



September 2023 Issue

# Through foster care, you can make a difference in the life of a child.



## CNO asks eligible tribal members to consider opening their hearts and homes to foster care

By Kendra Germany - Wall

In America, foster care homes are now in short supply. Many states have reported a decrease in the number of homes since the beginning of the pandemic, and the Choctaw Nation is also feeling those effects.

Recruiting foster families has become a priority for systems, including the Choctaw Nation's Children and Family Services.

While in foster care, children may live with relatives, in group homes or foster homes. In nearly all cases, the goal is the reunification of children with their families.

However, foster homes are a necessary part of the process and are desperately needed.

In the U.S., over 407,000 children and youth are in foster care, and 34% were placed with relatives or kin, according to Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2020 data.

Nationally, American Indian and Alaskan Native children are overrepresented in the foster care system at more than 1.6 times the expected level, according to National Indian Child Welfare reported statistics.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was enacted in 1978 in response to a crisis affecting American Indian and Alaska Native children, families and tribes.

The Supreme Court handed down a major decision Thursday, June 15, 2023, affirming the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act by a 7-2 vote.

While the decision to uphold ICWA is a victory for tribal sovereignty, there is still one issue on the table—the need for more tribal foster homes.

Within the Choctaw Nation, the Children and Family Services program collaborates with state workers and the courts to ensure safe, stable and nurturing homes for Choctaw children.

This program works on behalf of Choctaw children and families in accordance with ICWA.

Choctaw Nation social workers join with state workers and the courts to ensure safe and healthy placements for Choctaw children removed from their homes, including finding Choctaw foster and adoptive homes to prevent placement in non-Indian homes.

ICWA allows placement preferences for Choctaw children when they are removed from their homes and placed in the legal custody of an agency other than the Choctaw Nation.

According to Robert Whitfield, a foster care recruiter with Choctaw Children and Family Services, there are hundreds of Choctaw children within the foster care system.

When seeking to place a Choctaw child in a pre-adoptive home, Choctaw Nation placement preferences include:

- A biological parent.
- A member of the child's extended family.

- A foster home licensed by the Choctaw Nation.
- A foster home licensed or approved by another Indian tribe.
- An Indian foster home licensed or approved by a non-Indian licensing authority.

Choctaw ICW Oklahoma offices are in Ardmore, Coalgate, Durant, Hugo, Idabel, McAlester, Oklahoma City, Stigler and Poteau.

### How to Become a Foster Parent

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma asks anyone qualified and who feels led to help to consider becoming a Choctaw Nation foster parent.

To become a foster parent, individuals must meet the eligibility requirements:

- An enrolled member of any federally recognized tribe (individual or spouse).
- At least 21 years of age.
- Have the emotional, physical and financial abilities to provide for a child's needs.
- Submit to a search of all state and national criminal history records.
- No household member has a prior conviction of a sexual offense.
- Attend pre-service training.
- No household member has confirmed child welfare history.
- Provide information for a family assessment (home study).
- Fill out an application online at the CNO Foster Care & Adoption webpage.

### Traditional Foster Care

Traditional foster care is for those who are willing to care for a child for an undetermined amount of time.

Traditional foster homes have the opportunity to help create a safe and nurturing home for children, provide support and guidance for parents and be a part of helping families heal.

### Emergency Foster Care

Emergency fostering plays a significant role in helping children overcome anxiety and fear. This short-term placement is ideal for households and families that exhibit an atmosphere that is calm, caring and attentive to the child's individual needs.

Emergency foster care is usually just enough time for Children and Family Services to locate a family member and usually ranges from one night to a few days.

### Respite Foster Care

Respite foster care is ideal for those who are unable to devote themselves full-time to foster parenting.

Those taking part in respite care will be

able to provide relief care for children during scheduled periods depending on the needs of the foster family.

According to Whitfield, those unsure of traditional foster care might consider fostering part-time as a respite home.

"Respite homes offer temporary placement options for homes that are looking for a break. When you offer respite placement, you are stepping into the position as a foster parent for sometimes just a few days, but those few days make a big difference to our full-time homes that sometimes need breaks," said Whitfield.

### Application Process

The first step to becoming a Choctaw foster parent is to fill out the application form which can be found online at <https://www.choctaw-nation.com/services/foster-care/>.

This application shares information about the home and those living in it. It gives Children and Family Services the information they need to determine whether a home initially qualifies to become a foster home.

Once the application is completed, potential foster parents are assigned to an onboarding specialist who will contact the applicant to schedule local and national background checks. The applicant is not responsible for the cost of the background checks, and any results will be reviewed with the applicant before proceeding with the application process.

Once backgrounds have been reviewed, applicants will be assigned to a foster care specialist. This specialist will visit the potential foster home, ensuring it is a safe space for a child to live in and confirm that there are no concerning conditions in the home. The specialist will also review and assist with additional forms applicants must complete.

Trauma training is a requirement for all foster parents to complete before a foster child can enter their home. This training informs the foster parent about the policies and expectations, along with information that emphasizes the importance of viewing the behaviors of children through the lens of trauma.

This training also explains that foster care's goal is to reunify the child with their family and stresses strategies to assist in this process.

The assigned specialist will meet with everyone currently living in the home and conduct a home study. A home study tells the foster family's story and gathers information about their past, such as traditions, feelings about fostering, skills and other experiences.

Every foster child has unique needs. A home study helps Children and Family Services determine the best placement option for each child.

Once all of the above has been completed, a final review is made to ensure everything is completed before final approval is given. All information is reviewed with the foster parents before making a final decision. The entire process of application can take up to 90 days.

After approval, foster parents will be contacted with placement opportunities.

"When you foster, you are not just keeping a child in your home. You are keeping a family together by working cooperatively to ensure that the child can return home safely, said Whitfield. "When you foster, you make a real difference in the life of a child and that child's family."

### THE HARD QUESTIONS

#### WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO KNOW ABOUT TRIBAL FOSTER CARE

**Q. I have a full-time job and my own family to care for, will I be able to handle a foster child?**

**A. Many foster parents have full-time jobs and children of their own. Caring for a foster child is just like caring for your own children. Taking in a foster child should be a decision a family makes together, though.**

**Q. What should a foster parent expect from the social worker?**

**A. Social workers develop close relationships with foster children and their foster families. You can expect to see your social worker on a regular basis, and you will work together to do what's best for the child.**

**Q. Do I have to pass a background check?**

**A. Yes. Certain offenses will disqualify you from being a foster parent.**

**Q. Does the Choctaw Nation help with necessary items needed to care for babies/toddlers? Especially in emergency placement situations?**

**A. The Choctaw Nation has plenty of resources for parents who take in a foster child, including baby items like car seats.**

**Q. What are the financial responsibilities for a foster family?**

**A. The family should be able to provide for themselves before they can provide for a foster child. The Choctaw Nation helps cover the cost of basic necessities like clothes, shoes, food, baby-proofing, and medical care.**



## Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

### Cybersecurity is top priority for CNO

Long ago, Choctaw Warriors faced their enemies and could repel them with their might and knowledge of fighting techniques to keep the Tribe safe. Today, our Choctaw Warriors use their minds to repel enemies of the Nation with computer security and protection of sensitive tribal member data through a process called cybersecurity.

The Choctaw Nation's cybersecurity team is always on guard for would-be intruders trying to hack their way into our systems and gain access to our Nation's sensitive data. Thanks to our outstanding Information Technology team's great planning, training, and focus, so far, the cyber intruders have not been successful, but it does give

me something to think about as I read about the latest phishing efforts and data breaches that have negatively impacted other organizations and individuals across the globe. What can we do to help shield ourselves from cyber intruders?

The need for cybersecurity in the digital world is a necessity. The volume and sophistication of cyberattacks constantly grows. As technology dependence increases, so does our vulnerability. Cybersecurity helps to protect our data and systems from these threats.

The Choctaw Nation Cybersecurity team has a few tips to consider when you are navigating your emails and the Internet:

- The IRS will not email you and ask for personal information.
- Sweepstakes are nearly always a scam.
- If it's too good to be true, it's probably a scam.
- Microsoft will not have you call them with updates to your computer.
- Never click on an anti-virus download link that arrives in your email.

The U.S. government's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) offers more suggestions to secure your personal information on your computer:

- Use strong passwords.
- Update your software.
- Think before you click on suspicious links.
- Turn on multi-factor authentication.

These cybersecurity basics apply to both individuals and organizations. For both government and private entities, developing and implementing tailored cybersecurity plans is key.

The Choctaw Nation takes the privacy of its tribal members very seriously and we will continue to upgrade our systems with the latest security technology. The care in keeping our Tribal Members data safe and secure is at the very foundation of what the Choctaw Nation stands for. We will remain tireless in our efforts to keep the Choctaw Nation's data safe from cyber-attacks.

For more information on what you can do to combat cyber thieves or to participate in online activities during Cybersecurity Awareness Month in October, go to [cisa.gov](https://cisa.gov) to find out how to protect your personal information from cyber-attacks.

Yakoke and God Bless!



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

### The Face of an Ox

In the first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel, the Prophet and Priest Ezekiel describes a vision he had of four living heavenly creatures. Verse 10 is a description of the faces he saw.

“As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.”

The four faces pictures Christ; (1) as a “man” incarnate; (2) as an ox “suffering servant and sacrifice”; (3) as a lion, that is, ruler (“the lion of the tribe of Judah”); and (4) as an eagle, all seeing and all-knowing.

The Church in later times took the four faces described by the prophet and distributed them among the four evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

They gave Matthew the face of a man, Mark the face of a lion, Luke the face of an ox, and John the face of an eagle.

This was according to a supposed resemblance between the particular gospel and the thing symbolized by each face. For the present purpose, we will regard these faces as symbols of four great traits of character that every person requires who would serve his fellow man.

This month we will look at the face of an ox and its character traits. The ox is an animal that some people consider dull and common of all of God's creatures. He lacks imagination. He plods along, never hurrying, never worrying and seems content with this.

For this reason, the face of an ox symbolizes labor, toil, drudgery, and patient perseverance. What, then, is labor and work? Work is what makes life worth living. Work is contributing to the forces that make the world. Work builds things up and makes them better. Work builds the worker up and makes the worker better. Without work, life ceases to exist.

No people ever rose in the scale of being until they learned the value of work. However, hard work does not receive the same welcome as idleness does. We greet holidays with smiles and joyous elations; work days are greeted with sobered antipathy. This is not to say that there is no place in life for recreation and play.

Play is an essential condition of work and wholesome living. Work builds nations, and all play can bring them down. When work ethics are lost, there is no more productivity. God is a being of creativity. He works. Therefore man is made to work.

It is said, “All true work is sacred.” Labor, wide as the earth, has its summit in heaven.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

### Bear conservation, hunting workshops announced

The black bear population in the Choctaw Nation is now at a healthy level after nearly being eradicated from Oklahoma due to overhunting.

Southeast Oklahoma is once again home to a healthy, growing population of black bears. The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife (ODWC) opened a black bear season in 2009. Originally the season was only available in McCurtain, Pushmataha, Latimer and LeFlore. Since then, it has expanded to include all counties east of Highway 69/75 and south of I-40.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Department will be conducting bear conservation and hunting workshops at Choctaw Community Centers across the reservation. Workshops are open to the

public and no registration is required. The workshops are designed to go over what is expected of hunters during black bear hunting season.

With the season approaching, as part of these programs, bear biologist Jeff Ford will be highlighting black bear hunting techniques, field care, and conservation efforts. The CNO team will also be available to explain harvest check-in (bear and other game), and season bag limits and answer questions.

Workshops will be held on the following dates at Choctaw Community Centers:

- August 24 – Poteau – 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- September 9 – Broken Bow – 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- September 14 – Antlers – 5 pm to 8:30 p.m.
- September 21 – Talihina – 5 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

The events are open to the public, and there will be door prize giveaways.

Black bears may be harvested by archery from Oct. 1 to Oct. 16 and muzzleloader from Oct.22 to Oct.30.

The Choctaw Nation made history this past fall by administering our first hunting and fishing seasons. When the State of Oklahoma failed to renew the hunting and fishing licenses on Dec. 31, 2021, tribal leadership exercised our sovereignty by ensuring the rights of tribal members to hunt and fish within the Choctaw Nation Reservation.

