

# POEH CULTURAL CENTER & PUEBLO OF POJOAQUE LAUNCH BOLD INITIATIVE TO PROTECT THE HEALTH & WELLBEING OF PUEBLO COMMUNITIES

*Officials with The Poeh Cultural Center & Pueblo of Pojoaque have been making a lot of noise in an effort to combat COVID-19 within Pueblo communities.*

SANTA FE, NM, USA, December 14, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- (Santa Fe NM) For more than six months, officials with The Poeh Cultural Center & [Pueblo of Pojoaque](#) have been quietly making a lot of noise in an effort to combat COVID-19 within the Pueblo communities. The result of that hard work is the “Fight the Virus” campaign, and its impact is hard to miss.



"Fight the Virus" Road Signage Posted Throughout the Community

“Our Pueblo communities need help to fight this virus,” said Karl Duncan, Executive Director of the Poeh Cultural Center. “We have been working throughout the pandemic to raise funds and provide critical programs to aid the community.”

Under Tribal leadership direction, the Poeh has been assisting the Pueblo of Pojoaque in its community awareness initiatives to protect people from the spread of COVID-19.

“Information is key in this fight,” Duncan said. “So our first component of communication is an educational one.”

An array of “Fight the Virus” instructional signage has been posted throughout the Pojoaque valley along with billboards, provided by Buffalo Thunder Resort, reminding the public of their responsibility to stay safe by masking up, staying home and social distancing. On social media,

the Poeh has featured flyers, photos, challenges and curated weekly posts such as Mental Health Mondays, Wellness Wednesdays and Face Mask Fridays.

The campaign is already seeing results: According to Duncan, the Pojoaque Pueblo has had lower COVID-19 rates compared to other pueblos and nearby Santa Fe.

The multi-layered campaign also emphasizes the wearing of facemasks during the pandemic. To encourage this, the Poeh produced masks featuring artwork created by local Tewa Pueblo artists, including Erik Fender,

Wesley Vigil, Rose Simpson, Pilar Agoyo and Shawn Tafoya. The designs were chosen and created for their cultural and community significance, with over 4600 masks distributed thus far. Officials confirm that funding for additional masks is needed.



"Fight the Virus" Sign Encourages the Wearing of Facemasks

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*Karl Duncan, Executive Director of the Poeh Cultural Center*

“Each of us can fight the virus everyday by wearing our masks,” Duncan said. “We have the power to keep our loved ones safe with our choices.”

Officials also point out that it’s equally important to maintain a sense of normalcy and routine from day to day.

That’s why the Poeh has promoted the continuation of Traditional Pueblo Arts by offering free online classes, including Micaceous Pottery, Black on Black Pottery,

Traditional Sewing, Pueblo Weaving and Traditional Cooking. Instructors Zoom into their classes from their home studios or utilize closed studios at the Poeh Cultural Center. As most students are elders or new to online arts classes, Poeh staff spent hours training students to sign into the classes and finding best practices to conduct online arts classes. Some students needed webcams, headsets, laptops and simple encouragement to keep learning and practicing traditional Pueblo arts. Internet connectivity and computer availability has been a challenge.

“We’re asking for financial resources, contributions and donations to help us continue our mission,” Duncan said.

Many Native American Artists have lost their income due to the economic shutdowns and struggle to pay utility, car, phone or food bills. The Poeh has developed a webpage to help train artist to promote, market and pivot to online sales. Videos, links and one on one support is available. The Poeh's Facebook Native Artist Marketplace has been established to link artists directly to buyers. This marketplace is promoted by the Poeh in hopes to drive interest to available artists.

Finally, The Poeh Artist Relief Fund was established to support New Mexican Native American artists who are in financial need. To date, over 100 artists have been awarded funding and a round two of funding is currently underway for another 100 awards. Applicants' stories of financial need show a bleak landscape of Pueblo village closures, curfews, financial and personal loss. Artists can apply on the Poeh's website and funds are available until depleted. Funding has been provided by Pueblo of Pojoaque, NDN Collective, National Endowment for the Arts, First Nations Development Institute, Santa Fe Community Foundation, McCune Foundation, Chamiza Foundation & National Museum of the American Indian.

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How Can You Help?

Public support can be directed to our website at [www.poehcenter.org/donate](http://www.poehcenter.org/donate)

For additional information contact Karl Duncan (505) 803-0212, [kduncan@pojoaque.org](mailto:kduncan@pojoaque.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/poehculturalcenter/>

<https://poehcenter.org>

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About The Poeh Cultural Center:

In the Tewa Pueblo language, Poeh means "path" and the Poeh Cultural Center embodies that pathway. Serving the Northern New Mexico Pueblo's for over 30 years, the center is a gathering place for cultural archives, Pueblo arts and museum exhibitions helping to bring the values of the Pueblo traditions to the public.

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