



# THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE NEWS

www.astrobe.com

Volume 35, No. 09

September 2025

## Mo Ke Ti Ya He - Vision Zero Safety Bash

August is National Traffic Safety Awareness Month. And to celebrate this, the Absentee Shawnee Tribe recently held the Mo Ke Ti Ya He Safety Bash. Over 100 people were in attendance for the celebration at the AST Multi-Purpose Building on August 13.

The AST Self-Governance Department hosted the event that featured a golf cart obstacle course with drunk goggles, fire and emergency response vehicles and several informational booths.

Among those in attendance were US

DOT Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, James A. Crawford and his staff Milo Booth, O.J. King and Eli Sessions; Pottawatomie and Cleveland County Commissioners; City of Norman Engineer, ODOT Director of Transportation; Cross Timbers Consulting and head-on collision survivor Ryan Rogers.

He shared his personal story and the importance of road safety. "I appreciate the focus and allocation of time and resources the AST is giving towards Highway/road safety within its lands. This

cause is near and dear to me and my family," said Rogers.

The Mo Ke Ti Ya He Safety Bash was held to highlight the importance of road/highway safety. The tribe received the SS4A Grant (Safe Streets for All) and created the logo Vision Zero – Safer Streets Save Lives, Mo Ke Ti Ya He. The Absentee Shawnee Tribe is the first tribe to incorporate tribal language in the promotion of the grant.

The Safety Action Plan being created hopes to reduce and eliminate serious

injuries and fatal crashes on roadways in the tribal study area by identifying locations with the most significant safety risks. A survey was introduced earlier this year and results should be known later in 2025.

"It was a great turnout and I appreciate ODOT, FHWA, US DOT staff, Pottawatomie, Cleveland County Commissioners and the City of Norman coming out to help us celebrate." Said AST Self-Governance Director Twyla Blanchard.



**Left Photo:** James A. Crawford, US DOT Assistant Secretary of Tribal Government Affairs. **Right Photo:** AST Executive Committee and James A. Crawford, US DOT Assistant Secretary of Tribal Government Affairs, pose with AST Building Blocks staff and kids.



**Left Photo (L-R):** AST Treasurer Joseph Blanchard; AST Self-Governance Director Twyla Blanchard; US DOT Tribal Affairs Specialist Eli Sessions; US DOT Assistant Secretary of Tribal Government Affairs James A. Crawford; ODOT Director of Tribal Coordination Dr. Rhonda S. Fair; AST Governor John Johnson; US DOT Director of Tribal Affairs Milo Booth; US DOT Tribal Affairs Specialist O.J. King; AST Lt. Governor Diane Ponkilla; AST Secretary Misty McGirt; AST Representative Anthony Johnson. **Right Photo:** AST Lt. Governor Ponkilla navigates the obstacle course while wearing drunk goggles.



**Left & Right Photos:** Safety bash attendees visit the information booths.



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Absentee Shawnee Tribe







**GOVERNOR**  
John Johnson



**Lt. GOVERNOR**  
Diane Ponkilla



**SECRETARY**  
Misty McGirt



**TREASURER**  
Joseph Blanchard



**REPRESENTATIVE**  
Anthony Johnson



**GOVERNOR’S REPORT**  
John Johnson, AST Governor

Hello Tribal Members,

School is back in session, I hope all the children had a great start to the new school year. Please be sure to sign your children up for the 477 program. They can help your child with most educational needs. You must meet all qualifications to be eligible.

The first annual Safety Bash was a big success. We had two special guest in attendance, Mr. Milo Booth the Director of Tribal Government Affairs US DOT and Mr. James Crawford the Asst. Secretary of Tribal Government Affairs, US DOT. They gave some great safety tips and also explained the importance of the safety plan for our roads and streets on AST Land. We were honored to have them

**LT. GOVERNOR’S REPORT**  
Diane Ponkilla, AST Lt. Governor

Hello All,

I hope everyone had a great summer and enjoyed time with family. Now that the kids are returning to school we need to be aware of bus stops, traffic and send them to school in a rested, good mood.

There were 23 saferoom applications submitted. On July 24, 2025 the first list of ten (10) elders was sent out to Firestorm Septic & Shelters. Firestorm scheduled on-site visits on July 30 & 31, 2025. These on-site visits ensure that the installation of the shelter is safe for the installers and aligns with the needs of the property owners. The saferoom is textured wood/stacked stone pattern, engineered to withstand F5 tornado and fastened with 6 ground anchors, dimensions: 6’x 8’ which fits up to 12 people. The first installation will be done August 19, 2025. I have been seeing negative comments regarding why the age limit 70+, because these are our elders and I would think family would

both in attendance and in Oklahoma.

The Treasurer and I made a trip to Washington D.C. to meet the newly appointed Department of Interior Acting Secretary, Scott Davis. The meeting request was to get the new officers updated on the issues at hand regarding the Fee to Trust for the Absentee Shawnee Tribe. For many many years we have had issues getting our lands into trust. With the new Secretary in office our hopes is that he will look at changing the outcome and let us get our tribal lands moved into trust. This will help the tribe move forward much easier. The meeting with Mr. Davis was very important for the tribe and I am thankful he took the time to talk with us.

I attended the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma Graduation ceremony at the gathering in Tulsa Oklahoma. I would like to say congrat-

be checking on or assisting their elders during inclement weather situations to assure their safety. Most elderly members 70+ cannot make it down the steep steps of the underground storm shelters and may require equipment to assist their mobility. The majority of 50 and 60 year olds are still mobile and able to act quickly during a tornado advisory.

On Thursday, August 14, 2025 Twyla Blanchard, BIA/Self-Governance Director held the Absentee Shawnee Tribes 1st Safety Bash (MO KE TI YA HE) with the following guest in attendance: Opening Prayer Jerry LittleAxe, Absentee Shawnee Tribal Elder, James A. Crawford, Assistant Secretary of Tribal Government Affairs, US DOT, Oklahoma Department of Transportation Dr. Rhonda S. Fair, Director of Tribal Coordination, ODOT, Pottawatomie County Abby Thompson, County Commissioner District 3, Cleveland County Rusty Grissom, County Commissioner District 3, City of Norman David Riesland, Transportation Engineer, Cross Timbers Consulting Chris McCray, Project Planning & Development Man-

ulations to the tribal members that graduated. AICCO brings together American Indian Businesses, tribal leaders, and other community leaders to foster innovation and collaboration. They work to enhance economic success and create opportunities that benefit both Native people and the communities where we live and work.

