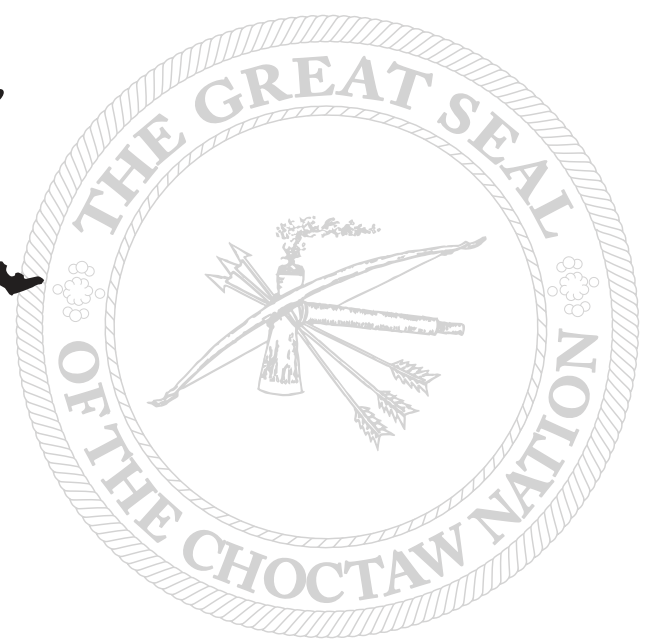


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CHOCTAW NATION

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

April 2015 Issue

## Tribal Council holds regular session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session March 14 at Tvshka Homma.

- The Council unanimously approved two grant applications and a cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs:
- Approved FY 2015 Family Violence Prevention Grant Proposal
- Authorized Chief to place property in Pittsburg County in Trust Status with the U.S.A.
- Business Lease No. G03-3245 with Meridian Aggregates Company, LP in Johnston County
- Approved disposal of surplus equipment
- Application for the Native American Library Services Basic Grant
- Application for the Replicating Evidence-Based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program Grant
- Application for the Rural Outreach Benefits Counseling Program
- Application for the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers and Veteran Farmers and Ranchers Program
- Approved a waiver of Sovereign Immunity for the limited purposes of entering a settlement agreement with GlaxoSmithKline, LLC (GSK)

For detailed meeting information on these resolutions and council bills, go to <http://www.choctawnation.com/government/tribal-council-bills/2015-council-bills/>

The Tribal Council meets at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tvshka Homma.

## What's inside

Columns .....	2
Notes to the Nation .....	5
Food Distribution .....	6
People You Know .....	7
Obituaries .....	8
Education .....	10
Sports .....	13
Iti Favvssa .....	15

## The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy, successful and productive lifestyles.

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## Water relief comes to residents of the Ouachita Mountains

*\$25 million water project to provide service for the first time to members of Choctaw Country*

By ZACH MAXWELL & RONNI PIERCE  
Choctaw Nation

The Ouachita Mountains, for all their beauty, include communities with some of the highest poverty rates in America. Basic services such as running water are a scarcity.

This cycle of poverty could be changing as a consortium of local and federal officials have worked for years on bringing a water system to the rugged hills of Choctaw Country.

McCurtain, LeFlore, and Pushmataha counties are seeing a force for positive change with newly developed access to a delivered potable water system made possible by grants and loans from USDA Rural Development, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Department of Commerce, Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and McCurtain County RWD #6.

"To attract manufacturing or anything else, you need good water and sewer," says Choctaw Nation's Chief Gary Batton.

We always talk about being good stewards of the water which the good Lord has blessed us with. This will help people in southeast Oklahoma keep their families here."

The project includes installation of 253 miles of new water lines and the construction of five pump stations and three water storage tanks.

Prior to completion of the project, residents were forced to bring in



Photo by Zach Maxwell

**USDA State Director for Rural Development Ryan McMullen presents an appreciation plaque to Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation on Wednesday, April 8, for contributing to a multi-million dollar water project in the Smithville area. Joining them are Brian McLain, Councilman Kenny Bryant, Tim Noahubi of the Choctaw Nation and Councilmen Thomas Williston and Tony Messenger.**

their own water or dig their own wells. More than 800 have signed up for water service but the project could impact as many as 1,200 people in locations such as Bethel, Battiest, Sherwood, Octavia and Honobia.

Improving the health and well being of the families who live in the area is a major factor in the project. The new water system also has the added potential of attracting businesses that wouldn't previously consider relocating to an area without a

potable water source. "Access to basic utilities and infrastructure is the minimum that most any prospective business requires to locate in a community. While this part of Oklahoma is in need of further investments, this water system finally clears a major barrier to economic development in the region," according to Ryan McMullen, state director for USDA Rural Development.

The project is the largest of its kind in Oklahoma for USDA, us-

ing \$18 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Sustaining a viable workforce to help develop the area, to establish permanent roots, and to grow the economy is crucial to long-term economic growth.

"We are going to grow in Choctaw Country," says Chief Batton. "I know this council is dedicated to economic development. It could not happen without the infrastructure here."

## Sticking true to native roots leads to opportunity for Choctaw

By ZACH MAXWELL  
Choctaw Nation

One young man's stickball skills have had a direct impact on his acquisition of a scholarship to play lacrosse at St. Gregory's University.

Allen Baker is one of the first Oklahoma Choctaws to get the chance to play collegiate sports because of his involvement in stickball. He joined Texoma Lacrosse in November and began playing in the youth league in February.

be symbolic of a sport coming full-circle, from the brink of extinction to playing a role in its modern, northern counterpart.

Historians think lacrosse may have developed among woodland peoples of northeastern North America nearly a thousand years ago. George Catlin's painting Ball-play of the Choctaw illustrates the connection between the two versions of the sport.

In recent years, the game has enjoyed a comeback in Mississippi and Oklahoma. Now, with

Baker's scholarship, he becomes a trailblazer for future young Choctaws who want to utilize their stickball skills as a crossover to another sport.

"It's quite an honor to have a tribal member such as Allen representing the Choctaw Nation," said Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation. "It is our culture, history and game of stickball that are helping him to get this scholarship. It's keeping our culture alive and it will help people learn about it."

Batton's ultimate goal is to have competitive stickball teams from local colleges and universities. He said stickball can instill "sacrifice, hard work, trust in one another" as well as "unity, honor and respect—the true part of being Choctaw."

St. Gregory's Lacrosse Coach Bryan Seaman recognized the link between his sport and the Choctaw game of stickball. "Historically, they come from the same place." But it was more than stick skills and fleet-footedness he saw in Baker.

"He could easily be a guy who steps into a leadership role," Seaman said. "He's a great athlete and a tough-minded individual. He has a lot of people backing him."

This includes Texoma Lacrosse Coach Mike Delloro of Madill, who introduced Baker to the sport.

"What he will bring to St. Gregory's is heart. He is a person of purpose," Delloro said. "He is the most coachable player I have had."

Parents Robert and Tracy Baker, along with

Allen's sister Raven, all play stickball and participate in Choctaw language and cultural activities.

Tracy works at Bennington Head Start and Robert has an Associate's degree, but they see their son taking the family name to the next level.

"He's the first one out of my family to play a college sport," Robert said. "And St. Gregory's is a great college, so he'll get a good education there."

It's perhaps fitting that a family of stickball players is among the first to see one of their own take this skill set to the collegiate field. Chief Batton made this connection:

"Like the rest of Choctaw culture, it's a family event."

The Cavaliers are wrapping up their 2015 season, but Baker will play competitive lacrosse next spring. Baker plans to study kinesiology at St. Gregory's with the ultimate goal of becoming a physical therapist.



**The Baker family (center: Allen with mom Tracy and dad Robert) with Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Texoma Lacrosse Coach Mike Delloro, Tvshka Homma Coach Ryan Spring, St. Gregory's Coach Bryan Seaman and Chief Gary Batton.**

But Baker's athletic history—and his involvement with Choctaw stickball—runs a little deeper. He was a stand-out center and defensive end for Caddo High School football and participated in basketball, track and weightlifting.

He plays stickball with Team Tvshka Homma and also helps coach in the youth league. Not only this, but he holds down a part-time job and has recently joined the National Guard.

"I like having the background of stickball," Baker said on Monday, April 6, after signing his letter of intent in Chief Batton's office. "It helps with lacrosse in so many ways. It keeps you fit, it gives you hand-eye coordination and toughness."

"More than anything, it means a lot to bring my culture up to Shawnee," he said.

When Baker takes the field next spring, it will



Photos by Zach Maxwell

**Allen Baker practices his stickball skills while coaching at a youth stickball camp in 2014.**

# FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE



## A family legacy

The Easter Celebration last month at Tvshka Homma brought together hundreds of Choctaw families. It felt like a huge family reunion and even with the cool, rainy weather there were Choctaws outside enjoying the activities.

Six thousand colorful eggs covered the Capitol lawn and were swooped up in minutes during Easter egg hunts for the kids and the elders. I think the older “kids” moved faster!

The youth stickball teams met for their first tournament of the year and a few folks even tossed horseshoes in the mud. The gospel singing was great. I enjoyed being there with my family and talking with friends I haven’t seen in a while. I noticed others doing the same, greeting each other with laughs and hugs.

Choctaw people have a history of rallying to help whether it is a community event or assisting someone they have never met. The donation to the Irish during the 1847 Potato Famine

is an example of Choctaw people showing empathy with a nation experiencing a tremendous tragedy. The tribe continues to reach out to others through everything from benefit dinners for a fellow Choctaw to donation drives for other countries.

We have the opportunity to enjoy being with family and friends at festivals and community events because of the legacy left us by our ancestors from Mississippi. We are able to help each other in times of need because of the foundation they put in place for us.

We will honor the Choctaws who traveled the Trail of Tears with a commemorative walk May 16 at Tvshka Homma. It is estimated 15 to 33% of the Choctaws who left Mississippi for their new home perished along the way. That was approximately 1,500 to 4,000 people. It was grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers, teenagers, babies. I don’t like imagining my mother or grandchildren walking thousands of miles in extreme temperatures. The protectiveness I feel for them is I’m sure only a fraction of what the families were feeling during those long days on the long walk.

The Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk will start at 10 a.m. Please join us at our Choctaw Nation Capitol for a special day filled with more fellowship, cultural activities and family fun. Most importantly, it is a chance to join in a tribute to the sacrifices of the Choctaw travelers who first settled in Oklahoma and created our great nation. We are now the third largest Native American tribe in the country. We are strong and have a faith in each other and the future being built for our children.



## Success is a choice

Success is a choice. It is a frame of mind and the tenacity to always strive for what makes us truly happy and secure.

The career I chose to follow was very rewarding. People from all walks of life touched my heart during my years at the Choctaw Nation Recovery Center in Tahihina.

The Recovery Center is a specialized treatment center for the rehabilitation of chemically dependent individuals. The staff at the center considers chemical dependence a treatable illness. Men can walk in with a sense of hopelessness but have an opportunity to successfully complete the program leaving with a new look on life. They are encouraged and taught skills to help guide them in a positive direction.

As in life everywhere, there are things to celebrate and things that sadden us. We don’t always have the effect we desire, but we do have the chance to try again.

There are multiple opportunities for success and we hear of people every day who have doggedly kept moving toward their goal. We have talked about several programs through the Choctaw Nation to help tribal members be self-sufficient. There are times in everyone’s life when they need a helping hand.

One of the newest programs is the Next Step Initiative to help tribal members reach the next step of self-sustainment through supplemental food vouchers. Offices are currently located in Durant, McAlester, Poteau, and Antlers, and there will soon be one in Broken Bow. The Next Step Initiative allows those families whose income is just over the limit for participation in the food distribution program to receive assistance. The program is available to eligible tribal members for up to a year. It can be used in increments of a month at a time if needed. A few months are all it takes sometimes to find a better job or recover from an unexpected illness.

I enjoy seeing the success stories sent to us from all over the world. They include sports feats, promotions, graduations, and military achievements. If you’d like to have your story shared in the News Room on our website, please email to the biskinik@choctawnation.com. To view the current stories, log on to choctawnation.com.news-room/stories-of-choctaw-success.

Your story is an opportunity to encourage others to stay on the path to success.

## Easter Celebration brings over 500 to Tvshka Homma



By **RONNI PIERCE**

Choctaw Nation

A cool, rainy day couldn’t dampen the holiday spirit of Easter egg hunters in Tvshka Homma for Chief Gary Batton’s Easter Celebration on March 14.

Eager children took only minutes to find the six thousand colorful eggs covering the Choctaw Capitol lawn. Golden egg winners took home books, stickballs, and stickball sticks. Winners included Channing Steve

and Jasper Ray Delbert Green, 0 to 3 year olds; Sadie Espinoza and Noah Allred, 4 to 7 year olds; and Vanessa Ludlow and Daniel Howard, 8 to 12 year olds.

Hundreds of families enjoyed activities on the grounds of the Capitol. In addition to the Easter egg hunt, the guests listened to gospel singing and played horseshoes, dominos, and checkers. And youth stickball teams played their first tournament of the year.

“I want to thank all of the staff that planned for months and then made sure we had a delicious lunch and a lot of fun,” said Chief Batton. “Thank you, also, to the Youth Advisory Board who was on hand to help with photos with our special Easter bunny visitors and with the Easter egg hunts.”



Chief Gary Batton kicks off the day’s festivities at Tvshka Homma.

Photos by Ronni Pierce & Zach Maxwell



Serenity Patton scoops up eggs and looks for the golden prize.



After the short trip from Idabel, Amber and Kelly Bond enjoy the day with their kids Maecian and Kelly Jr.

The James Roberts family from Hugo and Okemah take a break in between events.



Over 500 people took part in Easter fun during the March 14th event at Tvshka Homma. Guests enjoyed food, stickball, egg hunts, and other activities during the family outing.

### Choctaw Nation sets filing dates for 2015 election

The Choctaw Nation has set its 2015 filing dates for the July 11 tribal election for the offices of Chief and Council Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 11. Candidates may file May 11, 12, and 13, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Election Board Office at Durant, 529 N. 16th Ave.

A special insert with election and candidate information will be included in the May issue of the Choctaw Nation’s official publication, the BISKINIK. The Election Candidate Insert Policy can be found online at choctawnation.com/government/tribal-elections. For more information, please contact the Election Board at electionboard@choctawnation.com.

## Chaplain’s Corner

### The Second Coming



Rev. Bertram Bobb Tribal Chaplain

We shall continue our study on the signs of Jesus second coming.

From the earliest days of the church Christians have looked for the coming again of Jesus Christ. Their question was always, “Just when is Jesus coming back?” Jesus answered these questions concerning His second coming when He said: “No man knoweth the day nor the hour.” He said again concerning His personal return with these words: “In such an hour as you think not then I shall come.” Then He went on to say that His coming shall be as a thief in the night.

It is true that we do not know the exact time of Christ’s return, but what a blessing to know that He is coming back to this earth.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians “We are not in darkness that we should overtake us as a thief.”

To the Christian, there is no difficulty in understanding why the Lord has kept His return for His church a secret. The Lord Jesus wanted His church, the believers, to be waiting patiently, and watching expectantly, just standing firmly, looking for His return.

There is no doubt that the Rapture of the church is going to be sudden and is going to take the unbeliever by surprise. But to the Christian, to those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, certain signs have been given. These signs are signs pointing to the time when Jesus is coming back. And the knowledge of these signs brings the Christian out of the darkness into the light, so that he will not be overtaken by surprise.

The Rapture of the church will not surprise him.

The Christian who knows his Bible can surely know that Jesus is coming again and can see the fulfillment of prophetic scriptures concerning His return.

