

# The Oaks Arrow



The Oaks Indian Mission was blessed exceedingly this past Fall with numerous invitations to share congregational Mission & Ministry Festivals, from Texas to Nebraska, and back to Oklahoma, in fact, September through November, a few of those celebrations involving some of our kids, who traveled with staff. Pictured are those who attended the Mission Festival at St. John Lutheran Church in Pryor, Oklahoma.

And then, to top off the season, before the holidays began, staff and kids, again, journeyed to Florence, Alabama and were the guests of North Alabama University, where the story of the Oaks was shared and five of our students were treated to a few days of University life, including classroom visits and campus tours. It was a great display of hospitality from faculty members and college students, some of whom have been regular guests at the Oaks Indian Mission. This, however, marking the first time we had visited their campus.

With this partnership growing each year, there is a real opportunity for graduates of the Oaks Mission School to attend college there. Though a long way from Oaks, there is a ready support system in place now, which could be very advantageous for kids willing to accept such a challenge.

Below are photos showing the group visiting a sacred site of the Choctaw near Florence and Sol Bird Mockicin, Mission Alum, and Dan Cooper, Campus Director, sharing insights into the life of the Oaks Indian Mission with a roomful of University faculty and students.





Progress is moving along on the vocational education facility here on campus—in fact, the concrete flooring was poured and the big sliding doors installed earlier this month.

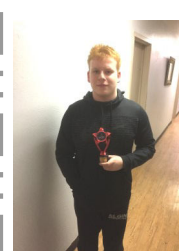
We are also pleased to report that, in addition to a grant from the Reformation Endowment Fund out of Wichita, as well as a Mission Festival gift from Zion Lutheran in Johnson, Nebraska and a gift from the Phil & Florence Larsen Family in Blair, Nebraska, this new facility will greatly benefit from the Immanuel Vision Foundation grant this year, funds that will help supply a security system, quality vocational education equipment and stipends to cover instructional costs.

In other words, we are well on our way to providing an excellent educational program in vocational training, skills that will prepare our kids for further vocational training toward a career path and skills that will serve them well in life no matter what vocation they choose to pursue.



And, speaking of projects, we are pleased to announce that the groundwork for laying the foundation of the new cottage is complete and the next phase to commence soon. Not only the campus, but the entire community is abuzz over the first major construction in years here at Oaks. We dare say, it has given this town a renewed sense of confidence in the future. This community with its rich heritage now expectant about what possibilities tomorrow holds.

The craft building is back in business. Kiowa, our resident artist, has taken a lead in sprucing up the interior with a new paint job, etc. New staff members, McKenna and LeaAnn, also applied a lot of elbow grease in the cleaning. The kiln will soon be fired up and various items crafted. We have been blessed with many gifts of molds just waiting to be put to good use. Prayer stones, like the one shown, is a popular craft project. Plans are being made to include work on ceramic tile as well as bead-making. Excitement is spreading about the possibilities.



Alex, our award-winning wrestler, has given us a lot to celebrate with his recent accomplishments on the mat. The medal he's displaying in the accompanying photo was for first place in the heavyweight division at a big meet in Muskogee. Alex has been competitive in every match he's entered, sometimes grappling with an opponent fifty pounds heavier. We're very proud of Alex and look forward to cheering him on in the future.

We celebrate, as well, the fact Jordan, a Junior, scored high enough on a recent ACT test to qualify for admission into college course work at Northeastern State University in nearby Tahlequah this coming Fall semester, during her Senior year, marking a huge boost forward as she prepares for her college career.

This past Fall a group of former residents of the Oaks Indian Mission, joined by a staff member, visited a group of southern Nebraska farmers who years ago, in the 1950's and 60's, hosted boys from the Mission for the summer in exchange for farm work.

