



Being Alive

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FIRST in the Nation

*Med School for
Cherokee Nation*

Volume 1 Issue 14 • November

In rural Oklahoma, a brand new medical school sits in the Cherokee Nation, training Nation members to become physicians at Nation clinics.

Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine at the Cherokee Nation (COMCN) is the first tribally associated medical school in the country, and they just had their inaugural class after opening this fall.

Bill John Baker, the former principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, is widely credited with spurring the project as far as it has come, which even included the decision to sell the Nation's private jet to help begin the new investment in a Cherokee Nation medical system, which first drew the attention of Oklahoma State University (OSU) to the idea of opening a medical school on reservation land.

"After we were removed from tribal lands and there were no teachers, we invested our treasury into teachers," said Bill John Baker, according to MedScape. "This is a natural progression. Just as our ancestors grew their own teachers 150 years ago, we want to grow our own doctors."

Indeed less than half of 1% of physicians in the country are eligible for tribal citizenship, but before growing their own doctors, Bill John Baker refurbished rural Nation clinics and financed the largest tribally owned outpatient facility in the country; [a stunning four-story, 469,000-square-foot piece of architecture](#) at W.W. Hastings Hospital campus, offering optometry, audiology, physical rehabilitation, dental, behavioral health, radiology, lab, and pharmacy services.

"The Cherokee Nation is excited to open this beautiful new facility that allows us to serve more of our citizens, and offer more services than they ever had before," Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. said in October at the grand opening.

"This facility is a real game changer that will improve our overall health system and is a huge investment in our local economy. It is a blessing for me to see former Chief Bill John Baker's vision come to fruition because of what it means for our citizens."

OSU and the tribes take notice

Bill John Baker was still the Principal Chief when OSU approached the Nation with the idea of opening a medical school.

FIRST in the Nation
Med School for
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(Continued)

“It was a match made in heaven,” Baker [said](#). “We’ve been investing in our young people for quite some time, sending them to medical school at Harvard and Stanford and all over the country, but when we saw an opportunity to have a medical school right here and not have to ship our kids off, that made perfect sense.”

The Cherokee Nation general fund paid \$40 million for the 84,000-square-foot facility, the construction of which, while being delayed to spring 2021 by the pandemic, is nearing completion. Like the outpatient facility, the building is striking to look at, and will marry modern medicine with traditional healing practices in both service and decor.

Interior art and decoration will be provided by Cherokee artisans, and the landscaping for the building will be exclusively medicinal plants used by Cherokee medicine men and women for generations such as yarrow, blue indigo, rattlesnake master, coneflower, and elderberry.

While the school sits on Cherokee land, the agreement to create it was supported by four other tribal nations: the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Seminole. All five tribes are providing funds for scholarships and clinical rotation sites within their tribal clinic systems.

Being a state school, COMCN isn’t beholden to train Cherokee or Chickasaw physicians, however 22% of the inaugural school identify as Native American, whether Cherokee or otherwise.

In an effort to keep them connected with their communities and their heritage, COMCN is preparing residency programs in Nation clinics and volunteer programs to be able to work and study traditional healing medicine and its benefits.

“We’re hoping an unwritten curriculum will emerge from the healing practices of the Cherokee people,” said Natasha Bray, DO, the school’s associate dean for academic affairs.

The success of these new Cherokee medical facilities involves marrying the future with a rich cultural past, and could go a long way to improving the lives of rural Oklahomites, Cherokee, Choctaw, or Chickasaw alike.

*Seven Ways to Help
Combat Loneliness
This Christmas*

Words by
[Anna Turns](#) November 16, 2020

With limits on social gatherings in place this December, more people than usual may find themselves feeling lonely during the festive period. This is what you can do to help yourself and others feel less isolated

It is the time of year when people are normally getting into the Christmas spirit. But with limits on gatherings in place across the UK and other nations, the countdown to the festive period has been somewhat muted this year.

According to the [Campaign to End Loneliness](#), there were nine million lonely people in the UK before the pandemic - a figure that is likely to have risen significantly since restrictions came in.

Fortunately, there are many ways we can connect with each other over the coming weeks. From writing to strangers to volunteering for a charity, here's how you can help combat loneliness this Christmas.

