

BERNALILLO COMMUNITY MUSEUM & GARDEN

2025

ANNUAL  
REPORT



COMMUNITY, COLLABORATION, EDUCATION

# GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

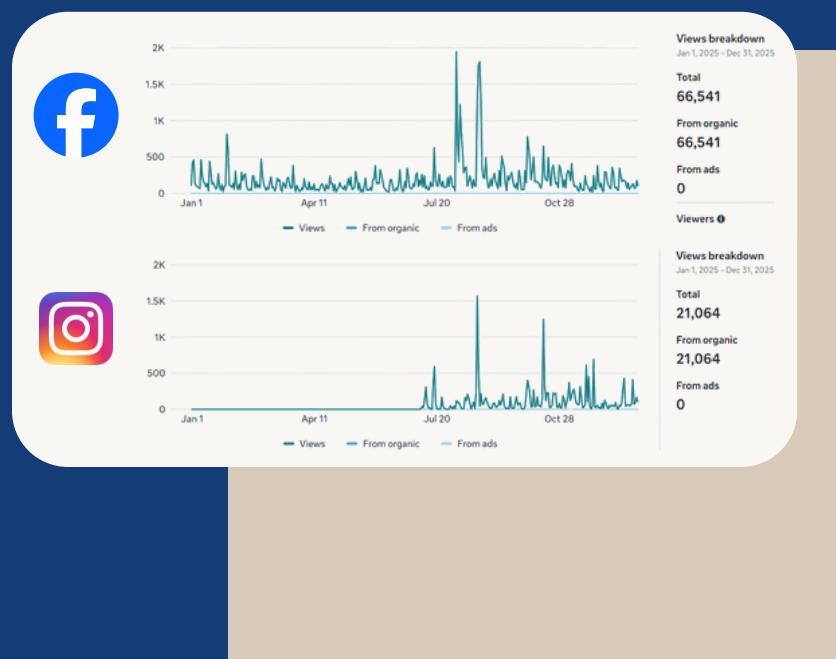
Bernalillo Community Museum (BCM) staff work diligently every year to improve our facility, programming, and outreach. Over the past three years we have successfully completed building renovations, developed multiple exhibitions, and established a community garden. The photos below demonstrate that growth, while the rest of this report will focus on 2025.



# SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, the BCM's social media accounts promoted 305 events for 36 local nonprofits, small businesses, and government organizations, in addition to all the marketing we did for our own programs. The BCM website was visited 4,660 times in 2025, and provides convenient access to tourism, programming, and educational resources in Bernalillo.

Our Facebook account received 66,541 views, while our Instagram account received 21,064 views for the year. We work hard to maintain these accounts and believe that they are crucial to the museum's growth, engagement with younger audiences, and community participation. Regular posts, including the Community Spotlight Series, and Throwback Thursdays, are particularly popular with community members.



TOURISM HUB SUPPORT BCM

Bernalillo Community Museum

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HOME CALENDAR PROGRAMMING ABOUT VISIT/CONTACT

Bernalillo Community Museum

Open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am-3 pm

LEARN MORE

# Hecho En Bernalillo



Thanks to a 2024 GRO Fund Award from Representative Derrick J. Lente, the Town of Bernalillo launched a free, multidisciplinary, cultural arts project for residents. Through this program, the Town of Bernalillo has provided locals of all ages with the opportunity to engage with other community members, develop tangible skills in various art mediums, and establish a strong cultural foundation that they can build upon for years to come.

The funds for this project were divided into two main programs, the Martha Liebert Public Library's *Young Renaissance Scholars*, and BCM's *Hecho en Bernalillo*. Below are the numbers for the *Hecho en Bernalillo* program.

## Types of Classes

**14**

Different art mediums taught, including pottery, oil painting, mosaics, and retablo making.

**18**

Free community workshop.

**37**

Individual Classes.

## Local Impact

**12+**

NM artists/instructors hired to teach the workshops.

**4 - 78**

Age range of participants.

**270**

Workshop Participants



# EXHIBITIONS

The *History of Sports in Bernalillo* exhibition was initially launched in June of 2024, and remained open until March 15, 2025. This exhibition contained seven different sports-related exhibits; where visitors learned about the accomplishments of local sports teams, the individual community members who worked tirelessly to maintain local sports programs, and were even be asked to test their own athletic ability. This exhibition was open to the public for 269 days and was viewed by 744 visitors.