It was an experience neither the farmers and their families nor the boys forgot. It shaped memories that would last their entire life. So that, when Simeon Gipson and Kenneth Jensby, pictured here, got together to share some of those memories, it became a special moment, a time to catch up on all those intervening years. And to celebrate the impression those summers so long ago had made upon the lives of those involved, both Mission kids and farm families.

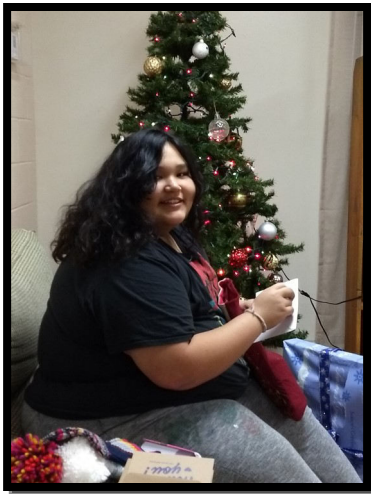




# Christmas

It has been quite a Christmas experience here at the Oaks. All you have to do is take a peek at the photos accompanying these words. Indeed, they speak much clearer and considerably louder than the words, themselves. In them are the smiles of kids for whom receiving gifts at Christmas is not a given. It's more of an exception to the rule. The only thing better than these pictures would have been being here to hear the expressions of surprise and wonder as the wrapping came flying off.

Thank you especially to Native American Student Association, Northeastern State University/Tahlequah, OK St. Paul's/OKC, OK - Salem/Stillwater, OK - St. Luke/Ft. Smith, AR - St. John/Pryor, OK - Peace/Cyril, OK American/Filley, NE - Dr. William & Barbara Hiatt - Biff & Susan Warren. Sharing the joy of the Season, you have enriched their lives a bit more. And, in doing so, perhaps sowing a small seed of faith, as all good gifts point, ultimately, to the Gift at the heart of all of our Christmas celebrations. Indeed, the Reason for the Season!



Though there were a couple of memorable evenings during the month of December here on campus when gifts were opened and smiles stretched across our kids' faces, as the photos above celebrate, the highlight of the Advent/Christmas Season at the Oaks Indian Mission surely had to be the night we packed up, staff and kids, and headed for neighboring Siloam Springs, Arkansas to join in worship with the John Brown University community, a local independent Christian college, whose faculty and student body have been involved here on the Mission campus in various ways, their nursing students most recently, under the direction of Sheryl Hill

The candlelight service included an extensive array of music celebrating the birth of the Messiah that had both a traditional and contemporary flavor, as well as Scripture readings, prayer and preaching of the Word.

What a moving night it was! Just to look across the pews at those candlelit faces of youth, some of whom never having experienced such a service before, as we joined our voices in a powerful rendition of Silent Night. Indeed, after which, we left the Cathedral of the Ozarks in silence, pondering all that had just transpired. Concluding that glorious moment with sweet treats from Braum's, the ice cream place!

*Honors, Memorials & In-kind*  
*November & December 2019*

*Honorariums*

**Rev. Elwin Bergstraesser 60th Ordination**  
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*Mark Sayther*

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*Rev. Elwin Bergstraesser*

**Sol Bird Mockicin**  
*Walter Laughlin*  
*Myrvin Christopherson*

**Sarah Romer**  
*Mary & Craig Romer*

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*Duane Frasier*

**Merl Lindburg**  
*Billie Lindburg*

**Hubert Radke**  
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*Julie Stone*

*Memorials*

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*Karla Kelly*

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*Delmer Hardesty*

**John O. Scheperle**  
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*Note: All individuals, families and churches are listed to the best of our knowledge. It is not our intent to omit any donors and contributions from our lists. If you see we have made a mistake, please accept our apology, and let us know so we can make a correction.*



