



THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE NEWS

www.astribe.com

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February 2026

Absentee Shawnee Tribe Breaks Ground on Building 3

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe held a groundbreaking ceremony for Building 3. The building was demolished January 2025 after being deemed uninhabitable. The new two-story building will have 9,696 square-feet and house Enrollment, Domestic Violence and Human Resources Departments.

Diak Architects designed the new building and Calm Construction is the general contractor. Construction is expected to be completed by January 2027. Construction on the previous structure was completed in 1906 at a cost of \$11,361. Over time the building suffered leaks and had significant structural damage. Initially the building was brick, consisted of two stories, a basement, had wooden floors and an iron roof. The wings were added along with modifications to the building in 1940.

Even though the building was over 100 years old, it was not on the National Register of Historical Places. It was first used as a girl's dormitory during the Boarding School Era before being taken over by the Shawnee Indian Agency. The Absentee Shawnee Tribe took ownership in 1965.



Left Photo (L-R): AST Treasurer Joseph Blanchard; AST Governor John Johnson; AST Lt. Governor Diane Ponkilla; AST Secretary Misty McGirt; AST Representative Anthony Johnson. Right Photo: Rendering provided by Diak Architects.

AST Historic Preservation Department Holds Workshop

The AST Historic Preservation Department recently held an informational workshop. The event on January 7 was held at the Multi-Purpose Building. Speakers included AST Historic Preservation staff and special guest speakers Reno Keoni Franklin, Chairman Emeritus, Kashia Pomo Tribe and Molly Gibb, Search and Rescue K9 Handler Volunteer/Non-invasive Search Specialist.

Also in attendance was Norman Mayor Stephen Tyler Holman, the AST Executive Committee and many tribal employees and members. The topics presented included NHPA, Section 106, NAGPRA, NEPA, Section 104, ARPA permits, tribal monitors and non-invasive techniques.

Historic Preservation Director Carol Butler held the workshop, to teach the significance of a building or object, especially before anyone tries to disturb the ground or if there is federal funding involved.

"The work that they are doing, the importance of all this that you are hearing about is so important, especially since we are about to start new construction. This is the importance of history and culture," said Representative Anthony Johnson.

Norman Mayor Holman also praised the work the Historic Preservation Department is doing. "The work you are doing is so important especially regarding the turnpike potentially coming through here," he said "It's important to protect history, indigenous or not. We don't want to repeat it."



Left Photo: AST Historic Preservation Director Carol Butler. Right Photo (L-R): AST Historic Preservation Director Carol Butler; (seated) AST TCNS Coordinator Julee Cobell; AST Representative Anthony Johnson; Norman Mayor Stephen Tyler Holman.



Left Photo: AST Representative Anthony Johnson; AST Lt. Governor Diane Ponkilla; Norman Mayor Stephen Tyler Holman; AST Governor John Johnson. Right Photo (L-R): Molly Gibb, Search and Rescue K9 Handler Volunteer/Non-invasive Search Specialist; AST Tribal Historic Officer Clayton Martinez; AST Representative Anthony Johnson; Chairman Emeritus; Kashia Pomo Tribe Reno Keoni Franklin; AST Lt. Governor Diane Ponkilla; AST THPO Specialist Jeffery Harjo; AST TCNS Coordinator Julee Cobell; AST Historic Preservation Director Carol Butler.



GOVERNOR
John Johnson



Lt. GOVERNOR
Diane Ponkilla



SECRETARY
Misty McGirt



TREASURER
Joseph Blanchard



REPRESENTATIVE
Anthony Johnson



GOVERNOR'S REPORT

John Johnson, AST Governor

Hello All,

Can you believe it is February? Before we know it, it will be June. The weather hasn't been all that bad, but living in Oklahoma that changes daily. Stay winter aware. Get your homes winterized, check your furnaces and check on your neighbors/elders. Oklahoma weather is unpredictable, always stay prepared.

We officially broke ground on January 22nd for the new building here on campus. While under construction parking will be limited and the roundabout will be closed when there is large equipment here. If you need to come to campus

please be cautious.

I will be attending the 2026 Executive Council Winter Session in Washington DC. This session will outline Indian Country's priorities for the year ahead. It will also address tribal sovereignty and nation to nation governance. We hope to get clear recommendations for federal action. While in DC; I requested to be placed on the schedule for a brief meeting with the new DOI Asst. Secretary; Mr. Kirkland. We want to discuss the fee to trust issues and get an update from previous conversations. I hope we get a better understanding of the issues so we can move forward economically.

The 2025 Children's Christmas Gift Card application has ended. Please be pa-

tient, we are processing the applications as quickly as possible. Soon as we get them all done they will all be mailed out at once. Also, just a reminder, all CDIB cards have an expiration date on them. They expire every four years, just like a Oklahoma driver's license. Please check yours; we have noticed many applications were being rejected due to the expiration date.

Should you have any comments or concerns you may call or email myself or my assistant at the emails listed below.

Thank You

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

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

LT. GOVERNOR'S REPORT

Diane Ponkilla, AST Lt. Governor

Hello All,

Welcome 2026! I hope this month finds everyone well and ready for the New Year. January was a slow month. The tribe was closed January 01, 2026 for New Year's Day and January 19, 2026 for Martin Luther King Jr Day. I assisted the Elderly

Committee with their audit on Friday, January 16, 2026. I would like to thank the Elders Treasurer Charlotte Ellis who did an amazing job accounting to the penny with the elder's budget. I attended the usually monthly meetings Director's Meeting, Executive Committee Meetings, Construction Meeting and the Health-board Meeting (video: GoTo Meeting). Any questions, concerns you may find me in office or you can contact me at (405)

432-0733, (405) 275-4030 ext. 3503 or by email Yvonne.Ponkilla@astribe.com. If you call into the tribe's number and I am not in office the call automatically rolls over to my cell phone number and by chance I do not pick up right away I will definitely return your call within a reasonable time. I would like to wish everyone a wonderful and prosperous 2026.

Ne yi wa

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Misty McGirt, AST Secretary

Greetings Tribal Members,

My apologies for my absent report last month, not going to lie January was a hard month for me. I pray anyone going through grief for strength and comfort for you and your family. If you need help coping with grief we have a great behavioral health department that can help. I hope everyone had a great Christmas and a good start to a new year. It has been very busy for my office with planning meetings, getting ready for general council, and our annual AST Easter. We had a special meeting January 30th 2026 amending the resolution L-AS-2025-12 to extend the deadline of the GAP assistance to February, 27, 2026. So if you haven't applied you still have time to apply the form will be available on the tribal website and we will have paper copies available on site at the tribal complex building #1. Also reminder to be sure your tribal enrollment cards are updated and not expired. It's TAX TIME! My office is once again offering it's FREE VITA Tax Prep Services to the public. Start Date began Tuesday January 27th, 2026. Eligibility is total household income of 69,000.00 or below. This is open to AST tribal members and the community. You can see the flyer on Pg.(3A) for more information. To make an appointment, please call my assistant Alexas Rosales at 405-275-4030 Ext. 3641 and she will get you taken care of.

