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Laura Trammell, vice president of Valir Hospice, is impressed by the dedication and compassion of the Valir staff.

by James Coburn, Staff Writer

It does not take long to see that the nurses serving Valir Hospice are passionate about the work they do. Laura Trammell, vice president of

Valir Hospice, has been with the company since

She enjoys working with Valir because of the support of management. They are visionaries who want to grow, she said, but they want to grow the right way.

"We want to be the best in every division

See VALIR Page 3

that we have," Trammell said. "We don't necessarily care about being the largest hospice. We want to be the best hospice. That's something I've taken a lot of pride in. We've grown over the years since I've been with Valir."

Part of this slow

Nursing graduates take first steps in newest journey



University of Oklahoma Heralth Sciences Center Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing nursing 2017 graduation ceremony Pictured left to right are class speakers Angela Kamermayer, Mallory Kornhaus, Jennifer Berg - class speakers.

story and photos by Traci Chapman

More than 400 students joined 11,000 predecessors May 13 as graduates from University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing.

Dean Lazelle Benefield presided over the Class of 2017 convocation, held at Lloyd Noble Arena in Norman. The graduating class was comprised of 310 students awarded a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree; 92 Master of Science in Nursing candidates, five graduates who earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice degree and one PhD in Nursing.

Those graduates included students from across Oklahoma and beyond, from backgrounds as diverse

See GRAD Page 2

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MUSTANG, OK 73064 P.O. BOX 239 **OKLAHOMA'S NURSING TIMES**

OBU Recognizes Nursing Graduates During Pinning Ceremony May 18



photo by Jeremy Sco

OBU honored 28 graduating nurses during the College of Nursing's Pinning Ceremony Thursday, May 18, in Raley Chapel's Potter Auditorium. Pictured: Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry (right), dean of the OBU College of Nursing, pins graduating senior Gracelyn Perkins.

Oklahoma Baptist University honored 28 graduating nurses during the College of Nursing's Pinning Ceremony Thursday, May 18, at 3 p.m. The ceremony took place in Raley Chapel's Potter Auditorium on the OBU campus in Shawnee.

Dr. Nichole Jackson, assistant professor of nursing and OBU alumna from '07 and '11, led the invocation. OBU President Dr. David W. Whitlock welcomed the graduates and their guests.

Dr. Lepaine Sharp-McHenry, dean of the OBU College of Nursing, made introductions and greeted the graduates and guests, while Pam Malloy, '74, director of end-of-life nursing education with the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, addressed the graduating students.

A group of senior nursing students presented "What a Beautiful Name" by Hillsong as a musical reflection during the ceremony.

Graduating nurses then received their pins from McHenry, including April Cannon, Tulsa; Bridget Burton, Springdale, Arkansas; Hannah Christian, Elk City, Oklahoma; Rachel Detweiler, Corn, Oklahoma; Miranda Dozier, Denver, Colorado; Ashley Eubanks, Dallas, Texas; Hannah Evans, Chandler, Oklahoma; Christine Ferguson, Fort Worth, Texas; Bailey Garrett, Sand Springs, Oklahoma: Christin Gainesville, Texas; Kyra Gilbert, Oklahoma City; Cory Grant, Denton, Texas; Kirsty Green, Joplin, Missouri; Kelsey Hays, Tecumseh, Oklahoma; Jennifer Holdridge, Alexandra Oklahoma: Lanphear. Independence, Missouri; Maci Lewis, Elmore City, Oklahoma; Catherine Lingo, Yukon, Oklahoma; Kierra Mattingly, Colorado Springs, Colorado: Iennifer McMartin. Mankato, Minnesota; Morgan Minx, Enid, Oklahoma; Kristi Neighbors, Marland, Oklahoma; Macy Palmer, Sand Springs, Oklahoma; Gracelyn Perkins, Colorado Springs; Brittney Roberts, Shawnee: Tucker Schultz, New Castle, Colorado; Katie Stiles, Denton, Texas; and Jade Young, Belfast, N. Ireland.

Megan Smith, '14, assistant professor of nursing, delivered the charge to graduates, and Dr. Karen Cotter, '94, assistant professor of nursing, led the benediction.

