

# ACCESS MUSKOGEE

Spring 2025



In this issue:

- Let's Get Physical
- Muskogee's Hiking Trails
- Seniors Staying Active

Celebrating the people and places of Muskogee County





# Neighbors Building Neighborhoods

Promoting positive change



**Neighbors Building Neighborhoods participates in initiatives to prevent substance abuse through community outreach, promoting awareness, and partnering with local law enforcement in the "One Pill Can Kill" campaign.**

Neighbors Building Neighborhoods of Muskogee, Inc. (NBN) improves the quality of life in Eastern Oklahoma through education, organizational support, and coalition building. This broad mission empowers us to provide a wide range of programs. Initiatives include substance abuse prevention, youth programs, and community revitalization. Go to [nbn-nrc.org](http://nbn-nrc.org) for more information about our programs.





www.healthymuskogee.com

## Springing Forward: Maintaining Momentum

Two years ago, Access Muskogee began as a simple idea—shine a light on the local people, programs, and partnerships shaping a healthier, more connected Muskogee. Since then, that idea has taken root and continued to grow, issue by issue, story by story. With each new edition, we’ve had the privilege of sharing voices and visions that are too often overlooked but are essential to understanding the strength of our community.

This spring, we’re leaning into the season’s spirit of renewal and growth. The stories in this issue reflect a community that is not only responding to challenges but actively reimagining its future. From innovative approaches to early childhood development to expanded access to needs like water, safety, and physical activity, the efforts featured here remind us that progress doesn’t always come from the top down—it often begins at the grassroots level, with neighbors helping neighbors.

Our efforts revolve around collaboration. Whether it’s law enforcement working alongside healthcare professionals, educators incorporating physical wellness into academic success, or everyday citizens stepping into leadership through community service, the energy behind Access Muskogee remains rooted in collective action.

Our goal remains unchanged: to make it easier for Muskogee County residents to find, understand, and utilize the resources that can make a meaningful difference in their lives. We want to help connect the dots—between services and the people who need them, between challenges and the local solutions already in motion.

As always, we welcome your ideas, your stories, and your voice. This magazine belongs to the community it represents. Thank you for reading, and for continuing to believe in the power of connection, collaboration, and community-led change.

Let’s keep moving forward—together.

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## *Celebrating the People and Places of Muskogee County*

### Access Muskogee Partners

Saint Francis Health System Muskogee

Neighbors Building Neighborhoods

Muskogee County Health Department

Muskogee Transit Authority

City of Muskogee Foundation

OSU Extension High Obesity Program

Eastern Oklahoma Library Systems

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# Moving with Purpose:



## Laura Wickizer's Passion for Fitness and Community

**By Haley Frix**

For many, finding the right balance between work, wellness, and community engagement can feel like a juggling act. But for Laura Wickizer, these aspects of life are seamlessly intertwined. A dedicated nonprofit executive by day and an inspiring fitness instructor by night, Laura has made it her mission to uplift both individuals and the broader Muskogee community.

### A Leader in Advocacy and Service

Laura Wickizer brings a wealth of experience to her role as Executive Director of Kids' Space Child Advocacy Center. Since stepping into the position in January 2023, she has overseen staffing, human resources, marketing, fundraising, donor relations, and grant compliance, all while ensuring that the center's programs effectively serve children and families in Muskogee County. Under her leadership, Kids' Space provides a vital safe haven for children, coordinating efforts among child welfare specialists, law enforcement, family advocates, medical experts, and mental health professionals.

Before taking the helm at Kids' Space, Laura served as the Grants & Office Manager at Foundation Management Inc., where she played a key role in maintaining grant compliance and advancing strategic initiatives. She also worked as a Marketing Specialist at Neighbors Building Neighborhoods, a nonprofit committed to strengthening the Muskogee community. Laura's background in nonprofit management is complemented by her Bachelor of Arts in Art & Graphic Design from the University of Maryland, College Park.

### Fitness as a Way of Life

While Laura's work at Kids' Space is critical to the well-being of Muskogee's children, her passion for health and wellness extends beyond the typical nine-to-five. As a Pilates and Spin instructor at the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center, she channels her enthusiasm for movement and personal growth into her classes, helping others improve their strength, flexibility, and overall well-being.

Laura's journey into fitness instruction

began with her own experience as a student. In 2013, she discovered Pilates at the Swim & Fitness Center, and by 2015, she became certified to teach it. A year later, she earned her Spin certification through NASM Personal Training. Her dedication to fitness, however, was instilled much earlier in life; at just 12 years old, she and her father started swimming together every morning before school. The quiet, rhythmic movement of swimming became a cherished routine, reinforcing the importance of physical activity and the emotional connection it can foster.

### The Power of Pilates and Music

As a former ballet dancer, Laura was naturally drawn to Pilates, a practice that blends elements of ballet, yoga, and breathwork. She describes it as both a challenge and a form of moving meditation. But beyond the technical aspects, her classes are fueled by two key motivators: music and people.

Music is a huge part of what drives Laura. In her classes, you might hear anything from '60s and '70s rock to current pop hits and country. It keeps things fun and engaging. But equally important to her are the people who show up to every class with a commitment to becoming a better version of themselves. "The only thing holding you back is your mind," she often reminds her students, encouraging them to push past self-imposed limits and embrace their potential.

