SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES:
Through the Lens of Cherokee Youth
Project Participants (from left to right):
Kelen Pritchett, Cody Chewey, Shania Brown,
Justine Littlehead, Shameka Cochran, Kali Sawney
and December Rider

For more information, contact:
Tiffanie Ord
918-444-3599
ord@nsuok.edu
This booklet contains the photovoice photograph and narratives that will be exhibited May 10-14 at the Cherokee Heritage Center, the Community Mapping activity as well as the initial insights of Tiffanie Hardbarger (Ord) in response to the dialogue during the project.

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May 13, 2016

COMMUNITY EVENT

AGENDA

5:30 p.m.
Opening
Meet & Greet

6:15 p.m.
Visit Exhibit

6:45 p.m.
Community Discussion

7:30 p.m.
Closing
About the Project

Using photography, seven Cherokee young people ranging in age from 15 to 18 from Stilwell High School share their voices and visions of a sustainable community and the iyunadvnelidasdi (ᎠᏂᎦᏳᏗ) (life ways) they believe we need to sustain as Tsalagi.

Many far-reaching changes have taken place over the generations that have altered our values, practices and relationships. These multi-faceted disruptions have severely impacted individual and community well-being and overall cultural continuance.

Stemming from the doctoral work of Cherokee Nation citizen Tiffanie Hardbarger (Ord), the project explored the perspectives of Cherokee young people on the topic of sustainable communities through various strategies of inquiry including community mapping, photography (photovoice), individual interviews and group interviews.

About the Exhibit

May 10-14, 2016 | Cherokee Heritage Center Main Gallery

The Sustainable Communities: Through the Lens of Cherokee Youth Exhibit & Event is the result of this project. The photographs and narratives exhibited have been selected by the young people as their response to the following photovoice guiding questions:

From your perspective as a Cherokee young person, take photographs that represent:

» your understanding of what a sustainable community is

» the values, practices, and relationships we need to perpetuate to sustain our life ways for generations to come

About the Community Event

May 13, 2016 | Cherokee Heritage Center Atrium

The young people will share their experiences and perspectives with the community during a Community Event on May 13. This is an important part of the project as it provides the opportunity to have open discussion with elders and others from the community on the Exhibit. The hope is that this project will inspire future discussions and actions that will benefit the Cherokee people and communities.
This is a photograph of some deer antler sheds I found out on my land. It represents self-reliance, that we can hunt for our own food and gather our own food. We grow our own wheat and corn and stuff like that down there, we grow our gardens. That’s what it represents, being self-reliant.

I think we still need to keep passing down the language, relationships with the elders; the elders are the ones that know more than anyone.
My grandpa is my whole world. He’s full blood Cherokee. He’ll teach me sometimes, but he’ll start crying. I know most of the time what he’s talking about. He gets sad because he doesn’t feel like he has the time to teach me before he passes on. In this photo, we are sitting in our Talking Chairs where we sit and talk all the time. Sometimes we have really funny moments... I don’t want to go to school because I worry about him all throughout the day. I want to stay and take care of him. I’m just not ready for him to pass on.
This is a photo of my grandma and my mom. I asked them what they felt was a great representation of heritage and they chose this quilt because my great grandma started making this quilt and when she passed away my grandma finished. This quilt is something that connects my great grandma, my grandma, my mom and me. We don't just use her quilts to cover up when we are cold, we treat them like art. We need to keep the tradition going, treating something like it is worth something instead of just letting it go. Keeping it together instead of letting it get torn up, they are taking care of it.
We should take care of the elders like as people, instead of putting them in nursing homes. Instead, I think we should take care of them as family.

I think we should take care of the land, because the land was very important to the Cherokees. The land is where we would go for spiritual things and the land took care of us so we need to take care of it. I don’t think we take care of the land as much as we use to. We would care for the land as a community and now it’s just certain people or certain families that are keeping the tradition going.

I personally don’t know Cherokee, but I wish I could have learned it because I find it a fascinating language that should be carried on. After we were talking about it the other day I started thinking I wanted to learn Cherokee and I asked my grandma about it, because my mom knows a few words but my grandma knows a little bit more; so I was going to ask them to try to learn the language.