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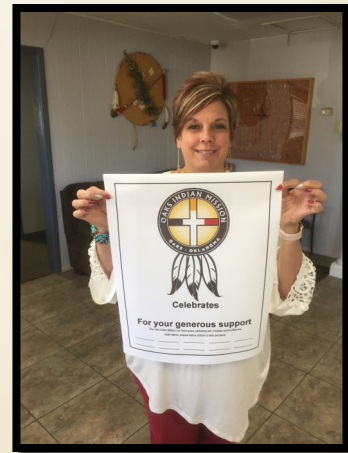
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## SAVE THE DATE

The Mission Children Alumni has announced the date for their annual reunion—**Saturday, April 25**. As in past years, there will be lots of food and great fellowship, with a program that includes speakers from the Cherokee Nation. It is a time for the sharing of many memories and a celebration of life and faith.

The Mission Children Alumni has also announced a date—**Saturday, June 13**—for the Grand Opening of the new Mission Museum here on campus. Dedicated this past April, the Museum is about to be open to the public and available as a place to learn about the remarkable history of this ministry, spanning centuries now.



To express our appreciation, the Oaks Indian Mission will be presenting newly designed banners to those congregations and organizations with an asterisk beside their name - in the Gold Level category on the preceding page - for their support this past year, 2019.



## WELCOME TO TEAM MINISTRY

We are delighted to welcome two new cottage-parents to our staff. Ken and Cindy Perkins are now serving the younger boys of Cherokee Cottage, after being relief staff for six years. The Perkins come with a lot of life experience, in general, and a faith active in love, being very active in their Sand Springs congregation, Saint Andrew Lutheran. They have also been active in the life of the Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod in various ways. Cindy has worked for many years now in nursing home oversight throughout this area of the state. Ken has managed numerous restaurants around the upper Midwest. They are a blessed addition to campus life. Ken put it this way recently: "As relief parents, we were inspired to model respect, teach values and fire a desire for learning. And now we are devoting ourselves to being full-time cottage-parents, nurturing the lives of our children, helping to open their eyes to everything life has to offer."

Stormy Manes returns to us after a short stint as a cottage-parent three years ago. She is excited to be back and ready to parent the younger girls in our fourth cottage, newly opened, Chickasaw, which previously has served as a student life center and, more recently, as the Boys & Girls Club.

We'd also like to introduce two new office staff members to our ministry team. McKenna Andrews joined us late last summer, serving as office manager. She stepped away for a few months to have a baby. She and her husband, Tyler, are now the proud parents of a bustling baby boy. McKenna returns now with the new responsibilities of coordinating student activities on campus and helping to manage the Mission website. She brings a rich faith to her work here, believing she is where God wants her to be at this moment—every experience a part of the Lord's divine plan.

LeaAnn Slamons, our new office manager, is very excited to be a part of the Oaks Indian Mission staff. A member of Eben Ezer Lutheran Church here on campus, LeaAnn has a family of seven—five children, with two still in high school. She will be a very positive influence on the children here at the Oaks Indian Mission, helping them become thriving adults.



Chapel services continue to be a Wednesday after school highlight. Sol Bird Mockicin, Cherokee elder and Mission Alum, is now going from cottage to cottage, rather than having everyone together in the Commons Room. The new arrangement allowing for more of an intimate, family style spiritual experience, in which interaction is now happening.



We are particularly excited about our new tutors, Doctors Ed and Cynthia Gustavson, who drive from Tulsa every week to lead inspiring discussions with a handful of our teenagers. One week they talked about environmental issues, another session was devoted to the brain and the location of its various activities.





Oaks Indian Mission  
P.O. Box 130  
Oaks, Oklahoma 74359  
918-868-2196

## Needs List

### *~Home Items~*

Toilet Paper  
Paper Towels  
Laundry Detergent

### *~Pantry Items~*

Peanut Butter  
Granola Bars  
Fruit Snacks

### *~Health Items~*

Cough Drops  
Thermometers  
Feminine Products

### *~Large Items~*

Mid-Size Vehicle (Gently Used)  
Washing Machines

