



# THE MVSOKOKE NEWS

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Muscogee Creek citizen Mike Flud, Former Principal Chief Bill Sunday Fife, Martha Jean Froman, Margret Floyd and Rev. Patrick Freeman were 2019 distinguished Living Legends. Muscogee (Creek) Nation is now searching for the next round of living legends. (Submission)

## MCN SEARCHES OUT CITIZENS FOR THE 2020 LIVING LEGENDS

NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2020 LIVING LEGENDS WILL BE ACCEPTED THROUGH JULY 31

**Morgan Taylor**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—Every year the Muscogee Creek Nation celebrates deserving citizens through the annual Living Legends Ceremony.

Last year the honors went to Educator and Tribal Administrator Micheal Flud, Veteran and Former Principal Chief of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Bill Sunday Fife, Indian Education advocate and teacher Martha Jean Froman, Advocate for Foster Children and 30 year foster grandparent, Margaret Floyd, and Rev. Patrick Freeman.

The ceremony honors those citizens that have been nominated by people in the communities in recognition of their outstanding efforts and contributions to their communities and the MCN.

“The induction ceremony began in 2005 under former Principal Chief A.D. Ellis and continues yearly,” said MCN Tribal Liaison for At-Large Citizens Geebon Gouge.

“I love getting to make those calls to let citizens know that their name was nominated to become a Living Legend and that they have been selected,” said Gouge. “To be able to hear one of our elders’ voices when they hear it and to give them that affirmation because some of them don’t think they deserve it, is truly amazing.”

This year’s ceremony will be held on August 29 at 6 p.m. at the River Spirit Casino Event Center.

“In the past, we have had submissions of people chosen

who were former chiefs and people who aren’t necessarily in leadership positions but show leadership within their communities,” Gouge said.

As long as the nominee has made a positive influence in their community and falls under the eligibility guidelines the submission will be accepted.

“Please consider all potential nominations in accordance with the nominees’ eligibility requirements,” said Gouge.

Completed applications may be hand-delivered, emailed to [Ggouge@mcn-nsn.gov](mailto:Ggouge@mcn-nsn.gov) or mailed to the address listed below:

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Liaison  
Living Legends  
P.O. Box 580  
Okmulgee, OK 74447



MCN Behavioral Health Prevention Specialist John-Wako Hawk Co-Cke shows his pride during the 2019 MCN Festival Parade. (MN File Photo)

## CITIZEN PROVIDES SUPPORT FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

JUNE BRINGS ABOUT THE 20 YEAR MARK FOR PRIDE

**Morgan Taylor**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—The term “Two Spirit” may not be something that is heard every day, but in some Native cultures “Two Spirit” people have been around for over a century.

“In culture they [Two Spirit] were healers and caregivers and often times called upon to watch over the orphaned children in the tribe,” said MCN Behavioral Health Prevention Specialist John-Wako Hawk Co-Cke’.

Co-Cke’ through a MSPI Grant awarded to the MCNBHS provides meetings and services all over the Creek Nation while advocating for the Two Spirit community.

“I identify as Two-Spirit which means I carry a feminine and masculine spirit,” Co-Cke’ said. “It is vital to our tribe an community to accept the Two-Spirit people for the healing of the whole tribe and as last piece to our sacred hoop.”

“The first Gay Pride Movement happened in 1969. The drag queens got tired of their shows being stopped and people getting arrested at their shows. Its crazy to think that people were arrested just because they love someone different,” Co-Cke’ said.

On June 1, 2000 President Bill Clinton declared the month of June as Gay and Lesbian Pride month in commemoration of the June 1969 Stonewall Riot. The riot turned into a six-day raid after law enforcement forced employees and patrons out of a pub. This later served as a catalyst for the Gay

LGBTQ— 2



Members of the MCN cabinet meet to discuss the plan for CARES Act funding. (Submission)

## COMMITTEE CONSIDERS CARES ACT FUNDING

SPECIAL COMMITTEE DETERMINES FOUR STRATEGIC AREAS TO BEST USE COVID RELIEF FUNDS

**Angel Ellis**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has put together a taskforce representing various elements of tribal services and policy, as well as citizen input in order to best assess exactly how the tribe should utilize the \$282.2 million received in CARES ACT funding on May 5.

The tribe has had a core team that helped work to advocate for and secure the funding and now that the first rounds of payments to tribes was made, the focus for tribal leaders is to determine the best use for the funds while staying within the guidelines of the CARES ACT.

According to Acting Secretary of the Nation and Commerce Terra Branson, the tribe started bringing cabinet members into the discussion in early March.

“That team grew and shifted based on needs,” Branson said.

Branson, whose background is rooted in federal tribal policy and whom has even spent time working with the National Congress of the American Indian has been charged with the duty of advancing the committee towards the goal of a CARES Act funding plan for the tribe.

“The primary team of the CARES Act specifically to the Coronavirus Relief Fund has included Principal Chief and Second Chief, many different Cabinet members depending on the data that we are trying to pull in,” Branson said. “Some consistent players have been the

controller, myself, Chief of Staff, Secretary of Interior Affairs and the Community and Human services secretary.”

To that core group the MCN added representation from the private sector.

“It grew as we began to prepare data for the first certification,” Branson said. “It grew from that core cabinet team to include all of our MCN own enterprises, mostly CEO’s from those groups.”

“We were leveraging their knowledge and experience in the private market to gather data and submit that data to treasury.”

Once the funding was received and verified the team expanded further.

CARES ACT— 2



MCN Behavioral Health Staff members have been traveling to Creek Nation Community Centers setting up locations sites where care packages are distributed. (MN File Photo)

## MCN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE PACKAGES DISTRIBUTED WITH THERAPUETIC ITEMS

GOODY BAGS ARE TO BE USED TO ALLEVIATE THE STRESS FROM BEING AT HOME DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

**Morgan Taylor**  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—The Muscogee Creek Nation Behavioral Health Services Department began distributing COVID-19 care packages at the Okmulgee Indian Community Center on May 29.

The COVID-19 Care Package Outreach Event is a limited contact distribution of care packages that are bags filled with items such as games for the family, therapeutic items, and flyers with resources. MCN Behavioral Health Staff members will be traveling to Creek Nation Community Centers setting up locations sites where care packages will be distributed.

