

ga-du-gi 2002-2022

TWO DECADES OF WORKING TOGETHER
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

It has been twenty years since Cherokee Preservation Foundation began providing funding for projects and programs to improve the quality of life on the Qualla Boundary and the surrounding seven counties. This report to the community is a review of activities and key results from the investment of these charitable resources between 2002 and 2022.



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHEROKEE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPF) was established on November 14, 2000, as part of the Second Amendment to the Tribal-State Compact between the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and the State of North Carolina. The Compact determined a percentage of revenues from the newly inaugurated gaming enterprise would be used for broad community enhancement. CPF created a Board of Directors to guide its work, and hired initial staff in 2002. A funding program was designed and the first grants were given that same year.

ACHIEVING THE FOUNDATION'S MISSION

The mission of Cherokee Preservation Foundation is to preserve their native culture, protect and enhance their natural environment, and create appropriate and diverse economic opportunities – in order to improve the quality of life for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and their neighbors in western North Carolina. This is achieved by balancing the ways of Cherokee culture and history with the pursuit of new opportunities. Over the past 20 years, almost half of CPF's grants have supported cultural preservation programs that are reviving and enhancing artistic traditions, encouraging widespread learning of the Cherokee language, cultivating Cherokee leaders, and teaching Cherokee heritage and culture.

Reuben Taylor, a highly decorated WWII war hero, at the Veteran's Day of Caring.

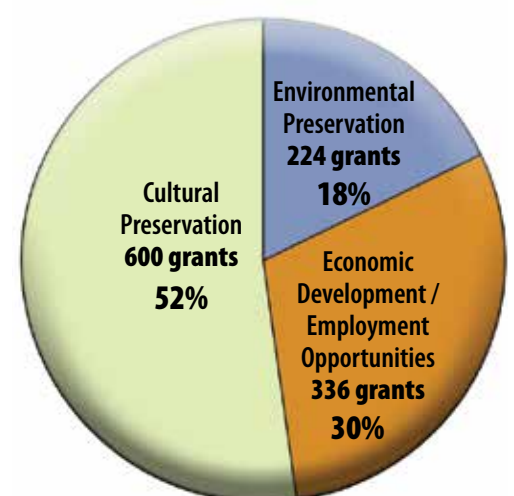


Significant investments have been made in building and diversifying the local economy, as well as preserving the natural environment that has sustained the Eastern Band for centuries.

GA-DU-GI 2002-2022

The Cherokee word ga-du-gi has multiple meanings: working together, helping hands, and community. It is the essence of the Foundation's service to EBCI members and to the surrounding seven western counties.

**Cherokee Preservation Foundation
Total Giving 2002-2022: \$107 million**



LOOK INSIDE...

WHAT THE FOUNDATION AND GRANTEEES HAVE ACCOMPLISHED: Above the river timeline (that symbolizes the journey taken by CPF and the community) – Sections on Cultural Preservation (Leadership, Language), Economic Development (Cultural Tourism, Downtown Revitalization, Entrepreneurship, Financial Literacy, and 21st Century Schools), and Environmental Preservation (RTCAR and Generations Qualla)

HOW THE FOUNDATION WORKS: Below the river timeline – Sections on the varied and critical roles the Foundation plays (Partnerships, Community Planning and Convening, Capacity Building)

Dana Cochran

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

PREPARING NEW CHEROKEE LEADERS



APPROACH: CULTURE-BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

To help ensure that the Cherokee way of life continues, new native leaders are being cultivated to assume future roles of responsibility. The Foundation has developed a culture-based, life-long learning continuum for teenagers through adulthood. The programs are grounded in Cherokee values (see box on page 3) and feature local elders sharing Cherokee

customs and history. Programming results have enabled Cherokee participants to examine traditional selfless leaders within the community, while examining how practicing traditional Cherokee values are intrinsic to cultivating leaders with Cherokee worldviews. **The result is a growing pool of EBCI citizens who embrace traditional Cherokee values and have a commitment to selfless leadership in the local community.**

PROGRESS IN LEADERSHIP

The first leadership effort by CPF was the Costa Rica Cultural Exchange program, started in 2005 as a challenging and rewarding experience for Cherokee and other western North Carolina youth, ages 14 to 17. Many of the participants have never been out of western North Carolina before they travel to Costa Rica on the 10-day eco-study tour, where they visit with indigenous tribes to experience local cultures and share their own culture. Each year the students and chaperones hold fundraisers and practice the concept of ga-du-gi by completing a service-learning project during the trip. The most recent service-learning project completed was on the 2022 trip to Costa Rica where our youth and chaperones assisted with mangrove tree restoration. Mangroves, known as the guardians of the coasts, are essential to Costa Rican erosion prevention and help provide a healthy habitat to the native wildlife. Our participants dug out and repaired a flooded Mangrove nursery and helped fill sandbags to build a wall to help prevent future flooding. Additionally, in 2017, a domestic cultural exchange was initiated and happens every other year, alternating with the international exchange. This opportunity allows youth to visit other native tribes within the United States. They engage in cultural sharing and experience how similar and different other tribes are to them.

KEY RESULTS: Served 160 youth, who were accompanied by 60 chaperones. Participant evaluations report increased confidence, appreciation for their own heritage, and a desire to travel and be more involved in the world outside Cherokee.

PARTNERS: Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute (RKLI); Cherokee Central Schools; and area schools.

The **CHEROKEE YOUTH COUNCIL (CYC)** was established in 2007 to empower local youth to have a voice on issues that matter to them. This local group has 19 youth members who meet several times a month. During these meetings, members practice the grand council model to decide what issues to address within the community. This program allows a safe space to learn and grow into leaders grounded in the Cherokee Core Values. CYC is currently focused on culturally-based activities and the CYC plans one community project each year. Recently the group hosted a conference titled "The Cherokee Youth Council presents: A Discussion on Generational Trauma. During Covid-19 the groups took a step back and focused on smaller projects including stocking food pantries, a video project where CYC members read children's books and put that on YouTube for local childcare facilities, a Trail of Tears sign clean-up, helping give out food boxes, and donating gifts to Tsali Care residents for the holidays.

