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Timing for life



ER nurse keeps pace at INTEGRIS Health Edmond

Stephanie Jones's caring spirit and curious intellect as a registered nurse guide her each day to do her best work at INTEGRIS Health Edmond

by James Coburn, Staff Writer

An adrenaline rush for Stephanie Jones means not knowing what type of emergency is coming through the ER door, said the registered nurse at INTEGRIS Health Edmond.

"It keeps us on our toes, and there is not a day that I work that I don't learn something new," Jones said. "I feel that it's challenging. As a group, ER nurses like to be challenged."

Jones engages life with a confident smile. She has spent her 12-year career as a registered nurse helping patients in an ER. Her first career choice was at INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center before she transferred to the INTEGRIS Health Edmond ER where she is a lead nurse.

"At this facility I absolutely adore the management," she said. "The management is wonderful. They always have your back

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A lot of heart Golden Age Nursing Center LPN wins a lot of smiles

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

Kathy Ordaz loves the challenge of working in a nursing home.

"I love the difficult residents," said Ordaz, LPN, Golden Age Nursing Center, located in Guthrie.

Those are the ones who need her the most, she said. They tug at her heart as she hears them say her name, she said. A family oriented environment keeps her motivated to continue caring for the elderly at Golden Age.

Golden Age is a family affair employing not only Ordaz, but also her mother-in-law, sister-in-law and husband.

"I've had daughters who have worked here. My son was working here when he was going to high school," Ordaz said. "It's family oriented and on my halls everybody pitches in when something needs to be done."

Help often comes from the nursing aides, she said. They also know she is available to help them when a resident is in need.

"I understand their role because I've been in

See GOLDEN AGE Page 2

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Nurses Needed



GOLDEN AGE

Continued from Page 1

their shoes," Ordaz added. "But I also understand, too, that I don't mind helping if they're busy. If you're not busy then you need to pick up your pace and you need to help out."

She has never had the desire to work in a hospital. She feels like the nursing home is where she needs to be because of the close relationships she develops with residents.

"We're all here for one thing. We are here for these residents," Ordaz said. "And if it wasn't for these residents we wouldn't have a job."

She often shares with nurses the thought of how would they feel if their mother or father was being cared for at a nursing home.

"You've got to treat these residents the way you'd want your family members to be treated," she said.

The reason she became a nurse was prompted by her late father. Ordaz did not graduate from high school but would later earned her GED. During that process, her dad said, "You need to go to nursing school," Ordaz recalled. "I promised him I would go for my nursing license. And before I got my GED, he passed away."

Almost immediately she pursued her way to nursing school. Ordaz went from being a certified nurse and medication aide, restorative aide and a home health aide to being a licensed practical nurse by attending the Metro Technology Center in Oklahoma City. She has also worked in hospice and has had various leadership roles in long-term care.

She had finished some prerequisites to become a registered nurse, but then she needed to help with her grandchildren, she said.

"To me being an RN - they have a little bit more schooling - but to me a nurse is a nurse and we're here for one thing," she said. "And I love what I do."

Most importantly for an LPN working in a long-term care center is being the doctor's eyes and ears, Ordaz said.

"We have to do a lot more critical thinking, to me, than in a hospital because the doctors are there," she said.

Nursing home physicians and family members rely on the nursing staff to take care of the residents' needs, Ordaz continued.

"Doctors have to be able to rely on us and be able to trust our judgement," she said.

Family members want the peace of mind of knowing they can return home without worrying about their loved ones, especially when feeling sick.

Ordaz has many heartwarming memories of her nursing career that remind her daily why she is a nurse. When a resident thanks her or says "I love you," Ordaz knows the resident understands that she loves them, too. She loves hearing a resident say, "Hear comes Kathy" or "I need you to do this," Ordaz said.

To work in a long-term care facility takes a lot of heart, she said. A compassionate nurse will find that love makes being a nurse easier, she added.

"That's what it's all about," Ordaz said. A nursing career is more than a job. She tells family members that she is a nurse at Golden Age because she cares. Each resident has different things she loves about them.