The upcoming 95th Semi-Annual General Council will be on October 4, 2025 at 10:00am at the Thunderbird Casino in Little Axe. Hope to see you all there.

Should you have any question you may contact my office or my assistant at the information listed below.

Thank You

John Johnson - 405-275-4030 ext. 3500  
governor@atribe.com

Alvina Barnes - 405-275-4030 ext. 3501  
alvinab@atribe.com

ager and Scott Miller, Language Linguist AST 477. Survivor Testimonial Presentations by Ryan Rogers, head-on collision survivor and Human Trafficking Presentation by Amy Hill, Transportation Coordinator, Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Dr. Rhonda S. Fair, Director of Tribal Coordination, ODOT. The Absentee Shawnee Tribal Police Department had emergency vehicles displayed and drunk driver goggles course. The Safety Bash was a great success and I would like to thank Twyla Blanchard for her hard work and dedication to the Absentee Shawnee Tribe.

The Agriculture Department completed the first hay cutting of the season, producing 250 bales. A pumpkin patch was planted with the assistance from a few summer youth workers and the agriculture department. There is currently 154 head of cattle which beef is processed and sold to other AST department which in turn generates revenue to support the Agriculture Department.

Ne yi wa



**TREASURER’S REPORT**  
Joseph Blanchard, AST Treasurer

Hello Fellow Tribal Members, Family, and Friends,

I hope all is well with you. Can you believe Summer is over and school is back in session? It went by so fast, I tried to remember, “Did I do anything fun or exciting?” I saw several posts about the 1st day of school and the excitement of the kids to get back to normal routines. As we approach the “Ber” months (Sept, Oct, Nov, Dec.), that means Fall will be here for another season of Fastpitch softball, “Friday nights in the Big Town”, and Sooner Saturdays. As always, if you have a student athlete and would like me to attend an event, please forward a copy of their schedule to my email and I will do my best to make a game. Boomer!

As I begin this month’s edition, I want to provide an update for those who aren’t on my Social Media page. I was out of office a few days this past month for business meetings and conferences. While on travel, I picked up the recent strain of COVID in DC. Compared to previous illnesses, this one really hit me hard and was quite a bit more severe, causing me to work remotely and miss a deadline. So let me bring you up to speed on my office’s activities for the last few months, bringing us back to the most current activity.

I can’t get into all the details but wanted to provide an update on my Ethics Hearing. Unlike regular court proceedings, these are not Public Records intended to be shared by anyone but treated similar to Employee data. Instead, only the fol-

lowing are allowed to review and provide comment: the Complainant, Respondent, AG, and members of the Ethics Panel. Even the EC isn’t allowed access to the material or involvement once the Panel has been assembled. The only thing left is for the EC to receive the update and decide whether to implement the recommendations to improve the system. I want to acknowledge and thank the Panel for fulfilling this difficult but important task. I agree with their findings and conclusion of “Dismissal, and No Wrongdoing by the Treasurer.”

During the 3rd week of July, the annual Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association (OIGA) Conference was held in OKC. There were several good sessions to choose from and lots of information to learn. The EC split up the agenda to attend as many of the categories and hear multiple presentations. While there, I was also able to network with other Tribal officials, meet potential new business partners, and met a ton of new vendors. One of the evenings, me and a TEI board member met with lead officials from Key Bank. At the conclusion, they requested an opportunity to follow-up with the EC to engage in future discussion.

The following week, I went to DC with Governor Johnson and ASTHA Executive Director Chris Larkin. We represented the Tribe and Health facilities at several key meetings with Federal officials over Self Governance, Indian Affairs, and a consultation with Indian Health Services. I will give a more detailed description at General Council on the major points of discussion. We met important new Agency officials, some who had just re-

ceived Congressional approval. Though we weren’t able to speak directly with our Oklahoma State Representative or Senators, we were able to pass along information to staff. As it happens, Senator Lankford was on our flight home and I had a brief conversation with him.

Upon return, Budget Officer Courtney Green from the Finance team led the meetings with all Department heads, Coordinators, and Executive Committee members in their respective Mid-Year program reviews. This is an opportunity for staff to learn if they have mastered operations and determine if yearly projections are on target. The expectation is upon completion of half the year, individuals would have spent at least half of their appropriations or grant funds. Since implementation, we have only had one or two programs come in grossly overspent or way under budget. In the same breath, this helps with management and future growth.

While talking about Finance, I was informed the annual Indirect Cost Proposal has been submitted and received at Agency. Now we wait for the call to negotiate the final rates for what we will charge in 2026. I informed Leadership at our monthly Director’s Meeting the rate is expected to drop back down to a more relatable percentage if approved by National office. For those who are not aware, the numbers were drastically increased due to the extra CARES and ARPA funds the Tribe received during the Pandemic, which was included as a part of our base amount. Additionally, the Tribe’s Audit information is almost complete. (Continued on Page 3A)



## TREASURER’S REPORT

(Continued from Page 2A)

Once the Controller has received updates from Casino, I will sign and submit to Federal Clearinghouse.

The last couple items I will discuss this month include information that will become available and posted in the “Members Only” section on the AST Website.

The data has been compiled and the results will be shared for view on that format. The survey will assist Grant writers in their approach and search for specific grants, Directors in development of new goals and objectives, and the EC in creating an updated Strategic Plan. Additionally, I will be providing a breakdown of the OIGA Economic Impact Report. AST was 1 of the 19 Tribes who participated

in the study. I will be providing analysis and comparison to the 2019 submission which utilized records from 2017.

