

May 2018 Issue

# Choctaw Nation Reveres Past, Celebrates Future as Relocation to New Headquarters Approaches

by APRYL MOCK

For more than 40 years, the Choctaw Nation Headquarters has resided at the corner of Locust Street and North 16th Avenue.

It has served as the hub of our great nation and a home away from home for Choctaw employees.

Throughout the month of May, the heart of our nation will be relocating to a much larger, state-of-the-art headquarters located at 1802 Chukka Hina, off of South Ninth Street.

As we say goodbye to our past and hello to our future, we will continue to honor those who came before us.

Those who, through hard work and perseverance, have made the Choctaw Nation what it is today; resilient, adaptable and dignified.

Long-time employees, Judy Johnson, Jeanne Porter, Clione Ramos and Shelia Kirven shared their thoughts and experiences with the Biskinik.

Judy Johnson has worked for the Choctaw Nation

for 29 years. She began as a Head Start teacher's aide and now holds the position of ERSEA Administrative Clerk. Johnson said,

"I have only had one other job than Choctaw Nation so I feel that I have worked a lifetime here."

Johnson has several family members who work for the Choctaw Nation, including her brother Mike, her daughter Alisha and her oldest brother Tom.

Clione Ramos started her career with the Choctaw Nation at the head start as a cook. She is now a Research Specialist for tribal membership.

During her 34 years with the Choctaw Nation she has also held the positions of teacher's aide and bus driver.

She is sad to be leaving the place she has spent most of her time since 1984, but will always cherish the memories made here.

Ramos said, "There are a lot of memories here, but we will make new memories in the new building."

Jeanne Porter has been employed by the Choctaw Nation for 30 years.

When she first began she was a LIHEAP Coordinator and now holds the position of Special Assistant to the Assistant Chief.

Porter shared, "I am starting to get excited about the move after seeing pictures of our new offices."

"I look forward to being in a new beautiful place that our tribal members can be so proud of," said Porter.

Although excited, Porter finds the move bittersweet.

She said, "This building has been my home for almost 30 years and I will miss it."

"I learned a lot in this building and made lifelong friends who are more family than coworkers."

"This place is where the tribe's momentum began. Our growth has been phenomenal."

"The new Headquarters will have a legacy of its own," Porter concluded.

Shelia Kirven is a Marketing Development Assistant who began in the Summer Youth program. She has been with the Choctaw Nation for 36 years.

She said, "I am excited, but also very sentimental about this building and when I think of having to move



Everyone is welcome to. Along with its new technology and beautiful landscaping, the new headquarters will be home to a "Standing Pole".

The "Standing Pole" is an important part of Choctaw history.

As a group of Native Americans (with a tribe name we'll never know) traveled across the land, they were guided by a pole placed in the ground at night.

When the sun rose, they followed whatever direction the pole leaned.

One morning the two brothers who led the tribe, Chata and Chikasa, disagreed on where the pole was guiding them.

Chata believed the pole was straight, telling the people to stay put, and Chikasa believed it was pointing them East. The brothers went their separate ways, forming the Choctaw Nation and the Chickasaw Nation.

The standing pole will

be representing our culture and heritage for generations to observe and enjoy.

At the Choctaw Nation, we are a family. Many of us have grown up alongside the building, benefiting from the support and love of those who share our offices.

Connie Zalenski started out as a secretary for the JOM program, now 32 years later she is the Accounts Payable Manager for Commerce.

Her children, Waddel and Amber Hearn grew up with the Choctaw Nation and now work for it.

Zalenski said, "Both Waddel and Amber are passionate about their positions. They are Christians first and foremost, but Choctaws who are proud of their roles."

Amber works as Licensed Professional Counselor and Waddel is the Director of Tribal Events.

Instead of being spread across Durant, our family will be under one roof, awaiting new additions with open arms.

We will still begin and end each gathering with a prayer, as we know that nothing is possible without the guiding hand of Christ, and he has blessed us immensely.

While we may be in a different location, the same values of faith, family and culture will continue to guide the Choctaw Nation.



If you need to visit any of the Choctaw Nation services and programs please call ahead to find out if they have relocated to the new headquarters. The Choctaw Nation can be reached at (580) 924-8280, or (800) 522-6170.



# FOSTER CARE

## Foster Care Gives Youngest Tribal Members a Safe Harbor



Chief Gary Batton

There are many families who are brought together through programs such as Foster Care and Children and Family Services.

Providing a home is just part of the commitment to being a foster family. A foster parent offers opportunities that otherwise may not have been available for the child.

Choctaw foster parents nurture a child's social and cultural heritage as well as provide basic needs.

Maintaining the child's cultural heritage is very important. To become a Choctaw foster family, you must be a member of the Choctaw Nation or another federally recognized tribe and at least 21 years of age. You can be single or married. A full list of requirements to become a foster family can be found on the Choctaw Nation website. Look for [Foster Care & Adoptions](#) under the Tribal Services tab.

Placement is preferred to be with a member of the child's extended family or a tribal foster home in the child's tribe. If neither are available, a tribal foster home outside the child's tribe is sought.

There are many families who are hesitant to take the steps to becoming foster parents. Most are concerned it will be too hard to let the child go when it is time to return him or her to their family. There are actually two other types of foster care needed for families who are unable to be full-time.

Emergency fostering is short-term placement for children who need additional assistance because of health, anxiety or fear.

The families who welcome children in these emergency situations provide an atmosphere that is calm, caring and attentive.

Respite foster care offers a short break for foster parents while providing other families with the opportunity to become involved with the lives of the children in need.

Respite foster care is a good option for anyone who is unable to become a full-time foster parent.

If you are interested in becoming a Choctaw foster parent, please visit our website, [ChoctawNation.com](#), or call (800) 522-6170 and ask to speak to Foster Care Recruiter Kat DeCaire.

Assisting with foster care for a Choctaw child can be very rewarding for everyone involved. The children need a safe harbor and we are given the chance to make a difference in the life of a child, putting them on the path home.

**SPIRIT OF FUN**  
**FREE KIDS' FAIR**  
 PRESENTED BY CHO FOSTER CARE  
**MAY 12 | 10 A.M. - 2 P.M.**  
 Durant Event Center | 3702 Choctaw Rd, Durant, OK 74701

- Free Hot Dogs and Drinks
- Kids' Zone
- Choctaw Cultural Events
- Local Talent Performances
- Photo Opportunities
- Tribal Police
- Durant Fire Department
- Prussian the Service Dog

**Free for ALL Children**

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma | Living out the Choctaw Spirit

One of the comments I have read recently about the importance of family is that family is essential because it sustains society while fulfilling God's purposes.

The Choctaw Nation Foster Care program creates a bridge for children from despair to reunification with family.

As of the end of March, there were 575 Choctaw children in the foster system in Oklahoma. Only 12 percent are with Choctaw foster families.

To ensure the best interests of Indian children were being met, Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978.

ICWA's goal is to help keep children in loving, caring homes with priority placed on uniting them with family members. My wife and I were foster parents. It was a blessing to be able to open our home for the children.

## Appreciating Our Armed Forces



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

The month of May is Military Appreciation Month. On Memorial Day, May 28, the men and women who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country will be honored.

May 12 is Military Spouse Appreciation Day for all the spouses who support our country in a different way by sustaining the home and family.

May 19, the day of our commemorative Trail of Tears Walk, is Armed Forces Day.

During the opening program of the annual Trail of Tears event, before the Choctaw Color Guard begins leading the way for hundreds of people to follow the footsteps of our Choctaw ancestors, we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Choctaw Color Guard.

The Choctaw Color Guard is an esteemed group of Choctaw veterans who give their time to attend tribal and community events around the country, including rendering military funeral honors and participating in parades and powwows.

Five members of the current Choctaw Color Guard were among the initial group formed in 1998—John Bureson, Shirley Mantaghi, John Barry, Terry Loman and Ron Scott. Yakoke for everything you do to represent the Choctaw Nation and veterans everywhere.

The Choctaw Nation is grateful to all who serve or have served and proud to be able to provide other ways of showing appreciation to the military.

The Choctaw Nation Veterans Advocacy program was formed to ensure Native American veterans are receiving benefits equal to other veterans. The Veterans Advocacy team assists with VA claims, applications, referrals, Cell Phones for Soldiers, the Choctaw Veteran Cemetery at Tvshka Homma and scheduling the Choctaw Color Guard.

They purchase items and mail care packages every three months to military personnel stationed in active war zones. During 2017, Veterans Advocacy mailed out 1,269 care packages to soldiers stationed in a combat zone. From January to mid-April of this year, there have been 905 care packages sent to the soldiers deployed.

Family members, friends, or even groups can bring Veterans Advocacy items to be sent to our troops overseas at no charge, as long as they are stationed in a combat zone.

Every district in the Choctaw Nation holds a special event during the summer to honor the Choctaw veterans in their areas. Every November, Choctaw veterans are invited to attend a ceremony at Tvshka Homma where they receive a special gift.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the original Choctaw Code Talkers and the end of World War I. During the Nov. 10 Veterans Ceremony, the Choctaw Nation and the Choctaw Code Talkers Association will be honoring all of the Code Talkers of World War I and II.

In 2017, both the Oklahoma House and Senate passed a bill to name 23 county bridges in southeastern Oklahoma after the Code Talkers. The first unveiling was the Joseph Oklahombi Bridge in Wright City in April.

During this month and every month, please say a prayer for the members of the U.S. Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and National Guard. We have everything to thank them for.



by Kendra Germany

Members of the Choctaw Nation Honor Guard carry the flags of the Choctaw Nation, United States of America, the State of Oklahoma and Prisoners of War during the Grand Entry of the 2017 Labor Day Pow Wow in Tvshka Homma. The Choctaw Nation Honor Guard was formed in 1998.

# BISKINIK

## May 2018

### BIHI HVSHI mulberry month

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#### Page 1:

Employees of Choctaw Nation who started in the 1980s share their stories of the old headquarters and how the Choctaw Nation has grown since they started work in the old Presbyterian College at the corner on Locust Street and North 16th Avenue. They also give their thoughts on moving to the new headquarters.

Photo Illustration by Apryl Mock

*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.** ChoctawNation.com features access to information about tribal history, culture, news, services, government, businesses, applications and contacts. The Choctaw Nation's official publication, the BISKINIK, is available to tribal members by mail and archived editions are on ChoctawNation.com.

[www.facebook.com/ChoctawNationofOklahoma](http://www.facebook.com/ChoctawNationofOklahoma)

[www.twitter.com/ChoctawNationOK](http://www.twitter.com/ChoctawNationOK)

[www.instagram.com/ChoctawNationOK](http://www.instagram.com/ChoctawNationOK)

[www.youtube.com/ChoctawNationOK](http://www.youtube.com/ChoctawNationOK)

**If You're A Choctaw Veteran, We Want You.**

Tell us your story for a video library. Send your information to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Veterans Advocacy: [veteransadvocacy@choctawnation.com](mailto:veteransadvocacy@choctawnation.com)

Contact Roger Hamill  
 Deputy Director  
 (800)522-6170 ext. 2160

**CHOCTAW TAG TEAM LEADERSHIP CAMP**  
**WEDNESDAY, MAY 23**

Incoming 10th-12th graders attending Talihina H.S. OSU School of Osteopathic Medicine, Tulsa, OK

Sign up with Mrs. Akins by May 9  
**580.775.7547**

**Enrolling NOW for the 2018-19 school year at your local Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Head Start!**

CNO Head Start provides a fun, safe learning environment for children where they will feel love, acceptance and understanding. The goal is to prepare each child for kindergarten and to excite them about learning.

**Head Start is the Best Start**

**We Offer**

**For Children:**

- Social Interaction
- Health & Nutrition
- Quality Child Development Practices & Activities
- Vision & Dental Screening

**For Families:**

- Referrals to Community Resources
- Parenting Classes & Other Education

To enroll or for more information, stop by your local CNO Head Start or call: (800) 522-6170 Extension 2219

Head Start focuses on the whole child intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially, with respect for the family as partners in education. Head Start provides language and literacy, school readiness and age appropriate activities. We also serve children with disabilities and/or special needs.