Here is an update on some of my departments.

Enrollment - the Enrollment Department completed 2,135 GAP applications during the 5 weeks the program was open. During that same time 455 Tribal Members updated their cdib cards. Precautions we are taking in our department for Tribal Members concerned about ICE. The Enrollment Department has waived the \$5 fee for lost or misplaced CDIB cards for those who do not have their old card to turn in. They have also been providing extra help to Tribal Members concerned about ICE interactions by providing a verification of enrollment letter to those

who request one. The letter includes the member's name, date of birth, roll number, and place of birth. It is very important to us to provide our members with as many tools as possible to help keep them safe-reach out if you would like to request one. Please note identity must be verified by showing CDIB or driver's license prior to issuing the letter.

Rising warriors (Domestic Violence)- February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. We wear orange to show awareness. Here is some information to share with you all from our team.

Tribal: Tribal communities experience significantly higher rates of teen dating violence than the national average, and Oklahoma - home to 39 federally recognized tribes reflects this pattern. Nationally, about 1 in 12 teens report some form of dating abuse, but Native American youth face disproportionately higher risks, with multiple reports highlighting elevated rates of physical, sexual, and emotional violence. Native American teens experience higher rates of dating violence than any other racial or ethnic group, according to national reporting focused on Indian Country. Tribal organizations emphasize that violence against Native youth often intersects with broader community issues such as historical trauma, limited access to services, and jurisdictional challenges.

Oklahoma: The issue is especially pressing. Data from the Oklahoma State Department of Health shows that about 1 in 10 Oklahoma teenagers has experienced some form of dating violence in recent years. Additional state data indicates that 9% of public high school students have experienced sexual dating violence and 8% have experienced physical dating violence, with young women disproportionately affected. These statistics underscore the need for community awareness, school based prevention programs, and accessible support services to help Oklahoma teens build healthy, safe relationships.

National data shows that teen dating violence affects a significant portion of U.S. adolescents, while Oklahoma's rates are slightly lower but still serious, with notable gender disparities. Nationally, up to

19% of teens report experiencing dating violence, and about 1 in 12 face physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a dating partner.

National: Teen dating plays a significant role in adolescent development, shaping how young people learn communication, boundaries, and emotional connection. Healthy relationships during these years can build confidence and social skills, while unhealthy ones can create long lasting emotional and academic challenges. Nationally, teen dating violence remains a serious concern, with up to 19% of teens reporting experiences of dating violence and 1 in 12 facing physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a partner. These patterns highlight the importance of early education on respect, consent, and conflict resolution to help teens navigate relationships safely and confidently.

Sites:

https://www.breakthecycle.org/teen-dating-violence-statistics/?utm_source=copilot.com

https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/health/health2/documents/teen%20dating%20violence%20infographic.pdf?utm_source=copilot.com

https://nativenewsonline.net/health/native-american-teenagers-experiences-higher-rates-of-dating-violence-than-other-groups?utm_source=copilot.com

https://www.indian-affairs.org/endviolenceagainstnatives.html?utm_source=copilot.com

Agriculture - our agriculture department I share oversight with Lt. Governor will be having a beef distribution for our **AST elders only** there will be a drive thru distribution at the farm 43406 Benson Park February 27, 2026 from 9:00am-4:00pm. Open to our tribal members if your needing assistance with your garden plowed this year please schedule with our Ag department @ 405-827-6545.

That's all I have to report at this time if you should have any questions or concerns feel free to call my office 405-275-4030 Ext. 3505.

Ne yi wa!
Secretary McGirt

Our podcast, Among the Shawnee just released a new episode - Inside the TOR Be Well Project

This episode of Among the Shawnee focuses on the Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) Be Well Project. Guests Susan Stacy, Karen Kaniatobe and Michaela Tuberville bring forward an honest and emotional look at addiction, prevention, treatment and long-term recovery within the Absentee Shawnee community. The conversation highlights the work TOR does daily including transportation for clients, long-term case management, court support, Narcan distribution, fentanyl and xylazine test strips, cultural programming, trauma-informed care and youth prevention outreach. For more information about TOR Be Well Project, call (405) 701-7059, email tor@astribe.com or visit astribe.org and click on PROGRAMS & PREVENTION.

Episode available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, SoundCloud and www.astribe.com/podcasts





OFFICE OF THE TRIBAL SECRETARY

TAX PREPARATION SERVICES

START DATE: TUESDAY JANUARY 27

TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS

5:30PM - 8:00PM

SATURDAY'S - FEBRUARY 21 & MARCH 14

8:30AM - 12:30PM



Misty McGirt
Tribal Secretary

FREE INCOME TAX FILING: FORMS 1040 OR 1040 SR

LOCATION:

AST MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING
2029 JAMES L EDWARDS LANE
SHAWNEE, OK

**ELIGIBILITY: TOTAL HOUSEHOLD
INCOME OF \$69,000.00 OR
BELOW**

**OPEN TO: AST MEMBERS AND
THE COMMUNITY**

END DATE: APRIL 9, 2026



**TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT PLEASE CALL:
ALEXAS ROSALES AT 405-275-4030 X 3641**

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- **PHOTO ID**
- **MEDICAL/DENTAL EXPENSES, IF ANY**
- **W-2 FORM**
- **CHARITABLE DONATIONS, IF ANY**
- **SOCIAL SECURITY CARD**
- **1099 FORM**
- **LAST YEAR'S TAXES**
- **IRS PIN LETTER**

HSB AFTER SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

February 2026

Learning Objectives

- Practicing kindness, empathy, and respect towards others.
- Building positive friendship skills such as sharing, taking turns and cooperation.
- Building vocabulary and language development through listening, speaking, and exposure to the Shawnee language using simple, age-appropriate words and phrases.
- Practicing early literacy and math skills through hands on, play-based activities.
- Learning responsibility by following routines and helping care for shared spaces and materials.
- Building critical thinking skills through hands on projects, puzzles, and group challenges.

