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Kyla Dufrene says Mercy Family BirthPlace is a place focused on safe deliveries with having healthy moms.

by James Coburn
Staff Writer

Kyla Dufrene says Mercy Family BirthPlace is family centered, which is why Dufrene and the other nurses on staff feel they are working beside their extended family. As a safe path nurse, she

provides education at Mercy Family BirthPlace to make better nurses and to improve labor and delivery outcomes. As a registered nurse, she serves as the safe path quality nurse at Mercy's Family BirthPlace in Oklahoma City. "It's fun nursing. It's

happy nursing," she said. "People who come here are having a baby so everybody's excited about it."

Dufrene focuses on safe sleep and educating parents about the shaking baby syndrome. She helps parents to understand how to best care for their babies after the mother and baby are discharged from the hospital. Her process improvements and quality measures for the hospital focus on ensuring it is following the best practice for not inducing labor to early in delivery

Splitt uniting growing Norman Regional Health System



Richie Splitt is leading the Norman Regional Health System during an unprecedented time of growth.

story and photo by Bobby Anderson, Staff Writer


Richie Splitt's kids attended All Saints Catholic School, just a stone's throw away from the Norman Regional Healthplex. He's watched as the Norman Regional Health System has solidified itself over the past 70 years as the provider of choice for Norman and Cleveland County residents alike. And just a couple weeks into his new role as the health system's interim President and CEO, Splitt couldn't be happier leading one of Oklahoma's few remaining independent hospitals as it continues to evolve. Norman's second largest employer, only behind the University of Oklahoma, the Norman Regional Health System has undeniably woven itself into the fabric of Norman.

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MERCY
Continued from Page 1

without a viable medical reason. Charts are audited by her to ensure the care provided at Mercy Family BirthPlace aligns with the hospital's professional standards, Dufrene said. Even if the standard of care is being met, Dufrene delves into what can the nursing staff do to make the standard better for patients and nurses.

"I make sure that everything we do here is meeting the latest guidelines and standards so we can provide the best care possible for the moms and babies, too," Dufrene said. "So I am constantly reading journals, updating our policies."

She attends meets with other nurses in the state sharing her field of nursing. They discuss the latest standards of practice and how they assimilate the best care.

Dufrene has worked her entire nursing career at Mercy Family BirthPlace on the campus of Mercy Hospital. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at OSU/OKC in Oklahoma City.

"I worked at Mercy when I was in nursing school actually," Dufrene said. "As a CNA I floated all over

the hospital and then I started working at the Family BirthPlace right after graduation," she said. "I've been at the Family BirthPlace for seven and a half years and Mercy for nine years."

She has been in her current position for four years come April.

She understands the dimensional layers of labor and delivery nursing and puts them in context in order to keep the already competent nursing staff alert for best practices.

Dufrene believes this is her purpose as a nurse. She believes learning is relevant to a better life and that having a baby is one of the most important times in a mother and father's lives.

"We are always improving," Dufrene said. "Our nurses bring a lot of process improvements, too. What I do at the Family BirthPlace has a lot to do with our nurses."

Nurses are primed to do the best job that they can so that they can educate mothers and fathers with the best up-to-date information available.

Nursing school only provides a snippet of obstetrics nursing, Dufrene said. Labor and delivery nurses at Mercy are trained from the moment they are hired about

comprehensive labor and delivery care.

"So we meet on a regular basis. We try to do it daily depending on how busy we are," she said of the nursing staff. "So we have a big color board up there and they put ideas or issues up on the board. We talk about if there is a problem with anybody and what we can do to solve it."

A lot of patients come to Mercy Family BirthPlace feeling uncertain about what is going to happen. Their uncertainty fades as Mercy Family BirthPlace nurses walk them through the process step-by-step.

"When they're trying to deliver natural without medication, we're the support base for them," Dufrene said. "It's a privilege walking them through the most important day of their life."

Dufrene and other managers step out during times of a high birth census to take patients when needed, she said of the interwoven team process.

"This is a second career for me. I was a teacher before I became a nurse and the experience I had when I had my twins was so amazing, I thought I could see myself doing that. And when I decided to go to nursing school my kids were age 2."

"I went back to nursing school and I knew I wanted to be an OB nurse," she said.

Dufrene enjoys spending her leisure time with her twins.

"So a lot of our activity on weekends centers on what they're doing," she said. "Baseball, swim team and things like that. I love summer. It's my favorite season and we are fortunate that we have a pool."

"My favorite thing to do is to go home, kick back, watch the kids swim, read a book and workout."