Ordaz likes it when a resident or family member jokes about giving her permission to take days off work for family cook outs or going to a movie. But when she returns to work they will tell her they missed her.

"You can see it in their eyes," she said. "They are appreciative, and they know that I do care," she said.



Kathy Ordaz, LPN, Golden Age Nursing Center, gives of herself to patient care and feels the love returned to her.

Special Event: August 19, 2017

Pharmacology For Advanced Practice Nurses

The event will be held at the OU Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing, 1100 N. Stonewall Ave, Room 130, Oklahoma City, OK 73117 August 19, 2017 from 8:00 am to 4:15 pm.

Topics will be COPD, CHF and Psychiatric Updates and will include lunch. For \$200 per person and \$150 for FT OUCON Faculty and OUCON Students.

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JONES

Continued from Page 1

and are very helpful."

Several of her coworkers in the ER had worked with her at INTEGRIS Baptist. They had established a great bond together, she said. So Jones followed them to INTEGRIS Health Edmond where they continue to improve on excellence.

"I think teamwork is a quality we share," she said. "We help each other out and I think we all share working well under pressure together. We call it organized chaos."

The nurses have a type-A personality and take charge. A rush of adrenaline is a common trait among them, Jones said. She added that everyone she works with has been doing ER nursing for a long time.

"We just kind of feed off each other," she explained. "I think we're always learning something here and that's what I love about it."

Nurses build on each other's confidence by always being a step away with help. This applies to life outside of work as well.

"I love it here because everyone

is willing to jump in and help everybody else," she said. "We've all become friends outside of work. They're a second family to me. It's great to work with people like that."

Love is what sparked her desire to become a nurse. She has always been inspired by the medical field. Even when she was a young girl, Jones was always interested in science. Anatomy and physiology sparked her interest.

"When I got to college I chose nursing," she said. I feel that I have that kind of personality. I like to take care of people. I've always been that kind of a person. And that kind of led me in that direction."

Jones became a nurse in 2005 after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing at the University of Central Oklahoma. In 2004 she worked as a nurse tech at INTEGRIS Baptist before being hired as a nurse there. Jones came to work at the Edmond hospital two years ago.

She may not know her patients very long as an ER nurse, but there is a common thread among them that drives her performance to shift to high gear.

"I think what I love the most

is you are the first person they see in a critical situation," Jones said. "Everybody is scared; everybody is nervous about outcomes. I get the sense of pride helping people."

It is important for Jones to explain to patients and their family members what is transpiring. ER nurses must have a rapport with people and a communication style that empathizes with their fears.

"You have to have that kind of ability to talk with people to help calm them down and help ease their minds," she said. "And not everybody can do that."

The ER staff often shares the importance of updating the patient with information.

"It's different than a doctor's office. We get results here almost immediately," she said.

Information regarding CT scans and X-Rays, even if it's not good news, at least gives the patient perspective in understanding their condition. Processing information is important for patients and their family members.

"I think it is this whole not knowing that causes so much stress," Jones said.

Her work is fast paced and to

stay flexible, Jones likes to exercise when away from the ER. She said exercise is a major stress reliever in life. Exercise is her "me time," Jones said.

"I've got young kids at home, so we're always doing something - taking walks and going to the park," she said.

Family members call her all the time for advice when they have a minor pain. She loves life.

"I like what I do. I love the place that I work," she said, knowing the ER can change within one minute.

"I think that's what I like about it so much. You just never know," she said.

