



NATIVE

oklahoma

MAGAZINE

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CREDITS

NATIVE *oklahoma* MAGAZINE

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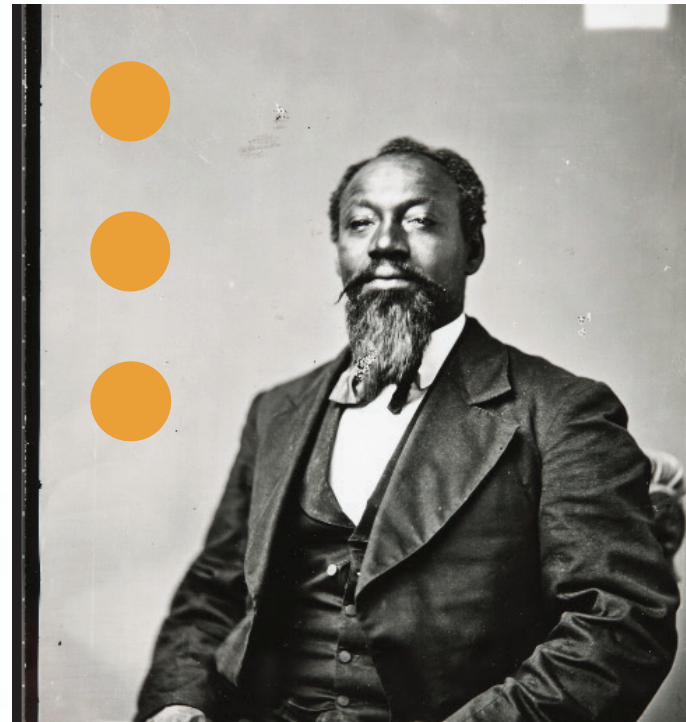
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CONTENTS



04

HOTVLKEMEKKO
SILAS JEFFERSON



17

BETWEEN TWO FIRES



22

LAND STEWARDSHIP AND
INDIGENOUS AGRICULTURE

Native Oklahoma Magazine is a publication not only for the visitor to Oklahoma, but also a resource for our Native community and neighbors. Every month, Native Oklahoma's award-winning writers showcase Native artists, cooks, foods, culture, and crafts, as well as current events and powwows. Our issues include event calendars and lists of Native American attractions across Oklahoma. Native Oklahoma also includes a list of gaming venues, places to stay, and the location of tribal headquarters.



ON THE COVER:

Featured is Hanna Crystal, a Cherokee Potter. She is holding a Make and Take Pottery Class during the month of March. Turn to page 12 to learn more.

04 | SILAS JEFFERSON, CHIEF OF THE WHIRL WIND
Celebrating Black History Month by telling the story of Silas Jefferson

06 | FARMING OUR WAY TO STARVATION
Land Stewardship and Indigenous Agriculture

12 | FESTIVAL OF WORDS
Stephen Graham Jones has been awarded the Festival of Words Writers Award

17 | BETWEEN TWO FIRES
A Best Selling Fiction Book about the Native story of Oklahoma

18 | KWEK SOCIETY
A nonprofit organization addressing period poverty in Indian Country

22 | NATIVE FOODS IN SCHOOL
The founder of Indigikitchen is pushing for the incorporation of more Indigenous foods into school lunch menus

24 | OVERWHELMED TO OVERFLOWING
Here are four daily habits that will help move you from overwhelmed to overflowing

26 | PROTECT EMPLOYEES
See if your business and employees are legally protected



Hotvlke Mekko

Silas Jefferson

Chief of the Whirlwind

In celebration of Black History Month, we take a closer look at Silas Jefferson, featured in these photos from the Gilcrease collection. Silas Jefferson was a Muscogee Freedman and prominent figure in his community. Muscogee Freedmen include both mixed blood Black and Muscogee people and formerly enslaved African Americans that were once owned by tribal citizens during the late 19th century.

Also known by his Mvskoke name, HotvlkeMekko, Jefferson was born in 1835 in Taskigi Tribal Town in Alabama and arrived in Indian Territory three years later when his family was forcibly removed from Mvskoke homelands and made their way west on the Trail of Tears. He claimed Mvskoke citizenship by blood through his mother Betsey McNac, a member of the influential Wind Clan, and became a clan leader as an adult. During the Civil War, he joined the Union as part of the First Indian Home Guard Regiment and later became the only Muscogee Freedman to represent one of the Creek Tribal Towns in council. Significantly, he also served as tribal interpreter and later, as a tribal liaison for Smithsonian Institution anthropologists who sought to learn about Mvskoke life and customs. Silas Jefferson died in 1913 near Beggs, Oklahoma. These photographs of Hotvlke Mekko document the complexities of late 19th century race relations in Indian Territory when Freedmen in the Mvskoke Nation attended segregated schools



Mahota

MAHLI BLANKET

\$320

Sweeping across the center of the blanket is Wind, Mahli, bringing both the fluid curvatures of change and the sharp edges of the unexpected, an integral revival of ancient motifs of Chickasaw mound builders. Wind represents our life's journey; bringing the many changes we go through from the time of birth to the afterlife. It was said in the Chickasaw story of Wind, Aba' Binni'li' knew that eventually, young children would grow up, and the wind would bring this change to them. Mahli blows across the blanket to remind us that change will come, and resilience will always be the way of the Chickasaw people.