"Ke ti qa la ma la"
I love you

Reminders

- We will be open February 13th all day.
- CLOSED FEB. 16th for President's day.

Upcoming Events

- Valentine's Day Party - February 13th (More info to come)

Contact Information

- Sara Garcia - HSB ASP Manager
 - SaraG@astribe.com
 - (405) 827-8891
- Brody Miller - HSB ASP Assistant Manager
 - Bmiller@astribe.com
 - (405) 827-7019

AST Education Department: Big Jim Youth Awards

Absentee Shawnee High school **seniors** of both genders within the 50 United States are eligible to apply for these awards for the 2025-26 academic year. The official application form is available at www.astribe.com on the Education page under the Services tab.

- Applications will be accepted from **January 1, 2026 8 am CST to March 31, 2026, 5 pm CST.**

- All applications and supporting documents must be postmarked (mail) or received (in person or email) by March 31st at 5:00 pm CST. Our network may quarantine emails from Gmail accounts so please call or email to make sure applications and documents have been received well in advance of deadline to make sure the deadline is met.
- Documents received after the deadline will not be reviewed by judges.
- Official transcripts will be accepted via email, from school personnel, or as a hard copy. Faxed copies will not be accepted.

Applications are for the following awards:

- Big Jim Academic Achievement Award (Male and Female)
- Big Jim Athlete of the Year (Male and Female)

Please refer to the application for required documents. Eligible applications will be judged by a panel of (non-AST) experts assembled specifically for this purpose. The intent is to bring together an unbiased group of experts to evaluate the applicants in an impartial and unbiased environment. Their decisions are final with respect to all matters concerning these awards.

Awards will be announced at a date to be determined after April 2026.

Award recipients will be recognized as the 2025-26 Big Jim Academic Achievement Award winner or the Big Jim Athlete of the Year. In addition to this recognition the award recipients will receive the **\$1,000.00** scholarship to be used towards their education and the advancement of their career. The \$1,000.00 award is in the form of a scholarship to the school where the award recipient will attend for the fall 2026 semester. The scholarship **must be used for the fall 2026 semester.**

Questions on these awards program should be addressed to:

Absentee Shawnee Tribe
Education Department
c/o Tresha Spooner
2025 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801
405.275.4030 Ext 3533
youthaward@astribe.com

Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma

2025 General Assistance Program

On behalf of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, the Executive Committee has established a new **2025 General Assistance Program**. The Executive Committee remains committed to serving our people and providing meaningful support to our Tribal Members.

The **2025 General Assistance Program** will be for enrolled adult Absentee Shawnee Tribal Members. All AST Tribal Members **ages 18 and older**, enrolled as of November 25th, 2025 are eligible to receive a one (1) time payment of **\$100.00**.

General Assistance Program Application Acceptance: Tuesday, November 25th, 2025 at 8:00 AM

CST General Assistance Program Application Deadline: Friday February 27th 2026 at 5:00 PM CST

All checks will be mailed as quickly as possible but please allow up to 30 days due to year end close out accounting duties.

2025 General Assistance Program Eligibility

- Must be an enrolled member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma (on or before November 25th, 2025).
- Must be 18 years old and over to participate (**must be 18 on or before November 25th, 2025**).
- Must have a copy of AST Tribal Member's **Current CDIB Card** (attached to application).
- Must have a completed **2025 General Assistance Program** application (One per Tribal Member).
- **MUST BE SUBMITTED ON OR BEFORE FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27TH 2026 @ 5:00 PM**

2025 General Assistance Program Required Documents

- Completed **2025 General Assistance Program** application (One per Tribal Member).
- Copy of updated AST CDIB card
- Adult guardianship completing on behalf of an adult AST member, must provide a current State ID and legal power of attorney to accompany application.

2025 General Assistance Program Submission Options: NO FAXES

- By snail mail to AST Enrollment Department, 2025 S. Gordon Cooper Dr., Shawnee, OK 74801.
- By AST website electronic application (no social media submissions).
- In person to Enrollment during normal business hours (M-F 8-12 or 1-5).
- By email to 2025GAP@astribe.com.

If you have any questions, please contact us at 405-275-4030 or email 2025GAP@astribe.com.

2026

ELDERS COUNCIL MEETING DATES

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Saturday, January 17, 2026	10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.	AST Multi-Purpose Building, Shawnee, OK
Saturday, February 21, 2026	10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.	AST Resource Center, Norman, OK
Saturday, March 21, 2026	10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.	AST Multi-Purpose Building, Shawnee, OK
Saturday, April 18, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Resource Center, Norman, OK
Saturday, May 16, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Multi-Purpose Building, Shawnee, OK
Saturday, June 20, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Resource Center, Norman, OK
Saturday, July 18, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Multi-Purpose Building, Shawnee, OK
Saturday, August 15, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Resource Center, Norman, OK
Saturday, September 19, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Multi-Purpose Building, Shawnee, OK
Saturday, October 17, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Resource Center, Norman, OK
Saturday, November 21, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Multi-Purpose Building, Shawnee, OK
Saturday, December 19, 2026	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	AST Resource Center, Norman, OK

ELDERS COUNCIL OFFICERS

Term: February 2026 to January 2029

President:	James Cody Spybuck, Jr.	Cell: (572) 268-4181	Email: jcbs68@gmail.com
Vice-President:	Audrey Dodds	Cell: (405) 593-5987	Email: scr2014@yahoo.com
Treasurer:	Charlotte Ellis	Cell: (405) 620-4091	Email: ellischarlotte63@gmail.com
Secretary:	Phyllis Johnson	Cell: (405) 827-6027	Email: Tiggpr@hotmail.com

01-17-2025/sa

Big Jim Youth Award

2025 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801
(405) 275-4030 Ext. 3533
youthaward@astribe.com

Applications accepted:
Jan. 1 - March 31 @ 5 pm CST

Check one:

- \$1,000 Scholarship Big Jim Academic Achievement Award (Male)
- \$1,000 Scholarship Big Jim Academic Achievement Award (Female)
- \$1,000 Scholarship Big Jim Athlete of the Year (Male)
- \$1,000 Scholarship Big Jim Athlete of the Year (Female)

STUDENT INFORMATION

Name: _____ (LAST) _____ (FIRST) _____ (MI)

Tribal Enrollment #: _____

Address: _____ (STREET) _____ (CITY) _____ (STATE) _____ (ZIP)

Home Phone: (_____) _____ Cell Phone: (_____) _____

Email: _____

College/university/vocational institution you plan to attend and course of study/major? _____

HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION

High School Name: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Advisor/Counselor: _____ Phone #: _____

Sport, if applicable: _____ Position: _____

Coach: _____ Phone #: _____

Indian Education Director: _____ Phone #: _____

All Absentee Shawnee High School Seniors are eligible and encouraged to apply.
If applying for both Academic Achievement and Athlete of the year, applicant must provide two (2) separate applications and sets of supporting documents.