### A Gym That Feels Like Home

The Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center recently underwent a major renovation, enhancing its accessibility and overall experience for members. When asked why she chose this facility as her fitness home, Laura's answer was simple: "It's central to everything, it's the only gym in town with a pool, and it just feels like home."

For those looking to experience Laura's high-energy, welcoming approach to fitness, her classes are open to all skill levels. Whether you're interested in Pilates or an invigorating Spin session, her guidance ensures a workout that is both challenging and rewarding.



### Join a Class

Laura Wickizer's class schedule at the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center is as follows:

- Pilates: Monday, 5:15 PM – 6:00 PM; Thursday, 11:45 AM – 12:30 PM
- Spin: Tuesday, 5:15 PM – 6:00 PM

*Laura's classes are open to Swim & Fitness Center members and pass holders. There is no additional charge for the classes.*

# Staying Active with the Eastern Oklahoma Library System



**Seniorcise classes—low-impact classes designed to keep seniors moving and fit—are held at the libraries in Fort Gibson and Haskell. (Photo by Sarah Jackson)**

## By Wendy Burton

Regular physical activity is key to maintaining health and independence as we age. For senior citizens, exercise not only reduces the risk of falls and enhances flexibility but also promotes mobility for daily tasks, lowers blood pressure, and strengthens muscles. Thankfully, Muskogee County organizations offer a wide array of free exercise programs tailored for older adults, providing opportunities to stay active and improve overall well-being.

For example, at Q.B. Boydston Library in Fort Gibson and at Rieger Memorial Library in Haskell, seniors can take part in “Seniorcises” once a week. These low-impact exercises are designed to keep seniors moving and fit without straining their bodies, and best of all, it’s completely free to attend.

Additionally, the Fort Gibson library offers yoga classes that are open to

adults of all ages, typically in six-week sessions held multiple times a week. Again, these classes come at no cost, providing a perfect opportunity for senior citizens to explore new ways to stay healthy. To stay updated on upcoming programs, visit the events calendar at [eols.org/events](http://eols.org/events).

In Muskogee, the public library takes part in the Oklahoma Healthy Aging Initiative (OHAI) by offering a variety of

fitness and wellness classes, including the Staying Active and Independent for Life (SAIL) program. This class, which can be done either sitting or standing, focuses on building strength, improving balance, and enhancing overall fitness, all of which contribute to a better quality of life for seniors.

The OHAI also offers Tai Chi and caregiver support classes at Muskogee County libraries and senior centers. These six-week programs are designed to help seniors improve flexibility and reduce stress. To find out more about dates and locations for these valuable programs, visit the OHAI event calendar at [ouhealth.com/events-calendar](http://ouhealth.com/events-calendar).

Whether you’re looking to boost your strength, improve flexibility, or find support as a caregiver, Muskogee County’s free classes offer a variety of options for older adults to stay active, engaged, and healthy.

### **Seniorcise Locations:**

Muskogee Public Library  
801 W. Okmulgee Ave., Muskogee  
918-682-6657

Q.B. Boydston Library  
201 East Ave., Fort Gibson  
918-478-3587

Rieger Memorial Library  
116 N. Broadway, Haskell  
918-482-3614





# Building a Culture of Movement:

## How Webbers Falls is Embracing Fitness



**Meghan Johnson—far left on the top row—is a teacher at Webbers Falls Public Schools and a champion of community fitness in northeastern Oklahoma. Among other efforts, she organizes community running events as seen in the above photo and photos on the next page.**

**By Ella Klassen**

The community of Webbers Falls has been making strides toward integrating more physical activity into daily life. At the heart of these efforts is Meghan Johnson, a math teacher at Webbers Falls Public Schools who has become a driving force for fitness in her community. She has championed various initiatives to encourage movement for all, regardless of age or ability. Whether leading a girls' summer athlete workout program, coaching the cross-country team, organizing Walk, Bike & Roll events, or incorporating indoor recess fitness into the school day, Meghan is inspiring her community to embrace physical activity in accessible and meaningful ways.

### THE ROAD TO FITNESS: MEGHAN'S PASSION FOR RUNNING

For Meghan, running has always been more than just exercise—it's a lifestyle. Over the years, she has fallen in love with the sport, and it has become an integral part of her routine. "Running has given me a sense of discipline and accomplishment, and I want my students to experience that same feeling," she says.

Upon entering her classroom, visitors are met with a wall adorned with race bibs and medals from the many races she has competed in over the years. "Hanging up my race bibs and medals sparks interest in my students to run as well," she explains. What began as a personal passion has now evolved into a community-wide movement, thanks to her relentless enthusiasm.

### BUILDING A RUNNING COMMUNITY: THE WEBBERS FALLS CROSS-COUNTRY TEAM

Meghan took her love for running a step further when she founded the school's cross-country team in 2021. The first season started small, with only three students signing up. By the end of the season, just one runner remained. Despite this slow start, Meghan remained committed. "Webbers Falls' cross-country team has grown to 22 runners, and this year, we will have our first student sign to run with a college cross-country team," she proudly shares.

She credits the team's growth to persistence and leading by example. "Some students don't see themselves as runners at first, but as they train and push themselves, they realize they are capable of more than they thought."