“We at MCN Behavioral Health Services are excited to provide these care packages to our citizens during this difficult time. We want to ensure that everyone has access to these items to help alleviate stress and provide a sense of community.”

THERAPUETIC— 2



LGBTQ

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Rights Movement.

Nine years later in 2009, President Obama expanded the commemoration by declaring June as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Pride Month.

“We have come very far in 20 years but we still very far to go,” Co-Cke’ said.

“As a preachers kid, I grew up trying to get my dad to understand me and accept me. It hurts when your family who is supposed to love you won’t accept you for who you are,” Co-Cke’ said. “This is something common I hear among my group members and that’s why my mission is to help the Creek

people to embrace our culture.”

John’s hope for the tribe is to create a support group where everyone is welcome. A meeting was to be held at the Wetumka Indian Center on May 28 but was cancelled due to CDC guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This group will not be limited to gays or lesbians. It will be a group for all walks of life and sexual orientations,” Co-cke’ said. “The group name will be the creek word Tvmektv which means ‘one to fly.’”

Due to COVID-19 and CDC guidelines, John has not been able to hold face-to-face Two Spirit meetings yet. Meetings have been held via zoom for the time being and until further notice.

Any MCN citizen needing additional information on where to find meetings, support and resources can contact behavioral health offices whose information is provided below.

638 Alexander Dr., Ste 104,  
Eufaula, OK 74432 (918) 618-2168  
31870 Highway 51, Coweta, OK  
74429 (918) 279-3471

100 N. Main St. Sapulpa, OK  
74066 (918) 224-9307

1800 E. Coplin Rd, Okemah,  
OK 74859 (918) 623-1424

100 West 7th, suite 102,  
Okmulgee, OK 74447  
(918) 758-1910

CARES ACT

Continued from Page 1

According to Branson the more formal and current team structure came together once the funding was verified and the question of how to use the funding was posed.

Branson said at that point the invitation was extended to National Council Members. The inclusion of the council provides a point of contact for citizens. It is through their council representatives that citizens can voice how they feel the tribe should use the relief funding.

So far there have been no options completely ruled out. But one of the questions the committee hopes to answer, according to Branson, is “where is additional or increased need?”

“One area that we know there is additional need is around the hardship grant provided through social services,” Branson said. “We have been meeting with them, meeting with the department of education, we’ve met with tribal construction to explore infrastructure opportunities, that might be tied to the coronavirus, and how to make our employees feel safe.”

As the meetings take place, Branson said many ideas are brought to the table and the some are being identified as a priority in this first round of funding. Those ideas are vetted and researched.

“As we come across one that really needs to happen in this first initial funding application, we are assembling documents, coming up with application and policy to support early imple-

mentation,” Branson said. “As the committee comes up with those programs and expansions we are putting together budgets.”

One thing is for certain ruled out.

“We are not allowed to use coronavirus relief funds to shore up revenue shortfalls,” Branson said. “We have to approach it differently, we have to identify expenses that fit within the guidelines, within the statutes, that will allow our businesses to safely reopen and that will allow us to recoup some of the additional costs during the pandemic.”

Branson said the committee goal is to put together a complete spending package that will be taken before National Council for their review and comments.

“We know that citizens are suffering and it is important that we move quickly,” Branson said.

One of the concerns for citizens of the tribe is how these funds can be used to help citizens of the tribe who may live outside of the jurisdictional boundaries of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

“We have received internal direction to create services and programs that expand eligibility,” Branson said. “Some of our social services we have now are dictated by federal regulation where we cannot serve at large citizens.”

“In this case, the Coronavirus Relief fund allows us to provide services to citizens no matter where they live.”

Branson said the committee

is looking at the direct service programs and factoring in the at-large populations when budgeting.

One the concerns for the committee in this planning phase of how to use the funds, is the fact that there is minimal guidance on the use of the funding. So far just two documents have been used in framing the rules for the use of coronavirus relief fund.

The main guidance for the use of corona virus relief funds states that the funds can be used to cover costs that, “are necessary expenditures incurred due to public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019: were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 for the State or Government; and were incurred during the period that begins on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.

On June 2, MCN Press Secretary Jason Salsman stated that there had been recent progress from the committee.

“They have identified four key areas for disbursement,” Salsman said. “That’s individual and family support, we know a lot of people have a need right now and are doing our best to fill the gaps in the needs that they have.”

“Another area is health care services and access, also government operations, then business and enterprise relief funds.”

For tribal governments the clock is ticking. Funds must be used by December 30 or returned.

Therapeutic

Continued from Page 1

Health are doing a good job at getting ahead of this pandemic and what I think is to come which is potentially a mental health crisis as a result of COVID-19,” said Project Director for the Native Connections Grant with the MCNBHS Tyler Stone.

“We wanted to create a bag that helped provide resources. In the bag you may find dominos, playing cards, therapeutic items such as bendy-straws, or stress balls,” Stone said.

There is a limit of one bag per family.

“People can pull up to the

site and without ever getting out their car, pick up a care package,” Stone said. “We realize that there has been a huge impact on financial hardships as well as mental health.”

Bags contain information and items that families can use if they need more activates to do as a family unit, as well as information regarding behavioral health needs to help cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have expanded it to everyone and not just MCN citizens. Our next plan is to hold events up north. We have focused on the Southern communities so far due to the lack of resources in those communities,” Stone said. “People can

look forward to more events, more virtual trainings, and more outreach and awareness.”

For more information or announcements concerning upcoming Care Package Events and Locations follow the MCN Behavioral Health Facebook page.

An MCN Employee Stress Line is available to call at 1(918)-758-1930.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline- 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line- Text CREEK to 741741

For further information please contact MCN Behavioral Health Services 1 (918)-758-1910.

CORRECTIONS

The following are corrections of mistakes published in the graduate edition on June 1.

Tafv Sanders



School: Beggs High School  
Bio: Tafv graduated from Beggs. He is the son Melissa and Virgil Sanders. Tafv belongs to the Wind clan and Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. Tafv was active in football, powerlift-

ing, track, studentcouncil and MCN Challenge Bowl. He was the vice president of his senior class. He was a Member of the state runner up (2017-18) and the 2019 state semi-finalist Golden Demon footballsquads. 2019- NE Regional Runner Up and placed 4th at the state meet 2020- NE Regional Champion and state meet canceled due to COVID-19. His powerlifting season ended with a #1 ranking heading into the state meet lifting a total of 1525 lbs. Tafv is a member of the Muscogee Nation Youth Council and serves as Sergeant at Arms and Environmental Committee chairperson. He is also a 2020 Youth Ambassador for WeRNative. Attending Haskell Indian Nations University in the fall.