Documents to be included with application:

- Official High School Transcript (emailed copies sent directly from school personnel will be accepted)
- Tribal Enrollment Card (copy)
- Résumé of all relevant **Academic** or **Athletic** accomplishments, activities, work experience, etc. (if applying for both Academic Achievement and Athlete of the Year, you will need **two distinctly different résumés**)
- Letter(s) of Recommendation (Educator/Coach/Tribal/Church)
- 500-word Essay: How do you feel your accomplishments (culture/knowledge/training) as well as your being an Absentee Shawnee Tribal member will influence your future plans?
- Video (optional): no more than 10 minutes in length



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

It's February and our teachers & children are excited about Valentine's Day as they do lots of fun activities. On Friday, February 13th @ 3:00 p.m. the classrooms will have Valentine's Day Parties.



Jami Timbo, a Parent has volunteered to paint our entry window for holidays. This month she has decorated a candy box for Valentine's Day. Thank You, Jami!

BUILDING BLOCKS
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
AN ABSENTEE SHAWNEE ENTERPRISE

HAPPY
Valentine's Day

Building Blocks will be closed Monday, February 16 in observance of President's Day.



Building Blocks Inclement Weather Policy is that if Shawnee Public Schools Closes due to weather then Building Blocks will also Close. Also, if the AST Complex closes for weather then Building Blocks will also be Closed! Have a Fantastic February!!



FEBRUARY IS TEEN DATING VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

What is Teen Dating Violence?

- Psychological Aggression**
 - use of verbal and non-verbal communication with the intent to harm a partner mentally or emotionally and exert control over a partner
- Sexual Violence**
 - forcing or attempting to force a partner to take part in a sex act and or sexual touching when the partner does not consent or is unable to consent or refuse.
- Stalking**
 - pattern of repeated, unwanted attention and contact by a current or former partner that causes fear or safety concern for an individual victim or someone close to the victim.
- Physical Violence**
 - when a person hurts or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking, or using another type of physical force.



1 in 12 Teens experienced physical dating violence



1 in 10 Teens experienced sexual dating violence

405-273-2888

[www.facebook.com/ASTRising
Warrior](http://www.facebook.com/ASTRisingWarrior)



FEBRUARY

Newsletter



IMPORTANT INFO:

This month, our **infants** are learning all about their feelings by working on self soothing and social emotional exchanges. Our **toddler** and **2-year-old** classes will be identifying and matching shapes and recognizing shapes in everyday surroundings. Our **3-year-olds** will be learning about friends and family. Through play, stories, and group activities, children will practice kindness, sharing, and building positive relationships with those around them.

In our **4-year-old** classroom, we are exploring exercise and emotions! Children will engage in active play to learn about different types of exercises while also building emotional awareness, practicing how to recognize feelings and express them in healthy ways.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Feb 13th - Valentine's Day Party
- CLOSED - 16th - President's Day

Absentee Shawnee Tribe
Building Blocks III CDC
16051 Little Axe Dr.
Norman, Ok 73026
Phone (405) 360-2710
Director: Renee Richardson



FEBRUARY

Newsletter



FEBRUARY

Newsletter



Science & Sensory Play: Slime Lab Day



Art & Emotional Development: Family Portraits



Family-Style Mealtime:
Supporting Self-Help Skills



Social-Emotional Development:
Feelings Storytime

LEGAL NOTICE

FILED in the Office
of the Court Clerk

IN THE TRIAL COURT OF
THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA DEC 17 2025
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA 74801

Absentee Shawnee Tribal Court
Court Clerk

In the matter of)
S.C.) Case No. CIV-2025-10
)

AFFIDAVIT TO OBTAIN SERVICE BY PUBLICATION

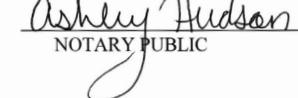
THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBE OF INDIANS)
SHAWNEE, OKLAHOMA) \$.

Stephen Cortez
being duly sworn upon oath states:

That she/he is the Plaintiff Stephen Cortez above-named, and that on the 17th day of December 2025, said Plaintiff filed in this Court a Petition for Change of Name 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 the exercise of due diligence, said Plaintiff is giving publication that, Stephen Cortez, 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)


PLAINTIFF

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of December, 2025.


Ashley Hudson
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires:

June 23, 2028





Happy 2nd Birthday (January 30) Baby ZoeZoe

From: GG Bonnie, Grandma Diane
and Bubba CaiSyn and CanAan



Uncle Garland – Happiest of birthdays to our awesome uncle. Hope it's a great one! We love you very much!

Love,
Sherrie, Jil, Jop & JT



Cousin Greg – Have a most wonderful time turning 54!
You almost caught up with me lol.

Love you!
Sherrie & kids.

Did you know

AllNations Bank



has financial resources available to you?

SCAN ME!



**FINANCIAL PROSPERITY
IS ACHIEVABLE**



FDIC FDIC-Insured - Backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government

Justin – Happy Birthday to my eldest child, so very proud to be your momma! I love you! Momma



Digital Predators: A Global Fraud Epidemic Reaches Oklahoma Communities

By Eri Gjergji SVP of Technology Operations, AllNations Bank

SHAWNEE, OK — While technology has made communications more accessible than ever, it has also opened a digital front door for sophisticated international criminal syndicates. At AllNations Bank and throughout our central Oklahoma community, we are noticing a national surge in “social engineering” fraud—a type of crime that doesn’t hack a computer but instead hacks a person’s trust.

This is not a local issue or a specific group being targeted; it is a global epidemic. In 2025, the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) reported that Americans lost a record-breaking \$16.6 billion to cyber-enabled fraud. These criminals operate out of massive “fraud compounds” overseas, using Artificial Intelligence to send millions of messages a day, hoping for just one person to reply.

The “Social Hook” Strategy (Pig Butchering)

One of the most common entry points is a tactic known as “Pig Butchering” (Sha Zhu Pan). It begins with a text that looks like a harmless mistake:

“I’m thinking of traveling to Ulaanbaatar soon. I’d like to experience falconry culture. Do you have any plans to return to Mongolia soon?”