### COMMUNITY RACES: ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Beyond coaching the cross-country team, Meghan organizes running events for the entire community. Two prominent races hosted in Webbers Falls are the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) 5K Run and the Cherokee Wings Run. The FCA 5K serves as a fundraiser for the FCA club, while the Cherokee Wings Run is a free program for Cherokee Nation citizens and individuals residing within Cherokee Nation boundaries. The latter program features seventeen 5K





**More than 100 participants gather for the 2023 Walk, Bike & Roll event organized in part by Johnson (left). Below, students exercise using grant-funded wobble boards thanks to Johnson's efforts.**



runs across the Cherokee Nation Reservation. “Not only do individuals and families from Webbers Falls participate in the Cherokee Wings event in their town,” Meghan notes, “but they also take buses to travel to other 5Ks in surrounding areas to compete.” Her efforts have helped establish a strong running culture within the community, fostering friendships and a sense of camaraderie among participants.

## INTEGRATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTO SCHOOL LIFE

Another way Meghan promotes physical activity is through initiatives within the school. Webbers Falls received a grant to acquire wobble boards—uneven boards used to practice balance—and indoor recess activity resources. Meghan applied for the grant to provide students with wobble boards as a brain break activity during test preparation. Beyond offering a fun and engaging break, wobble boards help improve coordination and core strength, adding a valuable movement-based component to the school day.

Additionally, Webbers Falls partners with different community entities like OSU Extension, OSU HOP, TSET, and local police to host Walk, Bike & Roll events, encouraging students to engage in active transportation to school. On these event days, parents and bus drivers drop students off at the town park, where they walk together to the school—a journey close to a mile in length. These initiatives, combined with Meghan’s dedication, are making a lasting impact on the health and well-being of both students and the broader community.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES AND LOOKING AHEAD

While Meghan’s initiatives have seen great success, they have not been without challenges. In the early days of the

cross-country team, she struggled to generate interest among students who were unfamiliar with distance running. “Many students didn’t believe they could run long distances, but once they started training, they realized how strong they were,” she says. Funding has also been a hurdle, as small schools like Webbers Falls often have limited resources for extracurricular activities. However, through community support and grants, Meghan has been able to secure funding for equipment and travel opportunities for her runners. Looking ahead, Meghan hopes to expand the running program and introduce new fitness initiatives to reach even more students. “I’d love to see more students and families get involved in fitness,” she shares.

## A LASTING IMPACT ON WEBBERS FALLS

Through her leadership and passion for fitness, Meghan Johnson is inspiring Webbers Falls residents to embrace a more active lifestyle. Whether through school programs, community races, or fitness-based learning activities, her efforts continue to pave the way for a healthier and more active future.

Her work aligns with broader public health goals, as physical inactivity remains a pressing issue in many rural communities. According to the CDC, only about 24% of children ages 6-17 engage in the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Programs like Meghan’s are crucial in addressing this gap by making exercise more accessible and enjoyable for young people.

For the students of Webbers Falls, the impact of Meghan’s work goes beyond fitness—it instills discipline, confidence, and a lifelong appreciation for movement. “It’s not just about running; it’s about building a culture where movement is a natural part of everyday life,” Meghan says. And thanks to her unwavering dedication, Webbers Falls is well on its way to achieving just that.



# GETTING PHYSICAL

with the

## MUSKOGEE SWIM & FITNESS CENTER

By Jesse Thomas

As the warmth of summer quickly approaches, shaking off the lethargy of winter can be a challenge. Or perhaps, for some, the struggle to become—or remain—physically active has been a recurring battle. Whatever the case, Muskogee offers plenty of opportunities to get moving; but if the parks and trails around the city don't quite fit the bill, there's another option: the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center.

The blocky concrete building at 566 N 6th St. may seem imposing from the outside, but stepping through its doors reveals a cool, sleek atmosphere that contrasts sharply with its stark exterior. The City of Muskogee acquired the facility from the Red Cross in 2007, opening it to the public as the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center the following year. Since then, it has undergone multiple renovations, with the most recent one completed just last year, ensuring a modern and welcoming space for residents.

### A HUB FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS

While the name may conjure images of a stereotypical gym, the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center is much more than that. It's a community-driven space dedicated to promoting health and wellness for residents of all ages and fitness levels. The facility, managed by the City of Muskogee Parks & Recreation Department, houses a range of fitness



and aquatic programs and even serves as the home base for the Muskogee High School swim team. Additionally, it offers lifeguard certification courses that benefit communities across the region, including Wagoner and Tahlequah.

One of the Center's defining qualities is its accessibility. Whether you're a dedicated athlete or a complete beginner, there's something here for you. With amenities including a full gym, weight training areas, cardio machines, and a pool with designated open swim times, visitors have numerous options to tailor their fitness journeys.

### THE LINK BETWEEN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Exercise isn't just about aesthetics or athletic performance—it's intrinsically linked to overall well-being. Kevin Anthis, Fitness & Aquatic Facility Manager, passionately advocates for this connection. "I believe that physical health and mental health are directly related. If you don't have both, you won't be able to live life to the fullest," he says.

Beyond exercise programs, the Center actively participates in broader community health initiatives. Through collaborations with the Muskogee



Wellness Initiative, Oklahoma State University's HOP grant, and local schools, it contributes to a more holistic approach to health. Additionally, partnerships with therapy providers enable aquatic therapy programs, which assist individuals recovering from injuries or managing chronic conditions.

