



## Mino Ayaa—Being Well

Sponsored by the Forest County Potawatomi Foundation in 2010-2011, the project partnered with Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center (GLIHC), the Indian Council of the Elderly (ICE), South East Oneida Tribal Services (SEOTS), and Native Punx in an innovative intergenerational project to encourage healthy lifestyles among Indian families. We published a cookbook of healthy recipes and personal stories that celebrate traditional foods to nourish the body, mind and heart.

Content was collected at the Work Out, Low Fat for Elders (WOLFE) group, a weekly fitness, nutrition, and cooking class shared by members of the multi-tribal Milwaukee Indian community at the Indian Health Center. Recipe and story collection were primarily through oral interviews conducted by Thirza Defoe and volunteers at the Health Center under the direction of Jennifer Casey, dietician at the Health Center.

Most of the featured recipes were designed using produce raised in their Circle of Life group garden, and with participation of a weekly garden club throughout the season. The Harvest Picnic in the fall featured foods from the book, and dishes prepared by the WOLFE group and the Health Center.

Illustrations for the cookbook were created by Visual Artist Kristelle Ulrich after conducting workshop sessions with elders in the WOLFE group. 500 books were printed and distributed to all participants of the project and agency staff and clients. The cookbook was highlighted through cooking demonstrations at Milwaukee's annual Indian Summer festival.

Outreach in the community consisted of events at the Indigenous Writers Reading Series at Woodland Pattern, the Midwinter Pow Wow and the Indian Summer Festival by Native Punx volunteers and elders from ICE and the WOLFE group. The Story of the Three Sisters and other short stories and recipes from the cookbook were featured.

A youth ensemble made up of 20 youth from the South East Oneida Tribal Services summer camp learned traditional hoop dancing and theatre skills, directed by Thirza Defoe. Their performance was presented at the 2011 Indigenous Games and at events for the participating agencies.

Over 2,400 people of all ages were reached through this project.

*The Mino Ayaa Cookbook project* enhanced the project started by GLIHC through the gathering of additional stories by elders, the creation of beautiful illustrations for the cookbook, and providing additional means for distribution. Offering the cookbook for free and online helped thousands of elderly and poor members who could not afford to purchase one.

*The theatre summer camp project* enhanced SEOTS' programming, gave 20 youth an opportunity to work with professional and internationally renowned Native artist Thirza Defoe to learn traditional and contemporary forms of dance and theatre. It provided many opportunities for youth to perform in the community, develop their skills and self-esteem, and gave parents an opportunity to support their children in these activities.

The **Mino Ayaa Cookbook** is available at the Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center. Contact Jennifer Casey, **414-383-9526**. An e-book version is available for free download at [www.glihc.net](http://www.glihc.net).



*WOLFE group at Harvest Picnic.*



*Cooking demonstration at Indian Summer.*



*Collecting sweetgrass.*



*Indigenous Writers Reading Series*



*Youth volunteer cooking demonstration.*