In the CNO's inaugural black bear hunting season, a total of 1,123 black bear permits were issued to tribal members compared to the 530 black bear tags issued by ODWC. With the 200% increase in hunting pressure, there was concern of over-harvesting being a possibility. That turned out not to be the case. ODWC hunters had a success rate of 9.8% compared to the success rate of 0.7% for Choctaw tribal hunters.

For questions contact the CNO Wildlife Conservation department at [wildlife@choctawnation.com](mailto:wildlife@choctawnation.com). Yakoke in advance for your participation in these important hunter-education and conservation events!

Yakoke and God Bless!

## BEAR CONSERVATION WORKSHOPS

TOPICS	WHEN & WHERE
Bear Conservation Hunting Techniques Field Care Harvest Check-in	<b>Choctaw Community Center Poteau</b> August 24th • 5pm - 8:30pm  <b>Choctaw Community Center Broken Bow</b> September 9th • 10am - 1:30pm  <b>Choctaw Community Center Antlers</b> September 14th • 5pm - 8:30pm  <b>Choctaw Community Center Talihina</b> September 21st • 5pm - 8:30pm
<b>OPEN TO THE PUBLIC</b>	
<b>DOOR PRIZES!</b>	

## UPDATE REQUIRED FOR THOSE WITH SOONERCARE COVERAGE

The Oklahoma Healthcare Authority is now requiring all SoonerCare recipients to update their information to continue coverage. Contact a Patient Benefit Coordinator at your local Choctaw Nation Health Clinic to update your information and avoid termination or lapse in coverage.

## Looking for a new career path?

There's something for you here.

## Choctaw CAREERS

Apply at [Careers.ChoctawNation.com](https://careers.choctawnation.com)

### CNO partners with McAlester Taekwondo for Ninja Camp

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation’s Behavioral Health Department partnered with McAlester Taekwondo to host the first Ninja Camp this July.

McAlester’s Boys and Girls Club became a training ground for kids from across the Choctaw Nation aged 6-12.

The kids had the chance to learn from experts in Taekwondo about staying active, how to be kind and even empowerment to stop bullying.

From kicking practice to picking up beans with chopsticks, these kids had fun and learned essential life skills.

Around 66 kids from the Choctaw Nation reservation participated in the ninja camp. To learn more about upcoming events, visit [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) or Choctaw Nation on Facebook.



Students learn the basics of nunchucks during the Ninja Warrior camp.



Leigha Scott navigates part of the obstacle course at one of the learning stations with instructors from McAlester Taekwondo.



(Left to Right) Addy Weiher and Adonis Griffin practice picking up beans with chopsticks at one of the learning stations.



Photos by Christian Toews

Above: McAlester Taekwondo instructors teach students at different stations throughout the morning during the ninja warrior camp.

Below: Sawyer Sexton practices with foam Nunchucks during the Ninja Warrior camp.



## Choctaw Nation wraps up another successful summer camp season

By Christian Chaney

Kids and teens across the reservation had an exciting summer participating in camps offered by the Choctaw Nation.

The camps kicked off in May and concluded in late July, with over 2,000 total registrations. Camp options were vast and for various areas of interest.

From athletic to academic, there were opportunities for campers to find something they enjoyed. Elite coaches and instructors taught students fundamentals in different sports.

STEAM and cultural camps offered cultural and educational enrichment, completing a busy and impactful summer for all camp participants.

Youth Events and Activities (YEA) offered a brand-new camp this summer, Rodeo Camp, that proved to be a hit with nearly 100 registered participants. The camp was held on May 25 and 26.

In partnership with Choctaw Nation Commerce Division, two of Choctaw Nation’s sponsored athletes, seven-time PRCA World Champion Sage Kimzey and nine-time Wrangler National Finals Rodeo Qualifier Tilden Hooper, were surprise guests. Students learned the fundamentals of steer wrestling, bronc riding, bullfighting, bull riding, break-

away roping, barrel racing, and much more through hands-on activities.

Aside from athletic camps, Choctaw Nation hosted Cultural, Wildlife Conservation and STEAM Camps. Campers who registered for Cultural Camp learned and participated in pottery, beading, traditional archery and studied the Choctaw language.

The Wildlife Conservation Camp partnered with the Choctaw Nation’s Wildlife Conservation Department and Oklahoma Game Wardens to offer campers a chance to complete their Hunter’s Safety Course, learn about ATV safety, compete in skeet shooting and fish in the Tuskahoma village pond.

Hosted by Project Pelichi WILL, the STEAM camps offered workshops, college trips and tours, academic development and more.

Program Manager Javen White said, “In our department, we are blessed to have the opportunity to provide a fun and safe environment for our tribal youth to participate in activities throughout the year. It means the world to us to be a positive light in their lives and encourage the next generation of strong Choctaw people.”

To learn more about the camps and activities offered by Youth Events and Activities (YEA), visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/yea/>.



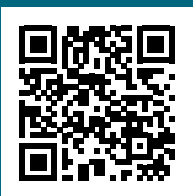
Photos Provided



## SANITATION FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

The program provides sanitation facilities, including water and wastewater facilities, to promote a healthy and safe living environment for the applicant.



Scan to learn more about the program.

APPLY NOW VIA MAIL, FAX OR EMAIL.

Choctaw Nation Office of Environmental Health

## AUTUMN IS IN THE AIR!

CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF CHANGE!

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER



## District 9

Halito, from District 9, I hope everyone has enjoyed a wonderful summer, and I'm looking forward to the fall. We had an unbelievable District 9 Princess Pageant at our Cultural Center in June.

We would like to thank all the staff that put on a wonderful event for all our young ladies and the support they all received from our District. Our 2023-2024 princesses, Senior Miss Kenzie Wilson, Junior Miss Cassidy Lee and Little Miss Audrina Samuels, will represent our District very well.

Our District 9 Wellness Center celebrated their 5-year anniversary in June. This has been a tremendous facility for our associates and tribal members. They offer so many activities for our youth and elders to promote a healthy lifestyle. They just recently hosted our Senior volleyball tournament for all the districts, with over 20 teams that participated.

We also handed out 15 keys to families that qualified for our LEAP program this summer, with 65 homes currently under construction and another 25 starting soon. This will put us over 200 new homes in Bryan County since we started this program. Our construction team is also working on our new apartment complex, which will consist of 216 units that will be available to our tribal members and associates. We are also getting ready to start 60 Independent Elderly units and 10 affordable rental units in the coming months.

It was a privilege to honor SGT Donald Ray Brimage as District 9 veteran of the month and First Language Speaker Lille Taylor Ott at our Tribal council meeting in June. We appreciate the sacrifices you've made throughout the years to protect our Great Nation and preserve our language.

One of my favorite books by Steve Harvey is JUMP: Take The Leap of Faith To Achieve Your Life Of Abundance. Steve Harvey talks about creating a vision board to achieve your goals. We had our six summer youth workers create a vision board at the community center this summer. Along with that, they battled the heat every Tuesday and Wednesday by giving back to the youth and then their seniors. First, handing out over 20,000 "Grab n Go" meals to the youngsters and 1,709 meals to their Seniors the following day. Their confidence grew so much as they presented their vision boards to Chief Batton, Commerce Division, Gaming Division, and our Health Division. I can't wait for what the future holds for them.

Our Community Center's Senior Nutrition has been feeding our seniors some fantastic meals this year, not only in quality but in quantity, with the total for over half of the new year showing 11,267 meals served. Although we lost many of our members during COVID, we have been adding at least 1 to 2 new members each week to where our numbers keep growing.

Our center is proud to announce their choice for Outstanding Elders for 2022-2023 are Roger Scott and Mary Lee Williams. They both have been involved in areas that show the District 9 Seniors as caring for its members. Their display of the Chahta Spirit hopefully speaks to our young people and visitors to the campus in ways that say Choctaws ARE More together. Congratulations to both. YAKOKE.

## CNO Housing Authority announces expansion of Section 184 Home Loan Guarantee Program

**DURANT, Okla. (August 15, 2023)** – The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation is excited to announce the growth and expansion of the Section 184 Home Loan Guarantee Program.

Congress established the 184 Home Loan Guarantee Program in 1992 to facilitate homeownership and increase access to capital in Native American Communities. With Section 184 financing, borrowers can finance a home with low down payment. Section 184 loans can be used on and off native lands for new construction, rehabilitation, purchase of an existing home, or refinance.

Loans must be in an area approved by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and deemed as an Indian Servicing Area. Fees are monitored and restricted to protect against predatory lending. Interest rates must be fixed, not adjustable, and based on the current market rate, not by credit score.

By serving Native communities, Section 184 is increasing the marketability and value of the Native assets and strengthening the financial standing of Native communities. Section 184 is synonymous with homeownership in Indian Country.

Participating tribes determine the areas where Section 184 loans are available. Loans must be in an eligible/approved area.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma requested an expansion to HUD, Office of Native American Programs and Office of Loan Guarantee, and has been approved for an expansion of 14 counties in Texas to be deemed as Indian Service Area for Section 184 loan. Bowie, Collin, Dallas, Denton, Fannin, Grayson, Harris, Johnson, Lamar, Montgomery, Red River, Tarrant, Travis and Williamson are now approved Texas counties for Section 184 home loans. Previously approved Texas counties are EL Paso and Hudspeth.

HUD also has approved the expansion of the Section 184 program to the following 23 Tennessee counties: Bedford, Blunt, Campbell, Coker, Crockett, Davidson, Dyer, Giles, Haywood, Knox, Lake, Lauderdale, Maury, Monroe, Montgomery, Obion, Rutherford, Sevier, Shelby, Tipton, Trousdale, Wilson and Williamson.

Down payment assistance loans are offered with Section 184 loans to Choctaw tribal members who apply with Choctaw Home Finance and are approved with a partner lender.

The down payment assistance loan is up to 2.25% assistance at a fixed 5% interest rate for up to five years. Borrowers must make a minimum investment of 1% from their own funds. There are no set income limits to be eligible. Credit guidelines must be met.

Please visit the HUD website, [www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/184\\_Map\\_States\\_and\\_Counties.pdf](http://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/184_Map_States_and_Counties.pdf), for a complete listing of Section 184 eligible lending areas.

Choctaw Home Finance understands unique circumstances and wants to assist with all homeownership goals. Let our knowledgeable staff assist you.

For more information, please call 1.800.235.3087 or visit the website at [www.choctawnation.com/services/chap/](http://www.choctawnation.com/services/chap/).

## CNHS recognized at Indian Health Service Awards Ceremony

**DURANT, Okla. (August 15, 2023)** – Leaders and innovators across Native American tribes were recognized at the 20th Annual Oklahoma City Area Director's Indian Health Services awards ceremony in Oklahoma City. Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) associates received several honors which were presented.

Service awards were given to those who have served Native Americans for 30 years or more. Ronita Henry was recognized for her service with CNHSA for the last 30 years. Mary Boerner, Anthony James and Quanda Shelton have been with CNHSA for 35 years.

The Oklahoma City Area Director's IHS/Tribal/Urban Awards Committee took submissions from all the tribes across the area and recognized those who stood out among their peers. CNHSA had several standout associates receive awards:

- Sabrina Beard, Chelsea Golden, SuzAnne Cryer, Lisa Jones, April Justice, Dr. Misti Crawley, Patty Hickman, Jamie Edwards, and Mary Woodral: Peer Recognition Tribal Award for outstanding work in their respective fields.
- Wendy Brown: Merit Tribal Award.
- Stephanie Riser: Area Director's Individual Area Impact Award.
- Jodi Robinson: Area Director's Individual Excellence in Customer Service Tribal Award.

The reception opened and closed with the Choctaw Nation Honor Guard, giving them an opportunity to show their passion for presenting the flags.



Choctaw Nation Photo

Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. (second from right) and Choctaw Nation Health Leaders pause for a moment after the ceremony with the award recipients.

## APMEX partners with Choctaw artist DG Smalling for a custom Oklahoma themed Coin Collection

**OKLAHOMA CITY (August 1, 2023)** – AP-MEX, an Oklahoma City-based global precious metals retailer, partnered with Choctaw artist DG Smalling to release an exclusive custom coin collection.