Taiah Sanders



School: Tulsa Community College  
Bio: Taiah graduated from Tulsa Community College. She is the daughter of Melissa & Virgil Sanders of Okmulgee. She is a member of the Wind Clan and Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. She received her Degree in Associate of Applied Science- Majoring in Respiratory Care. She was aMember of the National Society of Leadership and Success.

Cassandra Self



School: Texas Tech University  
Bio: Cassandra gradu-

ated with a Master of Science in Healthcare Administration from Texas Tech University Health Science Center. Cassandra is married to Zeb Houston and together they have four children and reside in Fort Worth, Texas. Cassandra is currently employed as a hospital supply chain manager and is involved with the community through various outlets including on the board of a local chamber of commerce, being a member of PAHCOM and ACHE of North Texas. Cassandra is a life long learner and plans to expand hereducation and certifications.



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To submit a change of address or a letter to the editor, call: 918-732-7720 or email: [info@mvskokemedia.com](mailto:info@mvskokemedia.com).



# SOVEREIGNTY MESSAGE SEEKS TO UPLIFT CITIZENS WHILE THE SUPREME COURT CONSIDERS TRIBAL JURISDICTION CASES

CIRCLE CINEMA MARQUEE FEATURES MESSAGE OF INDIGENOUS SOVERIEGNTY, CITIZENS ENCOURAGED DURING UNCERTAIN TIMES

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

TULSA, Oklahoma–The average person may not realize it but if they were to stand in on the sidewalk at 10 S. Lewis Avenue in Tulsa Oklahoma, they could cross the street and enter from sovereign nation to another. On one side of the street is the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, on the other side the Cherokee Nation.

Citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Aaron Griffith is aware of that little known fact. He also knows the theatre that sits at that location has a unique relationship with tribal issues. The Circle Cinema theatre has a reputation for featuring indigenous up and comers in film. That is why he picked their marquee to put a message out into the world in a special way. He created a short-term paid message with the help of Circle Cinema and their marquee.

On May 28, the sign went up for the first time with a message for tribal citizens. The sign displayed, “TVLSE LOCV POKV HEYV EKVNV PUM EKVNV ESTE MVSKOKVLKE PAKSVNKE MUCV NETTV PAKSE” in the Muscogee (Creek) Language and in English “NDN Country Rez Never Disestablished.”

Anyone who missed a chance to see the Muscogee Creek Lan-

guage in lights had a second chance. According to Stephanie LaFevers Executive Director at Circle Cinema the sign went up again.

“The message was up by 10 am on Thursday, June 11, and stayed up until Saturday morning, June 13,” LaFevers said.

It is a message that Griffith feels encourages tribal citizens in light of the Murphy and McGirt court cases being considering in the USSC.

“Being a tribal citizen is more than a sacred lament card,” Griffith said.

“In the process I wanted to make sure to support and promote our language,” Griffith said.

He thinks the message on the marquee is one that the community might find comforting.

“In an anxious and uncertain period of pandemic, I just thought that it was a great opportunity to bring a positive message of promise and progress for our people,” Griffith said. “It’s also doing something good to help sustain Circle Cinema, who have been a really great outlet for Indigenous expression, not just this Indigenous people from this continent but globally as well.”

He said that while it is a private advertisement he thinks the message stands alone and is not about the author.



Pictured is the historic Circle Cinema Theater located at 10 S. Lewis Ave, in Tulsa Oklahoma. The lights illuminate a sign displaying a message of tribal sovereignty in the Muscogee (Creek) Language. (Submission)

“In these tough times any such expression of goodwill or gratitude should go towards the publisher Circle Cinema,” Griffith said. “It’s important to support those who support us.”

“The only gratitude or recognition or awards that I would seek aside from garnering more attention for Circle Cinema is to enlighten someone’s day with this message.”

He admits to one thing he might want from this.

“Maybe if people who are interested to go and snap a selfie for sovereignty so that this pos-

itive message of self determination can spread to a wider audience.”

Circle Cinema is Tulsa’s oldest-standing movie theatre that originally opened in 1928. Today the theatre now operates as the only nonprofit cinema in the area.

The establishment takes pride on being much more than a local cinema. It is marketed as “Celebrators of creativity, the arts and filmmakers from around the corner, and the world.”

The cinema operates 365 days a year through selected features

and programs that expose and connect the community to global issues and environments and cultures. But since COVID-19 closed the doors, purchasing the marquee is a source of income to sustain the establishment.

It is that spirit of cultural connectivity that inspired Griffith to support the theater through a message that is spelled out in the Muscogee (Creek) language.

Circle Cinema is located at 10 S. Lewis Ave, in Tulsa Oklahoma. For more information about the theatre visit their website [circlecinema.org](http://circlecinema.org)

# CITIZEN ACCEPTED INTO TOP NAVAL ACADEMY IN THE COUNTRY

DANE FARRIS MAKES DECISION TO GIVE UP ACCESS TO TV, INTERNET AND MORE FOR RIGOROUS TRAINING

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKLAHOMA CITY– Bishop McGuinness High School graduate and Muscogee (Creek) citizen Dane Farris has been accepted into the Naval Academy.

According to a United States Naval Academy news release, the four-year service academy prepares midshipmen morally, mentally and physically to be professional officers in the naval service. U.S. News and World Reports has recognized the naval academy as a top five undergraduate engineering school and a top 20 best liberal arts college.

There are approximately 1,200 candidates selected each year for the Academy’s ‘plebe’ or freshman class, and every

student is required to participate in the Plebe summer. Farris was inducted and will begin on June 25, six weeks of basic midshipman training is part of the Plebe summer.

“The more I learned about the naval academy, the more I wanted to go,” Farris stated.

Farris is looking forward to being a part of the naval academy, because it is not like a college campus.

“At the naval academy it is something more bigger than yourself,” Farris said about his future at the academy.