The believer, has signs that tells him that the church age is coming to a close. He has God’s Word, he has the Bible. And it is through these Scriptures that these signs are given. And as the Christian looks into the Word of God then he can know that Jesus Christ is coming back and that His coming is very near.

Now the question is “How Soon?” Let me refer you to a portion of Scripture that is outstanding concerning the second coming of Christ.

I want to refer you to the Book of Daniel. Daniel chapter nine. Daniel 9 records the very important prophetic announcement through the prophet Daniel, of the 70 weeks, or the 70 seven year periods, that is altogether a program of 490 years. 70x7=490.

In Daniel chapter 9 verse 24 we read: “Seventy weeks (and the Hebrew word for weeks suggests a group of 7’s - 70 of them or 490 years) are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times.”

Then note verse 26: “And after (that is after seven weeks) threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off ...” Seven weeks (and a score is twenty) so 3 times 20 = 60+2 weeks = 62 weeks plus 7 weeks equal 69 weeks. Then we read on in verse 26 and after 69 weeks, “...shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.”

69 weeks (69x7) 483 years from the beginning of this period of time to the cutting off of the Messiah have been fulfilled. This leaves one seven year period remaining. That one seven year period that 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy is still future.

The Lord Jesus described this seven year period, this 70th week, as a “Time of Great Tribulation such as the world

has never seen nor ever shall see.”

Now that Great Tribulation period that 70th week is presented to us in verse 27 of Daniel chapter 9: “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

“And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week.”

This indicates that the beginning of the Tribulation Period. The beginning of the 70th week of Daniel will come with the confirming of the covenant between the Anti-Christ, the world dictator. The Anti-Christ shall appear at this time, he shall confirm a covenant with the Nation of Israel for one week.

Now this 9th chapter in Daniel gives us the basic things that will happen during the Tribulation Period. The Tribulation Period that will take place right after the church is taken out.

The reason why I have tried to bring this truth out in Daniel chapter nine is because of the covenant with Israel at the beginning of the tribulation. Israel has become a state. If Israel were not a state there could not be any covenant made.

For over 1900 years Israel had never been listed as a state until this generation. In May 1948 the statehood of Israel became a reality. And the Tribulation Period cannot begin until this came about. Today we have the Nation of Israel. The Israelites, Jews, are returning to their land. All of these truths have been prophesied in the Word of God the Bible.

The Word of God is true—with the fulfillment of prophetic Scriptures we can know that Jesus is coming soon.

Perhaps you are not a Christian, you don’t know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and you are not ready for His return for His own. You can be born again and become a child of God by trusting Jesus as your personal Savior. You can ask Jesus to come into your life, by faith. You can pray something like this: “God I am a sinner, I realize I am lost, I trust Jesus as my Savior.” Will you pray that prayer?

Pray for our nation. Pray for our men and women serving our country.

# BUSINESS



Photo by Brandon Frye  
Owner and operator of Kim's Diner, Kimberly Jones, stands with her partner Justin Strange who had stopped by the diner to help during the lunch rush. Since the grand opening of the restaurant on March 1, Jones has been preparing food, waiting tables, conversing with customers, and leading employees every day but Sunday.

## Kim accomplishes her diner dream

By BRANDON FRYE  
Choctaw Nation

After working for other people most of her life, Choctaw Kimberly Jones recently achieved a personal dream by opening her very own restaurant, Kim's Diner, just outside of Denison, Texas.

She has worked in the restaurant industry for 20 years, serving hungry and thirsty customers as a waitress and bartender for local restaurants as well as big franchises. Now, Jones is using everything she has learned to make home-style meals served up with a smile.

It has all happened quickly, Jones said. In January, she was made aware of an appealing empty building east of Denison on Highway 69. Lightly stained wood is present throughout the location, the walls are painted a soft cream, and there is plenty of room to move around. She found the location on a Wednesday, and Kim's Diner had a soft opening the following weekend. Finding success there, she decided to have the grand opening for her restaurant on March 1.

"We prepare and serve country cooking, home cooking. Most everything that comes out of our kitchen is

made from scratch," Jones said. "It is going to be like your mom and pop diner. Yesterday's special was meatloaf, today is goulash."

The menu is something Jones is still perfecting, but she said its development comes from working in the restaurant industry in the area, and knowing what sold and what didn't sell.

One of the most popular things on the menu at Kim's Diner is her cheeseburger. "I've come up with an excellent cheeseburger that just sells," she said. "It is a special meat that I worked and worked on, and then there is also a special bun that you won't find anywhere else around this area."

Locals stop in to eat and chat with Jones and her wait staff during lunch, the busiest time for the diner. But she also makes it easy for workers on a tight schedule to quickly drive up and grab a home-cooked meal for lunch.

"One thing to overcome is the fear of failure when starting your own business," Jones said. "You have to change your outlook, because you are responsible for all of it now. It's very challenging, but it's also very exciting. I have all of the

knowledge it takes to make this work."

Kim's grandmother and grandfather Linda and Aaron Bully were full blood Choctaws, as well as her mother who is an active member of the Durant Choctaw Community Center. She said her grandmother made a frybread she has yet to have seen matched, and could make a meal out of whatever was available.

"As a Native American, there are so many things that I've bounced back from. You know, a lot of Native Americans can," Jones said. "The Choctaw Nation helped me and guided me. I am currently in school and about to graduate. They helped me with school, gave me a clothing allowance, things like that."

Jones said this is all a dream coming true, despite some obstacles in life which had hindered her. "I overcame them all. Here I am today, and I never dreamed that would happen," she said.

To visit Kim and her Diner, come through downtown Denison and take Highway 69 east toward Bells, after 2.2 miles, look for the sign on the right. The address is 2419 US Highway 69, Denison, Texas 75021.

## Layne creates children's apparel

By BRANDON FRYE  
Choctaw Nation

Five years ago, after bringing her first child into the world, Choctaw entrepreneur Adrian Layne started making unique custom baby apparel in Texas, an endeavor which would lead to a successful business called Cuddlestar.

At first, Layne's creations were practical and driven by an enjoyment of the craft. She made clothes for her own newborn son, Eli. She also expanded her selection to include things like bags and purses.

"I got my start by doing artist markets in Austin," Layne said. "I handmade everything on a borrowed sewing machine, my grandmother's sewing machine."

With the stylish fruits of her labors in hand, Layne learned about the various artist markets in the Austin area, then set up shop in a tent. She said these markets were similar to farmers' markets, parking lots of local businesses sometimes set aside for creative folks to sell their goods.

The baby apparel took off, according to Layne. Demand grew, and kept growing. Layne's mother even started pitching in, helping sew for free to meet the demand.

What was popular then is the same as what makes Cuddlestar unique today: practical and stylish baby clothes with western and Native influences.

"A cute, functional cowboy boot for baby is hard to find," she said. But with her design, "elastic around the ankle keeps them snug while the Velcro on both sides makes them easy to take on and off."

She said it took the right kind of support and inspiration to get where she is, which she received from a number of sources. Her husband, who is a professional musician, enjoys being creative and supports a creative environment. And Layne's father, who she says is a big part of her inspiration, is a cowboy boot designer, rancher, and according to Layne, a handsome Marlboro Man kind of guy. She said her father is to thank for the western and Native style of Cuddlestar.

Cuddlestar has grown to require Layne's original patterns and designs be crafted on new sewing machines, with the help of a number of seamstresses. Layne's items are also now available online for purchase, and are sold in nearly 100 brick-and-mortar storefronts and boutiques.

Feeling like she was successfully serving parents looking for western-themed clothing for their children, Layne has now set in motion a new business and line of children's apparel aimed at parents with a different need.

This new business is called Cat and Dogma. It is a trendy and earth-friendly response to a pitfall Layne found in today's popular baby apparel.

"I found there is a problem with babies who wear cloth diapers, rather than disposable diapers," Layne said. "Disposable



Photo provided  
Adrian Layne, Choctaw business owner, shows off a bit of her western style.

diapers are very thin, and cloth diapers are pieces of cotton fabric you put inside the diaper, so baby's clothes can end up ill-fitting."

Layne designed Cat and Dogma's line of clothing to have extra space in the bottom, for the eco-minded families who use cloth diapers. She says the clothes are also meant for every parent and child as an organic and affordable option.

"What is most important to me about the Cats and Dogma brand is what I have done to make it sustainable from farm to store, with organic cotton," Layne said. "It will also be fun, playful, and comfortable."

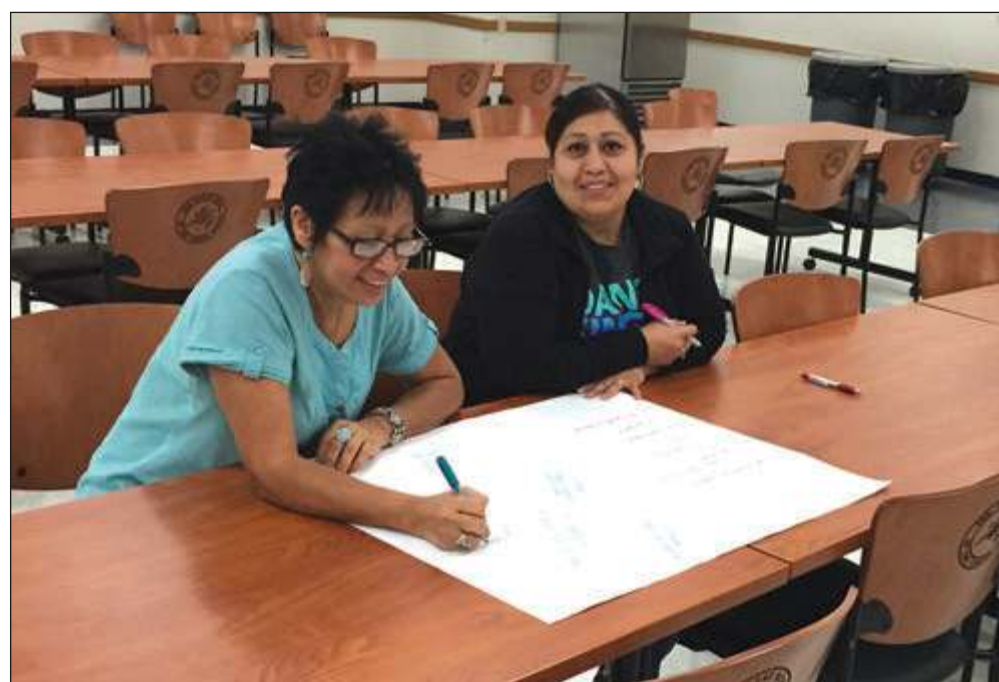
Do not expect to see "mommy's little man" or similar sayings on Cat and Dogma clothes. Layne kept this line completely original, with cute designs on fabric made without any bleaches, dyes, or finishes.

Cat and Dogma will launch with the help of an Indiegogo campaign, which will begin in mid-April and run for 30 days. According to Layne, around six weeks after the campaign with the well-known crowdfunding website, she says around July 1, she can begin shipping her new clothing line.

One of Layne's goals with her businesses is to represent who she is with her products and services. Cuddlestar is very western, much like a good portion of her childhood and her relationship to her father. Cat and Dogma shows off Layne as a self-confessed earth-hippie-momma. She said feels like these businesses represent her, and she has a lot of fun with them.

You can find Cuddlestar online at cuddlestarbaby.com and Cat and Dogma at catanddogma.com. You can also look to get involved with the indiegogo campaign later this month.

## Chahta Ohoyo Tikba Hikia CHOCTAW WOMEN LEADERS



Paula Griffith and Casandra Davis (left to right) discuss what they think makes a good leader. Casandra adds, "I would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for providing Choctaw Women with this opportunity."

## Coming together to support women leaders

By MELISSA CRESS  
Choctaw Nation

The Chahta Ohoyo Tikba Hikia "Choctaw Women Leaders" program, a division of the Choctaw Nation Outreach Services, has kicked off to a great start.

The group has met five times over the last couple of months. The women have been setting goals for themselves and learning many things to help guide them on their journey to reach their goals. We have a total of thirteen women enrolled in this year's classes. Trainings are focused on Leadership, Entrepreneurship, Home Ownership, Energy Efficiency, and Cultural Activities.

Outreach services department would like to thank the Choctaw Nation Career Development, Housing Authority of the Choctaw

Nation, Choctaw Nation's Utility Authority, Choctaw Nation Business Development, and Choctaw Nation Cultural Department for their partnership. We would also like to thank Thomas Williston and Tony Messenger and all of the Community Center and Investment Center Associates. The trainings are being held at either the Idabel Choctaw Nation Community Center or Broken Bow Investment Center depending on availability.

Any Native American women 18 years or older who live in the McCurtain County area interested in participating in the 2016 trainings should contact Melissa Cress, Director, or Joey Tom, Senior Director, at (877) 285-6893.

The application deadline for the 2016 year is Oct. 31 2015.

## CHOCTAW NATION BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The CSBDS provides business assistance to Choctaw tribal entrepreneurs that want to start or expand their business.

Choctaw Tribal members that utilize the services will receive specialized technical assistance through one-on-one business counseling, training workshops, an extensive network of business assistance programs and educational networking opportunities. Assistance offered includes, but is not limited to:

- Business Planning
- Business Counseling
- Business Registration
- Access to Financing
- 8(a) Certification Assistance
- Minority Business Registration
- Marketing
- Business Taxes
- Bid Assistance

### May Events Calendar:

(Please contact CSBDS for more details and to register)

- May 11th - Coalgate - Small Business Community Day
- May 13th - Broken Bow - Small Business Community Day
- May 18th - McAlester - Small Business Community Day
- May 20th - Wilburton - Small Business Community Day
- May 28th - Durant - Oklahoma Tax Workshop

Contact Small Business Development Services today!

bhamilton@choctawnation.com or 580-924-8280 ext.2901

## Choctaw Nation Household Hazardous Waste Collection

### Upcoming events:

- Durant || April 18, 10-2, Durant Event Center, 3702 Choctaw Road
- Idabel || May 16, 10-2, Idabel Community Center
- Poteau || May 30, 10-2, TBA

Bring all unwanted electronics, tires, clothing, shoes, purses, light bulbs, and general recyclables. Also accepting household hazardous waste such as cleaning fluids, pool chemicals, and pesticides. Tribal police will be accepting unwanted medication and ammunition.

Don't forget Earth Day is April 22!



## Higgins leads health and rehab center

Michael Higgins, 31, of Broken Bow, was appointed the administrator of Broken Bow Health and Rehab.

To earn the position, Higgins set out to obtain his administrator license and, after completing the necessary academic, state and federal requirements, finally reached his goal on Feb. 5.

While fulfilling his administrator requirements, he wrote a culture change strategy for Broken Bow Health and Rehab, and the facility will be implementing these culture change elements in 2015. The strategy focuses on de-institutionalization of the facility, creating a more homelike environment for the residents.

Higgins is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. He is the grandson of the late Marie Higgins, whose parents and grandparents, Tecumseh and Sophie Anna, Sampson and Hoteya Jefferson, and Santa and Liswe Anna were original enrollees of the Dawes Rolls.

He is the son of James Higgins of Broken Bow, and Tena Hutchison of Grapevine, Texas. His grandmother is Lois Hutchison.

Higgins graduated from Broken Bow High School in May 2002 and entered the U.S. Navy the following January. He had a successful five year tenure as an Aviation Electronics Technician.

His educational background includes an Associate of Arts in Health Care Administration and a Bachelor of Science in Health Administration with a concentration in long term care.

