



THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE NEWS

www.astrobe.com

Volume 35, No. 07

July 2025

Rising Warrior Department Holds Elder Abuse Awareness Event

The Absentee Shawnee Rising Warrior Department held an Elder Abuse Awareness Event June 20 in the AST Multi-Purpose Building. Elders were treated to lunch, bingo, prizes and several departments and other agencies promoted the services offered for the elders.

Protecting Ancestral Legacy was the theme and this important event coincides with June being World Elder Abuse Awareness Month. Our Elders are one of our most precious resources and it is always a great day when we get to pay homage to them.

If you would like more information on the Rising Warrior Department, please visit their website, <https://www.astrobe.com/domestic-violence>.



37th Annual Sovereignty Symposium

The 37th Annual Sovereignty Symposium was held June 12-13 at the new OKANA resort in OKC. The AST Executive Committee and AST Veterans Association Commander Jason Bender participated in the opening ceremony.

More than 650 attended the event marking a record-breaking turnout. The Symposium was founded in 1988 by the Oklahoma Supreme Court and is hosted by the Oklahoma City University School of Law. OCU Law Dean/OKC Mayor David Holt hosted the opening ceremony.

The event brings together tribal, state and federal leaders to discuss tribal sovereignty, economic development, health care and preserving cultural heritage.

The keynote speaker was former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. She spoke on the importance of tribal sovereignty "No decisions about us without us." Haaland said.

She also called on Oklahoma to require more tribal input on policy decisions.



Left Photo: Front row - AST Veterans Association Commander Jason Bender carries in AST flag. Right Photo L-R: AST Representative Anthony Johnson, AST Governor John Johnson, AST Lt. Governor Diane Ponkilla, AST Secretary Misty McGirt, Treasurer Joseph Blanchard, AST Veterans Association Commander Jason Bender.



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Absentee Shawnee Tribe





GOVERNOR
John Johnson

GOVERNOR’S REPORT

John Johnson, AST Governor

Hello Tribal Menmbers,

Summer has had a rainy start and the temperatures seem to be rising each day. With all this heat moving in, please be sure to stay hydrated and remember to check on your elders. Also remember to check and change your AC filters, this will help out tremendously.

The Sovereign Symposium this year was held at the new OKANA Resort in OKC. The symposiums agenda had several panels listed from Government to Government, Tribal Healthcare, Economic Development and several other

key topics for Indian Country. Also in attendance was the Honorable Deb Haaland the formal United States Secretary of Interior. Ms. Haaland gave an amazing speech as the main panelist for Friday. With elections going on with some tribes it was great to see newly elected officials in attendance. I had a pleasure of meeting some of them.

I received a call from the new Chairman for Comanche Nation, Mr. Forrest Tahdooahnippah. Mr. Tahdooahnippah was very interested in the growth of our clinic in Little Axe. He wanted as much information as he could get on how it all started. He stated that he was very impressed with our tribal health facility and

wanted to build one very similar.

The 4th annual Fishing for Nutrition had a great turnout. We had many families that came out and enjoyed their time together. It’s always great to see many tribal members in attendance at our events. I look forward to seeing you all next year.

Should you have any questions please reach out to my office or you may call my assistant at the information below.

Thank You

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

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



Lt. GOVERNOR
Diane Ponkilla

LT. GOVERNOR’S REPORT

Diane Ponkilla, AST Lt. Governor

Hello,

Sending condolences to all that have lost loved one this month. I do not have much reporting for the month of June, majority of the month I was in the office. I attended the Sovereignty Symposium on June 12-13, 2025. The Agriculture Department will be having the 4th Annual

Fishin for Nutrition Friday, June 27, 2025 10am-2pm at 140-9A Earlsboro Exit in Shawnee. I have been working on a project to assist 70+ yr old, elderly, handicap, AST Tribal Members who reside in the AST service area with a 5x7 safe room. The application states 70+ years of age, once these applicants are done if funding allows we will open to the 60+ age group. Application will be hardcopy and online June 30, 2025 and if you have any questions reach out to the Lt. Governor’s de-

partment. We will be off for Juneteenth on Thursday, June 19, 2025 and the EC meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 23, 2025. June 27, 2025 will mark one year in the office of Lt. Governor. It is a learning experience for sure and I spend a lot of time trying to find ways to assist the Tribal Members more with something that will benefit them. I am open to any input and visits from anyone with advice or concerns.

Ne yi wa



SECRETARY
Misty McGirt

TREASURER’S REPORT

Joseph Blanchard, AST Treasurer

Hello Everybody,

I hope you all are doing well and have had a chance to enjoy summer so far. Recently, it was pointed out and I was surprised to learn it was almost the middle of June. So let me start by saying, “Happy 4th of July!” Growing up as a child I remember being at the lake, a ball field, or at a family cookout eating good food and popping fireworks. It’s a great time of year as some of us will now be able to eat watermelon and cantaloupe. Woo, my mouth starts to water just thinking about the taste and smell...mmmm.

Since my last report, here are some of the things my office has been able to participate in or attended to represent the Tribe: monthly meetings with Tribal entities and programs; a few business discussions with potential companies wanting to submit for upcoming RFPs or RFQs; two Conferences in OKC for Health and Tribal Government; provided comments to Daily Oklahoman reporter after the release of Economic Impact Report; Consultation with DOI; and interviewed by Media for the June Podcast.

Of these activities, the Podcast is the one I want to begin with since I talk about the Economic Development Survey. If you haven’t seen the video, here are the important points I wanted to share with our People. Over the last few years, I’ve discussed the importance of establishing new business which creates job opportunities for Tribal Members; expansion of current programs and new services; and increase in tax revenue. This also helps our community by providing new locations for entertainment and dining.