This message is designed to pique curiosity. To many Oklahomans, the natural instinct is to be helpful and reply that they have the wrong number. However, in the world of professional fraud, a reply is a victory. It confirms your phone number is active and that you are a polite, responsive individual. The scammer will then attempt to strike up a casual friendship, talking for months before suggesting a fake investment. Nationally, investment fraud of this type accounted for over \$6.57 billion in losses last year.

The “Financial Hook” Trap (Task Scam)

A second, more aggressive tactic targets those looking for remote work or flexible income. These often impersonate well-known brands like Indeed:

“Hi, I’m a recruitment specialist from Indeed... Earn \$230-\$680 daily for 1-2 hours of work. Guaranteed \$3,000 weekly.”

This is a “Task Scam”. Victims are lured into a fake platform where they are told they are “optimizing app data”. To receive their “guaranteed” pay, they are eventually told they must deposit their own money to “unlock” earnings. In 2025, employment-related scams resulted in more than \$501 million in losses.

The “Urgency Hook” (Immediate Engagement)

More recently, scammers have moved toward shorter, more urgent messages designed to mimic neighbors or family members:

“My car is at the repair shop. Where are you right now?”

By presenting themselves as being in a vulnerable position, they prey on our willingness to help someone in a bind. Like the others, this is a “hook” to start a conversation that will eventually lead to a request for money or sensitive information.

Beyond the Script

It is important to remember that these three examples are just the beginning. Criminals are constantly evolving, creating even more creative and convincing forms of these scripts every day. They use psychological pressure, ego-stroking, and artificial urgency to bypass your logic.

Protecting the Community

To ensure our community remains a “dead end” for these digital predators, I recommend the following security protocols:

Practice Zero Engagement: If you receive a text from a number you do not recognize, do not reply. A reply validates your data for the scammer’s database.

Verify via Official Channels: No legitimate employer or bank will ever conduct high-stakes business or recruitment through an unsolicited, personal text message.

The “Too Good to be True” Rule: Any job offering hundreds of dollars per hour for simple tasks or any investment offering “guaranteed” high returns is a fraud.

At AllNations Bank, we are committed to being a shield for our customers. We continue to work with local and federal partners to stay ahead of these threats and ensure the financial security of our community remains intact.

SECURITY ALERT: Common Digital Fraud ‘Hooks’

The ‘Social Hook’ (Pig Butchering)



Grooming Tactic: Builds false trust over time before requesting investment.

The ‘Financial Hook’ (Task Scam)



Trap: Requires your own money to “unlock” earnings on fake platform.

The ‘Urgency Hook’ (Immediate Engagement)



Trigger: Creates false urgency and vulnerability to force a quick reply.

Ag Update:

Garden Plowing Applications Open - Applications are open for garden plowing services! If you're looking to get your garden ready for the upcoming growing season, now is the time to apply.

Apply early—availability is limited and spots fill quickly. For applications or more information, please contact the Agriculture Department at 405-827-6545

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

43406 Benson Park- The Farm

Drive-thru event for all AST elders

Bring updated CDIB card

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE BEEF DISTRIBUTION

Beef

February 27th
9am-4pm

THUNDERBIRD CASINO WINTER GAMES 2026

WIN OVER \$5K IN OUR WINTER GAMES GIVEAWAY!

Play weekly from February 6-22

Correctly guess the most winners during the Winter Games and Cash In! Earn up to \$25 in FREE PLAY!

Cash & FREE Play will be awarded every Sunday.

Top Winner Prizes

PRIZE	WINNER	AMOUNT
GOLD	Norman	\$2,000
SILVER	Shawnee	\$1,000
BRONZE	Norman	\$500
	Shawnee	\$250

A FROSTY BONUS TWIST
For an Extra 20 Same Day Points You Can Get Extra Bonus Cards to Play and Win!

PARADE OF THE WEEK
Pick one long-shot entry card and win \$25 in FREE Play!

UNDERDOG UPSET
Pick one long-shot entry card and win \$25 in FREE Play!

Submit your card in the drawing box while on property and must be present to win. Make your picks at the Players Club, Kiosk, or App on Mondays by 11:59PM. Earn one entry card with 30 same-day points — or 20 same-day points for New Members. Management reserves all rights. See Players Club for full details.

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe will be closed
Monday, February 16th - Presidents' Day

PAID AD

COMMUNITY HEALTH
Centers of Oklahoma
Family Health & Dental Clinics
“A Mary Mahoney Grassroots Expansion”

PEDIATRICS **FAMILY PRACTICE**

YOU are why WE are here...make an appointment today!

405.395.0399

Shawnee Family Medical Center
130 N. Broadway, Suite #300
Shawnee, OK 74801

HEALTHY START **BEHAVIORAL HEALTH** **& MORE**

QR Code



ASTHS February 2026 Monthly Update

February Health Awareness

February can be a busy month for a lot of people. We are finally settling down after the long holiday season and the New Year has just begun. As with everything in our lives, we need to continue to take care of ourselves. Each month is important for our health and well-being and February is no different. Let's look at a few events in February related to our health.

February is American Heart Month

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States but impacts some communities disproportionately. Heart disease is a significant health issue among Native Americans, with higher prevalence rates and unique challenges compared to other populations. Native Americans are more likely to experience heart disease at a younger age, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is often due to a combination of genetic predisposition, socioeconomic factors, and limited access to healthcare.

Health Risks Among Native Americans

Despite a rich history of natural living, systemic challenges have increased health risks among Indigenous peoples. Contributing factors include:

- High Rates of Diabetes – Type 2 diabetes is a major risk factor for heart disease and is prevalent in Tribal communities, affecting 27% of Native Elders.
- Obesity and High Blood Pressure – Limited access to affordable, whole foods contributes to higher rates of obesity and hypertension.
- Limited Healthcare Access – Many Native communities rely on the Indian Health Service (I.H.S.), which is chronically underfunded and understaffed.
- Historical Trauma and Stress – Generational trauma, stress, and economic hardship fuel higher stress levels, which contribute to poor heart health.

Ways to Align Healthcare with Native Culture

We agree that healthy diets are part of the solution, but it's not that simple. Improving heart health in Native communities requires practitioners to become more aware of our native ways, and use more culturally informed approaches. Providers can better align with traditional values and practices to make a difference. Some strategies include:

- Revitalizing Traditional Diets: Before colonization, Indigenous diets were rich in lean proteins, vegetables, and whole grains. Encouraging and supporting a return to traditional foods can help reduce the consumption of processed foods high in sugar and unhealthy fats. Native ancestors ate locally available foods such as wild game, fish, berries, and corn.
- Enhancing Healthcare Access and Education: Collaborating with Tribal health programs and providers can improve heart disease screenings, preventative care, and education on nutrition and exercise.
- Addressing Mental Health and Stress: Holistic health includes mental and emotional well-being. Culturally specific stress-reduction methods, such as talking circles, storytelling, and reconnecting to nature, can help reduce stress and improve overall health.