Farming Our Way to Starvation:

Indigenous Agriculture and Land Stewardship

Article by Matthew Braunginn

This is part two of a two-part series on how we can prevent the coming collapse of the global food system.

Our relationship with food and water and one another are a large part of why the united states and "western civilization" are breaking at the seams. A (not exhaustive) list includes how our farming techniques destroy the soil and sea life, that food recalls are common, and the way we eat (not only because of what is available) is unhealthy. Creating a revolution of values is a way through this; regenerative practices are actualizing this revolution.

Richard elm-hill, lead program officer from first nations development institute, spoke with daily kos about how communal food is, using cooperative farming as an example. In western cultures you'll often see a farmer's co-op, and the plot will be equally divided up between farmers. But for elm-hill, if "we do everything communally, we're all going to grow together as families, we're all going to share the space."

We're already seeing some of these things break through, such as the growth of urban farming. But that is just a small step to fix what is broken. A different way to think about food access and our relationship with food would be to ask, what if we designed urban environments around community, people, water, and food?

To elm-hill, "you can go into any native community, and they will paint you a picture of a beautiful food system ... societies that are built on top of the foods themselves when you have that deep relationship with the foods, that might be what's missing in modern agriculture."

Many americans are removed from their food: where it comes from, what's in it, how we access it, prepare, and eat it. It's a shallow and transaction-based relationship. Changing our relationship with food is healthier too: according to the american heart association, people who create intentional spaces to share and eat food together live healthier lives.

Regenerative practices don't just link to local interconnected ecosystems but global ones. The amazon rainforest is being cut down to become farms, mostly to feed animals being farmed in a destructive manner, just as fisheries are using wild-captured fish as part of the feed for fish farms. Animals actually play a role in regenerative farming through controlled rotational grazing, helping capture co2, fertilizer from animal waste, and pest management. And when we encourage the biodiversity of animals as opposed to fencing them in, it helps restore the lands and seas around us.



Mahota

THE WHITE
DOG'S PATH

\$350

The Milky Way was known as Ofi' Tohbi' Ihina' (the White Dog's road), and is believed to be the path that deceased Chickasaw tribal members use to travel to the other side. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chickasaw Nation suffered the loss of significant tribal elders who were artists, culture bearers, storytellers, language speakers, and song leaders. Through mourning the loss of loved ones, comfort is found, knowing that Ofi' Tohbi' Ishto' was waiting to lead them on into the next world, and reunite them with loved ones that have passed on. The stars honor those that have passed on and visualize their journey as Ofi' Tohbi' Ishto' awaits to accompany our Chickasaw people once again.



In partnership with indigenous nations

There are dangers as these practices scale. Major food giants general mills and kellogg company are partnering with organizations talking about regenerative practices, and while the companies adopt the technical aspects of regenerative farming, they leave behind the social and philosophical, replicating colonialism and the current flawed systems. While using techniques to “restore” the land, differentiating from sustainable agriculture, this branding is not restorative. It fails to engage indigenous populations and incorporate native land stewardship, it doesn’t change america’s relationship to food, and it’s more focused on the restoration of farming plots than the wider ecosystem. Put it this way: it primarily focuses on each farm, not what is down or even upriver and how it all interconnects.

Regenerative practices should only be adopted with engagement and partnership with indigenous people and nations. There is a link between adopting indigenous regenerative practices and landback calls. Landback is part of a more significant decolonization movement that calls for what the name suggests: returning stolen land. The nuance of it is important too; it’s about the sovereignty of native nations, having stewardship over their own lands and national parks, having power over practices that harm their (and our lands), and embracing a cooperative relationship with each other and our shared land.

Regenerative practices are further explained in this teen vogue piece by ruth hopkins, where nick tilsen, president and ceo of ndn collective, expounds: “we’re going to get back to prioritizing the relationship between the land and the people, rather than thinking about the land as just something that we should extract from for the purposes of money and power. We’re reclaiming our inherent right to assume control, protection, and stewardship of these lands.”

Stewardship is crucial. Marco hatch, an associate professor of environmental science at western washington university and a member of the samish indian nation, explains to daily kos, “these are our areas we’ve stewarded for millennia, and this is reclaiming our place on the tideline of the beach. In often large, visible ways this is an acknowledgment that indigenous people have maintained and managed intertidal ecosystem beaches [where the ocean meets the land, with high or low tides] for thousands of years, and it’s a restoration of that practice.”