### MAKING FITNESS MORE ACCESSIBLE

For many, cost is a significant barrier to fitness. The Muskogee





Swim & Fitness Center addresses this by offering reduced membership rates for seniors (60+) and incentives for long-term commitments and electronic fund transfer (EFT) payments. Additionally, during city-wide events like the Azalea Festival and Open Streets, the Center hosts free fitness activities to encourage community participation.

Those facing financial hardship may also find relief through partnerships with insurance programs like Silver Sneakers and Renew Active, which help cover membership costs—ask your insurance provider if you qualify. The Parks & Recreation Department also actively seeks grants to fund programs, such as a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently funding free swim lessons for children through May 2025.

For some, stepping into a fitness center can feel intimidating—especially for those new to the environment. To ease this transition, the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center provides guided tours and free equipment orientations, ensuring newcomers feel comfortable. The Center also offers a wide array of group fitness classes—including Tai Chi, Pilates, Spin, Boot Camp, and Water Aerobics—designed to cater to different skill levels and interests.

A particularly useful feature is the “Fitness on Demand” program, which

allows members to stream workout sessions at their convenience, whether at the facility’s upstairs fitness studio or from their mobile devices. The Center’s hours—Monday through Friday from 5:00 AM to 9:00 PM, Saturday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and Sunday from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM—are designed with flexibility in mind, accommodating a variety of schedules.

## RENOVATIONS AND INNOVATIONS

Thanks to a 2019 capital improvement plan approved by voters, the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center underwent two major facelifts in the past few years. These renovations included updated flooring, modernized lighting, an expanded weight area, and much-needed upgrades to the pool’s heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems. The result? A more functional and inviting space designed to enhance the experience for all members.

But the work doesn’t stop here. Looking ahead, the Muskogee Swim & Fitness Center is exploring new ways to expand its offerings, from forging additional partnerships with local businesses and organizations to developing innovative fitness programs. As the demand for accessible wellness options grows, so does the Center’s commitment to ensuring every Muskogee resident has the opportunity to lead a healthier life.

*Photos by Angel Ford*





# Nature's Plenty: The Network of Muskogee's Parks and Trails

By **Leo Pérez**

In the heart of northeastern Oklahoma, the City of Muskogee is home to a diverse network of parks and trails that brings together the community, nature, and adventure. Each park and trail offers a unique experience, reflecting the city's commitment to preserving its natural beauty and providing spaces for residents to enjoy the outdoors. From historic landmarks like Honor Heights Park to modern neighborhood green spaces, Muskogee's parks and trails showcase the city's commitment to outdoor recreation, environmental stewardship, and community well-being.

## Honor Heights Park: The Crown Jewel

Honor Heights Park is a 132-acre park acquired by the city in 1909 that stands as the crown jewel of Muskogee's park system. This expansive facility is more than just a green space; it's a cultural hub that hosts some of the city's most anticipated events, including the Azalea Festival in the spring and the Garden of Lights in the winter. Visitors can stroll through the Papilion Gardens and Butterfly House, explore the three trails—Henry Bresser Nature Trail (0.25 miles), Audubon Trail (0.5 miles), and Stem Beach Trail (0.5 miles)—or simply enjoy a picnic by one of the five lakes and ponds. The park also features a splash pad, a playground, and three tennis courts.

One of the unique attractions at Honor Heights Park is the StoryWalk, an innovative program developed in collaboration with the Muskogee Public Library. This interactive trail experience combines family time, physical activity, and literacy in a fun, interactive walk through nature. Pages from children's books are displayed along a walking path in the arboretum, encouraging a lifelong love of reading and outdoor exploration. The library updates the books regularly, ensuring a fresh experience for repeat visitors.

## Civitan Park: A Hillside Gem

Civitan Park, located at 3301 Gibson Street, is a 43-acre

hillside park that offers a serene escape from the city's bustle. This beautiful park is a popular spot for picnics, gatherings, and regular exercise. Visitors can enjoy a leisurely walk or jog on the nearly mile-long (0.8 miles) concrete trail which provides stunning views of the surrounding landscape. Civitan Park is also home to an 18-hole disc golf course, known for its challenging layout and scenic vistas. The park's historic facility is available for reservation, making it an ideal location for special events, and the ADA-compliant playground makes the park a fun place for all kids.

## Neighborhood Parks: Community Hubs

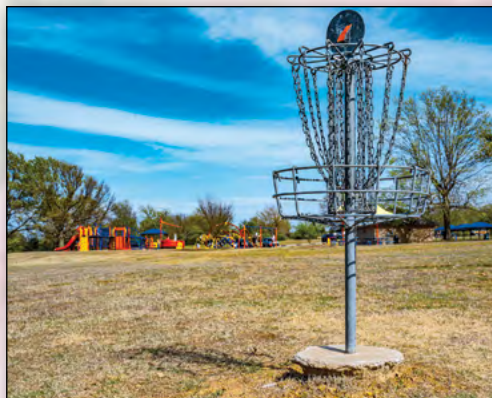
Scattered throughout Muskogee are smaller parks that serve as vital community spaces:

- **Beckman Park:** A 3.7-acre park in the Founders' Place Historic District with a playground, splash pad, and picnic shelter.
- **Bill Pool Park:** Located in the Phoenix Village area, this 2.5-acre park features picnic tables, a playground, and a basketball court.
- **Langston Park:** A 2-acre park north of Shawnee Street with shaded picnic areas, a playground, an open area, and a basketball court.