Higgins was named honor graduate twice after completing his courses at Naval Aviation Technical Training Center in Pensacola, Florida, for basic avionics, and at Naval Air Maintenance Training Unit, NAS Whidbey Island,

Washington, for P-3C Orion Weapon Systems.

He was stationed at Patrol Squadron Four, Kaneohe Bay Marine Corps Base Hawaii. He participated in three major Global War on Terror Operations: Enduring Freedom Afghanistan, Enduring Freedom Philippines, and Iraqi Freedom. He also participated in two multinational Rim of the Pacific Exercises at Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

For his efforts while stationed at Patrol Squadron Four, he received a letter of Commendation following his first deployment for outstanding performance as Avionics Technician, a Humanitarian Medal for support of search and rescue efforts in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami of Indonesia, a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for professional achievement as assistant branch supervisor during the 2006 Rim of the Pacific Exercises, and a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for professional achievement as branch supervisor during Operation Enduring Freedom Philippines.

Higgins was honorably discharged at the rank of Second Class Petty Officer in January 2008.



## Wolf honored for engineer work

Lauren Wolf, a Choctaw member from Oklahoma who has worked with The Boeing Company since 2008, received a Distinguished New Engineer award and title from the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) in October



2014.

SWE found Wolf to be an ideal candidate, being a woman who has demonstrated outstanding technical performance, as well as leadership within the organization and the community.

Wolf earned her bachelor's degree in industrial engineering and management from Oklahoma State University and a master's degree in human factors and systems from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. She also holds a certificate in lean manufacturing from the Oklahoma Alliance for Manufacturing Excellence and a master's certificate in project management from Stevens Institute of Technology.

With Boeing, Wolf provides technical and business support to meet supplier performance targets as part of the B-1B airplane modernization effort to upgrade front and aft cockpits. She develops stakeholder relationships and evaluates performance throughout all contract phases, reviews current and projected work statement to support procurement strategies and contractual compliance.

She evaluates elements of recovery, corrective and preventative action plans and provides data to support the communication of supplier

performance plans, risks, issues, and opportunities. She often travels to visit suppliers with contracts valued at \$1.5 million annually.

"The Choctaw tribe encourages you to embrace your culture and understand how it enriches your life, and Boeing's embrace of all cultures enriches our workplace in the same way," she said.

Through SWE, Wolf has continued to give back by mentoring Girl Scouts, and planning, leading, and presenting at Girl Scout events. Over the past several years, she has mentored approximately 1,200 adolescents and teens encouraging them to pursue engineering. She tries to break down the engineering stereotype by giving girls a positive role model who knows how to have good, clean fun.

"I am overwhelmed and extremely honored to have the society recognize my work and dedication to the science, technology, engineering and math environment," Wolf said. "I have found so much joy and purpose in building up membership in sections and helping girls realize their potentials—that they too can be innovators, scientists, and change the world! I know that SWE made a huge impact on my life, and I only hope to help make that impact on the upcoming generation of girls."

CHOCTAW CASINO | RESORT Delaware North

# CDIB JOB FAIR

MAY 14

CHOCTAW EVENT CENTER DURANT, OK

11AM - 6PM

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Hotel Housekeeping
- Front Desk Clerk
- Valet Attendant
- Bellman
- Environmental Services
- Call Center Rep.
- Security
- Parrot Beach Bar & Grill
- Bartenders & Servers

This event is for CDIB Members exclusively. Must bring CDIB or Proof of Membership.



Careers.ChoctawNation.com

**Tribal Members, Want your Choctaw News Snapshot?** It's easy! Sign up to receive news flashes through email. Just call the Choctaw Nation Circulation Department and provide your email address and phone number, 800.522.6170 x2116 or email [abentley@choctawnation.com](mailto:abentley@choctawnation.com)

**OFFICE SITES:**

Durant (580) 924-7773

Antlers (580) 298-6443

McAlester (918) 420-5716

Poteau (918) 649-0431

Broken Bow **Coming Soon!** Call (800) 522-6170 ext. 2334 for more information.

*Please call to schedule an in-person intake interview.*

**SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD INITIATIVE**

**Next Step**

*Mission*

To assist Tribal Members reach the next step of self-sustainment through supplemental food vouchers, financial fitness and healthy living.

\* Participants are required to complete training set by initiative guidelines.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- One Tribal Member in Household
- Reside in Choctaw Nation Service Area
- Must be a Working Household
- Over income for Food Distribution up to \$200

### Over 18 years old?

Don't forget to update your membership card

If you have recently turned 18 or will be turning 18 within the next 60 days and have not yet obtained your Adult Membership card please complete a new Tribal Membership application and return to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Membership Department. The application can be found online at [www.choctawnation.com](http://www.choctawnation.com) or by contacting the Tribal Membership office at (800) 522-6170 or (580) 924-8280.

~20th Annual~

**OKLA CHAHTA CULTURAL GATHERING**

*Come and enjoy*

*Games like Achahpi (a.k.a. Chunkey)...*

*Weaponry including the rabbit stick and blow dart...*

*The traditional arts of beadwork, pottery, and basket weaving...*

*Food for the whole family, including tanchi labona and grape dumplings...*

*History and culture booths...*

**Help us honor our veterans!**

May 2nd and 3rd || Held at Bakersfield College, Bakersfield, Calif. || [www.oklachahta.org](http://www.oklachahta.org) || (661) 319-6308

# NOTES TO THE NATION

## Looking for Code Talker relatives

I am seeking information on my grandmother, Gency Elapachubbe. She was born Jan. 10, 1905, and was married to Tobias Frazier, a Choctaw Code Talker. She also had a son named Charlie Campbell. Any information, pictures, or stories would be appreciated. Please call (918) 567-3286.

Ralph White



## Texoma Exposition Livestock Show

Thank you to Choctaw Nation for purchasing my pig at the sale. Your support of the kids in Grayson county is greatly appreciated!

Konnor Daniels, Van Alstyne, Texas, pictured with her Reserve Champion York

## Veteran honored at service

On February 19, 2015, our beloved David Bell Williams was laid to rest at our Willis family cemetery in Poteau. Our family was honored with the presence and participation of the Choctaw Nation Color Guard. It was an outstanding representation of all Choctaw veterans and of our great Choctaw Nation.

Thank you for your willingness to be a part of the service celebrating David's life and to honor our Choctaw veteran. It is with our deepest gratitude and appreciation for caring and giving. It is times like this that are forever remembered and our lives are deeply touched. God Bless You.

David Bell Williams Family

## Youth of the Nation

Mahli Webster, YAB member

There are many things students of today's world face. There is the inevitable stress from school, work, sports, etc. Not to mention the additional stress seniors must face when every day of their last year of high school is overcrowded with application after application and the pressure of deciding what to do with their lives after graduation. It's hard. I wish I could have provided a better, more elaborate word, but that's the only one that seems appropriate. It's just hard.

In addition to the aforementioned problems, I think one of the toughest things high school students have to endure is judgment. It seems like no matter what you do, wear, say, or even think makes others assume that they should have an opinion on it. Sometimes I feel like even the breaths I take will be judged.

We shouldn't feel this way. We shouldn't have to worry about what people think about our wardrobes. We shouldn't have to censor our opinions, or our thoughts, or our actions just to save ourselves from the unwanted opinions of a mean girl, boy, or parent.

I understand we are all entitled to our own opinions, and we all have the freedom of speech. But, when did those privileges become weapons to use against those who use them for their initial purpose? The next time you think a negative comment about your "friend," your colleague, your child, or your neighbor, please remember that we are already judged enough. Please remember that it is hard. Please remember how it feels to be judged yourself.

**Gary Batton**  
Chief

**Jack Austin Jr.**  
Assistant Chief

The Official  
Monthly Publication  
of the  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Judy Allen, Senior Executive Officer**  
**Lisa Reed, Executive Director**  
**Vonna Shults, Media Director**  
**Ronni Pierce, Editor**  
**Zach Maxwell, Reporter/Photographer**  
**Brandon Frye, Reporter/Photographer**  
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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal Members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for 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.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs changed, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Article deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month's edition.

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.



Thank you to Choctaw Nation for support at the Love County Jr. Livestock show. Thank you Mr. James Dry for representing our Choctaw tribe.

Kacie and Maggie Mapp, Turner 4-H



## Storm shelter program successes

I want to say a big thank you to Chief Gary Batton and the Choctaw Nation for my new storm shelter! It is very appreciated. I live in a county that has been hit quite a few times and I am so thankful to have the new shelter to go into. Again thank you.

Linda Gillispie

This letter is to thank you for helping us with the storm shelter program. It will give us a great peace of mind in the coming storm season.

Thomas and Shirley Sorrels

I am grateful and appreciate the help for our storm shelter. Thank you so much Choctaw Nation. It is a blessing.

Tommy V. Whiteman

Thank you to the Choctaw Nation for providing me with a beautiful shelter this year. I will be safe from storms in Frederick (instead of getting into a closet). Great job Choctaw Nation for the support of our People.

Linda (Airington) Hefner

## Transit program is there for citizen

My name is Bruce Wolfe. I have needed transport for about four years. I am well aware of the expenses the tribe pays for labor, fuel, insurance, etc.

Dispatch and the drivers (all I have dealt with) have been courteous and go out of their way to make my appointments possible. Without the transport benefit, I would have missed, at minimum, 80 appointments out of 100.

I would like to thank the transit department for their part and, equally important, the Choctaw tribe for continuing to finance the transit department.

Words can't possibly express how grateful I am. Thank you.

Bruce Wolfe



## Crane cousins in San Diego

Please convey my thanks to Chief Batton and how very much these visits are appreciated by those of us living outside of Oklahoma. My grandmother, Mary Myrtle Crane, made sure we all knew that we were Choctaw and proud of it.

Here's a photo of the Crane cousins at the cultural meeting bead class which we all enjoyed very much!

And, I want to thank you again for the Biskinik. It's a wonderful paper, and I know it is a lot of hard work.

Linda Pennington

## A home with heat

I want to thank the Choctaw Nation for giving us a new cook stove and central heat. We haven't had either one in two years. They have made our mobile home safer and warmer. Again, thank you.

Sheila Anderson

## EVENTS

### Noahubi - Columbus- Battiest Family Reunion

May 9 from 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Broken Bow City Park

Bring a covered dish and prizes for bingo. Come and let's enjoy family, friends, games, and lots of food!

For more information, call Louise Laney at (580) 286-3647 or Susie Rose at (580) 743-6434

### Idabel Wild Onion Dinner

Thursday April 30 @ 6pm

Idabel Community Center

2408 E Lincoln Rd

32nd Annual Southwest Open Chili Championship Choctaw Casino Resort

May 23 & 24

Entry Fee: \$25

For more info, call James Taylor at 940.733.4536

## Inter-Tribal Arts and Crafts Beading Class

EVERY Thursday  
6 - 9 p.m.  
Choctaw Community Center  
1203 W. Liberty Rd.  
Atoka OK

Public is welcome to come learn tribal beadwork.

Beads and thread available for purchase.

**Wade-Jefferson-Prock Family Reunion**  
**June 13, 2015**  
**Robbers Cave State Park Wilburton, OK**  
**Bring photos, food and family!**  
**For more details, call:**  
**(580) 579-2332**

## Chief's Appreciation Dinner

Friday May 8 @ 5:30pm

Coalgate Community Center

District 12 Councilman James Frazier and staff will be hosting an Appreciation dinner for Miko Gary Batton at the Choctaw Nation Community Center 103 E. California St. in Coalgate, OK

## Birthday Singing for Hannah Bryan

Saturday • May 9 • 7 p.m.

Supper at 5 p.m.

Agape Church in Broken Bow

All singers are welcome and everyone is invited.

*You are cordially invited to attend . . .*

## The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Legal Assistance Events

Samantha Guinn, a licensed attorney, will be available to provide assistance with simple legal documents. This service is **free** to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters she may be able to assist with are:

- Family law (adoption, divorces, custody, child support)
- Drafting a simple will, power of attorney, or living will
- Contracts and leases

April Community Center Schedule	May Community Center Schedule
• 4/16 Coalgate	• 5/14 McAlester
• 4/23 Wright City	• 5/21 Talihina
• 4/30 Atoka	• 5/28 Stigler

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

*Please call ahead during winter months to confirm events have not been canceled due to inclement weather. Currently we are not providing representation in court or assisting in criminal matters.*

## District 8 Perry Thompson's Wild Onion Dinner

May 5 • 6pm

Choctaw Community Center  
408 North M St., Hugo

» 2015 Bow Shoot Schedule «  
Tvshka Homma Capitol Grounds

May 9 • June 13 • July 11 • Aug. 8 • Oct. 10  
Registration, 10:30 Competition, 11:00

Long Bow » Recurve Bow » Selfbows » Handmade Bows

No compound bows

Age groups: 5 & under co-ed; 6-8 co-ed; 9-13 co-ed; 14-16 boys & girls; 17-19 boys & girls; 20 & over men & women

Special Events: Sept. 6, Labor Day Festival, 8 a.m. & Turkey Shoot, Nov. 14

Prizes for each age group at end of each shoot  
Final prize awarded at end of year for overall points

Information, please call  
Sue Folsom (800) 522-6170x2134 or  
Pam Waugh (580) 775-7862.

# HEALTH

## This National Nutrition Month, the Academy encourages everyone to bite into a healthy lifestyle

There is no one food, drink, pill or machine that is the key to achieving optimal health. A person's overall daily routine is what is most important. That is why, as part of National Nutrition Month® 2015, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics urges everyone to "Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle."

The Academy encourages Americans to return to the basics of healthful eating through National Nutrition Month. This year's theme encourages consumers to adopt a healthy lifestyle that is focused on consuming fewer calories, making informed food choices and getting daily exercise in order to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of chronic disease and promote overall health.

"A healthy lifestyle—one based on regular physical activity and an eating pattern chosen to meet individual nutrient needs within calorie limits—is vital to maintaining good health and quality of life," said registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy President Sonja Connor. "This year's 'Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle' theme gives consumers an easy reminder that achieving optimal health is not about a specific food or time or year, but rather a life-long commitment that leaves plenty of time for the foods and activities we love."

The Academy strives to communicate healthful eating messages that emphasize balancing food and beverages within an individual's energy needs, rather than focusing on any one specific food or meal. To this end, it is the Academy's position that improving overall health requires a lifelong commitment to healthful lifestyle behaviors, emphasizing sustainable and enjoyable eating practices and daily physical activity.

"The key is determining the lifestyle balance that provides the body what it needs, while still allowing room for the foods and activities we enjoy most," Connor said. "This

is where the expertise of registered dietitian nutritionists plays such a key role. RDNs work with consumers to find balance and create sustainable eating and physical activity plans that fit their tastes and routines."

Initiated in 1973 as a week-long event, "National Nutrition Week" became a month-long observance in 1980 in response to growing public interest in nutrition.

To commemorate the dedication of registered dietitian nutritionists as the leading advocates for advancing the nutritional status of Americans and people around the world, the second Wednesday of each March is celebrated as "Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day."

As part of this public education campaign, the Academy's National Nutrition Month website includes a variety of helpful tips, games, promotional tools and educational resources, all designed to spread the message of good nutrition based on the "Bite into a Healthy Lifestyle" theme.

###

All registered dietitians are nutritionists—but not all nutritionists are registered dietitians. The Academy's Board of Directors and Commission on Dietetic Registration have determined that those who hold the credential registered dietitian (RD) may optionally use "registered dietitian nutritionist" (RDN) instead. The two credentials have identical meanings.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at [www.eatrightpro.org](http://www.eatrightpro.org).

