



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You



For the future of the Cherokee Nation, one of the most important things we can do for our youth is ensure we provide ample opportunities for them to grow mentally and physically in a safe and nurturing environment. The Boys & Girls Clubs of America supports a mission that focuses on the next generation and their development. Cherokee Nation is proud to be a partner and financially support the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, which has made a sincere commitment to Indian Country and clubs based in Native communities.

Recently, I was a speaker at the 25th annual Native Summit hosted by the Boys & Girls Club of America. The gathering, held in conjunction with Native American Heritage Month, is designed to celebrate and appreciate the important work done by clubs in Indian Country. These educational efforts play a significant role for our people, and they provide opportunities for young Cherokees to learn and grow.

As a tribe, Cherokee Nation donates almost \$200,000 annually to eight clubs within our 14-county jurisdiction. We support clubs in Washington, Delaware, Sequoyah, Rogers, Nowata, Cherokee, Mayes and Adair counties. More than 11,000 youth are served in northeast Oklahoma through Cherokee Nation contributions, and about 60 percent of those young people are Native. We have also donated surplus vehicles and a small bus fitted with a wheelchair lift to assist with transportation needs. Additionally, individual Tribal Councilors have given from their community budget funds. Councilor Bryan Warner gave \$6,300 to help build a STEM-learning classroom for the club in Sequoyah County, and Councilor Harley Buzzard gave an additional \$5,000 for operations at the Delaware County Club.

Locally, one of the most important functions they provide is a safe place for Cherokee kids to go before and after school, as well as during the summer.

Club participation can foster lifelong friends and mentors. Our eight local clubs empower Cherokee youth to work in their community, sustain meaningful relationships and respect cultural heritage. Because of an involvement with the Boys & Girls Club, a child who participates has more influence that is positive in their young life. Teaming up with the Boys & Girls Club means better access to education,

physical activity and healthy lifestyle choices for our Cherokee youth, and many of our local clubs offer tradition-based classes based on Cherokee games and arts.

Good character, leadership skills and positive self-image are important for any young person to succeed in school and in life. Boys & Girls Clubs here in northeast Oklahoma help fulfill that potential for Cherokee Nation citizens.

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Bill John Baker



17675 S. Muskogee Ave.
Tahlequah, OK 74465
918-453-5000

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Cherokee Nation P.O. Box 948 Tahlequah, OK 74465