February is National Cancer Prevention Month

Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people have higher rates of getting certain kinds of cancer than non-Hispanic White people. They have been the subject of centuries of systemic racism, which has often resulted in less access to health care, healthy food, and educational and employment opportunities. These types of inequities have contributed to many health disparities, including higher cancer rates, across American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and between American Indian and Alaska Native people and people of other races and ethnicities. Eliminating these inequities can improve health outcomes for these populations.

Cancer rates:

The rates of getting and dying from certain kinds of cancer can vary widely among American Indian and Alaska Native people in different areas of the United States. For example:

- Lung cancer is the most common cancer among non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native populations in five of the six Indian Health Service (IHS) regions in the United States. And in the Southwest region, lung cancer is the fourth most common cancer, after colorectal, kidney, and liver cancer.
- Stomach cancer is the fourth most common cancer among non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people in Alaska but the sixth most common cancer among this population in the Southwest region. Stomach cancer is not among the top 10 most common cancers among non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people in other regions.
- The overall rate of getting cancer is more than twice as high among non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people in the Southern Plains region (612 per 100,000 people) compared to the Southwest region (294 per 100,000 people).

Compared to non-Hispanic White people, non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people have different rates of getting some kinds of cancer. For example:

- Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native women have higher rates of getting cervical cancer than non-Hispanic White women in all regions except the East region.
- Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native males and females have higher rates of getting colorectal, kidney, and stomach cancers than non-Hispanic White males and females in almost all regions.
- In all regions, non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people have higher rates of getting liver cancer than non-Hispanic White people.
- Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native men have lower rates of getting prostate cancer than non-Hispanic White men in all regions except the

Northern Plains and the Southern Plains.

Risk factors

Many cancers can be prevented. Staying away from commercial tobacco smoke, keeping a healthy weight, and drinking little or no alcohol can lower a person's risk of getting cancer. Screening tests can prevent some cancers or find them early, when treatment works best.

Note: Commercial tobacco means products that are made and sold by tobacco companies. It does not include traditional tobacco used by Indigenous groups for religious or ceremonial purposes.

A risk factor is something that may increase a person's chances of getting cancer. American Indian and Alaska Native people in the United States have a higher prevalence of some risk factors compared to White people. For example:

- Obesity is more prevalent among non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native adults than non-Hispanic White adults.
- On average, American Indian and Alaska Native people are more likely to smoke cigarettes than members of other racial or ethnic groups in the United States.
- American Indian and Alaska Native people have the highest rate of getting chronic hepatitis C, which can lead to liver cancer.
- The prevalence of Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori)—a type of bacteria that can lead to stomach cancer—is particularly high among Alaska Native people.
- Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native people are less likely than non-Hispanic White people to be up to date on cancer screening tests, according to the IHS's 2021 Government Performance and Results Act report.

February is Teen Dating Violence Month

Romantic relationships between teenagers are incredibly complicated. The undertaking of a relationship, very often, requires more maturity than most teens have developed. These relationships are more likely to be riddled with problems include communication, jealousy, and selflessness.

As a result, teenagers are more likely to be involved in relationships that are unhealthy, violent, and/or abusive. If you are a teenager involved in a romantic relationship it is important to understand the behaviors that may point to an unhealthy and/or abusive relationship.

Red Flags in Teenage Relationships

Unhealthy or abusive relationships take many forms, and there is not one specific behavior that causes a relationship to be categorized as such. However, there are certain behaviors that should be cause for concern. Behaviors that should raise a red flag include:

- Excessive jealousy or insecurity;
- Invasions of your privacy;
- Unexpected bouts of anger or rage;
- Unusual moodiness;
- Pressuring a partner into unwanted sexual activity;
- Blaming you for problems in the relationship and not taking any responsibility for the same;
- Controlling tendencies;
- Explosive temper;
- Preventing you from going out with or talking to other people;
- Constantly monitoring your whereabouts and checking in to see what you are doing and who you are with;
- Falsely accusing you of things;
- Vandalizing or ruining your personal property;
- Taunting or bullying; or
- Threatening or causing physical violence.

If your partner frequently engages in these behaviors it may be wise to speak with someone with whom you feel comfortable. Adults who have experience with relationships may be able to provide advice that can help you to determine if you are in any danger.

If You Think You Are in an Abusive Relationship

If your partner exhibits any of the behaviors outlined above, or if your partner has physically harmed you in any way, there are many things you can do. Trust your gut – if you think you are in danger or in an unhealthy relationship, you should end it. If you are afraid of confronting your partner, or fearful of what they may say or do, there are numerous resources you can contact for help, guidance, or counseling. If you think you are in an abusive relationship, you should consider:

- Reaching out to a trusted friend, teacher, parent, or mentor;
- Spending more time with individual with whom you are comfortable;
- Getting involved with activities you enjoy that will allow you to associate with positive people;
- Seek the guidance of a school counselor or therapist; or
- Calling the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-SAFE (7233).

Studies have found that negative or abusive behaviors in unhealthy relationships are more likely to increase over time. Abuse escalates as the relationship progresses, and victims are more likely to sustain substantial injuries or harm. If you believe that you may be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship do not hesitate to ask for help. Teenage dating violence is more common than you know; you are not alone.

As with any health care concern you may have, please contact either the Little Axe Health Clinic at 405-447-0300 or the Shawnee Clinic at 405-878-5850 and make an appointment with your primary care provider. If you feel your safety is a concern, contact your local law enforcement agency.



Scheduled Closures

Feb 4th - Closed at NOON for Townhall Day, PlusCare & Pharmacy will re-open at 5pm

Feb. 16th - Closed in observance of President's Day.

Follow us on Facebook or visit asthealth.org for closure information and updates!



Elders Thursday's Fun Day!

February 12th | 11 AM-1 PM
LA Resource Center

February 26th | 11AM-1 PM
AST Complex, Title VI Bldg.

Elders 55 years and older, come and join the Public Health Department for fun games and activities with health education topics.

Lunch provided by Title VI, if you are signed up with the program. \$5 a meal if you are not signed up with Title VI.