With this information in mind you may want to try is easy to make and tasty alternative to hamburgers.

### Recipe of the Month

#### Homemade Black Bean Veggie Burgers

From allrecipes.com

**Ingredients:**

- 1 (16oz) can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon Thai chili sauce or hot sauce
- 1/2 onion, cut into wedges
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs or panko

**Directions:**

1. If grilling, preheat an outdoor grill for high heat, and lightly oil a sheet of aluminum foil. If baking, preheat oven to 375 degrees F, and lightly oil a baking sheet.
2. In a medium bowl, mash black beans with a fork, potato masher or just clean hands until thick and pasty.
3. In a food processor, finely chop bell pepper, onion, and garlic. Place mixture in cheese cloth or paper towels and squeeze off excess juice. Then stir into mashed beans.
4. In a small bowl, stir together egg, chili powder, and chili sauce.
5. Stir the egg mixture into the mashed beans. Mix in bread crumbs until the mixture is sticky and holds together. Divide mixture into four patties.
6. If grilling, place patties on foil, and grill about 8 minutes on each side. If baking, place patties on baking sheet, and bake about 10 minutes on each side.
7. Serve as you would your favorite burger and enjoy!

**Nutrition Facts**  
Per Serving:  
Calories 198 kcal      Carbohydrates 33.1 g      Cholesterol 53 mg Fat 3 g  
Fiber 9.8 g      Protein 11.2 g      Sodium 607 mg

**Additional Information**  
I hope you enjoy this healthy and tasty alternative to hamburgers! For more information you may contact Erin Adams, RD, Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Center 800-349-7026 x-6959.



## Trail of Tears Bike Team

**How it Began.** The U.S. government moved the Choctaws off of their land to make room for white settlement. The last concession was made in 1830 with the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. After doing the ride for three years, the bike team knows the closer we get to southeastern Oklahoma the more beautiful and friendly the Nation becomes. We also gain some small understanding of the hardships endured by those who walked before us. As we ride through the towns along the way we create a "Trail of Smiles" for those who see us pass by, and hopefully they wonder about our ancestors who we honor as we ride the same route they walked over 180 years ago.

#### Why We Do This.

- To embrace the memory and spirit of our Cultural History
- To honor our ancestors
- Experience some challenges our ancestors had faced on the Trail of Tears
- By living an active, healthy lifestyle as example for individuals, families, and friends

TOT Bike Team: Billy Eagle Road III, Teresa Eagle Road, Mary Barrs, Mary Ayn Tullier, Brian Johnston, Johnnie Anderson, and Tony Stoltzfus

To contact us:  
One Choctaw Way, Talihina, OK 74571, (918) 567-7000 x 6550 or sipokni.tot@gmail.com

**10 tips**  
Nutrition Education Series

## make better beverage choices

**10 tips to get started**

ChooseMyPlate.gov

**What you drink is as important as what you eat.** Many beverages contain added sugars and offer little or no nutrients, while others may provide nutrients but too much fat and too many calories. Here are some tips to help you make better beverage choices.

- 1 drink water**  
Drink water instead of sugary drinks when you're thirsty. Regular soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sweet drinks usually contain a lot of added sugar, which provides more calories than needed. To maintain a healthy weight, sip water or other drinks with few or no calories.
- 2 how much water is enough?**  
Let your thirst be your guide. Water is an important nutrient for the body, but everyone's needs are different. Most of us get enough water from the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. A healthy body can balance water needs throughout the day. Drink plenty of water if you are very active, live or work in hot conditions, or are an older adult.
- 3 a thrifty option**  
Water is usually easy on the wallet. You can save money by drinking water from the tap at home or when eating out.
- 4 manage your calories**  
Drink water with and between your meals. Adults and children take in about 400 calories per day as beverages—drinking water can help you manage your calories.
- 5 kid-friendly drink zone**  
Make water, low-fat or fat-free milk, or 100% juice an easy option in your home. Have ready-to-go containers filled with water or healthy drinks available in the refrigerator. Place them in lunch boxes or backpacks for easy access when kids are away from home. Depending on age, children can drink 1/2 to 1 cup, and adults can drink up to 1 cup of 100% fruit or vegetable juice\* each day.
- 6 don't forget your dairy\*\***  
When you choose milk or milk alternatives, select low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soy milk. Each type of milk offers the same key nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium, but the number of calories are very different. Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups of milk per day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2 1/2 cups and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.
- 7 enjoy your beverage**  
When water just won't do—enjoy the beverage of your choice, but just cut back. Remember to check the serving size and the number of servings in the can, bottle, or container to stay within calorie needs. Select smaller cans, cups, or glasses instead of large or supersized options.
- 8 water on the go**  
Water is always convenient. Fill a clean, reusable water bottle and toss it in your bag or brief case to quench your thirst throughout the day. Reusable bottles are also easy on the environment.
- 9 check the facts**  
Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose beverages at the grocery store. The label contains information about total sugars, fats, and calories to help you make better choices.
- 10 compare what you drink**  
**Food-A-Pedia**, an online feature available at [ChooseMyPlate.gov/SuperTracker](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov/SuperTracker), can help you compare calories, added sugars, and fats in your favorite beverages.

\*100% juice is part of the Fruit or Vegetable Group. Juice should make up half or less of total recommended fruit or vegetable intake.

\*\* Milk is a part of the Dairy Group. A cup = 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1 1/2 ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Go to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) for more information.

DG TipSheet No. 19 May 2012 USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Choctaw Nation Breastfeeding Classes

Come join us for a breastfeeding class in your area! Many mothers want to learn more about breastfeeding so that they can feel more confident in their decision to breastfeed. This breastfeeding class will address the following topics:

- \*latch
- \*frequency of feedings
- \*breastfeeding resources
- \*positioning
- \*growth spurts

<p><b>DURANT</b> April 8, June 10, August 12, October 14 1:00 - 3:00 pm Choctaw Nation WIC Office</p>	<p><b>TALIHINA</b> April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7 9:00 - 11:00 am Choctaw Nation DWC</p>
<p><b>POTEAU</b> May 6, September 2, November 4 9:00 - 11:00 am Family Investment Center</p>	<p><b>IDABEL</b> April 15, June 17, August 19, October 21 9:00 - 11:00 am Choctaw Nation Clinic Education Room</p>
<p><b>McALESTER</b> May 13, July 8, September 9, November 18 1:00 - 3:00 pm Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Downstairs Conference Room</p>	

**Sponsored by Choctaw Nation WIC**  
For more information, or for breastfeeding help, please call Erin James, IBCLC 1-800-522-6170 extension 2507

### Choctaw Nation WIC

WOMEN, INFANTS and CHILDREN

Site	Hours	Days
Antlers (580) 298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tues.
Atoka (580) 889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.
Bethel (580) 241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tues.
Boswell (580) 380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Fri.
Broken Bow (580) 584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs
Coalgate (580) 927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.
Durant (580) 924-8280 x 2257	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo (580) 326-5404	8:00-4:30	Daily
Idabel (580) 286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon., Thur., & Fri.
McAlester (918) 423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau (918) 647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville (580) 244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thur.
Spiro (918) 962-3832	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.-Fri.
Stigler (918) 967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Mon.-Wed.
Talihina (918) 567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton (918) 465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thur.

## CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

**WAREHOUSES & MARKETS**  
**Antlers:** 306 S.W. "O" St., (580) 298-6443  
**Durant:** 2352 Big Lots Pkwy, (580) 924-7773  
**McAlester:** 1212 S. Main St., (918) 420-5716  
**Poteau:** 100 Kerr Ave, (918) 649-0431

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES**  
**Bethel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Broken Bow:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Idabel:** Choctaw Community Center  
**Smithville:** Choctaw Community Center

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**ANTLERS**  
 Market open weekdays May 1-31, except for:  
**May 6:** Idabel 9-11:30 a.m.; Broken Bow 1-3:30 p.m. (market open)  
**May 13:** Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)  
**Closed:** May 25 for holiday; May 28-29 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 14, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**DURANT**  
 Market open weekdays May 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** May 25 for holiday; May 28-29 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

**McALESTER**  
 Market open weekdays May 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** May 25 for holiday; May 28-29 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 12, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

**POTEAU**  
 Market open weekdays May 1-31, except for:  
**Closed:** May 25 for holiday; May 28-29 for inventory.  
**Cooking with Carmen:** May 7, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

# PEOPLE YOU KNOW

## Head Start crafts and learns heritage



The Choctaw Nation Bennington Head Start celebrates Heritage Day in fun and cultural ways each month. Tracy Baker, who leads the class, plans the activities to match the seasons.

"We do a cultural activity every month on Heritage Day with the children," Baker said. "We use material that is more suitable for small

children to work with."

Baker said it is very important for children to learn about their culture and the way things were done in the past. She added the children enjoy the activities and it also helps educate the parents.

Recently, Bennington Head Start has dyed material and made baskets using pipe cleaners. Baker also taught



a lesson over what could be used to dye material, and why ancestors dyed the materials. After finishing their craft projects, the children take home their creations to show their parents and keep.

Pictured are Joshua Campo weaving a small basket and Danni Bohanan carefully dipping cloth material into a bowl of colorful dye.

## Pesina creates award winning art



High School Junior Isabella Pesina from Billerica, Mass. won a Gold Key (first prize) award in the Massachusetts Scholastic Art & Writing competition for a photo she entered titled "America." Her photograph has

since moved on to compete in the National competition. She also won "Best of High school" in a United States Congressional Art Competition hosted by Monserrat College of Art and received a \$500 scholarship to use towards an art class at Monserrat in Beverly, Massachusetts.

## Head Start Policy Council Members named



Choctaw Nation Head Start welcomed its new Policy Council members for the 2014-15 school year. These volunteers serve as a link between the program, government, parents, and community, working to plan and coordinate the program.

The current Policy Council members are:

(Antlers) Mailynn Jones; (Atoka) Leslie Benefield; (Bennington) Rachael Reynolds; (Broken Bow) Stephanie Brantley, Charity O'Donnell; (Coalgate)

Cheryle Eaves, Carin Parrilla; (Durant) Natalie Cox, Keith Gray, Robert James, Marquita Hughes; (Hugo) Morgan Burgess, Christi Hood, Tori Smith; (McAlester) Nancy Paxton; (Poteau) Kayla Angel; (Stigler) Gail James; (Wilburton) Vickie Pruitt; (Wright City) Kristie Collins.

Community Representatives are: Staci Pettigrew, Amy Loyd, John Vick, and Angela Dancer.

## Kemp celebrates 50th birthday



Wishing a happy 50th birthday to Tammy Kemp of Durant (and Fort Towson) on April 18, from her friends, sister, niece, great-niece and great-nephew.



## Atoka throws 50s sock hop

Anthony and Janie Dillard take a break with Sherley Zaicek during the 50's-themed sock hop at the Atoka community center in March.

Zaicek, main cook for the Atoka Choctaw Community Center and event planner, said this first event was a big success with over 200 attendees, many of which visited from other community centers.

## Walker wins speech contest



Chad Walker, a student at Kiamichi Technology Center in Stigler, shows his first place award from the prepared speech contest he won at the Skills USA competition in Atoka recently. He is shown being congratulated by Tribal Councilman Ron Perry at the Choctaw

Nation Career Expo in McAlester. Chad's victory qualified him for the upcoming state competition.

## Jones Academy goes fishing



Students from Jones Academy caught, filleted, and ate their own catfish.

After this, the students put what was left of the fish into the garden for fertilizer, showing a knowledge of and responsibility to a natural process.

## Mathews collects numerous accolades



Devon Mathews, from Heavener, performs with multiple bands and has recently found much success musically and scholastically.

Mathews has performed with the Eastern District Band Director's Association (EDBDA) Honor Band, as well as the Eastern Oklahoma Band Director's Association (EOBDA) Honor Band.

He made state with other groups such as the Oklahoma Small School Band Director's Association (OSSBDA), with the Oklahoma Solo & Ensemble Competition, and with Southeastern Oklahoma State University Scholastic Competition for Music Fundamentals and Algebra 2.

He is a member of the Choctaw Nation Honor Society with a 4.0 GPA, as well as a member of the National Honor Society. His family said they are all very proud of him.

## Halford attends TRIO day at capitol



Elijah Halford, Choctaw citizen from Broken Bow, recently attended the annual TRIO day held at the state capitol. Elijah is a first year student at Carl Albert Junior College. While at the Capitol Elijah dropped by the office of Representative Lisa J. Billy, to visit about college.

## Choctaw Nation Women, Infants, and Children program earns CUDOS Effect award



Top row, standing: Vicki Kirkpatrick, ReaDeana Vineyard, Ami Richards, Erin James, Sabrina Tynan, Kim Shannon.

Bottom row, standing: Julene Carter, Lead Facility Director; Teresa Jackson, Senior Executive Officer; Health Services, Ashley Tutt, Peggy Carlton, WIC and Senior Farmer's Market Coordinator; Betty Baker, Claudene Williams, WIC Director; Marie Oehler, Linda Woolbright, Sharron Hammers, Brittany Burke, Sandra Dupire.

Bottom row, kneeling: Sam Fitzer, LaVonne Lawson, and Shelly Rector, Nutrition Coordinator and WIC Assistant Director.

care for those individuals utilizing the WIC program with remarkable personal guest service, expertise, and effectiveness. In appreciation for the WIC Program's outstanding service, associates were awarded a celebratory brunch and gift bags.

Teresa Jackson presented Claudene Williams, WIC Director and Shelly Rector, Nutrition Coordinator & Assistant Director with a permanent plaque and an official certificate boasting the WIC Program's accomplishment.

The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program with Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) earned a Choctaw Nation Guest Service Award. The award is called "CUDOS Effect," which stands for Commitment, Unity, and Dedication of Service.

This honor was created to recognize those facilities, clinics, and departments which offer guests a friendly, efficient, and professional experience. WIC has shown commitment to their work and unity of purpose, as well as dedication to those they serve.

In 2014, Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority welcomed the WIC department into its ranks. The associates quickly began practicing all guest service standards both internally and with their participants. After scoring the highest overall quality inspection scores during the 4th quarter of 2014, the WIC department earned the "CUDOS Effect" Award.

Celebrating with the WIC Department on their outstanding achievement was Teresa Jackson, Senior Executive Officer of Health Services; Lead Facility Director, Julene Carter; and Guest Service Director, Joyce Wells. Each leader offered words of congratulations, pride, and encouragement for continuing to



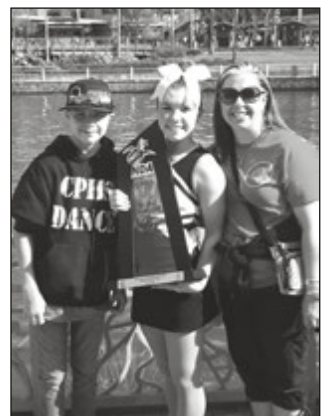
## A Choctaw State Capitol devotional

Pastor Jay Mule, a Choctaw from Oklahoma City, led devotionals at the State Capitol in February. Rep. Lisa J. Billy sponsors Tuesday devotionals and her family was able to attend. Billy and her family are Choctaw. Her husband Phillip Billy and children sang Choctaw hymns, the first time such hymns were performed at the State Capitol during devotionals. Monie Horsechief also sang in Pawnee.

## Proud Choctaw on top dance team

Saige Maxville, a very proud Choctaw native, is part of the varsity dance team at Charles Page High School in Sand Springs. The team recently placed second in nationals in Orlando, Florida.