Where these practices are being developed, a lot can be learned. The lesson of nature’s resilience should not be lost. In drought-affected parts of mexico, regenerative practices have created resilience and healed the soil from its past poor state. Dimitri selibas of mongabay (a nonprofit conservation and environmental science news platform), writes about how regenerative practices have restored fields to the point where enough water is in the subsoil to last for 40 days of drought, where before, crops would be destroyed before they could grow.

Regeneration is possible in the sea too; coral reefs can heal as well when human interference is prevented. As much as our practices have been destructive, if we change how we engage with our planet, it can heal and actively help us.



How we need to change

Regenerative is about breaking down walls and decentering humans, instead seeing us as one piece—with immense effect—of a complex ecosystem. And it’s about how our governments need to be willing to engage with native governments.

Elm-hill emphasizes the sovereignty of native nations, saying a “key part of having sovereignty is that you’re in a nation-to-nation relationship.” This relationship applies to regenerative practices being adopted, as elm-hill continues, “because a lot of coastal tribes or waterway located tubes have a good understanding of what that ecosystem looks like in a healthy state, there should be a lot of asking when we’re looking at specific parts of say, the coast. You know: what’s happening here, what are the changes, what do you see, what do you want to happen?”

Governments must consult early with tribes when making decisions on natural resources, and tribal governments should be treated as equal partners in the stewardship of this land. What could this look like? California has just passed land stewardship of 200 miles of coastland back to five different tribes in the state, and in early 2022, the california state government did the same with their redwood

forests. U.S. National parks are increasingly seeing co-stewardship between indigenous peoples and the national parks service, with currently over 80 such agreements in place. This progress is just the start of what the governments of the united states need to do.

Individually, we can take collective steps, especially for those of us who are not indigenous. Elm-hill says the first step is for us to learn native and global indigenous history and culture. I “think there’s a lot to be said in learning the history, whatever tribe where you live, that was, is or was their land, go read about them and go read everything you can. ... Once you have that knowledge base, you’re going to run into what was done on the land, what was the food system, you’re going to run into all the injustices, some badass leaders and characters, you’re going to cry a little bit, you’re going to know how you feel about your place in that space. If you don’t come in having done that history work, it’s kind of at your own loss.”

Food can be a shared resource

One of the biggest lessons from regenerative agriculture is seeing the genuinely diverse ways to be human. Food doesn't have to be a scarce and controlled resource but instead a communal one. Instead of thinking about resources as something

to extract, control, and hold power over, they are something to cultivate and share.

It is incumbent upon us to recognize the failures of these western systems and practices and to see our failing ecosystems, social connections, and social health as rooted in these dominant systems and practices. The failures of these systems have always been

pointed at those the systems oppress the most: global indigenous peoples, immigrants, black people, and other marginalized groups.

So we must learn, read, and study those who understand this.



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STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES

FESTIVAL OF WORDS AWARD WINNER

Stephen Graham Jones (Blackfeet) will receive the Tulsa Library Trust's "Festival of Words Writers Award" March 4, 2023 at 10:30 a.m., in Connor's Cove at Hardesty Regional Library, 8316 E. 93rd St. A book signing will follow. This event is free and open to the public.

Stephen Graham Jones is the New York Times bestselling author of nearly 30 horror and sci-fi novels and collections including *The Only Good Indians*, *Don't Fear the Reaper*, *My Heart Is a Chainsaw*, *Mapping the Interior* and *Mongrels*. His new comic-book series *Earthdivers*, launching in October 2022 by IDW, is set in an apocalyptic near future where four Indigenous survivors embark on a bloody, one-way mission to save the world by traveling back in time to kill Christopher Columbus and prevent the creation of America.

Jones has received numerous awards and honors including the Ray Bradbury Award from the Los Angeles Times, the Bram Stoker Award, Mark Twain American Voice in Literature Award, the Shirley Jackson Award, the Jesse Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction from the Texas Institute of Letters, the Independent Publishers Award for Multicultural Fiction and the Alex Award from American Library Association.

He is the Ivena Baldwin professor of English at the University of Colorado Boulder and a member of the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation of Montana. He lives in Boulder, Colo.

Inaugurated in 2001, the American Indian Festival of Words Writers Award recognizes written contributions of outstanding American Indian authors, poets, journalists, film and stage scriptwriters. It is the first and only award given by a public library to honor an American Indian writer. The award is given in odd-numbered years. Recipients receive a \$10,000 cash prize, provided by the Tulsa Library Trust and the Maxine and Jack Zarrow Family Foundation.

Previous winners include: 2001, Joy Harjo (Muscogee Creek); 2003, Vine Deloria Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux); 2005, Leslie Marmon-Silko (Laguna Pueblo); 2007, Carter Revard (Osage); 2011, LeAnne Howe (Choctaw); 2013, Sterlin Harjo (Seminole/Muscogee Creek); 2015, Joseph Bruchac (Abenaki); 2017, Tim Tingle (Choctaw); 2019, Laura Tohe (Diné, Tsénahabíłnii, Sleepy Rock People clan, and born for the Tódich'íinii, Bitter Water clan) and 2021, Tommy Orange (Cheyenne/Arapaho).