The collaboration features two iconic Oklahoma symbols: the grand buffalo and the Osage warrior's shield.

Born in Oklahoma, Smalling is best known for his continuous one-line drawing technique. DG's career has been marked by exceptional achievements including representing Oklahoma as a featured artist at Disney's Epcot Center in 2007; having art featured in the National Museum of the American "Choctaw Code Talkers Celebration" in Washington, D.C., in 2012; and recently partnering with Incredible Technologies to develop the first Native American-designed casino game.

"DG Smalling's vision beautifully embodies the spirit and history of Native American heritage," said MC Garofalo, director of product development and licensing at AP-MEX. "This exclusive coin collection creates another way to celebrate cultural diversity and artistic expression."

The exclusive collection comprises Grand Buffalo 1 oz. Silver round, Grand Buffalo 1 oz. Colorized proof Silver and Grand Buffalo 1 oz. Copper round.

"Art creates a space to learn about cultures and delve into narratives and traditions," Smalling said. "I hope this collection inspires more people to learn about our culture and support Native American artists."

The collection brings Smalling's artistry to the world of precious metals, an industry where art doubles as an investment.

Visit <https://www.apmex.com/category/82715/d-g-smalling> to see full collection.



Choctaw Nation Photo

The APMEX and DG Smalling coin collaboration features two iconic Oklahoma symbols: the grand buffalo and the Osage warrior's shield.



# WHELOCK ACADEMY

## HISTORIC SITE

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED IF SOMEONE IN YOUR FAMILY ATTENDED WHELOCK ACADEMY?

To find out, simply complete our lineage intake form. Scan the QR code to access the Wheelock Lineage Intake Form.

1377 WHELOCK ROAD, GARVIN, OK | 580.746.2139

MUSEUM HOURS MONDAY-FRIDAY 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM (GROUNDS CLOSE AT 5:00 PM)



Choctaw Nation Wheelock Academy



## CONNECTING KIDS TO COVERAGE

INSURANCE IS COMPLICATED, BUT WE CAN HELP!

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CELL: 580-380-2102 OR 580-380-7481



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma | 1800718.NATION.COM

## UPDATE YOUR CHOCTAW NATION MAILING SUBSCRIPTION

At Choctaw Nation, we constantly try to improve our services and look for better ways to serve you, our Tribal Member.

To choose your Circulation subscriptions, scan the QR code or visit the website above to select which of these items you wish to continue receiving through the mail.

- Biskinik
- Birthday Card
- Calendar

- Christmas Ornament
- Member Letter



choctawnation.com/subscribe/

Please allow time for changes to be effective. You will continue to receive your items during this process. Subscribers must be 18+ years of age, or the only member in the household.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE



## ITI FABVSSA

## Wheelock Church: A Brief History

This month, Iti Fabvssa is sharing the story of the Wheelock Church, the oldest standing church in Oklahoma. Established in 1846 in what is now Garvin, Oklahoma, Wheelock Church was commissioned by Presbyterian missionary, Reverend Alfred Wright, and built by a Choctaw congregation. It is adjacent to Wheelock Academy, the girls' boarding school. This summer, Choctaw Nation will gain ownership of the church.

Construction on the Wheelock Church building was completed in 1846, after two years of work. It was home to a Wheelock congregation originally established in 1836 under the guidance of Reverend Alfred Wright. Wright served a community of Choctaws that came over on the Trail of Tears from the Okla Falaya District, also known as the Western District, under Chief Thomas LeFlore. Chief LeFlore, with 600 Choctaws mustered near Goshen, Mississippi where they began their journey in early August of 1832. The group had a few wagons either provided by the United States to haul food or brought along by wealthy Choctaw families. The majority of Choctaw people had to walk and did not have the ability to bring much with them. What items could be brought from home were carried by Choctaw women in traditional pack baskets (Gilcrease Museum 2023:3) The travelers did not have adequate clothing, nor were they provisioned with enough supplies and shelter for the cold weather. The group relied on a herd of cattle and wild game to help feed them along the journey; once that ran out, they lived off small rations of corn. As the weather turned cold, rain, snow and sleet began to fall, causing the roads to muddy and streams to overflow. There were delays from wagons getting stuck and families burying their loved ones who had died



Photo Provided

Exterior view of Wheelock Church, near Milerton, built by Choctaw parishioners

on the Trail. "...There was much suffering at best" (Gilcrease Museum 2023:2). Babies born had to endure while those who passed on had to be buried on the roadside. Chief LeFlore's company was called the Christian Company because it held morning and evening services and did not travel on Sundays. After arrival in Indian Territory in March of 1833, the group traveled until they found open land and a spring where they could begin re-building their community. Anxiously awaiting Wright's arrival, the community had selected and cleared an area where they built benches. Soon after, Wright, delayed by sickness, arrived. On December 9th, 1832, Wright held the first Presbyterian service in Indian Territory "under a towering oak with some split-log benches and an ordinary wooden box serving as pulpit." (Kent 1972:3). During the service, Choctaw people sang hymns that they had learned in the homelands and Reverend Wright preached the sermon. Alfred Wright is

credited with writing Choctaw Hymn 48; however, it may have not been sung at this service since it is not in the 1829 Chahta Aba Isht Taloa Choctaw Hymnal. He later organized mostly Choctaw laborers to build a log building to serve as the congregation's church and school. That building became the first Presbyterian church in Indian Territory and Choctaw Nation.

Reverend Alfred Wright was a missionary who was part of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM). The Presbyterian organization was chartered by the Massachusetts legislature in 1810 to fulfill a mission of promoting Christianity among Native people. Missionaries from this organization were some of the ones that established the first missions in original Choctaw homelands in 1818. During Choctaw removal, individuals like Wright and Cyrus Kingsbury and Cyrus Byington accompanied Choctaw people to Indian Territory and continued their work there. Wright worked with his congregation until his death in 1853. Wright was buried in the nearby Wheelock Cemetery.

On land near the Wheelock Church, the building that would later become Wheelock Academy was also built. The school was also part of Wright's missionary efforts, the school operated in part under his direction. In 1833, a log building was erected as a day school but after Choctaw General Council passed a law in 1842, it became the well-known female seminary Wheelock Academy. Wright's wife also served as superintendent of the school. From 1844 -1846, the log building gave way to a newer and sturdier building, and the school also expanded into multiple buildings – some of which still stand today. After Choctaw Nation closed its schools in response to allotment and Oklahoma statehood, Wheelock Academy later became a federal boarding school for Native girls. To learn more about Wheelock Academy, you can read about it online or visit the Wheelock Historic Site and Museum

The Wheelock Church is a one-story masonry building constructed in a simplified Greek Revival style. Made from local stone that was hand-carved, the church's walls are 20 inches thick. The building is rectangular, with a gable-end front entrance facing west and a wooden steeple clad in vinyl siding and a metal roof. Inside, the church is one large room with wide cedar plank flooring. The decorative wooden pulpit is centrally located on the east wall and sits on a wide two-tier wood platform. Two rows of eight long wooden pews face the pulpit. Structural wood posts, rafters, and beams are partially visible and adorn the lower portions of the sloped ceiling. Painted bead board covers the ceiling peak of the rafters and between the wooden beams. The wall surfaces are plastered and painted. Small candle shelves were installed on each post to help light the interior. The central candelabra chandelier is not hooked to electricity. Other interior furniture includes a shorter pew, wooden chairs, two pianos near the pulpit, and a large portrait of Jesus hanging centrally on the east wall. After a fire occurred in 1866, the roof, steeple, and interior finishes were replaced in 1882, however the balcony was not reinstalled. Other than the metal roofing, the building appears much the same for 177 years and offers a unique look into Choctaw Nation's past.

In 1866, the fire that destroyed the church roof also wiped out the buildings



Photo provided

Interior view of Wheelock Church, Oklahoma's oldest stone church, built in 1846.

in the area, including Reverend Wright's old house, a single log building and the stone church. This left it abandoned until restoration efforts in 1882 by Reverend Johnathan Edwards. From then to 1900, the church was used for religious services. From 1900-1946, the church was primarily used for weddings and funerals.

During Choctaw allotment in the early 1900s, the land that Wheelock Church was on was allotted to Anna Reva Tyler. The old church was supposed to be exempted but that oversight was due in part to the limited use of the church. In 1957, Ms. Tyler agreed to sell the church and cemetery back to the Presbyterian church. After fundraising to purchase the church, the local Presbyterian church regained title. The church was then later acquired by the Wheelock Cemetery Association in 1995.

Recently, Wheelock Cemetery Association, realizing the church's importance to Choctaw Nation, offered to donate Wheelock Church to the Nation in April 2022. Chairwoman Maureen Haynie and Linda Endsley shared that the board worried that if the Nation did

not take ownership, there would be no one else in line to do so and the cultural connections could be lost. Numerous inspection reports were generated and, each time, the Church passed with flying colors. The maintenance by the Wheelock Cemetery Association and all those preceding them is a testament to their dedication and excellent stewardship of the Church. The Choctaw community and Nation is joyful in accepting the very generous donation.

Lastly, we would like to encourage you to interact with the QR code embedded in this month's article.

### References Cited:

*Ruth, Kent*

*1972 Wheelock Church. National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form. Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City.*

*Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art*

*2023 Typescript of "Granny LeFlore," an account of the 1832 removal of Choctaws from Mississippi to Indian territory. 4027.4566. Edmond J. Gardner Manuscript Collection. mid-20th century. Tulsa: Gilcrease Museum, <https://collections.gilcrease.org/object/40274566> (12/13/2018).*



## HOUSING EDUCATION

The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority Service Coordination Department is offering free Homebuyers and Rental Education Workshops in September for potential homebuyers, new homeowners and renters.

For dates, times and location of classes, please call or email:

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Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

## WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By John Worthington

September brings the occasional cooler day and also opportunities to head to the field to begin hunting season. Many of us look forward to sitting on the edge of a pond or crop field with family and friends anxiously awaiting the chance to harvest dove. Additionally, hunters can begin their pursuit of waterfowl through September teal season and the Special Resident Canada Goose season.

There are three species of dove that can be harvested in Oklahoma. Mourning, White-winged, and Eurasian Collared dove can be found in abundance across the state. Agricultural fields, ponds, or native pastures with high densities of forbs are all great places to find dove. Also, flight corridors between these locations provide opportunities to harvest dove as they transition through these areas. There is a daily limit of 15 dove, consisting of any combination of the three species. There is no bag limit on Eurasian Collared dove but the head or one fully feathered wing must remain naturally attached to the carcass until they are transported to their final destination. Additionally, tribal members are exempt from the Harvest Information Program (HIP) permit requirement when hunting within Choctaw Nation.

September teal season allows hunters the chance to harvest green-wing and blue-wing teal that tend to migrate through Oklahoma earlier than other waterfowl species. Teal typically travel in small flocks ranging from 6 to 15 birds and have a fast erratic flight pattern. Teal are categorized as dabbling ducks and prefer shallow water to rest and feed. Ponds, marshes, and flooded areas of agricultural fields are great places to find teal. Hunters are allowed a daily bag limit of six birds, and all other migratory bird hunting regulations apply including the use of federally-approved nontoxic shot.

The Special Resident Canada goose season provides hunters with an opportunity to pursue Canada geese that live in Oklahoma year-round. Resident geese tend to be larger than their migratory counterparts and are usually easier to pattern. Resident geese often spend their days within city limits and travel to roosting ponds in the evening. Understanding their routine and accessing these locations in the afternoon or evening are keys to success. The daily limit is eight Canada geese, and migratory bird hunting regulations apply including the use of federally-approved nontoxic shot.

For additional information or questions, please call or reach out to us at [wildlife@choctawnation.com](mailto:wildlife@choctawnation.com). Enjoy these early season opportunities and good luck in the field!

Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation

## Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

The Homeowners Substantial Rehabilitation Program helps provide assistance to low-income homeowners for home repairs and 504 ADA accessibility items to single-family homes. Homeowners must meet the eligible priority score of at least 60 points. Scores are based on income, age and family size. Additional points are given for documented disabilities and veterans.