KEY RESULTS: The youth are actively addressing community issues, learning from one another, and working together on impactful projects for the region.

PARTNERS: Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute (RKLI)

The **JONES-BOWMAN LEADERSHIP AWARD** was established in 2007 for college-age students, to honor the memory and leadership of Principal Chief Leon Jones and Jim Bowman, both members of the EBCI and founding members of the Board of Directors of Cherokee Preservation Foundation. Selected through a nomination process, Fellows each create an individualized leadership learning experience that includes training, volunteer service, academic pursuits, and travel. Each class of Fellows completes a community service project, such as the recent Winter Walk and Read.

KEY RESULTS: 65 undergraduates have participated; 37 have completed the Jones-Bowman program and graduated from college, earning degrees in various fields; graduates continue as mentors to current and future Jones-Bowman Fellows.

Grad Images



Tammy Jackson

Teenagers and adults are benefiting from the culture-based leadership development continuum created by Cherokee Preservation Foundation, which originated with the Costa Rica Cultural Exchange program (above). (left). Levi West, Jones-Bowman fellow, graduated from Arizona State University.

KEY MILESTONES OF CHEROKEE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION'S FIRST TWENTY YEARS

2002

Staff hired and first grants made

2003

First Community Celebration

First grant to cultural entities

2004

Vision Qualla

Initial grant to Sequoyah Fund

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS

EBCI artist Shan Goshorn painted the flowing river timeline graphic (above) as well as the nine icons, which represent the major programs and initiatives Cherokee Preservation Foundation has helped establish in the past 20 years: Culture-Based Leadership Development, Cherokee Language Revitalization, Cultural Tourism, Downtown Revitalization, Entrepreneurship,

Financial Literacy (symbolized by a Cherokee wampum belt), 21st Century Schools, Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR), and Generations Qualla, the newest program that encourages sustainable practices. The timeline on pages 2-11 shows key dates for program activities during the Foundation's twenty years.

Goshorn, who passed away in 2018 was an accomplished artist who addresses aspects of her heritage, from traditional spirituality to educating mainstream audiences about Native American people. She earned her B.F.A. from Cleveland Institute of Art.

PARTNERS: Volunteer mentors from the community; Cherokee Central Schools; EBCI Tribal Education office; surrounding high schools; Southwestern Community College and Western Carolina University's Cherokee Center.

The most in-depth CPF leadership endeavor has been creation of **THE RIGHT PATH**, a year-long adult leadership program that bridges past and present by exploring Cherokee cultural traditions while also introducing contemporary leadership development competencies. Right Path participants meet two days per month to learn about Cherokee cultural themes presented by elders and other experts. The program covers cultural values, Cherokee social systems and gender roles, the Cherokee language, governance, healthy living, artistic expression, the natural world and environment, sports and recreation, storytelling and humor, and indigenous peoples and their leadership initiatives, community programs and Tribal heroes. The Right Path also advances self-learning, through various assessment tools.

The following **CHEROKEE CORE VALUES** are taught throughout the CPF leadership programming:

- ◆ Spirituality
- ◆ Sense of Place
- ◆ Group Harmony
- ◆ Strong Individual Character
- ◆ Honor the Past
- ◆ Educate the Children
- ◆ Possess a Sense of Humor



2023 Right Path

2005 RTCAR

First Costa Rica Eco-Study Tour
KPEP receives grant for language revitalization planning



Brenda Oocumma



Cherokee Day of Caring

developed and implemented throughout one's life. To share and build on their learning, each graduate will conduct cultural presentations for future Right Path programs.

- ◆ The Right Path is housed with the other leadership programs within the Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute.

PARTNERS: Local Cherokee elders and leaders provide the content for this program.

Since 2005, CPF has spearheaded **CHEROKEE DAY OF CARING** each year, coordinating up to 300 volunteers to assist neighbors in need in 10 EBCI communities, and

honoring local heroes. Projects include garden planting, home repairs, and other expressions of the ga-du-gi tradition.

KEY RESULTS: 3,750 volunteer participants have assisted with 150 projects

PARTNERS: EBCI Tribal government; Harrah's Casino; Cherokee Boys Club; EBCI members.

REVITALIZING THE CHEROKEE LANGUAGE



APPROACH: INVESTING IN THE CHEROKEE LANGUAGE PARTNERS

The CPF has supported Cherokee Language programs sense inception, and strategic partners include the KPEP Language Academy, Cherokee Central Schools, WCU Cherokee Studies & Language Department, and Snowbird Cherokee Traditions. Several language programs have evolved and expanded their programming activities with CPF

funding support, and all share the common goal of ensuring that the Cherokee language is spoken and living for the next seven Cherokee generations. **Today, the Cherokee language is being renewed through new instructional materials, resource distribution, teacher education, an established immersion school, second language learning programs, after school programs, summer programs, and community-based classes.**

Cherokee Day of Caring begins

WNC Nonprofit Pathways partnership forms

PARTNERSHIPS

Cherokee Preservation Foundation was established in the spirit of partnership, under the Tribal-State Compact of 2000 that provided funding to improve the quality of life for people on the Qualla Boundary and in neighboring counties. The Foundation took the partnership approach to heart and at every step has sought to identify others who can bring varied knowledge, skills and resources to the table. Additionally, it is required that all

2006

WNC EdNet

Cherokee Friends

Leadership program convenings

projects that receive Foundation funding have established partnerships with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), to ensure the local community is involved and will benefit. The partnerships serve a dual purpose – bringing others from the outside to Cherokee so they may experience the unique culture and people, and also helping connect Tribal members with the broader region of western North Carolina and world.

