

CHAHTA CORNER

MOWA CHOCTAW INDIANS NEWSLETTER

Volume 2/ Issue 1 – January 2023

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Maggie Rivers



A WORD FROM THE CHIEF:

Halito HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Here we are into 2023, a new year and hopefully new beginnings for the tribe. We continue to pursue grants and other opportunities for our tribal members.

I just want to remind everyone that our monthly Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month at 6:00pm. You are invited and encouraged to attend the meetings to keep abreast of what's going on with the tribe. This Newsletter is another source of information for you. Maggie and Melanie do an excellent job of providing you with the latest information via this Newsletter. If you have upcoming events or activities, please notify Maggie or Melanie and let them know so we can include them in our Newsletter.

FEATURED PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The tribe/housing authority offers several scholarship programs to our tribal members. Outlined below are the scholarships which are available and general information about each one of them:

• **MOWA Choctaw Housing Authority Scholarship Program**

- Student must be an enrolled tribal member;
- Student must reside on campus;
- Applications to apply are generally available in July;
- The amount is based on the number of students that apply but generally ranges from about \$1700 to \$2500 per student.

• **Martha Walden Medical Scholarship Program**

- Student must be an enrolled tribal member;
- Student must be currently enrolled AND enrolled for the next semester in a **medical field of study** of an accredited college or university and must be able to provide proof of enrollment;
- Student must have a 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA);
- Student must provide their student ID number;
- The amount is based on the number of students that apply but generally ranges from about \$250 to \$500 per student.

• **Joshua Taylor Scholarship Program**

- Student must be an enrolled tribal member;
- Student must reside and attend a college or university in Alabama;
- Student must have at least 3.0 Grade Point Average (GPA);
- Applications to apply are generally available in December/January;
- Eight students are selected—four from Mobile County and four from Washington County;
- Each student receives a \$1000 scholarship.

• **Alabama Indian Affairs Scholarship Program**

- Student must be an enrolled tribal member;
- Student must reside and attend a college or university in Alabama;
- Must enclose a copy of acceptance from the school.

These are general guidelines only and are subject to change. You may contact the tribal office for additional information.

FEATURED TRIBAL MEMBER

Our featured tribal member to begin this new year is Dawson Orso. Dawson is 22 years old and is the son of Bridgette Sullivan and Keith Orso. He grew up on Patillo Road in Mt. Vernon and attended Calcedaveer Elementary School. He attended Fruitdale High School for a while before transferring and graduating from Citronelle High School.



Dawson indicated that some of his favorite memories of growing up in the Mt. Vernon area included winning a championship for the MOWA Chiefs. He enjoyed the fact that he got to come back to Citronelle High School for his senior year and have the opportunity to play with the boys who he had grown up with earlier.

Dawson graduated from Bacone College located in Oklahoma in December with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. He is home now, but will return soon to play his last season of baseball. He has served as Team Captain of the team for the past three (3) years.



Dawson has fond memories of his time participating in Powwows. He stated that he danced in the powwows from about the age of 3 up to the age of 15. He reminisced about sitting under a tent eating a GOOD Indian taco, and simply being a kid who got to be a part of something great surrounded by his family and friends. He said he learned the art of playing stickball from Mr. Cedric Sunray! He stated that his memories, his heritage, and other teachings he received from elders are things he hopes his children will someday get to experience.

When asked how he described success he summed it up this way, "I don't believe there is one definition of success because each of us has unique interests, goals, and needs. Once there is a sense of purpose, defining success becomes more accessible, varying with time and experience. I would say that success is the process of identifying and striving to reach our own aspirations. Real success seems to come from striving toward something that we find meaningful, not from a final result of actually having arrived there. So, I describe success as giving all that you've got, knowing that you did go outside of your comfort zone, pushed through all the obstacles, and how you picked yourself up after failing and then doing it all over again and again." Well said Dawson!

Congratulations from the tribe to Dawson Orso for graduating from Bacone College. We hope that Dawson will return to his hometown and give back to his tribe which he is very proud to be a member. We wish you much success in all your endeavors.

MOWA Choctaw Housing Authority

Congratulations are in order to those who received a new house just prior to the holidays from the MOWA Choctaw Housing Authority. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Thursday, December 8, to award keys to those families. Those receiving a new home are: Tex and Alpha Byrd, Robert Lofton, Sue Ellen Byrd, Cranny Lofton, Shirley Faye Byrd, and Tracy Byrd

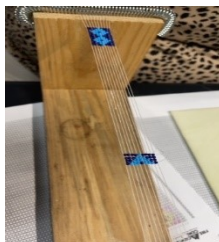


Mrs. Lillie Steiner and her staff did an outstanding job working with contractors, with materials not being shipped on time, and with stormy weather, to ensure that the homes were move-in ready for the holidays. We appreciate her staff, the Housing Authority, and the MOWA Choctaw Council members for working together and for all their efforts to assist our tribal members to be able to become home owners of such nice homes.

Cultural Classes

Cultural classes for the new year has begun. Beginner's beading classes are held on Mondays from 6:00 to 8:00 for beginners and on Tuesdays from 6:00 to 8:00 for advanced classes. The classes began on Monday, January 23. The classes will only go for six weeks so you should sign up soon if you would like to learn to bead.

