



Top: San Carlos Apache youth learning about non-toxic cleaners



## Asthma & Allergy Walk at Community Earth Days

By Marti Lindsey, Ph.D. & Ben Richmond M.S. / Photos by Ingrid Que Salt

Large photo: Engaging community members with the Asthma & Allergy Walk

Right: Earth Day at Gila River Indian Community



Right: Tohono O'odham Earth Day



Right: food coloring used to see effects of non-toxic cleaners



The Southwest Environmental Health Sciences Center (SWEHSC) does research regarding lung health, and the Outreach and Engagement group decided to provide information about asthma and allergies on Earth Days and at other events, developing a mini health fair called the Informational Museum Walk. The walk was developed using principles of museum displays. It's purpose is to teach students and families about the causes, symptoms and prevention of asthma and allergies.

### Tribal communities have a high prevalence of asthma

- 13.0% of American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) children, ages 2 to 17, have asthma compared to 8.9% of children nationwide.
- AI/AN adults have a higher lifetime asthma prevalence and twice the current asthma prevalence than that of the general adult population.



Left: Tiffani Begay, SWEHSC member, teaching youth how to not use toxic cleaners.



Top: Discussing with Pascua Yaqui nurse about using a peak flow meter to measure lung capacity with a peak flow chart.

### Four informational stations

1. "Lung Functioning"
2. "What is Asthma?"
3. "Indoor Allergens"
4. "Outdoor Pollutants"

Each station has either a physical model and/or a hands-on activity that focuses on the station's key concepts with background information.

Take-home handouts are provided with the same information for community members.

With the success of the project presented in indigenous communities, other institutions and programs have asked for the Asthma and Allergy Museum Walk to be presented at various conferences, environmental health seminars, summits and Earth Days. With the main audience being Native American communities, the posters are being reviewed and revised to include the tribe's language and culture to enhance tribal identification. In 1997, the group began to update the displays with the purpose of making them more culturally appropriate for tribal communities. Included in the current update are new information, new photos, and words from tribal languages. The SWEHSC partners wanted community members to be more accepting of the information. Community members have been complementary when the new walks have been used.