# Edible Schoolyard Digs into Second Year

by KENDRA GERMANY

This year marks the second year of the Nihi Hokchi-Edible Schoolyard Project. The project is spearheaded by the Chahta Foundation, as a part of their Green Growth Initiative.

According to Seth Fairchild, Executive Director of the Chahta Foundation, the 2017 pilot year was a huge success. With that success, a few minor changes were made to the project for the 2018 year.

"We believe in intentional and never-ending improvement. We've made a few minor changes, but the core of our programming has remained the same," said Fairchild.

According to Fairchild, the project has teamed up with various other Choctaw Nation departments such as Ag Outreach, Tribal Events, Head Start/Day Care centers, Maintenance and Video Production to make this year's project even bigger and more successful.

"We hope to capitalize on this momentum and expand our efforts in the coming years," stated Fairchild.

Thanks to the Edible Schoolyard Project, students enrolled in the Child Development Center in Durant are now able to get hands-on experience on how to plant, grow and harvest their own fruits and vegetables.

This year, the project is going even farther with more garden stations and the support of a master gardener to guide the educational and maintenance efforts.

All Edible Schoolyard activities are designed to empower Choctaw students. The project builds knowledge and skills at an early age, and initiates thought and discussion about the food system and our ability to grow our own food.

In late winter, students plant seeds in a greenhouse, and by early spring get the opportunity to plant the seedlings in raised garden beds. Students tend to these plants until they are ready to be harvested. Vegetables such as squash, tomatoes and peppers have been planted. The group even planted strawberries and herbs. These foods will ultimately be served to students for lunch in the center's cafeteria.

According to Fairchild, the project is teaching students valuable lessons that they can carry throughout their lives.

"I think the benefits are generational. If we can prioritize health at a young age, we will see a positive impact on numerous quality of life indicators. These will affect not only those individuals but will eventually impact their children, and our tribe as a whole," said Fairchild. "My favorite part is knowing that our students are learning valuable lessons, while at the same time having fun and getting to work alongside their friends, parents and teachers. It really is a community effort."

For more information about the Nihi Hokchi-Edible Schoolyard Project visit [www.ChahtaFoundation.com](http://www.ChahtaFoundation.com).



Photos by Kendra Germany

Above: Students at the Durant Child Development Center get their hands dirty planting seedlings.

Bottom Left: Nikki Schuth-Mitchell helps a student plant vegetables in the Edible Schoolyard garden.

Bottom Right: Students planted various fruits, vegetables and herbs, including squash, in their Edible Schoolyard on April 10.

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## NURSERY NEWS

### Huck Finlee McDowell



Huck Finlee McDowell was born Jan. 5, 2018. He weighed 7 pounds, 15 ounces and was 18 and 1/2 inches long.

Huck was welcomed home by his parents Jason and Alicia McDowell and big brother Henry Lee.

He is the grandson of Scott and Nikki McDowell all of Noble, Oklahoma and Jaunita Bryant of Wayne, Oklahoma. He is the great-grandson

of the late Cora Ellen Joslin-Pando of Paul's Valley, Oklahoma.

Huck's Choctaw roots trace back to his great-grandfather Frank Crippens and great-great-grandmother Florence Leflore-Loring of Antlers, Oklahoma.

### Region Jaye Williams



Region Jaye Williams was born March 9, 2018, at the Choctaw Hospital in Talihina. She weighed 7 pounds, 6 ounces and was 20 inches long.

Region is the daughter of Hank and Jessica Williams of Keota, Oklahoma.

She is the granddaughter of Fleming Simes Jr. and Tina Simes of Boswell, Oklahoma, Joe Williams of Holly Creek, Oklahoma, and the late

Linda Taylor of Goodwater, Oklahoma. Region is the great-granddaughter of Fleming Simes Sr. and Christine Simes of Boswell, and Edgar and Hazel Taylor of Goodwater. She is welcomed and loved by many aunts, uncles and several cousins.

## Nursery News Submissions

To see your newborn in the Biskinik, please send us a photo and information. Due to space limitations, submitted information is subject to edits to fit format and style.

Please send information to:  
[biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com) or  
P.O. Box 1210 Durant, Oklahoma 74702

Choctaw Nation partners with the Chickasaw Nation to bring the program:

## Summer EBT for Children Apply Now!

STUDENTS RECEIVING  
**FREE AND REDUCED SCHOOL MEALS**  
MAY QUALIFY FOR FREE FOOD THIS SUMMER!  
APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JUNE 1, 2018.

To apply online, go to [www.Chickasaw.net/SummerEBT](http://www.Chickasaw.net/SummerEBT).  
To apply over the phone, call (580) 272-1178 or (844) 256-3467 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday).

This federally funded program is open to both Native American and Non-Native students. Qualifying families will receive an EBT card (works like a debit card) that allows you to purchase healthy food for the summer.

To qualify for Summer EBT for Children, your child must meet the following requirements:

- Be enrolled in a participating public school district in grades pre-K (4 year old program)-12th grade for the 2017-18 school year
- Be eligible to receive free or reduced meals at school

- Participation in this program will not impact any government assistance you and your child currently receive.
- Information provided by you on the consent form, or any records obtained for this program, will be kept confidential as allowed by law, and will be used only for this project.
- Once approved, Summer EBT cards will be mailed to the address you provided, along with a list of participating stores and a food card shopping list that will help you identify approved food items.

To learn more, call (580) 272-1178 or (844) 256-3467 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Summer EBT for Children is an initiative of the Chickasaw Nation. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material is based upon work that is supported by the Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

## Recipe of the Month

### Pumpkin Bread Pudding



Recipe by Carmen Robertson

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups milk
- 4 eggs
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 can pumpkin
- 1 loaf bread
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla
- 1 Tablespoon pumpkin pie seasoning
- 2 Tablespoons butter

#### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Mix together eggs, milk, sugar, pumpkin, vanilla and seasoning.
3. Cut bread into chunks and place in milk mixture.
4. Then place in 9x13 pan and place butter on top.
5. Bake for 45 minutes or until set.

#### Nutrition Facts:

Servings 12  
Serving size 204 grams

(per serving)  
Calories 309, Total Fat 12 grams, Trans Fat 0 grams, Cholesterol 350 milligrams, Sodium 143 milligrams, Total Carbohydrates 36 grams, Dietary Fiber 2 gram, Sugars 18 grams, Protein 15 grams, Vitamin A, 106 percent, Vitamin C, 2 percent, Calcium, 14 percent and Iron 17 percent.

For further information, you may contact Choctaw Nation Nutritionist Carmen Robertson (800) 522-6170 ext. 2733, email [crobertson@choctawnation.com](mailto:crobertson@choctawnation.com), or go to a Cooking with Carmen demonstration.

### MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR A CHILD

We support our foster resource families every step of the way with:

- Comprehensive training and support
- One-on-One relationship with your Foster Care worker
- Extensive resources through the Choctaw Nation

**INTERESTED?**  
CONTACT KAT DECAIRE AT  
[KDECAIRE@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:KDECAIRE@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)  
OR (580) 924-8280 EXT. 2643

## FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma FAITH • FAMILY • CULTURE



Location	Days	Hours
<b>Antlers</b> 580-298-3161	Every Tue.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
<b>Atoka</b> 580-889-5825	Mon. Wed., Thurs. & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Battiest</b> 580-241-5458	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
<b>Boswell</b> 580-380-2518	1st Thurs. Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
<b>Broken Bow</b> 580-584-2746	Daily Mon. - Fri	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Coalgate</b> 580-927-3641	1st Wed. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
<b>Durant</b> 580-920-2100 x 83517	Daily Mon - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Hugo</b> 580-326-5404	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Idabel</b> 580-286-2510	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>McAlester</b> 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Poteau</b> 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Smithville</b> 580-244-3289	1st Thurs. Every Month	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Spiro</b> 918-962-5134	Wed., Thurs. & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Stigler</b> 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
<b>Talihina</b> 918-567-7000 x-6792	Mon., Tue., Wed. & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
<b>Wilburton</b> 918-465-5641	Every Thursday	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**WAREHOUSES & MARKETS**  
Open 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday  
Thursday: 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
**Antlers:** 400 S.W. "O" St., (580) 298-6443  
**Broken Bow:** 109 Chahta Road, (580) 584-2842  
**Durant:** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773  
**McAlester:** 3244 Afulotta Hina, (918) 420-5716  
**Poteau:** 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

### June 2018

#### ANTLERS

Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 28 & 29.

#### BROKEN BOW

Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 28 & 29.

#### DURANT

Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 28 & 29.

#### MCALESTER

Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 28 & 29.

#### POTEAU

Market open weekdays June 1-30, except for:  
**Closed:** June 28 & 29.

**Spiro Hoop House Food Demo:** June 9, 23 & 30, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

**Cooking With Carmen:** There are no cooking with Carmen classes scheduled for the month of June.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; Fax: (202) 690-7442; or Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.





Top Right: Coach S. Cervantes encourages her team during their big game.

Above: Josue Lainez-Ortiz Fights for position.

Bottom Right: Isabel Lujano drives the ball.

Below: Fans in the Warrior's Den cheer on the Jones Academy Warriors.



# Jones Academy Elementary School Highlights Inaugural Warriors Basketball Teams

by DAVID SANCHEZ

It was a raucous and thunderous home crowd that welcomed the Jones Academy Elementary School boys and girls basketball teams to their inaugural season. This was the first year that the elementary school had its own basketball team competing with other schools from the immediate area.

The dorm and school staff alongside students threw their unrestrained support and uncurbed enthusiasm all season, giving the Warriors a boisterous home court advantage.

The team's first-year coach, Sara Cervantes, expressed that the first season had been a success overall and quite an achievement for everyone involved.

The boys had more wins than losses, but the real triumph lay in that, in every game, "the players never quit." She stated, "The fact that they never gave up was a huge success. They always played hard until the end, regardless of the outcome. As a whole, they exceeded my expectations and definitely made a statement in every game."

The Warrior teams played 11 games during the season and were very competitive for students who had not had the opportunity to play organized sports before.

The enthusiasm remains high and the teams are looking forward to the offseason to make improvements.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it and loved working with the boys and girls. Can't wait 'til next year," said Cervantes.

If the school's zeal is any indication of the kind of basketball future Jones Academy has in store, opponents should be forewarned of the deafening reception they will receive from the Jones Academy faithful.

## Coalgate District 12 Youth Language Class Win at Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair

The Coalgate Choctaw Community 12 Language Youth class participated in the 2018 16th Annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair at the Sam Noble Museum in Norman, Oklahoma April 3.

The group won first place in the Spoken Language category with their skit "Ofi Nukoa."

The group also received second place in the Traditional Song category. They sang three Choctaw Hymns.

In individual awards, Tvli Birdshead took home first place in the Spoken Word category with the Choctaw Lord's Prayer.

The ONAYLF is held each year to showcase the talents of Native youth for across the state, allowing them to share what they have learned about their native languages.



Above: The Coalgate District 12 Youth Language Class performed three Choctaw Hymns at the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair on April 3. Back row: Warren Birdshead, Tyson Buckley, Ez Faulkenberry, and Tvli Birdshead. Front row: Zeke Faulkenberry, Checotah McCoy, Cheyenne McCoy, Leanicka Dickerson, Aingeal Wilson, Creek McCoy, Jordan Faulkenberry, Rhoda Buckley, Alizaye Buckley and Cherokee McCoy.

Right: Tvli Birdshead performs the Lords Prayer in Choctaw at ONAYLF in Norman, Oklahoma.