Additionally, I touched on the value

of updating the AST Strategic Plan. For those who are unaware, it has been nearly 15 years since an Executive Committee has approved a Strategic Plan. As discussed, the new data and long term goals are very helpful for when the Tribe or Health submit Grant applications. It is vital we keep these current as the items on the checklist are completed and we can move forward with other projects. The information provided by members, staff, and our local residents is beneficial for the improvements they would like to see. Unlike the Administration in DC, we have concerns and want to gain input to make certain we can prioritize how to move forward.

In the Department of Interior (DOI) Consultation at the Oklahoma Supreme Court building, I was 1 of approximately 20 Tribal leaders attending in person to represent their respective Nations; online there were another 185 people logged on. Unfortunately, there isn’t a lot to report because the Interior staff did not have all the information and expressed they were initiating dialogue and gathering information. The bad part is we were not given a date for follow-up. I have asked Governor Johnson to send an official request to meet with the Indian Affairs staff at a future date and time, once their lead official has been approved and confirmed by the Legislature.

Regarding the two conferences I attended in OKC, the first was for the Native Public Health Resilience grant, hosted by Southern Plains Health Board. It was a continuance of last month’s Tribal Leaders Convening, but, this time the agenda was more specific and covered “Financial Leadership and Working in Public Health”. I was able to bring the information back and share with our

ASTHA Health Board some ideas on how to improve or make situations better for our System.

The second event was the Sovereignty Symposium held at OKANA. There were several good sessions and we were able to network with other Tribal governments in attendance. The major guest speaker on Friday was former Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, who happens to be a Democratic gubernatorial candidate in her home state of New Mexico. She provided a passionate speech and observation of how she thinks the State of Oklahoma should operate, to enrich the relationships with Tribes and utilize us as an asset and resource.

The final topic for this month is the Economic Impact Report, released at the OK History Center, compiled by OIGA, Oklahoma City University, and the United for Oklahoma organization. Of the 38 Tribes in Oklahoma, 19 submitted information to be included in their study. The results can be found at unitedforoklahoma.com website. Here are the 3 key takeaways that Tribal activities support for our State:

1. 139,860 jobs
2. \$7.8 Billion in wages and benefits to workers
3. \$23.4 Billion in state production of goods and services

As I conclude this edition, I hope everyone has a safe and happy 4th of July. I want to give a quick shout-out to our Veterans as we celebrate the holiday. Also, I appreciate the support, advice, and encouragement as we continue our trek down this sometimes bumpy road. See ya next month.

Neyiwa!
Joseph H. Blanchard



TREASURER
Joseph Blanchard

REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Anthony Johnson, AST Representative

Hello Tribal Members,

Congratulations to all of our recent graduates in May. My office has been busy assisting with the summer camps our tribe hosts, the past month. June 12 and June 13, my office attended the Sovereignty Symposium at the new Okana waterpark in Oklahoma City. Our summer youth worker, Alyssa Medina attended

the symposium with our office, and we invited Alyssa to contribute to our newsletter this month. She shared the following words for our newsletter this month:

“Hi, my name is Alyssa Medina, I am from Anaheim, California and I am a part of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe. I work for the Representative’s Office this summer for the Summer Youth Program. It has been a great start. I chose to work for the Summer Youth Program for more job experience.”

We welcome Alyssa to our office for the summer and look forward to working with her. Should you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact my office by phone or email.

Phone: (405) 531-3512

Email: adjohnson@astrobe.com

Sincerely,
Anthony “Tadpole” Johnson
Tribal Representative



REPRESENTATIVE
Anthony Johnson



AST 477 PROGRAM

AST 477 Program

PARENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Learn about the program and the parental rights to be engaged in your child's education.

Meet other parents

Get your questions answered

Discuss important information

Attendees must be a Parent or Guardian of student(s) eligible for the AST 477 Youth Education Training services who attends one of our eleven (11) school districts: Asher, Bethel, Dale, Earlsboro, Little Axe, Macomb, Maud, Noble, South Rock Creek, Tecumseh, and Wanette.

*Note: Youth not enrolled in one of the above listed school districts must get a letter from the other Tribal 477 Programs stating they are not otherwise being serviced to receive assistance. The 477 Program staff can assist you with who to contact to get this letter.

Call Us: (405) 878-4545

Meeting Location: 2029 James L. Edwards Ln, Shawnee, OK 74801

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Jim Thorpe Sports Performance Camp May 30

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe was a sponsor for the Jim Thorpe Sports Performance Camp May 30. The event was at the Jim Thorpe Stadium.

Tribal Judge Vacancy

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma is accepting applications for the position of Supreme Court Judge of the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Court. Minimum qualification for said Judge is: must be an enrolled member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe or the parent, child, or spouse of an enrolled member of the Tribe, or domiciled within the territorial jurisdiction of the Tribe, or an attorney; or a lay advocate who has regularly practiced before the Court as a member of the Bar of the Court for a period of five years; or an Indian graduate of an American Bar Association law school or a paralegal program approved by the Supreme Courts.

Please submit resumes to Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Attn: HR Director, 2025 S. Gordon Cooper, Shawnee, OK. 74801 or Email: HR@astribc.com, Fax: 405-395-0534.