Before hitting the first academic year at the Naval Academy and the four years of challenge, the pressure and rigor of Plebe summer prepares them.

During the Plebe summer Farris will face, basic skills in seamanship, infantry drill and

how to shoot 9 mm pistols and M-16 rifles.

He will go through daily training sessions, activities and forty hours of instruction on infantry drill and five formal parades.

Plebe does not allow access to television, internet, music and they are very strict on cell phones. They only allow three calls during the six weeks of Plebe summer.

“These restrictions don’t bother me,” Farris said. “I understand they did this to get everyone ready for the first academic year.”

The Naval Academy is a very selective place where not many people get accepted, and Farris felt good about himself.

As a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Farris leaves a word of encouragement for the



Dane Farris a graduate of Bishop McGuinness was inducted into the U.S. Naval Academy Class of 2024. (MN File Photo)

younger generation who might want to be in the military.

“You should go for it. I was on the fence about it for a long

time and was unsure of going. Now that I made the decision about doing it, I feel really good about it.”

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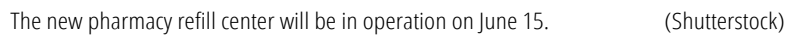
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ATTORNEY DRU R. TATE

Is a Member of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Bar Association and has served the Tribe through its various departments and its Citizens since 2011.

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**Lani Hansen**  
*REPORTER*

"We are trying to pull the volume out of the clinics," Allen

New prescriptions pickups will still be available at all clinic locations. Patients are urged to contact the pharmacy at 855-771-4321, online at [creekhealth.org](http://creekhealth.org), or via the Muscogee (Creek) Pharmacy app to confirm their contact information and address is correct.

With IFC being a church camp,



"We are also looking at virtual activities which are being planned,"

For more information about IFC and to stream the online services visit [www.indianfallscreek.org](http://www.indianfallscreek.org).

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MCN Gaming facilities are reporting a positive response to reopening. (MN File Photo)

# GETTING BACK TO GAMING AGAIN

REPORTS POSITIVES AS GAMING REOPENS FOR MCN

Angel Ellis  
REPORTER

TULSA, Oklahoma—While visitors might notice some differences to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation’s flagship resort and other gaming facilities operations since reopening one thing they can expect is being greeted by staff who are happy to see them and be provided the safest possible gaming experience.

The shut down of all gaming operations because of a pandemic was a first for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. It was the second shut down for the River Spirit Casino Resort. Even with adversity tribal leadership issued a message of resilience through Principal Chief David Hill’s Facebook post.

‘No matter how many times you get knocked down, you always get back up one more time,’ the post said. ‘We endure.’

The strategy for reopening started with planning and implementation according to a news release issued on May 21. In the nine-page document, leadership outlines the addressing employee and guest health.

According to the release, employees received training on their personal health and guest health procedures implemented to combat COVID-19 spread.

The procedures include, “the guest journey from entrance to exit; cleaning products and protocols; locations for distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE); social distancing and public entry screening protocols.”

One of the big changes to accommodate safety is that regional casino locations will close nightly for cleaning and the River Spirit and Margaritaville Casinos will rotate closure overnight on alternating dates.

“All guests and employees will receive a non-contact temperature screening prior to being admitted entrance to the casinos,” the release stated. “All employees are required to wear masks while working, guests will be provided disposable masks and gloves upon arrival.”

“In addition to the hourly, recurring sanitization of all guest areas and hard surfaces, hand sanitizer stations and sanitary wipe dispensers are available for guest use throughout the properties.”

Part of the prep work also focused on the layout of gaming machines, restaurant tables, banquet spaces and other layout in order to practice six feet social distancing.

Another strategy for reopening was the use of a special MVP invitation, which allowed the facility to avoid a long line of people who might be waiting for the opening day on June 1.

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Casino’s CEO Pat Crofts shared some encouraging reports from the first reopening phase as the River spirit Casino Resort in Tulsa and the smaller facilities in Beggs, Holdenville, Eufaula, Bristow, Checotah, Okemah, Okmulgee and Muskogee welcome back guests.

“You could see everyone smiling, even wearing the masks as employees greeted each other and the guests,” Crofts said. “We had nearly 300 people staying overnight opening night.”

“More than half of them decided to stay over another night or two.” Crofts reported the feedback from guests and employees has been very positive.

“We even had the Tulsa World in and they spoke with some of the employees,” Crofts said. “They couldn’t say enough good things about how excited they were about getting back to work and seeing their teammates and the customers.”

“It’s nice to get back and be around such positive people.”

If the news of maintaining a \$3M per pay period payroll during an 11 week pandemic when the gaming operations were closed generating zero revenue was not enough to raise eyebrows, then the special promotion for Healthcare professionals is jaw dropping.

On May 28 the River Spirit Casino Resort announced an offer for a free night stay for healthcare professionals along with a complimentary \$10 reward play for these workers who have faced the pandemic on the front line.

The offer is valid through August 30, is valid for any day of the week based on availability and May include: doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, employees of clinical and diagnostic laboratories, housekeepers and janitorial staff in healthcare facilities, free standing clinic employees, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, dental hygienists, dental assistants and dental laboratory technicians, hospice employees, home healthcare workers and staff of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.

“This is a small token of our appreciation for the Herculean efforts healthcare workers are doing as they put themselves at risk to keep our community safe,” said Crofts. “They are taking care of us, now we can offer to take care of them.”

# NATIONAL COUNCIL SET TO VOTE ON NEW CABINET MEMBERS

PRINCIPAL CHIEFS NOMINATIONS OF CABINET MEMBERS SET ON COUNCIL COMMITTEE AGENDAS, IF APPROVED THE CABINET WILL GO THROUGH JUNE FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—MCN Principal Chief David Hill has selected nominations of cabinet members. The nominations were sent to MCN National Council Committee for sponsorship and consideration.

In the Business, Finance and Justice Committee there was six nominations listed to serve. Terra Branson-Thomas was nominated to serve as Secretary of the Nation and Commerce. Branson-Thomas was sponsored by William Lowe. Clay A. Darnell was nominated to serve as the Controller. Darnell was sponsored by James Jennings.

Gregory Anderson was nominated to serve as the Chief of Staff. Anderson was sponsored by Patrick Freeman Jr. Robert Hawkins was nominated to serve as the Chief of the Lighthouse Administration. Hawkins was sponsored by Robert Hufft.