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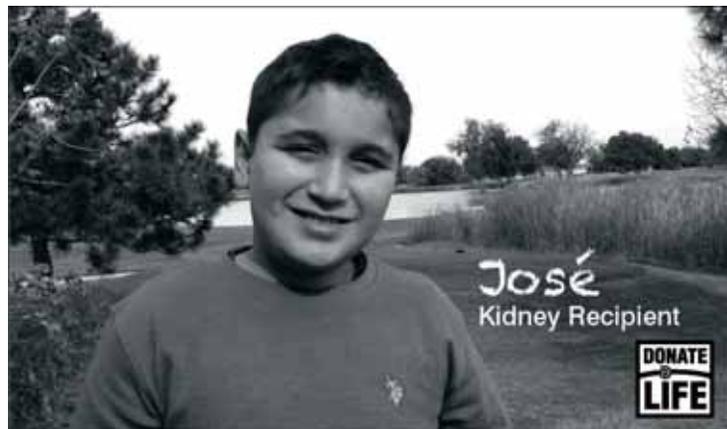
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At 10, his health started declining and he was placed back on the list in July 2013. His mom was also tested to be his donor, but within three weeks, a donor kidney became available and he was transplanted in August 2013. The doctors said it was a one in a million perfect match. José was only in the hospital for 5 days. He is now able to do almost anything a boy his age wants to do with the exception of contact sports.

LifeShare

Oklahoma CLICK for Babies Campaign Seeks Local Knitters

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) needs your help as we CLICK for Babies. This campaign is to create awareness of the Period of PURPLE Crying to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome. Frustration with crying infants is the number one trigger for the shaking and abuse of an infant. The OSDH is recruiting crochet artists and knitters to help reach this year's cap goal of 4,300 to spread Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention efforts across the state.

The Period of PURPLE Crying is a time when babies cry more than any other time in their life. It is important for parents to know that it is a normal and healthy part of infancy, that it is not their fault, and that it is not going to last forever. Currently, Oklahoma has 41 birthing hospitals participating in providing new mothers with The Period of PURPLE Crying DVD to educate them on normal crying patterns, how to cope with unsoothable crying, and the importance of never shaking a baby. Along with the DVD, in the months of November and December, each newborn will receive a purple baby cap as a reminder of the importance of never shaking a baby.

Volunteers are encouraged to knit or crochet newborn baby boy and girl caps of any shade of purple with soft, baby friendly yarn. The caps can have a variety of fun colors and patterns, as long as they are at least 50 percent purple and free of straps, strings or other potential choking hazards. Purple baby caps are accepted year-round. Only caps received by Oct. 1 will make it in this year's hospital distribution.

Purple caps can be mailed to: Oklahoma State Department of Health, ATTN: Maternal and Child Health, 1000 NE 10th St. Oklahoma City, OK 73117-1299

To obtain patterns for caps, guidelines and "CLICK for Babies" campaign details, visit clickcampaign.health.ok.gov, or call Amy Terry at (405) 271-4471, or email amyt@health.ok.gov.

INTEGRIS Family Care Mustang Earns National Recognition

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) recently announced that INTEGRIS Family Care Mustang has officially received Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH) Recognition for using evidence-based, patient-centered processes that focus on highly coordinated care and long-term, participative relationships.

The NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home is a model of primary care that combines teamwork and information technology to improve care, improve patients' experience of care and reduce costs.

Medical homes foster ongoing partnerships between patients and their personal clinicians, instead of approaching care as the sum of episodic office visits. Each patient's care is overseen by clinician-led care teams that coordinate treatment across the health care system. Research shows that medical homes can lead to higher quality and lower costs, and can improve patient and provider reported experiences of care.

"NCQA Patient-Centered Medical Home Recognition raises the bar in defining high-quality care by emphasizing access, health information technology and coordinated care focused on patients," said NCQA President Margaret E. O'Kane. "Recognition shows that INTEGRIS Family Care Mustang has the tools, systems and resources to provide its patients with the right care, at the right time."

To earn recognition, which is valid for three years, clinics must demonstrate the ability to meet the program's key elements, embodying characteristics of the medical home. NCQA standards aligned with the joint principles of the Patient-Centered Medical Home established with the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Osteopathic Association.



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Military academy students get hands-on lab experience at OMRF

Three U.S. military academy students have completed a crash course in biomedical research at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation through the John H. Saxon Service Academy Summer Research Program.

Two students from the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and one from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., participated in the foundation's eighth annual program.

John Saxon III, M.D., a Muskogee physician and OMRF board member since 2000, established the program to honor his father, a West Point graduate who taught for five years at the U.S. Air Force Academy and was a career Air Force pilot before passing away in 1996.