PROGRESS IN LANGUAGE

The Language Revitalization Initiative is an ambitious effort to create from scratch the tools and techniques needed to introduce the complex Cherokee language into today's education system. A first challenge in the overall effort was that very little Cherokee had been written as educational tools, so materials had to be created to teach to current standards. This was accomplished by hosting gatherings of elder speakers, who generously provided words, phrases and stories that were crafted into instructional texts and resources. In the words of one local elder: "Speaking a language means we have a culture. Having a culture makes us significant. There's a lot of difference between people who have a culture and people with a history." A major component helping save the language is the utilization of technology. Many partners have developed digital archives over the years and are adding new materials every day. Recording fluent speakers carrying on conversation is vital to ensure the music of speaking the language lives on. Another great example of technology as a tool is the Shiyo app. It was started by a student's senior project at Cherokee Central Schools (CCS) and the language department continues to expand the app to this day.

IMMERSION LEARNING – Language is typically learned at home and in the community, but that was not sufficient to address the urgent need to save the Cherokee tongue; the situation called for an intensive program of teaching in a structured school setting. CPF's first investment in language was in 2002 for pre-kindergarten immersion and later grants focused on the planning and design of Kituwah Academy, a total-immersion program that starts with infants and follows them through elementary school. The focus on immersion of children is based on the proven role of early language



Mike Belene



Brenda Oocumma

Revitalizing the Cherokee language includes community-based classes (top) and the Kituwah Academy language immersion program (below) that starts with infants and follows them through elementary school. CPF supports a range of language programming.

acquisition in learning and retention. The EBCI has assumed financial support of the Kituwah Academy – including opening a beautiful school building in 2009 – but CPF continues support for instructional developments and future planning.

ADULT SECOND LANGUAGE

LEARNERS – In 2016, CPF supported the plan for a pilot program at Kituwah Preservation and Education Program (KPEP) for adult second language learners. In 2018 the Cherokee Language Immersion Adult Program was implemented. This method diversified teachings and supports language revitalization efforts in a new way, through paying learners. Several years later, the program continues now under the name the Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program. This group is currently in their 4th cohort of the program with the following progress so far; 20 participants, 7 graduates, and 6 of those working in language departments. The hope is to support language learners at all ages and bridge the gap between immersion students and fluent speakers.

COMMUNITY BASED TEACHING AND LANGUAGE USAGE

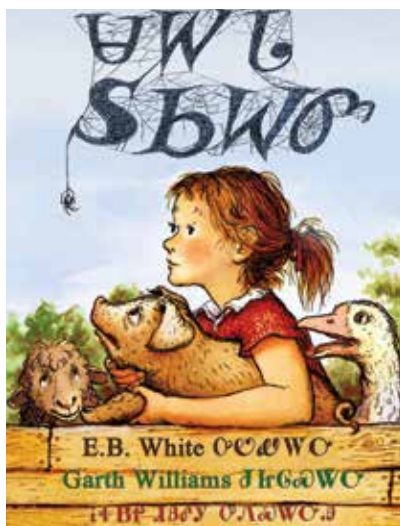
– At the heart of the language revitalization effort are those who grew up speaking Cherokee in the coves and forests of the Tribe's homeland. The late Shirley Oswalt was a native speaker who began quietly hosting Cherokee language classes in Little Snowbird, nestled in a pristine corner of the Qualla Boundary. Her dedication started the Snowbird Cherokee Traditions program, one of the vital Cherokee language partners, which now offers year-long language learning to interested youth in graham county. Both KPEP and Cherokee Central Schools also have established summer programs for students to further their knowledge of the Cherokee culture and language. These programs are so popular, there is often a waiting list. It is a goal of CPF to increase the number of community language classes and also the interest in using Cherokee as part of everyday life.

CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTION – A major barrier to the expansion of Cherokee language is the shortage of fluent and skilled language teachers. CPF has worked with Western Carolina University to create a Cherokee Language Program (see Key Results section, below). A significant success of the WCU program has been to work at the state level to get approvals and certifications, including obtaining an agreement with the state university system by which all 17-member schools will honor students who have taken Cherokee in high school with

EarlyLight Books



CPF supports the creation of new instructional tools – including these new book to teach the Cherokee language.



2007
Cherokee Youth Council
First Technology in the Classroom conference

2008
Grand opening of Riverbend and Riverwalk
Generations Qualla

Jones-Bowman Leadership Award Program

Cherokee Central Schools curriculum & technology grants

Because of colonization the practice of passing down traditional knowledge in tribal communities has shifted from being taught in the home to a community-wide approach. By offering culturally based leadership programs, the Ray Kinsland leadership Institute and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation are providing our tribal members access to Cherokee values, culture, history, and language that they may not get anywhere else. This is instrumental in preserving and perpetuating Cherokee identity, worldview, and unique cultural practices that makes us who we are."

Tonya Carroll, Manager RKL

certified teachers as meeting college-level foreign language entrance requirements. The WCU program leaders have also done an excellent job of sharing successes, challenges, new technologies and practices related to saving indigenous languages with multiple interested parties near and far.

KEY RESULTS:

- ◆ Collaboration and partnership between language partners.
- ◆ A focus on support for second language learners at all ages.
- ◆ Thousands of resources have been distributed and archived by language partners and are accessible by the community.
- ◆ Community classes for second-language learners have increased in availability and enrollment.
- ◆ Through Western Carolina University,
 - A fully accredited post-secondary degree program and certification process for future teachers, which includes first-time Cherokee language textbooks, courses in grammar and conversational Cherokee, and scholarship support for participants;
 - Ongoing development of curriculum materials for use in Cherokee language education from birth through adulthood, through immersion and community-based techniques;
 - Hundreds of students have taken entry level Cherokee language classes; over 30 students have completed four levels of language instruction and represent a growing pool of potential teachers.

PARTNERS: Kituwah Preservation Education Program (KPEP), Western Carolina University (WCU), Cherokee Central Schools (CCS), and Snowbird Cherokee Traditions (SCT).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**CULTURAL TOURISM
APPROACH:**

**ATTRACT VISITORS VIA
AUTHENTIC CHEROKEE BRAND**

Cherokee Preservation Foundation has used a two-part strategy to help cultural tourism grow into a local economic development engine. The Foundation has made major investments in the community’s treasured cultural attractions. A second major focus has

been a coordinated marketing program that promotes Cherokee as a destination for both family fun and high-quality history and culture. **The result is that more visitors are expected in Cherokee and they will have a noticeably improved experience– being greeted by appealing signage, banners, and artistically painted bears; and attending an array of new or renewed facilities and events with more culturally authentic programming and exhibits.**

2016 Cherokee friends



Shan Goshorn

CPF provides significant support for the Southeast Tribes Cultural Arts Festival and Festival of Native Peoples, which bring many visitors to Cherokee to enjoy an authentic experience.