THUNDERBIRD CASINO

LEARN MORE

NEW MEMBERS GET UP TO

\$100

THUNDERCARD

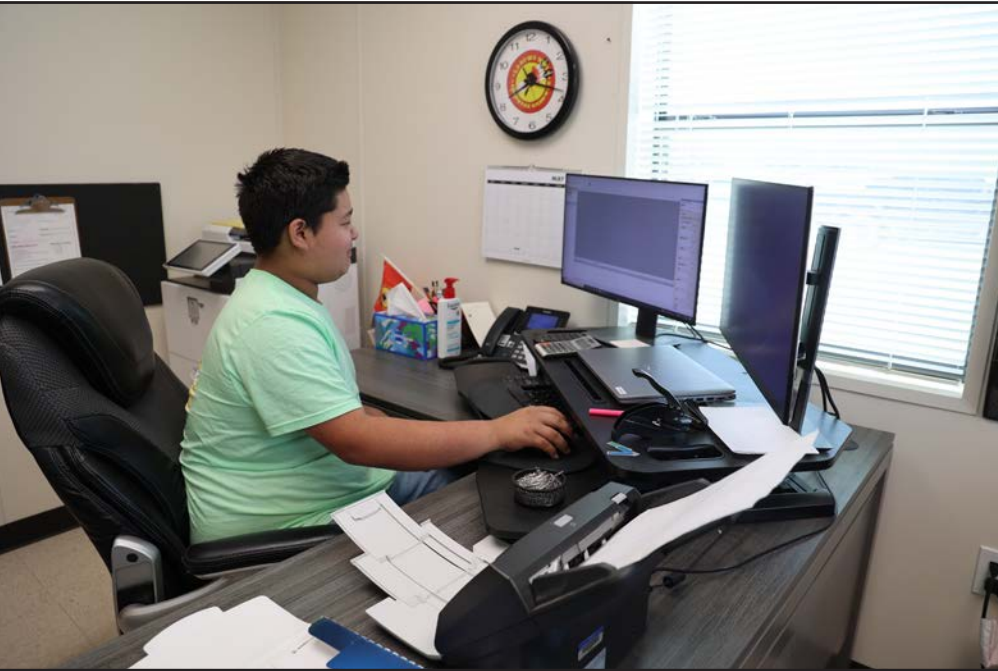
POWERFUL REWARDS

477 Summer Youth Work Program

It’s summertime at the AST complex and that means summer youth workers are here. The summer youth program is open to any native youth 477 participant ages 14-24.

During the eight-week program the summer youth learn valuable skills such as customer service, interviewing, resume help and on the job training. The 34 youth are currently working in 16 different programs throughout the AST complex, AST Health and AST Housing Authority.

Several of the AST 477 staff were summer youth workers. 477 Executive Director Briana Ponkilla even got her start as a summer youth worker at the tribal store.



Left Photo: 477 summer youth worker Thomas Jim III works in the AST Tax Commission office. Right Photo: 477 summer youth/tribal member Erika Blanchard works at Building Blocks III. Top Right Photo: 477 summer youth pose for a picture.

Adult Services

Need Job Training?

Need help with reinstatement fees?

Need Behavioral Health Services?

Unemployed or Underemployed?

Need education assistance?

Homeless?

Need small business assistance?

Need Childcare?

Need assistance with clothes for new job?

Help with GED/HS Diploma?

AST 477

NOT INCOME BASED
OPEN TO ALL NATIVE AMERICANS

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US! ONLINE APP:

421 N. Beard St. Shawnee, OK 74801
(405) 878-4545 | 477program@astribe.com
https://www.astribe.com/477-program

Scan for Application!

*Tribal ID Required

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US! ONLINE APP:

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Youth Services

Child need school supplies? (JOM)

Extracurricular Expenses

Tutoring

Assistance with Drivers Ed?

Need education assistance?

Tuition Assistance

Need help finding a job?

Graduation Expenses

Help with GED/HS Diploma?

Need assistance for clothes with new job?

AST 477

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OPEN TO ALL NATIVE AMERICANS

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*Tribal ID Required

New podcast episode – The Power of Tribal Voices

Welcome to another insightful episode of "Among the Shawnee" where Mindy Longhorn Media Director for the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, sits down with Treasurer Blanchard. The episode kicks off by highlighting the Economic Development survey introduced at General Council. Treasurer Blanchard also discusses the tribe's efforts in strategic planning.

Subscribe to our channel, Absentee Shawnee Tribe to watch. Podcast is also still available on Apple, Spotify, SoundCloud and the Absentee Shawnee Tribe website.

NOTICE

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE OR STORY

Please give us a call at (405) 598-1279 or send an email to media@astribe.com

All articles for the next month’s issue are **DUE** by the **15th of the current month**.

Unfortunately we can only accept **ONE PICTURE PER BIRTHDAY PERSON**, not per birthday wish.



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



BUILDING BLOCKS
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
AN ABSENTEE SHAWNEE ENTERPRISE

Thanks to all of Building Blocks wonderful Dads for joining us for *Donuts with Dads* on June 13th. We appreciate them for joining Building Blocks in celebrating Father’s Day.

We are currently hiring staff, if you are interested in applying visit <https://www.astribecom/employment> for applications and to see what positions are available.

Building Blocks is accepting waiting list applications for all of our ages; 6 weeks through Pre-K/4 Year Olds. If you are interested in getting your child on our waiting list please call and we can email you a waiting list application or you may stop by to fill one out.

Summertime means that Building Blocks children get to play on the Splash Pad! They have lots of fun playing in the water and cooling off.

Summertime heat has arrived and it’s going to get hotter. Remember when doing outside activities to hydrate by drinking lots of cool water. Also, regularly apply sunscreen when in the sun and in water activities.



Building Blocks will be closed Thursday, July 3rd & Friday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day.

Enjoy the Summer & Have a Safe July!



Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Building Blocks C.D.C.
16051 Little Axe Dr.
Norman, OK 73026
(405)360-2710

NOW HIRING
For Multiple Positions

Please call for more information or log onto
www.astribecom

4th Annual Day of Champions Sports Camp

The first week was busy for individuals ages 6-18 in the Little Axe community. The weather tried to damper the camp. The access to an inside facility, coaches and volunteer staff that were able to adapt and adjust 82 campers learned a lot and had a lot of fun!