The objective for substantial rehabilitation is to help bring the condition of homes to a decent, safe and sanitary standard through repairs to electrical, plumbing, roofing, HVAC, foundation or ADA accessibility components. Eligible repairs are based on a home inspection conducted by the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation. Adding additional rooms to the home is not an eligible repair. If the home is determined to not be cost-effective alternative housing options will be recommended. We strive to assist our Choctaw tribal members with the most effective and efficient services allowed with our resources.

Completed application with supporting documents including a proof of residence, warranty deed and proof of homeowner insurance are required. The deed must have been filed for a minimum of one year.

This program is available using federal funds within the reservation boundaries of the Choctaw Nation and does require a lien to be filed on your property. The lien is forgivable and will only be recouped if the property is sold.

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### Korzeniowski earns Doctorate

Choctaw tribal member Pam Korzeniowski, PA-C has graduated from A.T. Still University with a Doctor of Medical Science (DMSc) degree.

Dr. Korzeniowski has been a practicing Physician Assistant (PA-C) for 20 years, with seven years serving a rural tribal clinic (Shoalwater Bay Tribe of Tokeland, Washington) and the past 10 years with the VA of North Texas, where she has specialized in dermatology. Dr. Korzeniowski's Capstone applied project was titled "Skin Cancer Screening Protocols and Preventive Modalities in Solid Organ Transplant Recipients."

Pam is grateful to the Choctaw Nation for their support during her initial PA training as a recipient of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma scholarship (graduating in 2004 from the University of WA MEDEX Northwest PA Training Program).

She is also an IHS Scholar (selected for the Indian Health Service Scholarship, 2002-2004). Dr. Korzeniowski is thrilled to have reached this academic pinnacle in her PA career and has been very blessed to practice medicine these 20 years (and more to come) as a PA.

### Pettigrew helps welcome Native astronaut Nicole Mann back to Earth



Choctaw Nation tribal member Penny J Pettigrew was honored to welcome Space-X Crew-5 Commander and Astronaut Nicole Mann, the first Native American woman to launch to space, home after over a five-month mission onboard the International Space Station.

Nicole "Duke" Mann was the first Native American woman to launch into space

in October 2022 and returned after over five months onboard the International Space Station (ISS) in March 2023.

Pettigrew serves as an ISS Payloads Communication Manager (PAYCOM) at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC) in Huntsville, Alabama Pettigrew got to work with and assist Duke in successfully completing her science activities while she was on the ISS.

Commander Mann and her crewmates Josh Cassada and Koichi Wakata recently visited MSFC to present an overview of their mission and thank everyone for all we did to support them during their time in space. Nicole mentioned Pettigrew by name as one of the specific people she wanted to thank during the presentation.

### Poteau seniors have a blast to the past



Poteau Choctaw seniors had a 1960s flashback dance on April 28. Even William Logan Jr., a Choctaw veteran of World War II participated in the dance.



### Hunsecker earns degree from SDSU

Samantha Rayne Hunsecker of Lansing, Kansas, graduated on May 6, 2023, from South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota.

She attended SDSU on an Equestrian Scholarship, where she was a captain of

the English team. She graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Human Biology and a Minor in Chemistry.

Samantha is the daughter of Travis T Hunsecker and the granddaughter of Don and Anne Hunsecker.



### Jones earns degree from CSULA

Samara Jones, a member of the Choctaw Nation, graduated in May 2023 with her bachelor's in television, film and media studies with a focus in production at California State University, Los Angeles.

She greatly appreciates the Choctaw Higher Education program for helping her pursue her academic career.

Jones's admiration for telling stories and directing started in her early childhood as she treasured her grandmother, Marian Gardner, storytelling in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Jones is highly motivated and passionate about amplifying important, often overlooked stories and informing audiences on ways to affect change.

She thanks her parents, Amy Lopez and Tim Jones, for supporting her wildest dreams.



### Robertson earns degree from CC

Scott Robertson is a tribal member of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

He was born and raised in Lewis County Washington and graduated from Centralia College in 2021 with an associate degree in applied science in Chemical Dependency.

He is a loving husband and father whose goal is to provide a better life for his children than he had. His struggles with addiction have motivated his work in Behavioral Health and Substance Use Disorders. And his goal is to inspire those who believe they have no hope for a brighter future.

Through his studies at Evergreen, he has been able to build a sense of community and establish a well-rounded culturally competent education. He looks forward to graduation, and sharing experiences with the people who matter most, his family.

Graduating June 17, 2023, with a Bachelor's in Native American Studies from The Evergreen State College.



### Cherry brothers represent home state at Nationals

Thomas and Isaac Cherry represented Leflore County and the State of Oklahoma in

the National 4-H Archery competition.

The duo presented a speech and demonstration to Leflore County Farm Bureau after receiving a generous donation from the company to help the brothers with expenses associated with the competition.

### Two CNO tribal members receive Ivy League education from Columbia



Choctaw tribal members Zane Braudrick of Caddo, Oklahoma and Malia Dills of the Big Island of Hawaii graduated in spring 2023 from Columbia University in Manhattan, New York.

Braudrick graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in film studies/ethnic studies, and Dills earned a Bachelor of Arts in sustainable development.



### Wright turns 5

Albert Richard (Rick) Wright IV turned 5 on August 22, 2023.

He is the son of Albert R. Wright, III and grandson of Nanette and Richard Sells of Taylor, Texas.



### Meireles earns degree from CSU

Tribal member Zoe Watson Meireles recently graduated from Colorado State University located in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Zoe received a BA in Women's Studies and Gender Research and a BA in Ethnic Studies with a minor in Indigenous Studies and will now pursue a master's degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Native American Leadership.

Zoe would like to thank Chief Batton and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for their continued support on their higher education journey.



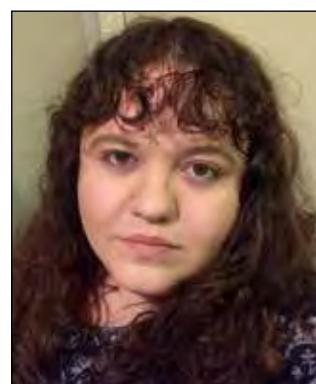
### Sims earns degree from University of Alabama

Macen Ronald Sims graduated on May 6, 2023, from the University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, Alabama) with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in personal finance and investment.

Macen expresses his gratitude and thanks for his Choctaw Nation family's financial support and encouragement. He's ready to begin his professional future with great roots and education.

Thank you, again, for all the support these past years! Macen is the great-grandson of Harold Stanberry, grandson of Ronald Stanberry and son of Lisa (Stanberry) Prieto.

Macen is also proud to announce the acceptance of his younger sister Ava Grace Sims to San Diego State University and his younger brother Brady Cale Sims, to the University of Miami, Florida, this fall.



### Waddy graduates from Murray State

The parents of Aliison Waddy are proud to announce that she has graduated with a doctorate degree from Murray State University.

She wishes to thank the Choctaw Nation for their help in achieving this goal.



### Roberts earns degree from UC Merced

Angela Roberts graduated with high honors from the University of California

Merced in May 2023 with a BA in sociology and a minor in psychology.

Angela is the great-granddaughter of the late Lesa and Jesse Roberts. Angela has received the prestigious Eugene Cota-Robles Fellowship and will enter the Ph.D. program in Interdisciplinary Humanities at UC Merced in Fall 2023.

She plans to conduct research surrounding Choctaw Cultural Revitalization in California. Her future goals also include conducting this research with the Choctaw Nation.

Angela would like to thank her ancestors for their guidance and the Choctaw Nation for offering much of the funding she has used to pay for her education. Yakoke!

### Battiest seniors win tournament



The District 2 Battiest Choctaw Seniors Chair Volleyball Team won the 5th Annual Teddy Ward Memorial Senior Chair Volleyball Tournament on June 22, 2023. The tournament was held at the Broken Bow Wellness Center and over 20 teams from across the Choctaw Nation participated.

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### Martin graduates from USF

Carla S. Martin received her Doctorate of Nursing Practitioner Degree from the University of San Francisco on May 18th, 2023. Carla is daughter to Bill and Sandra Parish of Durant, Oklahoma.



### Buxton earns bachelor's from EOU

Kacy Lyn Buxton graduated summa cum laude from Eastern Oregon University on June 17, 2023, with a bachelor's degree in computer science.



### Perkins wins at NJHF Rodeo

KJ Perkins, age 13, recently competed at the National Junior High School Finals Rodeo in Perry, Georgia.

He won reserve world champion heeler in the team roping event. KJ also is the Oklahoma reserve champion heeler.

He will be an 8th grader at Zaneis School next year and is a tribal member of the Choctaw Nation.



### Briseno wins male athlete of the year

Lance Anthony Briseno received Male Athlete of the 2022-2023 School year out of 800 athletes at West Hills High School in Santee, California.

He was a starter on the Wolfpack Varsity football team (Iron Wolfe Award), went to state with the varsity wrestling team (24th in the State of California) and participated in Varsity Track (shot put and the discus throw) (Tri-Athlete Award).

His coaches and team players consider him to be a gentle giant. He is proud to be Choctaw and wore his Choctaw Cord at graduation this year.



### Davis earns 50 Year Masonic Pin

Pictured top left, from left to right, is Delbert Wilson, Secretary of Cherokee Masonic Lodge # 10, located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, which is the oldest chartered Masonic Lodge within the State of Oklahoma. Holding the Certificate is Walter R. Davis (Choctaw) and his Uncle David W. Davis (Choctaw) of Talihina, Oklahoma are accepting a 50-year certificate of membership and pin awarded to their father/brother, Major Tommy Davis (Choctaw) pictured bottom left, who presently lives in Aberdeen, Washington and is retired from federal service.

Walt was born in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science from the University of Oklahoma in forensic science. He also is known as "Big Smooth" in the wrestling arena, Champion Power Weight Lifter, former Police Officer, and employee of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

David went to work for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma after serving his country in the United States Army and is now retired and enjoying the good life with his brother Floyd and family in Talihina.

"Lastly, it should be noted that three of the Davis Boys played for the 1966, Oklahoma State Football Championship, Floyd Gene, Kenny "Muggs", and Tommy Davis. Still waiting on our championship rings," said Major Tommy Davis.



### Ennis graduates from UC San Diego

Jerrick Ryan Ennis, a Choctaw tribal member, graduated from the University of California, San Diego, with a Bachelor of Arts in sociology in socioeconomic on June 18, 2023.

He is the son of Robert Ryan and Kolina Ennis and Dominic and Janine Lopez. Grandparents are Tommy and Peggy (Puckett) Ennis and Manual and Irma Tapia. Great-grandparents are Bill and Mary (Hayes) Puckett.

"I am so excited about this accomplishment. I am so grateful and thankful to the Choctaw Nation and to all my family and friends who have helped and supported me during this pursuit of my education. Thank you to you all," said Ennis.



### Sparks wins Okla. High School Steer Wrestling Championship

Hazen Sparks of Talihina, Oklahoma, tackled a significant rodeo achievement. Sparks won the steer wrestling championship in the Oklahoma High School Rodeo Association finals, June 3-4, 2023, in Lawton.

With the win, he received a buckle, a saddle and a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) permit.

He was the Reserve All-Around Cowboy, a top-10 finalist, and an average tiedown champion.

Sparks, a third-generation steer wrestler, made another run at the National High School Finals Rodeo, July 16-22 in Gillette, Wyoming.

Sparks finished with a 6.63 on his first run and a 10.14 on his second run.

### Anderson celebrates 65th birthday



Joe G. Anderson of Tulsa, Oklahoma, reached 65 years in August 2023.

He is originally from Talihina is the son of Edwin (Buddy) Anderson and Joye Vineyard Anderson.

Joe is grandson of Bethel Anderson, the great-grandson of Crawford Anderson and the great-great-grandson of Captain John Anderson of Tuskahoma.

Joe's grandfather and great-grandfather are original enrollees.

### James has Hollywood film career



Jimmy James Jr. (Redhawk) is a 67-year-old Choctaw and Cherokee producer and actor.

Jimmy was the producer of the films "Attack of the Unknown" and "Pipeline" where he played Leonard Pax a Tribal Police officer alongside good friends Wes Studi and Barry Corbin.

He also acted in "The Dawn" alongside Jonathan Bennett, Stacy Dash, Devanny Pinn.