## Garry Named National Merit Scholarship Finalist

Susan H. Garry has been named a National Merit Scholarship Finalist. She was named a semi-finalist earlier in the school year and has now advanced to finalist standing. She is a senior at the Legacy Early College High School in Taylor, Texas, where she is a Superintendent's Scholar and a member of the National Honor Society, Chess Club, Music Club, and BLADE (Beginners Learning Alternative Designs for Energy). She is a Tae Kwon Do instructor, lifeguard and has done research for the Taylor Conservation and Heritage Society. Her parents are Madeleine Garry and Kyle Hensley. She is the descendant of original enrollees Josephine Hickman Hill Terrell and Elizabeth Lewis Hickman.



## Burdex Excels at Language Fair

Paris Burdex, daughter of E'Vonne Zumwalt, recently participated in the 2018 Oklahoma Native American Language Fair. She placed first in both the Spoken Poetry and modern song categories. Paris placed second with her book titled "What Are You Dreaming Of." She is a student at Mission Elementary in Anadarko. Paris is also involved in her schools H.O.P.E Squad, Little League Cheer and part of the Gifted and Talented program. Paris learns her Choctaw language from her grandmother, Viola Noah Zumwalt. Viola has been a teacher at Riverside Indian School for the past 36 years. Paris is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation.

## Moss Recieves Scholarship to Study Abroad

North Davis Preparatory Academy, presented Leilani Evelyn Moss with a Certificate of Honor Scholarship -\$1,500 for their International Spain Study Abroad 2017-2018 program.

Leilani was also a member of the girls volleyball team which finished fourth at the state tournament for the 2017-2018 school year. Leilani is the great-great-granddaughter of L. Joseph "Jack" Coplen and Myrtle Evelyn Palmer.



## Byars Set to Graduate From the Institute of American Indian Arts

The Institute of American Indian Arts is pleased to announce the graduation of Amber Morningstar Byars, with an BA in Indigenous Liberal Studies and an AFA in Studio Arts. Byars is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. She will receive her degrees during the commencement ceremonies in Santa Fe, New Mexico on Saturday, May 12.

Offering undergraduate degrees in Studio Arts, Creative Writing, Cinematic Arts and Technology, Indigenous Liberal Studies, and Museum Studies -- a minor in Performing Arts -- an MFA in Creative Writing -- along with certificates in Business and Entrepreneurship, Museum Studies, and Native American Art History -- IAIA is the only college in the nation dedicated to the study of contemporary Native arts. The school serves 517 full time equivalent (FTE) Native and non-Native American college students from across the globe. IAIA is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission -- and is the only college in New Mexico accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.



Don't have anyone to give your box tops to?  
Here's how you can help!

Each year, the Choctaw Nation will select a school district within the Nation to be the recipient of the Box Tops Program.

It's simple: Buy the products; clip the Box Tops; drop off or send the Box Tops to the Choctaw Nation and help earn cash for things the school needs like: school supplies, playground equipment, teacher training, computers, etc.

Send to:  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
Attn: Jerry Tomlinson  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702

Yakoke to all of the Biskinik Readers for all of your Box Top contributions!

**You are making a difference!**

For further information, contact Jerry Tomlinson at 800-522-6170

*Living out the Chahta Spirit*



## Choctaw Early Head Start Announces Perfect Attendance Award Winners

Early Head Start Program is a federally grant that provides services for children ages six weeks to 3 years old. EHS is in partnership with the Choctaw Nation Child Development Center in Durant, Colgate and Bennington. They also have their own EHS center in Durant. There are 24 participants in the EHS Program at the Durant EHS-CCP (Child Care Partnership). The following children received a Perfect Attendance Award for the month of March. Left to Right: Ava Lynn, Rigdon Wiley and Gabryelle Valliere.



## Tribal Council Holds Regular Session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Saturday, April 14, in their chambers at Tvshka Homma.

During the regular session committee reports were presented.

The minutes of the regular session held on Saturday, March 10, were approved.

New business included approval of the following items:

- Letter of Appointments for Sherry Krebs, Sylvester Moore, Hoss Ward, Concetta Gragg and Kay Green to the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority Board.
- Family Violence Prevention Grant proposal.
- Dispose surplus capital assets.
- Quit Claim Deed and Disclaimer of Interest to record owners in Pittsburg Co. Oklahoma.
- Electric line easement on Choctaw Tribal fee land in favor of Oklahoma Gas and Electric LeFlore Co. Oklahoma for Poteau Food Distribution Center.
- Oil and Gas lease No. 4200066147 in favor of Hanna Oil and Gas Company on land held by the United States of America in Trust for the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Sequoyah/LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma.
- Oil and Gas lease No. 4200066145 in favor of Hanna Oil and Gas Company on land held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Sequoyah/LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma.
- Oil and Gas lease No. 4200066130 in favor of Hanna Oil and Gas Company on land held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Sequoyah/LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma.
- Oil and Gas lease No. 4200066139 in favor of Hanna Oil and Gas Company on land held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Sequoyah/LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma.
- Oil and Gas lease No. 4200066138 in favor of Hanna Oil and Gas Company on land held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Sequoyah/LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma.
- Oil and Gas lease No. 4200066126 in favor of Hanna Oil and Gas Company on land held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations in Sequoyah/LeFlore Counties, Oklahoma.
- Fiber optic easement in favor of Oklahoma Wester Telephone Company on Choctaw Tribal Fee land in Pushmataha Co., Oklahoma.
- Application for the Second Chance Act Comprehensive Community Bases Adult Reentry Program.

For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and Council bills, go to [www.choctaw-nation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills](http://www.choctaw-nation.com/government/tribal-council/council-meetings-and-bills).

The next Tribal Council meeting will be held on Saturday, May 12, at 10 a.m. in Tvshka Homma.

## Biskinik Announcement Policy

We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published.

All events sent to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.

We apologize for any inconvenience. This is a necessary adjustment due to rising production and mailing expenses.

Mail to: Biskinik  
Attn: Notes to the Nation  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702  
or email to: [biskinik@ChoctawNation.com](mailto:biskinik@ChoctawNation.com)

## EVENTS

### Choctaw Nation Community Center March Health Fairs

Idabel  
Wednesday, May 2

All Health Fairs begin at 10 a.m. at the Choctaw Nation Community Center unless otherwise noted.

### Wild Onion Community Supper

Thursday, May 10 at 6 p.m.  
Choctaw Nation Community Center  
Idabel, Oklahoma

The Wild Onion Supper will include wild onions and eggs, fried fish, fried potatoes, pinto beans, cornbread, dessert, and tea and coffee. It is free for all District 1 tribal members.

For more information, call Matilda Paxton at (580) 286-6116.

### Mothers Day Gospel Singing

Saturday, May 12  
Black Jack Church East of Rattan

Black Jack Church is 11 miles east of Rattan on SH 3. The start time for the singing is 3 p.m. and supper begins at 5:30 p.m. Concessions will be available.

For more information, contact Mary Woody at (580) 372-5114.

### Ritter Family Reunion

Saturday, May 19  
Quarry Island in Wister

An invitation to any relatives of Issac (Ike) & Georgia Ritter and Frank & Tennie Ritter. Bring a covered dish & a drink. Donations appreciated.

Imogene (McCoy) Odell,  
(918) 647-3791 or (918) 647-7596  
507 Chickasaw, Poteau, Oklahoma 74953

### Hampton Chapel Annual Gospel Singing

Saturday, May 19  
East of Spencerville

The gospel singing will be held three miles east of Spencerville and 11 miles north of Fort Towson. The Wild Onion Supper will begin at 5 p.m., followed by the singing at 7 p.m. Floyd Peters will be the emcee. There is no charge for the supper.

For more information, call (580) 317-3320

### Memorial Weekend Gospel Singing

Saturday, May 26  
Robbers Cave State Park, Wilburton

Afternoon program from 1-2 p.m. Singing from 2-7 p.m. Supper served throughout the evening. Special musical guest Lineage of David. Guest speaker District 6 Councilperson Jennifer Woods. Solos, duets, trios, quartets, groups and listeners welcome.

For more information, contact Jeremy Scott at (918) 448-6889.

### Noel & Roxie Baker Family Reunion

Saturday, June 2 at 8 a.m.  
Sardis Lake South Shelter

Bring a side dish, dessert and refreshments. Meat will be provided. Also, bring photos and memories to share.

For more information,  
Georgia at (580) 236-4402 or Mary D. at (580) 982-6300.

Gary Batton  
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
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of the

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Lisa Reed, Executive Director  
Stacy Hutto, Managing Editor  
Kendra Germany, Reporter/Photographer  
Apryl Mock, Reporter/Photographer

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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal Members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double spaced. You must include an address or phone number where you may be reached. Due to space limitations and the quantity of article submissions, we are unable to include everything we receive. Items are printed in the order received.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs to be changed, our Circulation Department would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Deadline for articles and photographs to be submitted is the first day of each month to run the following month.

Editor's note: Views and opinions in reader-submitted articles are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Choctaw Nation.



### 22nd Annual King Family Reunion

Saturday, June 9 at 10 a.m.

Tate Memorial Chapel, Free Will Baptist Church  
Buffalo Valley, Oklahoma

Descendants of Judy (King) Potts, Robert King, Ada (King) Spring, William Joseph King and Lillie Josephine (King) McGee are invited to attend the reunion.

Bring a covered dish, family pictures, family tree and a good story.

For more information, contact  
Janelle Kirkes, (918) 522-4309, or  
Vernis King, (918) 522-4410

### Parnell Family Reunion

Saturday, June 9 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
Choctaw Nation Community Center  
Smithville, Oklahoma

Any relatives of Tom and Roxie Parnell are invited to bring a covered dish and enjoy the day.

For more information contact  
Doylene Vaught (580) 244-7276  
Louise Hamrick (580) 244-3478  
Sharon Youndblood (580) 244-7372  
Ardis Keiss (918) 427-6050

### Golden Wedding Anniversary Concert

Saturday, June 9  
Choctaw Community Center  
Talihina, Oklahoma

The concert honors Preston Jr. and Joann Fobb Ludlow. A luncheon will be held 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., followed by the concert from 1-5 p.m.

For more information, contact Joann Fobb Ludlow at home (918) 592-0203 or cell (918) 607-2145.

### Jefferson–Wade–Prock Reunion

Saturday, June 9, at 10 a.m.

Robber's Cave State Park in Wilburton, Okla.  
The reunion will be held at the usual area in the North Picnic area.

For more information, contact Etta Baskin at (580) 579-2332

### The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Legal Assistance

A licensed attorney will be available by appointment ONLY to provide assistance with simple legal documents free to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters that the attorney may be able to assist with:

- Family law (divorces, custody, child support)
- Contracts and leases
- Guardianships and modifications

The office does not provide representation in court or assist in criminal matters. At this time the legal department is not providing assistance with wills and probate. To make an appointment, or for any questions, contact Samantha Guinn at (580) 380-8149.

April Community Center Schedule      May Community Center Schedule

4-5 Hugo: 10-1 & 1:30-3      5-3 Stigler: 10-1 & 1:30-3  
4-12 Broken Bow: 10-1 & 1:30-3      5-10 Wilburton: 10-1 & 1:30-3  
4-26 Talihina: 10-1 & 1:30-3      5-24 McAlester: 10-1 & 1:30-3  
5-31 Durant: 10-1 & 1:30-3

### Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association and Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement, and agriculture loans. To be eligible to apply, a person must reside within the 10 ½ county service area of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and must possess a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) from a federally recognized tribe. Micro-loans are available for emergency home improvements and small businesses. The loans are available up to \$2,500 and are to be repaid within 24 months. To be eligible to apply you must be Choctaw, possess a CDIB and reside within the 10 ½ county area of the Choctaw Nation.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at (580) 924-8280 ext. 2161 or toll-free (800) 522-6170.

If you are interested in applying for a loan from the SOICA or the Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund, there will be a representative from the Choctaw Nation Credit Department at the:

Idabel Community Center  
May 4  
9:30 a.m. – 11 a.m.

### Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

June 2018

Durant - Monday, Wednesday and Friday      Broken Bow - Monday, Wednesday and Friday      Idabel by appointment  
Phone: (580) 326-8304; Fax: (580) 326-0115      Email: [ddavenport@choctawnation.com](mailto:ddavenport@choctawnation.com)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Durant 8:00-4:30	5 Antlers by appt.	6 Talihina 10:00-2:00	7	8 Wright City by appt.	9
10	11 Durant 8:00-4:30	12 Idabel by appt.	13 Poteau 11:30-1:00	14	15 Crowder by appt.	16
17	18	19 Wilburton by appt.	20 McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler by appt.	21	22 Atoka & Coalgate by appt. Broken Bow by appt.	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



# Choctaw Nation Ag Outreach Program Brings Agriculture Education to Nation

by LARRIANN CHAMBERS

For the past two years, Choctaw Nation's new and rising program, Agriculture Outreach, has been making leaps and bounds as they strive to serve tribal members, Choctaw Nation and tribal youth across the State of Oklahoma.

The Choctaw Nation Agriculture Outreach program consists of four Tribal Extension Agents lead by the Ag Outreach manager, Jody House.

Together they serve the 10 ½ counties by working with producers and providing educational programs, technical assistance and various youth programs throughout the year.

The program has also received several grants to further outreach within the 10 ½ counties, including the Farmers' Market Promotion Program, the 2501 Beginning Farmers and Ranchers project, the Community Food Project, the Specialty Crop Block Grant, and the Lehigh Project.

Each of these programs and projects have a specific focus area, but all contribute to the mission of Agriculture Outreach by serving our tribal members and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The program also has an Ag in the Classroom program that is continuously growing. Whether teaching a lesson in a Choctaw Nation Head Start, or a public school within the Choctaw

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Nation, the Ag Outreach team strives to introduce agriculture to the minds of the younger generations.

As a whole, Ag Outreach also assists with various youth events throughout the year, such as 4-H and FFA events, livestock shows and several youth camps put on by the Choctaw Nation each year.

While the Ag Outreach program may be fairly new and somewhat small, they are doing big things and look forward to growing and expanding, as they hope to continue making a difference in Choctaw Nation.



Provided by Choctaw Nation Agriculture Outreach

(from left) Tribal Extension Agent Nikki Schuth-Mitchell, Tribal Extension Agent Larriann Chambers, Ag Outreach Manager Jody House, Tribal Extension Agent Lakesha Hawkins and Tribal Extension Agent Macy Vansickle work in Choctaw Nation Agriculture Outreach to serve the 10 ½ counties of Choctaw Nation by working with various programs and producers. Ag Outreach also has an Ag in the Classroom program. Ag in the Classroom is taught to all age ranges, from Choctaw Nation Head Starts to different classes in local public schools.

# Choctaw Storyteller Tim Tingle Honored With Lifetime Achievement Award

by CHARLES CLARK

Tim Tingle has been awarded the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award by the Oklahoma Center for the Book.

The Choctaw storyteller and author is well known in southeastern Oklahoma. He takes the stage every year at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival, he shares ancient tribal tales at schools, libraries and colleges and he turns both oral and documented histories of the area into books for children and adults.

"House of Purple Cedar," "Salty Pie: A Choctaw Journey from Darkness into Light" and "Crossing Bok Chitto" are a few of his award-winning works.

On Saturday, April 7, Tingle was recognized at the 29th Annual Oklahoma Book Awards.

Held at the historic Skirvin Hilton in downtown Oklahoma City, the ballroom was filled with authors, artists, librarians, teachers and book lovers from across the region.

Two former governors were present: Frank Keating, in the capacity as a nominee for his new book "Abraham" and George Nigh, who served as emcee of the event.

Soft-spoken and eloquent, Tingle, as so often in his presentations, had the room leaning forward and hanging on his every word as he accepted the honor.

Tingle opened by saying "Yakoke," Choctaw for thank you. He asked everyone to say "thank you," in whatever language they chose, to the memory of a teacher who had impacted them.

He then told the story of his first break, meeting a professor at the University of Oklahoma, who directed him to write a paper on interviews with Choctaw elders which led to his book "Walking the Choctaw Road."

Tingle, who resides near San Antonio, was introduced to the podium by his son Jacob Tingle, who also lives in the same Texas metropolitan area.

Ron Wallace, Southeastern Oklahoma State University adjunct professor of English, won in the Poetry category for his book "Renegade (and Other Poems)."

The Durant native is a four-time finalist for the award and a three-time winner of the Oklahoma Writers Federation Best Book of Poetry Award.

Also, a rare presentation was made of the Director's Award which went to "The Survivor Tree" by Gaye Sanders.

It's a story told from the viewpoint of an elm tree. Planted in Oklahoma City, it witnesses the nearby destruction of Alfred P. Murrah Building on April 19, 1995.

The charred and battered tree was to be cut down when it suddenly sprang new leaves and became a symbol of hope for Oklahoma and America.

"I am a teacher," said Sanders in her acceptance. "I went to work that day not knowing what was to happen. The children and I vowed never to forget."

For the complete list of winners and nominees, visit <https://libraries.ok.gov/ocb/oklahoma-book-awards/>.



Photos by Vonna Loper

Above: Choctaw storyteller Tim Tingle signs a copy of his book, "When a Ghost Talks, Listen" during the 29th Annual Oklahoma Book Awards in Oklahoma City.

Left: Jacob Tingle (left) was able to introduce his dad, Tim Tingle, to the podium. Tim Tingle was awarded the Arrell Gibson Lifetime Achievement Award on Saturday, April 7.



# CHOCTAW COMMUNITY CENTERS ACTIVITIES



Photos Darlene Orr

Battiest elders gather at the Choctaw Nation Community center for their weekly lunch. Chief Gary Batton visited with those in attendance along with Councilman Tony Ward.



Hugo elders gather for a photo after their weekly dinner. Weekly dinners are a time for seniors to get a nutritious meal and fellowship with each other.

## THE CHANCE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

**Serving our members**

Job for the Day is here for you! We are not successful unless we help others. By offering work opportunities within the Choctaw Nation, we enable participants to serve tribal members and our communities while becoming active in the workforce.

**Who can participate in Job for the Day?**

- Choctaw Tribal member with a CDIB card
- Over 18 years of age
- Provide your own transportation both to and from worksites
- Be unemployed or underemployed

## JOB FOR THE DAY

800.522.6170

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Living out the Chahta Spirit

## Units Available at Belvin Housing

1 and 2 Bedroom units available at Belvin Housing in Talihiha.

Must have a CDIB, income and clean criminal background check.

Applications may be found online, at any CN Community Center or Housing Office

Please submit applications to Choctaw Housing

or email them to: [tsmalling@choctawhousing.com](mailto:tsmalling@choctawhousing.com)

For Questions or Concerns call (580) 372-4664

or (918) 567-4187

8 am- 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.



# April Marked as Both Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness Month



Volunteers tie blue ribbons on the trees at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Headquarters on March 26, in support and acknowledgement of Choctaw children in foster care. April was designated as Child Abuse Awareness Month.

Photos by Kendra Germany and Krislan Turner.



Above: Aldo Seoane addresses the crowd as the keynote speaker at the 4th Annual Gathering of Voices on April 5. Left: Choctaw Chief Gary Batton places a blue flower on the Ribbon of Remembrance in honor of victims of sexual assault and violence.



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## SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 7, 2018

Choctaw Nation Career Development

### 2018 Career EXPO

866.933.2260 [www.choctawcareers.com](http://www.choctawcareers.com)  
 Location: South East EXPO Center  
 4500 W. Highway 270 McAlester, OK 74502

### Choctaw Nation Online Academy

Do you have access to wifi and a computer?  
 Are you interested in earning your high school equivalency diploma?

The Choctaw Nation Online Academy is open to students in all counties within the United States who have a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB). To enroll in the academy, please call our Adult Education office and request an application packet. You may also print an application packet from our website at [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) (Click on Tribal Services tab, then Postsecondary tab.) Once you have completed an application packet, please mail to Choctaw Nation, Adult Education, P.O. Box 1210 Durant, OK 74702. You may also fax to 580-920-3161.

You may contact Lisa Bebout at 800-522-6270 ext. 2122 for further questions.

### Homebuyers Education

Are you interested in becoming a homeowner?

The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority offers FREE workshops for potential and new homeowners. All materials are furnished.

For more information on dates and course locations, or to preregister, contact Neile Vance at 580-579-7319 or [nvance@choctawhousing.com](mailto:nvance@choctawhousing.com)

### SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERING MATH SUMMER CAMP

June 24-29

Students must:

- Be in 9th-12th grade
- Have a CDIB

Application deadline: May 11, 2018  
See school counselor for application or send email to address below

#### STEM Camp

918-297-2518 ext. 1030  
[stemcamp@choctawnation.com](mailto:stemcamp@choctawnation.com)  
[jtribbey@choctawnation.com](mailto:jtribbey@choctawnation.com)

Spend part of your summer at the hands-on STEM camp! The camp includes workshops, challenges, field trips, and FUN. STEM camp is free to selected students who will spend five nights at Jones Academy.

# SHOW YOUR CHOCTAW PRIDE

choctawstore.com |

## CHOCTAW NATION ON~FARM FIELD TOUR

Please join us for a free lunch to learn about soil health options and how healthy soil can benefit you.

**MAY 19, 2018**  
**BRING~A-CHAIR**

Choctaw Nation Community Center  
 Travel to Tom Soil Health Site  
 2408 East Lincoln  
 Idabel, Oklahoma  
 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

PLEASE RSVP BY MAY 16th  
 Clay Pope at 405-699-2087  
 Jack Hicks at 580-326-3201 (ext. 6019)  
 Carol Crouch at 405-612-9331  
[claypope@gmail.com](mailto:claypope@gmail.com)  
[carolcrouch@ok.usda.gov](mailto:carolcrouch@ok.usda.gov)

PRESENTED BY:  
 Choctaw Nation Agriculture Outreach  
 USDA NRCS  
 Southern Plains Climate Hub  
 McCurtain Co. OSU Extension  
 Oklahoma AgCredit

WHERE WILL YOUR TRIP TAKE YOU IN CHOCTAW COUNTRY

Being adventurous in Choctaw Country isn't just about the countless discoveries, the fun times, or the natural beauty. It's about making lifelong memories with the ones that matter most.

[www.ChoctawCountry.com](http://www.ChoctawCountry.com)

"I found my next step"

The Next Step Initiative offers more than just an income supplement, we provide the tools and education that will allow you to develop the skills to find your success.

We work to assist you in reaching the next step of financial freedom.

Contact one of our locations for more information

Antlers (580) 298-6443 Broker	McAlester (918) 420-5716
Bow (580) 584-2842	Poteau (918) 649-0431
Durant (800) 522-6170 Ext. 2920	<a href="mailto:nextstep@choctawnation.com">nextstep@choctawnation.com</a>

### Possible Refund Due to Housing Authority Participants

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma may owe the following individuals a refund. If your name is listed below or you are an heir to any listed individual please contact us for additional information.

Shannon Billy	Ricky Ludlow	Winston Billy	Michael Lyons
Donny Jones	Earl Seagraves	David Maxwell	Katherine Ward
Janice Deaton	Lisa McGee	Kenneth Langston	Earnestine Beaver
Edward McCann	Dorothy Willie	Bennie Darned	
Louisa Johnson	Thomas Fulsom	Stacy Holbird	

Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
 207 Jim Monroe Road  
 Hugo, OK 74743  
 580-326-7521 ext. 6380



# OBITUARIES

## Tommy Durham

Tommy JoAnn "Nene" Durham, 83, passed away Nov. 16, 2017.

Tommy was born on July 10, 1934, to Mae (Mills) and Dova Dee Durham in Quinton, Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 36 years, Maynard Weathers; her brother Gene; and niece Doris Ann.

Tommy is survived by her brother Bill Durham; son Danny Weathers; daughters Shelley McKinney, Tracy Heffentrager and Rebeckah Weathers; nephews Bill Durham II, Dick Durham and Jim Durham; grandchildren Norman Weathers, Dawn Hurst, Anna Eperson, Shauna Glazier, Chris Weathers, Bregan Heffentrager-Brown and Victoria Springfield; step-grandsons Mark and Brian McKinney; and several great-grandchildren.