Saige is the daughter of Tim "Frybread" and Heather Maxville and granddaughter of Robbie Maxville. Saige is very proud of her native roots. She teaches others and educates them on her traditions. She is also an avid stickball player. We just can't be more proud of her! Congratulations Saige.



## 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 1/2-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 you must reside within the 10 1/2 county area of the Choctaw Nation.

For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580.924.8280 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:

McAlester Community Center • April 24, 2015 and

Wilburton Community Center • May 15, 2015 at

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## Free Will Preparation Clinic

at the following  
Choctaw Nation Field Offices

April 30, 2015: 2208 E. Main St., Stigler, OK  
June 19, 2015: 2408 E. Lincoln Road, Idable, OK  
July 17, 2015: 2750 Big Lots Parkway, Durant, OK

OKLAHOMA INDIAN LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

Call 1-800-658-1497 for

details and to make your appointment!

(You must have an appointment to see an attorney.)

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4300 Penimeter Center Drive, Suite 222  
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800-658-1497  
405-917-7060 (FAX)

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# OBITUARIES

## Willadeane 'Deane' Andrews

Graveside services for Willadeane "Deane" Andrews were held March 10, 2015 at Woodlawn Cemetery with Pastor Tom Launius officiating.

Deane passed away Thursday, March 5, 2015, at her home at the age of 82.

The daughter of Harold David and Juanita Agnes (Redpath) Hopkins was born Sept. 26, 1932, in McAlester where she grew up and attended school. While growing up in McAlester Deane was active with the Rainbows. She graduated from McAlester High School in 1950. On Aug. 15, 1951, Deane married William Maurice "Bill" Andrews in Eureka Springs. While Bill went to college they lived in McAlester and Norman. They later moved to Claremore where they raised their children. Deane worked in several area flower shops including Florals by Linda. She was very active in her church, First Presbyterian, helping anywhere she could. Deane loved gardening and taking care of her flower beds. She also enjoyed painting, reading, needlework, cooking, baking, and fishing with Bill.

Deane is preceded in death by her husband, Bill in 2011; and her parents.

She is survived by her children: Carrie Jo Steffens and husband, James of Claremore, Bill Andrews of Tiawah, Art Andrews and Durlene Tanner of Verdigris, and Kenny Andrews of Claremore; daughter-in-law, Deb Andrews of Inola; sister, Juanita Vannoy of Virginia; grandchildren: Seth Andrews, Elizabeth Steffens, Jenny Andrews, and Matt Andrews; great-grandchild, Trace Andrews; cousins: Betsie Helms of Tulsa, and Buddy Kamm of El Reno; sisters-in-law: Pat Hultz and husband, Gene of Crown Point, Indiana, and Mary Hampton of Crawfordsville, Indiana; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family members.

Memorial contributions may be made to First Presbyterian Church, 102 E. 4th St., Claremore, OK 74017.

Leave your memories of Deane and view her tribute online at [www.mmsfuneralhomes.com](http://www.mmsfuneralhomes.com).



## Frances Delois Walker

Frances Delois (Sheffield) Walker, 73, a lifelong Lane resident, was born on Saturday, Sept. 13, 1941, to Jewell and Pauline (Wise) Sheffield, at Lane. Frances passed away on Monday, March 16, 2015 at Atoka.

She attended Atoka High School. Frances was a Sales Clerk at Sharpe's for 35 years. She married Jackie Ray Walker on Sept. 1, 1962 at Durant; they had 50 years of wedded bliss. He preceded her in death on Dec. 5, 2012.

Frances was a member of Crystal Baptist Church. She enjoyed westerns, especially John Wayne, Elvis, word puzzles, Patsy Cline, and Dallas Cowboys. She was a very proud member of the Choctaw Nation.

She is survived by a daughter, Cindy Walker Love and Lee Estrada of Dallas; granddaughters, Amy Love and Sam Ebrahimi of Dallas, and Sara Brown and husband Clay of Dallas; great-grandchildren, Amber Knipe of Dallas, Preston Miller of Dallas, Nathaniel Ray Brown of Dallas, Archer Jackson Ebrahimi of Dallas; siblings, Betty Kennedy and husband Roe of Oklahoma City, William Sheffield of Bastrop, Texas, Marlin Sheffield of Yukon; sister-in-law, Betty Walker Donaldson of Springfield, Ill.; nieces, Tawanna Sheffield-Osborne and husband Craig of McAlester, Nancy Sheffield-Witt and husband Larry of Pauls Valley, Wanda Sheffield-Ramirez and husband James of Austin, Linda Sheffield of Austin; nephews, Terry Sheffield of Lane, and Dale Sheffield and wife Ruthie of Atoka; special cousins, Doyle Sheffield and wife Sharon of Lane, and Mary Sheffield and husband Curtis of Lane; special friend, Janis Isbell and husband Doug of Crystal; along with other relatives and many dear friends.

She was preceded in death by parents, Jewell and Pauline (Wise) Sheffield; husband, Jackie Ray Walker; son, Jason Walker; brothers, Alfred, Glen Dale, Carroll Sheffield.

Interment was in Butler Cemetery in Lane.



## Ivanna Aranda

*"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*

On March 14, 2015 Ivanna Aranda entered into her eternal home.

Ivanna leaves to treasure her life, her parents, David and Kristi (Anna) Aranda of the home; paternal grandparents, Ismael and Minerva Aranda of Hope, Ark.; maternal grandparents, Heriberto and Margie Hernandez of Nashville, Ark. and Solomon and Jackie Anna of Broken Bow; paternal great-grandparents, Maria Aranda and Irma Salazar both of Mexico; aunts and uncles, Adrian Aranda, Ismael Aranda Jr and wife, Areli and Minerva S. Aranda all of Hope, Ark., Dewayne and Teather Anna of Idabel, Shannon Yanez of Nashville, Ark. and Christopher Anna of Broken Bow; she is also survived by several cousins.

She was preceded in death by her maternal great grandparents, Jacob James, Mary Battiest and Sarah Anna and two uncles, Timothy James and Brad James.

Celebration of life services were held at Hochatown Cemetery.

## Peggy Jean Kee

Peggy Jean Kee, 78, of Sunset, went to be with her Lord on Feb. 10, 2015 in Decatur, Texas.

Peggy was born Oct. 17, 1936 to William Casey and Ada Mae (Gibson) Selby in Oklaunion, Texas. She married Howard Wayne Kee on Aug. 29, 1952 in Electra, Texas. They were married for 62 years and are members of Jack County Cowboy Church.

She was preceded in death by her parents, a brother, and sisters.

Left behind to cherish her memory is her husband, Howard Kee of Sunset; sons, Edward Kee and wife Jean of Alexandria, Virginia and Larry Kee and wife Irene of Springtown, Texas; 5 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; numerous nieces, nephews, and a host of friends.



## Clifford Wilson, Sr.

Clifford Wilson, Sr., 62, of Tulsa, formerly of Broken Bow, passed away March 9, 2015 in Tulsa. He was born July 21, 1952, the son of Calvin and Nellie Battiest.

Clifford was of the Baptist faith. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, camping and going to the casino. He cherished spending time with his grandchildren and watching them play sports.

He is survived by his children, Kenny Wilson and wife, Norma of Horatio, Ark., Clifford Wilson, Jr. of Tulsa; longtime friend, Carol Ishcomer; brother, R.B. Wilson, Jr. of Broken Bow; sister, LaQuinta Wilson of Idabel; five grandchildren, Dakotah Wilson, Ayden Wilson, Kylie Wilson, Erin Ishcomer and Cameron Ishcomer; a host of family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his father, Calvin Battiest; adopted father, R.B. Wilson and mother, Nellie Wilson; four brothers, Mitch Wilson, Kenneth Wilson, "Hot Rod" Wilson, Arnold Wilson; one sister, Leona "Bashford;" and one grandson, Gabriel Wilson.

Interment was at Broken Bow Cemetery, Broken Bow.



## Charles Edward 'Chuck' Stultz

Charles Edward "Chuck" Stultz, 56, went to be with his Lord Feb. 18, 2015.

Chuck was born April 8, 1958 to Margreet Janeel (Campbell) and Charles Allen Stultz in Lawton.

He had Cerebral Palsy all of his life but he never let it keep him from enjoying life. He loved music, loved to fish, loved motorcycles and he LOVED his family.

Survivors include his mother, Janeel Stultz of Marlow; his four sisters, Vickie Boyer and brother-in-law Gwin Boyer of Azle, Texas, Ginger Giles and brother-in-law Jon Giles, of Duncan, Rebecca White and brother-in-law Melvin White of Duncan and Lana Gantt of Duncan; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews which he loved very much; and his dog, Butch (Juan).

He was preceded in death by his father, Charles Allen Stultz; and a brother, Russell Allen Stultz.

Interment was at Duncan Cemetery.



## Virginia Lee Caudle

Virginia Lee Caudle, 80, passed away March 12, 2015 at Paris Regional Medical Center, Paris, Texas. She was born Sept. 28, 1934 in Stonewall, the daughter of Ollie and Joyce (Krebs) Pettit.

Virginia and Lowell Caudle were married on June 9, 1989 in Farmersville, Calif. She was of the Christian faith and for many years had worked as a home care provider. She worked in U.S. Government in housing, was a motel manager, and worked as a cook at a soup kitchen in Selma, Calif. and had received recognition for her work.

She leaves to cherish her memory her husband, Lowell Caudle of Paris, Texas; three daughters, Judy Hitchcock of Goshen, Calif., Anna Anderson of Tulare, Calif. and Karen Tinney of Rattan; one brother, Larry Pettit; one sister, Joyce Oliver; six grandchildren, Nancy, Jennifer, Thomas, Becky, Angela and Suzann; and several great-grandchildren; many nieces, nephews and friends.

Virginia was preceded in death by her parents; one daughter, Trudy Brown; one son, Joseph Risenhoover; one grandson, Matthew Anderson; and one sister, Shirley Wright.

A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date.

## Jonathan Randall Marris

Jonathan Randall "Catfish" Marris, passed away at the age of 44, on Saturday, March 21, 2015, at Ada. Funeral services were held March 25, 2015, McAlister Cemetery, Overbrook, with the Rev. Dan McLemore and The Rev. George Harjochee officiating.

Jonathan was born on Jan. 10, 1971, to Leonard Marris and Florene (Jefferson) Marris at Lawton. He attended school and played football for the Plainview Indians and graduated from Plainview Schools with the Class of 1990. He has been with his life-partner, Jenifer Denison, since 1991 and from their union came two daughters. Jonathan worked as a general laborer throughout the county until taking a position through a contractor at Michelin Tire Company as a forklift driver until his health forced him to retire. Jonathan was an avid OU fan, but most important to him was watching his girls play softball and soccer.

He is preceded in death by his parents; infant brother; brothers, Darrell Marris and Roger Marris; and sisters, Priscilla Nan Marris and Lisa Christine Marris.

Jonathan is survived by his life-partner, Jenifer Denison, and two daughters, Taegen Skye Marris and Savannah Wynter Marris, all of the home; 10 siblings, Arlie Marris and wife, Jackie, Harry Marris and wife, Delores, Tony Marris, Lani Marris, Phil Marris and wife, Mary, Tammy Marris, Wendell Marris and wife, Lawanda, Kendell Marris and wife, Cassandra, Stefanie Brown and husband, Edward Jr., and Latitsha Royal; father-in-law, Charlie Denison; numerous nieces and nephews; and a host of family and friends.



## Nehemiah Gipson

Nehemiah Gipson, 61, a Caney resident, was born on Saturday, July 11, 1953, to Willie and Mary Jane (Barcus) Gipson, at Talihina. Nehemiah passed away on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at Denison, Texas.

He graduated high school at Pittsburg, Kansas (home of the Purple Dragons) in 1973, he was on the basketball team, won ribbons for running cross country; and later attended SOSU for 3 years for drafting.

Nehemiah was self employed, he was a beadmaker. Earlier in his life he worked at Sonic in college and Atoka Memorial Hospital for two years as an orderly.

He married Margaret Ann (Scott) on May 21, 1990 at Atoka. He was of the Native American Religion. Nehemiah enjoyed fishing, basketball and beadwork. He was very proud of Choctaw culture.

He is survived by wife Margaret Ann Gipson of the home in Caney; sons, Steven Gipson and wife Kayla of Durant and Chunsa Gipson of Caney; nephews, Roger Gipson Jr. of Chicago, Illinois, Charles LeFlore and wife Jeanette of Kingston; sister-in-law, Betty Jean Gipson of Chicago; along with other relatives and many dear friends.

He was preceded in death by parents, Willie and Mary Jane Gipson; a son, Tunsabi Gipson; and brothers, Roger Gipson and Jeremiah LeFlore.



## Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw tribal members and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes or other official sources. Family members/individuals may still submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspapers 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. Notices may be edited for space limitations.

Send official obituary notices to:  
Biskinik  
PO Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702  
or  
email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

## Ferman Dewayne Wilson

Ferman Dewayne Wilson, 77, a lifelong Atoka County resident, was born on Wednesday, April 7, 1937, to Noel J. and Starla (Peeler) Wilson, at Lane. Ferman passed away on Monday, March 23, 2015 at Tulsa.

He attended Iron Stob and Lane schools and graduated from Atoka High School in 1956. Ferman was a truck driver. Ferman proudly served his country in The Air Force. He enjoyed deer hunting and fishing.

He is survived by a son, Emmett Wilson and wife Janet of Tushka; siblings, Edith Soester of Durant, Ruth Morris of Durant, Eloise Bingham and husband Joe of Texas, Peno Wilson of Tushka; along with grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, other relatives and many dear friends.

He was preceded in death by parents, Noel and Starla Wilson; brothers, Kenneth Wilson, Eugene Wilson, Aubrey Wilson, James Wilson Jr.; and sisters, Nadine Warford, Marlin Wilson.

Interment was held in Butler Cemetery in Lane.

## Edna L. (Cole) Stamps

Edna L. (Cole) Stamps, 90, of Odessa, Texas, passed away on March 12, 2015 in Odessa.

Edna was born in Keota to Edgar and Loraine Cole on Jan. 6, 1925. She married Kenneth Stamps on March 1, 1943 in Stigler. She worked as a seamstress for Luskey's Western Wear.

Edna was the last surviving member of her childhood family and is preceded in death by her parents, four sisters and three brothers.

Edna is survived by her husband, Kenneth Stamps; daughter, Linda Carroll White; two grandchildren, Melissa Thornton and Amy Chavez; six great-grandchildren, Claudia, Anthony and Melissa Chavez, Meade, Conner and Colin Thornton; one great-grandchild on the way, Aviana Grace Palmer.

Burial was in Sunset Memorial Gardens, Odessa, Texas.



# EDUCATION



Photo Provided  
K D Moody teaches a group of students during a summer school session in Durant. The POSSE summer school program is expanding this summer, with classes like this one in every district.



## Stigler recognized by JOM

Stigler was recognized as the exemplary Johnson-O'Malley program in the Choctaw Nation during the 2015 Oklahoma JOM Conference banquet March 4 in Catoosa. Accepting the award are Councilman Ron Perry of Stigler, Chairperson Leland Sockey, Choctaw Nation Senior Director of Child Development Rebecca Hawkins, Stigler School JOM Coordinator Michelle Moore and Vice Chairperson Felicia Sockey.

The conference began March 3 with two days of workshops scheduled for participants from schools throughout Oklahoma. There are 70 schools in the Choctaw Nation participating in JOM and serving over 11,000 Native American students. Congratulations to the Stigler JOM program and thank you for your commitment to the education of our youth.

