

7TH ANNUAL NTCSA Conference: *Strengthening Families and Enhancing the Lives of Native American Children*



July 22 – 26, 2007 – Oklahoma City, OK

The Chickasaw Nation Tribal Child Support Agency was the host for another fantastic tribal child support conference held at the Cox Convention Center in downtown Oklahoma City. Once again, this year's conference was loaded with informative workshops and abundant opportunities for networking.

The three-day conference had over thirty workshops and plenaries on topics ranging from Casework 101, Tribal Sovereignty, Indian Child Welfare and Child Support to legal topics including how to write your child support codes and the infamous Mock Court.

The conference week concluded with a banquet of delicious food and an awards ceremony recognizing a few of the many dedicated tribal child support professionals.

Karen Thomas, Attorney for the Chickasaw Nation Child Support Services agency wrote the following:

"On July 25, 2007, the NTCSA 7th Annual Training Conference Awards Dinner provided an evening of fellowship, good food, and inspiring entertainment for all attendees. The Awards Dinner was held in the second floor ballroom of the Cox Convention Center in Oklahoma City.

After providing the opening remarks for the Awards Dinner and offering best wishes to all from The Chickasaw Nation, sponsors of this year's conference, Jay Keel, Division Administrator for the Chickasaw Nation Division of Youth & Family Services introduced The Chickasaw Nation Princesses. The princesses, dressed in traditional Chickasaw costume, performed an interpretation of the Lord's Prayer. Mr. Keel followed by leading the attendees in the invocation.

Norman Willow, conference attendee and Business Council member of the Arapaho Tribe, described overcoming his difficulties in battling cancer and the loss of a kidney and the importance of his faith in recovering. Mr. Willow offered prayers to lift the burden of suffering for all, including the Native American children assisted by tribal child support agencies.



Following the prayers, Tracy Rattlingourd Littledave, President of the NTCSA, presented the following five award categories:

Lucille Dawson Award for Professional Excellence for an individual child support program worker going above and beyond to promote and enhance tribal child support enforcement efforts went to Tiffany Hopper, Manager for Chickasaw Nation Child Support Enforcement Services.

Left: Tracy Rattlingourd Littledave / NTCSA President

Partnership Award for Professional Excellence was awarded to Chickasaw Nation Child Support Services for its partnership with the NTCSA to promote tribal child support enforcement programs and efforts nationwide.

Judges' Award for Professional Excellence was awarded to Judge Charles Tripp for his efforts in supporting tribal child support enforcement.

President's Award is provided to recognize the efforts of an individual making an exceptional effort in child support enforcement. This award was given to Stacey Koski, Child Support Specialist for Keweenaw Bay Tribal Child Support Services. Tami Lorbecke, Director for Keweenaw Bay Tribal Child Support Services, accepted the award on behalf of Ms. Koski.



Above: Cassandra McGilbray, Chickasaw Nation IV-D Director & Jay Keel, Chickasaw Nation Youth and Family Services Administrator

Outstanding Tribe Award recognizes a tribe showing outstanding leadership and willingness to assist all tribes in ensuring that the needs of children are met. This award went to Port Gamble Sklallam Tribe for its exemplary efforts.



Upon conclusion of the awards ceremony, the Chickasaw Nation Honor Guard led the Retiring of the Flags. Afterward, attendees were treated to a visual kaleidoscope of movement by the Chickasaw Nation Youth Dance Troupe, headed by Roman Kilcrease of The Chickasaw Nation Cultural Resources Department. Dancers outfitted in traditional Chickasaw costume consisting of vibrant colors trimmed in flowing ribbons and beadwork performed a variety of dances for the audience in conclusion of a rewarding and inspirational evening."

As we said our farewells at the conclusion of the Annual Business meeting on Thursday, plans were already underway for the 2008 conference.