Throughout March, TCCL's American Indian Resource Center will present programming featuring cultural, educational and informational resources highlighting American Indian Culture



Yuchi Language Class

March 6, 20, 27, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Location: Zarrow Regional Library, South Meeting Room

Any and all skill levels are welcome to join this language revitalization class, led by Yuchi language instructor Brent Deo from the zOyaha School of Language.

Kiowa Language Class

March 7, 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Zoom, <https://events.tulsalibrary.org/events>.

Registration closes 24 hours before class.

Learn the beautiful language of the Kiowa people. This class is taught by the Kiowa Language & Culture Revitalization Program of the Kiowa Tribe. Registration is required. Registration closes 24 hours before class. For

Take and Make: 3D Turtle Kits

March 6-31 or as long as kits last!

Location: Maxwell Park Library, 1313 N. Canton

The turtle bounces! The turtle can stick its head in and out of its shell! Enjoy a creative 3D Maker Space AIRC turtle craft kit. Stop by and pick one up from March 6-31 or as long as kits last!

Make and Take: Cherokee Pottery

March 14, 2 p.m. – Judy Z. Kishner Library, 10150 N. Cincinnati Ave. E., Sperry

Join Cherokee potter Crystal Hanna for native stories and a hands-on workshop. Materials provided. Class size is limited. Registration is required. Please call 918-549-7323 to reserve your spot.

Dancing Eagles

March 15, 3:30 p.m.

Location: Broken Arrow Library, 300 W. Broadway

The Pahsetopah's will perform spectacular Native American dances and traditional storytelling. This entertaining and educational performance will include specialty, traditional and social dances. Audience participation is encouraged.

Make and Take: Basket Making I

March 16, 10:30 a.m.

Location: Charles Page Library, 551 E. Fourth St., Sand Springs

Join Choogie Kingfisher to learn the art of making a single-walled Cherokee basket. This program is for ages 3rd grade and up, younger participants will need parent supervision. Class size is limited. Registration is required. Please call 918-549-7323 to reserve your spot.

Talking with Hands with Mike Pahsetopah

March 16, 2 p.m., Brookside Library, 1207 E. 45th Place

Learn the endangered sign language that tribes used to communicate with other tribes in the 1800's.

Storytelling with Will Hill: Omulget!

March 16, 3:30-4:30 p.m. - Kendall-Whittier Library, 21 S. Lewis

Stories of how the animals work together. All ages welcome.

Make and Take: Pony Bead Creations

March 18, 2 p.m. - Schusterman-Benson Library, 3333 E. 32nd Place

Join Stella Foster as she brings pony beads to life with fun and colorful crafts! Registration required. Please register at <https://events.tulsalibrary.org/events>. Registration closes 24 hours ahead of class.

Make and Take: Beaded Ornament

March 25, 12-3 p.m.

Location: Zarrow Regional Library, South Meeting Room, 2224 W. 51st St.

Join Dode Barnett in this 3-hour class as she teaches how to make 2 beaded Christmas tree ornaments; a mini and regular sized ornament. It's a fun, contemporary application of a traditional Mvskoke beading technique. Materials provided. Class size limited. Register online at <https://events.tulsalibrary.org/events>. Registration closes 24 hours before class.

Native Culture Arts: Comanche Bow and Arrows with Willie Pekah

YouTube

Learn about Willie Pekah's journey to bow and arrow making. Beginning Monday, March 6 at 8 a.m. Watch on TCCL's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/TulsaLibrary.

Native Culture Arts: Cooking Traditional Foods with Carol Tiger

YouTube

Join Carol Tiger as she demonstrates how to make fried pork and wild onions! Beginning Monday, March 6 at 8 a.m. Watch on TCCL's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/TulsaLibrary.

For more information on library programming

call the AskUs Hotline, 918-549-7323

or visit the library's website,
www.tulsalibrary.org



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BETWEEN TWO FIRES

“OIL, THEFT, AND MURDER IN THE MAGIC CITY”

“BEST SELLING FICTION BOOK IN OKLAHOMA”

SOUR SOFKEE BY FUS YVHIKV

Native banker and author, J.D. Colbert (Chickasaw/Muscogee-Creek/Cherokee/Potawatomi) and Red Bird Publishing recently held a book launch for the historical fiction thriller, *Between Two Fires: The Creek Murders and the Birth of the Oil Capital of the World*. The event was hosted by the Tulsa Historical Society and co-sponsored by Magic City Books of Tulsa, OK. Colbert spoke to a standing-room-only crowd. Mr. Colbert was introduced by renowned author, Connie Cronley. *Between Two Fires* is presently the best-selling fiction book in Oklahoma.

Set in the 1920s, *Between Two Fires* powerfully tells the story of the extreme injustices perpetrated upon the non-English speaking original Indian land allottees of the early 20th century in the former Indian Territory. The book focuses on the experience of the Muscogee-Creek allottees in the Glenn Pool near Tulsa. In the early 1900s, the Glenn Pool was the world's largest reservoir of oil.