## Missie Jones

Missie Van Jones, 82, passed away April 11. Missie was born on Feb. 21, 1936, to Joseph and Francis (Coley) Jefferson in Red Oak, Oklahoma.

Missie was preceded in death by both parents, and husband Charles Jones.

She is survived by her niece and nephew.

Missie was laid to rest at the Highland Cemetery in Durant, Oklahoma.

For full obituary visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

## Joe Wilson

Joe Harold Wilson, 67, passed away March 31. Joe was born on Jan. 28, 1951, to Eugene and Flora Foster Wilson in Childress, Texas.

Joe was preceded in death by his parents; brother-in-law Russell Hartsfield; 10 aunts; seven uncles; and several cousins.

He is survived by his daughter Veronica Jo and spouse Tony Polito; sister Jeanne Hartsfield; nephews Ben and Charlie Senter; great-nephews Michael and Cameron; great-niece Makenna; uncle Vernon Foster; and aunts Edith Soester and Elouise Bingham.

Joe was laid to rest at Butler Cemetery in Lane, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Resthaven Funeral Home](#).

## Inez Sadefur

Inez Sandefur, 91, passed away Dec. 31, 2017.

Inez was born on Oct. 9, 1926, to Nora and Tandy (Russell) Dillard in Caddo, Oklahoma.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 65 years, Roy Earl "Sandy" Sandefur; her parents; and brother Don Dillard.

She is survived by her sons Rusty Sandefur and spouse Lisa and John Sandefur and spouse Regina; daughter Nancy Michener and spouse John; brother Bob Dillard and spouse Linda; eight grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and three great-great-grandchildren.

Inez was laid to rest at Highland Park Cemetery in Okmulgee County, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Minton-Chatwell Funeral Home](#).

## Travis Daniels

Travis R. Daniels, 81, passed away Jan. 28.

Travis was born on June 24, 1936, in Soper, Oklahoma.

Travis is survived by his wife of 58 years, Nedra Daniels; his children Brian Daniels, Debbie Daniels, DeeAnna Cossu, David Cossu, Heath Daniels and Angie Daniels; and grandchildren Kimberly Daniels and Travis Daniels, Taylor Cossu, Bridget Cossu and Christopher Cossu and Richard and Cassidy Daniels.

## Terry Burris

Terry Doyce Burris, 73, passed away March 20.

Terry was born on Jan. 4, 1945, to Mable and Sid Burris in Blanchard, Oklahoma.

Terry was preceded in death by his parents; brother Tony Burris; sisters Loretta Wilson and spouse Doyce, Wanda Witt and spouse Virgil and Joan Thomson; brother Burnett Burris; and sister-in-law Kathryn Ferguson.

He is survived by his wife, Diane; son Terry Burris Jr.; daughter Trina Bertoletti; twin brother Perry Burris; sisters Karen McConnell and spouse Jimmy, Marsha Lynn and spouse Toni and Jennifer Kniss and spouse Jeffrey; nieces Twila Wilson and Helen Ruble; nephews Larry Wilson and Ray Ruble; sister-in-law Kay Smith and spouse Ron; and brother-in-law Julius Fredricks and spouse Judy.

## Buddy Monahan

Reverend Buddy Dee Monahan, 52, passed away March 27.

Buddy was born on Dec. 3, 1965, to Irvin Monahan and Theda Jefferson in Talihina, Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Buddy is survived by his wife of 29 years, Dyanna Krissman Monahan; children Jordyn, Brandyn and Ashdyn; brother Tony Monahan; step-parents Ellis and Audrey Jefferson; aunt and uncle Alicia and Gene Wilson; and numerous cousins and friends.

Buddy was laid to rest at Tonihka Cemetery in Eagletown, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Sunset Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home](#).

## Pamela "Sue" Jefferson

Pamela "Sue" Jefferson, 66, passed away March 14.

Sue was born on Aug. 19, 1951, to Ranes M. "Rufus" and Lela (Yota) Coley in Red Oak, Oklahoma.

Sue was preceded in death by her husband of 17 years, Cleveland Jefferson; her parents; brothers Solomon Coley, Cecil Coley, Wilburn Coley and Presley Coley; sister Cora Coley and her spouses Bobby Baker and Cleveland Jefferson.

Sue is survived by her son Doug Jefferson; brothers Joe Coley and spouse Mary and Eston "John" Coley; sisters Bydia Pope and Dollie Scott; sister-in-law Missie Jones; God children Pamela and Lakota Whitelance; great-nephew Ranes Riddle; and numerous other family and friends.

Sue was laid to rest at South Rock Creek Cemetery in Red Oak, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Jones Harkins Funeral Home](#).

## Geraldine "Jerri" Martin

Geraldine "Jerri" (Rowland) Martin, 79, passed away Feb. 22.

Jerri was born on July 20, 1938, to Gholson and Ada (Toole) Rowland in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Jerri was preceded in death by her husband of 55 years, Ronald "Ronny" Martin; and sister-in-law Mary Evans.

She is survived by her daughter Ronna Robins and spouse David Wasson; sister Ann and spouse Steve Spears; brother-in-law Tom Evans; nieces Christy and spouse Dean Edwards, Tonya and spouse Nate Davis and Dianne Wopart; nephew Jerry Phipps; aunt Betty Harr; and numerous great-nieces, great-nephews and cousins.

For the full obituary, please visit [Moore Funeral Homes & Crematory](#).

## Barrentine "Bear" Tushka

Barrentine "Bear" Tushka, 82, passed away Jan. 26.

Barrentine was born on Nov. 19, 1935, to Benson and Swezzie (Jones) Tushka in Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

Barrentine was preceded in death by his parents; grandsons Steven Stewart and Angelo Tushka; sister Elencie Jessie; and aunt Lizzie King.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Nancy (McKinney) Tushka; children Ray Tushka and spouse Fern, Darrell, Melvin and Michael Tushka, Gloria Bond, Peggy Jefferson and Theresa Tushka and Brenda Smith and spouse Steve; 26 grandchildren; brothers Otis and Bennie Tushka; and sister Lewezie Calonahekskie.

Bear was laid to rest at the McGee Chapel Cemetery in Broken Bow, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Bunch-Singleton Funeral Home](#).

## Dr. Donald "Don" Addison

Dr. Donald Francis Addison passed away Feb. 18.

Dr. Don was born to Walter and Aurelia "Jerry" Addison in 1942.

Don is survived by his sister Sharon and spouse John Jackson; nephew Sean and spouse Jennifer Jackson; niece Sandy and spouse Joe Noffsinger; a great-nephew; and a great-niece.



## Sharon McGee

Sharon Kay McGee, 63, passed away March 29.

Sharon was born on May 4, 1954, to Wilson McGee and Rena Belle (Williamson) McGee in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Sharon was preceded in death by her parents and her sister Sandra Darlene Spencer.

Sharon is survived by her husband, Nelson Moore; daughter DeAnna Moore; son Jerod Moore; brothers Luther McGee and Arthur McGee; sisters Gloria McGee, Sherie McGee and Carla (Kelly) McGee; grandchildren Alicia Moore, Skye Moore, Macy Moore, Brandon Moore and Tre Moore; and numerous beloved nieces, nephews, friends, family and cousins.

For the full obituary, please visit [Brown's Durant Funeral and Cremation Service](#).

## Norvell "Mafo" Noahubi

Norvell "Mafo" Noahubi, 62, passed away March 11.

He was born on Dec. 27, 1955, to Battiest and Mary (Wade) Noahubi.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Ben Wade; and grandson David Noahubi Jr.

Norvell is survived by his wife of 17 years, Lorraine (Arthur) Noahubi; sons David Noahubi and spouse Abigail, Derek Noahubi and spouse Leann and Terry Noahubi; daughters Delana Noahubi, Kayla Finley and spouse Dustin and Natasha Battiest; brothers Alton and spouse Darlene, Melvin and Nolan and spouse Katie; sisters Pauline McGee, Geraldine Jessie and spouse Freeman, Hylda Tinajero, Selina Lopez and spouse Jorge, Loretta Hunt and spouse Ray and Asterline Gonzales and spouse Adam; 18 grandchildren; and friends Austin and Ellis Jefferson.

Norvell was laid to rest at the Kulli Chito Cemetery in Bethel, Oklahoma. For the full obituary, please visit [Brumley Funeral Home](#).

## Walter Huddleston

Walter Ray Huddleston, 48, passed away on Oct. 31, 2017.

Walter was born on Nov. 9, 1968, to Gary Dale Huddleston Sr. and Gevonna Jo (Phillips) Huddleston in Norman, Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his son Cameron Ray Huddleston.

Walter is survived by his mother Gevonna; father Gary; daughters Beth Ann and Cheyenne Huddleston; sons Zachary and Stone Huddleston; brother Gary Dale Huddleston Jr.; step-brother Lynn Sanders Jr.; maternal grandparents Wanda and C. D. Scribner; and five grandchildren.

Walter was laid to rest at Fillmore Cemetery in Fillmore, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Clark Funeral Service](#).

## Laurea Benedict

Laurea Jouree Benedict, 90, passed away March 26.

Laurea was born on Jan. 1, 1928, to Cleo Carmen (Thomas) and Howard Luther Grenn in Tolbert, Texas.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Marion Claude Benedict; and her parents.

Laurea is survived by her children Marion Dwaine Benedict and spouse Rachael, Ronnie Howard Benedict and spouse Marilyn, Terry Glenn Benedict and spouse Sherry Lynn; grandchildren David Benedict and spouse Bethanie, Kerri Crane and spouse Adam and Bret, Russell, Teri and Jason Benedict.

Laurea was laid to rest at Restland Cemetery in Silo, Oklahoma.

For the full obituary, please visit [Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home](#).

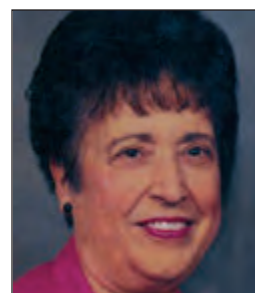
## David Mackey Jr.

David Middleton Mackey Jr., 63, passed away March 3.

David was born on Aug. 7, 1954, to Marguerite (Burke) and David Middleton Mackey Sr. in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

David is survived by his wife of 31 years, Mary Mackey; daughters Ashley and Amy Mackey; step-daughter Sherri Deis; son Brian Mackey; and step-son Tom Miotke.



## Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw Nation tribal members only and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes. Family members/individuals may submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspaper through a funeral home service. Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws, therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice. Due to space limitations, there is a 150 word limit for obituaries. The online issue of the Biskinik will contain links to the full obituaries.

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik  
PO Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702

or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)



## Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

### Noun and Verb Forms

**okcha (v):** to wake; to awake  
**okchali (v):** to awaken another  
**okchalechi (v):** to stimulate; to stir  
**okchalinchi (n):** to deliver from danger, sickness, etc.; savior

1. Himo siokcha! *I just now woke up!*
2. Chiokcha ho? *Are you awake?*
3. Chiki ya okchali! *Wake up your Dad!*
4. Is siokchali ma! *(You) Do not wake me up!*  
Siokchali nna! *Do not wake me up!*
5. Vloosi mvt chekosi kash okcha tuk. *That ch awoke a little while ago.*
6. Chishke ya hashikanvli tuklo fokalikma ish okchala chike.\* *Wake up your mother aroun, two o'clock.*
7. Ofosik ma okchali li tuk. *I awakened the puppy.*
8. Ofi shakapa yvt siokchali tuk. *The loud dog woke me up.*
9. Skvli chito habenah ma okchalechi tuk. *He, She was excited by the large monetary gift.*
10. Anumpa hlampko e hakloh ma piochalechi tuk. *We were stirred by the strong speech we heard.*
11. Okhish himona makosh okchalinchi tuk. *It was the new medicine that kept him alive.*
12. Chisus Klaist akosh hapiokchalinchi. *It is Jesus Christ who is our salvation.*

\* Okchali changes to 'okchala' for future tense, the last vowel changes to an 'a.'

