

INVESTMENTS IN CHANGE

The mission of Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPFdn) is to improve the quality of life of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and strengthen the western North Carolina region. Established in 2000, the Foundation has three areas of focus — cultural preservation, economic development and environmental preservation.

CPFdn has made 707 grants totaling nearly \$56 million to EBCI and regional projects and programs. With matches in secured grants and other resources, the Foundation's total impact on the region over the past decade has been more than \$145 million.

CULTURAL PRESERVATION

Much of CPFdn's work in support of cultural preservation is concentrated on the revitalization of the Cherokee language and the development of a culture-based Cherokee leadership initiative.

By helping strengthen the infrastructure of the Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual cooperative, funding opportunities for young Cherokee artisans to learn from elders, and supporting initiatives such as the Oconaluftee Institute for Cultural Arts, CPFdn is enabling Cherokee artists succeed artistically and economically.

CPFdn is supporting Tribal efforts to revitalize



A language immersion class sings at a cultural celebration.

the Cherokee language because this traditional way of communicating is so critically linked to the preservation of the culture. As a Tribal elder stated, there is a big difference between people who have a culture and people who have a history.

To help the Tribe develop new leaders to join the ranks of those already serving, CPFdn has developed culture-based leadership programs that are grounded in traditional Cherokee values, yet teach modern leadership skills. These programs include a cross-

cultural eco-study program in Costa Rica for high school students, the Cherokee Youth Council that empowers youth with a voice of their own, the Jones-Bowman Leadership Award Program for college undergraduates with leadership potential, and The Right Path, a leadership program for adult members of the Tribe.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tourism is a principal driver of economic development on the Qualla Boundary. Significant funding from CPFdn has enabled the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Qualla Arts & Crafts and Cherokee Historical Association to work as partners and mount a multi-year marketing campaign to make the Qualla Boundary and surrounding area a heritage destination that attracts visitors interested in learning about the

Tribe's history and experiencing authentic Cherokee culture. The Tribal levy income (sales tax) has grown every year since the Foundation funded the advertising campaign.

The Sequoyah Fund is a grantee that has become a strong force in local business development. With funding from CPFdn, the Sequoyah Fund has made low-cost loans to merchants in the Cherokee business district for new roofs and building facades that have enhanced the visual appeal of Cherokee's downtown. Other Sequoyah Fund loans and support services are helping new and experienced entrepreneurs start and expand businesses.

To help Cherokees students prepare for professional careers, CPFdn grants have been enabling Cherokee Central Schools to develop a rigorous curriculum. A technology project-based learning model has been implemented throughout the high school.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

CPFdn funds the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR) initiative, a grantmaking program whose purpose is to assist the EBCI as the Tribe works to restore the traditional Cherokee balance between maintaining and using natural resources such as river cane, white oak and clay. For Cherokee artisans, it is impossible to separate the environment that surrounds them from the art that they create.

RTCAR's natural resource strategy involves mapping existing stands of river cane, expanding acreage and access to materials through land protection and stewardship practices, incorporating RTCAR's priorities into existing plans and research, and creating a clearinghouse to connect artisans with the necessary resources.

RTCAR is also implementing a unique strategy of preserving cultural knowledge by engaging the Cherokee people in peer-to-peer sharing, promoting the Cherokee as experts and teachers in the research agenda, teaching about Cherokee culture, and connecting Cherokee artisans with groups that are engaged in their own preservation efforts.

For many hundreds of years, it has been important to the Cherokee people that they be good stewards of the land. Through a community-wide planning effort begun by CPFdn known as Generations Qualla, new green initiatives are underway to make tribal buildings more energy efficient, develop a green building standard, expand public transit, increase recycling, and engage local communities in environmental improvement projects.

REGIONAL EFFORTS

Regional initiatives in which the Foundation has been playing a leading role include WNC EdNet, a fiber optic network connecting schools, community colleges and universities in westernmost North Carolina, and Mountain Landscapes, a regional planning process to understand and address mountain land use challenges. Through its support of WNC Nonprofit Pathways, CPFdn is helping to build the capacity of nonprofits in the region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Cherokee Preservation Foundation, visit us on the web at www.cpdfn.org, or call 828-497-5550.

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