PROGRESS IN CULTURAL TOURISM

Two decades ago, the twin properties of the **CHEROKEE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION** (CHA) – the Mountainside Theater (home of outdoor drama) and Oconaluftee Indian Village – were in need of repairing. The facilities have since been transformed through CPF and EBCI investments in physical renovations including: new theater seating; improved accessibility for mobility-challenged patrons; upgrades to ticketing, concession, and restroom facilities; rehabilitation of stage production areas, lighting, audio and public address systems; and housing for seasonal performers. Support also has helped improve their artistic product – including training for performers and staff, a rewrite of the *Unto These Hills* script, and wardrobe replacements. CPF has also supported CHA’s internal organization with strategic planning, staff and board development, and financial sustainability analysis.



Museum of the Cherokee Indians

2009

Energy audits of tribal buildings
Grant for significant reduction of energy consumption on the Qualla Boundary

2010

The Right Path
Initial business plan competition for community college students

Skill Builder classes begin



CHA has updated all production areas as well as the special effects. The *Unto These Hills* script has also received an additional revamp. The original script has been shortened and updated to appeal to modern visitors. CHA also began offering shoulder season plays. As of now, they have had two Halloween season shows: *Sleepy Hollow* and *Dracula*. They also offer *Alice In Wonderland* in the spring. This show has been adapted by local authors and language specialists in order to incorporate Cherokee language and culture. The Oconoluftee Indian Village (OIV) has also been kept updated and more authentic items have been added to their gift shops. Customers also requested that the experience be more Immersive. Since receiving feedback OIV has developed different scripts and employees have received training to enhance the visitor experience.

KEY RESULTS: An iconic Cherokee cultural institution continues to improve it's facilities and now has more offerings throughout the year.

The oldest Native American artist cooperative – **QUALLA ARTS AND CRAFTS MUTUAL**, founded in 1946 – sparkles today with its upgraded gallery and sales space, funded in part by CPF. The crafts that fill the facility are locally made by Cherokee artisans who have demonstrated their skill to a selection committee that has responsibility for upholding high standards for quality. Qualla was founded with the purpose of creating a year-round market for Cherokee artisans and that mission is being realized in the 21st Century thanks to CPF grants that helped expand their website with an on-line store and point-of-sale software that helps manage merchandising and accounting. In addition to selling, Qualla is dedicated to teaching Cherokee craftmaking so that the traditions are shared and continued. They have collaborated with the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR) on gathering expeditions with local artists. Most recently, Qualla held their 75th anniversary celebration in the summer of 2021. They remain the oldest running Native American craft cooperative in the United States. Qualla has increased the cataloguing of their permanent collection. They have also digitized their artisan archives and continues to work with WNC Nonprofit Pathways in staff development. CPF has consistently supported Qualla Arts and Crafts.



Scott McKie



Dick Klaas

CPF has helped tourism entities on the Qualla Boundary attract more visitors and provide a positive and authentic Cherokee experience. Support includes funding tourism marketing efforts (above) and the significant renovation of facilities such as the Mountainside Theatre. Fly Fishing contest (at top) on the Oconoluftee River. (below) Unto These Hills.



KEY RESULTS: Qualla has renovated its shop space to improve the experience of visitors, uses technology for marketing and sales, and hosts artist-led demonstrations to promote and celebrate the unique and extraordinary talent and heritage of Cherokee crafts. Qualla has also increased its organization capacity with board development, committee structures, and operational effectiveness. Qualla continues to improve and update it's artisan archives. They have also started the process to bring vintage Cherokee artist photographs into it's permanent collection.

The **MUSEUM OF THE CHEROKEE INDIAN** has continually improved its quality and offerings over the years, in addition to being an Education Wing that is filled with teaching and learning facilities, supported by CPF. Other highlights achieved over the past two decades with support from CPF have been development of the Emissaries of Peace exhibit, archival facilities to store artifacts and crafts, and redesign of the Museum website. Additionally, CPF has funded several projects to improve the Museum's operational effectiveness, which helped increase fundraising success for the Education Wing.

Most recently, the Museum has opened a hands-on children's exhibit. This is a permanent part of the Museum and will give children the opportunity to explore and learn about Cherokee culture in a way the is accessible to them. The Museum has also undergone renovation to include a rotating exhibit space. This space has been utilized well and has been a welcoming and refreshing addition.

KEY RESULTS: An expanded Museum of the Cherokee Indian now has ample educational and archival facilities. In addition, the rotating exhibit has been a way to keep exhibits fresh and therefore there is always something new to see. The Museum continues to provide excellent outreach on Cherokee language and arts, as well as doing independent fundraising.

A large investment toward increasing cultural tourism has gone into marketing Cherokee as a destination. Today's coordinated advertising campaign is led by the **GREATER CHEROKEE TOURISM COUNCIL** which started with the entities above and now represents nine organizations important to the Cherokee tourism-based economy. The Council is taking a holistic approach— from tackling shared data collection for more targeted marketing to continually improving customer service— all to build the base of visitors who come and have a

2011

Solar and wind turbine demonstration projects funded



Former Governor James Hunt visits to see results of the Foundation's first decade of investments



2012

First Cherokee High School business plan competition



positive experience, then tell others and return to visit Cherokee again.

KEY RESULTS: Today, what started as isolated individual marketing efforts has become a collaborative and data-based effort among cultural partner organizations. The group is currently working at its highest level of cooperation and effectiveness, and the partners and the collaborative continue to get stronger. Currently, the focus is on Heritage and Eco tourism. The development of Fire Mountain Trails In 2017, as well as the enhancement of many waterfall areas has aided in keeping Cherokee relevant and encourages continued visitation from modern visitors.