The Saxon program is designed to provide military academy students

with an opportunity to work side-by-side with OMRF's senior scientists.

Matthew Lerdahl, a Coon Rapids, Minn., native and cadet captain first class in the U.S. Air Force, worked in the lab of Roberto Pezza, Ph.D., studying cell division.

Lerdahl, a biology major, specifically worked on what happens when cell division goes wrong in disorders like Down syndrome and is implicated in certain cancers.

"This experience has been even more intense than I thought, and that's a great thing. It's very hands-on and the mentors are super helpful but also give you the freedom to make mistakes and learn on your own," said Lerdahl. "It made me a better scientist and



(From right to left) OMRF Saxon students Jocelyn Rodriguez, Erin McShane and Matthew Lerdahl are military academy students who got hands-on research experience in the labs at OMRF.

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CAREERS IN NURSING

POWER OF CHOICE: CARTER HEALTHCARE

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer

Carrie Blumenthal, RN, is closing in on three years with Carter Healthcare. And every day the assistant director of hospice nursing is humbled by the amazing opportunities her nurses are given by families across Oklahoma.

"Hospice is such an intimate service because you are so involved with the families. You're in someone's home," Blumenthal said. "You're a complete stranger the day you start. When you finish, you're family."

The bottom line in hospice care is to ensure the pain of each and every patient is managed during end-of-life care.

It's Blumenthal's job to make sure that each one of her nurses meets that standard daily.

But the job is so much more than that.

"It goes along with our mission statement of making people's lives better," Blumenthal said. "Hospice is the only aspect of a person's health care where they get to make all the decisions. We get to facilitate that for them."

Blumenthal has been a nurse for 17 years after graduating from Oklahoma State University.

She spent her first 10 years in trauma and has cycled through cardiac stepdown, ICU, post-op and even a stint in management.

With no home health experience she went directly into hospice care.

Looking back, not even a decade of trauma could prepare her for what she was stepping into.

"You learn it once you get out

in the field and you learn it every day," she said. "It's dynamic because every family and every patient is different. A disease process has a way it normally goes but that doesn't mean it's going to affect every patient the same way."

It was a few months before then that Karen Stowers, RN, accepted the role of Carter's director of nursing.

She quickly saw something in Blumenthal.

"And she has climbed quickly," Stowers said. "If you ask me she is my right and left hand in hospice. She's my hospice guru."

And what does a guru do? Everything.

"Hospice is a team approach. It is actually a real team approach because it takes more than one person," Blumenthal said. "We have our social workers, our chaplains and a fabulous team of nurses who take care of their business every day."

And that business is bringing dignity to someone's last days.

"You have to pull every ounce of nursing knowledge that you have ever learned, had and experienced into taking care of one person at home, because most hospice care takes place at home," Blumenthal said.

After a seemingly endless stream of bad news patients and their families often find themselves staring face-to-face with hospice care for the first time.

It can be both liberating and terrifying at the same time.

"Especially the older population because they are so used to having



Carrie Blumenthal, RN, serves as the assistant director of hospice nursing for Carter Healthcare.

their care dictated for them. They do everything the physician says without question," Blumenthal said. "So when we break it down and ask the patient what they want they have to think about that. No one wants to die but we try to steer them more towards thinking of what are their goals."

Blumenthal's nurses give patients that freedom to choose. Do they want to be pain-free? Do they want to be able to go to the park with their family?

And there's a large team at Carter helping those patients navigate their course but nationwide people are still finding hospice for the first time.

DIGNITY IS A CHOICE

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, despite the clear advantages in quality of life for terminally ill patients, and the cost benefits associated with palliative and hospice care, the decision to utilize hospice is made by only an estimated fraction of the patients who stand to benefit.

Only approximately 20%-25% of people who die in the US utilize hospice services with the median utilization of hospice standing at only 22 days while over one-third of hospice patients receive fewer than 8 days of services

Some 10 percent of hospice patients are enrolled in the last 24 hours of their life.

Education is needed for people to seek out hospice earlier.

For Blumenthal, her education in hospice has been a life-altering experience.

"It makes you acutely aware of life and what's important," she said. "You gain satisfaction knowing that the patient got what they needed. It's a selfless role in nursing. Even though as a nurse you want them to get better sometimes better isn't better."

"You're successful if you've met the goals the patient has set for themselves."

And that can be a very humbling experience.

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Alpha Hospice: 7512 N Broadway Ext., suite 312
Okc, 405-463-5695 Keith Ruminer/volunteer
coordinator/chaplain

Autumn Bridge Hospice: 405-440-2440

Autumn Light Hospice: 580-252-1266

Carter Healthcare & Hospice: OKC - OKC
Pat McGowen, Vol. Coordinator, 405-947-7705, ext.
134; Tulsa - Samantha Estes, Vol. Coordinator,
918-425-4000

Centennial Hospice: Becky Johnson,
Bereavement Coordinator 405-562-1211

Choice Home Health & Hospice:
405-879-3470

Comforting Hands Hospice: Bartlesville:
918-331-0003

Companion Hospice:
Steve Hickey, Vol. Coordinator, Guthrie:
405-282-3980; Edmond: 405-341-9751

Compassionate Care Hospice: Amy Legare,
Bereavement/Vol. Coordinator, 405-948-4357

Cornerstone Hospice: Vicky Herrington, Vol.
Coordinator, 918-641-5192

Crossroads Hospice: Elizabeth Horn, Vol.
Coordinator, 405-632-9631

Cross Timbers Hospice: Ardmore-
800-498-0655 Davis-580-369-5335 Volunteer
Coordinator-Shelly Murray

Excell Hospice: Toni K. Cameron, Vol.
Coordinator 405-631-0521

Faith Hospice of OKC: Charlene Kilgore, Vol.
Coordinator, 405-840-8915

Frontier Hospice: Amber Cerney, Vol.
Coordinator, 405-789-2913

Golden Age Hospice: 405-735-5121

Good Shepherd Hospice: 4350 Will Rogers
Parkway Suite 400 OKC OK 73108 405-943-0903

Grace Hospice Foundation: Sharon Doty, Dir
of Spec. Projects - Tulsa 918-744-7223

Harbor Light Hospice: Randy Pratt, Vol.
Coordinator, 1009 N Meridian, Oklahoma City, OK
73107 405-949-1200

Horizon Hospice: LaDonna Rhodes, Vol.
Coordinator, 918-473-0505

Heartland Hospice: Shawnee: Vol. Coor. Karen
Cleveland, 405-214-6442; OKC: Vol. Coor. Tricia
Woodward, 405-579-8565

Heavenly Hospice: Julie Myers, Coordinator
405-701-2536

Hope Hospice: Bartlesville: 918-333-7700,
Claremore: 918-343-0777 Owasso: 918-272-3060

Hospice by Loving Care: Connie McDivitt,
Vol. Coordinator, 405-872-1515

Hospice of Green Country: Tulsa:
918-747-2273, Claremore: 918-342-1222, Sapulpa:
918-224-7403

**INTEGRIS Hospice, Inc. & the INTEGRIS
Hospice House:** Ruth Ann Frick, Vol.
Coordinator, 405-848-8884

Hospice of Owasso, Inc.: Todd A. Robertson,
Dir. of Marketing, 877-274-0333

Humanity Hospice: Sala Caldwell, Vol.
Coordinator 405-418-2530

InFinity Care of Tulsa: Spencer Brazeal, Vol.
Director, 918-392-0800

Indian Territory Home Health & Hospice:
1-866-279-3975

Interim Healthcare Hospice: 405-848-3555

Image HealthCare : 6116 S. Memorial Tulsa,
Ok. 74133 (918) 622-4799

LifeChoice Hospice: Christy Coppenbarger,
RN, Executive Director. 405-842-0171

LifeSpring In-Home Care Network: Terry
Boston, Volunteer and Bereavement Coordinator
405-801-3768

LifeLine Hospice: April Moon, RN Clinical
Coordinator 405-222-2051

Mercy Hospice: Sandy Schuler, Vol.
Coordinator, 405-486-8600

Mission Hospice L.L.C.: 2525 NW Expressway,
Ste. 312 OKC, OK 73112 405-848-3779

Oklahoma Hospice Care: 405-418-2659
Jennifer Forrester, Community Relations Director