[www.choctawschool.com](http://www.choctawschool.com)

## Choctaw Asset Building Financial Education Classes\*

**May 12 - Oklahoma City**  
Oklahoma Choctaw Alliance Bldg.  
5320 S. Youngs Blvd.  
Class begins at 8:00am

**June 9 - Poteau**  
Choctaw Community Center  
208 "B" Street  
Class begins at 8:00am

To register, go to the following URL:  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAB\\_FinEd](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAB_FinEd)

For more information, Email:  
[dhix@choctawnation.com](mailto:dhix@choctawnation.com)

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## Choctaw Nation Online Academy Do you have access to wifi and a computer? Are you interested in earning your high school equivalency diploma?

The Choctaw Nation Online Academy is open to students in all counties within the United States who have a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).

To enroll in the academy, please call our Adult Education office and request an application packet.

You may also print an application packet from our website at [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) (Click on Tribal Services tab, then Postsecondary tab.) Once you have completed an application packet, please mail to Choctaw Nation, Adult Education, P.O. Box 1210 Durant, OK 74702. You may also fax to 580-920-3161.

You may contact Lisa Bebout at 800-522-6270 ext. 2122 for further questions.

## Attention CHOCTAW ARTISTS

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A JURIED AND JUDGED CHOCTAW INDIAN ART SHOW, LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

### Choctaw Nation Division of Tribal Services

Cultural Services  
Labor Day Art Show  
Ext. 2377

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the 2018 Choctaw Indian Arts Show held Labor Day weekend at Tvshka Homma, OK. **Must be 18 years of age & a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate.** Categories include: Painting, graphics, cultural, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, & basketry. **Please complete the form and mail to the address below.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: **Shelley Garner - CNO Cultural Services  
 PO Box 1210  
 Durant, OK 74702**

**1-800-522-6170** FAITH ◆ FAMILY ◆ CULTURE

## Post Purchase Education Workshop

### How to Love Your Home

May 3rd  
Smithville

May 15th  
McAlester

Our free course for homeowners provides cost saving and helpful repair information for the sustainment of your greatest investment, your home!

Please contact Neile Vance for more information or to preregister 580-579-7319 | [nvance@choctawhousing.com](mailto:nvance@choctawhousing.com)

CHOCTAW | CASINOS & RESORTS

**JOB FAIR | Durant**  
Monday, May 7th  
10:00AM - 6:00PM  
Choctaw Event Center

**BET YOUR SUCCESS ON  
MORE THAN JUST A JOB**

[careers.choctawnation.com](http://careers.choctawnation.com)  
Together, we're more

## District Princess Pageants are Coming Soon!

Information packets will be available at local Choctaw Nation field offices.

For more information please contact your local field office or the Cultural Services Department at:

1-800-522-6170, Ext. 4090

[tribalroyalty@choctawnation.com](mailto:tribalroyalty@choctawnation.com)



## TORNADO SAFETY

### MYTH

Opening windows in a home or building during a tornado will help equalize pressure.

If you are caught driving during a tornado, you should always get out of your car and seek shelter under an overpass or in a ditch.

Cities are protected from tornadoes because of the tall buildings.

Taking shelter in the northeast corner of your home will protect you.

## CHOCTAW NATION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

### FACT

Opening windows will have no effect. Stay away from windows and exterior walls. Take shelter in the basement, storm cellar, or an interior room without windows on the lowest floor.

Try to drive to the closest sturdy shelter. If there is flying debris, pull over and park. Stay in the car with the seat belt on and the engine running. Put your head below the windows, covering your head with your hands and a blanket.

Tall buildings do not protect from tornadoes. Cities cover a small geographical area so the chances of being directly hit are small. However, tornadoes can strike anywhere.

This is based on an outdated theory that all tornadoes come from the southwest. Tornadoes can move from any direction and no one corner of your home is always safe.

For more tornado safety tips visit [ready.gov/tornadoes](http://ready.gov/tornadoes)



**10% OFF**  
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10% off any purchase, no minimum, for all food or drinks.

Must show employee badge or CDIB card to receive.

Offer valid through August 31, 2018.

Valid only at Chill's Grant, Atoka, and Poteau.  
Cannot be applied to gift card purchases.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma FAITH ◆ FAMILY ◆ CULTURE



# Iti Fabussa

## Choctaw Stories: The Possum and the Wolf

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The Choctaw ancestors followed a way of life where they constantly interacted with God's creation.

Observing creation taught them important lessons about life, respect and humor.

These lessons were not put into books, but into stories that used animal characters to teach and to entertain.

In the Choctaw language these stories are called Shukha Anumpa, "Pig Talk."

More anciently, they were known as "Possum Talk," after an animal that commonly took the role of a trickster within the stories.

From time to time, in doing historical research, the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department comes across Choctaw animal stories. The following story about Possum is one of our favorites.

In the late 1800s, a Choctaw person in Mississippi shared this story with Henry Halbert, a school teacher, who wrote it down.

It is being shared here as a result of the generosity of the Alabama State Archives, which allowed the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department to scan Henry Halbert's full, unpublished manuscript and his notes about the Choctaw people.

Below is the story's exact words translated from the Choctaw language. We hope that you enjoy.

A long time ago, as the panther was traveling through the woods, he came across a lean, starving possum. The panther said to him, "My friend you look like you are almost dead."

The possum said, "Yes, I can not live long, for I have not had any thing to eat in a long time."

The panther was sorry for the possum. He said to him, "My friend, I can fix it so that you can get plenty to eat. You know I am the deer's enemy. They hate me and would be glad to know that I was dead. Then, they would not be afraid of my jumping down upon them from a limb of a tree when they are passing underneath. Now, I will make out I am dead. Then, you bury me and then go and tell the deer to come and have a big dance around my grave."

Straightway the panther stretched himself out on the ground and feigned death. The possum dug a grave and put him in it. He then laid a soft rotten log along on the panther's body. He then filled the grave with earth; but left a small hole for the panther to breathe through.

The possum now went to look up the deer. In a little while he met a deer. He told him of the death of the panther, and told him to go and tell all the deer. All must come and have a big dance around the panther's grave. The possum now went back and sat near the grave.

After a while, a great many deer came. First, a big buck took a sharp stick and stuck it down into the grave.

The stick went into the rotten log. The buck thought the rotten log was the panther's body. He told all the deer that the panther was really dead.

The deer then began to dance around the grave. When they were dancing, the possum kept singing, "Toshbi pullasi, toshbi pullasi, toshbi pullasi," "He is nearly rotten, he is nearly rotten, he is nearly rotten." The deer were very glad and danced a long time.

At last the possum said, "He will catch you soon." Just as he said this, the panther jumped out of the grave and caught and killed the big buck. The other deer ran away.

The panther gave the dead buck to the possum. The possum now had plenty to eat. He ate a long time. At last, he became frightened. He was afraid the deer would come and kill him because he had been so tricky with them.

Some black birds were feeding on the leaves not very far off. They flew up and made a noise like thunder. The possum was now in great fear.

He put the deer's backbone in a basket, fastened the basket to his body and started away on a trail. At last, he came to a creek, where there was a foot log. He climbed

up a bending tree that overlooked the foot log. He then took the backbone out of the basket and began to eat it.

After a while, a wolf came along. He got on the foot log and began to cross the creek.

When he was about across, he looked down in the water and saw the picture of the backbone on the water.

He thought to himself, "There is something mighty good to eat."

So, he jumped down into the water. He dived to the bottom, but found nothing but mud and leaves.

He was badly bothered and went back to the bank that he had left.

Just then, the possum said to him, "Open your mouth and I will throw into it something good to eat."

The wolf heard the voice, but did not know where it came from. He ran out on the foot log and again he saw the picture of the backbone on the water.

He jumped down again. Again he got only mud and leaves. He went to the shore again, ran around the tree and looked everywhere.

At last he lay down. He howled and threw up his head. Then, he saw the possum up in the tree. The possum again said to him, "Open your mouth, and I will throw into it something good to eat."

The wolf did so and the possum threw the backbone into his mouth. The wolf tried to swallow it, but it stuck in his throat and choked him to death.

The possum came down from the tree. He took a sharp flint and went and cut off the wolf's head and put it in his basket.

He then crossed the creek on the foot log. He was traveling slowly along on the trail when he met a gang of wolves. The leader of the wolves spoke to him and asked him where he was going.

The possum said, "I am going over to yonder hill. My grandmother is a potter. She told me to go over there to get some clay to make a bowl."

The wolves were satisfied and passed on. After a little while, the possum met a lame wolf who asked him many questions.

At last, he peeped into the basket and saw the wolf's head. He howled a signal for the wolves to return. They did so.

The lame wolf then told them of the wolf's head in the possum's basket. The wolves looked at it. They told the possum that he must die. The wolf leader said to him, "We will let you choose the quickest way to die, for die you must."

The possum said, "Over on the other side of that hill you will find a light-wood knot. You can kill me quicker with that than with any thing else."

The wolves left the lame wolf with the possum and all started off to get the lightwood knot.

When they were all out of sight, the possum said to the lame wolf, "Over on the other side of that log yonder is another light-wood knot. Go and get it and kill me before the others get back and you will



Provided by Alabama Department of Archives and History

Henry Halbert, toward the right, is pictured with some of the Choctaw people he worked with. Halbert was a school teacher who was involved in educational work among the Choctaws in Mississippi from 1884 to 1888. A Choctaw person in Mississippi shared the story about the possum and the wolf with Halbert, who wrote it down. The Alabama State Archives allowed the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department to scan Halbert's unpublished manuscript and notes about the Choctaw people.

become a big miko among them."

The lame wolf hobbled off after the knot. After going a little ways, the possum picked a rattlebox (crotalaria sagittalis) and a sharp thorn and then burrowed down into a sink hole.

Soon, all the wolves, with the lame one besides, came to the sink hole.

The lame wolf had told the other wolves on their return about the possum's trick and they soon tracked him up to the sink hole.

The wolves began to grab down after him. The possum now shook his rattlebox.

One of the wolves said, "We must be wrong. This must be a rattlesnake hole." Another wolf said, "Maybe so, but no matter what he may be, drench him with your water."

The wolf obeyed, and the brine running down with the hole, struck the possum on the throat. Then, another wolf ran his paw down into the hole.

The possum stuck the thorn in it. The wolf jerked back his paw, and all now believed it was a rattlesnake in the hole and not the possum. So the wolves went away and left the possum in the hole.

In Halbert's words, "This story shows how cunning the possum is; how he can fool animals that are bigger and stronger than he is; it shows too how he got the round yellow spot on his throat where the brine wet him."

From today's perspective, this story gives us a tiny glimpse of how our ancestors entertained each other with stories about the world that they experienced.

Do you have a question about Choctaw history or traditional culture that you would like to see featured in Iti Fabvssa? Please email it to [jbyram@choctawnation.com](mailto:jbyram@choctawnation.com).

**Need money for school clothing?**

**Student School and Activity Fund**

- \$100 VISA gift card available nationwide for Choctaw Tribal Members who are attending 3 year old daycare to 12th grade.
- Each student with a tribal membership can receive funding one time per school year.
- Apply online at [ssafapplication.choctawnation.com](http://ssafapplication.choctawnation.com)

**Applications for 2017-2018 School Year Available July 1, 2017- May 1, 2018**

For more information contact Jessica Huffman or Patricia Gibson (800) 522-6170 ext. 2175 or 2463

**Now Hiring**

Chahta Himmak Pila Pehlich  
"Choctaw Future Leaders"  
**Summer Leadership Internship**

Applicants must fit in following guidelines:

- ⇒ Must possess a Choctaw Tribal Membership and/or CDIB
- ⇒ Be between 14-24 years of age
- ⇒ Be able to attend classes at Battiest, Rattan or Wright City
- ⇒ Classes will begin June 4th
- ⇒ Applicants are encouraged to be eager to learn, highly motivated, hardworking and willing to work as a team

For More Information:  
Hannah Wood  
[hwood@choctawnation.com](mailto:hwood@choctawnation.com)  
580-326-8304 ext. 6073

Submit a Resume and Cover Letter to:  
<http://careers.choctawnation.com>  
*Scholarships Available*

**TRAIL to TEARS WALK**  
2018

Join Us for the Commemorative Walk

May 19, 2018  
10 AM  
Tvshka Homma, OK  
Walk Starts at the Choctaw Village

Choctaw Nation Division of Tribal Services  
Cultural Services  
Est. 2332 and 2517

1-800-522-6170 Living Out the Chahta Spirit

**CHOCTAW NATION CULTURAL SERVICES TRAIL OF TEARS WALK 2018**  
PO BOX 1210  
DURANT, OK 74702  
1-800-522-6170, EXT. 2517 AND 2332

**Unclaimed Funds Notice**

The Accounting Department of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is trying to contact the individuals listed below.