The OBU nursing program was the first baccalaureate nursing program in the state of Oklahoma and the first baccalaureate program in Oklahoma accredited by the National League of Nursing. It has maintained continuous accreditation, currently through the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, throughout its history. Founded in 1952, the first graduation took place in 1956 with 10 students. Since then, the OBU College of Nursing has graduated more than 1,200 nurses with baccalaureate nursing degrees. The College of Nursing is housed in the new Jane E. and Nick K. Stavros Hall located to the north of Shawnee Hall on OBU's Campus.

For more information on the OBU College of Nursing, visit www.okbu.edu/nursing.

With its campus in Shawnee, and locations in Oklahoma City

and Broken Arrow, OBU offers 10 bachelor's degrees with 88 fields of study and five master's degree programs.

Christian liberal The university has an overall enrollment of 2.073, with students from 40 states and 35 other countries. OBU has been rated as one of the top 10 regional colleges in the West by U.S. News and World Report for 25 consecutive years and has been Oklahoma's highest rated regional college in the U.S. News rankings for 23 consecutive years. OBU is one of three universities in Oklahoma and the only private Oklahoma university listed on Great Value College's rankings of 50 Great Affordable Colleges in the Midwest. Forbes.com consistently ranks OBU as a top university in Oklahoma and the Princeton Review has named OBU one of the best colleges and universities in the western United States for 12 consecutive years.

GRAD Continued from Page 1

as each individual. One of those graduates was Samantha Nortey, graduating with a BSN after moving to Oklahoma from Ghana in 2011. With her graduation behind her, Nortey said she was set to join cardiac/intensive care unit at OU Medical Center.

"This has been my dream, this is the day I've been working for so long, and it's finally here," she said. "It's been an incredible journey."

The journey was something on fellow undergraduate Shawn Mayhew from Midwest City. Planning to work in the surgical/intensive care unit at VA Medical Center in Oklahoma City, Mayhew said he was ready for his next step.

"This is just the beginning of my journey," he said.

Keynote speaker Kammie Monarch, RN, MSN, JD, encouraged graduates to never stop learning, growing and reaching for more.

"You are the future of nursing,"

Monarch is OU Medical Center adult services vice president, has served as chief nursing officer for Oklahoma Health Care Workforce Center. In that role, she advocated for nurses with legislators, working to expand health and nursing programs across Oklahoma. She



also served as the first chief operating officer of Sigma Theta Tau International, the honor society of nursing, and American Nurses Association and American Nurses Credentialing Center, both in Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1911, OU's College of Nursing hosts a range of students, including full-time, parttime and online options for those pursing undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees. The school also offers post-graduate APRN certificate programs. While its main campus is located in Oklahoma City, OU also maintains nursing college locations in Tulsa and Lawton.

VALIR

Continued from Page 1

and steady growth has been due to the nursing staff.

"I sit back in awe every day with our nurses. I really do because we have some nurses that have over 20 years of hospice experience," Trammell said.

Knowing the skill set Valir Hospice employs impresses Trammell while knowing that hospice nursing is a specialty field of care. The nurses are working with terminally ill patients and their family member on a daily basis, she continued.

"It is very challenging, and it is very hard work to deal with death and dying," Trammell said. "And they take such pride in their work."

Helping to get patients and their families through their final journey is demanding work when making sure everybody understands what is happening. Nurses offer comfort to both patients and their loved ones when their world is changing. Education is a key part of the process.

Valir Health as a whole includes inpatient rehab, outpatient rehab, a workforce health division for an allinclusive health care system.

Patients have learned to trust Valir. So oftentimes they chose Valir Hospice when they need calls.

Trammell said Valir Hospice nurses not only have the skill set required for the work, but they must have a true passion.

"I want nurses that are really wanting to work in hospice and not be there for a paycheck," Trammell said. "It takes a specific skill set to work in hospice. You have to have a huge heart. You have to have strong shoulders to deal with everything your patients and families are going through."

Nurses who have a history of various types of nursing will do well in hospice care, she continued. New nurses generally are not the primary applicants.

"Most of them get into nursing so they can provide curative type skills like in an ICU, pediatrics or something like that," Trammell said.

Hospice does not focus on curative methods of care. It is on comfort methods, she said. The beauty of hospice is holistic care. It is distinct from any other health care division with its attention to patients and their families.

Valir has physicians, nurses, chaplains, social workers, massage to meet all the needs of its clients.