The Day of Champions 4 main principles are Discipline, Respect, Trust and Hard Work. The campers learned the principles, sport specific drills, everyday foods/sometimes foods, and how much sugar are in the drinks we drink.

Jayden Watson was a terrific speaker at the camp and made an impact on the campers. Beverly Felton helped get an indoor facility so that camp could continue even in the wet conditions. The Public Health department were very helpful! Trina Foley, Courtney Cozard, Justis Sanchez, and the Clinic Summer Interns made the camp run so smoothly with all the hard work, sandwich making, and refilling water jugs!!

Thank you to the Executive Community for the support of this camp! The smiles on the campers faces at the end of camp was proof that it was a FANTASTIC two days!!





A B S E N T E E S H A W N E E

HOUSING AUTHORITY

107 N. KIMBERLY AVE. SHAWNEE, OK 74801 PHONE: (405) 273-1050 FAX: (405) 275-0678 WWW.ASHOUSINGAUTHORITY.COM

About Us

Our duty and mission are to provide quality and affordable housing to Low Income Indian Families in our communities. Our entity establishes goals for the program annually that serve the housing needs of the Indian people.



OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY- FRIDAY
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

 Find us on Facebook  Instagram 

2025 Programs

- Low Rent
- Lease to Own
- Safe Shelter
- College Housing Rental Assistance
- Tiny Home Lease Purchase
- Over-Income Lease to Own
- Market Rate Rental
- Home Rehab Assistance Enrolled AST Only
- Down Payment Assistance Enrolled AST Only
- Homeless Prevention Assistance



SCAN QR CODE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE SERVICES

PROGRAMS ARE DEPENDENT ON FINDING AVAILABILITY

Comment Card

Absentee Shawnee Housing Authority strives to provide you with the best possible service, so please share any great experiences you encountered with our program, or if this has not been the case and we did not handle something to your satisfaction, let us know.



SCAN QR CODE TO SHARE YOUR COMMENTS

ALL PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL

All players receive \$10 Free Play

4TH OF JULY

AFTER PARTY

Win \$5,000

at Midnight

***** PLUS *****

\$500 Cash Hot Seats Every 15 minutes | 11pm - Midnight

THUNDERBIRD CASINO NORMAN

PLAYERS MUST BE ACTIVELY PLAYING BLACKJACK WITH A THUNDERBIRD PLAYER CLUB CARD. MANAGEMENT RESERVES ALL RIGHTS.

TABLE GAMES



NO ANTE

NEW DAYS

MONDAY, TUESDAY,
WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY

4PM TO CLOSE

THUNDERBIRD CASINO SHAWNEE

SATURDAYS



BIG MONEY

\$10,000 MUST GO!

\$5,000 DRAWING
AT 8PM & 10PM

One entry for every 100 points earned.

PLUS

\$100 Free Play Hots Seats
Every 20 Minutes | 6pm-10pm

THUNDERBIRD CASINO NORMAN

SATURDAYS



BIG MONEY

\$5,000 MUST GO!

\$2,500 DRAWING
AT 8PM & 10PM

One entry for every 50 points earned.

PLUS

\$50 Free Play Hots Seats
Every 20 Minutes | 3pm-10pm

THUNDERBIRD CASINO SHAWNEE

EVERY THURSDAY



SHOW ME THE MUMMY

\$1,000 GRAND PRIZE

7 WINNERS EVERY NIGHT

Drawings every 30 minutes

ARISTOCRAT GAMING

6PM-9PM

MO' MUMMY

Receive one entry for every 100 same-day points earned

THUNDERBIRD CASINO NORMAN

EVERY THURSDAY



SHOW ME THE MUMMY

THUNDERBIRD CASINO SHAWNEE

ARISTOCRAT GAMING

MO' MUMMY

\$500 GRAND PRIZE


7 WINNERS EVERY NIGHT

Drawings every 30 minutes

6PM-9PM

Receive one entry for every 50 same-day points earned

Players will start earning entries at 10:00am to 8:59pm. Management reserves all rights.



Celebrating Excellence: Kanynn Kaseca Awarded Prestigious Cobell Scholarship

We are thrilled to announce that **Kanynn Kaseca**, an outstanding senior from Shawnee High School and a proud member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, has been awarded the highly competitive **Cobell Undergraduate Scholarship**—a distinguished honor for Indigenous scholars.



Established in 1996 as a part of the landmark Cobell settlement, the Cobell Scholarship is administered by Indigenous Education, Inc. It offers merit-based support to enrolled members of federally recognized Tribes pursuing higher education. Since its inception, the program has provided over **\$35 million** in scholarships to more than 4,000 Native American students attending over 400 colleges and universities (globenewswire.com).


The Cobell Scholarship selection process is rigorous—only about **28% of applicants** receive funding each year (cobellscholar.org). This is a testament to its selectivity and prestige, making Kanynn’s achievement all the more extraordinary.

Kanynn, who recently graduated as **valedictorian** and **Senior Class President**, will attend Northeastern State University in the fall, pursuing a major in **psychology** with a pre-med focus and competing as part of the Lady RiverHawks golf team. Her strong academic record, leadership, and commitment to serving Native communities reflect exactly the qualities the Cobell Scholarship aims to support.

Her selection as a Cobell scholar not only recognizes her achievements but also highlights the resilience and excellence of the Absentee Shawnee community. As Kanynn moves forward in her academic journey, we proudly celebrate her success and look forward to the meaningful impact she will have on future Native generations.

Congratulations, Kanynn—your accomplishment makes our Tribe shine brighter!





★ HAPPY JULY 4TH! ★



Celebrating the red, white, and blue can take some green.