I just think we should keep going the traditions going as much as we can, from our work to the food to the language—just everything as much as we can. Young people can go and seek the education of the Cherokees and see how they worked and how they cooked, how they made things and how they lived. We can go and look and whenever we get the knowledge we can share it with others.
This is set up in our house. It represents family; me, my mom and my grandma, the generations together. I made the basket and the bracelet. The doll is what my grandma gave me for my birthday a few years ago. The basket, beading and doll represent culture. It’s in my living room so whenever I come in I see this it makes me feel comfortable and it is just “home”.

As Cherokee people, we should continue traditions, like basket weaving, beading, or cooking. I think that is a big thing, it’s something fun to do and I see it as art, but you can use it. I want people to think of the Cherokee Indians whenever they see art like beading and basket weaving. I want them to know that we are still here and that we have made our mark.

Other things like cooking, I just think the culture should be carried on forever instead of kind of dying down. I think it is dying down because people just don't want to learn how to weave a basket because it takes too long or how to bead, or how to cook. I am sure if people would ask they could find somebody that will teach them. My grandma, luckily she teaches me some things and my mom. My grandma is the one who taught me how to make kanuchi (ᏅᏥ ᎠᏋᎣᏣ) and my mom taught me how to make fry bread. They just taught me because they thought they needed to, but some parents may not feel they need to, they just kind of forget about it.
Shameka Cochran

Home Is Wherever Family Is

This photo represents family because this is the house I grew up in. It was our great grandma Onn and my grandma Lela and then there were all four of her daughters that lived there. So it was a big family that lived here. It’s rundown now, everybody stopped taking care of it. It’s kind of heart breaking because that’s the house I grew up in, and now that I look at it, it’s just like there’s nothing left, just scraps and pieces. Back then, we were closer [when we all lived together] than we are now, now that everybody has moved out and has their own thing going on. We’re still close but not as close. Family is a big thing to me. And now that we all are separated and living in different places we’re kind of losing our spark as a family because we don’t see each other every day like we used to.
We still have cookouts, but mainly just for the elder’s birthdays. So mainly it’s just the only time we actually have a gathering like that it’s whenever the elders have a birthday. We throw a big party for the elders and everyone in the family comes down to join in the celebration. We would have a lot of chairs sitting around and a bonfire going on later that night. And it’s an all-day event. We sit out there all day and just talk and talk. I’m hoping this tradition keeps going. We’re actually losing a lot of our elders, especially here lately a lot of them are getting sick. I hope that me and my cousins will be able to do that for our parents too as they get older, because that’s one of the traditions that we’ve always had. And I don’t want that to die down or be forgotten.

My grandma used to always gripe at me and my cousins in Cherokee, and she’d say, “You little girls, you all get in here and watch us cook, so you all know how to do it when you all grow up”. My mom still teaches me how to cook to this day.

My grandma passed away about 6 years ago now. She’d always say: “I know you want to learn” Cherokee. She would always just talk in Cherokee, but not to tell us what it means, she’d expect us to tell her what it means. And that’s what my great aunt does too. She always talks to me in Cherokee, and if I don’t know then she just laughs at me and is like ‘just forget it’. My mom tries to teach as much as she can, but sometimes my mom’s like, “I don’t know how to teach it”. I don’t know what she means by that. She tries the only way she knows how, I guess. When my granny passed away we did lose a lot of traditions. On the holidays we used to have huge gatherings at my granny’s house, but we don’t have them anymore. At least not with the whole family.
Love Of God And Family

This is Oak Ridge Baptist Church. It is the church that I grew up in, and it’s just walking distance from my grandma’s house. Every Sunday morning my grandma would wake up all the kids and my aunts would be in the kitchen cooking breakfast before church, we’d all be getting ready, it would be chaotic in the house. Then finally, we’d all head down to the church. If there’s any breakfast left over we would take some down to the church. This whole church is basically our family. We’re all family so we’re all connected a special kind of way. It’s like everybody knew everybody. I used to go up there with my mom and sing in Cherokee, my mom, my aunts and everybody. Everything that’s spoken in this church is Cherokee. They sing in Cherokee, they pray in Cherokee, everything
Shameka Cochran

Even if we were just talking before or after the church service, it’s all in Cherokee.