Many of the nurses with Valir have had personal experiences with hospice before joining that realm of

"I think the majority of all of our hospice staff have at some point dealt with a death in their life and a hospice experience," Trammell said. "I know for myself, that is true as well. And I really didn't understand hospice until my grandmother was put in hospice years ago."

So the nurses empathize about what it is like to be a true family member in grief. They can put themselves in the shoes of their patients' families because they've been there.

Trammell said the nurses are good listeners and are pretty much like counselors, too. This is something that she always talks to the Valir Hospice staff about.

"It's so important to listen to your patients and families," she said. "I remind my staff at all times, 'Just go in and ask what is it that you want from my visit?""

In-turn, nurses understanding of what is transpiring with family dynamics and the patient. They definitely have to be

therapists, volunteers and pet therapist a multitasker with big ears at the bedside, she said.

"In hospice burnout is very strong and it can happen very quickly," she said of the feedback she understands from nurses. "Hospice just doesn't' stop at 5 p.m. It is 24/7." Even though nurses are rotated on and off call, some of them become very attached to their patients and their families. And if they're not on call, some of them go out anyway just because they have that true calling to do the right thing. They want to be there with that patient and family."

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Vic loved the great outdoors and was a great dad to both of his children. He had a big heart and dedicated his life to helping others, including becoming a volunteer fire fighter. After his death, his family knew he would still try to help someone to this day if he was able - and he did just that by becoming a tissue donor.

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CAREERS IN NURSING NEW BEGINNINGS: NURSES TO GO CONNECTS WITH PATIENTS

by James Coburn - Writer/Photographer

Jenny Savold, RN, says she feels like she is where she is meant to be with Nurses to Go Home Health, a new company that opened its doors in November.

"I've always had a fierce protection for the elderly," Savold said.

During her clinical work in nursing school she noticed how some of the elderly in Louisiana were treated by their own families.

"Drop them off, shut the door, and never come and visit them again," she recalled. "Some of them that can't talk for themselves, I think I'm their advocate. I just feel protection for the elderly."

Savold was already an LPN when she graduated from nursing school in Baton Rouge, La. She worked in nursing homes there and decided to further her education. So she engaged in a correspondence school, Excelsior College online. She completed the requirements and took the RN state board test in Louisiana and earned her degree.

Her first job was working in a nursing home where she fell in love with geriatric care. She had developed a calling to serve the geriatric population while doing her clinicals.

"So my first job was director of nursing, actually at a mental health clinic, mainly geriatric patients in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. It was called a PHP, which is a partial hospitalization program," she said. "That is patients that have a diagnosis like bi polar and schizophrenia."

Part of their therapy of drug detoxification was to partake in the drug therapy program to learn about different medical diagnosis, and how to deal with what they are living with, she said. Once a week a psychiatrist would come talk to them.

"That was the best part, I thought. It was very interesting," Savold said. She moved to Oklahoma due to

She moved to Oklahoma due to a relationship and has loved the state ever since. She had never ventured into home health and worked at another company in Edmond.

Today, Savold said if she can help the elderly in any way then she is fulfilled in her profession.

"Whether it be teaching; whether it just be talking and laughing with them -- because sometimes we are the only ones they see all day being homebound," she said.

Her clients, no matter their diagnosis or life experiences, take the initiative to do whatever they can to improve their health and see the positive in their lives, she continued.

"A lot of them don't have very much, and you can definitely tell where the poverty is here," she explained.

Nurses 2 Go is based near Classen and the Northwest Highway in Oklahoma City not far from Penn Square. She said the farther south she goes in Oklahoma City there is more need for care.

"So I feel like my patients in

the south -- they need extra TLC," she said. "And one of the good things about home health is you learn so many resources that can help them. For example, Meals on Wheels, churches that help with home restoration, just different resources that they had no idea was available to them."

There are no PHPs in Oklahoma, she said, and Savold said a partial hospitalization program for the elderly would serve the state well for the mental healing of the elderly.

Savold is a music lover and marathon runner. When she worked in the mental health program in Louisiana, there were people living with schizophrenia sitting in a corner, not paying attention and not interested. She would walk in and ask them about the type of music they like. Savold would burn the music on a CD.

"Those people that never Continued on next page



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Nurses to Go Home Health is a new company with experienced leadership in the Oklahoma City metro, says Jenny Savold, RN.

participated - they lit up," she said. Marathon. "So I'm really big on music therapy. It brings them back to a point in their life that was happier for them, so they're not so focused with what's going on with them now. To see them light up, to see them participate - it's like they come alive.'