The narrative of *Between Two Fires* encompasses the forced allotment of communal tribal lands by the Dawes Commission, the tragic Indian boarding school experience, compulsory assimilation, and the catastrophic effect upon allottees of the discovery of vast pools of oil on Indian lands. The book shows how the Indian guardianship system was systematically employed to despoil the Native population of their lands and oil wealth. The esteemed historian Dr. Angie Debo correctly labeled this situation as a grand conspiracy to murder and defraud the Native allottees.

Against this backdrop, *Between Two Fires* weaves a passionate and tempestuous love story between the Creek half-breed, Sam Davis, and Zitkala-Sa, a Lakota-Creek Indian rights activist. As Sam and Zitkala carry on a stormy and turbulent romance, they discover a conspiracy to steal valuable Indian lands in the Glenn Pool. The trail leads to powerful Tulsa Mayor John Simmons and his oil baron cronies. As Sam and Zitkala battle the mayor, and each other, the half-breed Sam struggles to find his identity.

“A gripping and engaging tale of oil, theft, and, murder in the Magic City” – Native Oklahoma Magazine.

J.D. Colbert has been a columnist for several Indigenous publications including *The Hownikan* (Citizen Potawatomi Nation), *The Chickasaw Times* (Chickasaw Nation), and *Native Oklahoma Magazine*. He has written many op/eds and has contributed numerous articles to a wide variety of publications. He was raised among Muscogee-Creek full-bloods and traditionalists.

Between Two Fires may be purchased through Amazon.com or at www.jdcolbert.com. Mr. Colbert may be reached through his website. People may register their email addresses to be advised of future book releases and upcoming events. Mr. Colbert is available for interviews and author talks.



2022 a record year for The Kwek Society

By: Rachel Vishanoff, Citizen Potawatomi Nation Public Information Department

The Kwek Society, founded in 2018 by CPN District 2 Legislator and humanitarian immigration lawyer Eva Marie Carney, is a nonprofit organization addressing period poverty in Indian Country. In 2022, the organization saw several significant expansions in partnerships and services rendered as well as media coverage and recognition for their work.

The Kwek Society supports the dignity and health of Indigenous students and community members by providing a wide range of menstrual products, puberty education materials and traditional teachings about puberty and “moon times.” Though the organization initially focused on rural reservations, it expanded quickly to reach cities and suburbs. It now partners with nearly 100 schools, clubs and nonprofit organizations assisting Indigenous communities throughout North America. Among its board members are six CPN citizens: Susie Howard (VT), Kimberly Chatfield Pratt (VA), Pam Vrooman (OK), Kathy Meacham Webb (TN), Paige Willett (OK), and Tesia Zientek (OK).

In August, the organization surpassed 1 million supplies donated, reaching nearly 1.3 million by the end of 2022.

Also in August, the organization was named one of 50 “Period Heroes” throughout the United States by Walmart and Always. The recognition came with a substantial donation of Always pads, which The Kwek Society distributed to school districts in New Mexico, Oklahoma and Wyoming.

18 | February 2023 | NATIVEOKLAHOMA.US

Native News Online’s coverage (cpn.news/nnokwek) of the organization foregrounded community members’ points of view and advocacy, which excited founder Eva Marie Carney.

“Hearing directly from those we are supporting is so valuable,” she said.

2022 brought growth in funding partnerships as well, including several different sovereign Nations. Carney noted that a number of Potawatomi Nations, including CPN, have stepped up to offer ongoing support.

“That was always my idea — to obtain support from Native Nations,” she said. “And we certainly see that many of our individual donors are Native people who want to help their relatives, and I think that has been one of the reasons that we’ve been able to continue to grow.”

Most recently, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation’s contributions helped to fund The Kwek Society’s new partnership with Haskell Indian Nations University — their first university partner — as well as other schools and organizations throughout Turtle Island.

PERIOD POVERTY

The term “period poverty” refers to a lack of access to menstrual products, education and other menstrual management necessities and often affects isolated and impoverished individuals and communities most. In turn, this lack of resources inhibits many menstruators from returning to work or school and — if menstruators are forced to turn to toilet paper, rags or socks — can result in serious health issues.

“Period poverty is an unjust, unconscionable problem across North America, not just in Indian Country,” Carney said. “As many as one in four students in the United States can’t afford needed period supplies.”

Over 500 million menstruators globally lack access to proper menstrual products and hygiene facilities, and an estimated 16.9 million people who menstruate live in poverty in the United States, according to a 2021 Medical News Today report.

Poverty impacts Native communities at an outsized rate compared to other racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. — 24.3 percent according to 2021 U.S. Census data — due to centuries of systemic impoverishment and isolation by the U.S. federal government.