There are fewer and fewer people using the language. I don’t like that because the language has been here for years and now all of a sudden it is starting to become a forgotten language, and I don’t like that. It’s too much of a prize to be forgotten. Then again it is also a hard language to learn and that’s why most of the people who want to learn it think it’s too hard to learn it. And that’s why I think that they should start out teaching the little kids when they’re still babies how to speak it. Because right then their mind is full of potential of learning and it’s easier for them to learn, as you grow up you got all these other stuff that’s in your head and you just don’t really want to bother with it. But I want to learn the language. I’m like the rest of them, it’s harder and sometimes I give up. I really do want to learn it because I can somewhat understand. I don’t know exactly what they’re saying but I can understand.
This photo is of Natural Dam in Arkansas. I sat down and I was watching the water and as I heard the waterfall I could somewhat hear my grandma, like how she used to always sit and talk to me. I just close my eyes and I tilted my head back and I just heard her speaking to me. Just how we used to sit outside on the porch all night to talk and she'd be telling me about the family and old memories when she grew up. And I thought it was pretty amazing because I haven't heard my grandma's voice since she passed away about 6 years ago now. That was the first time I've ever felt that connected with her. And that was one of the first things I heard whenever I sat on that rock is that night she held my hand when she was in the hospital right before she got too sick to speak. I felt like a little brush over my hand, like she was there with me holding my hand and she said I love you. And that's why I love this picture so much it's because my grandma's sitting right next to me and her spirit is telling me that she loves me.
The Reflection

I was looking into the water at my reflection and as I was looking I could see my mom in me, and I could see my grandma in her. That showed me that I was the third generation, and how far our traditions have been lost. Because when my grandma was around every tradition was being still done. Now that it’s just my mom, and my aunts, only some of the traditions are here, and now it’s me and I’m still trying to learn the traditions. I want to learn how they did this and did that and everything. I want to be to the point where my grandma was. In order to do that it’s going to be hard considering the fact that my grandma is gone now, and I can’t really exactly ask her questions about this and that. When I looked down into this water, that’s who I saw.

I don’t want any more traditions to be lost. Whenever I have a kid in the future I want them to know everything that my grandma knew. And I also want to know everything my grandma knew. I want to know everything my great grandma knew. And so I sat there, and I was just looking at my reflection for a minute, reflecting back on how we don’t celebrate our traditions.
anymore because somehow my grandma passing away has everything changing and I don’t like it. Sometimes I just wish that we could go back to the days when my grandma was still here. When we would always sit outside and talked with the whole family and everybody came to visit every day. It was never boring or lonesome when my grandma was around. And I like this picture too because I see it as growth, because you start down the river but as you go it gets smoother. There are a lot of rocks at the beginning but it just gets smoother and smoother as it goes. That’s how life is, life is always going to be hard but in the end it will all get better.
The Beauty That Nature Brings Out In Me

As I was climbing up these rocks I was just thinking about how back in the day when my cousins and I would go hiking up through the woods. It just brought back memories and that’s why I took this picture, because it brought back some precious memories to me. I looked out to the trees, and I see the water, the big rocks... You can hear the water just flowing. It’s really beautiful and it’s sounded amazing. It was like all my worries and issues went away for a second or two. I got to focus on me, nature and God. It felt really good. It felt like nothing I’ve ever felt before. I just wanted to lay there and never leave. My first time being out there it connected me with my grandma and my other past on family so much. It’s going to have to be something that I do more often just so I can connect with my ancestors, my elders and my grandma.
This is my little sister making fry bread helping my mom; rolling dough and flour in her hands, and my mom helps. Mom is trying to teach her to learn to cook.

This photograph is fry bread frying. I have a lot of good memories surrounding this. It reminds me of my granny. She passed on I don’t remember how many years ago it was but we were grown up at granny’s house, we had fried potatoes and fried bread, it was almost every meal. It was always there. When I think of that, I think my granny. Her rings on her fingers were covered in dough and flour all the time from when she cooked it so much. I remember looking at her big fingers and seeing dough on her rings. Fried bread reminds me of her.
That's all of it together: brown beans, onions and eggs, fried bread, hog fry and fried potatoes. This photograph shows all of our plates around the dinner table because that’s what we do when dad comes home to eat, me and little sister help get all the food on the table and help mom, so when dad comes home from work it’s all there ready. We eat at a table as a family. But afterwards we all sit in little room and relax, and then me and my little sisters go clean the table, mom does the dishes.