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GROWTH

Continued from Page 1

Spitt points to the health system's employees as the reason behind its successes, growth and the community's confidence in the level of care it provides.

"It's our people," Spitt said. "We can build beautiful buildings and bring in the latest technology and it matters not if we don't have the staff who can operate it and make it function to the best of its ability and more than that relate to our patients and provide to them that reassurance and confidence and quality of care they expect."

"It's our people who set us apart from everybody else."

Since May 2013, Spitt has served as the Chief Administrative Officer of the HealthPlex Hospital and Norman Regional Moore.

He has led the rebuilding efforts of the new Moore facility and established the EMSSTAT ambulance service in the community. Spitt has also been instrumental in the expansion of patient care services on the HealthPlex campus.

"Richie will provide the continuity of leadership and organizational

stability that Norman Regional staff and physicians require in order to continue providing exceptional care for our communities," Authority Board Chair, Tom Clote said. "Spitt will provide strategic direction and work collaboratively with leadership, physicians and staff to ensure system initiatives continue, as well as future growth and development opportunities."

Spitt took on the additional duties after former President and CEO David Whitaker left after 17 years.

"My main focus today is the same it was the day before any of this transpired and it's our people," Spitt said. "As leaders we're called to provide a vision and a direction and reassurance and confidence and trust. I was doing that before and in this position it's even more critical."

The gains the health system has amassed are even more impressive considering the system operates as an independent entity and one of a shrinking number of municipal hospitals left in the state.

"I'm just one person in this process and I'm extremely humbled by this opportunity," Spitt said. "It's a great responsibility I've been given and I take that very seriously. I

know as a single person I will fail without the help of the team and people around me."

Spitt will soon engage Norman Regional staff with a series of town hall meetings.

"I'm attempting to provide information in a way they can have a better understanding about who I am and what I see for our organization through their eyes, their work and their healing hands," Spitt said. "I would like to get affirmation and I want to serve alongside them in the movement forward."

Over the past 70 years, Norman Regional Health System has grown to become a multi-campus system that serves healthcare needs throughout south central Oklahoma.

NRHS is operated by Norman Regional Hospital Authority, a public trust, which serves the public interests and functions as a political subdivision of the State of Oklahoma.

The acute-care facility on the Porter Avenue Campus is licensed for 324 beds and offers a full range of services.

The new HealthPlex campus at Interstate 35 and Tecumseh Road, licensed for 136 beds, features

Cardiovascular Services, Spine and Orthopedic Surgery, and Women's and Children's Services.

On May 20, 2013 a tornado struck Moore Medical Center destroying the building. In May the new Norman Regional Moore emergency department will open to serve the emergent needs of Moore and south Oklahoma City.

Asked him if the continued confidence the hospital receives from the community ever surprises him and Spitt doesn't miss a beat.

"I say no because I've been part of this community for many years of my life," Spitt said. "I've known about this system for quite some time and have always admired it from afar until I joined it and became part of it."

"This is a very loyal community, a very proud community and they want what we want and that's the best. They want the best for themselves and their loved ones and we want to provide the best possible care for them."



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CAREERS IN NURSING

HOME IS IN THE HEART: GOLDEN AGE NURSING CENTER

by Bobby Anderson - Writer/Photographer

Three employees at the Golden Age Nursing Center in Guthrie found their niche more than 30 years ago at Golden Age and have worked there ever since then.

Roy Givens, a 52-year-old maintenance worker for 35 years; Carmen Tarrant, a CNA for 32 years; and Amparo Zamora, a CNA at the center since 1988, found their nests long ago.

"Well for one thing, I like my job. I like to help my patients. They feel like family to me and this is real close to my house so I walk here every day. I like this place," said Zamora, 69.

She met Tarrant at the center, who was doing housekeeping at the time and the two became friends. She found the nursing staff to be good coworkers and nice people, she said.

Tarrant's mother Thelma Bright had worked at Golden Age as a CNA when she accepted her job.

And since then Tarrant said her role as a CNA has changed a lot through the years.

"We didn't used to use lifts as much. Now we use lifts which makes it easier on the residents and us," Tarrant said. "It was still a lot of fun back then. Our menus have changed a lot and the residents like it better. They get to chose what they want."

Back in the 1980s, residents were taken to the dining room and would eat the same meal. Now they get to chose their meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner and can request a meal at any time of the day.

"I'm trying to learn something every day," said Tarrant, 65. "And most of the residents, if you listen to them will tell you something each day like what they had done in their lifetime that I'll never get to do. Most of them has traveled and have done all kinds of things that's very interesting."

