

CCCRA Press Release August 29, 2017

Champion Hoop Dancer to perform at Hayesville's Cherokee Heritage Festival

Internationally recognized Native American World Champion Hoop Dancer Eddie Swimmer will delight you with his hoop dancing skills from 1:30 – 2:00 pm during the Cherokee Heritage Festival on Saturday, September 16 at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit in Hayesville, North Carolina. In addition to touring the world for 10 years with Native American dance groups, Swimmer performed in the opening ceremonies of the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, the 1994 World Cup Soccer Tournament in Dallas and in the 1993 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. Also he choreographed a hoop dance for the New York Broadway production of "Annie Get Your Gun." He is the founder of the native dance group Native Movements and has toured extensively with numerous musical groups. Swimmer is a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI).

Joining Swimmer is his 95-year old grandmother, renowned Cherokee potter Amanda Swimmer, and her granddaughter artist Melvina Swimmer. In addition to the Swimmer family, other EBCI sharing their culture include well known artist and storyteller Davy Arch, along with dancers and artisans from the Oconaluftee Living History Village in Cherokee, North Carolina. These dancers and artisans learn traditional dances and perfect the arts and crafts of the Cherokee culture at the 17th century Indian Village in Cherokee. Crafts include beading, basket weaving, flint knapping, finger weaving, creating darts and arrows, and sculpting pottery.

The festival would not be complete without music from Hayesville's own Dan Hollifield who will provide melodic flute music for festival attendees. Hollifield, a member of the Cherokee Nation, carves the river cane flutes we have the pleasure of hearing.

Sure to entertain and inform you, local resident Darry Wood will show you how to create fire with two sticks and make a Cherokee-style blowgun and darts with native materials. Wood is a founder of Earthskills Rendezvous, a program dedicated to teaching the nature lore and life skills of Native people. You'll not want to miss Wood's authentic and exciting demonstrations.

Cherokee crafters Brenda Fire Eagle, Rob Rafford, David and Renee Chastain, Bill Rafford and Tony Walkingstick Moses will be joined by drum maker Bob Lawson and his wife Carol. Lawson creates pow-wow drums, hand drums and rattles using natural materials and dyes. Carol makes the dyes using native plants.

Using native plants to survive was a necessity for the Cherokee. Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition's Tony Ward will be sharing information about native plants that live in our region at 11:30 am and 2:30 pm at the Cherokee Botanical Sanctuary, located across the street from the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit. Ward will have activities for families, which will provide a fun way to learn about these

important plants. Clay County Historical & Arts Council invites you to wander in their native gardens located along the trail below the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit.

Children of all ages will want to practice blowgun techniques and make jewelry. Jane Eastman, PhD at Western Carolina University and an expert on Cherokee pottery, will provide the guidance and materials to make replicas of Cherokee-type crafts, which will serve as memorabilia from the festival.

You'll want to try out the Cherokee frybread that will be available, in addition to hamburgers and hotdogs, and purchase a Quanassee Path t-shirt to commemorate the event. T-shirts will be available at the Information Tent. Proceeds will be used to help fund next year's Cherokee Heritage Festival.

In addition, the adjacent Clay County "Old Jail" Museum will be open for the day and features Cherokee displays, local historical displays, and local art. There is no entrance fee. The Clay County Historical & Arts Council invites you to take part in the silent auction of regional arts and crafts from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm in front of the museum.

While in Hayesville you are encouraged to visit other sites along the 2-mile Quanassee Path: A Cherokee History Trail which includes the exhibit, museum, Cherokee Cultural Center at Moss Library, Spikebuck Mound/Quanassee Town site and the Cherokee Botanical Sanctuary.

The Cherokee Heritage Festival is hosted by the Clay County Communities Revitalization Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is sponsored by the Conservation Fund's Resourceful Communities Program. The free festival is held from 10 am – 3 pm at the Cherokee Homestead Exhibit, 805 Hwy. 64 Business in Historic Hayesville, North Carolina. Free shuttle service will be provided from several nearby parking lots. Call 828-389-3045 or visit <http://www.cccra-nc.org/> for more information.