1. Write to a stranger

The mental health support organisation [WarriorKind](#) is connecting lonely individuals via the written word this winter, encouraging participants to share some of the challenges they have faced during lockdown as well as their tips for staying resilient.

“We’re linking people the old fashioned way and using writing as a cathartic therapy to [help people] talk about their mental health to strangers and to get tips and advice from one another, hopefully creating new friendships in the process,” says Sarah Drage, founder of WarriorKind’s Contact for Christmas project.

WarriorKind connects lonely individuals 'the old fashioned way' via the written word.
Image: Green Chameleon

2. Phone a (new) friend

[The Silver Line](#) operates the UK’s only confidential telephone befriending service. It helps connects old people who are experiencing loneliness with volunteers willing to give up their time for a friendly natter.

“The phone is almost universal, personal and a relatively inexpensive way to create social connection,” explains Robin Hewings, director of campaigns, policy and research at the Campaign to End Loneliness. “It’s a two-way thing, but not symmetrical so often one party is much more vulnerable.”

*Seven Ways to Help
Combat Loneliness
This Christmas
(Continued)*

Other organisations also offer befriending opportunities. Visit [Befriending Networks](#) for more information.

3. Become a volunteer

The volunteering landscape looks very different this Christmas due to the pandemic, but there are still many opportunities to help others. The homeless charity [Crisis is looking for volunteers to](#), among other things, lead online activities, make calls to members and even perform live music over Zoom.

There are also nationwide volunteering opportunities with Meals on Wheels, which delivers dishes to people who are unable to purchase or prepare their own meals.

“People who work as volunteers always say to me that they do two things at once,” says Hewings. “They do something practical, but also help people connect and enrich relationships. Being part of the social world around someone can be really valuable.

Despite the pandemic, there are still opportunities to help isolated individuals this Christmas. Image: Andre Ouellet

4. Join an online social club

Bringing together people from all walks of life, [The Cares Family](#) is an intergenerational social club with 18,000 members in London, Liverpool and Manchester.

Hosting anything from quizzes and dancing to group yoga, organisers usually host in-person events, but have moved all jamborees online during the lockdown.

CEO Alex Smith says the social club provides a valuable support network in challenging times. “We’ve seen older people support younger people to feel less anxious about the world, and to gain patience and perspective; and we’ve seen younger people support older people with daily phone calls, friendship and connection to the world,” he says.

5. Jam with others online

During the first lockdown, many online choirs launched to connect people through music. The [Sofa Singers](#) is one of them and continues to bring together hundreds of people online through song. Similarly, the [Benedetti Foundation](#) brings amateur musicians together, teaching people to play instruments in online workshops. Another singing group, [Shared Harmonies](#), runs free, uplifting singing events online. Founder Emily Baylin says the classes “improve confidence, communication and wellbeing through inspirational singing”. So far, more than 300 people have got involved, from the ages of three to 92 and she’s planning special Christmas harmony sessions plus ‘ring and sing services’ for those not online.

Seven Ways

to Help

Combat

Loneliness

This

Christmas

(Continue)

Online choirs and music workshops are a good way to connect with others. Image: Bambi Corro

6. Walk and talk

Taking a stroll with someone is an informal way of making a connection - and it's still permitted under current lockdown rules in England. If you don't know any would-be rambles in the area, you could join a local walking group to connect with other hikers. Alternatively, there are many strollers seeking company on forums such as [Go4awalk.com](https://www.go4awalk.com).

"Walking groups are good for your health, but there's also something wonderful about not directly facing someone that makes it easier to have a conversation," says Hewings.

7. Connect virtually with colleagues

Working from home can be lonely. If you or your colleagues feel disconnected from each other, sign up for a play-based wellbeing and teambuilding session with Jess Shaw, founder of [PACT Creative](https://www.pactcreative.com).

The virtual workshops are fun and a great stress buster, she says. "Play in a group brings us into the present moment with a shared experience," explains Shaw. "It's joyful and we have found that play has been an excellent tool for reaching through the screen and bringing that experience of connection."