## Specialized Parks: Catering to Every Interest

Muskogee's park system is designed to cater to diverse interests:

- **Spaulding Park:** Recently renovated, this 19-acre park includes a swimming facility, tennis courts, and the asphalt multi-purpose Spaulding Trail (0.33 miles). The park also features a gazebo surrounded by the park's lake, two basketball courts, a fishing dock, and public restrooms.
- **Coody Creek Bark Park:** A 1.3-acre park designed for dogs, with separate areas for small and large breeds, agility equipment, and shaded picnic spots. The Coody Creek Trail, a 0.8-mile asphalt path, connects to the Centennial Trail.
- **Robison Park:** Offers a playground, sprayground, outdoor fitness equipment, and sports facilities including a skate park.



**Civitan Park features an 18-hole disc golf course.**

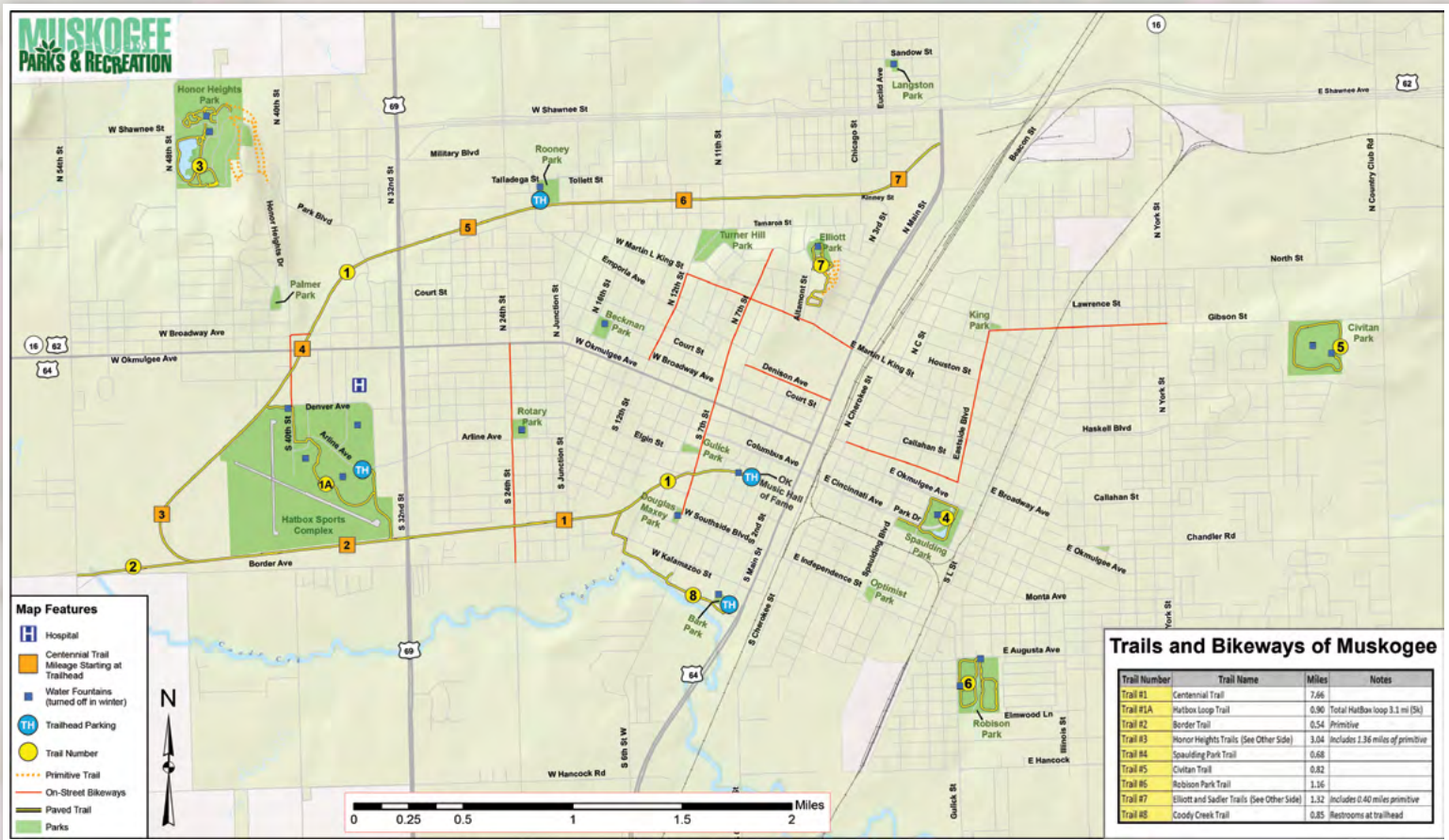


**Recently renovated pickleball courts at Spaulding Park.**



**Outdoor fitness equipment at Robison Park.**





**Hiking Trails and bicycle pathways in Muskogee. Water fountain locations marked with blue squares.**

## Trail System: Connecting the City

Muskogee's trail system is a testament to the city's commitment to connectivity and outdoor recreation:

- **Centennial Trail:** A 7.5-mile trail that begins downtown and loops through the city, popular among walkers, runners, and cyclists. The trail includes sections like Centennial North (3.5 miles) and Centennial South (2 miles), which connects to the Love-Hatbox Sports Complex.
- **Love-Hatbox Trail Loop:** A 3.1-mile loop around the Love-Hatbox Sports Complex, offering diverse microhabitats and hosting several organized runs annually
- **Stem Beach Trail:** A half-mile concrete trail in Honor Heights Park that encircles the park's largest lake.