For more info contact: Sianna Morgheim
405.827.7704 or smorgheim@astribe.com

Caregiver's Fun Day

Caregivers and Grandparents raising Grandchildren, come and join us for a fun hand crafting blanket activity

Thursday February 12th, 1-3PM
Little Axe Resource Center

RSVP by February 9th
Limited spots available

RSVP to Sianna Morgheim at
405.827.7704 or smorgheim@astribe.com

Caregiver Program



AST DIABETES & WELLNESS

FEBRUARY KI-KE-KI-KA-MI-GE "KEEP MOVING" MONTHLY CHALLENGE

February - Heart Health & Family

"Fuel Your Heart, Strengthen Our Circle"
Focus on heart health and supporting family/community wellness.

Challenge: Connect with your community, cross paths with friends, neighbors and new people while you walk.

Goal: Walking 30 minutes daily will reduce your risk of heart disease by 35%.



Scan to Register

Don't get SCAMMED!

HANG UP THE PHONE

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
ReportFraud.ftc.gov

"Can you please verify your social security..."

IT IS A SCAM

If someone you don't know pressures you for money urgently...

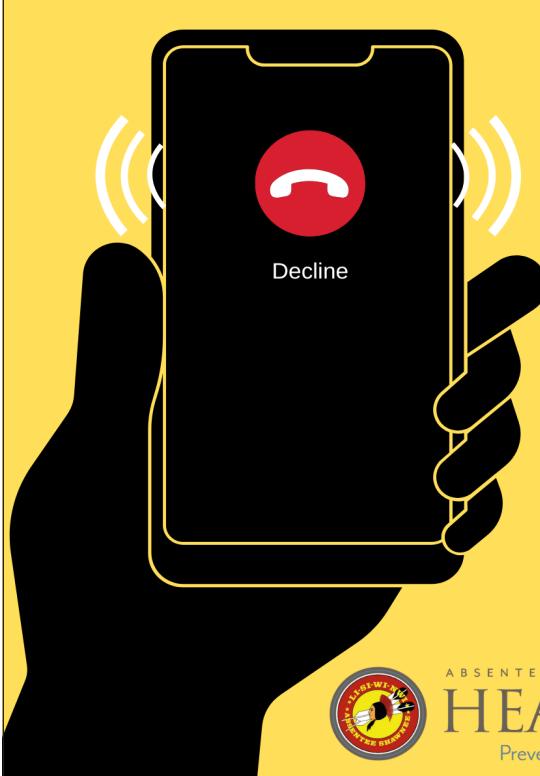
IT IS A SCAM

"Verify your insurance provider and member ID..."

IT IS A SCAM

**ASTHS CARES.
REPORT TO US & THE FTC**

Call for help at:
405-447-0300
405-878-5850



ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL
HEALTH SYSTEM
Prevention. Progress. Pride.

If you registered in January there is no need to register again.
You will automatically receive the February challenge invite via the Wellbeing+ app.



February

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

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 GROUND HOG DAY BAKED CHICKEN WILD RICE TOSSED SALAD* PEARS	3 STEW CRACKERS CHEESE STICKS CAKE	4 CHICKEN & BROCCOLI RICE CASSEROLE MIXED FRUIT	5 BAKED POTATO HAM, CHEZ, ONIONS BROCCOLI n CHEZ PUDDING	6 PANCAKES SAUSAGE PATTIES FRUIT
9 BAKED HAM SWEET POT BRUSSEL SPROUTS BREAD/FLUFF	10 CHICKEN EGG ROLL STIR FRY VEGGIES RICE FORTUNE COOKIE	11 SPAGHETTI W MEAT SAUCE GARLIC TOAST PUDDING	12 CORN SOUP BANANA PUDDING SALAD BAR	13 SCRAMBLED EGGS SAUSAGE GRAVY BISCUIT
16 PRESIDENT'S DAY	17 CABBAGE SMOKED SAUSAGE BREAD APRICOTS	18 CHICKEN FRY SANDWICH T,L,O/CHIPS MANDARIN ORANGES	19 TACO SALAD LTOC SPANISH RICE SALSA/PEACHES	20 OATMEAL BOILED EGG MUFFIN
23 BBQ PULLED PORK SANDWICH CHIPS/PICKLES PEARS	24 GOULASH OKRA WINTER BLEND JELLO	25 SALMON PATTY PEA & CARROTS COLESLAW	26 BEEF TIPS & NOODLES MIXED VEGGIES ROLL CRISP	27 BOILED EGG BACON FRUIT

2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4 <i>Closed at NOON</i>	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Little Axe Resource Center Events: Elders Fun Day 11am-1pm Caregiver Event: 1-3pm	13	14
15	<i>Closed for President's Day</i>	16	17	18	19	21
22	23	24	25	26 Elders Thursday Fun Day @ Shawnee Title VI 11am-1pm	27	28



FEBRUARY
ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL
HEALTH SYSTEM
Prevention. Progress. Pride.