Roger Wiley was nominated to serve as the Attorney General. Wiley was sponsored by Robert Hufft. Dana Deere was nominated to serve as the Tax Commissioner. Deere was sponsored by Robert Hufft.



MCN Principal Chief David Hill has selected nominations of cabinet members. (Shutterstock)

In the Health, Education and Welfare Committee there was four nominations listed to serve. Shawn Terry was nominated to serve as the Secretary of Health. Terry was sponsored by Joyce Deere. Kellen Bible was nominated to serve as the Office of the Veterans Affairs Services Administrator. Bible was sponsored by Joyce Deere.

Monte Randall was nominated to serve as the Secretary of Education, Employment and Training. Randall was sponsored by Anna Marshall. Carmin Tecumseh-Williams was nominated to serve as the Secretary of Com-

munity and Human Services. Tecumseh-Williams was sponsored by Randall Hicks.

In the Land, Natural Resources and Cultural Preservation Committee there was two nominations to serve. Jesse Allen was nominated to serve as the Secretary of Interior Affairs. Allen was sponsored by Thomasene Yahola Osborn. Rebecca Stone was nominated to serve as the Secretary of Housing. Stone was sponsored by Thomasene Yahola Osborn.

Mvsoke Media will follow these nominations through committee, pre-agenda and full council meetings.

# EMPLOYEES CAUTIOUSLY RETURN TO NORMAL WORK HOURS

SECRETARY OF HEALTH PROVIDES HEALTH UPDATE AND WELCOMES BACK EMPLOYEES

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma—On June 1 Muscogee (Creek) Nation employees returned back to work after working from home since March.

According to Secretary of Health for the MCN Department of Health (DOH) Shawn Terry, employees of DOH returned back to normal work hours in the last week of May but lobbies have remained closed to patients. Since the virus is still in effect, the DOH is only seeing certain patients to restrict traffic to the facility.

“The tribe then started its return to work with their employees, bringing all the essential and non-essential programs,” Terry said. “Before bringing the employees back the first thing we did was, an assessment of all the work areas looking at what we needed to adjust for social distancing. We also made sure all sanitations procedures were in place and cleaning appropriately.”

All the facilities are being cleaned and sanitized at a hospital level. Employees have returned to work but lobbies remain closed to the public until further notice.

With the return of employees, Chief David Hill enacted the protect our people document which is an addition to the state of emergency order. When the state was opening up Chief Hill wanted to continue for Creek Nation to have the document to be cautious as



Shawn Terry

the Nation opened back up.

“The protect our people document sets out guidelines that the DOH help put together with CDC guidelines,” Terry said. “The guidelines continues to give our offices and operations the things they need to do to keep themselves safe. It also gives guidance to the general public on who are at high risk. Chief Hill titled this operation protect our people.”

Now that employees have returned back to work, before entering the building each employee must have their temperature checked.

“We have purchased thermometers for all of our operations, which are placed at each worksite,” Terry said. “Once the temperature is checked and it is in the appropriate range, then a form is provided to make sure none of the employees has been exposed.”

With increased numbers on COVID-19 cases statewide, in the MCN health system there has

been 17 tested positive out of 962 who have been tested since the tribe has re-opened.

“There has been a slight increase, but overall we have been lucky that we haven’t had the rapid outbreak we have seen in some places across the country,” Terry said.

There are three types of testing MCN health provides; Abbott’s 24-hour test which is an invasive nasal swab where the results are returned within 24 hours. The second one is Abbott’s rapid test which is another nasal swab but less invasive, this test is available at the medical center, Creek Nation Community Hospital, Sapulpa Indian Health Center and Koweta Indian Health Center. The last test is the antibody test which is done by blood draw which is available at Koweta and Okmulgee.

MCN employees continue to practice social distancing while at work, being back helps MCN health monitor the employees symptoms every day.

“We are in a better position today to know how this virus spreads, and we’ve been able to adjust our business to make sure we can keep people safe,” Terry stated.

Terry shared that everyone should continue following CDC guidelines and recommendations such as washing your hands, wear a mask in areas filled with people, practice social distancing and be aware of your surroundings.



# OLDHAM HOME CARE

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Muscogee (Creek) citizen Dimitri Mahee working for the 2013 Summer Youth Program at Koweta Indian Health Center. (Submission)

COVID CHANGES HOW SUMMER YOUTH WORK

ONLINE OPTION IMPLEMENTED FOR HIGH-RISK YOUTH TO BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SYEP

Morgan Taylor  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma- Muscogee Creek Nation Employment and Training Department have decided to make changes this year to the tentative calendar regarding the Summer Youth Employment Program for the health and safety of all participants.

The SYEP is a program that will help provide native youth ages 16-21 with a career opportunity through the summer. The youth participant chooses a work site and the SYEP pays the youth to work full time at the site for the length of the program which usually last eight weeks.

The purpose of the program is to provide career and educational opportunities through quality, culturally focused guidance to enhance self-sufficiency, involve community and family, and promote a stronger workforce.

Applications for the program are no longer being accepted. The first day of SYEP will be June 22 and extend through July 31.

The SYEP Conference and Orientation, Financial Literacy, Kick

Off, and Financial Empowerment Fun Day have all been cancelled for the health and wellness of participants and collaborators. The SYEP Orientation will be held via Zoom conference call before the first day of the program.

Also new this year will be a ‘work from home’ option which was implemented for the immunocompromised or high-risk.

“A doctor’s note will be required by participants for the ‘work from home’ option. These participants will not have a work site but will be expected to complete weekly online assignments and maintain daily contact with their direct supervisor to maintain eligibility in the program,” said MCN Employment and Training Youth Coordinator Mia Hokinson.

Due to the modified dates the SYEP will only run for six weeks instead of the normal eight weeks. However, an incentive will be given to participants who have completed the requirements of the program.

For questions, please contact the Employment and Training office at (918)-732-7773.