“I think a lot of people overlook just how much inequality and poverty there still is in the United States,” said Tribal member and Kwek Society supporter Emily Rosewitz. “A lot of people choose to do missions and choose to do a lot of their work abroad, and that is fabulous. But I think it’s really important to look at our own communities and see where we can help and where we can raise up the people in our

The Kwek Society, she added, “does a big job while still having a very local feel. It’s very hands on and very intimate. We are helping out women and girls in our own communities, even though our community is spread all across North America.”

The Kwek Society board member Winona Elliot resides in Neyaashiinigiing First Nation, one of the largest Potawatomi settlements in Canada, located on the Bruce Peninsula. She works professionally in the Native child welfare sector.

Elliot has facilitated partnerships between The Kwek Society and four First Nations and five community organizations in her area. She spoke with the Hownikan about the barriers to period supply access that impact the groups in Ontario that The Kwek Society serves.

Particularly in northern Ontario, period supplies present an enormous financial burden, ranging in price from CA\$15-20 (US, \$11-15) per box. One of the First Nations partners is located on a small island in Gregorian Bay, and others are fly-in communities. The geographic isolation exacerbates lack of ready access to period products. The coronavirus pandemic only compounded those barriers.

“Because kids were out of school, that meant there was more need of accessing services through child services and community health organizations,” Elliot said.



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Financial difficulties also increased as many people lost wages.

DIGNITY FIRST

The Kwek Society centers dignity and celebration in its mission.

“We wanted to make it be centered on the dignity of people and not on the poverty and the indignities that some Native people suffer,” Carney said.

“We started out with the idea that our communications with and about the students and community members we serve would be filled with celebration. Celebration of the varied skills, interests and qualities of the young folks that we are helping and making sure that they have what they need so that they can continue to be awesome.”

The Kwek Society’s “moon time” bags are beautiful handsewn bags filled with menstrual products intended as a gift for students who are entering puberty. While The Kwek Society offers a variety of puberty education materials, it offers these as suggestions and resources only — not directives — to the schools and partners the organization serves, foregrounding the agency of each community and individual to make the decisions right for them when it comes to puberty education.

“The feedback from the kids who receive our puberty education materials is that they feel so ready and neither worried nor ashamed of what’s about to happen,” Carney said. “And that’s exactly where we hope to be.”

The Kwek Society also collects traditional teachings and moon time stories on its website (kweksociety.org/learn) and includes these in its periodic newsletters, in celebration of the sacred moon time of menstruation and menarche. Tribal members are invited to explore the shared wisdom held there and to contribute their own stories to the collection.

“Starting your period is such a momentous thing,” Rosewitz said. “Whether you’re able to participate in any of our traditional ceremonies surrounding it or not, you really do change sort of how you fit into the world once you get your period. ... I think it’s really important being able to give girls the space to sit with themselves and learn more about their bodies and learn about who they are and not have to worry about ‘Where am I going to get my next tampon?’ or ‘Where am I going to get my next pad?’”

Elliot shared her motivations include a “big love and compassion for helping out, especially helping my sisters, my little sisters.”

"This is a very sacred time," she said. "And if we can support that and educate our women and little sisters on the importance of our moon time and what that means to us and having the appropriate supplies... I like that we can more openly talk about it and push for change and even educate our young brothers about that important time in a woman's life. So to me, it's not hard. It's heart work."

NEXT STEPS

Carney views the present moment as a critical juncture in the growth of The Kwek Society.

"I think we're getting to the point of really needing to take the organization to the next level," she said. "But most importantly ... it needs to grow beyond me, and I'm still trying to figure out how to do that."

One step in that direction is the election of a new board president, which took place in December 2022. Barbara Hannigan now serves as president, with Tribal member Paige Willett elected as vice-president. Carney now serves exclusively as founder and executive director, a change that allows the organization to compete for certain funding only available to nonprofits with independent boards. Carney is also searching for a staff member to share in the responsibilities of running the organization.

She encourages Tribal members to take part in The Kwek Society's work, and welcomes connections with school nurses,

administrators, program directors and community health workers who would like to bring The Kwek Society to their organization.

Carney and Elliot also encourage readers to get involved directly in their local communities combatting period shame and period poverty by holding supply drives, connecting The Kwek Society with schools and organizations that need assistance, and continuing to hold open conversations about periods and period poverty.

"More hands make for light work," Elliot said.

"Talking about periods and addressing period poverty are two ways to make a difference in the lives of kwe'k (women)," Carney said.

The Kwek Society welcomes support through a variety of avenues listed at kweksociety.org/support. The Kwek Society is a 501(c)3 incorporated in Virginia. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Visit The Kwek Society online at kweksociety.org. Get updates on Instagram @TheKwekSociety and on Facebook and Twitter @KwekSociety. Sign up to receive the organization's email newsletter at cpn.news/tksnews.

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Originally painted on deerskin, The Chickasaw Map of 1723 is an important visual of Chickasaw history as it illustrates how the world was viewed by our ancestors. The map outlines in an artistic way, waterways, trade routes, and the relationships with other tribes at that time. Experiences and memory were depended on by the Chickasaw people who knew what lay beyond the southeast region, which was coveted by colonists who needed maps. The Chickasaw Map is credited to Fani' Minko' (Squirrel Leader or Squirrel King), a Chickasaw warrior and leader.