Our branches will be closed in celebration of Independence Day on Friday, July 4th, but our website and ATMs will be open. Branches will re-open on Monday, July 7th. To learn more, visit your local branch or our website.



2023 Gordon Cooper Dr.
Shawnee, OK 74801
(405) 273-0202
www.anbok.bank



Joseph Crossley, 79, of Shawnee, Oklahoma passed away Tuesday, May 6, 2025. He is a member of the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. Joseph was born in Wichita, KS on November 11, 1945 and graduated from Rose Hill High School in 1963. In January 1963 he joined the Navy, received an Honorable discharge then in August 1966 went on to attend college at Wichita State University earning his Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering in 1973 and his Master of Business Administration in 1975. Shortly after he completed his degrees he started a family and moved to Texas. In Texas he worked for Texas Instruments. He was able to retire from T.I. at an early age and moved to Shawnee, OK.

He was preceded in death by - his parents, Basil and Eleanor Crossley of Bethel Acres, OK; His sister-in-law Tessie Crossley, sister Ruth Harder and brother Orin Crossley.

He is survived in passing by his brother Burton Crossley of Elmo, Tx and his sister Rachel Crossley of Choctaw, OK – along with his four children, Son, Jesse Crossley & wife Narda Crossley and their children Ricardo and Lennox Daughter Caroline Crossley & Bryan Suhy and their children Caelin, Brody, and Eleanor Daughter Cathleen Crossley & husband Mason Riley and their children Wren and Jean-Michel Son John Crossley & Megan Kinney; and other extended family members and friends.

Joseph was a son, a brother, a cousin, a nephew, an uncle, a father and a grandfather. He will be missed.

TABLE GAMES



EVERY SATURDAY - ALL DAY

WIN \$25 IN TABLE GAMES CHIPS!

WHEN THE DEALER HITS BIG... YOU WIN!



PLAYERS MUST BE ACTIVELY PLAYING BLACKJACK WITH A THUNDERBIRD PLAYER CLUB CARD. MANAGEMENT RESERVES ALL RIGHTS.

TABLE GAMES



EVERY FRIDAY - ALL DAY

WIN \$50 IN TABLE GAMES CHIPS!

GET SUITED, GET REWARDED!



PLAYERS MUST BE ACTIVELY PLAYING BLACKJACK WITH A THUNDERBIRD PLAYER CLUB CARD. MANAGEMENT RESERVES ALL RIGHTS.

UNLIMITED WINNERS!

SPECIAL PROMOTION

WINNING COLORS\$

SUNDAYS, JULY 13 AND JULY 27

PICK YOUR WINNING COLOR

PLAY EVERY 20 MINUTES | 4PM - 7PM

THUNDERBIRD CASINO NORMAN

TABLE GAMES

FLUSH 'EM Up

EVERY THURSDAY All Day

 WIN \$25 IN TABLE GAMES CHIPS!  ULTIMATE TEXAS HOLD 'EM

THUNDERBIRD CASINO NORMAN

PLAYER MUST BE ACTIVELY PLAYING TABLE GAMES WITH A THUNDER CLUB CARD. ONLY PLAYERS WHO ARE PLAYING ULTIMATE TEXAS HOLD 'EM ARE ELIGIBLE AND GET ONE OF THE FOLLOWING HANDS - FLUSH, FULL HOUSE, FOUR OF A KIND, STRAIGHT FLUSH OR ROYAL FLUSH.

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe will be closed
Thursday, July 3rd - at 12 pm
Friday, July 4th - Independence Day

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



ASTHS July 2025 Monthly Update

Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

Juvenile Arthritis (JA) affects hundreds of thousands of kids and teens in the United States.

Juvenile arthritis, also known as pediatric rheumatic disease, isn't a specific disease. It's an umbrella term to describe the inflammatory and rheumatic diseases that develop in children under the age of 16. These conditions affect hundreds of thousands of kids and teens in the United States

Most kinds of JA are autoimmune or auto-inflammatory diseases. That means the immune system, which is supposed to fight against foreign invaders like viruses and germs, instead releases inflammatory chemicals that attack healthy cells and tissue. In most JA cases this causes joint inflammation, swelling, pain and tenderness, but some types of JA have few or no joint symptoms or only affect the skin and internal organs.

The exact causes of JA are unknown, but researchers believe that certain genes may cause JA when activated by a virus, bacteria or other external factors. There is no evidence that foods, toxins, allergies or lack of vitamins cause the disease.

JA Health Effects:

Here are some of the symptoms and health effects of JA:

- Joints: May cause joints to look red or swollen and feel stiff, painful, tender and warm. This can cause difficulty moving or completing everyday tasks. Joint symptoms may worsen after waking up or staying in one position too long.
- Skin: Skin symptoms may include a scaly red rash (psoriatic), light spotted pink rash (systemic), butterfly shaped rash across the bridge of the nose and cheeks (lupus) or thick, hardened patches of skin (scleroderma).
- Eyes: Dryness, pain, redness, sensitivity to light and trouble seeing properly caused by uveitis (chronic eye inflammation).
- Internal organs: Can affect internal organs such as the digestive tract (diarrhea and bloating), lungs (shortness of breath) and heart.
- Other symptoms: Include fatigue (feeling extremely tired or rundown), appetite loss and high spiking fever.

Diagnosis:

A pediatrician may start to determine what's causing symptoms, but parents may be referred to a rheumatologist, a doctor with specialized training in treating arthritis. Some rheumatologists treat only children, while others treat only adults, and others treat both.

The doctor will ask questions about the child's medical history, when symptoms started, how long they have lasted and about the child's family history. He or she will also perform a physical exam to look for signs of JA, like limited range of motion, rash, eye symptoms and joint swelling, tenderness and pain.

