



# Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*

Osiyo -

Pursuing higher education is a financial challenge in this day and age, especially with rising costs and education budget cuts in Oklahoma. However, a new matching program for scholarship endowments from the Cherokee Nation Foundation will create new opportunities for our tribal youth.

CNF has agreed to match \$100,000 in private donations. The matching program enables donated funds to have a bigger impact and furthers CNF's commitment to Cherokee students. With so many talented Cherokees pursuing their academic dreams, CNF wanted to expand its ability to help. Instead of simply asking for donations, the organization came up with a creative and meaningful way to leverage its investment.

Education has always been a cornerstone of our Cherokee values, and, personally, it holds a special place in my heart, as I come from a family of professional educators. That's why I was proud to be the first to create an endowment in honor of my grandmother, Audie Baker, who was a longtime Cherokee County educator.

These endowments allow donors to watch their gifts create possibility and inspire greatness in Cherokee youth for years to come. In addition to naming the scholarship, donors are able to customize guidelines, such as a specific area of study, a specific school or degree type.

I commend two of our newest Cherokee Nation Tribal Council members, Shawn Crittenden and Bryan Warner, for working together to create a scholarship fund that directly impacts students from their respective districts. There is no better cause than supporting the education of our children, and I hope that others will join us in investing in their future and of the future of the Cherokee Nation.

In 2015 CNF awarded more than \$134,000 to 64 students. This year, the foundation accepted more

than 200 scholarship applications and plans to announce those winners in just a few weeks. It is encouraging to know the new endowment program will allow even more students to receive aid. Additionally, students can apply for CNF scholarships in addition to funds distributed by the tribe.

The foundation plays an important role within our education programs, and the work they do extends far beyond college scholarships. CNF has partnered with Junior Achievement of Oklahoma to provide financial literacy programs throughout northeast Oklahoma and works with area middle and high school students to increase college-readiness and prepare for the ACT. I encourage parents, students and teachers to drop in and visit with the foundation staff about all of the opportunities that are available for our youth.

If you have the ability and the financial security to establish a college endowment fund at this time, I encourage you to join me. All contributions ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 will be matched by CNF on a first-come, first-served basis, and every donation is tax deductible. Most importantly, the program creates a brighter future for our Cherokee children.

For more information, contact Cherokee Nation Foundation at (918) 207-0950 or Janice Randall at jr@cherokeefoundation.org.  
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