Jimmy had uncredited roles in the "Thriller" music video with Michael Jackson, directed by John Landis and produced by Quincy Jones, and "Best of Times" alongside Kurt Russell and Robin Williams.

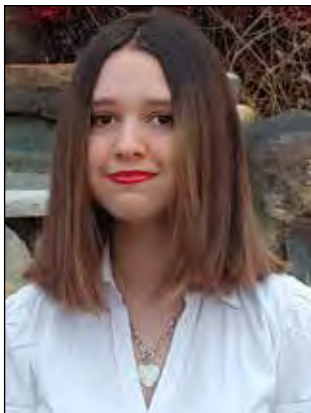
He was a credited actor in "About Scout" with Jane Seymour and Danny Glover, "Cowboys and Indians," "Escape from Ensenada," the Lifetime movie "Husband Wife and their Lover," "The Neighbors," "Tornado Alley," and spokesperson for True Credit Nationwide Commercials. He was also in music videos with R5 and That Poppy.

Jimmy was born in Los Angeles and lived in Burbank, California. He worked in the family Business Jim James Enterprises in North Hollywood, California, alongside his father, Jimmy James Sr., in a government-bonded sheet metal company that made components for the movie industry, NASA Space Program, and space shuttle projects.

Later moved to Kern County, California and married Louise James in 1977. He has one son, Blake and seven grandchildren.

Jimmy signed with Sovereign Talent in Los Angeles, which represents Eric Roberts.

He is very proud to be Choctaw and is active in the Indigenous community.



### Lucas turns 16

Carrisa Lucas attends Hugo High School and turned 16 on August 2.

She is the daughter of Shawna Benavides, a loving sister to Jaxon and a granddaughter to Carolyn Davis.

She enjoys gaming and is searching for a passion for her future after high school.



### Branam turns 1

Maren Branam of Houston Texas, turns 1 year old.

"Happy 1st birthday from Mimi and Pop. We love you!"

### Taliaferros celebrate 50 years

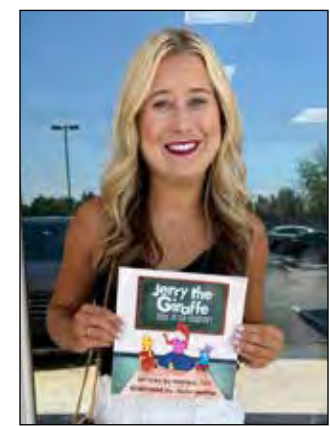


Perry and Patrice Taliaferro celebrated their 50th wedding on July 7, 2023.

They met at Northwestern State University in Alva, Oklahoma and married after graduation on July 7, 1973.

They lived in Liberal, Kansas for five years and Ardmore, Oklahoma for the past 44 years.

They have one daughter Valerie Perkins, son-in-law Brent Perkins and grandson KJ Perkins.



### Fox releases first children's book

Makenzi Fox, a full-time teacher and children's book author, released her first book, "Jerry the Giraffe: Quiet in the Classroom," in May 2023.

The book, written by Fox and illustrated by Jaylin Monroe, is now available on Amazon and featured in four different Oklahoma bookstores Deer Clan Books in Bethany, Pear Street Books in Oklahoma City, Best of Books in Edmond and Full Circle Bookstore in Oklahoma City.

According to the book's description on Amazon, "Jerry the Giraffe is SO TIRED of coming to school. Jerry feels that the classroom is always too loud, and the noise makes it hard for him to learn and focus in class. Because of this, his teacher Ms. Fox comes up with a solution to get the classroom to be quiet, which makes it a better school day for everyone! She invents the "Jerry the Giraffe" hand signal, which helps quiet down the classroom! In Jerry the Giraffe: Quiet in the Classroom, you as a teacher will find a manageable solution to help quiet down your classroom. This book is meant to be read to your students and will introduce to them the "Jerry the Giraffe" method, a fun and engaging way to "quiet down" your classroom!"

Fox has been a teacher for three years and currently teaches second grade for Oklahoma Virtual Charter Academy.

"My book was created for teachers by a teacher. In my classroom, I use a classroom management strategy called "Jerry the Giraffe", which helps get the student's attention in the classroom, and this strategy helped inspire my first book," said Makenzi. "My second book is designed for girls ages 8-10, and the title of this book is called "The Day Cara Cut Her Bangs." It will be released in December."

### Gillham graduates from SNU

Barbara Ellen (Bobbi) Gillham, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal member, graduated from Southern Nazarene University in Bethany, Oklahoma, on Saturday, May 13, with a Doctorate of Education in Administration and Leadership.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Career Development and Higher Education programs assisted her in accomplishing this achievement. At the end of the three-year program, Bobbi graduated as a Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society member with a 4.0-grade point average. Her dissertation, "The Impact of Trauma-Informed School Practices on Positive Student Outcomes" was recently published by ProQuest. Bobbi received her bachelor's degree in art education and master's in school administration and library science from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Bobbi is a career educator of 30 years who taught in the Arkoma, Van Buren, and Poteau School Districts.

She is a principal at Pansy Kidd Middle School, in its third year of implementing a trauma-responsive learning environment.

During 24 years of serving Poteau's students, she has been an English teacher, art teacher, librarian, assistant principal, principal, and curriculum coordinator.

In addition, Bobbi has been the Director of Poteau School

District's Johnson O'Malley and Indian Education programs for the last four years. During that time and in partnership with Julie Marvin, Poteau JOM Coordinator and Academic Advisor, and Poteau's dedicated JOM Parent Committee members, Poteau School District's Johnson O'Malley program has been recognized at the state and national levels as exemplary.

Bobbi is the granddaughter of the late J.V. and Barbara Conrad and Jack and Edna Pope. She is the daughter of Micheal and Rita Pope, both retired public school educators. She lives in Poteau with her husband, Erick, their son-in-law, Mitchell Moya, three daughters, Olivia Moya, Vivan Howerton, and Emma Claire Gillham, and two grandsons, Benjamin and Lincoln Moya. Her goals are to leverage the knowledge and experience gained as an SNU doctoral student and graduate to advocate for removing barriers that hinder student achievement and encourage using preventive, research-based approaches to assist struggling students.

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**CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER**

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### McGee is NCMEC Tribal Fellow

Melissa McGee, Idabel Choctaw, is a Choctaw Nation Indian Child Welfare Supervisor and is currently serving a one-year term as Tribal Fellow for the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC.)

NCMEC is a non-profit organization established in 1984 by John and Reve' Walsh after the abduction and murder of their son, Adam Walsh.

Melissa's duties with NCMEC include serving internally as a strategic advisor in matters relating to tribes and to serve externally providing education and resources to tribes across Oklahoma and the US regarding the vast array of free NCMEC resources available to tribes when children are missing ([www.missingkids.org/ourwork/nitc](http://www.missingkids.org/ourwork/nitc)).

Mrs. McGee is a graduate of Southeastern Oklahoma State University and holds a Master of Science in Native American Leadership.

Pictured is Melissa McGee at NCMEC headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia with John Bischoff III, Vice President of Missing Children Division.



### Tvshkahomma Ohoyos make history

The World Series of Stickball was held in Mississippi in July. Choctaw Nation's Tvshkahomma Ohoyo women's team received the Finalist Award in the 2023 Championship game, having an amazing run all the way to the finals.

The team was unable to play the first series' two games because opposing teams, Nanih Waiya and Tucker Alhiha, forfeited due to a lack of players, causing Tvshkahomma Ohoyo to advance.

In the semi-finals on July 11, Tvshkahomma Ohoyo played a physical and fast-paced game against a well-balanced championship-caliber team, the Natives. The teams were tied 0-0 until Tvshkahomma Ohoyo scored late in the third quarter, then again 12 seconds later to go up 2-0 at the end of the third quarter. Tvshkahomma Ohoyo played great defense for the remainder of the game and was able to secure the win 2-0 against the Natives.

Tvshkahomma Ohoyo advanced to the championship game on July 15 for the 2023 World Series Championship Drum. They played against Koni Hata Ohoyo, the 2022 defending team and seven-time champions. Tvshkahomma Ohoyo stood toe-to-toe until late in the third quarter when Koni Hata Ohoyo scored two points. Tvshkahomma Ohoyo held on but was unable to connect for a score to tie and lost 2-0 in the championship game. Coach Jared Tom said is very proud of Tvshkahomma Ohoyo's team for their hard-earned accomplishments, and that "making it to the finals is definitely one for the books."

Tvshkahomma Men's team played their first game on July 8 and fell to Beaver Dam 7-0.

Tvshkahomma 35+ Men's team played their first game on July 11 against Koni Hata and lost 7-3.



### Johns turns 90

Mary Louise Johns (Moore), a Choctaw Nation tribal member, celebrated her 90th birthday on June 15, 2023.

Mary was born in Atoka, Oklahoma, on June 15, 1933, to Mary Delena Nichols (Ferrante) and Carl Christopher Moore, both Choctaw citizens. Mary grew up in Centrahoma, Oklahoma, and graduated from Haskell Institute in 1955. She then attended Kiowa School of Practical Nursing, where she became an LPN.

In 1956, she married her husband, the late Rev. Wonder Johns (Seminole Tribe) and was married for 56 years. They had three children Victor Johns, Cynthia Rodriguez (Johns) and Theresa Johns.

The family moved permanently to Florida in 1971 when her husband went to work for his tribe and entered into the ministry.

Mary was a homemaker, pastor's wife and piano player for the church for many years. Mary lives on the Brighton Seminole Reservation near Okeechobee, Florida. She has six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Her family wishes her a Happy 90th birthday and many more to come!



### Harcrow turns 16

Evelyn Harcrow turns 16 this year. The opportunities to drive that comes with turning 16 excite Evelyn the most this birthday.

She worked hard in her 9th grade 2021-2022 year to get all these badges. Most of her badges were given to her during her 10th grade 2022-2023 year (after they

were ordered and received) so that she could be decorated in them when she wore her uniform on specific required days. She took the JROTC marksmanship program, which her school offered in her 9th grade year, and it was her first time shooting a rifle. Her dedication, skills and talents earned her way up to the top three in her class. They did go to several competitions and received two group trophies, but I would have to ask her what they placed. The trophies stayed with the school.

### Randel Oaklen Bohanon



Randel Oaklen Bohanon was brought into the world on May 25 at 3:14 p.m. by his parents, Damian and Abigail Bohanon.

He was born in Greeley, Colorado, just in time for summer.

He is named after his great-grandfather, Randel.

He is loved by his parents, his brother, Jackson Bohanon as well as his extended family.

Randel may not live close to his extended family, but in addition to them, he is adored by his village here in Colorado.



### Abel Paul Cole

Abel Paul Cole was born July 21, 2023 at 4:09 a.m. He weighed 6 lbs and he was 19 1/2 inches long, he was born in Page, Arizona.

His proud parents are Demetria Cole and Stephen Elzie of Page, Arizona.

Abel has two older sisters Taloa Elzie (4) and Kahara Elzie (3).

His grandparents are Jonathan and Quita

Cole of Page, Arizona and his great-grandparents are Raymond Lee Cole of Cottonwood, Oklahoma and Naomi Lee LeFlore of Cottonwood, Oklahoma.

Able is named after his great great-great-grandpa Abel Paul LeFlore of Cottonwood, Oklahoma.

### Ruth Wayman celebrates 80 years

Ruth Wayman (James) turned 80 on August 7, 2023. She is the granddaughter of original enrollee, Matthew James and daughter of original enrollee, Frank James.

She lives in Antlers and is married to "Duck" and has three children, Steve, Cindy and Patrick.



### Dunlap completes summer externship

Student Doctor Rylee Dunlap is a 23-year-old proud member of the Choctaw Nation from Stringtown, Oklahoma, and is the daughter of Scott and Trish Dunlap.

After graduating from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 2021 with a B.S. in Biological Health Sciences and a B.A. in Psychology, she began attending OSU-College of Osteopathic Medicine in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

She is now an incoming second-year medical student and plans to practice as a D.O. both rurally and tribally in the near future.

Dunlap recently attended a summer tribal externship with family practice physician Dr. Lee at the Choctaw Nation Regional Medical Center in Durant, Oklahoma.