PARTNERS: Cherokee Historical Association; Qualla Arts and Crafts Cooperative; Museum of the Cherokee Indian; EBCI Destination Marketing; EBCI Transit; EBCI Parks and Recreation; EBCI Fish and Game; Sequoyah National Golf Club



Carmen Nations

Establishing a distinct, vibrant Cultural District was a major goal of the Heart of Cherokee initiative. The major cultural attractions—Cherokee Museum, Qualla Arts & Crafts, Welcome Center, Oconaluftee Indian Village and others—are now surrounded by signs and banners that indicate their uniqueness.

and seating, and directional signage. The Foundation provided resources to help the community address these initial priorities. CPF also invested in: decorative streetlamps and energy efficient lighting fixtures throughout downtown; and continuing greenway development in 2014, suggestions from previous CPF convenings were implemented to include, a uniform color pallet for businesses, as well as a sign ordinance. More recently, the original painted bears have received refreshed paint and an addition of bears designed by the Cherokee communities. The bears can now be captured on an app, so that anyone can collect them all for a prize.

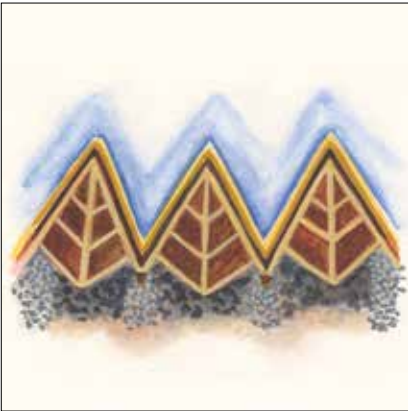
In keeping with the needs of modern travelers, Destination Marketing, with aid from CPF, has installed an area wide Wi-Fi network throughout downtown to capture demographic data as well as appeal to the need to have Internet accessibility when traveling.

KEY RESULTS:

- ◆ Local businesses are beginning to look more cohesive and less cluttered.
- ◆ The first 10 miles of Fire Mountain Trails opened in 2017.
- ◆ Internet connectivity has increased.
- ◆ Tribal levy (sales tax) income has risen every year since work on downtown revitalization commenced.
- ◆ Local and visiting families are enjoying the outdoor amenities.

PARTNERS: EBCI; Sequoyah Fund

REVITALIZING DOWNTOWN CHEROKEE’S CORE



APPROACH:

MAKE DOWNTOWN ATTRACTIVE FOR VISITORS AND LOCALS

With cultural tourism key to the Qualla Boundary’s economic future, Cherokee Preservation Foundation worked with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) to renovate the downtown and retail areas of Cherokee so they have a more traditional village appearance. **The result is a more vibrant and appealing**

downtown Cherokee that is seeing increased visitation and sales.

PROGRESS IN DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Downtown revitalization became a top priority as a result of the Vision Qualla planning process initiated and led by the Foundation in 2004. Community members participating in the planning effort determined that necessary improvements should include façade and roof renovations throughout downtown, pedestrian-friendly walkways, more plantings

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



APPROACH:

LENDING AND TRAINING FOR DIVERSE, LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESSES

To help build small businesses and a healthy local economy, the Qualla Boundary needed its own source for investment dollars and technical assistance. Cherokee Preservation Foundation helped create the Sequoyah Fund as a permanent, certified

Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that helps local people in ways that traditional banks cannot. **Today, the Sequoyah Fund helps start and support innovative small businesses and emerging industry sectors in order to provide good, sustainable jobs for local people in Cherokee and the surrounding region.**

2013

**Tribal Energy Efficient Vehicles
Ancient Cherokee Trails -
Virtual Tours**

2014

**Cherokee Day of Caring -
10 Year Anniversary
EBCI Energy Manager**

2015

**Fire Mountain Trails Planned
Shi-yo Cherokee Language App**



PROGRESS IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

When Cherokee Preservation Foundation helped launch the Sequoyah Fund in 2004, it initially provided a small number of low interest business loans to help downtown retail operators upgrade their exteriors. The Sequoyah Fund has since expanded to be not only a major source



of business lending but a strategic, regional force in economic development. The offer many different types of business loans with aid

from CPF including: small business loans, expansion loans for existing businesses, and emergency business loans (for unexpected repairs). A hallmark of the Sequoyah Fund has been and will continue to be hands-on training and community-based development efforts, provided through a close partnership with the EBCI Business Development office. Specific programming offered includes:

- ◆ One-on-one assistance with coaching on business start-up and growth
- ◆ Entrepreneurship training via REAL Entrepreneurship curriculum, as well as 4 business start-up courses each year (increasing to 6+ in 2023).
- ◆ A Shark Tank entrepreneurial competition for the area schools is offered annually. This competition allows students to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges. Winners are picked from each school and offered the chance to see their idea come to fruition.
- ◆ Business technical assistance training for hundreds of participants via a weekly Wednesday Webinar series that addresses a different small business topic each week.
- ◆ Provides an app-based TACTIX program designed to help small businesses reach new markets and connect with their customers through digital marketing education.

KEY RESULTS: Sequoyah Fund remains a vital partner for small businesses in the area, providing small loans as well as technical assistance. With the help of Sequoyah Fund, over 900 jobs have been created.

PARTNERS: Sequoyah Fund; Cherokee Business Development Center; Cherokee Central Schools; Community Colleges - Southwestern, Haywood and Tri-County, Small Business Technical Development Center (WCU) and the Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), WRESA.

FINANCIAL LITERACY



APPROACH:
TEACHING YOUTH MONEY MANAGEMENT SKILLS
With the arrival of the casino and the distribution of a percent of profits to enrolled EBCI members, the need for more knowledge about personal finances became critical. **In response, CPF provided funding for Financial Literacy programs. The result is financial**

training which youth receive in school and also must complete before they can access their Tribal earnings.

PROGRESS IN FINANCIAL LITERACY

When the casino was built in Cherokee in 1997, with it came opportunity and resources. A special challenge emerged with the establishment of the Minors Trust Fund, which provides for every EBCI member—from birth—to receive annual earnings that are released in three different disbursements beginning at the age of 18.