## A Future of Growth and Connection

As Muskogee continues to grow, its parks and trails remain at the heart of community life. The city's Trails Master Plan aims to expand and enhance the trail network, ensuring that these paths are safe, accessible, and connect major destinations within the city. This vision not only promotes physical activity and environmental appreciation but also fosters a sense of community and belonging among residents.

Whether you're exploring the vibrant azaleas of Honor Heights, enjoying a family picnic at Beckman Park, or cycling along the Centennial Trail, Muskogee's green spaces offer a journey through nature and community that is uniquely its own.

*For more information about Muskogee's parks and trails, including upcoming events and facility rentals, you can contact the Muskogee Parks and Recreation Department at 918-684-6302 or via email at [information@muskogeeparks.org](mailto:information@muskogeeparks.org). Their office is located at 837 E. Okmulgee, Muskogee, OK 74403.*



**Girl on a Swing, a statue in Spaulding Park.**

**Photos by Angel Ford**



# Water, Shade, and Safety:

## Surviving the Summer Heat

By Jesse Thomas

As frequently as the weather in Oklahoma changes—"If you don't like the weather, wait five minutes," as they say—the summers in our fair state tend to be very hot. With daytime temperatures often in the 90s or above, beating the summer heat becomes a life-saving necessity for all Oklahomans—particularly for those without reliable access to shade and water, such as our unhoused community members.

Extreme heat increases the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and even heat stroke—conditions that often develop silently, especially for those without shelter. But even in the heat, there are places offering relief. Scattered across our city are shaded spaces, welcoming indoor facilities, and compassionate organizations providing essential resources.

### Staying Hydrated: Where to Find Water in Muskogee

Access to drinking water is the first line of defense against heat-related illness. Fortunately, Muskogee offers several public and community-based options for hydration:

- The Muskogee Public Library (801 W. Okmulgee St.) has water fountains and indoor seating for anyone needing a break from the heat.
- The Muskogee County Health Department (530 S. 34th St.) may distribute water during heat advisories and shares vital information about staying safe in extreme weather.
- City parks across Muskogee, including Honor Heights, Spaulding, Elliott, and Rotary Parks, are equipped with public water fountains—offering a simple but essential source of hydration throughout the day.

While water access can still be

inconsistent in some areas, these fountains and facilities provide critical support. For those looking to help, donating bottled water to shelters or carrying a few extra bottles to share can make a direct and meaningful impact.

### Seeking Shelter: Shaded Spaces and Indoor Relief

Not every solution to heat exposure needs four walls and air conditioning. Shade alone can help lower body temperature and prevent overheating. Some public spaces offer welcome relief by offering shaded pathways and awnings:

- Honor Heights Park and Spaulding Park feature mature trees, covered picnic tables, and shaded walking paths. These green spaces are among the most accessible places to rest in relative safety.
- Downtown awnings and breezeways—though not designed as shelters—can provide momentary relief for those navigating city sidewalks in full sun.

- Community centers and churches may open their doors on dangerously hot days. While not always consistent, these informal efforts can be lifesaving. It's worth checking with trusted local organizations during heat advisories.

Encouraging the development of permanent shade structures or more accessible public cooling options remains an ongoing opportunity for community growth.

### Looking Out for Each Other: Safety and Emergency Help

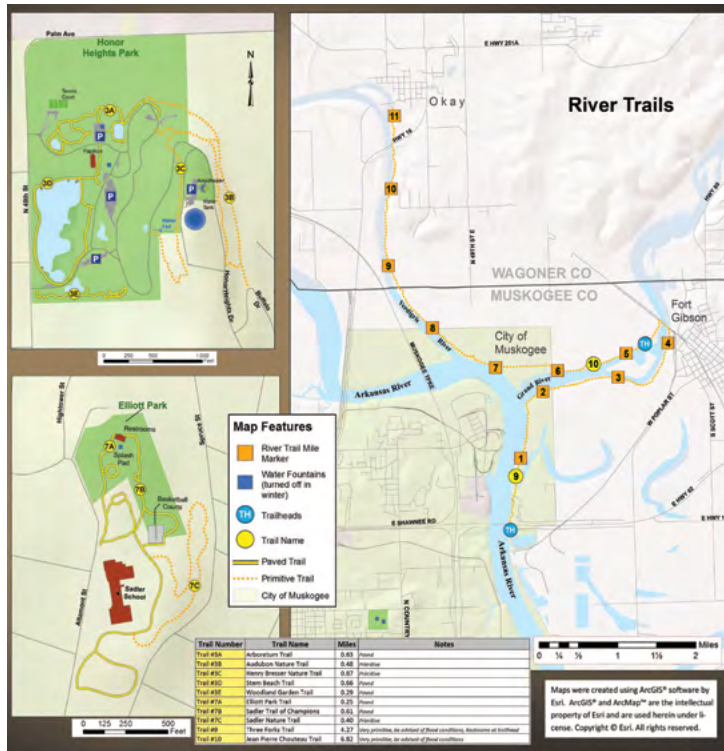
When heat-related symptoms set in, the body can go downhill fast. Dizziness, confusion, nausea, or skin that feels dry and hot instead of sweaty are red flags that someone is in danger. Fortunately, there are organizations and emergency responders trained to help:

- Muskogee County EMS and the Muskogee Police Department respond to welfare checks and emergency calls for individuals in distress.