## Oklahoma State University to supply student teachers for POSSE summer school program

By **BRANDON FRYE**  
Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Partnership of Summer School Education (POSSE) program teamed up with Oklahoma State University (OSU) to offer a better learning experience for students this upcoming summer.

The joint venture is being called Educate and Collaborate. Education experts from OSU and the Choctaw Nation crafted the program to provide classroom settings in Choctaw Country for OSU education majors.

POSSE is designed to provide summer intervention in reading and math for both Choctaw and non-Choctaw students in kindergarten through third grade who are attending public school within Choctaw Country. This summer POSSE is expanding to provide a summer learning site in each of the 10 1/2 counties. The selection of eligible students is based on the end-of-year math and reading assessment benchmark scores, or teacher recommendation.

The practical benefit of this for young students attending summer school this year is there will be more available classrooms across the Choctaw Nation, as well as more teachers ready to guide their learning.

"We are getting to work with people who are experts in the field," Larry Scott,

Director of POSSE said. "We are talking about a major university's education department. The resources they have will benefit the children of the Choctaw Nation."

The relationship between the Choctaw Nation and OSU began roughly two years ago when officials from the university—including the Dean of the College of Education, Pamela "Sissi" Carroll—were introduced to leaders of the Choctaw Nation during a lunch meeting in Durant.

"Listening to Joy Culbreath, Stacy Shepherd, Paula Harp, Jim Parrish, Larry Scott, Neal Hawkins, and Lori Wells at that meeting, I began to understand how deeply the Choctaw Nation is committed to education, especially the education of its children," Carroll said. "In my role at the College of Education, and as a former teacher of middle and high school students, I was drawn to the wonderful opportunities for teaching, research, and service that a partnership with the Choctaw Nation offers the faculty and students of the College of Education."

In addition to providing more teachers for our students, a partnership with a major research university like OSU opens up possibilities to better understand and research the success of programs like POSSE.

For example, according to research

by the Education Department of the Choctaw Nation, students who attended the 2014 summer school demonstrated significant improvement in reading and math. The results from a parent survey also indicated that over 90 percent of parents surveyed were very satisfied with the summer school program. A partnership with a research university could help better uncover the specifics of statistics like these.

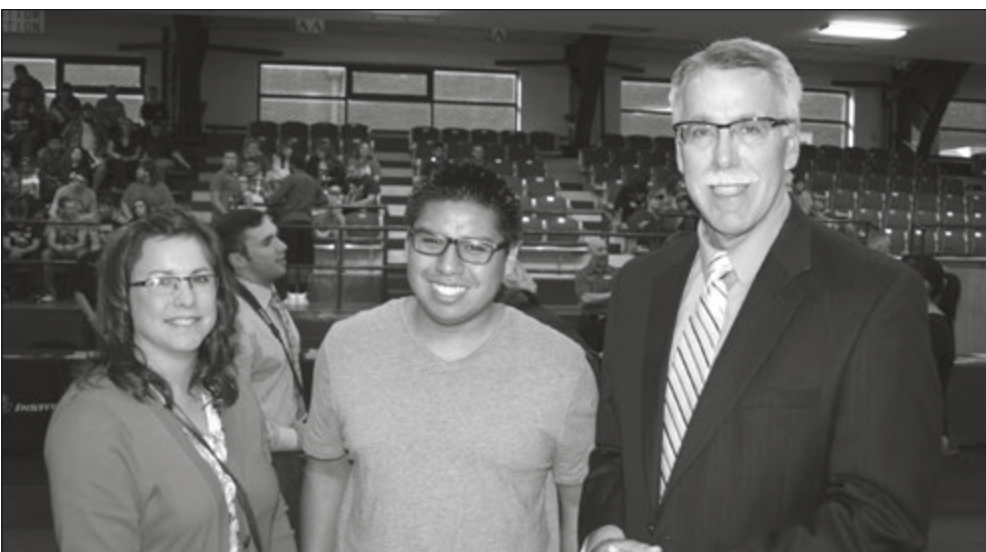
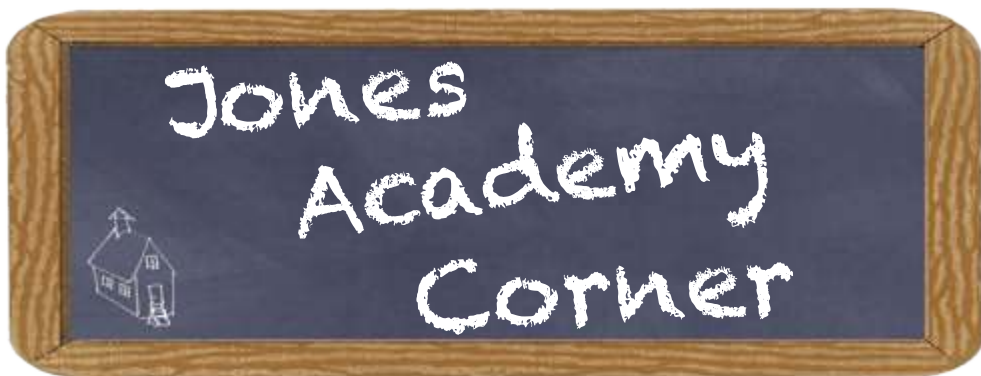
Scott said cooperative projects like Educate and Collaborate bring student teachers into our schools for a summer, and could also help bring more teacher applicants to work an entire career in the schools within the Choctaw Nation.

Both parties aim to sustain and improve young children's learning, as well as reinforce the students' interest in learning.

"We take very seriously our goal of working with communities to identify and address needs—to be involved at the local level, and learn with the community as we develop approaches to address needs through teaching, research, and service," Carroll said. "We will learn alongside the teachers of the summer school classes. We anticipate that children who participate in summer school will continue to demonstrate increased growth in mathematics and reading, as they did in 2013 and 2014."



<p>- 1 - May 30, 6pm Idabel Community Center</p> <p>- 2 - May 22, 6pm Broken Bow Community Center</p> <p>- 4 - May 23, 4 - 6pm Poteau Community Center</p> <p>- 6 - May 22, 6pm Wilburton Community Center</p> <p>- 7 - May 24, 2pm Antlers Community Center</p>	<p>- 8 - May 28, 6pm Hugo Community Center</p> <p>- 9 - May 29, 6 - 8pm Event Center</p> <p>- 10 - May 30, 3pm Atoka Community Center</p> <p>- 11 - May 22, 6pm McAlester Community Center</p> <p>- 12 - May 22, 6pm Coalgate Community Center</p>
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Victor Martinez (center) is flanked by Hartshorne High School Counselor, Jennifer King and EOOSC Director of Student Affairs Stephen Glazier

## Jones Academy seniors prep for the future

During the fall semester, 12th-graders at Jones Academy were busy planning and pursuing their educational interests for life after high school. They attended college workshops and visited several universities in preparation for the big transition.

In September, the seniors participated in the College GPS Workshop, a short seminar about college expenses and financial aid sponsored by the Choctaw Nation Talent Search program. Several seniors took their ACT tests that same month. More ACT tests would follow in October and November plus an ACT Workshop with test prep specialist Chad Cargill. There were college visits to East Central University, Southeastern State University, Northeastern State University and Eastern Oklahoma State College.



Seniors Ke'ana Watashe and Breanna Brown attend the College Fair at EOOSC in October 2014.

On Oct. 21, the 12th-graders attended a college fair at EOOSC meeting with university representatives from all over Oklahoma and Arkansas. That evening the students attended the OSU-IT Career Showcase and Open House in McAlester. They were able to tour the Choctaw Defense plant and explore career opportunities in manufacturing and technology.

On Nov. 1, the seniors met with 60 undergraduate college and educational institutions at the Choctaw College Connect seminar in Durant.

## GEAR UP helping students at Jones Academy

This year has been a flurry of activities for Jones Academy students enrolled in the GEAR UP program at Hartshorne High School. Freshmen and sophomores have made several excursions outside of the classroom in an effort to prepare themselves for their post-secondary education.



Students from Jones Academy visit ECU. (left to right) Daisica Rice, Raquel Ramirez, Laura Morgan, Gabriela Bernal, and Rose Foote.

In October, both classes made separate visits to East Central University (ECU) in Ada and toured the campus. The students learned about college life and scholarship opportunities. After doing a walk-through of the campus, BJ Eckhart, an ECU graduate and admissions recruiter, informed the students about academics, college housing and financial aid. He shared his personal experience of funding his entire college career by procuring obscure scholarships he found on the Internet. His story provided an eye-opening experience to the students about online grant opportunities such as endowments for being a red-head, liking potatoes, or having a certain last name. The trip benefitted the prospective students greatly and provided them with in-

sight into college living.

Sophomores also participated in an ACT Test and Character Building Workshop presented by Chad Cargill. He spoke to approximately 400 students from twenty different schools in the immediate area including Jones Academy students. He instructed the young participants on how to prepare for the college entrance exam and improve test scores. More importantly, Mr. Cargill also encouraged the students to take the initiative to serve others and be active in giving back to their communities.

In December, freshmen paid a visit to the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum. The tour included visual and audio exhibits about the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995. The museum provided computer-generated and interactive displays, along with rubble left from the explosion. Personal effects honoring the 168 victims were viewed in the Gallery of Honor. The building also houses the perpetrator's car which he drove when he was apprehended shortly after the blast. The students received a sobering lesson about the history and events that took place on that fateful day.

Tenth graders had an outing to the Science Museum of Oklahoma and Omniplex in January of this year. On the field trip, the students observed a myriad of science exhibits as well as hands-on demonstrations explaining the basic principles of physics and science in everyday life. The displays included giant presentations detailing bodily functions, how pendulums and gravity work, gyroscope and balance exhibits, and steering through a Segway Course -on a real Segway of course! At the end of the tour, students saw a documentary at the Dome Theater chronicling the life of Jane Goodall and her 40 years of work with wild chimpanzees in Gombe National Park on Lake Tanganyika in Africa.

In March, GEAR UP will sponsor Arel Moodie, an entrepreneur, author and motivational speaker on leadership and college success. Mr. Moodie has written the Amazon bestselling self-help books "Your Starting Point For Student Success and the Art of Likability."

Jones Academy students enjoy working with Rachael Ranallo who directs GEAR UP activities, and express gratitude to the GEAR UP and Hartshorne High School staff for their efforts in providing such practical opportunities for learning.



ACT workshop facilitator Chad Cargill photographed with Jones Academy students (left to right) Camden Coleman, Seth Crow, Candida Rooks, and Zach Bennett.

# EDUCATION



Center Supervisors above from left to right: Marie Cravens (Poteau); Gwen Martin (Idabel); June Dobbins (Bennington); Jennifer Helt (Wilburton); Lindsay Sistrunk (McAlester); Jackie Anna & Kathy Tisho (Broken Bow); Staci Sawyer (Coalgate); Lauren Scott (Durant); Michael Gills (Bethel). Not pictured: Sharon Carter (Antlers); Anita Zurline (Atoka); Natasha Hudson (Hugo); and Rebecca Good (Stigler).

## Choctaw Nation Head Start Centers recognized as Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program

By KATY PRUITT  
Choctaw Nation

Choctaw Nation Head Start centers received recognition as a Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program as follows: (1) Excellence: Antlers, Bennington, Broken Bow, Coalgate, Durant, Hugo, Idabel, McAlester, Poteau, Stigler and Wilburton (2) Merit: Atoka, Bethel. The certification program is administered by the Oklahoma Turning Point Council and the State Department of Health, Center for the Advancement of Wellness.

The three levels of certification (basic, merit, and excellence) are based on the percentage of total criteria met in the following categories: (1) Health Education; (2) Nutrition; (3) Physical Activity; (4) Screen Time; (5) Safe and Healthy Environment; (6) Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services; (7) Community and Family Involvement; (8) Health Promotion for Staff and, (9) Professional Development. To qualify for any level of certification, Head Start programs are held to the highest standard in the Early Childhood Category.

"The Certified Healthy Early Childhood Program is in its pilot year and recognizes Early Childhood Programs that are working to improve the health of children, families, and staff by providing wellness opportunities and implementing policies that lead to healthier lifestyles. Early Childhood Programs that advocate for health are recognized as leaders in the community!" Certified Healthy Oklahoma (<http://certifiedhealthyok.com/early-childhood-program/>)



## Choctaws coach science olympiad

Choctaws Nikki Tolbert and Cynthia Charboneau, coaching a Science Olympiad Team at Whittier Middle School in Norman, placed 2nd in the state at University of Central Oklahoma in March.

Charboneau is second from left on the back row, Tolbert is third from left in the middle row.

## Leach makes University Dean's List



Jake Leach of Springhill, Tennessee, ranked among 460 students named to the Union University Dean's List for the fall 2014 semester. Leach, a Freshman, earned his spot on the Dean's List for achieving a 3.6 GPA.

The dean's list includes full-time students who achieve a 3.5 point average on a four point scale.

Jake graduated from Summit High School in

2014 Springhill, Tenn. where he was very involved in DECA (Distributive Education Clubs of America) and attended People's Church where he played in the youth band, went on missions trips with the youth group, and was a leader in the summer camp program.

His parents are Alisha Leach and Clark and Amy Leach. His brother is Ben Leach. His grandparents are Susana and Dave Pate, Victor and Mary Chavez, Kent and Linda Leach, and Cheryl and Raymond Adams.

**Chahta Anumpa**  
**Aiikhvna**  
◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

**Possessive Pronouns: vm, a – 'my'**

*Possessive pronouns indicate ownership and comes before nouns.*

*'vm' or the 'm' form is used before nouns that begin with a vowel.*  
**vm – pronounced 'ahm'**

1. Yvmmt vm oka.  
That is my water.
2. Vm aboha yvt libesha.  
My room is warm.
3. Vm abinili yvt lapushki.  
My chair is soft.
4. Kvta hosh vm isht ishko achefa tuk?  
Who (was it that) washed my cup?

**a – or the 'n' form (nasal underline), is used before nouns that begin with a consonant.**  
**a – pronounced 'anh'**

1. Ilvppv a kafi sv yimmi  
I believe this is my coffee.
2. A shulush vt liteha chiyohmi.  
My shoes are really dirty.
3. A bahta ish pisa ha?  
Have you seen my bag?
4. Kvta hosh a kaa achefa tuk?  
Who washed my car?

vm, a – my yvmmt – that	lapushki – soft kvta hosh – who? (is it that) kafi – coffee sv yimmi – I believe shulush – shoes	ish - you pisa - see kaa - car achefa - wash tuk – past tense marker isht ishko – glass; cup bahta – bag
oka – water aboha – room vt, yvt – subject marker libesha – warm abinili – chair ilvppv – this	liteha – dirty chiyohmi – really ha? – past tense; have. . . , did	

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

## ATTENTION

### Choctaw Artists

If you are interested in participating in a juried and judged Choctaw Indian Art Show. Let us hear from you!

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the 2015 Choctaw Indian Arts Show held Labor Day weekend at Tvshka Homma, OK. **Must be 18 years of age & and 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  
P.O. Box 1210  
Durant, OK 74702

### CHOCTAW COLLEGE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

- The Choctaw clothing grant is a "one-time only" allowance.
- A grant of \$300 is provided for a semester GPA of 3.00 to 4.00.
- A grant of \$250 is provided for a semester GPA of 2.00 to 2.99.
- Students earning a semester GPA of 1.99 or less can re-apply once a semester GPA of 2.00 is achieved.
- A COLLEGE transcript is required to apply. Applicants must be full-time students and must have completed at least one semester of college prior to application.