Although the format has changed over the years, Financial Literacy has continued to be offered to youth as early as fourth grade on up into adulthood. Many programs are offered. The EBCI finance office provides an online course/module that is necessary before the Initial disbursement of funds from the Minor's Trust Fund. Cherokee Central Schools has a teacher available to assist with this and also requires all students to complete an Economics and Personal Finance course for graduation. Qualla Education Collaborative also hosts a Real Life Expo which includes financial literacy options. The EBCI Finance Office also has an online financial literacy component called StockTrack to help make sense of investing.

Sequoyah Fund offers credit builder classes to prospective borrowers and enrolled members seeking to improve their financial situation.

KEY RESULTS: All EBCI students who are eligible to receive their first disbursement from the Minor's Trust Fund must complete a financial literacy component. They must also either graduate from High School or



Deb Owle, Program Operations Manager, celebrates 20 years at CPF.

Ashley Walkingstick



Brenda Oocumma

The Foundation funds technology tools and related teaching methods to help students in the region be prepared to compete in the global economy.

2016
Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute Established

Charlotte's Web Translated into Cherokee
Kananesgi Pottery Festival

2017
Cultural Exchange
Outstanding Foundation Award



Brenda Oocumma

During the annual Cherokee Day of Caring, Tribal members and other volunteers help neighbors in need in 10 local communities. Partners in the Day of Caring have included EBCI Tribal government, Harrah's Casino, Cherokee Boys Club, and EBCI members.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Cherokee Preservation Foundation provides the funding but it is up to the recipient organizations to implement projects. In an effort to help grantees be as successful as

possible, CPF offers ongoing technical assistance, including skills training in planning, leadership, financial management, and other areas. The Foundation has developed two approaches to strengthening community organizations, based on the different targets they are trying to reach.

SKILL BUILDERS is a series of classes just for local Cherokee leaders, to address needs they identified. The

wait until they are 21 years old to receive funds.

PARTNERS: EBCI Finance, Cherokee Central Schools, Sequoyah Fund, Qualla Education Collaborative (QEC).

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



APPROACH: BROADBAND TECHNOLOGY, CURRICULA AND CULTURE

While preserving Cherokee history and culture is critical, it is also essential to prepare the next generations to think and work effectively in the fast-changing 21st Century. Cherokee Preservation Foundation has made major investments in regional teacher training, and

enhancements to the Cherokee Central School curriculum **The result is more technically savvy students, and stronger curriculum and teachers.**

PROGRESS IN EDUCATION

CPF and CCS has a partnership with Western Region Educational Services Alliance (WRESA) that helps ensure that rural students in western North Carolina can achieve the same levels of learning as students in more urban areas and compete in our global society. Most recently, WRESA has Introduced a mobile STEM lab that can be taken to each area school offering students the ability to use equipment they may not otherwise have access to. In addition to providing equipment, CPF is supporting training among regional educators and students in how to utilize technology in the classroom including Technology in the Classroom conferences, student technology competitions, projects in which students teach educators how to use Web-based tools, and school websites with student-generated content.

During the past, CCS continues to evolve and has moved away from Smartboards and now utilizes Promethean boards in all its classrooms (~150) and in many larger meeting spaces. CCS is 1:1 with student devices, which means every student has access to a computer or tablet. Technology is integrated in each class when and where appropriate. More STEAM activities and programs are incorporated each year. CCS continues to provide ESTEAM camps for CES and CMS students each summer.

In 2015, Cherokee Central Schools developed a unique strategic guiding organization called QEC the Qualla Education Collaborative. This collaborative includes school administration, the Cherokee School Board, Cherokee Boys Club, EBCI Tribal Government, Tribal members, parents, teachers, students, and the Bureau of Indian Education. They guide the school including the Personalized Education Through Blended Learning and ESTEAM initiative. This initiative helped CCS to become a 1:1 district and to infuse more STEAM activities and programs into curricular offerings.

Foundation grants also helped **INFUSE NATIVE CULTURE INTO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING**, with support for a vibrant music program, and traditional art classes with notable programs that support the development



(above) Science camp Medical Mania group doing medical training with Nurse Frances Hess.

(right) Some of the 2021-2022 Smart Tank winners.

of the next generation of double-weave basket makers, as well as new potters & mask carving.

The infusion of Native Culture doesn't stop with the arts. With the inclusion of AISES (American Indian Science and Engineering Society), students now see that careers in these fields are viable options for them. AISES also has worked with CMS and CHS students with STEM activities through a cultural lens. The schools have worked with AISES to develop student presentations for the AISES annual conference that the EBCI hosted a few years ago. Through this collaboration there is now an AISES Chapter in Cherokee.

KEY RESULTS:

- ◆ CCS has more National Board-Certified teachers than most school districts in NC. All teachers are licensed by NC.
- ◆ Student achievement at CCS was negatively affected by the pandemic as was the case across the nation. However, there was a general increase in test scores in 2021-2022.
- ◆ Technology is an active part of learning, and remote classrooms throughout western North Carolina have access to a whole world of information.
- ◆ Cherokee culture is a continuing part of the public school experience on the Qualla Boundary. CCS offers language and culture classes to all grades PrK-12.

PARTNERS: WRESA, Cherokee Central Schools; Southwestern Commission; Swain County Schools, AISES.



Caroline Williamson

2018 Veteran's Project Kanesegi Fashion Show

Skill Builders program now has a nine-course curriculum and was launched in 2009, with the objectives of:

- ◆ Building capacity and capabilities within grantee organizations
- ◆ Increasing individuals' ability to plan projects, achieve best outcomes, and complete projects on time, within budget
- ◆ Applying this learning for community benefit

Renewal of the Ancient Exhibit

Since Skill Builders' inception, there have been 217 enrollments, and Foundation applications and projects have steadily improved as a result.

CPF helped start **WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA NONPROFIT PATHWAYS** in 2006 as a way to provide education and training for leaders of community organizations around the region. The motto of WNC Nonprofit Pathways is "strong organiza-

Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program



Skill Builder participants work on a personality assessment exercise.