Givens never gave a second thought about leaving Golden Age. A friend recommended that he apply there and after a few days he found he liked it, he said. He has also made close friendships among the staff and residents. Givens said the Chappell family are very nice and generous company owners to work for.

He likes to learn about the residents' histories, the work they have done and also their military life. Some residents are veterans of World War II, he said.

"It's interesting to talk to them about Japan. They are great. We talk about when they were younger," he said.

Givens said he admires Tarrant and Zamora for their longevity and dedication to Golden Age. When they first started working there, all of the nursing staff wore white uniforms, he said. They changed the color.

"Everything changed a lot," Tarrant said.

Zamora immigrated to the United States from Mexico in 1978. Her husband had been working in Guthrie since the 1970s. She didn't speak the English language at the time, but was determined to learn. At the time, she said her husband was one of few Mexicans living in town. She said it was hard to go to the post office and communicate at the time when sending money back to her family in Mexico. Golden Age workers such as Tarrant helped her a lot to learn English.

"She was real patient with me because she could understand me and I could understand her," Zamora said. "We worked together."

"You have to like what you do. You're not just here for a check," she said. "That's what keeps me here. I like my residents."

When she's not working, Zamora prefers to stay at home and do

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Despite living with cystic fibrosis, Natalie was active and loved sports. In high school, she played basketball and was the only girl on the Ice Hockey Team. In college, Natalie's health worsened. She lacked the energy to walk to class, much less play sports. On the transplant waiting list, Natalie needed a double lung transplant – and a hero donor came through. Natalie got her life back! One month later, Natalie received her master's degree in Public Health from OU. She runs 5Ks, plays sports, and recently married her best friend.

Natalie is forever grateful for the life-saving gift she received. She volunteers with LifeShare of Oklahoma to share her story. Natalie now lives life to the fullest thanks to her selfless donor.

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Golden Age Nursing Center maintenance Roy Givens along with CNAs Carmen Tarrant and Amparo Zamora enjoy their work.

house cleaning. Most of her time is spent at home with her grand children, she said. Her daughter lives with her along with her daughter's children. Zamora has eight sons and daughters, 25 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren.

Tarrant said it makes her feel good when she's out in the community and the families of residents greet her at the grocery store. Even after several years, people tell her they remember her face and will remind her who their mom or dad was at Golden Age.

"They say, 'I still remember how you took care of them. It makes you feel good that from years ago you are still remembered,'" said Tarrant, who has four adult children and 11 grandchildren. Her grandchildren like to play baseball.

"The twins, oh my God -- they are terrible," she lovingly said with laughter. "They destroy everything. They broke my window playing baseball. I cannot keep them down."

She goes to garage sales during her leisure time and likes shopping for groceries.

"That's my favorite thing," she said.

Givens said he enjoys movies

and going out to dinner with friends. He enjoys knowing a lot of people in Guthrie.

Tarrant lives in nearby Meridian, far out in the country away from city life. She likes her privacy and has few neighbors. Her drive to work is only 15 minutes. She laughed when saying she has a dog and cares for six stray cats.

"You can go outside anytime you want, sit out and watch the sun and the moon come up," she said. "You don't have to worry about somebody coming up to your door. It's peaceful."

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Oklahoma's
NURSING TIMES

Beauty Queen's Dream Still Alive

It was Chelsea Walker's crowning moment. The moment she had worked toward for the majority of her 21 years. She had just been awarded the title of Miss Southeast Oklahoma.

"When they called my name, I knew my life was about to change," Chelsea recalled. "I felt nothing but pure excitement pumping through my body when they first put the crown on my head."

That day was October 25, 2015. Less than one month later, on November 20, Chelsea had something else pumping through her veins: she was on intravenous (IV) medications, lying in a hospital bed.

It started with a headache.

"I thought it was a migraine," Chelsea said. She was in her senior year at the University of Oklahoma in Norman. "No matter what I did, it

wouldn't go away. It got to the point where I didn't want to have any lights on." A few days after the headache started, Chelsea drove to her mother's home in Ada.

"I was concerned the minute she walked through the door," Angela Walker said. "Her face was swollen."

Angela, a nurse at Mercy Hospital in Ada, kept close watch on her daughter. Within a few hours, Chelsea's condition had deteriorated.

"I woke up to her vomiting," Angela remembered. "She told me it was the worst headache she had ever had and her facial swelling was getting even worse."

That's when Angela knew it was time to take her daughter to the emergency room. In the middle of the night, the two raced to Mercy Hospital Ada. For Chelsea, much of



Chelsea Walker, Miss Southeast Oklahoma.

that night was a blur. Her mother, however, remembers every terrifying detail.