In conclusion, for those who are not aware, the HAF (Housing Assistance Fund) program is slowly winding down and getting closer to expending the remaining funds. Also, General Council will be held in October so make certain to put the date on your calendar and plan to

attend. I look forward to seeing you and talking about our Tribe. Let me know if there’s anything me or my staff can do to assist. As always, “Thank You!” to those who advise, encourage, share, and support our efforts to improve and make the Tribe more effective and efficient.

Neyiwa!  
Joseph H. Blanchard

## REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Anthony Johnson, AST Representative

Hello Tribal Members,

My office traveled to the 2025 CTER National TERO Conference in Tulsa, in August with our AST TERO Department. I would like to personally thank the Maintenance department for their help with cleaning up at the camp. Should you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact my office by phone or email.

Phone: (405) 531-3512      Email: adjohnson@astribecom

Sincerely,  
Anthony “Tadpole” Johnson  
Tribal Representative



### New podcast episode – Unlocking Alzheimer's Innovative Diagnosis Tools

Our podcast, Among the Shawnee just released a new episode!

Mindy hosts a discussion on Alzheimer’s and dementia with Atheda Fletcher, ASTHS Grant Director for Dementia Services, and Dr. Raphael Francisco, an endocrinologist, at ASTHS. They explore diagnostic tools like the mini cog test, discuss lifestyle changes for prevention, and detail the programs aimed at supporting caregivers and enhancing care through projects like Savvy Caregiver in Indian Country and Music and Memory. Discover the strides being made within the Native American community to address one of its most pervasive health challenges.

Episode available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, SoundCloud and <https://www.astribecom/podcasts>

AST 102-477 PROGRAM

LLSI-WI-NI

ABSENTEE SHAWNEE

Si wi n'wi ke Ni ti mo wi ke

EDUCATION FAIR 2025

DISCOVER ABOUT CAMPUS LIFE, ACADEMIC PROGRAMS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES.

SEPTEMBER 10TH, 2025

10AM – 3PM

HEART OF OKLAHOMA EXPOSITION CENTER

1700 W INDEPENDENCE ST

SHAWNEE, OK 74804

LEVEL UP

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- MILITARY RECRUITERS
- UNIVERSITIES
- VOTECH
- COLLEGES
- TRADE SCHOOLS

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WWW.ASTRIBE.COM/477-PROGRAM

(405) 878-4545

ELDERS CARE BAG

[THIS IS NOT A FOOD BASKET]

APPLICATION FORM

Form due by Friday, November 14, 2025

**“30 Bags will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.”**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

NOMINATED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

QUALIFICATIONS:

1) Must be an Absentee Shawnee Tribal Member

2) Must be 55 years old or above

3) Must reside within the counties of Pottawatomie, Cleveland, Lincoln, and Oklahoma

4) Must meet the Criteria Reason(s) listed below

CRITERIA REASON:

☐ Nursing Home

☐ Home Bound

☐ No Transportation

☐ Health Issue(s)

☐ Senior Housing 55 Plus/Communities

☐ Other: Describe *(Be Specific)* \_\_\_\_\_

**Care Bags will be delivered on Friday, December 12, 2025****“30 Bags will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.”**

Mail Application to:    AST Elders Council

2025 South Gordon Cooper Drive

Shawnee, OK 74801

Or you can E-mail Shirley Adkins, Elders Council Secretary,    E-Mail: [sadkins425@gmail.com](mailto:sadkins425@gmail.com)

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_ Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Delivery: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Delivery: \_\_\_\_\_

Absentee Shawnee Tribe

477 PROGRAM

Are you Native American and need assistance?

CALL FOR DETAILS

405-878-4545

Visit Our Website

WWW.ASTRIBE.COM/477-PROGRAM

EMPOWERING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE

AND MORE

AST 102-477 PROGRAM

LLSI-WI-NI

ABSENTEE SHAWNEE

Si wi n'wi ke Ni ti mo wi ke



# AllNations Bank Scholarship Recipients



AllNations Bank \$500 scholarship recipient is Serenity Casteel. She graduated from Shawnee High School and will be attending Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Guymon Oklahoma. Serenity will be playing basketball for the University, her major will be in Biological Science. Her goal is to have a career in Physical Therapy.



AllNations Bank \$500 scholarship recipient is Stormy Little. Stormy graduated from Bethel Hight School, she was in marching band and color guard. Stormy will be going to Southwestern Oklahoma State University to pursue a career in Nursing.

# Tribal Member Selected to Play For Team USA Softball



Tribal member Kailas Mack was recently selected to play for Team USA in the Pan American Championship in Argentina. He is a 2021 graduate from Varnum High School and is an enrolled member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe.

USA Softball has announced the U.S. U-23 Men’s National Team (MNT) roster that is set to compete in the 2025 Pan American Championship slated for September 13-20, 2025. The 16-player roster will travel to La Pampa, Argentina, where they will look to qualify for the 2026 WBSC U-23 Men’s World Cup set to take place in April next year.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to lead the U-23 Men’s National Team as we represent the USA at the highest level of competition,” said head coach, Tony Aresco. “Together, with assistant coaches Bob Piddock and Avon Meacham, we bring extensive experience to guide the inaugural U-23 men’s team on the international stage,” he added.

The 16-player roster marks the second U-23 MNT program in USA Softball history and the first to play in an international WBSC competition. Six members will join Team USA for the first time in their careers, while 10 veterans return to the Red, White and Blue after competing in previous seasons with the U-18 MNT and/or MNT. The selected athletes represent 12 states, with California leading the pack with three athletes apiece, while Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are each represented by two athletes. Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah and Washington are also represented on the roster with one athlete each.



## CAN MAKING Workshop

**OPEN TO ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL MEMBERS ONLY**

**SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup>, 2025  
9:00AM-2:00PM**

Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health  
Multipurpose Building  
2029 James L. Edwards Ln.  
Shawnee, OK 74801

Lunch Provided

**\*CLASS SIZE IS LIMITED-FIRST 25 ACCEPTED\***

**Ages 12 and Up**  
**Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian**

**REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

Julie Cobell, Cultural Preservation  
(405) 275-4030, Ext. 3527

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER: SEPTEMBER 19TH**

Sponsored by: AST 477, Cultural Preservation & Shawnee Bunny Designs



Sage is an enrolled member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe and is also affiliated with the Ponca, Otoe, and Sioux tribes. She is from the North Ceremonial Dance Grounds in Little Axe and is the proud owner of Shawnee Bunny Designs, where she creates and sells cans for stomp dancing. Sage is excited to lead our very first can-making workshop and looks forward to hosting many more in the future!