Capacity Building continued on p. 10

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION



REVITALIZATION OF TRADITIONAL CHEROKEE ARTISAN RESOURCES (RTCAR)

APPROACH:

EXPANDING NATURAL RESOURCES NEEDED FOR CHEROKEE ARTS

A top priority at the Foundation’s inception was to help protect and expand the making and marketing of Cherokee art and crafts including baskets, pottery and other items that embody and reflect the unique native culture. It was soon determined, however, that developing more artisans meant more resources would be needed and the available river cane, white oak, clay and natural dyes (bloodroot and butternut, among others) were already insufficient. In 2004, this need gave birth to the initiative called Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR), a multi-year investment to help restore the traditional Cherokee balance between maintaining and using natural resources. **Today, the result is a significant increase in awareness about the need for natural resources to support the arts, new partnerships, and a more reliable base of several plants used in Cherokee crafts.**

PROGRESS IN ARTISAN RESOURCES

RTCAR (pronounced “r-t-car”) is different than other focus areas of CPF because it has required creating an initiative with staff, advisory board, and resources versus just giving grant money to an existing organization. The first task of RTCAR was to help people understand the problem and identify partners with the knowledge and skills to help address it. Over the past twenty years, RTCAR has done research and programming on sustainable planting and harvesting techniques, as well as a variety of education efforts from youth classes to bringing experts together to create long-term solutions.

KEY RESULTS:

- ◆ RTCAR has facilitated dozens of harvesting trips on private lands for white oak, rivercane, butternut, hickory, and other resources exclusively for EBCI artisans.
- ◆ RTCAR has modified appeals to grantees based on lessons learned during the first 15 years of work pivoting towards sustainable harvesting



Beth Johnson

of existing resources and expanding the number of harvesting agreements on non-EBCI lands.

- ◆ RTCAR is partnering with EBCI educational organizations, Cherokee Central Schools and Kituah Preservation and Education Program on curriculum development for cross-generational learning and teaching opportunities.
- ◆ RTCAR has partnered with Warren Wilson College who’s students transplant rivercane to areas for future harvest and donate plant material to the EBCI Horticulture Division. Warren Wilson will expand to additional plant and tree species in coming years.
- ◆ RTCAR continues to be a leader at the local, state, regional, and occasionally at the national level regarding natural resources Important to the EBCI, particularly rivercane. RTCAR continues to deliver a wide range of educational talks, lectures, and activities annually.
- ◆ In sum, a new network of environmental organizations is dedicated to building awareness and addressing the needs of EBCI artisans for the next seven generations.

PARTNERS: They include: Chattooga Conservancy, Cherokee Central Schools, Conserving Carolina, EBCI Cultural Resources, EBCI Natural Resources, Haywood Waterways, Kituah Preservation and Education Program, Mainspring Conservation Trust, N.C. Cooperative Extension, U.S. Forest Service, Qualla Arts and Crafts, and Western Carolina University.

A new generation has learned to weave signature Cherokee baskets thanks to RTCAR’s support of Cherokee High School’s basket making program.



Dana Cochran

(Above) Jim Long selects mature river cane for harvesting. (Below) Big Cove Women’s group basket-maker.



Dana Cochran

2019

Community Food Pantry Built
Sleepy Hollow Opens

Cherokee Free Public Wi-Fi

2020

Right Path - Kituwah Ways
COVID Relief Grants

Capacity Building, continued

tions create strong communities.” Pathways’ offerings include Fundamentals courses on core topics (planning, board leadership, advocacy, human resources, financial management, communications, fund development, and evaluation). Other services include on-site tailored consultancies to help organizations address specific needs from financial management to strategic planning. This

“capacity building” support is offered free or low-cost thanks to the funding partnership of CPF and other local philanthropies. Several Cherokee groups have taken advantage of these resources including Cherokee Historical Association, Qualla Arts and Crafts, Vocational Opportunities of Cherokee, and Kituwah Academy.



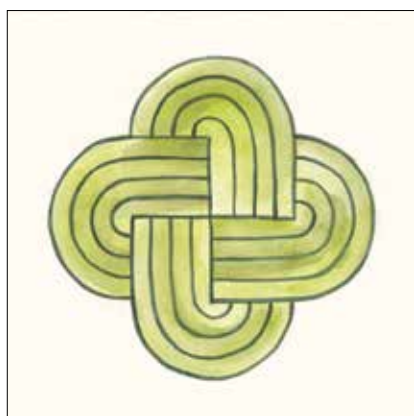
Brenda Oocumma

CPF is a co-founder of WNC Nonprofit Pathways, which helps nonprofits such as the Kituwah Academy strengthen their organizations by building their planning and other skills.



Seeking Paths in Nature partners Cherokee Middle School students with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park

GENERATIONS QUALLA



APPROACH:

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES TO PRESERVE AND RENEW THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

For generations, the Cherokee people have honored their natural environment. Cherokee Preservation Foundation is working alongside the EBCI to continue this practice – through programs that help ensure land is developed appropriately, waste is reduced and

recycled, energy is conserved, and air and water quality are protected.

Today, strategies and leadership are being put in place to expand upon the sustainable energy practices that have been started on the Qualla Boundary.

PROGRESS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In 2008, Cherokee Preservation Foundation launched the Generations Qualla action plan for environmental improvements on the Qualla. Energy efficiency and conservation were key components of the program, with a focus on energy audits and retrofitting of Tribal departments. Approximately 20 buildings now have programmable thermostats and routine HVAC maintenance, as well as new, energy efficient lighting. Many received replacement heat pumps, low-flow bathroom fixtures, replaced or added insulation, weather-stripping and door and window seals, added storm windows and occupancy sensors that control lighting, heat and air.

While the Qualla Boundary-wide program has been in effect, the benefits have been recognized. The program made a big leap with an investment by CPF in a created position of EBCI Energy Manager, who is charged with finalizing and implementing an expansive conservation program on the Qualla Boundary.