Choctaw Nation is in possession of unclaimed funds (uncashed payroll checks) that may be due to these individuals.

If you are an employee or former employee of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and your name is listed below, please contact:

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702

Attn: Jessica Pickens, Payroll and Employee Services Accountant  
Or phone (580) 924-8280 ext. 2408

**Allie Marie James**  
**Kathryn Nicole Miller**  
**Donald Stevens**  
**Samantha Duncan**  
**Charlea Michaels**



# Stigler Community Celebrates Eldest Man and Woman



The Stigler Community Center hosted a Valentine's Day party on Feb. 14. Gift baskets were given to the eldest man and woman in attendance. Donald Busse Sr., 85, and Ilena Krausch, 97, were the recipients of the gift baskets. Both Busse and Krausch live in Stigler, Oklahoma.

PK  
DYK  
PK

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# Committee 1 Tribal Council Meeting with Jones Academy Student Council April 2



Tribal Council Committee 1 (front, from left) District 4 Councilperson Delton Cox, District 6 Councilperson Jennifer Woods, District 10 Councilperson Anthony Dillard, District 7 Councilperson Jack Austin Sr., District 8 Councilperson Perry Thompson and District 11 Councilperson Bob Pate and the Jones Academy Student Council (back, from left) Preston Stoliby, Milton Henry, Truvon Willis, Maria Mackey, Alexis Lyons, Tayah Latimer, Odalys Lujano, Priscilla Trejo-Rains and Samuel Kaniatobe met on April 2, at Jones Academy.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU



Michael Lyn Brooks turned 5 on Feb. 1. He is the son of Lyn-Thomas and Janie Brooks of Randlett, Oklahoma. His grandparents are Louis Hutchinson, Georgia Gallaher, Mike Brooks and Lois Bartz. We love you very much and want to wish you a Happy 5th Birthday.

## AND YOU

Happy 97th Birthday to Alyce Caldwell! With love from Deen and Lisa Manis.



# Choctaw Youth Outreach Hosts Tenth Annual Safety Fair



Since 2008 Choctaw Nation Youth Outreach has hosted an annual Safety Camp for the students who are part of the program. This year's event had a total of 163 Choctaw youth in attendance from the 10 and ½ counties. The youth rotated through 17 different safety themed classes. Some of those themes include boat safety, gun safety, emergency management, first aid, emergency medical services, fire prevention, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, Choctaw language, bullying, self-esteem and behavior. The children were also treated to an inflatable obstacle course, fishing, archery, 9 Square and Choctaw stickball.



## AND YOU



Frances Stuart celebrates her 99th birthday on May 24. Happy Birthday from you family Frances!

# Pool Graduates from MSU

Nathan Pool graduated from Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri on Dec. 15, 2017 with a degree in Marketing Management. Nathan is the son of David and Darla Pool; grandson of Royce and Betty Shipman, Christine and Richard Pool and Bob King. Congratulations Nathan!



# Jefferson McDonald Graduates



Jefferson Lee McDonald graduated from Ada High School. His parents are Jeff McDonald and Thalia Walton. His grandparents are Nadine and Larry McDonald; Ervin Walton; and the late Martha and J.C. Hawkins. His great-grandparents were the late Martha Stick and Hosey Walton. His siblings are Kim, Nick and Felicia. His niece is Ariyanna Walker. His aunts and uncles are Marilyn, Randy, Wanda, Matt, Larry, Sherry and Debra. He was a member of the Football team and plays stickball for the Chickasha Tvli team. He plans to work, join the Marines, continue his education and become a Lighthorseman. His family is proud and knows he will succeed at everything he does.



## NOTICE:

### Trail of Tears Walk T-Shirts & Caps Available at Event ONLY this Year...

Purchase Day of Event at the Trail of Tears Walk T-Shirt Booth

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Shirts can be purchased AFTER the event at the Choctaw Store On-line...  
(See June Advertisement for More Information)

1-800-522-6170

FAITH • FAMILY • CULTURE

## TRAIL OF TEARS WALK

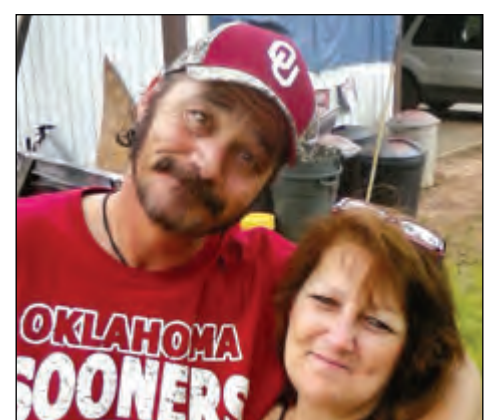
MAY 19, 2018

**Choctaw Nation Division of Tribal Services**

Cultural Services  
Ext. 2517 and 2332

# Pierces Celebrate 22nd Anniversary

Mike and Tee Pierce celebrated 22 years of marriage on Feb. 3. Happy anniversary Mike and Tee. May you have many more years together.





# HUGO WILD ONION DINNER

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The Hugo Wild Onion Dinner drew a large crowd. It was held at the Choctaw Nation Community Center on Thursday, April 12.



Chief Gary Batton visits with Bobbie Ware during the Wild Onion Dinner.

Wild Onion Dinner photos by Stacy Hutto



Kaybreigh Billy, the daughter of Sarah Billy, gazes into the face of her grandmother, Tammy Thompson.



Trenson Harvison watches cartoons on a cell phone while he and his mom wait for the Hugo Wild Onion Dinner to begin.



Tressia Childress, Litha Reeve, Loretta Lambert and Carmen Watkins wait for the main dish of wild onions and eggs to be served.

## Choctaw Nation Counseling Services Help With Suicide Prevention

by VINCE MAYTUBBY

If you are suicidal, you are not the only one who thinks this way. People of all nationalities, Hollywood actors, rock stars, hip-hop artists, popular athletes, professional wrestlers, politicians and standup comedians have all been affected by these types of thoughts.

You are not crazy or out of your mind. If you are finding it very difficult to cope with life, please take your thoughts very seriously.

Some reasons people may have suicidal thoughts include risk factors such as the death of a close family member, friend, loss of other types of relationships, loss of job, broken homes, mental or physical abuse

or even being non-compliant with medication. In addition, people who obsessively rehearse past painful events, isolate themselves for long periods of time, people who are less forgiving of themselves, the abuse of alcohol or drugs, and those that take more risks are at greater risk of suicidal ideation.

Tribal members connecting with support is critical for recovery such as accepting support from God, reaching out to helpful family members, close friends, and church or community involvement. The above support can help to overcome these thoughts and work through the struggles a person may have.

When a person fights suicidal thoughts alone, it is like fighting

a giant bully in a dark alley with no weapons to fight him with. This suicidal enemy has taken many good people down, but with a person who has a willingness to get the necessary help we can fight back against this powerful yet conquerable foe together.

In your mind, you may think you can get through your difficulties on your own; however, life becomes more difficult, overbearing, and can make things much worse. Reaching out and accepting help can save your life and prevent lifelong periods of pain, grief and sorrow for those left behind.

We have counseling services throughout the 10 ½ counties of Choctaw Nation. We have a caring

staff that will do our best to make sure you are safe and provide our most effective resources to make your recovery possible. For more information on counseling services, please contact Choctaw Nation Behavioral Health at 918-567-3065 or McAlester Wind Horse at 918-302-0052.

Also, remember there is a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline that provides 24/7, free and confidential support if you are in distress at 1-800-273-8255.

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## Tom, Williston, Shomo Honored at 22nd Annual A.I.L.Y.C. Spring Powwow



(Left) Angie Williston was recognized as the Educator of the Year at the 22nd Annual American Indian Leaders Youth Council Spring Powwow on April 7. She was given a commemorative blanket from the Youth Council. Choctaw dancers also performed several dances to honor Angie her and her family. The Powwow was held at the McCurtain County Sports Complex in Broken Bow, Oklahoma.



(Middle) Shonda Shomo was also honored during the 22nd Annual American Indian Leaders Youth Council Spring Powwow. She was recognized as the American Indian Leaders Youth Council Alumnae of the Year. Shonda was presented with a blanket and honored with a dance.



Choctaw dancers perform in honor of Angie Williston.



The American Indian Leaders Youth Council, along with A.I.L.Y.C. Royalty pose for a picture with the Powwow honorees. (Left to Right Sitting) Betty Tom was recognized as Artist of the Year, Angie Williston was recognized as Educator of the Year, and Shonda Shomo was recognized as Alumnae of the Year.



Attendees give donations to the drummers for their hard work.



A young man gives a spirited performance during the inter-tribal dance at the 22nd annual A.I.L.Y.C. Spring Powwow on April 7.

Powwow photos by Apryl Mock



# Jones Academy Student Pursues Path to Success

by DAVID SANCHEZ



The distance between Macy, Nebraska and Hartshorne, Oklahoma is exactly 600 miles. It is a straight shot on Highway 75 from McAlester to Macy on northeastern Nebraska's Omaha Indian Reservation. It is unlike the more circuitous route Jones Academy student Alexis Lyons has taken to southeast Oklahoma. Alexis was raised by her grandparents, Betty Grant and Kenneth Lyons, in Macy. It was a strict upbringing in a small town with no traffic lights and a population of 1,023. Alexis' life has been a series of starts, stops and detours, but by her own estimation, she recognizes that those setbacks and hardships have driven her to be successful.

Driven is the operative word. Alexis is in her senior year at Hartshorne High School. She was a starter on the basketball team that went 26-0 during the regular season. Their single loss was to Comanche in the state 3A quarter-finals. Her high school coach, Mark Woolard, describes her as a "force to be reckoned with at both ends of the court." She wasn't always the biggest competitor in the game, but she always played with heart and an oversized passion for the game. She was tenacious and operated with an intensity that often found her on the floor scrambling for a loose ball despite the score or outcome of the game.

That kind of hustle does not go unnoticed. Alexis was named the McAlester News-Capital Defensive Player of the Year. She earned MVP honors for the Tushka Basketball Tournament, the Pick and Shovel Classic in Hartshorne and was chosen as the MVP of her district, the Black Diamond Conference. She is also the Hartshorne High School Basketball Homecoming Queen.

Through all her blessings, Alexis has remained humble and kind. She has deflected much of the attention as she praised the community for their support and her teammates for their hard work and the "drive to win." Alexis was recently selected to All-State in the Mid-East 3A-4A Region—a feat her high school coach Mark Woolard characterized as "really amazing."

The All-State game is in June. It pits the best players in the state from west of I-35 against the best from eastern Oklahoma. Coach Woolard explains, "Of all the schools this side of I-35, Alexis was one of 10 players in the region picked to represent the east." The coach voiced how pleased he is with the team's success and Alexis' achievements.

Amid her triumphs on the court, Alexis is also determined to do well in the classroom and to be a good role model. Her GPA is close to 4.0 as she excels in academic settings. She is a member of the National Honor Society, the National Technical Honor Society and the Jones Academy Student Council. Alexis is currently enrolled in the Bio-Med program at the Kiamichi Technology Center in McAlester. Someday she hopes to pursue a career in "Kinesiology, physical therapy, forensics, (the sciences) and play college basketball."

