

The **NASNTI** Monthly



February 2023

Watch a Virtual Tour of the Access Lab

Virtual Tour

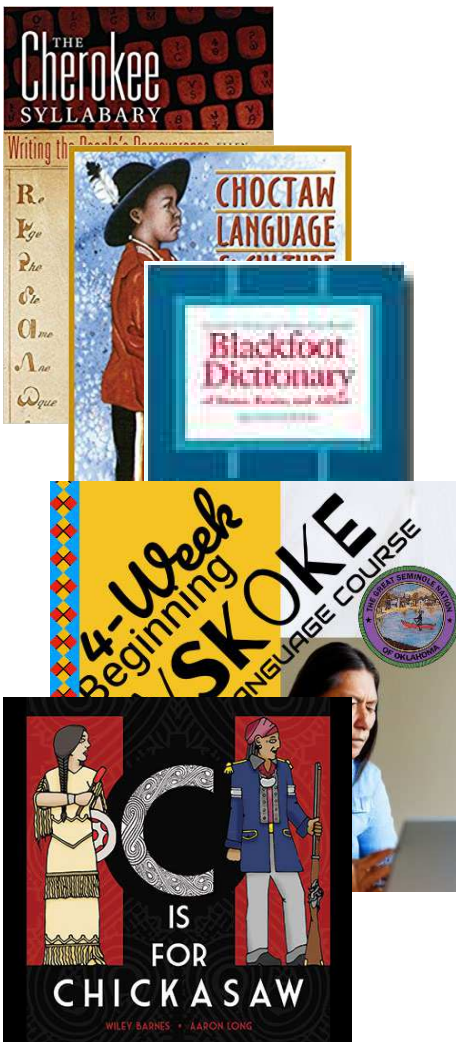
(The link is posted in the email)

Created by

SSC Web and Multimedia Coordinator

Brooks Nickell

The NASNTI Native Language Resource Area



Preserving language is an intricate and vital part of Indigenous communities. With 39 active Indigenous Tribes in Oklahoma, Native communities are constantly seeking innovative ways to preserve their language. To continue championing Indigenous communities, Seminole State College NASNTI has been awarded a supplemental grant to aid in the initiative of Native language preservation and revitalization. Part of the supplemental funding will be used to construct a Native Language Resource area in the NASNTI offices.

The resource area will house three computers, a study table, and bookshelves of a diverse collection of Tribal language books which includes Cherokee, Seminole, Blackfoot, Choctaw, and additional language books of Tribes throughout the country. Currently, steps are in process to acquire licenses of the Chickasaw Language Rosetta Stone software for the resource area!

It is no secret there are benefits when learning another language. Besides the benefit of acquiring knowledge of the language and culture, researchers suggest learning another language can improve your memory, enhance creative thinking, and improve cultural competence. The Native Language Resource area will open during the summer of 2023. *(Book images from various websites).*

NASNTI is 100% federally funded in the amount of \$450,000 annually.

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“How to Become a Native Language Ally”

A 2-Day Native Language Conference



Kristen Thomas

One of the many exciting projects of the NASNTI supplemental grant is the 2-Day Indigenous Language Conference. The conference theme, “How to Become a Native Language Ally,” will feature four panelists each day to discuss the importance of revitalization and preservation of the Native Language.

The conference is scheduled for April 18 and April 19 and will feature representatives from Tribal communities from across the state. The moderator for both event days is Kristen (Smith-Snell) Thomas. Kristen serves as the Supervisor for the Cherokee Language Master/Apprentice Program.

Thomas is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and a Cherokee language learner. She was raised in rural Adair County and has always called the Cherokee Nation home. As Little Miss Cherokee, at the age of five, Kristen was determined she would become Miss Cherokee and serve her tribe. She began working for the Cherokee Nation immediately after high school and went on to serve as Miss Cherokee. It was during Kristen’s time as Miss Cherokee, she discovered how she could best serve the Cherokee people. As Miss Cherokee, her focus was on the Cherokee language and culture.

Thomas earned her Bachelor of Arts in Cherokee Cultural Studies and her master’s degree in Higher Education Leadership from Northeastern State University. Kristen has spent twenty years working in the tribe’s Cherokee language programs, including the Cherokee Language Immersion Charter School and the Northeastern State University Cherokee Degree Program.

In appreciation of the Little Miss Cherokee and Miss Cherokee programs, Kristen is also the volunteer coordinator for the Cherokee Nation Little Cherokee Ambassador program and serves on the Junior Miss and Miss Cherokee committees.

The Cherokee Nation is the largest tribe in the United States, with more than 430,000 tribal citizens worldwide (Cherokee.org, 2023). More than 141, 000 Cherokee Nation citizens reside within the tribe’s reservation boundaries in northeastern Oklahoma (Cherokee.org, 2023).

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