Music helps clients to bond with nurses because the nurse has brought out a side of the patients' lives they have not been connected to in years.

Savold's connection with mind, body and spirit as a runner is setting an example with home health patients. She recently ran the Oklahoma City

"I feel like I take such good care of myself. I strive to do that," she said. "I feel that attitude pours over when I see my patients."

Eating junk food messes with your attitude by making you tired,

"Even my 95-year-old patients have iPhones. And they have an app, and recently they followed me on the marathon running on their app," she said. "So I feel with me taking care of myself, and them looking at me, they're not looking at someone who does not practice what they preach."

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We are seeking dedicated Registered Nurse (RN). Inverness Village is seeking a dedicated Registered Nurse (RN) to work in our Skilled Nursing department. As an RN, your responsibilities will include but not limited to providing direct nursing care to residents as well as supervising day-to-day nursing activities. Successful candidates must be dependable, compassionate, have good time. compassionate, have good time management and communication skills management and communication skilling and have a desire to work with the elderly. They must also have the flexibility to work various shift times to include: evenings, weekends, holidays and nights. Associates receive free access to our on-campus gym, on-going training opportunities, and a work environment rich in our philosophy of valuing associates. Working at Inverness Village can provide you with rewards that extend far beyond pay and benefits. You can be fulfilled both personally and professionally. 3800 W 71st St, Tulsa, OK 74132





OKCU Begins Healthcare Researchers identify Management Program



The Meinders School of Business Oklahoma City University is starting a graduate certificate program in healthcare management, with classes set to begin in the fall.

The business school has partnered with the Oklahoma State Medical Association (OSMA) to design a program tailored to those working in the medical field.

"As governmental and insurancebased regulations become more complex, quality of care is no longer judged by medical knowledge alone," said Dr. Kevin Taubman, OSMA president. "Physicians need to be forearmed with new elements of knowledge that will help them stay current in this complex environment to protect their patients and practice. With the newly formed Masters Certificate in Healthcare Practice Management, the Oklahoma State Medical Association in collaboration with the OKCU Meinders School of Business work to fill these voids for the physicians of Oklahoma."

The enrollment deadline is July 31 with classes set to begin Aug. 21.

Master Certificate Healthcare Practice Management is a one-year program in an online format. Students will earn 15 credit hours toward an MBA upon completion.

The program is designed to help students meet competency benchmarks established by the National Center of Healthcare Leadership and the Healthcare

Leadership Alliance. The five courses include effective leadership and communication, strategic management of organizations, financial strategies and decision making, marketing and patient satisfaction, and medical law and regulation.

The Meinders School of Business, considered one of the top 5 percent of all business schools in the world through Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation, used the framework of some of its MBA courses and focused them on the healthcare industry in designing the program.

"The input provided by members of the OSMA Board and House of Delegates has been invaluable in designing the curriculum to bring leadership and management education, together with financial, marketing, healthcare law coursework and instruction to the medical community," said Steven Agee, dean of the Meinders School of Business.

Admission requirements include a bachelor's degree and at least two years of work experience in healthcare. For more information, visit the Meinders School of Business website at okcu.edu/business.

A discounted rate for certificate program will be offered to OSMA members. For questions concerning the discount, please Melissa contact Iohnson johnson@okmed.org.

gene associated with lupus



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Chris Lessard, Ph.D.

In a new study, scientists at the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation have contributed to the discovery of a gene associated with lupus.

The gene, NCF1, is a protein that was known by researchers, but it had not previously been linked to lupus, an autoimmune disease in which the body's immune system becomes unbalanced resulting in 'flares' of inflammation that damage tissue and

OMRF researchers Patrick Gaffney, M.D., Christopher Lessard, Ph.D., Kathy Sivils, Ph.D., and Astrid Rasmussen, M.D., Ph.D., took part in a collaborative effort, which was led by Dr. Betty Tsao from the Medical University of South Carolina. Results from the study revealed NCF1 experiences changes in its amino acids, inhibiting its function in a process critical to responding properly to inflammation or infections. Amino acids, said Lessard, are the foundation from which proteins are

NCF1 is known to be important in the creation of specific types of neutrophils, which are the most common type of white blood cells in the body. The gene plays a crucial role in a process called neutrophil oxidative burst, a rapid response by white cells

to address inflammation or infections. The research team discovered that NCF1, as a result of the change to its amino acids, was inhibited in this oxidative burst process.