I think just these simple pictures of food brings all of that together in one. We have a garden, we normally grow potatoes for frying.

Gathering all the food and then teaching the young ones how to cook it and coming together as a family. This is just one of our family dinners.
My mom and dad teach me to work, they teach me those things around the house, learning not to be about yourself, look out for the others in your family. My dad takes care of our family and he also takes care of others in the community. I guess that’s how he’s trying to raise me and teach me to be a man that will not only stand up for me, but for others, to make sure everybody else is ok too.

We have our little community where I grew up. It’s where grandma lived. That little community down there that’s where my dad and his cousins grew up together, all his cousins running around this place, they grew up like brothers. That’s just really stuff that I would like to keep continuing going. This is the families and the homes. It takes all the surrounding families around this community to make sure the community stays together and sustainable...just continuing teaching the kids and the grandkids these things to carry it on.

My dad tells me stories from his youth and how ga-du-gi (ᏚᏲ) was and still is an important thing. Strong communities are just kind of how you were raised and how you were brought up. If somebody was brought up to not recognize those things and weren’t taught those things it’s kind of hard to teach these things. If you wanted to help people understand, maybe you could invite them to your family gathering and show them what it’s about, that might help them open their eyes to it; the families still do carry on traditions.

I always heard the language, I picked up some stuff here and there. They didn’t intentionally not try to teach us, but they didn’t sit us down and try to have conversations with us. Language is important to our culture, it’s what our culture is. It’s based around language. Without our language it doesn’t make us any different from any other people if we are all speaking in English. Our language is the basis of our culture. We are Cherokee. That’s what we are, and our language holds us together.

Those that have the interest need to definitely learn it because our fluent speakers are slowly going away.

“A community brings people together to become one instead of a bunch of individuals. Because when we come together big things happen!”
This is my mom. She’s beading and she beads medallions and earrings, and necklaces. I’ve been learning a bit from her and she’s been teaching me, and I liked that I’m learning something from an older person, an elder. She was teaching me the night I took this photograph, and I was learning.

Beading is important for the Cherokee people culturally. You see beaded medallions and earrings. Women, they are big on that. And they like doing that. I know a lot of people that bead. Beading represents community in some ways because people getting together and passing knowledge on.
This photograph represents a lot. When you meet a person, you shake their hand. That’s the first thing my dad does when he meets someone, he shakes their hand. My grandpa does it, and you see it all over the place. Everybody shakes each other’s hands. Good relationships should be valued in communities. Shaking hands not only means the start of a friendship, but also the continuance of one. This photo represents mutual respect for another person. Shaking hands is supposed to convey trust, respect, balance and equality. All of the things of which should be found in a community.
My mom and my sister and me were out picking wild onions the other day. It means a lot because this is something that we do all the time when it comes out. That’s one time that we all get to get together and do something as a family, there isn’t electronics, we’re not on the phone or anything and it’s just us in the woods. We’d take it back and my mom would clean it, and my mom would cook it. We usually give some to our grandpa. My mom’s teaching me to cook. I’m not very good it right now, but I’m getting there.

Picking reminds me of my grandpa, he can’t get out and pick anymore. He loves wild onion, but he just got to where he can’t do it anymore. We do it, and we give it to him. You’re getting with your elders, you’re doing something for them, something that they might not be able to do anymore and you get to do it for them. You’re giving instead of just taking. This photo represents a way of living along with that an opportunity to do something with your friends and family. It reminds me of how I can give back, and how I can do something and be active with those around me. These things are tied together by the act of giving. Being generous to those around you is a good start to having an active community. Not only giving back to our elders, but also to each other. Understanding one another and the desire to help are great ways to keep our ways of life going.
“Strive to live, not just survive”

To me community should be like home. It is your home because it’s where you live, but you should feel safe there. And willing to help another. Giving back should be greatly looked upon. It happens so rarely anymore, but the younger ones should at least do it for their elders. Elders should be treated respectfully and taken care of. It should be a place where one may give and receive. Everyone should work together that way it wouldn't make things too hard on one person. Everyone who lives in a community should know one another. People should help one another, nowadays if someone has a problem and they can't fix it, no one will stop by and see if they’re ok. A community that works together to get things done. A community that contributes to another. In a community thing should be set up to help those who are unfortunate.