One Health Home Health in Tulsa:
918-412-7200

Palliative Hospice: Janet Lowder, Seminole, &
Sabrina Johnson, Durant, 800-648-1655

Physician's Choice Hospice: Tim Clausing,
Vol. Coordinator 405-936-9433

Professional Home Hospice: Sallisaw:
877-418-1815; Muskogee: 866-683-9400; Poteau:
888-647-1378

PromiseCare Hospice: Angela Shelton, LPN -
Hospice Coordinator, Lawton: (580) 248-1405

Quality Life Hospice: 405 486-1357

RoseRock Healthcare: Audrey McCraw,
Admin. 918-236-4866

Ross Health Care: Glenn LeBlanc, Norman,
Chickasha; April Burrows, Enid; Vol. Coordinators,
580-213-3333

Russell Murray Hospice: Tambi Urias,
Vol. Coordinator, 405-262-3088; Kingfisher
405-375-5015; Weatherford-580-774-2661

Seasons Hospice: Carolyn Miller, Vol./
Bereavement Coordinator, 918-745-0222

Sequoyah Memorial Hospice:
Vernon Stone, D. Min. Chaplin, Vol. Coordinator,
918-774-1171

Sooner Hospice, LLC:
Matt Ottis, Vol. Coordinator, 405-608-0555

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researcher. The environment here is just phenomenal."

Erin McShane, a battalion sergeant major at the U.S. Naval Academy, is a chemistry major who was assigned to the lab of Ken Humphries, Ph.D., where she worked with an enzyme called PFK2. This is important because it is under-expressed in people with diabetes. It could provide a clue as to why diabetics can't properly metabolize glucose.

"This project has been fascinating and a truly unique experience. I have an interest in serving in the Air Force's medical corps, and this has provided invaluable exposure to what medical research looks like up close," she said. "We have sent someone from the academy here for several years, and I am thrilled to have had this amazing opportunity."

Yuma, Ariz., native and Naval Academy midshipman second class Jocelyn Rodriguez worked under the guidance of Courtney Griffin, Ph.D., where she studied the formation of the vasculature, specifically during development of embryos.



Rodriguez, who studies chemistry, said understanding how vessels work is important not only for embryonic development but also during the development of a tumor. Understanding how to disrupt the process could lead to new ways to slow or stop tumor growth.

"I have an interest in becoming a medical officer, and this opportunity has been great for my future," she said. "It's fun to pick the scientists' brains to see if I want to do research or be more on the clinical side of things. It's also great to see the leadership styles here at OMRF. Dr. Griffin is phenomenal and you can really see people love to come to work every day in her lab. It's inspiring."



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The Hospice Directory above does not represent a list of all Hospice facilities statewide. For a complete list visit www.ok.gov/health

St. Anthony Healthplex East Opens Onsite Pharmacy

In order to enhance the patient experience and better serve the surrounding community, St. Anthony Healthplex East is pleased to announce the opening of St. Anthony Pharmacy East. The pharmacy is located on the first floor of St. Anthony Healthplex East, and is opened from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday – Friday. The pharmacy will accept most insurance prescription plans including Express Scripts, Tricare, CVS Caremark, Humana, BlueCross and many others.

The benefits of the pharmacy include convenience for ER patients and patients of St. Anthony Physicians Group, St. Anthony Healthplex East, as well as professional patient counselling services.

St. Anthony Healthplex East is pleased to offer these expanded services to patients and the community, in an effort to make health care more accessible and convenient. St. Anthony Healthplex East is located at 3400 S. Douglas Blvd., in Oklahoma City. To contact the pharmacy please call 405-772-4034.

Oklahoma Turning Point Conference & Policy Day Set for August 30-31

Community leaders, public health professionals, advocates and members of the public are invited to the "Leading Together 2017" 20th Annual Turning Point Conference and 9th Annual Policy Day hosted by the Oklahoma Turning Point Council (OTPC). The event is Aug. 30-31 at the Marriott Conference Center at NCED in Norman.