Bird-Friendly Turbines

Bird-Friendly Turbines

Birds colliding with turbine blades is one of the main negative effects of onshore wind farms. But a nine-year study at Norway's Smøla wind farm has found that bird strikes can be cut by up to 70 percent simply by painting one blade of a wind turbine black.

Scientists believe this reduces what they call "motion smear", allowing birds to see the three rotating blades. Trondheim-based researcher Dr Roel May says further tests at other wind farms are needed to confirm the findings. *[Source: BBC News]*

Solving the Issue of "Toxic Statues"

Solving the Issue of "Toxic Statues"

The Black Lives Matter and anti-racism movements have sparked angry debate over the public space given to monuments of figures from the colonial past, with some statues toppled or locked away. But a Berlin museum is showing a more thoughtful approach to the issue—by putting contentious statues and symbols on display with the aim of reconsidering history.

The Citadel Museum in the suburb of Spandau includes busts of militaristic Prussian rulers, Nazi-era statues and a 3.5-tonne granite head of Lenin, part of a giant statue unveiled in 1970 in Friedrichshain, a district of East Berlin at that time.

"The goal is to make history tangible," says the museum's director Urte Evert. Visitors are allowed to touch the exhibits, which are mounted at eye level rather than being put on pedestals. "It's an opportunity to not forget this history, to not let it disappear. Instead, we can show that there is anger, sadness, even violence."

Evert says the aim is to contextualise the past. "In the United States and United Kingdom there are discussions about what to do with dismantled memorials. Here we have already found a possible solution for memorials that are, so to speak, toxic... We put them here so that people can still be concerned about them, but in a different context." *[Source: Atlas Obscura, Deutsche Welle]*

Notre-Dame's Bees keep Buzzing Through Crises

Notre-Dame's Bees Keep Buzzing Through Crises

When fire ravaged Paris's Notre-Dame cathedral last year, many presumed that the three colonies of bees living on its sacristy roof had perished. But against all odds, the bees survived the inferno and continued to thrive through the coronavirus lockdown.

"There's nothing wrong with them at all," reports beekeeper Sibyle Moulin, who looks after some 30-45,000 insects in the three hives. "The behaviour of the colonies is perfectly normal."

The beehives are just 30 metres below Notre-Dame's main roof but were untouched by the flames. "The mystery remains," says Moulin. "All that smoke, heat, water..." She kept visiting the bees through the coronavirus crisis. As humans stressed over COVID-19, Moulin reported that the bees were "completely unbothered". *[Source: The Guardian]*

*A 1st Grade Teacher
Arrived Early Every
Day to Teach
English to a
Student. 40 Years
Later, the Student
Finds Her to Thank
Her*

December 2, 2020

An attorney has reunited with her first grade teacher who went above and beyond to help her learn English.

Ana Reyes and Pat Harkleroad / Kentucky Dept. of Education

Ana Reyes, 46, was 5 when she immigrated to the United States, and when she started school, she couldn't speak or read English. Prior to living in America, her family resided in Montevideo, Uruguay and Barcelona, Spain.

"I recall feeling generally confused and out of place during kindergarten when I couldn't speak any English at all," she told [People](#).

Pat Harkleroad, Reyes' first-grade teacher at Wilder Elementary School in Louisville, noticed her struggles and arranged with Reyes' mom to have her come in each day before school for tutoring.

Harkleroad would arrive at school an hour early every morning for a one-on-one lesson with Reyes to teach her English.

"It has always been with me that a teacher came to school early every morning to help me but I did not remember her name," says Reyes. "I've thought about that countless times over the years and discussed it with many friends. I know I was incredibly lucky."

It wasn't until a recent encounter with a friend's daughter that Reyes decided to find and reconnect with Harkleroad.

"Being able to say thank you to someone who changed my life felt so meaningful and uplifting," says Reyes. "And realizing that Mrs. Harkleroad is just as wonderful as I remembered her was very affirming. I know I will never forget the day."

Reyes asked for help on Facebook before being directed to the Kentucky Department of Education, which put her in contact with Harkleroad. During their emotional reunion the pair caught up on the past 40 years while Reyes expressed her gratitude for her former teacher.