We are also conducting registration for those who may be interested in learning the different styles of dancing. We hope to have four different groups. Beginners classes will be held for those in Grades Kindergarten through Grade 2; Intermediate classes for those in Grades 3 through 6; youth classes for those in Grades 7 through 12; and adult classes. The deadline to register has been extended to Monday, January 30, with classes beginning on Tuesday, February 7. We may need to combine some classes or we may have to cancel the dance classes if we do not have enough participants to sign up.



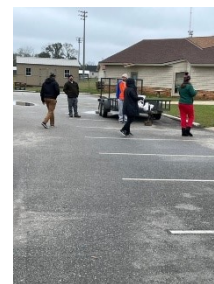
ADPH Clinic Program

We have begun making home visits again to those who may not be able to come to the reservation to receive their vaccination for the COVID-19 virus. We want to remind everyone that we are administering the Moderna vaccine, the Pfizer vaccine, as well as the new Omicron booster. We now have the vaccine for children beginning at age 6 months.

We are now located in another building. We have moved from the green building to the clinic next door to the main office. Please plan to visit us there if you need a COVID-19 shot. Be sure to let us know if you have anyone that is homebound and not able to come to us, we will go to them. We may be reached at 251-244-3627 to schedule an appointment or for additional information. You are encouraged to schedule an appointment since there may be a wait time if we do not know in advance that you are coming for a shot.

Ham Give-away

It was a cold day with drizzling rain but the staff persevered and sponsored a Christmas ham give-away on Wednesday, December 21, for tribal members. A special thanks to the Ambassadors who showed up to assist with the ham give-away. The ham give-away was conducted at the reservation in Mt. Vernon and also at the Community Center in McIntosh. We began at 8:00 that morning with 300 hams, but soon had to go back to Mt. Vernon and Citronelle for more hams. We ended up distributing 420 hams in all but everyone received a ham. This was made available through funds from the ADPH program.



Ambassador Program

The Ambassador Program is currently up and going. We appreciate the following individuals for electing to participate in this program. They are: Kirk Byrd, Jacey Rivers, Angel Orso, Denise Rodgers, David Sullivan Jimmy Byrd, Kayley Weaver, Anthony Rivers, Chris Thompson, Delaney Weaver, Daylin Orso, Matthew Davis, Jamal Brown, Phillip Snow, and Calan Reed. These participants will serve as Ambassadors on behalf of our tribe.

Each participant will be required to complete 50 hours of community service in the areas of Learning, Shadowing, Assisting, and Leading. They will be paid a stipend of \$20 per hour for the 50 hours of service for a total of \$1000. Stipends will only be paid at the completion of the 50-hour project. A graduation ceremony will be held and a Certificate of Completion will be given to each participant who completes the requirements.

Veteran's Park

The Veteran's Park is a long-term project, but each month we get closer and closer to completing it. If you recall, we held a ribbon cutting ceremony on November 11. Since that time, we have installed a six-foot wrought-iron fence around the parameters of the foundation. The fence sets off the foundation and the seal of our tribe. The next phase of the project will include a monument with a message to all our tribal members who are veterans as well as the purchase of the "stands" for the bricks. A huge thank you to Maggie Rivers who contributed \$1000 of her personal funds to these efforts.

Mobile County America's Rescue Plan Act

As recently reported, the Mobile County Food and Energy program will be conducted in phases. The first phase of the program will end January 30. At the time, documentation will be submitted to Mobile County to review and approve before the next allocation of funds will be awarded to the tribe. If Mobile County approves the first phase of the program, then they will award funds for the second phase of the program. We anticipate that the next phase of the program will begin around mid-April.

Museum Renovations

We are so pleased with the renovations to the museum. The interior and the exterior of the museum have been completely overhauled. We will be having an open house soon and we think everyone will be amazed at the transformation. Be on the lookout for the date of the open house in a future Newsletter.

Available Programs for Tribal Members

- **The Homeowners Assistance Fund (HAF)** - If you recently applied and received HAF benefits, contact **Debbie Weaver** at **251-276-5336**. You may qualify to be recertified. We are now accepting applications for new clients.
- **Easter Seals** is a senior program that allows seniors to work for the tribe.
- **Senior Lunch Program** is a program where tribal members over the age of 60 can go to the Old Calcedeaver school to receive lunches Monday – Friday from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

COUNCIL CORNER



Chief: Lebaron Byrd

At – Large : Kristin Weaver, Secretary

John Byrd, Sr.: Mobile County, District 1

Freddy Weaver: Washington County, District 1

Brittney Davis : Mobile County, District 2

Michael Orso: Washington County, District 2

Joseph Lofton : Mobile County, District 3

Sherry Dean: Washington County, District 3

Joseph A. Byrd: Mobile County, District 4

Claudette Graves: Washington Co., District 4

Shirley Byrd : Mobile County, District 5

Kesler Weaver, Sr.: Washington Co., District 5

Contact Us

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251-829-5500

Website: mowachoctawindians.com

***HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR
TRIBAL MEMBERS***