Diagnostic tests include laboratory tests that look for inflammatory markers and imaging (X-rays, CT scans, MRIs) to look for signs of joint damage and help rule out other causes, like trauma or infection.

Types of JA:

The most common types of JA include:

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Juvenile idiopathic arthritis is the most common form of juvenile arthritis and includes six types: oligoarthritis, polyarthritis, systemic, enthesitis-related, juvenile psoriatic arthritis and undifferentiated.

Juvenile myositis. An inflammatory disease that causes muscle weakness. There are two types: Juvenile polymyositis and juvenile dermatomyositis, which also causes rash on the eyelids and knuckles.

Juvenile lupus. An autoimmune disease that can affect the joints, skin, internal organs (i.e. heart, kidneys, lungs) and other areas of the body. The most common form is systemic lupus erythematosus, or SLE.

Juvenile scleroderma. Scleroderma, which literally means "hard skin," describes a group of conditions that causes the skin to tighten and harden.

Vasculitis. This type of disease causes inflammation of the blood-vessels, which can lead to heart complications. Kawasaki disease and Henoch-Schonlein purpura (HCP) are the most common kinds in kids and teens.

Fibromyalgia. Fibromyalgia is a chronic pain syndrome that can cause widespread muscle pain and stiffness, along with fatigue, disrupted sleep and other symptoms. It is more common in girls but rarely diagnosed before puberty.

Treatments:

There is no cure for JA, but with early diagnosis and aggressive treatment, remission (little or no disease activity or symptoms) is possible.

The goals of JA treatment are to:

- Slow down or stop inflammation and prevent disease progression.
- Relieve symptoms, control pain and improve quality of life.
- Prevent or avoid joint and organ damage.
- Preserve joint function and mobility for adulthood.
- Reduce long-term health effects.

A well-rounded plan includes medication, physical activity, acupuncture, massage, mind-body therapies) and healthy eating habits.

Medications:

There are several kinds of medications used to treat JA. Some control disease activity and others relieve symptoms. Drugs that control disease activity include corticosteroids and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs).

- Corticosteroids. These quick-acting, anti-inflammatory drugs are given by injection in a doctor's office. They are typically used to manage disease until other medications start working because of side effects.
- Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs). This class of drugs,

which includes traditional DMARDs (methotrexate, sulfasalazine) and biologics, relieve symptoms by suppressing the immune system so it doesn't attack the joints. Methotrexate is the most commonly used DMARD to treat JA. Traditional DMARDs may be available in pill form, but biologics are injected or given by infusion in a doctor's office.

- Drugs that relieve symptoms. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) and analgesics (pain relievers) relieve pain but cannot reduce joint damage or change the course of the disease. These medications are available over the counter or by prescription.

Every child with JA is different, and treatment depends on disease severity and type. The doctor may start with a modest approach, beginning with NSAIDs, analgesics and/or one type of DMARD (usually methotrexate), or choose a more aggressive approach that involves starting with a biologic or DMARD-biologic combo to combat inflammation as quickly as possible. These days, most doctors prefer early, aggressive treatment to slow disease progression rather watchful waiting. As doctors monitor the disease, drugs may be added or removed.

Surgery:

Most children with JA will never need surgery, but joint replacement can help kids with severe pain or joint damage. Many procedures may be performed on an outpatient basis.

Non-drug therapies:

Exercise. Regular exercise is key to managing joint stiffness and pain. Low-impact and joint-friendly activities like walking, swimming, biking and yoga are best, but kids with well-controlled disease can participate in just about any activity they wish, if their doctor or physical therapist approves. On tough days, it's important to balance light activity with rest. Taking breaks throughout the day protects joints and preserves energy.

Physical Therapies and Assistive Devices:

Physical therapy and occupational therapy can improve a child's quality of life by teaching them ways to stay active and how to perform daily tasks with ease. Here are some other ways physical and occupational therapists can help a child with JA:

- Teach and guide them through strengthening and flexibility exercises.
- Help improve balance and coordination.
- Perform body manipulation.
- Prescribe and show kids how to use assistive devices (e.g. braces, splints, hand grips).

Self-Care:

It's important that children and teens make healthy lifestyle choices and use complementary therapies to manage the pain and stress of arthritis. These include:

- Healthy eating. Eating some foods, like those found in the Mediterranean diet (i.e. fatty fish, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and extra virgin olive oil), and avoiding others (high-fat, sugary and processed foods) may help curb inflammation.
- Hot and cold therapies. Heat treatments, such as heat pads or warm baths, work best for soothing stiff joints and tired muscles. Cold is best for acute pain. It can numb painful areas and reduce inflammation.
- Topicals. Creams, gels or stick-on patches can ease the pain in a joint or muscle. Some contain the same medicine that's in a pill, and others use ingredients that irritate nerves to distract from pain.
- Mind-Body Therapies. Meditation, deep breathing, distraction techniques (listening to music or reading) and practicing visualization can help relax and divert attention away from pain, especially during shot time.
- Massage and Acupuncture. Massage may help reduce pain and ease stress or anxiety. Acupuncture involves inserting fine needles into the body along special points to relieve pain. If there's a fear of needles, acupressure, which uses firm pressure, may be used instead.
- Supplements. The use of supplements is rarely studied in children, but some supplements that help adults may help children, too. Ask a doctor about which supplements and vitamins may be helpful and which ones may cause side effects and medication interactions.
- Stress and Emotions. Kids and teens with chronic diseases are more likely to get depressed. Therapists and psychologists can help kids deal with tough emotions and teach positive coping strategies. A strong support system of friends and family can also provide emotional support during tough times.

If you are concerned about your child and need to find out more about juvenile arthritis, contact your child's primary care provider for an appointment.