*Sage Runsabove*

## NOTICE

### IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE OR STORY

Please give us a call at (405) 598-1279 or send an email to [media@atribe.com](mailto:media@atribe.com)

All articles for the next month’s issue are **DUE** by the **15th of the current month.**

Unfortunately we can only accept **ONE PICTURE PER BIRTHDAY PERSON**, not per birthday wish.





Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma  
**Building Blocks C.D.C.**  
 2025 S. Gordon Cooper Dr.  
 Shawnee, Ok. 74801  
 (405)878-0633 FAX(405)878-0156



We had a busy and fun summer here at Building Blocks. On July 25<sup>th</sup> Building Blocks held Summer Olympics. The Children participated in various activities and we had lunch. Thanks to all who volunteered & watched the kids doing Olympic Games. Pre-K and Kindergarten children started back to school in August. We had 15 children entering Pre-K and/or Kindergarten. We are ready for new curriculum and developmental activities for the children in our classrooms this fall.

We are currently hiring staff, if you are interested in applying visit <https://www.astribec.com/employment> for applications and to see what positions are available.

Building Blocks is accepting waiting list applications for all of our ages; 6 weeks through Pre-K/4 Year Olds. If you are interested in getting your child on our waiting list please call and we can email you a waiting list application or you may stop by to fill one out.



Building Blocks will be closed Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup> for Labor Day. Grandparent's Day is Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>. Building Blocks invites our Grandparents for snack at 3:00p.m. on Friday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. Fall Begins Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Have a Super September.



## Summer Olympics 2025



Building Blocks III C.D.C ~ 16051 Little Axe Drive Norman, OK 73026  
 (405) 360-2710 BB3Admin@astribec.com

The center will be  
**CLOSED**  
 AST Day ~ 8.29.25  
 Labor Day ~ 9.1.25

### IN THE CENTER



We were excited to send some of our 4 & 5-year-olds off to Pre-K & Kindergarten. We are so proud of them and wish them the best of luck!

**"Tiny Hands, Big Ideas, Endless Possibilities!"**

### Grandparents Day September 5th

The students will be celebrating their Grandparents on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The theme will be **"Our Roots, Our Strength"** which acknowledges the wisdom, experience, and guidance that grandparents offer, and recognizes their role as the foundation of the family.

The infants will be learning about the fall season. They will explore leaves and trees and what happens to them during this time of year. They will also learn about acorns and apples. What does a cow say? Our toddlers will learn when they study farm animals. Students will learn what types of animals live on a farm, the sounds that they make and what they eat. The 3's classroom will be studying transportation. They will explore different forms of transit such as cars, trains and planes. The pre-schoolers objective will be **"All About Me"**. The students will learn about themselves, fostering a sense of community and self-awareness.

### IN THE CLASSROOM

## September Newsletter



**\$70,000 CRIMSON CASH**



SEVEN GAMES EVERY WEEK

**PLAY LIKE A CHAMPION!**  
**SATURDAYS**  
**7PM TO 10PM**  
**DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES TO PLAY**

ONE ENTRY FOR EVERY 100 POINTS EARNED SUNDAY - SATURDAY

MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN. MUST ACTIVATE ENTRIES FROM 5PM TO 9:30PM TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR DRAWINGS. MANAGEMENT RESERVES ALL RIGHTS.



**CRIMSON CASH**



**OVER \$36,000 CASH!**

**PLAY LIKE A CHAMPION!**  
**SATURDAYS**  
**7PM TO 10PM**  
**DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES TO PLAY**

ONE ENTRY FOR EVERY 50 POINTS EARNED SUNDAY - SATURDAY

MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN. MUST ACTIVATE ENTRIES FROM 5PM TO 9:30PM TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR DRAWINGS. MANAGEMENT RESERVES ALL RIGHTS.

SHAWNEE LOCATION  
 2051 S GORDON COOPER DR, SHAWNEE, OK 74801

NORMAN LOCATION  
 15700 OK-9, NORMAN, OK 73026



NFL & COLLEGE

**Watch Parties**

**SATURDAYS & SUNDAYS**  
**FOOD & DRINK SPECIALS**  
**ALL SEASON!**





Hi si me ni ke s'fwa

Paw-paw Month  
(September)

Back when Shawnees where further east, paw-paw trees were more abundant and the fruit they provided were ripe in what we know as September.

September also used to be the start of school many years ago. Here are some phrases we might have heard at home and at school.

- *Fi ke ge k'ya hi* – go outside
- *Ma ge ki* – be careful
- *K'ya pe ke lo ti* – do your school paper
- *Hi ki wa sa lo* – you listen
- *Hi ki wa sa ko* – you all listen
- *Pi wi ne ta fe lo* – go play
- *Pi wi ne ta fe ko* – you all go play
- *Ka pi ke fe la g'yi* – wash your hands
- *Te k'ya pa ke s'to* – don't bother that
- *Ka ho wa se wi ne ta fe p'wi* – play nice
- *Te k'ya no g'yi la te p'wi* – don't pick on each other
- *Fi ke ge k'ya se pi wi ne ta fe* – go outside to play



WANTS YOU TO BE  
PREPARED FINANCIALLY

Check out our free educational portal designed to empower you with knowledge and tools to take control of your financial future!  
It's packed with valuable resources.

[anbok.enrich.org/](http://anbok.enrich.org/)



SEPTEMBER IS  
NATIONAL  
PREPAREDNESS  
MONTH

EMPOWERING YOUR FINANCIAL JOURNEY



AllNations Bank  
2023 Gordon Cooper Dr  
Shawnee, OK 74801  
405-273-0202  
[www.anbok.com](http://www.anbok.com)

Absentee Shawnee 477

## CAREER & RESOURCE FAIR

Get ready for our first Career & Resource Fair, where you can network with key individuals and discover new opportunities.