She stated, "My experience shadowing at this clinic was absolutely incredible! Being out in the real world and visiting with our tribal patients allowed me the opportunity to connect with their stories and learn how to treat them to the best of my ability. In the future, I hope to care for my tribe one day with the same amount of compassion and dedication I witnessed in this facility."

Dunlap will go on to graduate with her degree from OSU-COM in May 2026 and will then attend a residency program of her choice. She is excited to see patients within her own tribal community in the near future.



### Clark graduates from SNHU

Aspyn Analiece Clark of Rogers, Arkansas graduated summa cum laude from Southern New Hampshire University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Spring of 2023.

During her studies she was inducted into the National Honors Society for Leadership and Success.

Earning her degree online allowed her to continue working full time throughout much of her studies as an Emergency Medical Technician.



### Hardy is LDCFM Division Chief

Chief Llewellyn announced recently that Joseph Hardy has been selected as the new Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical's (LDCFM) Division Chief.

He is assigned to the Training Division, effective immediately, Division Chief

Hardy has recently been serving as the interim Division Chief of Training for LDCFM and had previously served as a Z-Shift Battalion Chief since January 2020.

Hardy, a lifelong Lawrencian, has worked for LDCFM since 1997 and is a second-generation employee of the department. His father, Robert Hardy, worked for the department from 1980 to 2009 and retired as a Lieutenant. Hardy has held the positions of Paramedic, Engineer, Lieutenant, Captain, Battalion Chief, and now serving as a Division Chief. Hardy is continuing to pursue his bachelor's degree at Haskell Indian Nations University.

Chief Llewellyn notes, "Division Chief Hardy is an experienced fire service leader with decades of service to our community. I'm excited to see the vision and energy that he brings to this new role."

I am proud to work for such a successful department, and am committed to continue moving the department forward to the next level. I'll pursue this through utilizing goals set forth by both the LDCFM and the City of Lawrence's strategic plans" says Division Chief Hardy.

LDCFM congratulates Division Chief Hardy.



### Thornburg turns 97

Stella Thornburg of Wister, Oklahoma, celebrated her 97th birthday on June 27, 2023.

Thornburg celebrated in Poteau with her sister, children, grand, great, great-great grandchildren, and many other relatives and loved ones.



### Meigs turns 94

Velma Meigs celebrated her 94th birthday on August 5, 2023.

Meigs was born on August 5, 1929. She celebrated her birthday with friends and family on her big day.

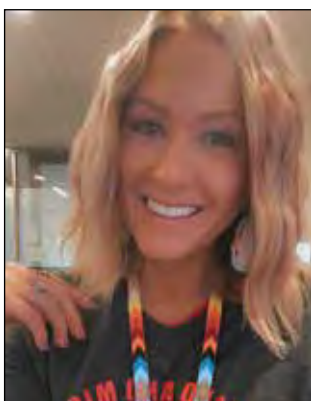


### Supernaw earns masters from SE

Casie (Lester) Supernaw received her Master of Business Administration with a specialization in Native American Leadership degree from Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

She is the daughter of Barbara (Jefferson) Lester, granddaughter of Theodore and Dorothy (Wilson) Jefferson, great-granddaughter of Darius and Edith Wilson and Perry and Evalina (Winship) Jefferson

She lives in Owasso with her husband, William "Son" Supernaw IV and three children, Nashoba, Tashka and Himona.



### Phelps turn 30

Shelbi Phelps' family and friends would like to wish her a happy 30th birthday!

Shelbi is a Choctaw tribal member. She has worked for the Choctaw Nation for five years and is currently a Legal Clerk for the Prosecutor's office.

Shelbi is also a loving mother to her boys, Jase and Revyn.

Shelbi is a devoted, honest, sincere and giving woman who is loved by many friends, family members and her work tribe.

"Yakoke, for everything you do, Shelbi Cheyenne!"

## REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT FEE-TO-TRUST

The Land and Title Department's Real Property Management team is introducing a new Fee-to-Trust program for CDIB cardholders across the reservation. Applications are available at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Real Property Management office.

Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/REAL-PROPERTY-MANAGEMENT](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/REAL-PROPERTY-MANAGEMENT)

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

## CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

NEW EXHIBIT

### BOK ABAIYA: PRACTICED HANDS AND THE ARTS OF CHOCTAW BASKETRY

SCAN OR GO TO: [BIT.LY/CCC-EXHIBITIONS](https://bit.ly/ccc-exhibitions)

JULY 22, 2023 - MARCH 30, 2024

# When seconds matter, CPR could save a life

By Chris Jennings

In one year alone, 436,000 Americans die from cardiac arrest. More than 350,000 cardiac arrests happen outside of a hospital each year. About 9 in 10 of those people die, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

Many of these people could be saved with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). However, CPR is often not performed due to no witnesses, or those who do see it happen are unfamiliar with CPR.

When a person's heart stops beating, they are in cardiac arrest. During cardiac arrest, the heart can't pump blood to the rest of the body, including the brain and lungs.

By performing CPR, you're using chest compressions to mimic how the heart pumps, getting blood flow to the parts of the body that need it to survive. Without these chest compressions, death can occur within minutes.

Trevor Vasquez, with the Choctaw Nation Police, recently experienced this firsthand. He received a call saying an unresponsive female was at the Latimer County Sheriff's office. "When we arrived, a male had brought his fiancée up to the sheriff's office because she complained of difficulty breathing," said Vasquez.

The woman's fiancée had tried to call EMS, but since they were in a rural area, it would take more time than he thought she had before they got there. That's when he decided to drive her himself.

Vasquez said she was no longer breathing when he arrived on the scene. That's when they jumped into action, relying on past training. "Myself, Wilburton police officer Hunter Donnelly and deputy Blake Surgeon removed her from the truck and took her inside the sheriff's office. I started chest compressions, and the Wilburton PD officer had one of the bags to give breaths. We did that until EMS arrived," said Vasquez.

Timing is the most important thing when it comes to giving CPR. Vasquez says he's had a few calls like this and has performed CPR four or five times, but never successfully because, by the time they get the call and get there, it's too late.

According to the AHA, for every minute CPR is delayed, a victim's chance of survival decreases by 10%. Immediate CPR from someone nearby could double or triple their chances of survival.

Knowing the difference between a heart attack and cardiac arrest is important. A heart attack happens when blood flow to the heart is blocked. A person having a heart attack is still talking and breathing. This person does not need CPR, but they need to get to the hospital immediately. A heart attack increases the risk of cardiac arrest, though.

Signs that someone may be in cardiac arrest are:

- They collapse suddenly and lose consciousness (pass out).
- They are not breathing or are gasping for air.
- They don't respond to shouting or shaking.
- They don't have a pulse.

While training is available through several resources, it's not necessary to perform CPR. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends following these steps if you see someone in cardiac arrest.

- Call 911 right away. If another bystander is nearby, save time by asking that person to call 9-1-1 and look for an automated external defibrillator (AED) while you begin CPR. AEDs are portable machines that can electrically shock the heart and cause it to start beating again.



## Food Distribution Headlines



This month Food Distribution would like to highlight our Antlers Market. The market is located at 306 SW O St. Antlers, OK 74523.

At our recent quarterly meeting, our associates were asked to create a poster with their individual teams entitled "What motivates you to keep working where you do?"

The wonderful crew at Antlers highlighted the love they have for helping others and building relationships with the participants of our program. They also love to visit and learn from the traditions and stories that are shared by the Elders that come in.

Working here is how they live out the Chahta Spirit of Faith, Family, and Culture.

## Watermelon Salsa

- ¼ cup Pepper jelly
- ¼ cup Lime Juice
- 2 cups Watermelon, seeded, diced
- 1 can Peaches, rinsed, drained, chopped
- 1/3 cup Basil, fresh, chopped
- ¼ cup Chives, chopped
- 2 c Tomatoes, diced
- Chips
- 8 Whole-wheat tortillas
- 1 tablespoon Water
- ¼ cup Sugar
- 2 tablespoons Cinnamon

### Preparation

1. Wisk together pepper jelly and lime juice in a small bowl. Heat in microwave for 10-15 seconds or until softened.
2. Stir in watermelon, peaches, basil, chives and tomatoes.
3. For the chips, brush tortillas lightly with water. Combine sugar and cinnamon; Sprinkle over tortillas.
4. Cut each tortilla into 8 wedges. Place in a single layer on ungreased baking sheet.
5. Bake at 400 for 6-8 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool and serve with salsa.



**70%** of out-of-hospital cardiac arrests happen at homes.

**SING A SONG SAVE A LIFE**

Perform chest compressions to the tune of:

- "CRAZY IN LOVE" BY BEYONCE
- "HIPS DON'T LIE" BY SHAKIRA
- "WALK THE LINE" BY JOHNNY CASH

- Give CPR. Push down hard and fast in the center of the chest at a rate of 100 to 120 pushes a minute. Let the chest come back up to its normal position after each push. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends timing your pushes to the beat of the song "Stayin' Alive." This method of CPR is called "hands-only" and does not involve breathing into the person's mouth.

- Continue giving CPR until medical professionals arrive or until a person with formal CPR training can take over.

Vasquez stressed the importance of performing CPR. "For us, in this kind of rural county, it's going to take us 10 to 15 minutes to get to a location. So, if somebody has just the basic training in CPR, they could start on a friend or a loved one; they can buy us a lot of time to get there," he said.

For more information on cardiac arrest and CPR, go to <https://cpr.heart.org/en/>. To watch a 90-second video on how to do hands-only CPR go to <http://www.heart.org/handsonlycpr>

WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS		
LOCATION	DAYS	HOURS
<b>Antlers</b> 580-298-3161	Every Tuesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Atoka</b> 580-889-5825	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Battiest</b> 580-241-5458	1st Tuesday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Broken Bow</b> 580-584-2746	Monday - Friday (except 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday of the Month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Durant</b> 580-920-2100 ext 83852	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Heavener</b> 918-974-1820	Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Hugo</b> 580-326-9707	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Idabel</b> 580-286-2600 ext 4113	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>McAlester</b> 918-423-6335	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Poteau</b> 918-647-4585	Mon, Wed & Friday Tuesday & Thursday	8am - 4:30pm 8:30am - 5pm
<b>Smithville</b> 580-244-3289	2nd Thursday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Spiro</b> 918-962-3832	Thursday & Friday (3rd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays of the month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Stigler</b> 918-967-4211	Monday - Tuesday (the first two Wednesdays)	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Talihina</b> 918-567-7000 ext 6792	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Wilburton</b> 580-642-7588	Monday and Wednesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Mobile Van</b> 580-380-5679	Dates & times vary due to weather & travel (Service in Boswell, Coalgate and Clayton)	

**Choctaw Nation Health Services**

### PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS

DISCUSS RISK FACTORS AND SCREENING OPTIONS WITH YOUR PROVIDER TODAY

Participating in preventative health screenings is one way to take charge of your health. These measures and tests identify diseases before symptoms are present. Some conditions show no warning signs, and these screenings can detect problems earlier when the conditions are possibly preventable or more treatable.

The first step in screening is to schedule an appointment with your primary care provider. At this appointment, you can discuss the benefits and risks of the screenings as well as develop a screening plan tailored to you and your unique health needs.

To reach your end goal of aging with grace, you should stay as healthy as possible. Participating in health screenings is an essential part of achieving this goal.

**Choctaw Nation Health Services**

### HEPATITIS C PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.CDC.GOV/KNOWMORHEPATITIS](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/KNOWMORHEPATITIS)

Choctaw Nation Health Services | CHOCTAWNATION.COM

### HEALTH FAIRS IN 2023

Learn about health services offered by Choctaw Nation.

Scan the QR code, or visit [chocta.ws/health-fair](http://chocta.ws/health-fair) for dates and locations throughout the year.

Choctaw Nation Health Services | CHNSA.COM

## Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

September 6	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 8	Crowder	By Appointment
September 12	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
September 13	Talihina	10 am - 2 pm
September 15	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
September 15	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
September 19	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 20	Stigler	By Appointment
September 20	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
September 21	Poteau	11:30 p.m. - 1 p.m.
September 26	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 27	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
September 29	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
September 29	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
Call 580-642-6007 for an Appointment

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

### MARKET HOURS

Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday  
Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Markets will be closed the last two days of each month for inventory.