Positive relationships with one another must be prioritized. Common attitudes working towards the same goals in making a community safe or a place a home. Passing values, practices, and our attitudes towards one another to the next person and generation.

Trust, respect and balance are all things that come with time, but only if you’re working for it as one. Community does not mean one, but instead a great number of people. It involves everyone interacting with one another and getting along to live together, in balance.

My understanding a sustainable community is one in which people are equal and respect one another. If you want a good a community, you would have to have good relationships, everybody knows each other and doesn't have a problem with each other, but anymore you don't see that. I’m not going to lie to you, I don’t really see that a lot.
This photograph shows the beauty in a community, because this photograph I think has a lot of beauty in it and all the connectivity. How community is connected with each other that is important. And in this photograph I believe it represents connectivity by all the blossoms and the air, and the breeze, and the sun, it’s like you’re out there living it in the beauty. And that’s how basically this community is.
Blue Skies

I like this picture because it’s visually pleasing. I feel it’s very equal and it shows that to me it represents a community as a whole. We always come together around whatever the problem is, whatever the solution needs to be, we just come together and we try to help each and everybody. And I feel like that’s what this represents. I wish I would have gotten something better in the circle, like a clear blue sky or some clouds, or something like that to show that there’s always beauty and happiness on the horizon of our struggles and the community. We’ll always be there for each other.
Starting Anew

This photograph represents the struggle all the Cherokees had to go through to get where we are today. Because we struggled a long time and this is all that stands of the education that those women at that time were receiving, and the beauty around, all of it was just amazing. This was a live community back then and that’s all that’s left its just three pillars, there were people that live there, that had families, that had lives. And that’s just historical significance to the Cherokee culture, that’s what I believe this is.
The Past Still Stands

We have a responsibility to pass things on. Because if we as young people aren’t going to pass this on to the next generation, then who is? It’s up to us. My mom was the most influential to me about our whole culture because she was the one that would tell me about my great grandparents and how they lived and traditions that they had, and what they had to do to survive as Cherokee people in that time and age.
Everyone drew their version of a “Community Map” and answered the following questions:

Does your map reflect a Cherokee worldview?

How would your ancestors recognize you as a Cherokee?

What are Cherokee “life ways”?

Some participants chose to include their names on their Maps, others chose to remain anonymous.
My map just describes what I see in my community. What I see in my community is I see the **heart** which represents the love of the community, their **religion**---the faith that the community has in God---the **strength** of the community, the **peacefulness** that's in the community, the **aliveness** in the community; the **loyalty** of the community and the **courage** of the people in the community. I’m also seeing **bravery** and **beauty** in the community and the **balance**. There’s also death. It’s is not all bad, it’s just that they **honor our ancestors**, the ones that have passed on. **We honor them in their beliefs and the traditions they have passed on to us.** The **education of our culture** which might achieve the **teaching of our language or traditions**; and the **equality** of the community---whether you are family or not, they will still help you out as much as they can.

The qualities are like the **family gatherings**, the **togetherness**, the **helpfulness** that is in the community---the helping hands and everything---and the **support**.

I think it reflects the Cherokee world view because Cherokees are all about this. They are all about this and more, like Cherokees pretty much revolves around love---it is based on **love**.

My ancestors would recognize me as Cherokee because me and my family are very **spiritual**. We use protective medicine and other traditions. My mom and her sisters all **speak Cherokee** and they are all **teaching the kids Cherokee**. My grandma teaches Cherokee to the young ones and the whole family is learning the language---all the kids and everything.

Our Cherokee life ways are pretty much **helping each other out**. There is always a friend or family in need, and there is always someone in the family, or in the friends, that are there to help and support. A lot of the family would get together and we will **go fishing or go hunting, or onion picking and mushrooms**---anything like that. We do whatever we can to **stay connected**, to **stay focused on the love of our community**.
thought of is community---together, everybody.

I’d say the qualities of a good community is **togetherness**---everybody being together and being on board about everything.

How would my ancestors recognize me as Cherokee: Well, I still try to **carry on the traditions as best as I can from what I was taught**.

My grandparents they didn’t teach us, they talked in the home to each other and to their friends and family members, but they just didn’t teach us. We grew up around it, it wasn’t they didn’t want us to hear it or anything, they just never, like, taught us. They taught us words and phrases and little things, but they never sat us down and taught us the language.

