



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

What started in 1909 as a club to help young men learn techniques to improve cotton crop yields is now an Oklahoma institution and an organization that has influenced many Cherokee Nation young people over the years, 4-H. Today, more than 150,000 youths from all 77 Oklahoma counties are involved in 4-H programs. Within our tribe's 14-county jurisdiction, there are more than 100 4-H clubs that serve thousands of kids. 4-H is helping youth, including many Cherokees, learn the life skills they need to be the leaders of tomorrow. I can speak positively from my own experience as a 4-H member growing up in Tahlequah. Participation meant growing new and better life skills that have served me well as a businessman and public servant.

That's why I'm proud Cherokee Nation is coordinating with the Oklahoma State University extension program to build a better bridge between the tribe and 4-H leaders. Recently, we hosted the first annual 4-H Day at the Cherokee Nation tribal complex. We hosted about 50 Cherokee youth and their respective club supervisors in early July. It provided some of our tribal youth the opportunity to learn about the culture, heritage, government and traditions of the Cherokee Nation.

Both the Cherokee Nation and Oklahoma 4-H are dedicated to helping Oklahoma youth, families and communities reach their full potential, by providing educational programs and events in a variety of areas. Many of those 4-H members are already influential within their respective communities as they make tangible, significant changes to their clubs, their communities, their tribe and their state. The 4-H pledge (*I pledge my head to clearer thinking...my heart to greater loyalty...my hands to larger service...my health to greater living...for my club, my community, my country and my world*) resonates for Cherokees

because it embodies values held by Cherokee Nation and our tribal citizens.

4-H clubs are typically groups of young people ages 9 to 19 who meet regularly to have fun and learn. They are made up of youth from specific Oklahoma communities, often formed around a school, a church or a community center. The continued success of local 4-H clubs in both rural and urban settings can be attributed to letting youth grow skills and interests at their own pace and in their own time, whether it is science, computer technology, crafts, entomology, cooking, agriculture, education, animal science, writing, horticulture or community service.

I want to especially acknowledge Cherokee Nation citizen Ethan Green for coordinating this effort. He is proud to be an OSU alum and currently serves as the Wagoner County 4-H Extension Educator through the OSU Cooperative Extension Service. Our partnership with the 4-H program and OSU is stronger than ever, and together we are helping shape a bright future for our youth and for all of northeast Oklahoma.

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