### September 2023

All markets open weekdays, September 1-26  
**Closed:** September 28 and 29  
Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation  
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

**ANTLERS** 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443  
Food demo September 12

**BROKEN BOW** 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842  
Food demo September 21

**DURANT** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773  
Food demo September 19

**MCALESTER** 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716  
Food demo September 7

**POTEAU** 106 B St., 918-649-0431  
Food demo September 14

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## Bok Abiya temporary exhibit highlights work of generations of Choctaw basket weavers

By Christian Toews

A new exhibit opened on July 22 at the Choctaw Cultural Center named Bok Abaiya – Practiced Hands and the Art of Basketry. The exhibit features the work of generations of Choctaw basket weavers displayed alongside contemporary Choctaw art. The temporary exhibit will be on display until March 30, 2024.

Claire Green Young is the curator at the Choctaw Cultural Center. She said that she had initially planned to focus on Mississippi Choctaw baskets, which happened to be the largest number of permanent items in the Choctaw Cultural Center's collection. That idea quickly evolved when she discovered more about the baskets.

"After I began to learn and research and talk to our historic preservation department and various community members, I realized what a unique and interesting story this was. How the art of Choctaw Basketry has been preserved and passed down by and for the Oklahoma Choctaw People as well," she said.

According to Young, you will still see

Mississippi baskets, but most of the 64 baskets in the exhibition are Oklahoma Choctaw-made.

"I'm proud that these aren't baskets that we just found. They are baskets that community members contributed and allowed us to display. I just feel really grateful that these community members trusted me as a curator," she said.

The night before the exhibition was opened to the public, Choctaw Cultural Center hosted a private viewing. The contributors, artists, weavers and the families of the basket makers were invited to view the exhibit before it opened to the public.

Young said one of the exhibition's highlights is Choctaw baskets on loan from the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa.

Typically, these baskets are only loaned for a short time. However, the Philbrook Museum of Art has allowed them to stay at the Choctaw Cultural Center for the duration of the Bok Abaiya exhibition.

To find out more information and hours of operation, please visit <https://choctawculturalcenter.com>.



## Choctaw artist is giving back to tribes and community through artwork and volunteering

By Shelia Kirven

Award-winning Fresno, California artist Bobby Von Martin paints Native American-inspired art. He has a passion for inspiring youth and adults and does a lot of volunteer work in communities to reach out to others.

Martin donates his time to local youth art classes and to local Native and non-Native activities for fundraisers and local events. His work is known worldwide, and he owns and curates the Honor Your Elders Art Exhibit in Fresno, one of California's largest Native American art exhibits.

This year's August event, complete with food, dancing and drumming, was organized, curated and funded by Martin and his wife, Soupie, as it has been for over half a decade.

Elders were honored and celebrated at the event through life-like portraits painted by Bobby Von Martin and his brother, artist James Martin.

"We see families crying, and it touches your heart when you start to talk to them and how they feel about it all and seeing their reactions, it's a beautiful thing," said Bobby Von Martin in a news interview.

Over \$10,000 of hand-painted art was gifted to elders.

He said of the exhibit that though many tribes are represented, he still honors his tribal roots.

Martin talked to us about how the exhibit began.

"I started this show six years ago with my wife, Soupie Martin, as a way to give back to my community elders. As a child, my grandmother was my only safe place coming from a broken home with many traumas. Also, when I was twelve or thirteen, a local elder went above and beyond to help me learn the local tribe's traditions, help me with trauma, help me understand why people struggle with addiction, who many of my family members struggled with. It really did give me hope for the future."

According to Martin, he started working with local Native American youth by teaching art classes and giving them a positive tool through art.

"Because of my own childhood trauma, I'm able to make a connection with some of the youth who might be coming from a similar childhood. I've taught youth up and down California and Arizona hoping to give these youth some hope," said Martin. "Working with them I've also seen the many elders who were also working hard to give these youth hope, so I wanted to start this show to honor them. The elders I paint locally are people I see and know out teaching language, tradition, working with our community to get clean from drugs and alcohol, and they need to be hon-

ored publicly. I can't thank them enough for what they do for our youth."

Martin has painted over 100 paintings and gifted them to elders or their families.

"Because I couldn't paint enough, I asked my brother [James Martin] to help me paint them starting about three years ago. Every year he paints four or five out of the 20-25 that we paint. It gives me the ability to honor even more during the show," Martin.

For Martin, the most important part about the elders' show is that the families of the elders themselves write their family member's biography, and it sits next to their paintings where you get to view the art and get to know the elder as well.

In other projects, for every painting Martin sells, he gifts one to the community to keep the circle moving and put out positive energy.

"I hope our youth see what I'm doing, see how I honor our elders, and see a successful, positive person who grew up around drugs and alcohol, and violence," said Martin.

The artist has received so much attention for his work that he has been contracted by the Save The Children World Organization for the past three years to teach art to youth in rural areas of the Central Valley. He also teaches art classes yearly at the Okla Chahta gathering in Bakersfield.



Photos Courtesy of Bobby Von Martin

Above: Choctaw artist Bobby Von Martin, right, with Tamu McPherson, Italy, are shown working with an after-school program for the Save the Children Organization. Martin and his wife, Soupie, worked seven different sites in one month to teach future generations about art and color during their second year working with the organization.

Below: Bobby Von Martin works to keep Chahta culture alive through his artwork, like his most recent Honor Your Elders Art Exhibit.

He says he has also been honored to have his "English Only" painting hang permanently in the "Hall of Nations" at the USDA AG building in Washington, D.C., where the halls are filled with art from Native Americans and used as a backdrop between tribal leaders and the President of the United States.

The artist credits the help of his wife, family and community for his success.

Martin's art can also be viewed at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, Choctaw Casino Resort and the Choctaw Cultural Center, all in Durant.

His artwork and merchandise can be seen on his website [www.bloodlineartstudios.com](http://www.bloodlineartstudios.com), and he can be followed on Facebook and Instagram.



## Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Awards 12 Businesses with Chahtapreneur Awards Burgess Family Healthcare named Chahtapreneur of the Year

**DURANT, Okla. (July 20, 2023)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma recognized 12 small businesses at its annual Chahtapreneur Award Ceremony inside Choctaw Casino & Resort – Durant on June 22.

Each year, Choctaw Nation gives Chahtapreneur Awards to a Choctaw business in each of the reservation's 12 districts, as well as crowning one business Chahtapreneur of the Year. This year, the highest honor went to Burgess Family Healthcare in Valliant, Okla.

Burgess Family Healthcare is owned by Chabon and Rachel Burgess, who opened their doors in 2018. Rachel is a family nurse practitioner who attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University for her LPN certification, the University of Oklahoma for a bachelor's in science and RN certification and Purdue University for her APRN. Burgess Family Healthcare's mission is to be the standard in healthcare and patient care, and its core values are integrity,

reliability and dependability.

"It is important to recognize our Chahtapreneurs that are putting in the time and energy to provide quality goods or services to the rural communities of the Choctaw Nation," Billy Hamilton, director of Choctaw Nation Small Business Development, said. "Entrepreneurship can be difficult but through their efforts, they are making a tremendous economic impact by creating local jobs and giving back to the communities that they serve. Our Chahtapreneurs are a vital part of our local economies throughout the Choctaw Nation and deserve an opportunity to celebrate their success with their peers."

Award nominations are based on business owners' participation in the Choctaw Nation Small Business Development program, community involvement and community impact.

For more information on Choctaw Nation Small Business Development, click here.



Photo by Deidra Elrod

District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston and Choctaw Nation Small Business Development adviser Julia Arrieta celebrate Burgess Family Healthcare being named Chahtapreneur of the Year with owners Chabon and Rachel Burgess.

Below is a complete list of Chahtapreneur Award winners by district:

District 1: Burgess Family Healthcare (Valliant)

District 2: Gypsy Brew (Broken Bow)

District 3: McKinney Creations Shop (Watson)

District 4: Morningstar Creations (Pocola)

District 5: Snow's Outfitters (Stigler)

District 6: Hey There, Honey (Red Oak)

District 7: Jenna's Concession (Rattan)

District 8: A and W Lawn Service and More (Hugo)

District 9: Durant Main Street Wash (Durant)

District 10: D&H Wholesale Tire (Atoka)

District 11: Freeze & Flare Heat & Air (McAlester)

District 12: Legacy Cryogenic Transportation (Coalgate)

## More than a teacher

TWM holds giveaway for teachers heading back to the classroom

**DURANT, Okla. (August 9, 2023)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's (CNO) new series of the Together, We're More campaign titled 'Choctaw Proud' features 18 tribal members from different careers, locations and walks of life, making a difference in Oklahoma and beyond. This month Choctaw Nation spotlights tribal member and Tannehill Public School teacher Stephanie Roberts. In tribute to teachers, CNO will also help three teachers supply their classrooms with needed items.

Just like many others, Special education teacher Roberts will return to the classroom just as she has done for over 20 years. This year, she will count herself among the new faces at Tannehill Public School in McAlester.

Roberts was inspired to teach after a family emergency where her cousin was struck by a vehicle at the age of five leaving her with a traumatic brain injury and physical disabilities.

Rather than resign themselves to the idea that their daughter would not be able to learn or function "normally," the little girl's parents advocated for her to receive an education comparable to other children her age.

Inspired by her cousin's journey, Roberts began looking forward to a career working with children who, like her cousin, deserve the best education possible despite any impediments they may experience.

Roberts encourages those who feel



Choctaw Nation Photo

Tribal member and Tannehill Public School Special education teacher Stephanie Roberts.

called to the classroom to answer that call: "If it has been laid on your heart to be in education, you should go for it. There are challenges you have to face, but there are challenges in any workforce. Whether it's nursing or retail or whatever, you're going to face a challenge at some point. But the rewards you get from teaching are going to outweigh any negative."

In honor of Roberts and teachers just like her, "Together, We're More" is conducting a giveaway where three lucky teachers will be chosen to receive \$200 towards their classroom Amazon wish list. To nominate your favorite teacher, go to [chocta.ws/twm-fb-giveaway](http://chocta.ws/twm-fb-giveaway).

Learn more about Roberts love for teaching and how she celebrates her students' accomplishments in the video below or at [choctawnation.com/bios/teacher/](http://choctawnation.com/bios/teacher/).

## Choctaw jury convicts Cowlington resident of sexual abuse of a child within Choctaw Reservation

**DURANT, Okla. (July 28, 2023)** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) announced Jonathan Ray Adams, 34, of Cowlington, Oklahoma was found guilty of six counts of child sexual abuse on July 26, 2023, in violation of the CNO Criminal Code.

The six-member jury trial began with testimony on Monday, July 24, 2023, and concluded on Wednesday, July 26, 2023, with the guilty verdicts. Based on the verdicts, the defendant is facing up to three years imprisonment on each charge which, if run consecutively, can be stacked for a maximum of nine years of imprisonment. Sentencing in tribal courts must conform with the federal Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010.

These guilty verdicts were the result of an interagency investigation involving Choctaw Nation Lighthorse Police, the Leflore County Sheriff's Office, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Choctaw Nation District Judge Richard Branam presided over the trial and ordered the completion of a presentence report. Sentencing is scheduled for September 12, 2023, following the completion of the report. Adams was remanded to the custody of CNO's Criminal Justice Department to be held pending the imposition of sentencing.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was represented by Tribal Prosecutor Kara Bacon and assisted by Spencer Harvey in the trial. "In this case, a family was torn apart by Mr. Adams' selfish and sickening actions," said Bacon. "It has been a journey for the victim and the family. I commend the jury on their ability to set aside their own personal discomfort and reach a decision in this matter."

"This conviction would not have been possible without the cooperation of the Leflore County District Attorney's Office, Leflore County Sheriff's and the Federal Bureau of Investigation working with our Lighthorse Police and the Tribal Prosecutor's Office," Bacon said. "If you hurt a child in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, we will work cooperatively across the public safety sector to ensure you are brought to justice."

## Raising awareness to reduce the number of opioid deaths

**OKLAHOMA CITY (August 7, 2023)** – The rise in opioid overdoses has become a concerning issue for health officials in the United States. Recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealed that nearly 75% of the almost 92,000 drug overdose deaths in 2020 were linked to opioids. Among those troubling statistics, the rate of drug overdose deaths among American Indians stands above the national average.