- Green Country Behavioral Health Services and other outreach providers regularly engage with unsheltered individuals and can help connect them with emergency services, shelter, or transport.

- The Gospel Rescue Mission may provide overnight shelter and meals, including during extreme weather conditions.

If you see someone struggling in the heat, don't assume they're okay. Symptoms of heat exhaustion include: heavy sweating; faintness; dizziness; fatigue; weak, rapid pulse; low blood pressure upon standing; muscle cramps; nausea; and headache. If you or someone around you is showing these symptoms, seek out water and shade—and if you can't get to water or shade, call 911. Heat stroke is deadly.



**Water fountains on the Centennial Bikeway. See page 11 for a map of water fountains in Muskogee parks.**



# Muskogee County Resources

## Recursos del Condado de Muskogee

### FOOD & NUTRITION (Alimentación y Nutrición)

#### FOOD PANTRIES (DESPENSAS DE ALIMENTOS)

**Little Free Pantry on Peak.**

112 E Peak Blvd. (under awning), Open 24/7.

**First Assembly of God.**

3100 Gulick St.,  
Mon-Fri 9am-12pm, Tues, Wed, Fri 1-4pm.

**Faith Love Baptist Church.**

1208 Tamaroa St.,  
Wed 4-5:30pm by request. Sun 12:30-1pm.

**Community Food Pantry.**

601 E Broadway St.,  
Mon-Wed 1-2pm. Thurs 3-4pm, 4-6pm.

**Community First Center.**

8th & Boston, Tues 10am-12pm.

**Joseph's Storehouse.**

615 S Main, Mon 10am-1pm.

**Muskogee Catholic Charities.**

1220 W Broadway, Mon-Fri 9am-12pm.

**The Salvation Army.**

700 Independence Ave., Mon-Thurs 9am-4pm.

**Eastern Heights Baptist Church.**

2401 Haskell Blvd, Sat 11am-2pm.

#### MEALS (COMIDAS)

**Gospel Rescue Mission.**

326 S Second St., Sack lunches available  
Mon-Fri from 12-12:30pm.

**Muskogee Creek Nation.**

111 S Virginia St., 55+ Tribal residents.

**Honor Heights Towers.**

300 N 40th St.,  
918-910-5570, Mon-Fri 11:30am-12:30pm.

**Meals on Wheels.**

918-687-5416, 1st Sat/mo 8-10am. 918-682-7891, ask for outreach.

**EODD (Senior) Nutrition Sites in Muskogee County:**

*Fort Gibson Site*, 790 S Lee, Fort Gibson, 918-230-6683.

*Muskogee Site*, 501 N Main St., 918-231-5297.

*Honor Heights Site*, 300 N 40th St., 918-687-5232.

#### OTHER FOOD RESOURCES (OTROS RECURSOS ALIMENTARIOS)

**Community Gardens. To request a plot:**

*Chandler Road*, 1900 Chandler Rd. (at T Street)  
Parks & Recreation 918-684-6302 ext.1470.

*Civitan Park* 3301 Gibson St., Civitan Club, 918-682-4957.

**Grace Episcopal Church,**

Corner of North 7th and Court Streets, 918-687-5416.

**MLK Community Center**

300 W Martin Luther King St., 918-684-6314.

*Muskogee Teen Center*, 322 Callahan St., 918-684-6345.

*Spaulding Park*, corner of Spaulding & Cincinnati,  
Parks & Recreation, 918-684-6302 ext.1470.

**OKFresh!**

Go to okfresh.org to see if your healthcare provider is participating in this program.

**Double Up OK. EBT @ Farmers' Market.**

Tues 4-7pm (May-Sept), Sat 8am-12pm (Apr-Oct).

### TRANSPORTATION (Transporte)

**Muskogee County Transit.**

918-682-1721, muskogee-countytransit.org.

**Sooner Ride. Scheduling**

877-404-4500, TDD 800-722-0353.

**Angel Flight.** 12345 E. Skelly Dr., Tulsa, OK 74128

Phone: 918-749-8992.

### SHELTER & HOUSING (Refugio y Vivienda)

#### SHELTERS (REFUGIOS)

**Gospel Rescue Mission.** 323 Callahan St.,  
Mon-Fri. Up to 2 weeks unless arrangement.

**Women in Safe Homes (WISH).**

Domestic violence emergencies, 918-682-7879.

#### HOUSING ASSISTANCE (ASISTENCIA DE VIVIENDA)

**Muskogee Housing Authority.**

918-910-5489, www.muskogeehousing.org.

**Habitat for Humanity.**

918-478-0074, https://www.muskogeehabitat.org.

**KIBOIS Community Action.**

315 N 5th St, 918-967-3325., Once/year rent/utilities help.

**KIBOIS Community Action Emergency Housing Vouchers.**

918-684-7258, 315 N 5th St.

**KIBOIS Support Services for Veteran Families.**

https://www.kibois.org/ssvf, 918-681-7525.

**Red Cross Disaster housing assistance.**

566 N 6th St, 918-682-1366.

**Eldercare Locator.**

1-800-677-1116, www.eldercare.acl.gov.