The Turning Point conference will showcase best practices, innovative initiatives, youth empowerment, navigating life and work, blending public health with economic development and other community health topics.

Practical tips and tools will be available to help sustain health improvement efforts and engage communities in the development of policy objectives to connect with other local stakeholders working to improve overall health and wellness in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma native Rhett Laubach is the keynote speaker for the first day of the conference. His dynamic presentation will demonstrate how to become a 'Torchbearer' while growing and strengthening influence within organizations. Laubach has taught leadership skills for more than 20 years to a million audience members in 48 states, the Bahamas and Canada.

Katie Fitzgerald, CEO of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, will present Aug. 31 during the Policy Day event focusing on the social and economic environment, with particular emphasis on the social determinants of health and their role in improving health and shaping policy.

The intent of Policy Day is to engage statewide community partners in development of policy objectives, advocacy efforts and to build enthusiasm for a shared call to action for health policy change. Policy Day breakout sessions will cover topics such as Medicaid, the impact of Oklahoma's incarceration rate, children's health, food access policy, healthy aging and the importance of caregiving.

"This year's theme of 'Leading Together' honors the essence of Oklahoma Turning Point's vision to create a healthier future and improve the quality of life for Oklahomans through partnerships," said Doug Moore, OTPC Chair for the Conference.

All attendees must register online by 5 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 24, as onsite registration is not available. Registration for both days is \$100 and includes lunch, Aug. 30.

Learn more and register at: www.okturningpoint.org/annualconference. For additional information, contact Danielle Dill, Office of Partner Engagement, at DanielleMD@health.ok.gov.



**Vicki L Mayfield, M.Ed., R.N.,
LMFT Marriage and Family
Therapy Oklahoma City**
*If you would like to send a
question to Vicki, email us at
news@okcnursingtimes.com*

I am a 39 year old mother of two beautiful children who has been through a lot of difficult times in my adult life. My first husband left me for his girlfriend, my second husband (the father of my children) was abusive and eventually had a massive stroke, leaving me to raise my two children alone. And after a long period of grieving I married the love of my life about a year and a half ago. He has been absolutely wonderful to my children and I.

The problem is my parents. They believe that because of my previous two marriages that I am unable to make good choices. They didn't agree with my getting remarried, especially because of my children. They've strongly voiced their opinion that my sole devotion should be to my children, and that "sharing" my attention with a man should not have to happen. They question most of my major decisions about my children and say that I'm an unfit mother. But my goal has always been and continues to be the well being of my children!

How do I get them to understand that I am an adult who is very capable of making good decisions on behalf of my children, and that they need to keep their criticism of me to themselves?

-Angie

A. First of all I believe you are a concerned mother because you took the time to write this question in an attempt to educate yourself about possible solutions

Your first husband cheated and left you. That can happen to anyone. Even when we think we have chosen a good person, they can cheat, lie and betray us.

Your second husband was abusive. You did not say how he acted out the abuse or when you first experienced the abuse but sometimes people can mask their behaviors and we do not see the "real person" until after we sign the marriage license.

You had a "long period of grieving." That sounds appropriate and normal. The fact that you are with someone who is "wonderful" to you and your children is a blessing.

Sometimes we are unable to get other people to understand our life and sometimes it just doesn't matter. What matters is you and your children have a good life. I suggest you live your life and enjoy this man who loves you and your children.

Try to ignore (as much as possible) the comments made by your parents. Have a mantra that you can say when you are irritated by things they say, i.e., "this moment will pass." "it doesn't matter what they think," "my children and I are lucky to have this wonderful man."

The energy you give to their negative, critical, offensive words should be saved for you and your family. Limit the time you are around them. You could confront them and set boundaries when they cross the line with you. Give up trying to get them to understand. Sometimes it just doesn't happen.



NURSE + TALK

Read what other health care professionals have to say...

What is meaningful about your nursing career? Companion Healthcare Home Health and Hospice

"Being there to help the families through this difficult time of watching their family member pass."



Amber Zamora, RN, hospice

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