References: Arthritis Foundation (2024). Juvenile Arthritis (JA). <https://www.arthritis.org/diseases/juvenile-arthritis>

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Shawnee Health Center

NEW SHAWNEE HEALTH CLINIC!

39665 Benson Park Road, Shawnee, OK 74801 (adjacent to Tecumseh Lake)
Groundbreaking held Mar 19, 2025 (Anticipate completion in late 2026)

June 2025 Health Employee Awards of the Month

Employee of the Month: Kelsea Hasbell, Medical Assistant

Team of the Month: Annual Wellness Team

Special Leadership Award: Mark Scott, Lead Fitness Specialist

Chris A. Larkin, MBA, FACHE, CHC
Executive Director

Public Health Department

Car Seat Safety Check

Car Seat Checks & Installation Education

Car seats for those in need
(Available until out)

Thursday, July 17th, 2025
2:00-6:00 PM

Little Axe Health Center

15951 Little Axe Drive, Norman, OK 73026

Cleveland County Health Department

AST Multi-Purpose Building

2029 James L. Edwards Lane
Shawnee, OK

Contact Rita Hunnicutt at 405.561.7868 or Rhunnicutt@astribe.com

Public Health Department

DRIVE-THRU SCHOOL SUPPLIES EVENT

Ages K-12 Grades

Wednesday, July 30th, 2025 from 4:00-6:00 PM

Child must be present to receive incentives
FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE UNTIL WE RUN OUT

Little Axe Health Center
15951 Little Axe Dr.
Norman, OK

AST Multi-Purpose Building
2029 James L. Edwards Lane
Shawnee, OK

For more information contact: Beverly Felton at 405.701.7190 or bfelton@astribe.com

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT PRESENTS

Elders Thursdays Fun Day!

July 10th | 11 AM - 1 PM
Little Axe Resource Center

July 24th | 11 AM - 1 PM
AST Complex, Building #9

Come and join the Public Health Department for fun games and crafts with health education topics.

For more information contact:
Sianna Morgheim 405.447.0300 or smorgheim@astribe.com

ADDRESSING DEMENTIA IN INDIAN COUNTRY & ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

BINGO

FOR DEMENTIA & HEALTHCARE EDUCATION

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF GAMES, AND LEARN ABOUT DEMENTIA AND OTHER HEALTHCARE.

SATURDAY, JULY 26 TH
10:00AM - 3:00PM

SAVE THE DATE

Preferred for AST Tribal Members & Native Americans but open to public. Due to limited seating, this event is for ADULTS ONLY 18 YRS & OLDER.

FREE ENTRY & BINGO PLAY

JOIN THE EVENT

EDUCATION | FOOD | FUN | PRIZES!!

AST MULTI-PURPOSE BUILDING IN SHAWNEE, OK

HEALTH SYSTEM

Prevention. Progress. Pride.

| <div><div>ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM</div><div>Prevention. Progress. Pride.</div><div>July</div><div>Health observances of the month:</div><div><div>Healthy Vision Month</div><div>UV Protection Month</div><div>Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month</div></div></div> | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY |
| <div>Note</div> <div>For additional details on closures and events please visit asthealth.org or our Facebook page - facebook.com/ASTHealth</div> | | 1 | 2 TOWNHALL DAY Closed at NOON Pharmacy and PlusCare re-opens at 5pm | 3 Closed at NOON | 4 Closed **HAPPY** <i>Independence</i> **DAY** | 5 | 6 |
| | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 Elder's Thursday Fun Day - Little Axe Resource Center | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 <i>Car Seat Safety Check</i> Little Axe Health Center 2pm-6pm | 18 | 19 | 20 10AM-3PM AST Multi-purpose Building, Shawnee |
| | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 Elder's Thursday Fun Day - AST Complex Center | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

JULY

| MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| | 1 BEEF TIPS & NOODLES BRUSSEL SPROUTS ROLL PEACHES | 2 GRILLED CHEZ SANDWICH CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP | 3 CEREAL SAUSAGE PATTIES TOAST | 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY |
| 7 BEEF FINGERS MASHED POT/GRAVY VEGGIES BREAD/PUDDING | 8 CHICKEN POT PIE VEGGIES BISCUIT PEARS | 9 CHEF SALAD W HAM COTTAGE CHEESE PINEAPPLES | 10 TAMALE REFRIED BEANS SPANISH RICE CINNAMON ROLL | 11 FRENCH TOAST SAUSAGE PATTIES FRUIT |
| 14 KRAUT & WEINERS GREEN BEANS BREAD MIXED FRUIT | 15 CHICKEN STRIPS MASHED POT/GRAVY CAULIFLOWER FLUFF | 16 SPAGHETTI W MEAT SAUCE PEAS N CARROTS SALAD BAR* | 17 BEANS SPINACH CORNBREAD | 18 SCRAMBLED EGGS SAUSAGE GRAVY BISCUIT |
| 21 HOT HAM & CHEZ SANDWICH CHIPS APRICOTS | 22 FRITO CHILI PIE CHEZ, ONIONS PEACHES | 23 HOAGIE SANDWICH MAC SALAD COOKIE | 24 CHICKEN, BROCCOLI RICE CASSEROLE BEETS ROLL/PEARS | 25 BAGEL CREAM CHEZ GRAPES |
| 28 LEMON PEPPER CHICKEN RICE VEGGIES/CUTIE | 29 BAKED POTATO CHEZ,ONIONS,HAM BROCCOLI & CHEZ PUDDING | 30 TUNA SANDWICH CHIPS MANDARIN ORANGES | 31 TAMALE REFRIED BEANS CHIPS/SALSA | |

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

2025

HEALTH BUZZzz!!

MUSIC AND THE BRAIN: A PATHWAY TO UNLOCKING STORED MEMORIES



DID YOU KNOW THAT MUSIC CAN UNLOCK PARTS OF THE BRAIN THAT STRUGGLE WITH MEMORY?

Recent studies have revealed that the link between music and memory is a powerful tool in recalling memories, reducing agitation, an increase in appetite, and a boost in overall mood that can have a lasting effect up to a couple hours after the music is put away. This is because music engages multiple areas of the brain where memories form, and auditory and emotional processing occur. In regards to Alzheimer’s, musical memories are typically the last memories to fade in patients, emphasizing the significant connection between music and memory.

Our Dementia Care Team at the AST Health System offers therapeutic Music & Memory kits and training for both patients and their caregivers to help manage stress, reduce agitation, and trigger positive emotional responses and memories, providing a sense of familiarity and comfort.

We believe that a personalized playlist from a person’s most meaningful years plays a huge role in the lives of those living with Alzheimer’s or other types of dementia by momentarily restoring back to them a sense of self and personal history.

If you are a caregiver and would like to receive more information about our Music & Memory Program, please reach out to us and schedule a session.



- Benefits of Music Therapy
- Improved Mood
 - Reduced Caregiver Stress
 - Encourages Physical Activity
 - Enhanced Cognitive Function
 - Improving Sleep

“Music evokes Emotion, and Emotion can bring with it Memory... it brings back the feeling of life when nothing else can.” This quote by well-known British neurologist, Oliver Sacks (author of Awakenings), shows the power of music. Indeed, like the aroma of cookies baking, a familiar song can bring us back to another time.

Below are two photos of our Music & Memory participant, Sue Sanchez. Thank you Sue and Sylvester Sanchez for allowing us to share your photos with our communities!



Sue Sanchez—first time listening to her music!



Sue Sanchez—loving her music!

If you or someone you know would benefit from the Savvy Caregiver in Indian Country or Music & Memory programs, contact adpi@atribe.com, or call 405-701-7906.

Check out our web-page on the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System’s website, asthealth.org, click on “Programs and Preventions” and then click on “Seeking Hope”. You can sign up on line also!

Wi Si Ka To Wi – Be Well, TOR Grant Project

Thursday, May 15th, 2025, the Wi Si Ka To Wi – Be Well, TOR Grant Project, along with Diabetes and Wellness and Ensuring Hope held a Spring Into Prevention Walk at the Little Axe Resource Center. Participants had the opportunity to walk the big trail loop or the mini trail loop. The mini trail loop was geared towards mature people or people with disabilities. Along the trail there were signs posted to boost awareness of mental health to promote the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Prevention Week. Walking is one way to boost your mental health. Check with Diabetes & Wellness about the services they offer to increase your physical health, which increases your mental health too! The Ensuring Hope – (SPF-PFS Grant) disseminated a survey to gather responses regarding community knowledge of substance use and usage. For completing the survey, participants receive a \$25 WalMart gift card. This survey will be ongoing until at least September 2025 and available at events where Ensuring Hope has a booth.

Saturday, June 7th, 2025, Wi Si Ka To Wi – Be Well, TOR Grant Project, along with community partners: Native Connections, Indian Child Welfare, Domestic Violence, 477, Ensuring Hope – came together to support a community event, Celebrate Community Protective Factors. Protective factors are our community strengths. This event brought attention to the positive things going on in our community and some of the tribal programs available that can help strengthen community. Courtney Yarholar, served as the moderator and speaker on community strengths. Charlie Hayes offered his DJ services. And featured in this event was a children’s program. Each child carried a message about how we can all make a difference for each child in our community. The balloon decorations were from Balloon Therapy which the children loved. The children were asked what they wanted to be when they grow up. Responses ranged from a zookeeper to a McDonald’s worker to an activist/singer. Let’s help all our children achieve their dreams. This event was held at the event space at the Thunderbird Casino in Little Axe.

We have a little free library here at the Little Axe Resource Center. Come take a look and take a book home with you!



Native Connections



AST Indian Child Welfare

Ensuring Hope



Wi Si Ka To Wi – Be Well, TOR Grant Project

AST Domestic Violence Program

AST 477 Program

July 20th is National Ice Cream Day!

Besides traditional ice cream, there are many kinds to enjoy, such as:

- Halo Top or another brand of low calorie, low carbohydrate frozen treat
- Plant based ice creams such as So Delicious
- Frozen yogurt brands such as Yasso
- Sorbet/fruit popsicles
- Frozen fruit

For more information, visit with our dietitians in Diabetes/Wellness!

Ground Turkey Stuffed Peppers

5 servings ⌚ Prep time 30 min, total time 20 min 🍳 cal/serv: 323 (2 halves)

Stuffed peppers with ground turkey are a delicious and healthy meal option, offering a lighter alternative to traditional ground beef versions. They are relatively easy to prepare, making them a great choice for weeknight dinners.

Ingredients

- 5 medium green, red or yellow peppers
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 - ¼ pounds extra-lean ground turkey (99% lean)
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 - ¾ cups shredded cheddar-flavored lactose-free or other cheese
- 1 - ½ cups soft bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh parsley
- ¼ teaspoon paprika

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 325°. Cut peppers lengthwise in half; remove seeds. Place in a 15x10x1-in. pan coated with cooking spray.
2. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook and crumble turkey with onion, garlic and seasonings over medium-high heat until meat is no longer pink, 6-8 minutes. Cool slightly. Stir in tomatoes, cheese, bread crumbs and parsley.
3. Fill pepper halves with turkey mixture. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake, uncovered, until filling is heated through and peppers are tender, 20-25 minutes. If desired, sprinkle with additional parsley just before serving. **Diabetic Exchanges:** 5 lean meat, 2 vegetable, 1 starch, 1/2 fat.