



# *Celebrating* **Kimee** **Wind-Hummingbird**

**Muscogee Creek Nation**

Kimee Wind-Hummingbird is a Muscogee (Creek) Nation citizen with Cherokee descent. She will receive her MSW from the University of Oklahoma in May 2023 and has earned the title of 2023 Graduate of the Year. Kimee earned her undergrad degree in health and human performance from Northeastern State University. She started her child welfare career in 1999 with the Cherokee Nation Indian Child Welfare program, where she gained experience in many facets of Indian child welfare. Kimee joined the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's (MCN) Children and Family Services Administration (CFSA) as a program manager in 2013 and swiftly rose through the ranks. She served as the director of the CFSA, which encompassed Promoting Safe & Stable Families; Child Protection Services; Certification, Placement & Recruitment for Foster and Adoptive Homes; and Tribal and State Reunification and Permanency Services, and oversaw the Tribal Juvenile Justice program before departing the MCN in 2021. Kimee joined the team at the National Native Children's Trauma Center as the training and technical specialist shortly after leaving MCN and now serves as a training and technical assistance manager overseeing initiatives concentrating on tribal child welfare and child advocacy centers at the National Native Children's Trauma Center.

Growing up, her father would often say that she was always one to ensure everyone had what they needed and always showed up with what she could offer to help her family and community. Her lifelong commitment to helping others has continued into her adult years, during which she continues to positively impact the lives of children and families. Kimee believes that collaboration and encouraging everyone to bring their unique skills to the table is essential to success. As a result, she considers teamwork to be one of the most important keys to success. Kimee is no stranger to overcoming obstacles, but through these struggles, she understood what a support network consists of and how it impacts the work. Kimee is very proud of coauthoring the NCWWI grant, creating connections between tribal sites, the university, and NCWWI. She is proud of building and fostering connections with child welfare professionals across the nation, while making a positive impact on the lives of Native children and families.

Kimee is excited about the opportunities that have allowed her to work alongside Indigenous people worldwide. Having worked with First Nations Peoples in BC last fall and in May of 2023, Kimee will participate in the International Child Welfare Exchange Program and travel to Israel to understand child welfare from a global perspective. Kimee's willingness to continually have an open mind and take in new information daily is one of her most valuable assets. She has a strong understanding of responsibility to community, acknowledging the importance of uplifting the diversity of skills that everyone brings and the value of listening and learning from others.

Kimee's advice to aspiring child welfare professionals is, "Take care of yourself. Recognize that you have a responsibility to the community that you serve and be intentional in your approach to walking alongside them. And try your very best to support your team in the work."

*"A group becomes a team when a team when each member is sure enough of themselves and their contribution to praise the of others."*

*~Norman Shidle*