## NEED COLLEGE CLOTHING?

## Do you have a student that attends school in TEXAS?

**Enroll your student into the Choctaw STAR Program!**

For more information and to access online enrollment, visit:  
[star.choctawnation.com](http://star.choctawnation.com)

# Ireland recognizes gift from Choctaw Nation during potato famine

## Artist honors the Nation with his sculpture

By ADAM KEMP

Contributing Writer

The nine eagle feathers tower 20 feet into the Irish sky.

Aligned in a circle, the look is imperfect, bends and creases in one feather distinguishing it from its next metallic counterpart. The feathers stand strong, made from steel and bound together with more than 20,000 welds. But they also give off a sense of fragility, a feeling that a strong breeze could topple them at any moment.

"This monument represents this time of great instability," sculptor Alex Pentek explained. "But it also represents this great moment of compassion, strength and unity."

Built to honor a donation by the Choctaw Nation to the people of Ireland during the Great Potato Famine, Pentek has spent more than a year sculpting a work he's named "Kindred Spirits."

Scheduled to be unveiled in May in Bailic Park in Middleton, a small town of 12,000 not far from Ireland's southern coast in County Cork, a plaque in the middle of the structure will detail how in 1847, the impoverished Choctaw Nation was able to scrape together \$170 to send to Ireland to help feed starving people. The sum would be close to \$5,000 in today's money.

But it's not the size of the long-ago gift that resonates with Irish nationals today, but the sacrifice required to make it.

During the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s, more than a million people perished in Ireland when a blight decimated potato crops that served as the primary food source for almost half the population, but primarily the rural poor.

Irish were either starving or fleeing the country in hopes of finding work and food in neighboring countries.

The event was a watershed moment for Ireland — shaping the country's agriculture, politics, demographics and culture from that point forward, according to historians.

During those years, 1847 was considered the worst.

A local newspaper wrote about how frustration mounted because of a lack of support from the country's own government.

"The people watch food melting in rotteness off the face of the earth, all the while watching "heavy-laden ships, freighted with the yellow corn their own hands have sown and reaped, spreading all sail for England."

Joe McCarthy, who today serves as East Cork's municipal district officer, said that's why the Choctaw donation meant so much to people back then. Just when they thought nobody cared, a group from across the world reached



Irish artist Alex Pentek stands beside a part of his "Kindred Spirits" sculpture. Pentek took on the massive, year-long project after researching the plight of the Choctaw people.

out to lend a helping hand. The county is paying for the sculpture, which a local Irish newspaper reported will cost more than \$100,000.

"These people were still recovering from their own injustice, and they put their hands in their pockets and they helped strangers," McCarthy said. "It's rare to see such generosity. It had to be acknowledged."

In 1831, the Choctaw Nation, along with members of the Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole and Chickasaw nations, had been forced to walk hundreds of miles to Oklahoma from their ancestral lands after President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act in 1830, which ended American Indian claims to land in the southeast U.S.

Struggling through harsh conditions, 17,000 Choctaws would attempt the perilous journey, which came to be known as the Trail of Tears. They would be met with disease, starvation and exposure during one of the coldest winters on record. More than 6,000 Choctaws died.

"It was a death march," Pentek said. "As I researched more into this, it had a profound impact on me. These people were basically sent away from their homes to die. It sends a shiver down my spine thinking about it."

Forced to settle in what is present-day southeastern Oklahoma, the Choctaw Nation, which had occupied large portions of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, adjusted to life in Oklahoma quickly. The people lived a simple life, starting farms and raising families as they recovered from their time on the trail.

When word reached them about the plight of the Irish, the familiarity of the stories opened wounds that had just started to heal, said Chief Gary Batton, the tribe's current-day leader. Despite

their situation, impoverished and homeless, the Choctaw people pooled their money to send to Ireland. Batton said it was the tribe's way of saying, "Your story is our story." "We didn't have any income," Batton said. "This was money pulled from our pockets. We just went through the biggest tragedy that we could endure, and they saw what was happening in Ireland and just felt compelled to help." Now, 168 years later, the selflessness of the Choctaw Nation still is taught in Irish schools with an emphasis on the fact that they gave even when they couldn't afford to do so.

"To then be able to have that generosity of spirit to see that these people needed help and we'll do whatever we can ... there's a strength in that donation that is so much more than just money," Pentek said. "I wanted to try to get that across."

This is not the first time the Choctaw Nation has been honored in Ireland. In 1990, Choctaw leaders traveled to County Mayo to take part in a re-enactment of an 1848 protest. The gesture was returned in 1992, when Irish leaders took part in a trek from Oklahoma to Mississippi. Former Irish President Mary Robinson also has been named an honorary Choctaw chief.

Batton said he's been invited to the late May unveiling. He hopes to attend and take part in another chapter of the Choctaw-Irish story.

"We should be proud of our history and culture that we have," Batton said. "These are great healing moments. A great moment for us to show our respect back to them as nation to nation. A chance to stand up and say, "A, Chata Sia."

"Yes, I am Choctaw."

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## Friendship through Famine

A Letter of Gratitude to the Choctaw Nation

By AMADEUS FINLAY

Contributing Writer

"A mist rose up out of the sea, and you could hear a voice talking near a mile off across the stillness of the earth... when the fog lifted, you could begin to see the tops of the potato stalks lying over as if the life was gone out of them. And that was the beginning of the great trouble and famine that destroyed Ireland."

Of all the devastations to befall Ireland, few have been as harrowing as the Great Potato Famine. Striking in the fall of 1845 and lasting for almost six years, an Gorta Mór left over one million Irish dead as a result of starvation, exposure and disease. When the emaciated peasants looked to their colonial masters for support, the British minister for famine relief responded that the events were, "a mechanism for reducing surplus population... the selfish, perverse and turbulent character of [Irish] people." During the famine years, Britain exported out of Ireland approximately £500,000 of government produced food. The fact that it had been British policy to constrain the Irish to tiny plots of barren land suitable only for growing basic tubers was conveniently forgotten. When famine hit, the Irish would starve. It was an inevitability brought on by nature but predetermined by acts of man.

Within such a hostile environment, the Irish felt that they had few friends. And yet, 4,000 miles away, the news of the ruin in Ireland had reached the people of the Choctaw Nation. The Choctaw, too, were familiar with how society hemorrhages in the face of tyrannical governance, and in the Irish they saw shadows of their own past. Only fifteen years before, the Choctaw had been the victims of a forced march from their homelands, a wretched exodus that they call the Trail of Tears. But the long march from Mississippi to Oklahoma had made the Choctaw acutely sensitive to the anguish of those desperately in need, and when news arrived of what was happening in Ireland, a group of concerned tribal members promptly rallied together to raise funds for those Irish still clinging on to life.

"We helped the Irish because that's who we are and what we are," explains tribal council speaker, Delton Cox, "we remembered the sorrow to befall our people, and we felt the same for the people in Ireland. \$170 might not seem like much, we were poor, yet each of us eagerly gave to help our brothers and sisters."

A softly spoken man with a musical Oklahoma twang, Delton is the embodiment of the connection enjoyed by Ireland and the Choctaw. Some of his ancestors were Brysons, a name historically associated with a rugged peninsula on Ireland's west coast named Donegal. Delton compares his two lines of heritage, drawing on a shared cultural landscape centered on kindness and support.

"This way of being is important to us," he continues, "my granddaughter is part of a short film about kindness and compassion, so she is learning to take this on through her life."

There is a certain familiarity in Delton's fondness for his granddaughter. Like the Choctaw, the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is one that is highly treasured by the Irish, and it was from my grandmother that I first learned about the kindness of the Choctaw during the Great Hunger. Born in the spring of 1913, the Ireland that young Evelyn Johnston knew was a place still at the mercy of illness, violence and political unrest. Her own grandparents had lived through the famine, the proximity of the event made even closer by the lingering uncertainty in the world around her.

With just enough animation, this kindly matriarch impressed upon me her belief that Ireland's unlikely allies had been sent by the divine. But there was more. Not only had the unprompted charity of the Choctaw resonated deeply with my grandmother, but since her own father had met the great Lakota Sitting Bull during a visit to the United States in the 1880s, Evelyn felt she had just the faintest sense of connection with the native people of North America.

In turn, Evelyn's son, my father, ensured that the stories of our connected past were not lost, and until the day he died he passionately advocated that the Choctaw were to be remembered as our friends. But such is the way of Ireland, a misty island crisscrossed by a deeply engrained culture of oral history. Sure, I learned about Medb, Cú Chulainn and Finn, yet of all the exciting stories I heard growing up in rural Ulster, the relationship between Ireland and Oklahoma was the one that captured my imagination.

Indeed, it seems that the relationship enjoyed by the Choctaw and Irish has captured the imagination of more than just my family. In 1990, a delegation of Choctaw officials participated in an annual walk in County Mayo to commemorate the Doolough Tragedy, a starvation march that occurred during the Hunger, while in 1992, a group of Irish anthropologists retraced the Trail of Tears in a gesture of reciprocal solidarity. Most notably of all, the Choctaw dubbed Ireland's then-president, Mary Robinson, an honorary chief.

And the beautiful thing is that the friendship continues. Later this year, a monument of gratitude to the Choctaw shall be unveiled in Middleton, County Cork. The sculpture will take the form of an empty bowl cupped by feathers, a poignant embodiment of the Choctaw embracing a starving people. The news was warmly received in Ireland, and it was due to the announcement of the Middleton statue that I first got in contact with the Choctaw Nation. Not only did Chief Gary Batton promptly respond to my enquiry with considerable grace, but in the continuation of the close relationship between our people, I was extended the offer to write this article.

So what to say in closing? Well, my thoughts are simple, and as I write in my adopted country of the United States, thousands of miles from the whitewashed cottage of my childhood, I fondly reflect that the friendship between the Choctaw and the Irish continues to blossom. Few, if any connections have lasted so long, and certainly none have known as much mutual respect, compassion and laughter as that enjoyed by Ireland and the Choctaw.

Look how far we have come. Now, let's see how far we can go.

Go raibh maith agat.

Amadeus Finlay was born in Ireland and educated at the University of Edinburgh where he studied American History. He has spent his professional career in international media and communications, and currently lives with his wife in New England. Amadeus can be contacted at amadeus\_finlay@hotmail.com



The Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk will be held this year at Tvshka Homma on Saturday, May 16, beginning at 10 a.m. The annual Walk is held to honor and recognize the Choctaws forced to march from their ancient homelands to Indian Territory nearly two centuries ago.

The Choctaw Nation Color Guard will lead the Walk. Chief Gary Batton follow with Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., the Tribal Council, and Choctaw royalty along with the hundreds of Choctaws and friends who will make the Walk.

A program will follow on the Capitol Grounds at Tvshka Homma to include messages from Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Austin, and Council Speaker Delton Cox.

Activities will include gospel singing in the traditional Choctaw style and Chahta Anumpa language, cultural demonstrations, basket weaving, beading, pottery, and Choctaw social dancers.

Lunch will be served in the cafeteria and shuttle buses will be available between parking sites and the Capitol.

## Trail of Tears Walk T-shirt Order Form

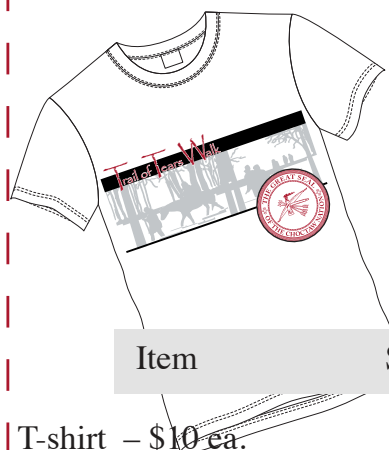
2015 T-shirts are white

Sizes available are:

Children – (2-4), (6-8), (10-12) and (14-16)

Adults – Small, Medium, Large,

X-Large, 2X, 3X and 4X



Item	Size	Quantity	Total Price
T-shirt			\$10 ea.
Cap			\$10 ea.

Price includes postage and handling. Limited supply of children, 3X, and 4X sizes. To order, send cash or money order (NO PERSONAL CHECKS) with completed form to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Events Dept.  
 Trail of Tears  
 Walk T-shirt  
 P.O. Box 1210, Durant,  
 OK 74702-1210

# SPORTS

## TOUGH, TOUGH CHOCTAWS

### Poteau family embraces athletics and tribal culture

By ZACH MAXWELL

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Success is piling up for the Hornbuckle family of Poteau.

The Hornbuckles claim both Choctaw and Cherokee descent, as well as three generations of award-winning wrestlers. The Hornbuckle children, Roderick and Kyra, are both athletes at Poteau High School and participate in stickball as well as Choctaw cultural activities.

As another season of youth stickball gets under way, Dewayne Hornbuckle is one of the coaches for the new Yvnnvsh Homma (Red Buffaloes) team. Son Roderick, a Poteau junior, plays center defense for the new team. Kyra is on the squad as well.

Roderick also just completed a third-place finish at the 4A state wrestling tournament, going 3-1 to complete his second straight 30-plus win season at 39-9.

But it's in the blood: Dewayne and his father Jack are both wrestling coaches at Poteau, and Jack is still winning world titles in 50-plus competitions in Europe.

Wrestling fans will recall Jack's accolades at OSU, where he was part of a wrestling team that won two national titles and made it to Olympic trials.

"He's the one with all the credentials," Dewayne said of his dad. "And he started the wrestling program at Poteau in 1977."

Now, Roderick is following in the footsteps with his award-winning moves on the mat. Not only did he make it to State this year, but he also made the all-conference list and is a three-time wrestling champion at the Jim Thorpe Games.

"It's fun, but it takes commitment and determination," Roderick said. "It takes mental strength, too."

Some of the skills help him with tackling in adult-level stickball games; tackling is frowned upon at the youth level. His dad grew up playing the Cherokee "fish game," a softer, one-pole version of the sport known as a social game



Photo Provided

**Three generations of wrestlers: Jack Hornbuckle, grandson Roderick and son Dewayne pose for a photo at the Oklahoma wrestling tournament earlier this year.**

throughout most of the Choctaw Nation.

Roderick is looking forward to taking his wrestling talent to the next level, perhaps at a small school such as Bacone College. He wants to stay close to home. And, he is not confining his native cultural interests to the stickball field.

"I'm starting to learn social dance songs," he said, adding that he has a CD of songs by B.L. Joe that he keeps playing. "I jam out to those in my truck."

He is also trying his hand at artwork, inspired by art classes at school. He is

sampling beadwork as well as sculpting, in a style his dad describes as "abstract art."

Dewayne has taken his children to see artists including Bunkie Echo-Hawk (Pawnee-Yakama) and exposed them to music from native groups such as A Tribe Called Red.

"This lets them explore as much of these things as we can," he said. "It's so kids can have more pride and not be ashamed to learn their native culture and language."



Photo Provided

**Garrett Johnson on National Signing Day, showing his ECU Tiger Pride.**

### California Choctaw commits to ECU

Garret Johnson from Wasco, California, continued the parade of Choctaws in collegiate football committing to the ECU Tigers in Ada on National Signing Day in February.

Johnson chose to do his signing at his alma mater, Wasco High School, where he was surrounded by family, friends, and Wasco School community members.

Johnson transferred from Bakersfield College, where he earned second team all-conference honors. He is a two-time all-league offense and defense selection as a prep and was named to the first all-area team twice.

Johnson would like to become a coach at the college level or NFL someday.