"I couldn't believe it," Harkleroad said. "I was so glad that she thought enough of me to want to meet with me again and to think I had a small part in her success."

Reyes went on to graduate from Harvard Law School and now works as an attorney at Williams & Connolly, where she is the co-head of the international disputes practice group. In 2017, she was honored as the Woman Lawyer of the Year by the D.C. Women's Bar Association. Harkleroad, 77, was 36 when she taught Reyes and continued to work in the Wilder classrooms until 2005. She is now retired.

"What Mrs. Harkleroad did for me was extraordinary, and I am positive that she has helped thousands of other children," Reyes added. "When you help one person, you also help all the people that person goes on to help... So the help Mrs. Harkleroad gave four decades ago continues to this day and going forward."

Strangers Reunite 13
Years After Act of
Kindness That Left
Lifelong Impact

November 30, 2020

A Texas woman says she is "forever grateful" for a stranger's act of kindness that happened more than a decade ago.

This year, the two reconnected.

Hailey Allen and Melissa Mullins

Thirteen years ago, when Hailey Allen was just 16, her mother and brother unexpectedly passed away.

The responsibility of making arrangements for the funeral fell completely on Hailey's shoulders. While shopping at her local mall for outfits for her mom and brother, an employee overheard her crying in the dressing room.

"I walked into Maurice's and every little piece of clothing I would look at I would lose it," Hailey told [Brownwood News](#). "I decided it was too much for me to pick something for my mom right away so I started going into the dressing room and trying things for me. The only person that was working in there at the time heard me crying and asked my friend what was wrong. My friend said my mom and brother had just died and I was worried I wouldn't have enough money for something nice. I picked out what I was going to wear and when I came out the lady that worked there said 'don't worry about anything, get whatever you need.' No one had ever done anything like that for me before."

The employee was Melissa Mullins, whose generosity helped Hailey get through a tragedy she never anticipated facing.

"Toward the end my mother was depressed, she aged overnight and she didn't have energy to look nice. I didn't see the signs of depression until it was too late," Allen said. "Because of Melissa, my mother looked more beautiful than I had ever seen her look in her casket and I have that image to look back on."

Years had passed and Hailey had moved on with her life the best she could, having a son of her own. On Mother's Day, she shared the story of her mother and brother with her son.

"This past year on Mother's Day I was talking to my son about what happened, how this kind lady paid for my mom's clothes and I was able to get her something nice," Hailey recalled. "When I was talking about it, her face came to my mind and I remembered her face. I thought she looked so familiar and I recognized her and thought I had seen her somewhere since then."

As it turns out, Hailey - while snapping pictures for her Phoenix Photography business - had recently seen the woman that helped her years ago.

"I started thinking about it and I remembered I had given away a couple of free photo shoots to some little girls and one of the girl's grandma brought her," she said. "She was the grandma, so I met her again not knowing that was her."

Once realizing she had crossed paths with Melissa Mullins again, Hailey reached out to Melissa's daughter in an effort to make contact.

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(Continued)

"I messaged her daughter and I asked if her mom worked at Maurice's in 2006 and she said yes, so that was confirmation," Hailey said. "After that, we talked on the phone for a little bit and she texted me. She has two daughters of her own and she was picturing me as one of her daughters and what that would be like. A couple of weeks later she reached out to me again and asked if I would meet her for breakfast and we have met every two weeks on Monday and had breakfast ever since."

The text Melissa sent to Hailey is as follows:

"Thank you for your kind words. This is all just a reminder that you never know how much you can touch someone's life. You cannot imagine how you touched mine that day. It is something I will never forget. Of course I have daughters myself, it was such a powerful thing to see all you were dealing with and picturing in my mind my girls going through anything like this. I would have just prayed that they would have had someone to help them. I always wished when I thought of that I would have remembered your name so I could have kept up with you. You owe me nothing, it was an honor and a blessing to help. I have shed a few tears today remembering that day. Thank you for your kindness."

Since the two have reconnected, Melissa continues to offer Hailey support in a variety of ways.