Cherokee Life Ways: Cherokees were communities---like we were talking about---they were together, we didn’t roam, we didn’t travel, we stayed in one place and we had our families and our community. We were just together, and we’d eat together; that was a big thing to me. Like our family, that’s what we are about---**family togetherness**. You know, they say, ‘It takes a village to raise a baby.’ That’s how we were. You know, if we needed a baby sitter we took it to grandma, aunt, or whatever. It took the village. There’s a saying, ‘A family that prays together stays together,” we say that, but we also say, ‘A family that eats together stays together.’ Big family dinners are big in our family, we do that all the time for every occasion---birthdays, holidays---it’s just what we do.
If something bad happens in the family we all come together to help but I was always raised up that it is not how much you have, it is how much you help. It don’t matter how good you are, it's how good everybody else is. We all just fend for ourselves, and don’t ask for anything, we like to help other people more. We really don’t have as many Cherokee, I’d say, ceremonies or rituals but I think we have pretty much the same ideas—pretty much the entire issue is unity, everyone being one. We all help each other and we don’t rely on anybody, we try to rely on ourselves more than anything.

I think the Cherokee world view would be just the well-being of others, and that’s pretty much how our family is. Our main goal is making sure the whole family is good. The main thing in our family is like to get together for meals. Every Sunday we eat together, it is just being with one another, camaraderie with each other. That’s the big thing in our family.

I don’t think they would recognize me as Cherokee just because I don’t speak it. We don’t have any ceremonies...

Qualities would be relying on each other, helping others and self-reliance. Even if something happens, let’s say the market crashed, we wouldn’t be in trouble, we can rely on ourselves, we can work the land. Hunting is a big thing in our family that has been carried on. The main things that Cherokees really relied on is hunting and growing their own food, and gathering food. That is something for sure needs to keep going on because if everything just crashes, you can just hunt and grow your own food. That’s all self-reliance, you don’t need anybody; you can make a good living and have a good life just on your own.
I envision a sustainable community as a place where people help others where we have faith in each other where there is no gossip or any type of hatred just people helping each other out and doing the right thing.

My map reflects togetherness---two hands holding each other’s hands that says, ‘Together we strive.’ I think the qualities of a sustainable Cherokee community would be helpfulness, have faith in one another, and trust.

It very much reflects the Cherokee world view because that is what we Cherokees are all about is helping each other in time of need; being there for one another. Whether it is a celebration or when something bad happens, we are always there for each other. We are always just connected with each other in a way that’s very different. I am not sure how to explain it, but my family on my grandmother’s side is almost all full-blood Cherokees. My great grandmother, she would get mad at my grandmother for not teaching my grandmother’s children, such as my mom and my aunts, Cherokee. She would get very mad at that. She wanted them to learn it and pass on because they knew it was a dying language and a dying culture. That never happened and I never got to meet my great grandmother, and I barely was around my grandparents before they went on.

How would my ancestors recognize me as Cherokee: I am not even really sure that they would, except for the fact that I can maybe count to ten in Cherokee, that’s it! The traditions: We cook the same I guess, we cook from our land still, so that’s a tradition.

Cherokee Life Ways: I’d say that’s fry bread and beans, man! That’s just the traditions we carried on throughout the years---the traditions that have survived anyways. The cooking and the family gatherings---I think that is what is the most important, is the family in Cherokee life ways and traditions; because we are always there for family, no matter what. Family is family, you do for family what you’ve got to do for family, you know.
On my map I tried to recreate a time-- a few months ago my cousin was dealing with diabetes, and he had to have a lot of surgeries. The community came together and helped raise money for his medical expenses. That really represents a sustainable community to me. Everyone voluntarily coming together for one common goal. I think it reflects the Cherokee world view because it is people coming together and just loving one another.
INITIAL PROJECT THEMES & INSIGHTS

THEMES:
The themes that were brought up over and over again regarding sustainable communities were those that highlighted the importance of: family togetherness, taking care of one another (especially the elders), unity, love, the importance of being able to rely on the air, water and land to provide for our needs (self-reliance), and the responsibility of both the learner and the teacher to pass on knowledge and practices to young people on traditions, language and culture.

INSIGHTS EMERGING FROM THE FINAL GROUP INTERVIEW:
How do we help encourage other people to strengthen the ties between one another, to make stronger communities? What actions can we take?

» Individual Leadership to Inspire Others
“Show more care for others” as a way to inspire others to do the same.

Is continuing the language important?

» Language Is Crucial
“Continuing the language is very important, because if we don’t try to teach it to the little ones and we don’t try to teach it then it is going to die, and the language will be forgotten.”
Whose responsibility is it to pass on knowledge? Is it just the elders that have a responsibility to pass on knowledge to the younger people?

» Have the will to learn and perpetuate the knowledge, take responsibility as both a teacher and a learner by speaking up and taking action

“It is ours [as young people] as well. If you have knowledge to pass it on to your friends and your cousins. As long as we just have the will to learn it. Some of the youth don’t really care anymore. If you have the will to learn about it then that’s good.”

“Just speak up instead of staying quiet about it. If you want to learn just speak up and say you want to learn, if you want to teach, say you want to teach...because nobody’s going to do it for you. They’re not going to say: “oh, hey by the way this is the heritage...”

“You can’t go unheard. And just think that you’re going to find those things out. You have to have the will to learn it.”

Are we taking care of the land and water the way that we should or does it need more attention?

» There is a desire for more environmental awareness, care and education founded upon Cherokee worldview

“It needs to be paid more attention to. It’s kind of how you grew up and what you’ve learned. If you learned living off the land, you’re going to learn to respect the land and take care of it. [We should be] watching out for our resources. There’s a lot of people taking it for granted.”

Do you have a class that teaches you about natural resources, about land and water? Does it come from a Cherokee perspective at all or does it come from more of a scientific, more western perspective?

“We have a class called Environmental Science. It comes from a scientific perspective. [A class coming from a Cherokee perspective] would probably have a lot more meaning read into it, than the scientific perspective would.”

“It would be an interesting class. I’d like to take a class like that.”
What did you experience when you were thinking about sustainable communities and values, and practices, and relationships, and responsibilities we all have?

» More awareness and engagement in community and cultural activities

“Kind of about to listen to everybody else’s the stories about their Community Mapping, helped to show what my community has and what it lacks. Show the ups and downs of everybody around. Well, I can get started, I can get them [the community] all on it, bring it up to the Board in our community building like: “here’s something that would be awesome”. When [the Community Building] was first built we had people come down and teach the kids in the community basket weaving and stuff. Just stuff like that has died off a little bit. I haven’t really noticed it until we started talking about all these things. I really noticed that. We don’t really do those things anymore. We used to have bow shoots. I’ll start bringing that back up to our Board and show them that we need to start bringing that back together. Because if we go on without it our community may fall apart and wouldn’t be as together.”

“I’m going to ask more questions to my grandma and my mom about the heritage. I’ll really try to bring those back. I haven’t really thought to learn things like cooking and stuff, it just kind of came naturally. But if I ask more I can just learn a lot more.”

“From doing this I just realized that you don’t see a lot of the things that are being pointed out in this discussion. You don’t see a lot of that nowadays. It really needs to be brought back; we need to keep doing that. Instead of just letting it go and everybody does their own thing. [We need to] keep community. Community means people together, not just one by themselves.”

“Doing this I realized how strong our heritage, our culture is. That’s what I’ve learned. How many times we’ve had to rebuild and retry, and how many times we have succeeded in doing that.”

“Doing this I’ve experienced different ways to connect to my elders and remember how they did this and how they did that. That way I can somehow learn to keep the tradition going.”

“I agree that I should ask more to learn everything.”
WADO TO EVERYONE THAT SUPPORTED THIS PROJECT INCLUDING:

Northeastern State University

Cherokee Nation Tribal District 7 and District 8

Stilwell High School

Advisory Committee:
Chris Holms, Sequoyah High School
Wyman Kirk, Northeastern State University
Stacy Leeds, JD, University of Arkansas
Wahde Mackey, Cherokee Nation
Candessa Tehee, PhD, Cherokee Heritage Center

Arizona State University Dissertation Committee:
Kathleen Andereck, PhD,
Jeff Corntassel, PhD (University of Victoria),
Elizabeth Sumida Huaman, PhD and Behrang Foroughi, PhD