**Wednesday**  
**September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025**  
**10AM-3PM**



**The Well**  
**210 James Garner Ave,**  
**Norman, OK 73069**

**QUESTIONS?**  
**MELINDA FERRELL/KELI MITCHELL**  
**477 OUTREACH**  
**(405) 878-4545**



### LEGAL NOTICE

### LEGAL NOTICE

FILED in the Office  
of the Court Clerk

IN THE TRIAL COURT OF  
THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA  
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA 74801

AUG 05 2025  
Absentee Shawnee Tribal Court  
Court Clerk

In the matter of )  
)  
Yasmin Backiel-Vance ) Case No. CIV-2025-07  
)  
)

**AFFIDAVIT TO OBTAIN SERVICE BY PUBLICATION**

THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF INDIANS )  
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA ) §.

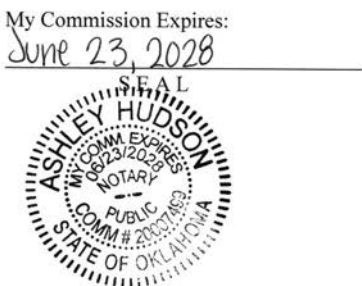
Yasmin Backiel-Vance  
being duly sworn upon oath states:

That she/he is the Plaintiff Yasmin Backiel-Vance above-named, and that on the 5 day of August, 2025, said Plaintiff filed in this Court a Petition for a name change: and this is one of the class of cases prescribed by the Statutes of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, and that with and after the exercise of due diligence, said Plaintiff is giving publication that, Yasmin Backiel-Vance, within the jurisdiction of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, and that Plaintiff wishes to obtain service by publication as provided by law. (AST CODE OF LAWS, Section 205, Section 206 and Section 209)

Yasmin Backiel-Vance  
PLAINTIFF

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 5 day of August, 2025.

Ashley Hudson  
NOTARY PUBLIC



FILED in the Office  
of the Court Clerk

IN THE TRIAL COURT OF  
THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA  
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA 74801

AUG 01 2025  
Absentee Shawnee Tribal Court  
Court Clerk

Rebecca Davis )  
Vs )  
) Case No. JFD-2025-17  
)  
Kenneth Davis )  
)

**AFFIDAVIT TO OBTAIN SERVICE BY PUBLICATION**

THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF INDIANS )  
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA ) §.

Rebecca Davis  
being duly sworn upon oath states:

That she/he is the Petitioner Rebecca Davis above-named, and that on the 1 day of August, 2025, said Petitioner filed in this Court a Petition against Respondent, Kenneth Davis: and this is one of the class of cases prescribed by the Statutes of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma, and is absent therefrom, and that with and after the exercise of due diligence, said Petitioner is unable to make personal service upon said Respondent, Kenneth Davis, within the jurisdiction of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, and that Petitioner wishes to obtain service upon the said Respondent by publication as provided by law. (AST CODE OF LAWS, Section 205, Section 206 and Section 209)


Rebecca Davis  
PETITIONER

Subscribed and sworn to before me 1 day of August, 2025.

Ashley Hudson  
NOTARY PUBLIC








Happy 5th Birthday Harland!  
We love you and hope you have a blast on  
your special day!

Love, Mom, Grandma, Uncle Slim  
and Da'lovely



Ho wa se la p'wi  
Ne ho ko m'fi ke  
Ke sa ke

(ho weh see leh p'wah  
ne hoh koh m'thah kee  
kee seh kee)

*Happy  
Grandparents Day!  
September 7*



So mi  
Grandfather

Ko ko ge  
Grandmother

**HAPPY 65th  
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY!**



**ANNIVERSARY DATE**  
August 11, 1960

**WE ARE SO BLESSED TO  
HAVE YOU BOTH FOR  
PARENTS  
&  
TO BE ABLE TO STILL HAVE  
YOU AROUND!**

**WE LOVE YOU! Rena & Tina**

Do you recognize anyone?

Tribal member Lorrie Thorpe needs your help. If you can identify any of the unknown people in these photos, please contact her through her cell (text or call) (405) 413-8114 or through her email: lathorpe2010@gmail.com.



Photo L-R: Unknown man in black hat, "Big Mary" Thorpe, George Thorpe Sr, Emma Spybuck, around 1918, colorized photo.



Photo L-R: Emma Spybuck Thorpe, unknown woman.



Photo L-R: George Thorpe Jr., Unknown, Unknown, Approximately taken in 1944.



Photo L-R: Unknown, George Thorpe Jr., Herman Thorpe.



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## ASTHS September 2025 Monthly Update

### Healthy Aging Month

Healthy Aging Month is recognized as a time to celebrate life and the positive aspects of growing older. As we age, we become aware that our physical and mental health as well as dietary and social needs change over time. However, that doesn't mean you've lost control. You can take charge of your well-being, by taking steps to age with a healthy body and a healthy mind.

The numbers of people over 45 is growing every year. The attention used to be just on the baby boomers. The generation x-ers are elbowing their way in and have many of the same interests as the previous generation – stay active and vibrant as long as possible. There are over 76 million baby boomers today over 50 and the first of the 82.1 million generation x-ers reached that milestone in 2015.

September is a perfect time to celebrate Healthy Aging Month since it is time when many people think about getting started on new tasks after the summer. Drawing on the "back to school" urge embedded in everyone from childhood, the observance month's activities are designed to encourage people to rejuvenate and get going on positive measures that can impact the areas of physical, social, financial and mental wellness.