Photo Provided

**Ian Crilly at HSA Winter Camp in Tempe, Arizona.**

### Crilly tabbed for All American Rugby Team

Choctaw Ian Crilly of Fallbrook, California, has been chosen for the USA High School All American Rugby Team.

He is also carrying a 4.0 GPA through his senior year at Fallbrook (California) High School. Ian is a National Team player for the USA High School All Americans (HSAA) under-17 age group.

Ian was selected after attending the HSAA winter camp in Tempe, Arizona.

Ian was born in Tulsa but didn't start playing rugby until the age of nine, after he and his family moved to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

His position, as open side flanker, is considered to be one of the most physical.

The open side flanker must be capable of attacking and defending players much larger and much faster than himself.

The player must be one of the fittest on the pitch, strong enough to bring down the largest player on the field with relative ease, but also possessing solid ball handling abilities.

The boys High School All American Junior Varsity team will travel to France and then Belgium to play multiple international games between March 28 and April 8, 2015.

Ian will play rugby in college while pursuing a degree in political science and plans to continue on to law school. With multiple college offers, he is still deciding which one to accept at this time.

Coming soon:

Team Tvshka Homma trading cards



(FRONT)

### Red Oak teams reach state basketball bracket



The Red Oak Eagles and Lady Eagles both qualified for the 2015 Class B state basketball tournament this season. Located in the heart of Latimer County, both Red Oak teams have a large number of Choctaw Nation members.

**The Red Oak Eagles (left) are coached by Trey Booth.**

**Red Oak Lady Eagles (below) are coached by Casey Butcher.**



### A little heavy lifting ...

Trent McLaughlin represented McAlester High School in the heavyweight division of the state weightlifting meet. Trent's parents are Dawn and Greg McLaughlin of McAlester.



### Fichik Baleli Running Star



**Breanna Jones, a freshman at Anadarko High school, competed in the Cross Country State Championship.**

## Choctaw Champions

The Choctaw Nation would like to honor students who have excelled in their chosen sports or academic field.

If your child is a Choctaw Champion, please send a photo and brief description of their accomplishments to:

**biskinik@choctawnation.com**

# CHAHTA HIMMITHOA



Youth Safety Camp staff and participants gather at the traditional Choctaw Village at Tvshka Homma in March.

## Choctaw Nation Outreach Services

# Youth Safety Camp 2015

Choctaw Nation Outreach Services held its annual Youth Safety Camp at the traditional village in Tvshka Homma on March 19. The event was held to coincide with Spring Break to maximize the number of youth participants from Choctaw Country.

A mixture of safe activities and safety training awaited participants of varying ages. On the safety side, Oklahoma Highway Patrol brought their drug education kit, Choctaw Nation Forestry taught fire safety and Outreach staff showed kids some pointers on safe archery and fishing techniques.

On the activity side, Les Williston offered insights into Choctaw cultural traditions and materials, a bounce house was offered, and Junior Miss Choctaw Nation Summer Moffitt taught a group of eager girls (and one brave boy) how to perform the Lord's Prayer in sign language.

Lunch and T-shirts were provided by the Outreach Services staff.



Oklahoma Highway Patrol Trooper Jefferson shows a group of teenagers what can happen when a person chooses to drink and drive.



Attentive children at a presentation during Youth Safety Camp.

Les Williston with a hands-on demonstration of Choctaw cultural items.



Youth Outreach Director Paul Roberts talking to a group of children at the safety camp.

Photos by Zach Maxwell



Mazie Nagel of Clayton caught a *nakishwana* (catfish) at the Tvshka Homma village pond during fishing time at Youth Safety Camp.



Darryl Brown mentors Abigail Simes of Boswell during the safety camp.



Having fun on the bounce house slide.

## Pow Wow

May 23 | 2929 W. Henderson in Cleburne Texas | Chisholm Trail Outdoor Museum

### Attractions

Contact Diane (817) 648-0989 or Robert (817) 240-9535

Free Admission and Parking  
Reserve camps early

Dancers, cultural food, art, jewelry music and drums, yarn spinning, blacksmithing knives, arrows, regalia food and merchandise vendors Terry's Texas Rangers Civil War Re-enactment

Coming soon:

Team Tvshka Homma trading cards

**Teela Walton**

- HOMETOWN: ANTLERS
- OCCUPATION: CHOCTAW HOUSING
- FAVORITE MOMENT: PLAYING WITH MY SISTERS AND CHIEF
- QUOTE: "THE GAME IS A WAY OF LIFE, IT IS UNITY. IT BRINGS TRIBES TOGETHER"

(BACK)

Biskinik is currently gathering posed and action photos of Choctaw stickball players for an ongoing trading card project. We will start with Team Tvshka Homma, the official team of Choctaw Nation, but this could branch out to other adult and youth teams in the future. To submit photos for this project, email a photo with name and phone number to:

biskinik@choctawnation.com



Choctaw Nation Diabetes Wellness Summer Camp Presents:

# MAKE A CHANGE. BE A HERO.

100 REGISTRATIONS ACCEPTED

MUST RESIDE IN THE 10 1/2 COUNTIES OF CHOCTAW NATION

AVAILABLE FOR NATIVE & NON-NATIVE CHILDREN

APPLICATION DEADLINE MAY 15, 2015

**WEDS. JULY 8 - FRI. JULY 10**  
**JONES ACADEMY, HARTSHORNE**  
**8 - 12 YEAR OLDS**

Applications available at Choctaw Nation Clinics and online at choctawnation.com  
Contact Raina Sparks (918.942.8078) with any questions.

# CULTURAL

## Iti Fabussa

### Preservation and remembrance: Choctaw heirloom seeds

From providing oxygen to giving us food, plants are critical for our survival. Over the last few thousand years, people around the world have developed an extremely wide diversity of domesticated plants for use as food. Unfortunately, each year this diversity is now decreasing as societies industrialize, globalize, and stop planting the seeds that their grandparents planted. The loss is a tragedy, not only because of the cultural richness that is disappearing, but also because some of these diverse plants may have been able to help people deal with emerging issues like climate change and new diseases.

Over many generations, Choctaw ancestors developed unique varieties of corn, beans, pumpkin, and other plants. During the last century, as “western” crop varieties have been developed and as fewer and fewer Choctaw families grow their own food, these Choctaw heirloom plants have also been disappearing. The loss to Choctaw communities’ traditional foods and nutrition is unmeasurable.

Over the last several years, the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department has been working with community members and a variety of other people, to try to get accurate descriptions of what the different heirloom Choctaw plants look like, and to track down heirloom Choctaw seeds before they are forever lost. The ultimate hope is to keep heirloom Choctaw varieties from disappearing and to develop a seed bank that could one day distribute seeds for heirloom Choctaw plants out to Choctaw tribal members who would like to grow them in their gardens.

What has been saved:

- Tanchi Tohbi – a white corn that Choctaw people used for making cornmeal and grits. This is the corn that Banaha bread was originally made from.
- Tanchi Hlimishko – A yellow flint corn has been found that matches the description of the variety used by Choctaw people to make hominy dishes like Tanchi Labona.
- Isito –The Choctaw Sweet Potato Squash is a variety of pumpkin that grows as large as 30 pounds, will keep for up to nine months indoors, and has a very sweet taste.
- Tobi – The Choctaw Wax Bean, is a variety that became popular in the 1950s. Currently, we do not know if it is a bean that was grown by Choctaw ancestors or if it is simply a modern variety that was named after the Choctaw people.

Europeans brought field peas (black eyed peas, purple hulls, etc.) into the southeastern United States. Currently, we



Tanchi Hlimishko Kernels

Tanchi Tohbi grown by Ed Perkins

Choctaw Sweet Potato Squash grown by Pam Waugh

have “Smith Peas,” a small, green variety of field pea, brought out of Mississippi by a Choctaw family in the 1800s.

We also have seeds from several other plants grown or collected by Choctaw ancestors for food including, Lambsquarter, Jerusalem artichoke, and little barley.

What we are still looking for:

- Tanchi Bokanli – A Choctaw popcorn, or a flint corn, with small kernels. Choctaw elders who remember it say that the kernels were red or white.
- Tanchushi – A small variety of Choctaw corn that produced mature ears in just eight weeks after being planted. We currently do not know what color it was.
- Tobi – Choctaws once grew a wide variety of beans. Currently, we only have the one bean variety that may or may not really be Choctaw.
- Isito – Choctaws originally grew several varieties of

pumpkin / winter squash, including one variety of pumpkin that was small and grey, and one variety of crook-necked winter squash.

Currently, the Choctaw Historic Preservation Department has seeds only for the Choctaw sweet potato squash available for distribution. If you are Choctaw and would like some of these seeds, please contact us at the number below. Supplies are very limited, and the seed will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Do you remember details about the varieties of Choctaw corn, beans, pumpkins, or other plants grown by your family in the old days? Do you have seeds for heirloom Choctaw plants? The Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department would love to hear from you. Please call us at (800) 522-6170 ext. 2216. The information you have could help keep these precious Choctaw plants from being lost.



By LINDSEY BILYEU

Choctaw Nation

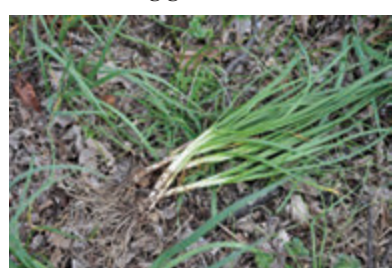
Spring has finally arrived in Choctaw Nation. The weather is getting warmer, the landscape is finally starting to look green again, and wild onions are waiting to be gathered. Soon Choctaw Nation tribal members will begin gathering and preparing these wild onions in preparation for family gatherings, church events, and community functions. Today we know these events as wild onion dinners. In this month’s Iti Fabussa we will look closely at wild onion dinners, why they are held and their significance to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

Wild onion dinners are held among the southeastern tribes that are living in Oklahoma today. These tribes, known as the 5 Civilized Tribes, consist of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole. Each tribe will have their own way of carrying out the wild onion dinners. Today in the Choctaw Nation you will frequently see the dinners being used as church fundraisers. Wild onions may also be served at family gatherings, stickball games, and gospel singings.

The first step in the process of wild onion dinners will be the actual gathering of the wild onions. This is a skill that takes time and practice to master.

Wild onions are typically gathered in February or March. Gatherers use small shovels to dig the onions out of the ground. When choosing wild onions, the gatherer must pay close attention and be careful not to pick onions that are too large, as they tend to get tough. The wild onions are usually best when they are small, around 4 to 5 inches tall. Once the wild onions have bulbs on the ends they are no longer good. It is also easy to confuse wild onions with different plants that closely resemble them. A gatherer must pay close attention so that they don’t gather a different plant that looks like the wild onions, but can be poisonous. It is also easy to confuse wild onions, which have a flat leaf, with garlic, which has a round leaf. It will take several gallons of the wild onions to feed a large number of people. For example, to feed a group of 20 people you will need about two gallons of wild onions.

Once the wild onions have been gathered, it is time to prepare them. When performing this second step, it is important that the onions be trimmed and cleaned very well. You must wash the onions until all the dirt is gone, which can sometimes be tricky as the dirt can get inside the layers of the onion. Cleaning and trimming the wild onions is similar to the process used when cleaning green onions.



Wild onion pancakes

Once the onions are cleaned and trimmed, you can move on to the third step which is cooking the onions. The onions will need to be boiled in water until they become tender. To add flavor, you can always add the drippings from bacon or the ever-loved Choctaw favorite, salt pork. Once the onions are tender, you can eat them as is or add them to scrambled eggs. Most often the wild onions are served up with scrambled eggs.

While the scrambled eggs and wild onions are the star of the wild onion dinners, many other Choctaw traditional foods will be served as well. Many times you will find tanchi labona, salt pork, pinto beans, and fry bread served. The traditional Choctaw dessert, grape dumplings, will be served along with pies, cakes, and cobbler.

While the wild onion dinners take a great amount of time and preparation from talented Choctaw cooks, they are worth the effort. These dinners have become a part of the life that the Choctaws have established in Oklahoma. They bring together families, friends, and communities. The dinners provide an environment in which our traditional Choctaw songs, dances, stories, and games can be carried out. Wild onion dinners contain elements of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma’s culture that must be carried on. Through these dinners we have the ability to pass on Choctaw cooking, stories, spirituality, history, and pride to our future generations. So this spring let’s get out and enjoy not only the season, but also help preserve and ensure the survival of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma wild onion dinners.

A special thanks to Mary Frazier, Vangie Robinson, and the Blaine family for the information that was shared for this article.

**BE A HERO FOR HOPE**

PRE-REGISTER BY MAY 20TH

CHECK OUT CHIMPY ON FACEBOOK FOR UPDATES & REGISTRATION FORM

THE FIRST 200 WITH A RACE BIB RECEIVE A T-SHIRT

**MAY 30, 2015**

Race Starts at 10am  
Stipe Recreation Center  
801 N. 9th St., McAlester, OK 74501

Packet pick up 8:30 - 9:30am  
Costume Contest at 9:30am  
Stickball Demo before and after race  
Zumba and Tae Kwon Do demos prior to awards ceremony  
SuperKids vs Villains Dash immediately after awards ceremony

Choctaw Nation Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative  
604 S. 2nd, McAlester, OK 74501  
(918) 302-0052 • (918) 302-0082 (fax)  
Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

**SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-TALK (12251)

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation						
May 2015						
Durant - Mon., Wed. and Fri. Broken Bow - Mon., Wed. and Fri.; Idabel by appt. Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-0115 Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Durant 8:00-4:30	5	6 Antlers by appt.	7	8 Broken Bow 8:00-4:30 Idabel by appt.	9
10	11 Durant 8:00-4:30	12 Talihina 10:00-2:00	13 Crowder by appt.	14	15 Wright City By appt.	16
17	18 Durant 8:00-4:30	19 Poteau 11:30-1:00	20 McAlester 10:00-2:00 Stigler by appt.	21	22	23
24	25	26 Wilburton by appt.	27 Broken Bow 8:00-4:30 Idabel by appt.	28	29 Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	30
31						

# CULTURAL GATHERINGS

## Ada



Larry Wade shows Herbert Zehender an example of traditional Choctaw weaponry.



June White visits the genealogy booth during the Ada Choctaw Cultural Gathering.



Zach Shanaholtsi helps draw door prize winners' names.



Raynie Tom enjoys participating in the stealing partners dance.



J.J. Jacob and Landa McClure present Chief and Assistant Chief with a gift from East Central University's Native American Student Association.



Grace King receives a token of appreciation from Chief Gary Batton for being the eldest Choctaw at the event.

### Upcoming cultural events

May 2015 • Bakersfield, California, and Poteau, Oklahoma

If you are not receiving your letter informing you of upcoming cultural events in your area, please give us a call. We'll make sure your contact information is correct.

800.522.6170, ext. 2116, 2409 or 2310

Dates and locations are subject to change.

## Tulsa



Wallace Henry is given a Choctaw blanket during the ceremonies. Originally from Haileyville, Henry's mother was an original enrollee.



Chief Batton chats with Jessica Reyna and her grandparents Sara and Joe Sherrill. Jessica danced and played the flute during the community meeting.



Tully Choate from Broken Arrow expresses his pride in his culture while posing with Assistant Chief Austin and Chief Batton.



Nicholas Charleston from the School of Choctaw Language pulls a young dancer onto the floor during the stealing partners dance.



Chip Melton, Managing Officer of Choctaw Defense Services, presents Assistant Chief Austin with a Defense Services cap.

Photos by  
Ronni Pierce,  
Brandon Frye,  
Payton Guthrie, &  
Tracy McKaughan