

2009 Outstanding Participant Award



Susan Lynette Bennett

*Cherokee Nation
Tahlequah, Oklahoma*

As a single-parent raising four children, Ms. Bennett struggled to make ends meet with her \$7 per hour job, limited transportation, and no family support in the area. Even though it had been sixteen years since her high school graduation, she was

determined to pursue a degree in higher education in order to change her family's circumstances.

Ms. Bennett received her Associate in Arts degree from Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College, and membership into the prestigious Phi Theta Kappa Society, an International Scholastic

Order of the Two-Year College, through tuition and textbook assistance from the Cherokee Nation's Classroom Training Program. She was also named to the Dean's Honor Roll, President's Honor Roll, and National Dean's List. She continued to work hard and took advantage of various scholarship opportunities through the Cherokee Nation's Education Services Group, and received her Bachelor of Social Work degree from Northeastern State University, and Master of Social Work degree from The University of Oklahoma.

Currently, she is the Supervisor for the Cherokee Nation Rental Assistance Program for Delaware, Mayes, and Ottawa Counties in Oklahoma. "In a way, it's almost like I have come full circle," Bennett stated. "I used to barely survive and struggled to make ends meet. Now, I am in a position to help others through kindness and encouragement shown to me."