COVID MONITORING WEBSITE USED BY MCN EMPLOYEES

MCN PARTNERS WITH RESPIRCARE AND HGE HEALTH TO PROVIDE A COVID TRACKING TOOL TO BE USED BY EMPLOYEES AS THEY RETURN TO OFFICES



HGE COVID-19 Symptom Tracking Tool is now available for employees. (Clinton Sinclair)

Lani Hansen  
REPORTER

OKMULGEE, Oklahoma- The Muscogee (Creek) Nation Department of Health (MCNDH) has partnered with RespirCare and HGE Health to provide Muscogee (Creek) Nation employees with a free COVID-19 Symptom Tracking Tool application and access to same-day care.

“HGE has this app that was monitoring the patients, so it made sense to develop a relationship with RespirCare and HGE to monitor our patients as well as our employees for COVID symptoms,” Chief Medical Officer of MCNDH, Dr. Billy Beats said.

The HGE COVID application monitors symptoms of COVID-19 regardless of whether they have tested positive for the virus, MCN employees have access to download it for free. The employee will go in on a daily basis to answer questions such as temperature checks, cough and shortness of

breath. “Answering the questions on the application will indicate if the patient has been exposed and has an acute infection of COVID-19,” Dr. Beats said. “That way we can direct them to the proper facility for care, instead of the employee coming into the office and possibly exposing other employees.”

According to a MCNDH press release, HGE COVID Care provides simple daily tracking of symptoms to provide early detection for patients at risk for developing severe symptoms. It takes users less than one minute a day to track symptoms. Then the recorded data is assessed by RespirCare’s remote care team to determine the degree of urgency and whether in-person testing and/or treatment is necessary.

“The employee will create their own account through computer or on their phone, and answer the questions,” Dr. Beats said. “Based on algorithm, it will send an alert to HGE, then they

will notify our department and we will reach out to that individual.”

With the application it will allow MCNDH to monitor patients without them stepping out of their home and possibly exposing individuals in the public. According to Dr. Beats, this application is a safety net to prevent a potentially positive COVID patient from going into the facilities and exposing others.

“I’m expecting great things from this,” Dr. Beats said about the COVID application.

The platform features an easy-to-use graphical interface that guides users through a questionnaire prepared in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 guidelines. This is in addition to the standard respiratory symptoms tracked in the clinically validated HGE Health solution for respiratory illnesses. More information on COVID can be found at [www.hgehealth.com](http://www.hgehealth.com).



# Summer Enrollment Now Open!

**Enrollment: May 4th through June 3rd**

Submit application online at [cmn.edu](http://cmn.edu), or by appointment through the Admissions office **(918) 549-2847**

Summer 2020 Course Schedule is available at [cmn.edu](http://cmn.edu)

**Classes held: June 1, 2020 — August 7, 2020**

**CMN will conduct the Summer Trimester Online.**

**Continuing students, please contact your advisor to re-enroll for the Summer Trimester**

**Student Advisors**

**Tribal Services:** Mackie Moore, 918-549-2805  
**Criminal Justice:** Cheryl Najera, 918-549-2815  
**N.A. Studies:** Norma Marshall, 918-549-2816  
**Gaming:** Shanh-Dea McIntosh, 918-549-2819  
**Natural Resources:** Truitt Eubank, 918-549-2850

**Student Center Coordinator:** Marissa Lewis, 918-549-2832  
**Student Center Academic Counselor:** Hollie Ledford, 918-549-2831

**College of Muscogee Nation - Academic Achievement, Native Values**



OBITUARIES

LESLEY FRANK

Lesley Marie Frank was called home early Sunday morning, May 17, 2020. Lesley was born June 26, 1974 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma to Roy and Allene Starr.

Lesley was preceded in death by her father, Roy Starr; her daughter, Alyssa Frank; grandmothers, Lena Starr and Esther Rednose-Starr; and grandfather, Eli Starr.

Lesley is survived by her husband, Warren Frank of the home; her three children Jalen Frank of Okmulgee, OK; Mykalia Frank and Logan Frank of the home; her granddaughter, Alanna Johnson-Frank of Okmulgee, OK; and her mother, Allene Starr of Okmulgee, OK.

The wake service will be held at the McClendon-Winters Funeral Home on Tuesday, May 20th from 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. in Okmulgee, OK.

A funeral service will be held at



2:00 P.M. Wednesday, May, 20, 2020 at the Yardeka Indian Baptist Church with Reverend Mitchell Taylor and William Wind officiating. Interment will follow in the Yardeka Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Kevin Starr, Mark Kerby, Victor Rivas, Brent Bruner, Forrest Gresham and Reid Young. Honorary pallbearers will be John Billie and Michel Laudermilk.

SUBMISSIONS

Higher Ed. Assistance

The Higher Education program provides supplemental financial assistance and opportunities to student-citizens of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in pursuing an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. Deadlines for Undergraduate Grants for fall is June 1 and spring is Dec. 15. All applications can be accessed online at [www.mcnnsn.gov/services/education-training/higher-education/](http://www.mcnnsn.gov/services/education-training/higher-education/), for more information contact the Higher Education Office at 918-732-7661.

Sex Offender Registration and Check-in

To help stop the spread of Covid-19 the Lighthorse Police Department will be taking offender information and report-ins over the phone. Follow-ups will be conducted in person at a later date once the threat has subsided. When reporting you will need driver's license number, citizenship number and current address avail-

able. Please contact Officer Dan Beaver or Officer Cody Townsend at Lighthorse Police Department (918) 732-7800.

Arts and Crafts

The Eufaula-Canadian Tribal Town will be hosting an outdoor arts and crafts show plus Indian Taco sale on Sat. June 20 at 502 Foley Ave, Eufaula, OK. The outdoor arts and crafts show begins at 9 a.m. and the Indian Taco sale is from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. They ask anyone setting up to pay a fee \$20, artists are responsible for own setup, setup available anywhere in the yard, etc. For more information contact Jon Tiger at 918-850-3806.

TCIC Election

The Eufaula-Canadian Tulsa Creek Indian Community's upcoming Election is set for September 24th, 2020 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. The positions of Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer is for one 2-year term beginning October 1st, 2020 to September 30th, 2022. The deadline for submitting a Letter of Intent stat-

Thank You

The family of Willie Barnett would like to thank the Muscogee Creek Nation for the care and support, of our dad during his life time, as an Elder and tribal citizen who lived to be 102 years old. A special thank you goes to the Sapulpa Indian Health Clinic Dr. Kathryn S. Zackery, D.O., Department of Social Services Ms. Iris & Ms. Amy, Department of Housing Mrs. Leslie Stone and the MCN Driveway Assistance Program Mr. Jimmy Basquez & Ms. Thomasine. We are so grateful for your years of care until his going home. MVto!