#### 10 Tips for Reinventing Yourself during September Is Healthy Aging Month:

1. Do not act your age or at least what you think your current age should act like. What was your best year so far? 28? 40? Now? Picture yourself at that age and be it. Some people may say this is denial, but we say it's positive thinking and goes a long way toward feeling better about yourself. (Tip: Don't keep looking in the mirror, just FEEL IT!)
2. Be positive in your conversations and your actions every day. When you catch yourself complaining, check yourself right there and change the conversation to something positive. (Tip: Stop watching the police reports on the local news).
3. Have negative friends who complain all of the time and constantly talk about how awful everything is? Drop them. As cruel as that may sound, distance yourself from people who do not have a positive outlook on life. They will only depress you and stop you from moving forward. Surround yourself with energetic, happy, positive people of all ages and you will be happier too. (Tip: Smile often. It's contagious and wards off naysayers.)
4. Walk like a vibrant, healthy person. Come on. You can probably do it. Analyze your gait. Do you walk slowly because you have just become lazy or, perhaps, have a fear of falling? (Tip: Make a conscious effort to take big strides, walk with your heel first, and wear comfortable shoes.)
5. Stand up straight! You can knock off the appearance of a few extra years with this trick your mother kept trying to tell you. Look at yourself in the mirror. Are you holding your stomach in, have your shoulders back, chin up? Check out how much better your neck looks! Fix your stance and practice it every day, all day until it is natural. You will look great and feel better. (Tip: Your waistline will look trimmer if you follow this advice.)
6. How's your smile? Research shows people who smile more often are happier. Your teeth are just as important to your good health as the rest of your body. Not only is it the first thing people notice, but good oral health is a gateway to your overall wellbeing. (Tip: Go to the dentist regularly and look into teeth whitening. Nothing says old more than yellowing teeth!)
7. Lonely? Stop brooding and complaining about having no friends or family. Do something about it now. Right this minute. Pick up the phone, landline, or cell and make a call to do one or more of the following: Volunteer your time, Take a class, invite someone to meet for lunch, brunch, dinner, or coffee. (Tip: Volunteer at the local public school to stay in touch with younger people and to keep current on trends, take a computer class or a tutorial session at your cell phone store to keep up with technology, choose a new person every week for your dining out.)
8. Start walking not only for your health but to see the neighbors. Have a dog? You'll be amazed how the dog can be a conversation starter. (Tip: If you don't have time for a dog, go to your local animal shelter and volunteer. You will be thrilled by the puppy love!)
9. Make this month the time to set up your annual physical and other health screenings. Go to the appointments and then, hopefully, you can stop worrying about ailments for a while.
10. Find your inner artist. Who says taking music lessons is for young school children? You may have an artist lurking inside you just waiting to be tapped. Have you always wanted to play the piano, violin, or tuba? Have you ever wondered if you could paint a portrait or scenic in oil? What about working in wood? (Tip: Sign up now for fall art or music classes and discover your inner artist!)

#### Activities and Events:

Throughout September, various activities and events are organized to celebrate Healthy Aging Month. These may include:

- **Workshops and Seminars:** Focused on health, wellness, and lifestyle changes.

- **Community Events:** Encouraging social interaction and community engagement.
- **Online Campaigns:** Utilizing social media to share tips and resources related to healthy aging.

#### Other Things You Can Do to Have a Healthy Aging:

##### 1. Get Moving

- It is important to consult your doctor before exercising. Start slow, know your limitations and modify activities if needed.
- Adults should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each week.
  - Beginning physical activity can be as easy as walking for ten to fifteen minutes for three to four days per week and increasing as you go.
  - Maintaining regular physical activity can help maintain a healthy weight, lower blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and blood sugar levels.
- Make your physical activity FUN and something you enjoy doing!

##### 2. Maintain a Healthy Diet and Balanced Diet:

- Eat proper portion sizes.
  - Overeating can lead to obesity and increase the risk of diabetes and heart disease.
  - Focus on nutrient-dense foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- Avoid excess processed foods.
- Stay hydrated- adults should drink between 10-16 cups of water per day, depended on gender, living environment, and activity level.

##### 3. Stay Social

- Try something new by attending online or socially distant in-person classes that interest you.
- Use technology like Zoom or Facetime to stay in touch with friends and family.

##### 4. Balance your body and mind and Stay Active:

- Keep a positive attitude.
- Keep your mind active by reading or doing puzzles.
- Keep your body active through stretches and yoga.

##### 5. Be proactive with Regular Checkups:

- Receive regular checkups, physicals and medical tests when needed as many diseases can be prevented when caught early.
- Don't forget appointments with the dentist and optometrist too.
  - Take vitamins, supplements and medications as prescribed.

As always, before starting a new exercise program or a diet regime, please schedule an appointment with your primary care provider for a complete check-up if you have not already had your annual exam. Contact the Little Axe Clinic at 405-447-0300 or Shawnee Clinic at 405-878-5850 to schedule your appointment.

Now is the time to get out there and start moving.

#### References:

Department of Homeland Security (2022). Healthy Aging Month. <https://www.dhs.gov/employee-resources/news/2022/09/06/healthy-aging-month>  
District Health Department #10 (2022). September is Healthy Aging Month. <https://www.dhd10.org/september-is-healthy-aging-month/>  
Healthy Aging (2025). September is Healthy Aging Month. <https://healthyaging.net/healthy-aging-month/september-is-healthy-aging-month/>

#### CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

##### Shawnee Health Center

##### NEW SHAWNEE HEALTH CLINIC!

**39665 Benson Park Road, Shawnee, OK 74801 (adjacent to Tecumseh Lake)**

Groundbreaking held Mar 19, 2025 (Anticipate completion in late 2026)  
Clinic slab concrete pours have begun!

#### August 2025 Health Employee Awards of the Month

**Employee of the Month:** Rolanda Smith, Behavioral Health Office Manager

**Team of the Month:** HIM

**Special Leadership Award:** Kelly Alexander, LPN

Chris A. Larkin, MBA, FACHE, CHC  
Executive Director



## WORLD ALZHEIMER'S DAY SEPTEMBER 21

THEY MAY FORGET.....  
BUT NEVER LET THEM BE FORGOTTEN!



ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

FUN ACTIVITIES FOR EVERYONE!

LEAVES ARE FALLING, BETTER HEALTH IS CALLING!

FALL INTO WELLNESS

HEALTH FAIR 2025

PUT ON A SWEATER AND COME GET BETTER!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3RD FROM 2:00-4:00 PM

RAFFLES!

DOOR PRIZES!