KEY RESULTS:

- ◆ More than 40 energy audits were performed on Tribal buildings, and the subsequent upgrades have brought their efficiency up by 30 percent or more.
- ◆ An office-based recycling program has been instituted in Cherokee Tribal programs and departments, spearheaded by the Cherokee Youth Council.
- ◆ Solar panels and wind turbine demonstration projects for the Cherokee Welcome Center were installed, along with kiosks to educate Tribal members and others about renewable energy and other energy efficient options.
- ◆ Cherokee Children's Home relocated to new, energy efficient building. LED lighting, efficient heat pump, tankless water heater, and reduced water consumption has cut energy use by approximately 10%.
- ◆ As a demonstration project, CPF installed solar panels on its own building, which has resulted in savings of nearly \$40,000 over the last several years.
- ◆ As a demonstration project, Cherokee Boys Club has planned to purchase, with support from CPF, four additional electric school buses for its fleet.



Energy efficient HVAC systems at Cherokee Children's Home

Carmen Nations

CHEROKEE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION Grant Making Totals: 20 years—2002-2022

1,466 proposals have been received for a total request of
\$125,899,413

1,160 grants were awarded totaling **\$106,843,231**

AREAS OF FOCUS:

Cultural Preservation: 600 grants = 52%
Economic Development/Employment Opportunities: 336 grants = 30%
Environmental Preservation: 224 grants = 18%

For every \$1 given by CPF, it has been matched by \$1.86, either by secured funds/grants, in-kind or leveraged resources, making our total contribution to the area \$306,381,036.

PARTNERS: EBCI, Cherokee Youth Council; Cherokee Children's Home; Land of Sky Regional Council; Museum of the Cherokee Indian; Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition; Watershed Association of the Tuckasegee River; Southwestern NC Resource Conservation and Development Council; Environmental Defense Fund; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

2021
Qualla Arts & Crafts turns 75

2022
Youth Cultural Exchange Program

Trail of Tears Symposium
Electric School Buses



LOOKING AHEAD

Cherokee Preservation Foundation has spent the past 20 years carrying out a dedicated effort to improve the quality of life on the Qualla Boundary and in the surrounding counties. The preceding pages highlight the many programs and partners that are joining in this work. It is clear that considerable progress has been made in the three focus areas of the Foundation’s philanthropy – Cultural Preservation, Economic Development, and Environmental Preservation.

Today, looking around the community – at the emerging leaders, revitalized downtown, improved cultural attractions, growing artisan traditions, and renewal of indigenous language, among many other things – you can see significant steps forward in protecting and

enhancing the very special lifeways and homeland of the Cherokee. A strong foundation has been built through major investments in planning and implementing projects, and building the infrastructure needed to sustain improvements over the long term.

But the work has just begun. The CPF has been learning from experience and has updated its Strategic Plan to set out goals and strategies for a bright future. In addition, there is an increased expectation of Foundation grantees to work at a higher level of effectiveness. This combination of clear direction and stronger organizations sets the stage for a continuation and expansion of the CPF’s role and impact in Cherokee and the surrounding region.

CHEROKEE PRESERVATION FOUNDATION 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY		
FOCUS AREAS, GOALS, RESULTS AND IMPACT		
FOCUS AREAS AND GOALS	DESIRED RESULTS	IMPACT
CULTURAL PRESERVATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">Expand the learning and use of Cherokee languageSupport the development of “Selfless Leaders” with cultural perspective and values, which becomes intrinsic to tribal decision-making processesEngage youth and adults in learning about and preserving Cherokee culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased knowledge and use of Cherokee language in the community; expanded support of second language learning areasExpand leaders who are grounded in Cherokee core valuesEncourage Cherokee youth and adults to learn about and preserve the Cherokee culture	Improved quality of life for EBCI members and residents of the region
ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify occupations/jobs needed for next 15-20 years and promote business climate that encourages tribal and non-tribal investmentTechnology and skills are in place for a future-ready workforceSupport comprehensive community planningRevitalize Cherokee’s business and cultural districtsContinue development of diverse, high-quality attractions that make Cherokee a vibrant cultural tourism destinationExpand and enhance entrepreneurial business development for youth and adultsDevelop financial literacy programs and outreach through all life stages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Jobs and work environment exists for local people to pursue and attract others to return for quality employment in growing sectorsBroadband use, digital literacy, and 21st Century work skills widely establishedThe future workforce has the requisite skills for modern jobsWell-planned districts, gateways, signage, way-finding, pedestrian access, and transportation routes are established to improve local and visitor experiencesDowntown and cultural districts achieve improved appearance, visitation and revenue through coordinated efforts and business-oriented practicesEffective operation and marketing of cultural attractions produces high-quality experiencesMore locally-owned and operated businesses in targeted sectors; greater variety of products and services available on Qualla BoundaryEBCI members have strengthened financial skills	Strengthened, diversified, and viable local economy
ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with EBCI and others to protect and renew natural resources through effective management practicesExpand raw materials for local artisans and be a resource for perpetuating traditional Cherokee waysExpand environmental education on the Qualla Boundary and in the WNC region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased energy efficiency, alternative energy, recycling, and other environmental initiatives practiced at individual, community and institutional level; more effective land and resource use leading to environmental and economic sustainabilityIncreased artisan and heritage resources available and utilized through community-based projects, convening, training, and data sharingIncreased understanding and use of environmental practices by youth and adults	Engaged and forward-focused community that embraces the Cherokee land and culture
ORGANIZATIONAL AND CAPACITY BUILDING <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure that the CPF and its grantees are effective, creative, and goal-drivenMake CPF mission widely known and understoodMaintain focused, talented, energetic and stable staffMaintain a strong technical capacityIncrease grantee capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Foundation, grantees, and non-profit organizations have leadership (staff and Board) and management practices that produce measurable resultsPeople across the Qualla Boundary and WNC are aware of CPFIncreased cooperation and collaboration among the Foundation and organizations on local and regional projects and issuesStaff development, skills, tools and equipment are in place; high-quality data gathered, available and used to make decisionsWorking with local and regional partners to improve and maintain grant and project quality	The Cherokee Preservation Foundation and local non-profit organizations are creative, effective and mission-driven
MISSION: The Cherokee Preservation Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of life for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and strengthening the Western North Carolina region.		