"Recently I took some Christmas photos and she's helped me with that," Hailey said. "We haven't know each other very long but as soon as I left her house the other day she said 'love you,' and that really got to me. It means a lot to me because I don't have any parents. Everything I've had to experience with my own child, it's just been me. I moved here eight years ago and we don't have any family here. It's kind of unheard for someone who doesn't know me at all to not just do one nice thing for me, but has accepted me like I've always been here."

Hailey has continually attempted to repay Melissa for her generosity.

"I've been trying to repay her in some way, rent a vacation home for her family for a weekend, I want to do something for her, but she won't accept anything," she said. "I wanted to do something nice for her, I wanted people to know how sweet she was so I made a video and tagged her in it."

Having gotten to know Melissa better in recent months, Hailey is even more thankful for their connection and their budding friendship.

"She continues to blow me away with her eagerness to know and love me, even though she doesn't owe me that," Hailey said. "She doesn't just do this for me, she does this for everyone she knows. This is a lifestyle for her, this is how she is. Any time I ask if someone knows Melissa Mullins they say yes, she's the sweetest. I can only hope to be this level of selfless."

Credit: [Brownwood News](#)

"Ye, TOO, through bringing healing to others may heal thyself. For he that would have life must give it; he that would be loved must show himself lovely; he that would have mercy must show mercy to his friends. He that would be patient and have patience shown must SHOW patience unto those that seek."

Edgar Cayce reading 705-1

"Every individual entity is on certain vibrations. Every dis-ease or disease is creating in the body the opposite or non-coordinate vibration with the conditions in a body-mind and spirit of the individual. If there is used certain vibrations there may be seen the response."

Edgar Cayce reading 1861-12

"Then we should never take food - meat nor drink - when the body is exceedingly worried in mind, nor when the body is over physically debilitated; that is, PHYSICALLY tired or MENTALLY overtaxed. Rest a bit before food or drink is taken. When the body is wroth, mad, or out of temper, or worried - leave food or drink from the system. Never think that either worry or madness may be drowned in drink or in over feeding the stomach; for these bring distresses to the body."

Edgar Cayce reading 4124-1

"While, true, medicines, compounds, mechanical appliances, radiation, all have their place and are of the creative forces, yet the personality of arousing hope, of creating confidence, of bringing the awareness of faith into the consciousness of an individual is very necessary."

Edgar Cayce reading 5083-2

"It is the "try" that is the more often counted as righteousness, and not the success or failure. Failure to anyone should be as a stepping-stone and not as a millstone."

"(Q) What are the best outlets for my loneliness?

(A) Be busy in keeping optimistic and in helping somebody who is in a worse fix than yourself -- and there are millions of 'em!"

Edgar Cayce reading 1540-6

"Do that which is good in those who are materially, mentally or even spiritually ugly in their relationships with their fellowman, with themselves or with their Maker as individuals; see the good, see the possibilities, see the opportunity for thee to say a kind word. Kindness, gentleness, patience, persistence should be the watchword for each entity."

Edgar Cayce reading 2072-15

"Know within self what you believe. Know the author of your belief, spiritually as well as mentally and materially. Then be willing to live, to stand, to do those things you know to be your conviction as to the correct manner in which they should be done; guiding the same by the spirit of truth, the universality of man's dependency one upon another."

Edgar Cayce reading 3132-1

"As has been indicated, a little more patient, a little more tolerant, a little more humble. But . . .not a tolerance that becomes timid--this would make rebellion in self. Not a patience that is not positive. Not an humbleness that becomes morbid or lacking in beauty. For as orderliness is a part of thy being, so let consistency--as persistency--be a part of thy being."

Edgar Cayce reading 1402-1

"Quit finding fault with others and others will quit finding fault with you. This is the first thing to adopt in thy new life. And let this be a new experience for you - to recognize the abilities as well as the faults."

Edgar Cayce reading 3544-1

Ethical Holiday Shopping Guide

<https://www.positive.news/lifestyle/ethical-gift-guide/>

This month's favorite links

[The Christmas Story | Kids Perspective - YouTube](#)

[My Christmas Eve - YouTube](#)

Happy Hannukah, Did you know?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hYeg7QbGR7E>

KWANZAA Celebration

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7fM5yjmVRY>

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