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Coming soon: More Native foods in the National School Lunch Program

The founder of Indigikitchen is pushing for the incorporation of more Indigenous foods into school lunch menus

BY LELA NARGI

On a day of -38 temperatures and frigid winds gusting across the Northern Great Plains, Mariah Gladstone fed the wood stove at her home in Montana as she shared details about her recent professional passion project. The founder of online Indigenous cooking show Indigikitchen has recently released a toolkit that, with funding from nonprofit Montana No Kid Hungry, is designed to help school food service directors figure out how to incorporate more Indigenous foods into their menus. Gladstone believes it's an important step in getting more culturally appropriate ingredients into meals at Native schools throughout the U.S.

"I really want to look at how can we reincorporate local ancestral foods in ways that makes sense in our daily lives, and obviously school meal programs are a huge place for that conversation to occur," she said. Although her toolkit is state-specific, as is a similar one put out by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "What I would really love to do is create a living resource so food service directors across the country who have incorporated Native foods [into recipes] can contribute those to a library of recipes that other food service directors are able to use."

22 | February 2023 | NATIVEOKLAHOMA.US

Montana has seven reservations (and one "landless tribe") that are home to 78,000 members of 12 Indigenous communities, including Sioux, Chippewa Cree, and Salish (Gladstone is Blackfeet and Cherokee). Food insecurity rates in these places are high, as they are in other Native communities; one reason behind the recent push towards greater Indigenous food sovereignty is to counteract this and other health challenges that come along with what Gladstone calls "a Western European bias for a lot of the current nutritional guidelines that has also been heavily influenced by certain food industry lobbies."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which in past years has assisted such attempts with, for example, the development of a manual for helping ranchers transition to bison from cattle, has also announced new initiatives to promote Native food sovereignty. These include food foraging and seed-saving resources, as well as \$2.2 million to extend "self-determination demonstration projects" to allow for tribally-procured foods within the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR); this replaces SNAP (formerly food stamp) benefits in places without easy access. According to Heather Dawn Thompson, director of USDA's Office of Tribal Relations, "Tribal nations have been really clear with Secretary [Tom Vilsack] and USDA that they see food security [intertwined with] food sovereignty and that they want to not be dependent upon external entities and agencies providing food to them, but to be able to grow that food locally and provide for themselves."

Her office is also in informal conversation with Gladstone and said it is "supportive" her work to "increase Indigenous foods in school lunch programs." Practically, this support might include providing information, resources and reducing barriers to getting more Indigenous foods into more meal programs. "We are trying to be respectful of, blue corn and mutton are very important in

the Southwest, and wild rice and white fish in the Great Lakes, and bison and venison and wild turnips in the Great Plains, and moose and seal and salmon in Alaska and the northwest," Thompson said. "One of the challenges is that it's multifaceted; how do we make sure that the programs are flexible enough to incorporate the regionality of these Indigenous foods?"

With USDA newly challenged by Secretary Vilsack to re-imagine its work from an Indigenous perspective, said Thompson, Gladstone hopes to see better, perhaps even quicker growth for her and others' so far "scrapped-together" efforts — which includes building off some foundational local food work already accomplished by Farm to School. "Having [USDA] interested and invested in this conversation is huge because that immediately helps build momentum and gather interest and reduce hurdles," she said.

On her website, Gladstone offers six recipes, for patties made of wild rice, turkey and cranberry, Pumpkin Lentil Soup, and Bison Chili, for example — simple, delicious dishes in proportions that can feed 50 kids in a cafeteria setting. Even though many Native foods can be, and are, served in school meals, the toolkit shows where the complexity of incorporating them lies. In the guide, Gladstone, who said she uses her bachelor's degree in engineering "just to calculate USDA requirements," explores how to properly credit calories and nutritional value for ingredients like buffalo berries or salmon, and to plan and standardize menus — in addition to finding local traditional foods in the first place.

For example, "stinging nettle plants can be cooked like spinach and they taste basically like sweet spinach. But you have to do your own work on how they're credited, to say this counts for one half-cup . . . as part of the vegetable requirement, specifically in the dark green category," Gladstone explained.

Another, slightly trickier example: the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) "has a requirement for whole grains, but a lot of Indigenous communities are not eating whole grains in the way that's defined by USDA. Rather, there was a lot more consumption of starchy root vegetables, so being able to credit things like camas root or prairie turnips as whole grains adds more flexibility into that whole grain requirement because you're seeing a very similar macronutrient breakdown."



Trickier still are substitutions in places around the Arctic Circle, with their short growing seasons and few vegetables. People there "were eating a lot of organ meat to get a lot of those vitamins and nutrients — that's not something that we do in school meal programs — so there's an interesting balance of navigating what the USDA requirements are with how Indigenous people traditionally got their nutrients, and it's hard to change the requirements for crediting in that way."