LITTLE AXE HEALTH CENTER

1595I LITTLE AXE DRIVE, NORMAN, OK

CONTACT: BEVERLY FELTON 405.701.7190 OR BFELTON@ASTRIBE.COM

ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

SHAWNEE CLINIC: LITTLE AXE HEALTH CENTER PLUSCARE

ZOMBIE RUN

5K FUN RUN/1MILE WALK

DIABETES & WELLNESS DEPT.

THE HOARD IS APPROACHING!

COMING LATE OCTOBER!

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR UPDATES FROM THESE FACEBOOK PAGES:

Absentee Tribal Health System, Absentee Shawnee Tribe, Absentee Shawnee Housing Authority, Thunderbird Casino,

DIABETES & WELLNESS

ASK THE TRAINER!

WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Feeling stuck in your fitness journey? Looking for a way to start? Ask the trainer! Ask ANY question you have and be answered by a AST Resource Center trainer!

Aerobic fitness?

Strength training?

Yoga?

Balance training?

Flexibility?

Scan and Ask!

ASK US TODAY!

Contact: 405.561.7874

AST Diabetes & Wellness Department

Easy Turkey Chili

4 servings ⌚ Prep time 10 min, total time 35 min 🍲 cal/serv 1 ¼ cup: 170

This may be the world's easiest one-pot chili, and like any good chili, it's very versatile. You can eat it on it's own, serve it atop a baked sweet potato, or spread some across whole grain tortilla chips with a sprinkle of cheese, shredded lettuce, and guacamole for a healthy take on nachos.

<https://diabetesfoodhub.org/recipes/easy-turkey-chili#recipe-steps-section>

Ingredients

- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 14.5 oz can no-salt-added diced tomatoes

- 1 small yellow onion (peeled and diced)
- 1 bell pepper diced (any color)
- 1 pound lean ground turkey
- nonstick cooking spray

Step-by-Step Instructions

1.Add cooking spray to a stock pot over high heat. Add the turkey and sauté until just cooked through, about 7-8 minutes.

2.Add the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer for 15 minutes.

3.Serve hot or cool to room temperature, then store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week or package in freezer bags in one cup increments for up to 3 months.

ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

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October 15th - December 7

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Contracted Benefits Advisor

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2025

SEPTEMBER

MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 LABOR DAY TITLE VI CLOSED NO DELIVERIES OR DINE IN	2 CHICKEN STRIPS MASHED POT/GRAVY GREEN BEANS MIXED FRUIT	3 TACO SOUP CORNBREAD CUTIE	4 CHEF SALAD W HAM PINEAPPLES CRACKERS	5 FRENCH TOAST SAUSAGE LINKS GRAPES
8 HAM & CHEESE SANDWICH LTOP CHIPS PINEAPPLES	9 SHEPHERD’S PIE JELLO	10 CHICKEN ALFREDO TOSSED SALAD* GARLIC BREAD PINEAPPLES	11 POLISH SAUSAGE CABBAGE COOKIE	12 SCRAMBLED EGGS SAUSAGE GRAVY BISCUIT
15 BEEF FINGERS MASHED POT/GRAVY CAULIFLOWER FRUIT	16 BAKED CHICKEN BROCCOLI BREAD APRICOTS	17 BEANS w HAM CORNBREAD COBBLER	18 TAMALE REFRIED BEANS CHIPS/SALSA	19 BOILED EGG BACON APPLES
22 VEGGIE SOUP CRACKERS CHEESE STICKS MANDARIN ORANGES	23 CHICKEN BROCC & RICE CASSEROLE TOSSED SALAD* FLUFF	24 SALMON PATTY COLESLAW MIXED VEGGIES PLUMS	25 BEEF TIPS & NOODLES PEAS & CARROTS FRUIT	26 MUFFIN HAM FRUIT
29 SLOPPY JOE WAFFLE FRIES PEARS	30 ROAST VEGGIES ROLL CAKE	MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE*  LUNCH IS SERVED FROM 11 AM TO 1PM BREAKFAST IS SERVED FROM 9AM TO 11AM		

SERVING AT THE SHAWNEE SITE AND LITTLE AXE RESOURCE CENTER

# HEALTH BUZZzz!!

## Dementia And The Power of Art Therapy

Research is now showing a strong correlation between art and memory. As it turns out, making art is not only fun, but actually healthy for us!

It’s no secret that those living with dementia generally find it hard to express themselves. Sitting down and having a conversation with a person that suffers from dementia can be challenging, and what’s even more difficult is keeping their mind engaged. That’s why it’s important to provide simple, stress-free stimulating activities, like art therapy. For dementia patients, art therapy helps prevent an accelerated decline, boosts mood and confidence, and allows the person to unleash their unexpressed thoughts creatively. This unconventional approach helps make enjoyable new memories while also bringing up past memories, even if only temporarily.

Much like music, art has the ability to transport us to specific moments from the past. Studies have revealed that when people living with dementia create art relating to something familiar or personal it helps build a stronger connection with self and others, reduces social isolation and anxiety, and stimulates memory. In fact, art has proven to be such a powerful tool in unlocking memory that some museums have made themselves accessible to those living with dementia. Our very own Oklahoma City Museum of Art (OKCMA) is one of these museums. They offer a "Making Memories" program tailored to seniors with dementia and their caregivers by providing interactive classes and discussions in a relaxed inclusive space while boosting creativity and thought. This admission-free, quarterly program includes an interactive tour of the museum's galleries, followed by an art-making class.

Whatever art medium you choose to do with your loved one, it’s Imperative to support and encourage them to be expressive in their own way at their own pace, while providing assistance only when needed. This approach not only makes for a more enjoyable time together, but it also allows stories to be shared while improving cognitive function in those living with dementia that are verbal, as well as, nonverbal. Regardless of skill-level, the sky is the limit!



Pictured is art from 2022 titled “Good Fish” by our participant (and my grandma, Mary Marcum) in the mid-stages of Lewy Body Dementia.

### 6 Budget-Friendly Art Therapy Ideas:

- Make a memory scrapbook or collage from magazines, craft paper, photos, and stickers
- Adult coloring books or pages
- Paint on rocks or pinecones
- Decorate cookies, cupcakes, or other baked goods
- Popsicle stick ornaments
- Sculpting with clay or salt dough



If you or someone you know would benefit from the **Savvy Caregiver in Indian Country** or **Music & Memory** programs, contact [adpi@astribe.com](mailto:adpi@astribe.com), or call **405-701-7906**.

Check out our web-page on the **Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System’s** website, [asthealth.org](http://asthealth.org), click on “**Programs and Preventions**” and then click on “**Seeking Hope**”. You can sign up on line also!

Lacy Gillean, CDCS  
Dementia Care Specialist  
(405) 701-7906





# Pickling Cucumbers



INCREASE  
INCLUSIVITY,  
BUILD  
COMMUNITY  
STRENGTH

ELEVATE  
AWARENESS OF  
Wi Si Ka To Wi  
AS A COMMUNITY  
RESOURCE

AUG  
2<sup>nd</sup>  
2025

# Wi Si Ka To Wi – Be Well

## Camp Nikoti Highlights: SPF-PFS and TOR Grant Activities

Camp Nikoti is a long-standing summer tradition of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe (AST), designed for elementary and middle school youth. Organized by the AST Youth Program and Education Department—with support from volunteers and community partners—Camp Nikoti offers youth a fun, engaging, and culturally grounded experience. AST Education Director Tresha Spoon explains that “nikoti” means “one” in the Shawnee language, representing the unity formed by the end of the camp: “The initial group involved with establishing the camp felt that by the end of the camp, the group is one group, one family.” Campers build lasting bonds as they participate in skill-building, cultural enrichment, crafts, fitness activities, field trips, and interactive presentations from Tribal programs.

### SPF-PFS and TOR Join the Fun

The SPF-PFS and Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) grants were honored to participate in Camp Nikoti this July, delivering meaningful prevention and cultural learning experiences to campers.

### Day 1: Prevention Education through Play

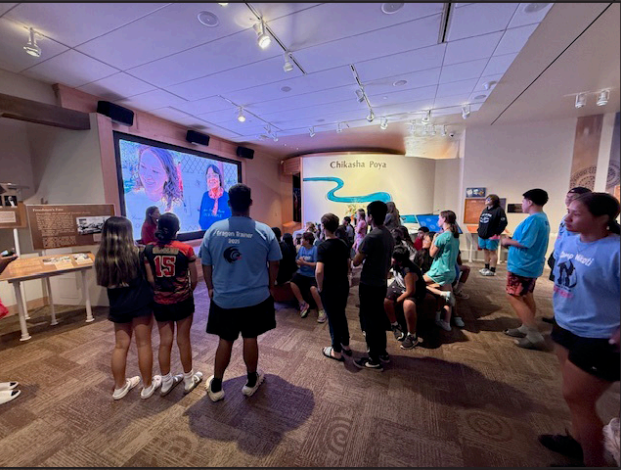
On Wednesday, July 9, Jack, Karen, and Bailey led prevention-focused activities at Brendle Corner. Jack and Bailey led Champions of Rx, a competitive game from Generation Rx that teaches teens about safe medication use and avoiding prescription drug misuse. After the Champions of Rx game, Karen facilitated Human Bingo, an energetic activity designed to promote connection, communication, and healthy social interaction.

*Photo: Campers at Brendle Corner participate in a lively game of Human Bingo, facilitated by SPF-PFS and TOR grant staff. The activity encouraged campers to interact, get to know one another, and build social connections in a fun and engaging way.*



### Day 2: Cultural Exploration and Heritage Learning

On Thursday, July 10, grant funds supported a cultural field trip to the Chickasaw Cultural Center. Campers participated in a guided tour, watched a traditional stomp dance, listened to cultural talks, viewed an educational film, explored the museum, crafted mini stickball sticks, and enjoyed traditional Native cuisine including Indian tacos, Pashofa, and grape dumplings. These experiences allowed campers to strengthen protective factors, build cultural knowledge, and learn about healthy decision-making—all while having fun and forming lasting connections. We thank Camp Nikoti for the opportunity to be part of this impactful program and look forward to continued collaboration.



**Left Photo:** Camp Nikoti participants gather at the Chickasaw Cultural Center to watch an educational video as part of a guided tour. This immersive experience offered valuable insight into Chickasaw history, language, and cultural traditions. **Middle Photo:** Campers listen as a cultural guide at the Chickasaw Cultural Center shares insights about historical artifacts on display. This part of the tour allowed youth to engage directly with museum exhibits and deepen their understanding of Chickasaw history and traditions. **Right Photo:** Camp Nikoti youth walk the grounds of the Chickasaw Cultural Center during a guided outdoor tour. The tour offered campers a chance to explore the landscape, architecture, and cultural landmarks while learning about the traditions and history of the Chickasaw people.



**Left Photo:** Campers gather around the Chickasaw Warrior statue during a guided tour at the Chickasaw Cultural Center. Created by renowned Chickasaw artist Mike Larsen, the nine-foot-tall bronze sculpture honors the strength and resilience of the Chickasaw people following their forced removal from their original Homeland. The statue serves as a powerful reminder of cultural endurance and identity. **Left Middle Photo:** Campers explore the Spirit Forest exhibit at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, where a guide shared the cultural and spiritual significance of the natural world in Chickasaw tradition. This immersive space, known as Itti' Anonka' Nannakat Oktani, reflects a time before recorded history when people, animals, and nature lived in harmony. The changing sky and symbolic elements throughout the exhibit honor the passing of time, clan identities, and the deep-rooted connection between the Chickasaw people and the Earth. **Right Middle Photo:** As part of a hands-on cultural activity at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, campers created miniature stickball sticks. This traditional craft connects youth to the history and significance of stickball—once used to settle disputes and now honored as a cherished sport and cultural practice among many Southeastern tribes. **Right Photo:** Campers observe a traditional stomp dance performance at the Chickasaw Cultural Center, experiencing the powerful rhythms, attire, and community spirit of this ceremonial dance. The stomp dance is a vital expression of cultural identity, storytelling, and spiritual connection for many Southeastern tribes.