More information for Elders Thursday Fun Day can be found on our Facebook page

PlusCare & Pharmacy will re-open @ 5pm Feb. 04

More information for the Caregivers Event can be found on our Facebook page



Elder Fitness Classes

6 Week Classes Starting March 2026

Located at the Resource Center
1970 156th Ave NE, Norman OK 73026

Days and Time
Tues. Wed. Thurs. 10:30 am

March - Yoga
April - Aerobics
June - Strength Training
July - SAIL

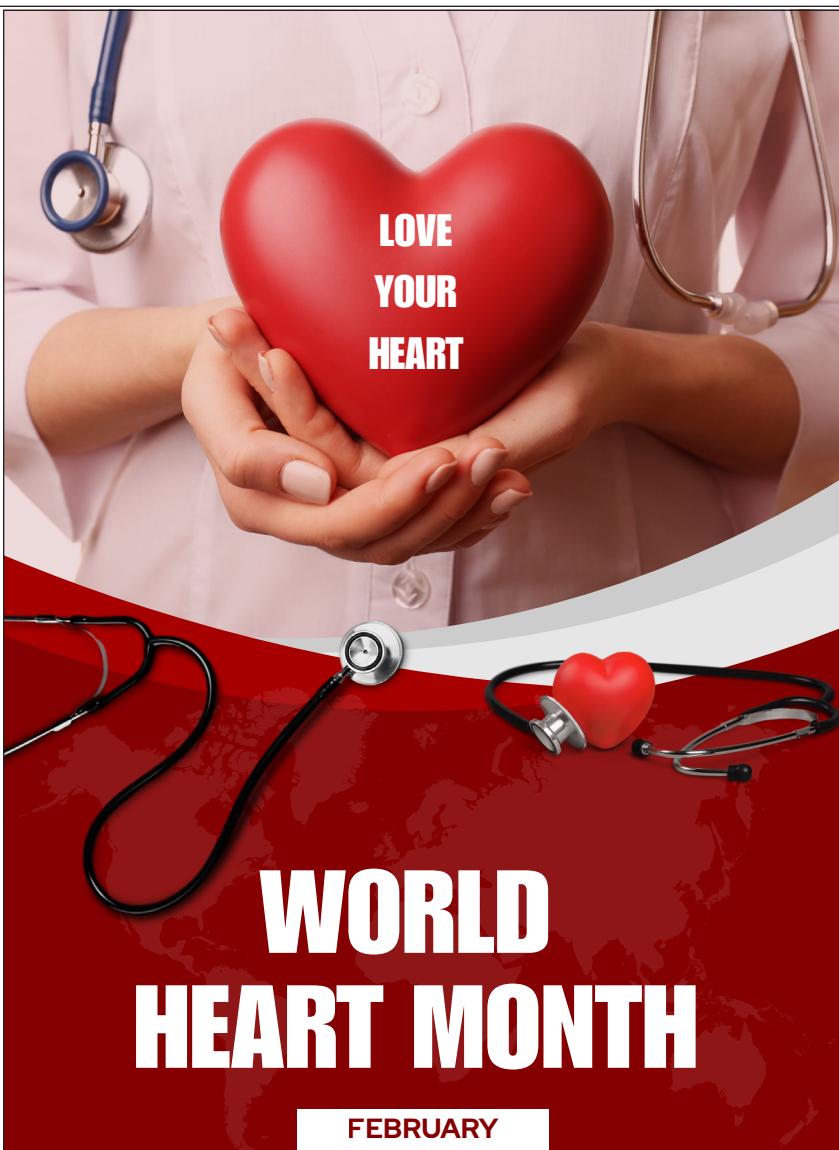
Scan QR Code to Register

Call 405-561-7874 with questions

Diabetes & Wellness Personal Training Cooking Demo's

Program design Diabetes Self-Management Training Diabetes Day

Hosts 5k Events Lifestyle Management Program Nutrition Education Fitness Classes



WORLD HEART MONTH

FEBRUARY

LOVE YOUR HEART

HEALTH BUZZ!!



FEBRUARY CAREGIVER FOCUS

Hatito and Happy February, AST family! I hope this finds you all warm and relaxed. Recently, I found myself reflecting on my time spent as a former respite provider, which led me to thinking about the demands caregivers face and just how important they are, and how critical their role is for the care recipient. The caregiver is the driving force behind keeping the person in the community for as long as possible, and with that comes a lot of responsibility for one person to manage. Caring for a loved one is a traditional, honorable, and rewarding role. However, the work of a caregiver can at the same time be overwhelming and demanding both mentally and physically. The lack of proper training, structure, and support in place can lead to what is called "caregiver burnout". Caregiver burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion from prolonged stress due to the overwhelming demands of caring for someone else, leading to feelings of being used up, frustrated, anxious, or depressed. According to the American Heart Association and Johns Hopkins Medicine, "It happens when caregivers neglect their own needs, impacting their health and ability to provide care, often manifesting as fatigue, withdrawal, irritability, sleep problems, and difficulty concentrating." These things are a normal part of the caregiving journey, but they don't have to be carried alone. There are many resources and tools available at no cost to help ease some of the caregiver burden. If you are a caregiver and you find yourself struggling with caregiver burnout, be sure to schedule an appointment with your primary care physician to get the necessary support and resources needed. It's no secret that caregivers are warriors, but even warriors need to take a break occasionally. Check out the tips below to help better navigate through caregiver burnout.

TIPS TO REDUCE AND MANAGE CAREGIVER BURNOUT:

- **Schedule Breaks:** Take at least 15-30 minutes of time daily for yourself that is NOT a chore.
- **Ask for Specific Help:** Ask for and accept help when needed. Friends and family often want to help but don't know how. Make a list of tasks to have handy—like grocery shopping, laundry, or picking up prescriptions—and let them choose one or two tasks to complete.
- **Take a Training Course:** Become a skilled caregiver! At the clinic, we offer a training program called [Savvy Caregiver in Indian Country](#) at no cost to help navigate through the daily challenges of caregiving for persons living with dementia.
- **Join a Support Group:** Alzheimer's Association and Family Caregiver Alliance are great places to start!
- **Prioritize Self-Care:** Don't skip meals; focus on good nutrition, sleep (7-9 hours), exercise regularly, attend a basket weaving or ribbon skirt making class.
- **Routinely Visit Your Primary Care Physician:** Be sure to keep your own appointments. Let your doctor know that you are a caregiver so they can monitor stress-related health and provide you with available resources.

In closing, if you know a caregiver, seek out thoughtful ways to show them that they are not alone and that they are appreciated. Check in regularly to let them know you're there to help lighten the load. Show them that you value them by continuing to offer invites, even when they can't make it. Go to them for a visit. Offer practical help like light housekeeping or give them time to run a few errands weekly. Caregivers deserve and need our help and support. Small gestures as mentioned could make a significant difference to their well-being and resilience.

We offer this quote as a reminder from the wise leader and fierce warrior, Sitting Bull, that the quiet and selfless act of caring for others is the highest form of bravery. "The warrior, for us, is one who sacrifices himself for the good of others." -Sitting Bull (Tatanka Iyotake)



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

Check out our web-page on the [Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System's](#) website: <https://www.asthealth.org>

Click on: "[Programs and Preventions](#)" and then click on "[Seeking Hope](#)". You can sign up online also!

Lacy Gillean
Dementia Care Specialist



Ensuring Hope December Activity

The Ensuring Hope staff recently attended a festive Winter Gathering hosted by Native Connections in partnership with Journey to Heal, bringing community members together for an evening centered on connection, creativity, and wellness. Held at the AST multipurpose building, the event welcomed attendees for crafting activities, food, and shared time together in a warm, holiday-themed setting. The evening included welcoming remarks, informational and craft tables, and a Christmas story, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, and activity time, creating an inviting space for both reflection and celebration.

The Ensuring Hope grant was honored to participate by tabling at the event and connecting with community members throughout the evening. Grant staff shared substance use prevention information, discussed available resources, and engaged attendees in meaningful conversations about youth and family well-being. Events like the Native Connections Winter Gathering provide valuable opportunities for Ensuring Hope to build relationships, increase awareness of prevention services, and support protective factors throughout community togetherness and culturally grounded outreach.



988 | **SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE**