

Cherokee Boys Club, Inc.

Dedicated Service since 1932

Club Motto: "By Prayer & By Work"



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



828-497-9101



www.cherokeeboysclub.com

P.O. Box 507
52 Boys Club Loop
Cherokee, NC 28719

Mission Statement:

"To Inspire and prepare individuals and families to reach their full potential, while embracing and honoring traditional Cherokee values."



Leadership

Board of Directors

President- Aaron Bradley

Vice President- Donnie Owle

Secretary- Tagan Crowe

Assistant Secretary- Tiffani Reed

Board Member- Tara Reed-Cooper

Business Member- Doris Johnson

Business Member- Bradley Letts

CHS Student Representative- Tayvin Bark

Tribal Council Representative- Perry Shell

Department Managers

General Manager- Greg Owle	828-359-5509
Finance Director- Rhonica Via	828-359-5504
Human Resources- Tiffani Reed	828-359-5506
IT- Terry Bradley	828-359-5505
Bus & Truck- Aaron Bradley	828-359-5585
Service Department- Donnie Owle	828-359-5591
Construction & Facilities- Sean Lawless	828-359-5521
RKLI Director- Tonya Carroll	828-359-5545
Cherokee Children's Home- Sharon Dills	828-359-5576
Child Development- Leslie McEntire	828-359-5570

History

The Cherokee Boys Farm Club was established at the Cherokee Boarding School in 1932. Two years later the Cherokee Motor Club was founded. When the Boarding school closed in 1954, the Cherokee Day School continued the two clubs. The clubs were combined in 1958 and continued to grow. On May 4, 1964, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians incorporated the Cherokee Boys Club as a non-profit, self-supporting Tribal Enterprise. The club's mission has concentrated on the core needs of the Cherokee community and has been very successful in implementing programs and services to that end. The Cherokee Boys Club's specific objectives have been our top priority and pursuing these goals in a fiscally responsible approach has enabled the club to prosper for the past 90 years.

Club Objectives

- To provide educational opportunities, vocational and leadership training for Cherokee People, especially the youth.
- To provide employment opportunities for Tribal members.
- To provide services for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and surrounding communities.
- To provide a Children's Home and services to children and families. Today, all divisions of the club combine their efforts to address these goals.

Revenue

The Cherokee Boys Club earns its revenue by providing services for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Performance of these services provides full-time employment for our staff and on-the-job training for Cherokee Youth. All funds earned by the Club are used for operational expenses, repayment of debt incurred for purchase of Club buildings and equipment, and for projects for Cherokee Youth.

Operations

The Club needs and receives donations for the operation of the Children's Home and Child Care Services projects, vocational training and scholarship programs. All other operations of the club are self-supporting. The Club borrowed money from financial institutions to purchase all Club vehicles, equipment, and to pay for the construction of most Club buildings. The Club repays all funds as well as interest on all funds borrowed.

Membership Criteria

Any person who is:

- Enrolled Member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
- A graduate of Cherokee Central Schools
- Current or Former Employee of Cherokee Boys Club with at least two (2) consecutive years of vested employment.

All of the above must be 18 Years of age or older

Frell Owl Award

2025 marks the 38th year that the Cherokee Boys Club Board of Directors will publicly recognize a person or persons with the Frell Owl Award.



The Frell Owl Award is given to those who best exemplify the character and accomplishments of the late Mr. Frell Owl, Cherokee Educator and Civic Leader; and to those who have significantly contributed to the welfare of the Cherokee children and families.

Anyone may submit a nomination. Any person or persons may be nominated with the exception of current Cherokee Boys Club Board Members.

Past recipients include:

- John Crowe
- Stella Kanott
- the Scar Crowe Family
- Ray Kinsland
- Pearl & John Reagan
- Betty Crisp
- Jerri Kinsland
- Mary Chiltoskey
- Dora Reed
- Marie Junaluska
- Sharon & David Crowe
- Ernestine Walkingstick
- Jody Adams
- Gary Maney
- Mary Sneed
- Mary Mantooth
- David McCoy
- Glenda Crowe
- Denise Ballard
- David McQueen
- Skooter McCoy
- Johnson "Booger" Arch
- Kathy Wolfe
- Carmaleta Monteith
- Roy Lambert
- Sandi Owle
- Lana Lambert
- Catherine Blythe Sanders
- Will Poolaw
- Lou Johnson
- Wilbur Paul
- Alan & Mary Jane Smith
- Isaac "Ike" Long
- Michael Yannette
- Mianna "Peaches" Squirrell
- Lloyd Carl Owle
- Butch & Louise Goings
- Jennifer Thompson & the Physical Therapy Staff at CIHA

Frell Owl Award Recipients

Sheyahshe Littledave & Ahli-sha "Osh" Stephens

Co-Hosts of We Are Resilient: A Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) True Crime Podcast



It is with deep respect and admiration that this nomination is submitted for Sheyahshe Littledave and Ahli-sha "Osh" Stephens, co-hosts of We are Resilient: A MMIP True Crime Podcast, for the Frell Owl Award. This award, honoring the late Frell Owl, Cherokee educator, leader, and advocate for children and families, recognizes individuals whose service and character reflect his enduring commitment to community, education, and cultural strength. Through their tireless work in advocacy, storytelling, and mentorship, Sheyahshe and Osh exemplify the very values Frell Owl championed.

Since launching We Are Resilient in November 2021, the pair have built a movement rooted in truth, awareness, and healing. Their podcast shines a light on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) crisis. This issue continues to touch Indigenous families, including those within the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Over the past four years, their efforts have reached listeners in 139 countries and more than 7,000 U.S. cities, covering over 120 cases. Each story honors victims and their families while promoting education, safety, and action to protect future generations.

We Are Resilient is a true grassroots effort funded entirely by the hosts themselves. Every aspect of the podcast, from in-depth research to editing, social media outreach, and educational presentations, is handled personally by Sheyahshe and Osh. They receive no financial compensation for this work; their dedication stems purely from passion and purpose. Despite balancing full-time careers and active family lives with children in sports, they continue to commit countless hours to advocacy and education, proving their genuine devotion to the well-being of Indigenous families.

Their dedication to Cherokee youth and families extends far beyond the podcast. At Cherokee Central Schools, they led age-appropriate discussions on MMIP and safety, empowering students to look out for one another and themselves. Their educational impact also includes numerous university presentations, including at Western Carolina University, where they continue to inspire the next generation of advocates and storytellers.

Note from Osh and Sheyahshe

Most of what we rely on to tell these stories and bring awareness comes from public sources, articles, reports, and whatever details we're able to track down. We always do our best with that, but we also know those sources don't tell the full story of who someone was or what they meant to the people who loved them.

Our goal has always been to shed light, bring awareness, and honor our relatives. As Indigenous women, this work is personal to us. These stories come from our communities, our people, and we try to carry that responsibility with care.

So if you're a friend or family member, whether it's someone we've already covered or someone whose story still needs to be told, and you ever feel comfortable sharing more about your loved one, we'd be honored to have you join us on the show or reach out privately. No pressure at all. Just an invitation whenever the time feels right. Your voice matters more than anything we can find online.

Contact us:

weareresilientpod@gmail.com



Frell Owl Award Recipients

Their advocacy has reached national audiences as well. In 2025 alone, they were invited to speak with the Women of the Atlanta Braves organization, presenting to more than 100 attendees on the MMIP crisis and Indigenous resilience. On May 5, the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, they appeared on native America Calling to elevate Indigenous voices and experiences. In March, Native News Online, a publication reaching millions annually, featured their work, amplifying their message to Native and non-Native audiences alike. In September, they participated in the “From Darkness into Hope” event in Cherokee, focusing on mental health and suicide prevention awareness, where they distributed information on MMIP and shared ways to promote community safety.

The following month, in October, they spoke at the Purple Lotus Day Domestic Violence Awareness event, emphasizing the connection between MMIP and domestic violence and helping promote healing through education. This event inspired Sheyahshe to cosponsor a resolution during October’s Annual Council, alongside the EBCI Domestic Violence Program, officially designating the third Thursday of every October as Purple Lotus Day to ensure ongoing awareness and recognition within the Tribe.

Beyond their shared achievements, both women bring remarkable individual strengths to their work. Osh is a respected mentor and coach who has guided countless young EBCI athletes to both personal and team success, including multiple state championships. She was recently named Girls Cross Country SMC Coach of the Year, a testament to her leadership, discipline, and heart for youth development.

Sheyahshe is a domestic violence survivor who believes in the transformative power of storytelling. A self-published author of three indigenous children’s books, including one that teaches children about the Beloved men and women of the EBCI, she uses her writing to preserve culture and instill pride in young readers. Her published works have been featured by NPR and National Geographic, reflecting her ability to bring Indigenous stories and perspectives to national audiences with authenticity and grace.

Together, Sheyahshe and Osh represent the strength and spirit of Cherokee women leading with courage, compassion, and cultural pride. Their partnership has united two powerful EBCI voices to create meaningful change locally, nationally, and globally. Through their advocacy, mentorship, and storytelling, they honor the legacy of Frell Owl by uplifting Cherokee families, empowering youth, and ensuring that the stories of Indigenous people continue to be told.

For their outstanding dedication to education, community welfare, and cultural advocacy, I nominate Sheyahshe and Osh for the 2025 Frell Owl Award.

–Ahinawake Littledave





Scholarships



Hornbuckle-Bennes Scholarship

The Hornbuckle-Bennes Scholarship Fund was established in 1991, by the Cherokee Boys Club, Inc. Board of Directors to provide scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who are furthering their education at a four or two-year college/university, vocational or technical school. This was done so to honor two leading citizens of Western North Carolina, Mr. Vernon M. Hornbuckle and Mr. Joseph M. Bennes.

These two men contributed meaningful support to the work of the Cherokee Boys Club during their lifetime.

Mr. Hornbuckle served as President of the Cherokee Board of Directors, was an employee of the Cherokee Boys Club and Cherokee Central Schools System, and at the time of his death was assistant director of the Indian Action Program.

Mr. Bennes was a pioneer of school bus safety in Western North Carolina. He helped train bus drivers for 16 years and assisted in educational programs throughout Cherokee, as well as the Western North Carolina area.

Ray Kinsland, Late General Manager of the Cherokee Boys Club, Inc. stated that "we know of no higher honor to bestow on these two outstanding citizens than through this scholarship fund."

Bertha Saunooke Memorial Scholarship

The Bertha Saunooke Memorial Scholarship was established in 1994 in memory of Bertha Saunooke and is administered in the same manner as the Hornbuckle-Bennes Scholarship, to provide graduating high school seniors who are enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who are attending a four-year college/university. Priority is given to students who are enrolled in private or out-of-town schools and to students who have unmet needs beyond Tribal Education Awards. Unlike the Hornbuckle-Bennes Scholarship, students who are attending GED classes, truck driving, continuing education class or remedial/transitional classes will not be considered for the Bertha Saunooke Memorial Scholarship.

Scholarship Recipients

Bertha Saunooke Memorial Scholarship



Name: Seshadri Pratama

Graduated From: Rabun-Gap

Nacoochee School

School Attending: Georgetown College

**Major: Chemistry with Pre-med Track
and Spanish Minor**



Name: Kiri Hill

Graduated From: Cherokee High School

**School Attending: University of
Minnesota**

**Major: Native American and Indigenous
Studies**



Name: Loshi Ward

Graduated From: Cherokee High School

**School Attending: Johnson & Wales
University**

Major: Psychology



Name: Amila Lossie

Graduated From: Cherokee High School

School Attending: Montreat College

**Major: Business Administration and
Marketing**

Scholarship Recipients

Hornbuckle-Bennes Scholarship



Name: Lillian Blythe-Ramos

Graduated From: Cherokee High School

School Attending: Brevard College

Major: Elementary Education



Name: Luke Smith

Graduated From: Cherokee High School

School Attending: Brevard College

Major: Exercise Science



Name: Isabelle Fourkiller-Raby

Graduated From: Cherokee High School

School Attending: UNC Wilmington

Major: Psychology

Administration



The Executive Division of the Administration Department is made up of the General Manager and Executive Assistant. Both provide oversight of all Boys Club operations.

In addition to general oversight, they also assist with preparation and maintenance of contracts, board meetings which includes maintaining all resolutions, Boys Club public relations, and liaison services between programs served by the Boys Club, which includes the Cherokee Central Schools, Cherokee Preservation Foundation, Tribal Leadership, and the many programs of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians.

The General Manager and his staff, with their combined experience, also provide support and guidance for all the Boys Club department managers. A monthly meeting is held with department managers to discuss their needs and concerns and to give them the opportunity to circulate ideas and strategies. They also provide updates and their departments activities as the Boys Club moves forward together. A monthly Board of Directors meeting is held to present resolutions and concerns of the Boys Club overall. The department managers may attend the Board of Directors meetings to answer questions that they may have about different departments and their activities.

The Boys Club Administrative Department includes the Finance Director, Assistant Finance Director, Human Resources Manager and Human Resources Assistant, IT Manager and IT Assistant, Grants Coordinator, Payroll Officer, two Accounts Payable a Accounts Receivable Processor and a Receptionist/Switchboard Operator.

The whole Administrative Department provides finance and accounting, IT Technology, and HR/Payroll services for all Cherokee Boys Club, Inc. Departments and the Cherokee Central School System. The Administrative Department strives to operate with efficiency and professionalism. The Boys Club also serves as a fiscal agent for the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, as a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Detailed audits are performed by independent certified public accountants each year and annual reports are available upon request.

Cherokee Central Schools

Cherokee Central Schools Administration

Superintendent- Consuela Girty

Associate Superintendent- Dr. Beverly Payne

Human Resources Director- Heather Driver

Finance Director- Deborah Kinsland Foerst

Empower our students, preserve our nation, and ensure our future is the vision of Cherokee Central Schools. On the 14-acre campus nestled beside the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Cherokee Central Schools lives its mission daily. The district, in partnership with its families and community, develops lifelong learners by providing challenging educational experiences that empower students for cultural stewardship, civic responsibility, future readiness, and academic success in a safe and healthy learning environment.



At the PK/Hope Center, our youngest students participated in an embryology project in partnership with the EBCI Cooperative Extension Office. Each PK classroom incubated and hatched baby chicks! PK students also participated in a Graduation Walk in May 2025 with the CHS Seniors. Students at Cherokee Elementary School facilitated parent conferences in January. In the spring, CES students performed thier annual musical. Cherokee Middle School began its Esports club. CMS grade 6 students took a trip to see the King Tut Exhibit at the Biltmore Estate. Our CTE department hosted a CTE Fair for Cherokee High School students. CHS Lady Braves won their second consecutive state championship in basketball. Special Education students participated in Special Olympics in the spring. CES and CHS students participated in Kuwohi Days in partnership with the National Park Service and the Center for Native Health. Cherokee Central Schools hosted two STEM-E events for students in the region in the spring, and in the fall, CCS hosted a regional professional conference for teachers, paraprofessional, and administrators from the far western school districts.



Cherokee Central Schools



The school district enrolls approximately 1400 students, PK-12, and employs approximately 400 faculty and staff. The graduation rate was 76%, The district has been accredited by Cogniz for a number of years with its most recent quality assurance review occurring in 2022.

Cherokee Central Schools enjoys a strong partnership with the Cherokee Boys Club, Inc. (CBC). The CBC is responsive to the changing needs of the students at Cherokee Central Schools, and it works collaboratively with the CCS administration in numerous ways. As the districts fiscal agent, CBC provides support to the districts finance department, including grants management. The two organizations' Human Resources departments work closely to ensure that our staff are supported. And the Cherokee Boys Club provides daily bus transportation and bus service for CCS extracurricular activities.



Cherokee Central Schools- School Board
Chair- Dr. Jennifer Thompson
Co-Vice Chair- Tara Reed-Cooper
Co-Vice Chair- Melanie Lambert
Secretary- Kristina Hyatt
Roberta Toineeta
Micah Swimmer
Council Representative- Michael Stamper

Bus & Truck Department



2025 like every other year has been yet another busy year. Here at the Bus & Truck Department we have twenty-four buses that run bus routes for Cherokee Central Schools. We have eight charter buses, one twenty-eight passenger bus, and two fifteen passenger vans that we rent out for traveling.

We now have fifteen electric school buses. We are waiting for five more, that will be Gen two. Gen two buses will have motors on the back axles that make it better to pull the mountainous terrains we have here around Cherokee. Then our bus fleet will be almost fully electric

Phase one of our solar grid is completed. Phase two should begin soon. This covers school buses and is hooked on the Eton chargers.



Every year, before the start of a new school year, the bus department goes to Cherokee Central Schools and does practice runs of how student pick-up and drop off will go for the current school year. The bus department also does bus safety training with kindergarten through fifth grade. This is where we go over the rules of the school bus and show them how to safely exit a bus in the event of an emergency while on the bus. This year, something Ray Kinsland started was brought back, all students received an oatmeal creme pie after completing Bus Safety Training.



Bus & Truck Department

This year Cherokee Boys Club got invited to go to New Kituwah Academy and go over bus safety with all of New Kituwah Academy Students on the first day of school Aug 7, 2025. What a great way to start the new school year and a great partnership between the Cherokee Boys Club and New Kituwah Academy.



We have four over the road trucks that we have going as far north as New Jersey and South of Georgia. We have five trash trucks running to Georgia two times a day. During 2025 we were able to purchase two new trucks and a new trailer. We also now have an electric truck that is used for Solid Waste Hauling.



We welcomed several new faces this year.

Bus Drivers:

**Timothy Guest, Darrell Mills,
Jimmy Ferris, Jamie Welch,
Bobby Hayes & Chace Andrews**

Truck Drivers:

**Timothy Guest- Trash
Carol Ball- Over the Road
David Wiggins- Over the Road**



We had one bus driver retire this year, Jason Owle retired after 33 years of service. Jason started working here at the Cherokee Boys Club in May of 1992 as a Temporary Trash helper, right after graduating High school.

In January of 1994, he became a School Bus Trainee and continued to keep being a school bus driver from that point on. He additionally acquired his Class A certification to be a trash Helper and became a Full Time Bus & Truck Driver in July, 2000. He retired from the Cherokee Boys Club in December of 2025.

We hope he enjoys his retirement and thank him for his many years of service to the Cherokee Boys Club & to this community.

Cherokee Children's Home

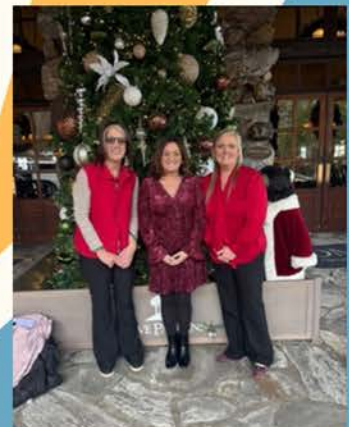


The Cherokee Children's Home has continued to grow. This past year we have served 36 residents, which was an increase from the previous year. Although we have been operating at full capacity most of the time, we will always remain committed to providing the high-quality care that our residents deserve.

Our 41st Annual Golf Tournament was a tremendous success, bringing in a net total of \$39,813 after expenses. In addition to the golf tournament, we held a bake sale and hosted a softball tournament to help raise funds for our annual beach trip for the residents at CCH. Although we planned to host a softball tournament, weather forced us to cancel the event.



At Christmas time, we received tremendous support from our local sponsors. We are truly grateful to be part of such a caring and generous community. We hosted our annual Christmas party at Camp Living Water in December, where our staff, their families, and our residents enjoyed a wonderful evening together. This event is one we look forward to each year. as it allows us to welcome community partners including tribal council members, the CBC Board members, the General Manager and others.



Cherokee Children's Home

Throughout the year, we participated in several events, including Christmas parades in Cherokee, Swain County and Jackson County. Our admin staff also took part in the Agelink Halloween Trunk-or-Treating event. In addition, we joined the Child Abuse Awareness Walk with our local FSP program and attended multiple vacation bible schools and summer camps within the community throughout the summer. We also worked to strengthen our community involvement by helping operate concession stands at local gyms during youth basketball season.



Many of our residents have been involved in extracurricular activities this year, including Little League, Travel League Softball, a local traveling basketball league and even competing in the Junior Miss Cherokee Pageant at the Cherokee Indian Fair.



Our annual beach trip took place in June, where we took our residents to the Outer Banks for a memorable experience, one they may not have gotten otherwise.



We continue to seek out community service opportunities to help our residents learn the value of giving back, especially as our community gives so much to us. It has been another great year to report about here at CCH, we look forward to what the future holds!

Child Development



Celebrations and Community Involvement:

In 2025, the Cherokee Boys Club Childcare Department demonstrated strong community engagement through participation in two major outreach programs: the Week of the Young Child and the Autism Awareness Project. Staff from both Agelink and Snowbird centers were actively involved, contributing donations, organizing information booths, and offering games and prizes for children.

These initiatives enriched our teaching methods and provided valuable resources for parents and guardians.

We celebrated and honored families through special events, including Mother's Day and Father's Day meals prepared by our kitchen staff. Our Family Partnership Coordinator collaborated with the kitchen team to recognize various National Food Days, such as Apple Pie Day, Gingerbread Day, Nacho Day, Hotdog Day, BBQ Sandwich Day, and Hot Chocolate Day, much to the delight of our children.

Holiday celebrations were marked by family dinners or festive parties. For Thanksgiving, our kitchen staff prepared over 200 traditional meals for families across both centers, with additional "to-go" options for busy parents and guardians. On Veteran's day, we expressed gratitude to veterans with care packages and children's art projects.

Cultural enrichment was a priority, as seen on Cherokee Speakers Day, when community Cherokee language speakers visited to share words and stories. Snowbird partnered with Cherokee Language learners who read to our children in Cherokee and provided books for our students.

Annual events such as Trunk or Treat and participation in the Cherokee Fair Parade (where we earned Second Place) strengthened community bonds. Both centers conducted successful fundraising campaigns, ensuring every child receives a Christmas gift from Santa Claus.



Staffing and Enrollment:

Both Agelink and Snowbird facilities have become essential resources within our communities, as evidenced by the consistently high demand for enrollment. We maintain a substantial waiting list of children eager to join our programs. This year, we celebrated the graduation of one student from Agelink and eleven from Snowbird, all of whom will be transitioning to kindergarten. It is truly an honor that so many families place their trust in us each day to care for and educate their children. As is typical, we experience a significant transition of 4 and 5-year-olds as they advance to kindergarten.

Staffing remains a top priority for our centers. Currently, Agelink teachers are working extended hours, with administrators providing additional classroom support as needed. We are actively recruiting new team members to meet the needs of our community. This year, we welcomed two experienced Behavior Assistants to support both Agelink and Snowbird centers. Additionally, we have strengthened our leadership team with the addition of a Family Partnership Coordinator and a Staff/Education Coordinator. Despite these positive developments, teacher turnover continues to be a challenge, particularly at Agelink, and recruitment efforts are ongoing. Our objective is to maintain three teachers per classroom to ensure optimal child-to-staff ratios.

Child Development

Our Family Partnership has played a vital role in enriching classroom experiences by providing materials for special activities such as lemonade stands and picnics, and by coordinating engaging events for National Shark Week. The kitchen staff has contributed to a positive atmosphere by preparing special treats for occasions such as National Chili Hotdog Day and National Ice Cream Day.

Behavioral Technicians are present in every classroom, diligently teaching breathing and self-regulation techniques to promote a positive and supportive learning environment. The Education Specialist continues to collaborate with teachers to ensure that lesson plans are well-prepared and curriculum standards are consistently met. We are proud to announce that three staff members have recently completed their Childcare Credentials.

Our Compliance Specialist works diligently to uphold our high standards, while the Fiscal Department is actively seeking new grant opportunities and has successfully completed our most recent Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) Grant application.



Facility Improvements:

In 2025, the Cherokee Boys Club Childcare Department initiated significant facility enhancements, supported by Hurricane Ian Disaster Relief (HIDR) funding. We began the planning phase in collaboration with LS3P Architects and contracted Kelly Andrews Building as our Construction Oversight Manager. Multiple meetings with LS3P Architects have focused on the development of additional classrooms and office spaces at Snowbird, as well as the remodeling of Agelink's school-age area and the addition of a multipurpose room.

Monthly consultations with the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) have provided critical guidance for programming activities and the remodeling process. LS3P has developed initial design drawings and initiated the bidding process for new additions. Although initial bids exceeded our budget, we are actively revising the design and will establish a new project start date for our childcare facility. The ongoing remodel at Agelink is progressing well and is expected to provide much-needed space to accommodate more children and enhance program delivery.

Our partnership with the Consulting Group (CCR) continues to be invaluable. Together, we finalized updates to our Parent Handbook and developed a new Personnel Policy Document. CCR's weekly on-site presence ensures expert support for leadership development, internal budget oversight, and daily operational needs.



Child Development

Staff Development:

Staff development remains a cornerstone of our department's success. In 2025, we completed the CCDF Program Plan for 2026–2028, with four staff members traveling to Miami in March to finalize the plan. The updated plan places increased emphasis on quality improvement initiatives.

We celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week by providing daily tokens of gratitude to our staff.

Additionally, Agelink staff were treated to a meal from Granny's Kitchen, while Snowbird staff enjoyed lunch from Lynn's Place. To promote well-being and team cohesion, staff participated in two Mental Health Days: one at Anakeesta in Tennessee, and another featuring bowling, fellowship, and lunch. These events provided valuable opportunities for team building and relaxation.

A new "New Hire Orientation" program has been implemented, consisting of a comprehensive week-long introduction. The Staff Education Specialist meets with all new employees to review Division of Child Development requirements and internal childcare policies. New hires then spend five days observing in classrooms before assuming their roles, resulting in improved understanding and confidence.

A key component of our staff development strategy is ensuring that all new employees are promptly enrolled in the North Carolina Early Childhood Credential I & II courses. In accordance with requirements set by the North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education (NCDCDEE), any staff member who has been with us for over six months has either completed, is currently participating in, or is preparing to enroll in these college-level courses. This commitment ensures that our team not only meets, but frequently exceeds, the mandated annual training hours. Our staff consistently demonstrates dedication to professional growth and quality improvement, going above and beyond to fulfill and surpass state expectations for early childhood education.



Construction & Facilities Department

2025 was another busy year for the Construction and Facilities Department at the Cherokee Boys Club. After breaking ground and doing most of our site preparation work for the Housing Improvement Program (HIP) Birdtown project at the site of the old Norman Maney Recreation Park in 2024, we started construction on the first eight homes in Phase I of the project. Two of the eight have been completed. And we are in various stages of construction on the remaining six. Ultimately the project, once completed, will have upwards of 25 homes.



The Construction and Facilities Department volunteers every year for the Preservation Foundation's Cherokee Day of Caring. This year our crews helped pour a concrete sidewalk in the Tow String Community and offered up our carpentry services in the Big Y community.



The Cherokee Boys Club Campus buildings require our services throughout the year. We helped with the plumbing, electrical hook-up and underpinning of the new Agelink modular building. We coordinated the repairs and replacement of several HVAC units of various campus buildings. And we installed kitchen cabinets for the Garage Department's break room.

We served the Tribal community at large by doing various private jobs. We did a total roof replacement, several concrete sidewalks, modular underpinnings, and gutter installations and repairs.

Service Department

The Service Department, consisting of 11 technicians, maintains the Boys Club fleet of 110 buses, trucks, and coaches.

The technicians provide all services, repairs, maintenance, parts, paint, body work and vehicle inspections. The staff operates out of a 16,000 square foot garage providing areas to work on larger vehicles like RV's, tractor trailers and buses. We do maintenance and body work for all Boys club vehicles, EBCI programs, and for the public.



The Boys Club operates a full-service paint and body shop which includes any insurance work for tribal programs, and the public. Our state-of-the-art paint booth is large enough to put a charter coach bus inside, the largest in the area.

The Boys Club has an agreement with the CDOT to provide roadside mowing and trimming for the reservation roads and back roads, including tribal roads in Robbinsville and Murphy. This agreement covers over 400 miles of roadways.



Service Department

The fuel department offers delivery of K-1 and heating oil to the public and the tribe. EBCI Senior citizens and disabled members of the tribe's home fueling is provided by the Boys Club through MOA's developed with Tribal Programs.



Fuel pumps for the Cherokee Boys Club and Tribal vehicles are also handled under this department.

The service department Manager has been working with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Natural Resource Office and Cherokee Preservation Foundation to get grant funding for implementing charging infrastructure for the electric buses with the help of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and EPA. This funding has also purchased 15 electric buses and an electric 18-wheeler. Our technicians are level three certified for repairing these buses and truck. A solar canopy is being used as a cost-efficient alternative for charging electric vehicles. Soon we will have a micro-grid on campus which will enable vehicles to charge off the grid.



Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute



The Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute (RKLI) serves as an umbrella for multiple culturally based leadership programs supported by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. Our mission is to create a community of lifelong, selfless leaders deeply rooted in Cherokee culture. Our vision is Kituwah people living as Kituwah people: a community of lifelong, selfless leaders focused on preserving and practicing Cherokee culture for the betterment of our people.

All RKLI programming is grounded in the seven Cherokee core values: group harmony, strong individual character, educating the children, honoring the past, sense of place, spirituality, and sense of humor.

RKLI Staff List

Tonya E. Carroll– Department Manager

Martha Wolfe– Administrative Assistant

Tara McCoy– Leadership Specialist, *Duyugodv'i Right Path Adult Leadership Program*, *Dhʏsqʏ TGʊʌm (Kituwah Ways)*, *ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ*, and *ᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ* *Native Plant Program (ages 18+)*

Levi West– Leadership Specialist, *Jones–Bowman Leadership Award Program (EBCI College Undergraduates)*

Meshay Nuna Long– Leadership Specialist, *Cherokee Youth Council and Youth Cultural Exchange Program*

Raylen Bark– Grants & Fundraising Specialist



Cherokee Youth Council (CYC)

- Serves EBCI youth in grades 7–12 through year-round, culturally based leadership programming.
- CYC members participated in the UNITY National Conference, engaging in workshops on youth leadership, identity, advocacy, and teamwork alongside Native youth from across the country in San Diego, CA.
- CYC members also engaged in an intertribal youth exchange with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians by attending a youth conference in Philadelphia, MS.
- Monthly meetings included hands-on cultural learning such as carving, traditional games, stickball education, sustainability practices, and teamwork activities.
- CYC members led environmental responsibility efforts through Go Green projects and outreach at the Spring Garden Fair.
- CYC completed a community service project supporting a community elder by getting her raised garden beds installed at her home.



Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute

Youth Cultural Exchange Program (YCEP)

- Completed a 2025 cultural exchange traveling to Vancouver, Canada; Suquamish, Washington; and the Seattle area.
- Cultural preparation emphasized Cherokee language introductions, traditional crafts, and stick game.
- Participants learned about traditional ecological knowledge including traditional fishing practices.
- Youth supported travel through a participant-led coffee fundraiser.
- Concluded the program with a community presentation sharing reflections on leadership growth and culture exchange.



Jones- Bowman Leadership Award Program

- Supported 9 Eastern band of Cherokee Indians college fellows during the 2024-2025 program year.
- Fellows developed and implemented individual leadership plans rooted in Cherokee values and personal academic and career goals.
- Leadership retreats focused on identity development, Cherokee core values, leadership styles, goal setting, and mentor-fellow relationship building.
- Each fellow completed at least 40 volunteer service hours supporting community organizations and initiatives and completed a group project with residents at Tsali Care.
- Completed group service projects benefiting elders, Cherokee High School, and the Cherokee Dialysis Center.



Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute

Duyugodv'i Right Path Adult Leadership Program

- Adult cohort completed a year-long, culturally based leadership program.
- Monthly sessions covered general leadership topics including Cherokee genealogy, sense of place, leadership styles, ethics, and servant leadership.
- Participants explored wellness, historic trauma, stress and coping strategies, and healing-centered leadership practices. Cultural learning included Cherokee history, site visits, art, humor, storytelling, and traditional knowledge.
- Sponsored two free community learning events extending leadership education beyond the cohort: Zebadiah No Fire Stand Up Comedy and Dr. Natalie Welch "Girls in Sports".
- Completed a group project celebrating Cherokee culture and art with vendors and classes at the Museum of the Cherokee People in July 2025.
- Celebrated graduation at the Kituwah Mound Pavilion for 10 participants.



Global Indigenous Engagement- WIPCE 2025

- 36 total participants traveled to Aotearoa (New Zealand) as part of the delegation.
- 30 participants attended sessions at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education.
- 25 community members were funded by the Harrah's Cherokee Tribal Scholarship Fund through RKLI.
- Conference learning focused on Indigenous education, language revitalization, leadership development, workforce development, and cultural sustainability.
- Participants are required to complete a group project in 2026 utilizing what they learned at the conference.





2025 Financials

2025 Financial Summary Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025



Revenue:

General Fund: \$2,910,842
Cherokee Central Schools: \$48,334,230
Social Service Fund: \$5,771,004
Total Government Funds: \$57,016,076

Revenue (Non-GAAP):

Enterprise Fund: \$9,490,584
Internal Service Fund: \$1,282,894
Trust & Custodial Funds: \$760,745
Total Non-GAAP Funds: \$11,534,223



Expenses:

General Fund: \$2,764,331
Cherokee Central Schools: \$47,508,017
Social Service Fund: \$7,993,197
Total Government Funds: \$58,265,545

Expenses (Non-GAAP):

Enterprise Fund: \$11,049,806
Internal Service Fund: \$201,739
Trust & Custodial Funds: \$506,388
Total Non-GAAP Funds: \$11,757,933



In Memory of Past/Present Employees

Past/Present Employees who we lost in 2025



Ray Anthony McCoy

Date of Hire: June 20, 2016

End of Service: April 23, 2025

Date Passed: April 23, 2025

Ray McCoy dedicated 8 years of service to the Cherokee Boys Club, doing everything from Security, roadside mowing, and working with the bus department. Ray always had a great attitude and was always willing to get started early in the morning. He was a great motivation for others who worked alongside him. Carrying a big smile and funny rhetoric, Ray made the Cherokee Boys Club a much better place to work.