Thompson acknowledges these intricacies. "There are of course nutrition guidelines. There are food buying guidelines, which outline the nutritional aspects of all the foods that are served to help guide schools in what they can and can't serve. And there are the inspection requirements...to make sure that our children are eating safe foods," she said. "All of those were designed without fully thinking through how different Indigenous foods are nutritionally, and how Indigenous foods are slaughtered or harvested differently." In process now is a "rethinking" of challenges and requirements that don't require statutory changes by Congress. "None of it's complete, but we're in a very different place than we were 10 years ago," Thompson said. The biggest menu change, which would require Congressional interference, has to do with the milk requirement. About 80% of Indigenous individuals are lactose intolerant so, "We got calcium through other sources — bone broth, wood ashes, things like that," said Gladstone. "But if I were to say that you had to have a teaspoon of wood ashes with every meal, even though that calcium is the same as a cup of milk and it's more absorbable by your body, people would freak the heck out."

Other hurdles remain to more broadly Indigenizing school meals, such as giving greater support to food service staff in transitioning to new ingredients and building up local processing facilities to keep local food truly local rather than shipping it off to be sold back to communities at a higher cost. But Gladstone's still optimistic both about what's so far been accomplished in making school meals more Native food-centric, as well as the future of her mission. School nutrition directors are asking, "What Native foods should we be adding to our lists? What do we need to get the nutrition information on? How do we put this in our resource so that everyone knows how it can be credited?" Gladstone said. "That's really exciting."

Overwhelmed to Overflowing

"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me. If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers. They gather them, throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples."

—John 15:5-8

It's better to rest in God's goodness than to be overwhelmed with work and worry. But it's also easier said than done. It can be hard to take the steps that lead to rest and the abundant life God has for you.

Here are four daily habits that will help move you from overwhelmed to overflowing.

1. Stay connected to Jesus every day. "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without me." -John 15:5

If you try to go through life on your own power, you're going to be overwhelmed. You cannot fulfill your purpose and enjoy God's goodness unless you're plugged in to his power.

2. Replace your complaining with gratefulness. "Do everything without grumbling and arguing," —Philippians 2:14

Complaining is a deeply unhealthy emotion. On the other hand, studies have shown that gratitude is the healthiest emotion.

3. Stop being stingy, and start being generous. "Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house. Test me in this way," says the Lord of Armies. "See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure." —Malachi 3:10

God wired a universal law into the world: The more you give away, the more you're going to get. God did that because he wants you to become more like him—and he is a giver.

4. Stop comparing, and start being content. "Better one handful with rest than two handfuls with effort and a pursuit of the wind." —Ecclesiastes 4:6

Contentment doesn't mean you don't have any goals, dreams, or plans for your life. It simply means you don't need more in order to be happy.

By nature, people are discontent. But by God's grace, you can rest contently in his goodness to you. When you grasp that most things in your life are simply gracious gifts from God, your life will go from overwhelming to overflowing with God's abundance.

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It is essential for any business to have legal protection in place to safeguard both the business and its employees. One of the main reasons for this is to protect the business from potential lawsuits. Without proper legal protection, a business could be at risk of being sued for a variety of reasons, such as discrimination, sexual harassment, wrongful termination, or breach of contract. This can result in costly legal fees and settlements, as well as damage to the business's reputation.

In addition to protecting the business, legal protection is also important for the well-being of the employees. A business that has proper legal protection in place is more likely to have policies and procedures that protect employees from discrimination, harassment, and other forms of mistreatment. This not only creates a safer work environment, but it also helps to attract and retain quality employees.

Another important aspect of legal protection is compliance with state and federal laws. Businesses are required to comply with a wide range of laws and regulations, such as labor laws, health and safety regulations, and environmental laws. Failure to comply with these laws can result in fines, penalties, and even criminal charges. Legal protection helps businesses stay compliant with these laws and avoid costly legal issues.

An affordable option for legal coverage is through a pre-paid legal services subscription with PPLSI. PPLSI has protected families and businesses for 50 years and was founded in Oklahoma. There are a variety of plans to fit your business needs, including legal plans for business formation and support for startups. There's also an option that offers security and privacy monitoring, provides essential layers



every business needs to identify, protect, detect, respond, and recover from a cyberattack and potential data breaches, along with consultation and restoration services. There are full-time, licensed private investigators, which is an additional benefit that many other identity theft protection services do not provide. Additionally, there's an option for employers to offer pre-paid legal services as an employee benefit for their employees.

In summary, legal protection is essential for any business to protect both the business and its employees from potential legal issues. It also helps businesses stay compliant with state and federal laws, which can save you from costly penalties and fines. By having legal protection in place,

businesses can focus on what they do best – running their business and serving their customers and communities.

Disclaimer: This is not any form of legal advice but for education purposes and sharing affordable options for coverage offered by Independent Associate, Michele Meza with Luksi Coaching and Consulting, LLC.

If you'd like to protect your business and employees, please visit: www.mdeann.wearelegalshield.com for details.





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