Introspectively, she finds it hard to describe her strong will or unwillingness to give in or give up, or to identify the force that compels her to dive for loose basketballs so fiercely.

Alexis pushes herself to "be the best and to get better" in all her endeavors. It is the current that runs in her life. Alexis is a member of the Omaha Tribe. The word "Umo ho" literally means "against the current." Her grandmother recalls that Alexis has always been driven. She said, "She always made good grades and stayed away from the bad influences." It has been a long road from Macy, Nebraska, and Alexis is pursuing success in southeast Oklahoma and beyond.

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## Warren Named 2018 Fellowship of Christian Athletes Rising Star

Jada Warren was recently chosen as the 2018 Rising Star for Southeast Oklahoma Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Jada is currently an eighth-grader at Durant Middle School.

The Rising Star award goes to middle school students who were nominated by their huddle coach, who are an integral part of their huddle on campus, on a leadership team and choose to be more involved with FCA and their communities.

Jada is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.



## Jordan Andrews Signs With the University of Minnesota-Morris

Jordan Andrews, a senior at Idabel High School, recently signed his letter of intent to play Division III football at the University of Minnesota-Morris. Jordan was named an All County football player, and 3A-8 all district tightend. He has been selected to play in the Indigenous Bowl football game for Native American athletes in San Diego, California this summer. Not only is he a tremendous athlete, he has also maintained a 3.5 GPA. Jordan is the son of Will and Candace Parker of Idabel, and the grandson of Robert and the late Kimberly Qualls of Idabel. He is the great grandson of Jerry and Sharon Qualls, Barbara Mitchell and the late Leroy Williston, all of Idabel.



## Navarro to Compete in California Junior Bass Championship

Kaine Navarro, 12, is set to compete in the California Junior Bass Championship May 27, at Lake Skinner in Southern California.

Kaine will be representing one of six Junior anglers from the Southern California JR bass Anglers group out of San Diego.

Kaine started fishing in trout tournaments when he was just 3 years old and bass tournaments at 10 years old.

Kaine was introduced to fishing by a family friend Dennis Chico, and was taught how to Bass fish by Tom Lowery and Todd Kline. Kaine is an FLW ambassador and volunteers at local county parks to help teach kids how to fish. He is proud to be the youngest boat captain in the history of the nonprofit organization Cast for Kids at 10 years old. When Kaine is older he would like to be a professional bass angler or biologist. You can follow Kaine Navarro Fishing on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram.



## Poteau Head Start Participates in Trike-A-Thon and Easter Egg Hunt

The Poteau Choctaw Nation Head Start had a fun filled day on March 29. The group participated in a trike-a-thon event followed by an Easter Egg hunt. Head Start staff appreciated all the parents who came and supported their children. The students enjoyed making memories and being active outside.



## 13th Annual Choctaw Nation Employee Co-Ed Basketball Tournament Winners



Team Wanderlust took home first place in the varsity bracket of the 13th Annual Choctaw Nation Employee Co-Ed Basketball Tournament March 17, in Talihina.



Team Choctaw Warriors took home first place in the junior varsity bracket of the 13th Annual Choctaw Nation Employee Co-Ed Basketball Tournament March 17, in Talihina.



Team The Tribe went home with second place in the varsity bracket of the 13th Annual Choctaw Nation Employee Co-Ed Basketball Tournament March 17, in Talihina.



Team Hemoglobin Trotters took home second place in the junior varsity bracket of the 13th Annual Choctaw Nation Employee Co-Ed Basketball Tournament March 17, in Talihina.



# At-Risk Afterschool Program Begins at Choctaw Youth Center

The At-Risk Afterschool Program began at the Choctaw Nation Youth Center in Talihiina on March 26. The program provides nutritious meals to Youth Center participants during afterschool hours.

The Senior Nutrition workers at the Talihiina Community Center, in partnership with the clinical Nutrition Services staff from the Choctaw Nation Healthcare Center, prepare the meals for the At-Risk Program.

The meals are served each afternoon when the children arrive at the Youth Center for afterschool activities. On days that the Youth Center is open all day, a meal and a snack is offered. The coordinated team effort between Health Services staff and the Senior Nutrition Program continue make this program successful. The administrator of the program is Carrie Thrasher, our Health Services registered dietitian in Talihiina.

The USDA via the Oklahoma Board of Education provides reimbursement for this program through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for nonresidential child care institutions to plan, purchase, and serve nutritious meals to eligible children. To be eligible, an At-Risk site must be housed in a low-income area. A low-income area is defined as an area in which at least 50 percent of the enrolled students are approved for free or reduced-price meals at their local school. Children also must be 18 or under at the start of the school year. The At-Risk Afterschool Program is an Equal Opportunity Program.



Photo Provided

Volunteers prepare meals for students in the At-Risk Afterschool Program. The program began at the Choctaw Nation Youth Center in Talihiina in March. The meals are served each afternoon when children arrive for afterschool activities. On days when the program is open all day a meal and a snack are served.

# Preferred Supplier Program Makes New Improvements to Portal

The Preferred Supplier Program (PSP) celebrates another successful year in the alignment of Choctaw-owned companies and local Native owned businesses within Indian Country with Tribal Nations throughout Oklahoma. The group is very excited to announce the site improvements to the PSP portal that will make seeking opportunity much easier for the end user.

- Navigation process made easier.
- Bid Board now available for viewing posted opportunities, simply log into your PSP personal profile.
- View vendors websites
- View online qualified Preferred Vendors by clicking on the business categories.
- Posting Portal for Surplus supplies, partnerships, help wanted and internships.
- Posting of upcoming trade fairs, conferences and trainings to support the growth potential of your business.

Visibility for your business as a Preferred Supplier to the Choctaw Nation Welcome kits are currently being distributed to qualified businesses to be proudly displayed at your business location.

Available for all registered PSP members.

Another arena the PSP has been extremely active in is seeking opportunity for our Choctaw owned suppliers through the development of connectivity within the following areas.

- Consortium of Tribes formed to facilitate the sharing of Native owned enterprise throughout Indian Country.
  - The American Indian Chamber of Commerce State and Nationally.
  - The Minority Development Councils
  - The Buy Indian Act
  - City of Dallas, Tulsa, and Oklahoma City diversity divisions.
  - Federal Government Contracting Office
- We wish all our PSP members a successful year and continued prosperity.

For more information regarding the Choctaw Nation Preferred Supplier Program please contact Lanell Hughes, Program Coordinator, lhughes@ChoctawNation.com, or call 580-924-8280 ext. 2899 or Boyd Miller, Program Manager, bmiller@ChoctawNation.com, ext. 2889.

**Choctaw Nation**  
Preferred Supplier Program

*Your Support for Success*

Providing opportunities for the development and expansion of Choctaw Nation tribal members and federally recognized minority owned businesses.

Register today at  
[preferredsuppliers.choctawnation.com](http://preferredsuppliers.choctawnation.com)

For more information contact  
**(800) 522-6170 ext. 2889**

# JOM Recognizes Durant Schools at Conference

Durant Public Schools was chosen as the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Johnson O'Malley Exemplary school for 2017-2018 and were recognized March 20 during the annual JOM conference, hosted this year by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, which was held at River Spirit conference center located in Tulsa. One school from the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Cherokee Nations, as well as the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Education was chosen to receive the award. The JOM program provides supplemental funding to contracted public schools within the service area and these funds are used to meet the specialized and unique educational needs of eligible students.

Choosing an exemplary school requires schools to display criteria going above and beyond assisting Native American students to succeed. Durant public schools is one of the largest school districts within the Choctaw Nation and currently has an enrollment of 997 Native American students. Their parent committee is comprised of dedicated parents with a devotion to developing and implementing effective programs to ensure their students can reach his or her highest academic achievement. These parents have eleven students enrolled in Durant schools, ranging from Pre-K through the 12th grade. Some of the initiatives of the Durant JOM is having a dedicated Indian Education office serving all Native American students, which assists students and family members by having one central location, the office also contains a computer lab for student use; school supplies organized and distributed for all grades; reimbursement for advanced placement testing and basic ACT test once per year for juniors and seniors; fall and spring semester newsletter; drop-out prevention by monitoring truancy amongst students, with two campuses conducting weekly truancy court for those with absentee concerns; tutoring; and provide representation to new students and parents by working closely with the admission office, administrators, and staff to introduce them to the JOM program.

The Choctaw Nation JOM is a federally-funded program and has approximately 70 participating schools, serving in excess of 12,000 students, across the 10 ½ county service area. The 2019 conference is scheduled to be held in Durant and will be hosted by the Choctaw Nation. For more information regarding the JOM program, please call (800) 522-6170 or visit [www.ChoctawNation.com](http://www.ChoctawNation.com).



by Vonna Loper

The Choctaw Nation Johnson O'Malley program selected Durant Public Schools as its 2017-2018 Exemplary School. Pictured, from left, are District 9 Councilperson James Dry, Charlene Hibbs, Neta Wesley, Pam Carey, Amanda Robinson, Kayla Whitmire and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

## Pastor Olin Williams

# Christian Believers Are Letters



**Pastor Olin Williams**  
Employee Chaplain

"Ye are our epistles (a formal written or printed message addressed to a person or organization) written in our hearts, known and read of all men: for as much as ye are declared to be the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart." (II Corinthians 3:2-3 KJV).

The Christian life begins, continues and finds its fulfillment in the Word of God for the believer. But to the natural man (a non-believer), the Word of God has no place in his or her life.

There is no desire for the things of God to the natural man. The natural man will hunger for the things of the flesh. He or she will not read the Bible for it makes no sense to them.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are

spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians. 2:14 KJV)

However, the non-believer will watch the life of the Christian. He or she will watch what the believer does, where he goes, the company he keeps, the words he or she speaks, and will judge God, not according to the Word of God, but according to the life of the believer.

Therefore, the Christian is the only Bible that this world reads. This is why the believer is admonished to surrender soul, spirit and body to the Lord.

The Apostle Paul wrote this admonition to the church at Thessalonica, "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Thessalonians 5:15-23)

The law of Christ is written in the hearts of Christians and the love of Christ is shed abroad there. The law of God written in tables of stones given to Moses are now written on the tables of the heart of the believer. A humble heart, softened by the new creating power of the Holy Spirit in a new dispensation ascribes all the glory to God. This is the letter that people read.

# District 6 May Events

Below are the list of activities in District 6 for the month of May. There are no activities on Monday, May 28, as it is a tribal holiday.

- Volleyball practice every Monday and Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.
- Choctaw language classes every Monday at 6 p.m.
- Senior lunch every Wednesday at 11 a.m.
- GED classes every Tuesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Friday, May 4, Indian Taco/Bake Sale and Indoor Garage Sale from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Senior Committee Meeting at 1:45 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 9, Victims Services at 11 a.m.
- Thursday, May 10, Shopping day. The bus leaves at 9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, May 16, Senior Day in Durant. The bus leaves at 8 a.m.
- Thursday, May 17, Durant Casino. The bus leaves at 8:30 a.m.
- Friday, May 18, Hunting Lodge in Daisy, Oklahoma.
- Saturday, May 19, Choctaw Nation Head Start graduation.
- Wednesday, May 23, Sam's Club from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Thursday, May 24, Shopping Day. The bus leaves at 9 a.m.
- Tuesday, May 29, Bingo Night from 6-8 p.m. Bring a covered dish and a Bingo prize.
- Thursday, May 31, District 6 Princess Pageant at 6 p.m. in Wilburton.

## The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation is now accepting applications for the Lease Purchase (LEAP) Program

The LEAP Program is a new homeownership program opportunity for Choctaw Tribal members who meet program income and credit guidelines. The goal of this program is to assist families with credit issues to become mortgage ready and lender qualified over time with credit counseling services available.

**For additional program information or for an application, please contact Donna Courtwright at the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation at 1-800-235-3087**