*Plants of the Bosque: The Agricultural and Medicinal Traditions of the Middle Rio Grande Valley* opened April 26, 2025, and explores the ways in which people have utilized this region for sustenance, healing, and economic growth. The Pueblo, Spanish, and Anglo communities who settled in the Middle Rio Grande Valley survived by establishing a deep connection with the land, and often times, with one another. This exhibition utilizes artwork from our community art workshops, and personal stories and family histories, to fully convey the connection between the local community and the land. This exhibition has been viewed by 1,249 visitors.

## LANDRACE CHILE PEPPERS

Chile was first cultivated in Mexico between 8,000 and 5,000 BC, and most likely arrived in New Mexico through Indigenous trade routes, prior to Spanish arrival. In Chaco Canyon, scientist have found remnants of chile dating back to AD 650 - 1250. However, the earliest surviving written records indicate that chile pepper seeds were first introduced to the New Mexico territory by Spanish explorers in the late 1500's. From those first seeds, Pueblo and Hispanic communities began to cultivate chiles that, over generations, would become landrace varieties.

Landrace is the term for a plant variety that has become adapted to a geographical location following more than 100 years of selection and seed saving. To achieve this, seeds must be saved from matured fruit before the season's first freeze. Those seeds are then passed on from generation to generation, bringing forward genetic traits that help a plant adapt to the unique growing conditions of a specific region. Most of the current landrace chile varieties come from the northern part of the state, and are often named after the village or Pueblo that cultivated them, such as Chimayó and Santo Domingo Pueblo.



NATIVE PUEBLO CHILE PLANTS FROM SANTA ANA PUEBLO  
PHOTOGRAPHER FRANCISCO O. OROZCO 2023

Today, most chile grown in New Mexico is the "New Mexican" pod type, which was developed by Fabián García at New Mexico State University. García first began breeding for a more standardized chile variety in 1888 and released 'New Mexico No. 9' in 1913. This standardized pod type had attributes better suited to commercial production, like a larger fruit size and uniform heat level. Some of the most famous chile varieties, including 'NuMex Big Jim' and 'Anaheim', are cultivars within the New Mexican pod-type. Most of these standard, or commercial, varieties are grown in southern New Mexico.

While both standard and landrace chile varieties play important roles in New Mexico's culture and economy, landrace varieties are genetically unique and produce distinct flavors and heat variability. They also contribute to the cultural identity of the communities that cultivated them. Public and community awareness and appreciation for landrace varieties is critical to ensuring their survival for future generations to enjoy.



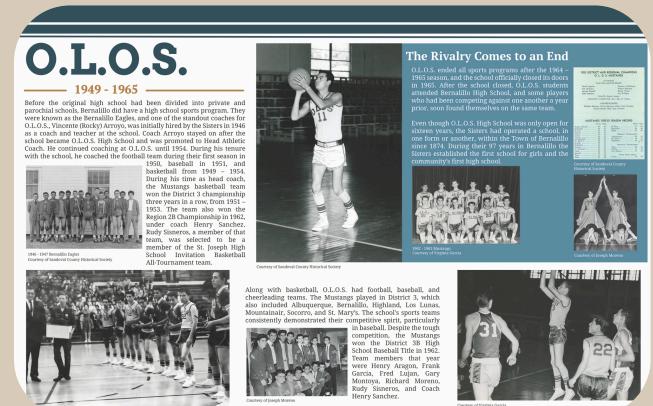
HATCH CHILE PODS, BERNALILLO COMMUNITY GARDEN  
SUMMER 2024

## FOOD AS MEDICINE

Chile is an excellent source of fiber, iron, and vitamins A and C. The heat of a chile comes from capsaicin, which can help fight inflammation, boost immunity and clear congestion. Capsaicin is also an effective pain reliever.



All exhibitions launched by BCM are developed with the help of student employees, and all content for our exhibitions comes directly from local community members and organizations.



# COMMUNITY GARDEN

The BCM's community garden is a registered backyard refuge and habitat for local wildlife, a living repository and seed bank for native plant varieties, and an outdoor classroom for hands-on education. We prioritize sustainable gardening techniques and pollinator-friendly practices. Every aspect of the garden, from composting to seed harvesting, and even our irrigation system, are used to provide free educational opportunities for all ages.