"I was so scared. It is such a helpless feeling," Angela recalled. "You begin to wonder if every decision that you are making is the right one."

Tasked with the choice of whether or not to allow Mercy Ada's Dr. Theodore Ware to perform a lumbar puncture, or spinal tap procedure on her daughter, Angela started to pray.

"They wanted to insert a needle into her spine to collect and examine her fluid. I didn't want her to go through a painful procedure, but I also didn't want doctor's to miss a potentially deadly disease due to my decision. I didn't know what to do, I asked God to help and guide me to make the best decision for my daughter."

Angela said moments after she prayed, a nurse came into Chelsea's room and reassured Angela that the procedure was needed.

"She told me Dr. Ware would only do the procedure if it was absolutely necessary, and that he was very skilled at them. I was just so grateful the nurse provided me with such comfort," Angela said.

Chelsea was not suffering from a migraine. Doctors found an epidural abscess, a collection of pus and

swollen body tissue, between her skull and the lining of her brain. She was immediately given antibiotics and rushed to Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City.

"At that point, I was really terrified," Chelsea said. "There were talks of me having full frontal neurosurgery, which meant they would remove my sinuses and make an incision from ear to ear."

Dr. Joseph B. Cox, a neurosurgery specialist in Oklahoma City, was one of the doctor's on call when Chelsea arrived.

"Typically, an epidural abscess is a medical emergency," Dr. Cox said. "They are usually treated with immediate surgery."

But there was something different about Chelsea's case. Doctors made a split second decision against operating.

"Because of the size and location of the abscess, we decided it would be best for Chelsea to not have surgery," Dr. Cox said. "Fortunately, doctors in Ada had given her the right antibiotics at the right time, and she was responding well to them."

Less than one week after she was rushed to the emergency room and one day before Thanksgiving, Chelsea walked out of the hospital without having surgery. The beauty queen

See BEAUTY next page

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Oklahoma's Nursing Times
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INTEGRIS Health Edmond
Holds Gift Shop Open House



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The volunteer auxiliary at INTEGRIS Health Edmond invites you
to the Seasons Gifts Open House. This two day event will feature
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such providing scholarships, patient care equipment, and many other
items to support the mission of the hospital to improve the health of
the people and communities served.

The hospital volunteers' main objective is to provide a vital service
in our hospital for patients, families and visitors. Please come support
their mission.

The Event will take place Monday, March 28th from 11:00 a.m. to
7:00 p.m. and Tuesday, March 29th 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at
INTEGRIS Health Edmond, 4801 INTEGRIS Pkwy, Edmond, OK 73034
in the Seasons Gifts and Memorial Conference Room.

BEAUTY
Continued from Page 8

chalks up her miraculous recovery to
those who cared for her.

"I found strength in my doctors
and nurses," Chelsea said. "They kept
telling me I was getting better, that I
was going to be fine and I believed
them."

Every single person who entered
her room truly cared about her,"
Angela said. "Her nurses were some
of the best patient advocates I have
seen in all my years of health care
experience. I trusted that when I had
to leave her bedside, she was in great
hands."

Chelsea continued IV treatments at

her mother's home in Ada, and just
weeks after she was released from the
hospital, Chelsea graduated from the
University of Oklahoma.

"Just imagine being 21 years old,
studying for finals and having a
neurosurgeon tell you that you may
need brain surgery," Dr. Cox said. "She
never once complained. She handled
every curve ball well and was a
pleasure to take care of."

Her last visit to Mercy Hospital
in January revealed the abscess in her
brain had almost completely vanished.
Today, she is back to teaching dance
classes in Ada and Norman. She
will compete in the Miss Oklahoma
pageant in June, and if she wins, she
will represent the Sooner State in the
Miss America pageant.

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



**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*

Q. *If one more person tells me how I should live my life I think I am going to scream!!!! People so freely give out advice about how I should do things and they have no idea what has happened in my life. So how do I shut these people up?*

A. It is interesting how many people think they know how we should live our lives and they aren't shy about telling us.

How many people have issues with parents, siblings or other family members to the point of being estranged? When someone finds out about it they may tell you that it is your mother and you should make everything right. So remembering that they may not have a clue about the relationship you have with your mother; you could smile and say nothing. You could say, "Since you really don't know my story you can't offer me advice."

You may be in a troubled marriage and have people telling you to stay because its the right thing to do, its the religious thing to do, your family will be upset if you do. Then there are the people who tell you to leave now, pack your bags and just get out.

Often people tell you what to do because it is in THEIR best interest. After I had my daughter, a friend told me that I should not have an only child and I needed to have another one very soon. (she had 2 boys one year apart). I chose not to take her advice. Years later she told me that she was miserable having 2 children so close together when she really only wanted one. She said she wanted me to be like her ..miserable.

A friend of mine went to law school because her parents told her that would be a good career for her. She wanted to work for a non-profit and help people in a different way. To please her parents she went to law school, worked for one year and now works for a non-profit. She was miserable.

Think of it like this: If you had a blank canvas, an assortment of crayons, colored pencils and paint and the instructions were to draw what makes you happy, what excites you, what you feel passionate about, what would you draw?

How many of you would sit still long enough (without Facebook, Pinterest, smart phone,etc) to seriously think about what you want to draw? You can draw anything you want. It is how YOU define your choices.

Be careful who gets to hear your story and know what you want from them. If you just want to talk maybe share with a really close friend or a therapist.

Bottom line, if you don't want to hear what they have to say, walk away. It's your life.

Logan County Administrator Awarded National Honor

It is a goal Josh Tucker has worked toward for more than five years. On Mar. 13, Tucker became a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE), the nation's leading professional society for healthcare leaders.

"I was on cloud nine," said Tucker, who traveled to Chicago for the honor. "This shows patients that Mercy Hospital Logan County meets their needs both clinically and professionally. The ability to interact with the nation's leading healthcare professionals brings another benefit to our local hospital and to our community."

Tucker is one of only a few thousand healthcare executives nationwide with the distinction of a Fellow. It is the highest standard of professional development. Tucker joins the ranks of leaders at Mercy who consider membership in FACHE as vital to their communities. Tucker also had to pass a six-hour long certification exam, and take a number of healthcare leadership classes in Texas.

"The healthcare management field plays a vital role in providing high-quality care to the people in our communities, which makes having a standard of excellence promoted by a professional organization critically



**Josh Tucker and Mercy Hospital
Oklahoma City's Jim Gebhart.**

important," said Deborah J. Bowen, president and CEO of ACHE. "By becoming an ACHE Fellow and earning the distinction of board certification from ACHE, healthcare leaders demonstrate a commitment to excellence in serving their patients and the community."

Tucker has served as an administrator of Mercy Hospital Logan County since 2011.

Mercy Clinic Hand Surgery Welcomes New Certified Physician Assistant

Mercy Clinic Hand Surgery-Edmond I-35 welcomes new certified physician assistant, Kelly Walker. Walker received her Master's degree from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center in 2014. She also received her Bachelor's degree in physiology from Oklahoma State University.

"I chose medicine because I want to be able to provide people with high quality medical care," Walker said. "I am passionate about the health and well being of my patients."

Walker and a team of others from Mercy Clinic Hand Surgery specialize in treating conditions and problems that involve the hand, wrist and forearm. Services include plastic and reconstructive surgery, joint replacement, microsurgery, arthroscopic surgery and tendon reconstruction.



NURSE + TALK

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How do you enjoy spending your time off from work? OU Medical Center Edmond

"I like any type of cycling down hill, mountain bikes and spending time with my grand baby and my family."



Leslie Craig, RN, ICU

"I hang out with my children, ride horse, play in my garden, go fishing. Lot's of outdoor stuff. I have four boys."



Tawnica Burton, RN, ICU

Each week we visit with health care professionals throughout the Metro



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"Landscaping and playing tennis and relaxing in my hot tub."



Scott Ellis, RN, manager

"I like gardening, picture taking, photography. I like decorating. I have grandkids. I take them somewhere on my day off."



Leticia Lancaster, RN, ICU

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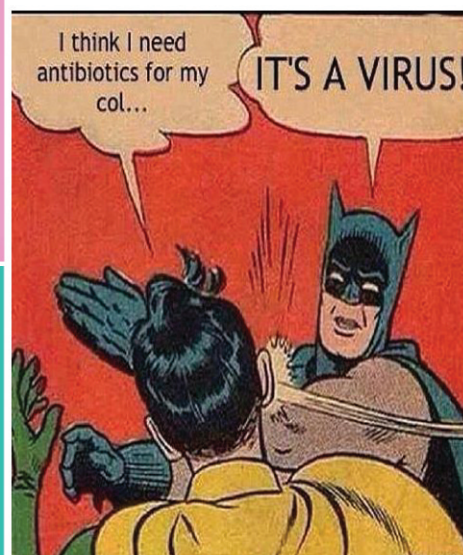
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