LEGALS

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:

M.T.,  
A minor child, DOB 01-24-2006,

And

K.T.  
A minor child, DOB 12-24-2006

DISTRICT COURT FILED  
2020 APR 27 A 11:48  
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
DONNA BEAVER  
COURT CLERK

Case No. GD-2020-06

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

TO: MICHAEL THIERRY and STEPHANIE LOONEY

You are hereby notified that NELLIE POWELL has filed in the District Court of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, a petition praying that Letters of Guardianship be issued to her upon the persons and estates of M.T. and K.T., minor children.

And that the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2020, at 9:00 o'clock a.m. in the District Court of the Muscogee Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, has been appointed as the time and place for hearing said petition, when and where any persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they can, why such appointment should not be made.

Dated this 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.

DONNA BEAVER, Court Clerk  
By: *Donna Beaver*  
Deputy

Spencer Torbett, OBA #33778; MNBA #964  
Attorney for Petitioners

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:

A.C.,  
A minor child,

A.C.,  
A minor child,

A.C.,  
A minor child,

AND

A. J. C.,  
a minor child.

DISTRICT COURT FILED  
2020 APR 27 A 11:51  
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
DONNA BEAVER  
COURT CLERK

Case No. GD-2020-02-SP

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

MUSCOGEE CREEK NATION TO: ARCHIE COSEY,

You are hereby notified that RACHEL HAJOO has filed in the District Court of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, a petition praying that Letters of Guardianship be issued to her upon the persons and estates of A.C., A.C., A.C., and A.J.C., minor children.

And that the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2020, at 9:00 o'clock a.m. in the District Court of the Muscogee Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, has been appointed as the time and place for hearing said petition, when and where any persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they can, why such appointment should not be made.

Dated this 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.

DONNA BEAVER, Court Clerk  
By: *Donna Beaver*  
Deputy

Spencer Torbett, OBA #33778; MNBA #964  
Attorney for Petitioners

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE MUSCOGEE NATION

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:

J.T.,  
A minor child, DOB 06-04-2009

A.A.,  
A minor child, DOB 08-09-2014

A.A.,  
A minor child, DOB 12-20-2016

AND

A. A.,  
a minor child. DOB 12-18-2018

DISTRICT COURT FILED  
2020 APR 27 A 11:44  
MUSCOGEE (CREEK) NATION  
DONNA BEAVER  
COURT CLERK

Case No. GD-2020-04-SP

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

TO: MANUAL TORRES AND ALEJANDRO AYVAR.

You are hereby notified that SHIRLEY TOLEDO has filed in the District Court of the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma, a petition praying that Letters of Guardianship be issued to her upon the persons and estates of J.T., A.A., A.A., and A.A., minor children.

And that the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2020, at 9:00 o'clock a.m. in the District Court of the Muscogee Nation, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, has been appointed as the time and place for hearing said petition, when and where any persons interested may appear and show cause, if any they can, why such appointment should not be made.

Dated this 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 2020.

DONNA BEAVER, Court Clerk  
By: *Donna Beaver*  
Deputy

Spencer Torbett, OBA #33778; MNBA #964  
Attorney for Petitioners

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor.

Looking at the Great United States we see a time of great social unrest. The Drums of Peace are becoming the War Dance Drums. The dancers are around fires of mistrust, hate and fear. The passive, yet supportive followers, those setting, wrapped in their blanket of society observe with fear of the impending. The possibility of a great resistance, a change of the drumming heart permeates the mind. Pipes of peace wrapped in reverent respect are held in love across the folded legs. Yet the sacred herb remains in its pouch of respect, no coal of fire will it see these coming times. The whinny of the war horse is floating on the wind.

Leaders are counseling aware of the needs of their people as on the distant horizon the red sun slides beneath the top of the waving tall grass. The wind wafting slow peaceful undulations through the grass and Indian paintbrushes, beautiful reflections of sparkling fireflies wing through the cooling night air. Lowing and stamping of the hooves the buffalo no longer to be heard by the ears, yet the heart of the people standing in fires glare beat at a

rhythm of the stampeding herd.

Comes in the mind a reflection to the past, of old people and babies buried under the grass. Of times of great strife and bone crushing cold. Hungering children cry as their mothers heart fold deeply into weariness, lost to hands that cannot hold. Waiting and wanting is all that remains not a pot to get water in, no berries will it hold. Meat and wild onions have long left the pot as the search to quill hunger is war in the pot.

The fires around which all eyes are froze shadows of fear grip heart in deaths hold. The feeling of fear do hopelessness bring. Some are in sorrow, some are deranged. Angry are the youthful, strong in the arm, yelling and shouting as wolves on the plain. Stomping and spinning turtles ring with a sound of great wanting and needing to meet an enemy, head to head, with hair and face painted so proud.

The old people are watching this waking despair shaking their heads and waiting as time has required. Each holds the stick of wisdom on their lap knowledge of life yesterday's map. Seems that wisdom shall in

mind there remain as shouts of hate and today's disdain. Wisdom isn't wanted in this life beyond wisdom is foresaken to needs more fraught. Old people are left to smell of past long lost so that odor of tomorrow is coming up fast. Waiting is the only way to get to their maker in humble ways.

Down into the valley behind all can see the brightness of glory of modern today. Interstate highways snake sparkling lights bringing glaring the future to hillside retreat. Birds in the air are metal and glass, wheels of rubber on trails of hard pack.

Fast is the life down below. Yet the fires of disenchantments rag- ingly glow. Smoke of burning pollution comes on the wind to melt the spirit of respect within. Racing and raging the crowds can be seen loot- ing and shooting now are about.

The dance to the drums leaves little doubt. Changes are coming soon to everyone's redoubt.

Drums . . . Dance . . . Fear . . . Doubt. . .

Tallgrass Muscogee  
Mahepvhe Mvskoke  
George E. Thomas

To the Editor,

In recent weeks I have submitted email correspondence to all of the MCN National Council Representative on various topics for discussion. The variety of correspondence ranged from the MCN Judicial position, Freedom of the Press, CARES Act, etc. The reason I am submitting this letter is to hopefully grab the attention of the NC Representatives.