In 2025, museum staff planted 293 plants/herbs/flowers and 18 vines/bushes. Staff added 1,000 lbs. of new mulch and 400 lbs. of compost to the garden. We grew 21 different varieties of fruits and vegetables, 11 different types of medicinal plants, 14 varieties of herbs, 3 types of cover crops, and 3 grape varieties. The garden was expanded to include the entire north half of the property, and a drip irrigation system, including over 600 feet of irrigation tubing, was installed throughout the entire garden.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key principle of the BCM is our commitment to serving the community. This means that we are always looking for ways to provide beneficial services for Bernalillo residents and opportunities to collaborate with local organizations. In 2025, the BCM provided workforce training opportunities for two student employees, and three high school interns. We also worked with local schools to provide free field trip opportunities throughout the year. Some highlights from 2025 included our partnerships with Sandoval County that resulted in free spay/neuter services for 313 dogs and cats, and an award of \$8,500 for their Home for the Holidays event. We also hosted the Southwest Writers, a local nonprofit, for a book reading by New Mexicans who contributed personal stories to *Unbreaking the Circle: Voices of the Military, their Families & Caregivers*.



**7** FIELD TRIPS

**158** Students

**33** Chaperons



**5** NONPROFIT/GOVERNMENT

Organizations utilized the museum to host events.



**6** FREE PUBLIC EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

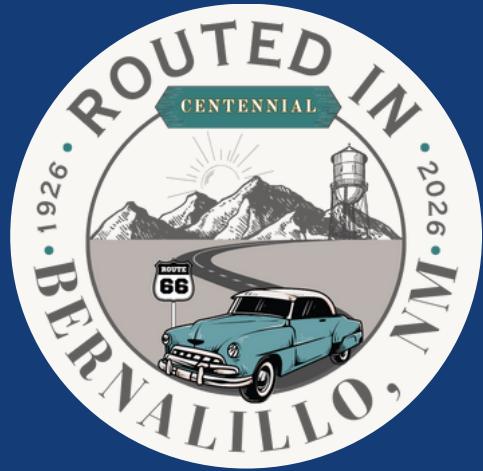
Were hosted by the museum, including public lectures and family events.



**7** BERNALILLO EVENTS

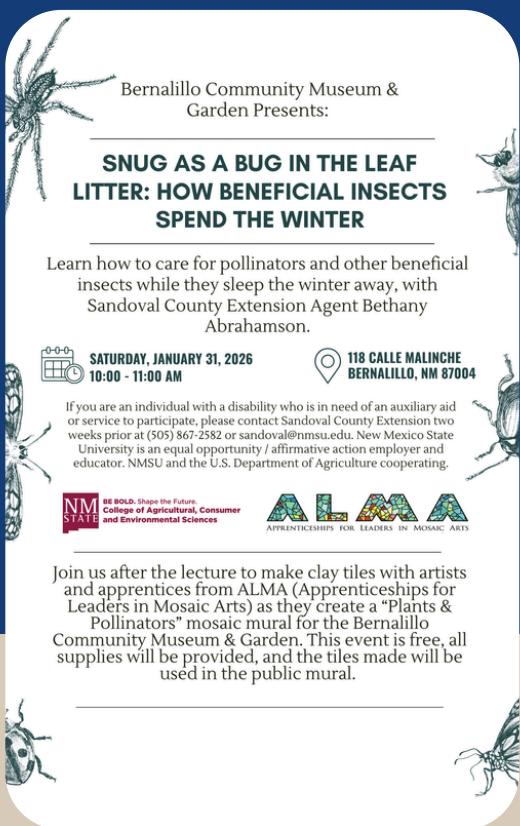
Were attended by museum staff.

# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026



BCM staff have already begun development on our third exhibition, which will focus on Route 66. This exhibition will launch in November 2026 and will be part of the Town of Bernalillo's overall Centennial Celebration.

Public access to our digital database is a top priority for staff, and will be a primary project for 2026, along with the new exhibition. We will also be working with other departments on various tasks, including mapping the historical sites within the Town of Bernalillo, and conducting feasibility studies for the Molino Building and commercial kitchen projects.



We are also committed to doubling our public programming this year and already have two events scheduled for January. Additionally, we are working on a two-year agreement with NMSU and the Sandoval County Master Gardeners to make it easier for us to collaborate on future events.

Lastly, we are currently exploring additional funding opportunities to continue offering free community art classes once the GRO Fund award has ended, and to establish a similar program focused on workforce training.