Opioid misuse remains a significant risk factor contributing to opioid-related incidents, often resulting from the combination of an opioid with other drugs or alcohol. Individuals with a history of substance abuse face an elevated risk of overdosing, emphasizing the urgent need to raise awareness about the dangers of taking opioids that are not prescribed to an individual or take more than prescribed. In an effort to address this risk, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic pharmacy offers Naloxone, a drug that treats narcotic overdoses in emergency situations, to patients with an active chart. If you suspect someone is experiencing drug abuse, seek professional help.

"Far too many people are suffering from this addiction," said Audrey Allen, Clini-



CDC Illustration

More than 932,000 people have died since 1999 from a drug overdose. Opioids—mainly synthetic opioids (other than methadone)—are currently the main driver of drug overdose deaths. 82.3% of opioid-involved overdose deaths involved synthetic opioids.

cal Pharmacist Specialist at the Oklahoma City Indian Clinic. "It's heartbreaking to see. With countless individuals struggling with addictions, we implore those to seek support from our team of medical professionals. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of those affected and create a healthier future for all."

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, a leading 501 (c)(3) nonprofit clinic dedicated to providing health and wellness services to American Indians in central Oklahoma, is taking proactive measures to address this pressing crisis. The clinic recognizes the urgent need to combat opioid misuse and prevent fatal overdoses.

## CNO partners with Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology for Culinary Program

**DURANT, Okla. (August 19, 2023)** – In a one-of-a-kind partnership, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) Division of Commerce is teaming up with Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OSUIT) to offer Choctaw Casinos & Resorts food and beverage associates culinary training and college course credit beginning July 17.

Choctaw Nation and OSU Institute of Technology have created an educational course designed specifically for casino and resort associates that's aimed at preparing them for culinary careers. If associates decide to pursue further accreditation, certification, or degree programs with OSUIT, they will receive prior learning credit toward their educational goals. Choctaw Nation casinos are the first to implement a program of this nature in Oklahoma.

"We're thrilled to offer our associates an opportunity to kick-start their careers," Heidi Grant, Choctaw Nation Executive Officer of Gaming and Hospitality, said. "Our goal is to empower each associate with the knowledge to succeed in their new adventure. Whether they are working toward an Associate's Degree in Applied Science in Culinary Arts or seeking a certificate, we are laying a foundation they can build upon."

Prior to starting their new roles at one of Choctaw Casinos & Resorts' 42 restaurants, new associates will receive a week of virtual and hands-on learning through OSUIT culinary training program to help get them acclimated in their new role.

Each day begins with training videos and quizzes before moving into hands-on preparation and one-on-one attention from quali-



Choctaw Nation Photo

ane Semple Umsted, a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal member and Durant resident, has been appointed to the Institute of American Indian Arts Board of Trustees.

fied Chef instructors. The first week ranges from the basics of hygiene and kitchen safety to detailed instruction on cooking methods.

After week one, employees will transition to their work locations to continue learning. Ten weeks later, they will begin taking in-depth courses in the second-tier level of training, which includes advanced cooking skills, techniques, and terminology. At the end of second-tier training, associates will be able to prepare a two-course meal and receive a co-branded CNO and OSUIT certificate.

This program will also be available to existing culinary team members who wish to sharpen their skills. Some current associates may be scheduled to attend training as a refresher, but all are able to utilize the training by coordinating with their supervisor.

If you're interested in a culinary career, check out Choctaw Casinos & Resorts food and beverages opportunities here.

**IT'S TIME FOR COMFORT FOODS!**

**PROVIDE THE HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS ITEMS YOU WILL NEED TO PREPARE GREAT MEALS FOR YOUR FAMILY**

A USDA food program for low income-eligible households in approved areas of Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas.

Visit any Food Distribution market (Antlers, Broken Bow, Durant, McAlester or Poteau).

Point your phone camera at the QR code and tap the pop up to learn more!

**Choctaw Nation** Food Distribution

**INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY DAY**

OCT 14, 2023

**ALL AGES ARE WELCOME**  
TRADITIONAL FOODS WILL BE PROVIDED

**CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER**

**SIGN UP NOW! SCAN CODE TO LEARN MORE!**

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM**

Guide Rate Enhancements and New Food for Participants

Effective September 1, 2023, the amount of food items for participants of the Choctaw Nation Food Distribution Program will increase and new items will be available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BECOME A PARTICIPANT, CALL 800.522.6170 OR VISIT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION/](http://CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION/)

**Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma**

## Chahta Foundation awards over \$400,000 in scholarships to 63 Choctaw students

By Chris Jennings

Over \$400,000 in scholarships were awarded to 63 Choctaw students seeking higher education at the 2023 Chahta Foundation Scholarship Banquet held at the Choctaw Cultural Center. The Chahta Foundation is the nonprofit arm of the Choctaw Nation, supporting tribal members with services and programs in education, health and wellness and cultural citizenship.

Since 2011, the Chahta Foundation has helped college-bound Choctaw students realize their education goals through competitive scholarships that help fund their pursuit of higher education. While the foundation may facilitate the scholarships, it's the community that makes it truly Choctaw.

Seth Fairchild, the Executive Director of Cultural Services, said, "The majority of our scholarships are donor based, meaning that these are Choctaws and non-Choctaws that want to give back to help tribal members."

Janie Dillard, the Senior Executive Officer of Commerce with the Choctaw Nation, is one of those donors. "I was born and raised in Boswell, Oklahoma, and I've always wanted to give back to the students in Boswell," she said.

Dillard said she's been blessed her whole life with the opportunities she's had with the Choctaw Nation. "I've always wanted to give back to the students to have the same opportunities and doors opened just like I've had with the Choctaw Nation. It's very important to me to help these kids," said Dillard.

Scholarship funds are donated to the Chahta Foundation through various fundraisers and individual donations. They are then matched dollar-for-dollar by the Choctaw Nation and go directly to funding student scholarships. During the banquet, Fairchild told a story of how a donor came forward with a large donation just after the council bill was passed, allowing for the match.

"We had just written that council bill, and about two weeks after that, I was in a meeting with a guy who said they were going to give a million dollars, and I thought, oh no. I went to talk Council about it. I said, 'Guys, I did not know this million dollars was coming' The first thing they said was, 'No, this is great. If somebody is going to give to our people, we want to give right alongside that,'" Fairchild said.

Fairchild stressed the importance of the efforts of the Chief and Assistant Chief along with the Tribal Council and thanked them for their support, saying that this is what makes it all possible.

The Choctaw Nation has always held education as a high priority. From the very beginning, when the Choctaw people came

across the Trail of Tears and set up in this new homeland, one of the first things they did was build schools and churches.

Stacy Sheperd, Executive Officer of Member Services at Choctaw Nation, emphasized that as she spoke to those in attendance. "Our education department at the Choctaw Nation is one of the most highly funded programs of anything here in the Choctaw Nation. Our Chief, Assistant Chief and Tribal Council 100% support education and opportunities for our students," Shepherd said.

Seeing the scholarship recipients receive this aid and go on to be successful makes the donors and tribal leadership happy, but when they choose to come back and work for the Nation, they really feel proud.

Councilman Anthony Dillard said, "We've got to find ways of helping to educate our kids. We've got to solidify the future of having somebody here to keep the legacy of the Choctaw Nation going, and education is the best way to do that. Get the scholarships out there to get these kids educated so they can come back to run the tribe for us," he said.

"This is a highly competitive scholarship situation, and to receive a scholarship shows us that you're the best of the best, you're the brightest, and you have great futures. So, we hope that you will take this and use this, and hopefully, someday, you might consider giving back," said Shepherd.

Jacob Brittingham received the Janie Hampton Dillard scholarship and was one of the recipients who was able to attend the banquet. Brittingham said the scholarship would relieve some financial stress in paying for his first semester, but the community support is what means the most to him.

"It means everything to me because it's the support of my community in my educational endeavors. Just being recognized today with everybody else, the Choctaw people and the culture and being surrounded by it means everything to me," said Brittingham.

Brittingham plans to go to George Washington University in Washington, DC and double major in political science, and journalism and mass media to be a journalist.

Brittingham is a perfect example of why those involved with the Chahta Foundation do what they do. He'll take his scholarship, go to school and then go out into the world representing the Choctaw Nation to every person he meets. His successes in receiving the scholarship set up the young man from the small town of Boswell, Oklahoma, to be a better and stronger person, in turn making the tribe a better and stronger tribe.

For more information on the Chahta Foundation, how to apply for scholarships or how to donate, go to [www.chahtafoundation.com](http://www.chahtafoundation.com).



Photo by Chris Jennings

Several of the Chahta Foundation scholarship recipients were on hand at the 2023 Chahta Foundation Banquet at the Choctaw Cultural Center.

## Semple Umsted appointed by President Biden to Arts Board of Trustees

**DURANT, Okla. (July 20, 2023)**

– President Joe Biden has appointed Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal member, Jane Semple Umsted to the Institute of American Indian Arts Board of Trustees.

Semple Umsted, a Durant resident, has spent a lifetime working in a variety of media including oils, acrylics, watercolor, sculpture, and the unique media of batik. She is a descendant of two Choctaw Chiefs and her art exudes the spirit of her Native roots.

Semple Umsted serves as the curator of the Semple Family Museum of Native American Art at Southeastern Oklahoma State University. She received a B.F.A. from the University of Oklahoma in 1969 and an M.E. from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1989. She retired from the Durant Public Schools where she was the art teacher for the Durant Middle School in 2007.

"Jane Semple Umsted is a brilliant artist as well as a loving and humble person, said Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation. "She represents the Choctaw people so well in her artwork as well as her daily life. She is a shining star for the Choctaw Nation and is very deserving of this appointment."

The Institute of American Indian Arts (formally known as the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development) was



Choctaw Nation Photo

Jane Semple Umsted, a Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal member and Durant resident, has been appointed to the Institute of American Indian Arts Board of Trustees.

originally established in 1962 as a high school under the auspices of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. It was formally established as a separate college by Congress in 1987. The mission is "to empower creativity and leadership in Indigenous arts and cultures through higher education, lifelong learning, and community engagement." Today, sixty years later, it continues to fill a vital role as the only fine arts college in the world dedicated to the study of contemporary Native American and Alaskan Native arts.

## Fall detection devices now available for eligible tribal members

**DURANT, Okla. (August 14, 2023)** – Continue living independently with a Medical Alert Service!

If help is needed, simply press the button, and a trained care specialist will respond immediately.

Operators are available anytime, anywhere. 24/7, 365 days a year.

Eligible patients can enroll by calling Choctaw Nation Patient Relations at 800-349-7026, ext. 6697.

### Eligibility:

- 65 years of age or older
- Member of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and reside within the reservation
- Must have doctor's prescription
- Must live alone or is left alone for extended hours
- Must be homebound
- Does not drive
- Must have a history of falls due to health or physical problems
- Must need assistance with at least two Activities of Daily Living or Instrumental Activities of Daily Living



### Activities of Daily Living

- Dressing
- Bathing
- Eating
- Toileting
- Maintaining continence
- Ability to transfer

### Instrumental Activities of Daily Living

- Preparing meals
- Shopping
- Taking transportation
- Making telephone calls
- Managing money
- Taking medications
- Doing housework

Choctaw Nation is not responsible for medical expenses incurred if emergency responders are called for care of patient.

# BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

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Choctaw Nation encourages tribal members to consider becoming foster parents.



### Page 11:

Learn how CPR training can help save lives.



### Page 12:

Bobby Von Martin working to keep the Chahta culture alive through his art.

*Biskinik Mission Statement:*  
To serve as the source of information for Choctaw Nation tribal members by delivering community news through a variety of communication channels.

Stay Connected to the Nation  
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## SECOND ANNUAL MCAAP SUICIDE PREVENTION WALK

SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 | 6:00 PM

### LIVE LIFE, LOVE MORE

Walk for those we have lost and those who can still be saved.

Registration starts at 5:00 p.m. at Rotary Park, 801 N. 9th St., McAlester, OK. McAlester Army Ammunition Plant and other community programs have sponsored the walk to provide raffles and therapy dogs!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL Naomi James at 918-420-6819

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