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# Muskogee County Resources

## *Recursos del Condado de Muskogee*

### HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL (Asistencia Sanitaria y Médica)

#### GENERAL (GENERAL)

**Arkansas Verdigris Valley Health Center.**  
East: 918-682-0222. West: 918-912-2333.

**Baptist Free Health Clinic.**  
205 Houston St., 918-869-0516.

**Good Shepherd Free Health Clinic of Muskogee.**  
2130 W Okmulgee, 918-683-8080.

**NeoHealth – Muskogee.**  
922 N York St., 918-683-0470.

**Muskogee County Health Department.**  
530 S 34th St., 918-683-0321.

**Three Rivers Health Center (Tribal).**  
1001 S 41st, 918-781-6500.

**Kelly B. Todd Cerebral Palsy and Neuromuscular Center.**  
1111 N 36th, 918-683-4621.

### MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING & CRISIS (Consejería y Crisis en Salud Mental)

#### COUNSELING (CONSEJERÍA EN SALUD MENTAL)

**Creoks Behavioral Health Services.**  
1139 N Main St., 918-687-7064.

**Green Country Behavioral Health Services.**  
619 N Main St., 918-682-8407.

**Integrity Pathways.**  
814 W Okmulgee Ave., 918-682-9292.

**MCCOYS.**  
4009 Eufaula Ave., 918-682-2841.

**Monarch Behavioral Health (Outpatient).**  
2400 W Broadway, 918-682-7210. [monarchok.org/request-services](http://monarchok.org/request-services)

**Oklahoma Families First – Muskogee.**  
928 N. York, Suite 44, 918-686-5588.

#### CRISIS (CRISIS EN SALUD MENTAL)

**Green Country Crisis Stabilization.**  
24/hr. 918-682-8407.

**Saint Francis Geriatric Acute Crisis Stabilization/Inpatient Care.**  
918-488-6688. (Seniors)

**Willow Crest. 24/hr.**  
800-950-7577, ages 5-17. (Children)

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.**  
1-800-784-2333.

**National Suicide Prevention Hotline.**  
1-800-273-8255.

**Oklahoma Department of Mental Health Hotline.**  
1-800-522-9054.

**National Youth Crisis Hotline.**  
1-800-448-4663.

**National Youth Crisis Text Line.**  
Text TALK to 741741 24/7.

**National Native Youth Crisis Text Line.**  
Text NATIVE to 741741 24/7. (Tribal)

**TXT 4 HELP (Youth).**  
Text 'safe' w/ location to 4HELP (44357) to connect with a Safe Place.

**Student Assistance by Mercy (SAM).**  
Mental health for college students.  
1-855-225-2726.

**Reach Out Mental Health Hotline.**  
1-800-522-9054.

### EDUCATION (Educación)

**Bridges Out of Poverty.**  
1503 W Broadway, Muskogee. 918-684-6314.

**Muskogee Public Library.**  
891 W Okmulgee, 918-682-6657.  
GED, US citizenship, tutoring.

**Ark of Faith.**  
429 E Broadway, Classes: guitar, deaf signing, anger management.

### ABUSE & ADDICTION (Abuso y Adicción)

**24/7 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.**  
9-8-8.

**24/7 Treatment Assistance Hotline**  
1-866-335-7377.

**Green Country Behavioral Health Services.**  
619 N Main St., 918-682-8407.

**Gospel Rescue Mission.**  
326 S Second St., Tues-Thurs 8am-4 pm.

**Monarch Substance Abuse (Outpatient).**  
2400 W Broadway, 918-682-7210.  
[monarchok.org/request-services](http://monarchok.org/request-services)

**Monarch Substance Abuse (Inpatient).**  
By referral.  
Visit [monarchok.org/request-services](http://monarchok.org/request-services).

**Rays House.**  
3991 Peak Blvd., 918-706-0883





## Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee Expansion: **Putting Wellness First for the Community**

As part of the Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee commitment to wellness, we are thrilled that the expanded Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee will open in December.

With patient rooms up to 47% larger than existing rooms, this construction will help ensure Muskogee remains an excellent place to receive care and work in healthcare.

### **The tower will feature:**

- New critical care units
- Larger staff support area
- New ground floor entrance
- New expanded chapel
- Expanded admission testing and admitting area
- Surgery family waiting area with consult rooms
- Dedicated infection isolation rooms, with anterooms
- Designed for pandemic preparedness
- Additional space for future growth



For those who visited when the entrance was on a hill, one of the key features for patients and visitors will be a new entrance that will enable visitors to park closer to the door and have safer, easier access.

We look forward to serving our neighbors at this modern and expanded facility!





Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Nonprofit  
Resource Center  
207 North Second Street  
Muskogee, OK 74401

Non-Profit Org  
ECRWSS  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Tulsa, OK  
Permit No. 932

**Residential Customer**

## CONGRATULATIONS, SAINT FRANCIS HOSPITAL MUSKOGEE!

Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee is honored to be named to the Premier 100 Top Hospitals® list for 2025 and as an Everest Award winner, recognizing the hospital's achieving a top rate of improvement over five years. These recognitions demonstrate our commitment to providing excellence in patient care and dedication to our Christ-centered mission of service.

**SAINTFRANCIS.COM**



**Saint Francis**  
*Hospital Muskogee*