As of this writing I have received only one acknowledgement of cor-

response from one NC Representative of whom I will not divulge at this time. As to the rest of the NC Representatives I have not received any acknowledgement as to the receipt of not one of my correspondence.

As a registered voting tribal citizen who has taken the time to put forth issues to the NC I would at least expect a “your correspondence has been received.” from them.

Is the new Ethics code forbidding them to respond? If so, why

publish the email addresses or phone numbers for all NC Representatives? The correspondence that I have submitted may or may not concern the entire MCN but it is my concern.

It is unfortunate that the majority of NC Representatives choose not to reply to the emails and that such non-response may or may not cost them a deciding vote in the future.

MVTO!  
Rik Wilde






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JOHNSON’S STEPPING STONE CAFÉ FORGES AHEAD DESPITE PANDEMIC CHALLENGES

TRADITIONAL MUSCOGEE CUISINE KEEPS PATRONS COMING BACK FOR MORE IS ON THE MENU AT JOHNSON’S STEPPING STONE CAFÉ IN BIXBY

Morgan Taylor  
REPORTER

BIXBY, Oklahoma- Johnson’s Stepping Stone Café is owned by a Muscogee (Creek) Citizen. Every day of the week, traditional Muscogee cuisine is a special on the menu for customers to choose from.

The owner George Johnson was born in Okmulgee but raised in Morris. As a teenager he worked at the original Coleman’s Drive in on Highway 75 in Okmulgee. He remained working at Coleman’s for 23 years. George and his wife Tammy moved the family to Tulsa and made plans of opening a restaurant in 2000 and finally did in 2013.

“It’s just a small mom and pop, family owned café; my wife, my four children, and grandkids help me here at the café,” said Johnson.

Johnson incorporates Muscogee tradition in most of the food served at the café.

“I do all the cooking and I do everything from scratch,” Johnson said.” I ground all my meats, I ground all my hamburger meats, I cut all my chicken fried steak and chicken strips and I cook all the pies.”

Every day of the week has a different lunch special and a choice of three different specials on Saturdays. On Wednesdays Indian Tacos are served all day.

“Wednesdays are the busiest day of the week for me,” Johnson said. “People love those tacos. On Saturdays I also serve dumplings just like my grandma used to make. Even though I was 12 when she passed I still remember her. She didn’t speak English at all and was traditional Muscogee.”

Other traditional foods served at Johnsons Stepping Stone Café are beans and cornbread with friend potatoes, salt



Local Muscogee citizen owned restaurant affected by pandemic but still pushes forward.

(MN File Photo)

meat, dumplings, wild onions and fried bread.

“Most of my customers are elderly and some of them come daily. Even the non-native elderly say they can remember eating the stuff I make for them as child,” said Johnson.

George’s wife Tammy recalls an elderly woman crying when she ate one wild onion dish at the café.

“She started crying and said it reminded her of her childhood,” said Tammy.

Due to COVID, the café operated as curbside pickup only but George got the “ok” to open the doors of the dining area to public on June 2 for the first time since March 20.

“I closed my dining area about five days before we were required to because my family

works here,” said Johnson. “We all live close to the café and close together, if one of us got sick, my whole family would get sick.”

During the time of the shut down, curbside pickup and drive thru window service was available for customers.

“Our dining area only holds 48 people and is very small but we are still practicing social distancing as much as possible as

well as sanitization. We also have supplied our employees with masks and gloves,” said Johnson. “My customers are sad and they are ready to come in and eat. We appreciate them all and all those who support small businesses.”

A menu and daily specials can be found on the Facebook page Johnson’s Stepping Stone Café. For more information call (918) 364-7350.



# Why Is Grandpa Happy and I’m Not?



Being truly thankful for what we have is hard to do & unfortunately a lost skill. Often, we spend more time focusing on what we do not have or want instead of what we do. How often does this happen to one of us or with our children? We get something new and are so excited and happy, but this happy is short lived. Either the newness wears off or we see someone with something newer, bigger or better. Our focus turns from what we have to what we do not have and want.

When did this skill get lost? When I talk to my grandfather, who does not have new or fancy belongings, but he is very happy with what he has. When I ask him why he doesn’t buy a new car or replace something that is older than me in the house, his response is why? He is appreciative with what he has and sees no reason to chase “the happiness of the new or the not”.

He went on to say “the happiness of the new” is basing your happiness on a temporary thing that will fade. New, will always become not new and eventually old. If that is where your happiness is then you have allowed “big business” to dupe you into a false happiness. If you subscribe to this thinking it will always have you chasing something new because that is where they want you to think true happiness comes from. Adding to this is the second part of the statement “the not”. If you constantly focus on what others have or what you don’t have, it will make you unhappy with what you do have. Thus, forcing you to chase the temporary happiness of the new again. In the end you’re still not really happy and “big business” gets your money.

He said he learned thankfulness at a young age and kept the practice to be grateful for what he had. It was something he practiced daily. He was thankful he had a job, family, home, car, food, clothes, etc. There seemed to be two major events that fueled this thankful mindset. One, he had little growing up so when he got something, even if it was a hand-me-down, he was very thankful to have it. He kept this thankful attitude every time he saw or used it. Two, when he was in the military, he saw how very little people in other countries have and realized no matter how little he had, he was rich in comparison to them.

Another thing my grandfather talked about that helps keep him happy is helping others. This practice started as child and has developed into a habit. He found great pleasure helping a neighbor or friend in need. Sometimes it was helping them fix or repair something and other times it was bring them a meal or being a listening ear. Even though he is in his upper 80’s he still asks others if they need help. Though he cannot get up on a roof or carry something heavy he can still offer support and teach a skill to those who want to learn.

Practicing what my grandfather taught me is a habit I want to consistently do and teach to my children. Changing the mindset from real happiness is something new to being thankful for what I have and helping others has taken some work. The more I practice and do the more I notice I am much more generally happy.

If you or someone you know is experiencing anxiety, worry, fear, stress, or even depression and you feel like talking to someone, contact Muscogee (Creek) Nation Behavioral Health at 918-758-1910.

Text “Creek” to 741-741 if you or someone you know is in a crisis. Or call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline Number at 1-800-273-8255.

Mvto!