"This neutrophil link with lupus becoming connected now," Gaffney. "For a long time, we didn't think neutrophils had anything to do with disease pathogenesis, but now through genetic studies and other research in inflammation, we're seeing a really important role for neutrophils in lupus."

This study gives researchers some mechanical insight into which neutrophil pathways are relevant for the development of lupus.

"This is obviously a critical pathway in autoimmunity, and the pathway itself was already on our radar," said Lessard. "The variant of the gene didn't have good biology behind it, so the research had to be pretty outsidethe-box to figure out the variant. It looks like a critical one because it is amino-acid changing. Of the 100 or so genes that have been defined, only about 10 do this."

Lupus impacts approximately 1.5 million Americans-predominantly women-and there is a strong genetic

See OMRF page 9

Oklahoma's Nursing Times Hospice Directory

- another free service provided by Oklahoma's Nursing Times -

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: Kelly Morris, 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 Meredian, 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:

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:

Kay Cole, 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; Kingfihser 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

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

OMRF

Continued from Page 8

association with the disease, but it is notoriously difficult to diagnose and treat because of how widely it varies from person to person.

Identifying the genes associated with the disease—and the roles they play—is crucial information in the ongoing effort to understand how to best combat it.

"This is sort of like painting. You know what you want to have the canvas look like in its completed form, but we have this tree in the middle of the scene right now," said Gaffney. "It's information that helps us build models of what causes lupus, which can spring other ideas for targeting pathways with interventions and drugs. These are the more long-term objectives, but there is tremendous value in being

able to continue to add features to the painting. Some day, we will have that canvas completed, and every discovery plays a role in making it happen."

The research team was also able to show the gene variant in multiple ethnic populations, including Caucasians, African Americans and Chinese. The link was also found in other autoimmune diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis and Sjugren's syndrome.

The findings were published in the scientific journal Nature Genetics.

"Lupus is a complex disease with many pieces in the puzzle. Many of these pieces have yet to be identified. This discovery helps with the bigger picture," said Lessard. "Hopefully these findings translate into a better understanding of the disease so we find ways to predict and prevent it in the future."

Oklahomans Should Be Aware of Ticks, Diseases

A warm spring means Oklahomans are already enjoying outdoor activities, but a bite from a tick could quickly put a damper on the fun. The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) advises anyone who participates in outdoor activities, such as hiking, camping, bicycle trail riding, yard work and gardening, to follow tick bite prevention precautions.

Ticks can carry many diseases which can cause illness, and even death, in both children and adults of all ages. Oklahoma continues to rank among those states with the highest rate of three types of tickborne illness in the U.S. each year. These diseases include Rocky Mountain spotted fever (RMSF), ehrlichiosis and tularemia. Oklahomans are at highest risk of tickborne illness from May to August when ticks are most active.

Since 2012, there have been approximately 2,000 cases of RMSF, ehrlichiosis, and tularemia among Oklahoma residents. Cases have ranged from 2 to 92 years of age; 11 percent of cases were hospitalized due to their illness. It is important to recognize the early symptoms and seek care as these diseases can be fatal if not diagnosed and treated early. In the past five years, four Oklahomans (two adults and two children) died due to tickborne diseases.

The symptoms of a tickborne illness may include fever, chills, muscle aches, vomiting and fatigue. Other symptoms may include a skin rash or painful swelling of lymph nodes near the bite. Symptoms of illness typically occur 3-14 days following a tick bite. Most tickborne diseases can be treated successfully with early diagnosis and appropriate antibiotics, so it is important to seek medical attention if a fever and other signs of illness are noticed within 14 days of a bite or being in an area where ticks are lurking.

The OSDH advises those who participate in hiking, camping, bicycle trail riding, yard work, gardening and other outdoor activities to prevent tick bites by following the tips below:

*Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to see. *Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into socks to prevent ticks from attaching. *Wear closed-toe shoes, not sandals. *Hikers and bikers should stay in the center of trails to avoid grass and brush. *Check for ticks at least once per day, particularly along waistbands, the hairline and back of the neck, in the armpits and in the groin area. *Remove attached ticks as soon as possible using tweezers or fingers covered with a tissue. *Use an insect repellent containing 20 percent or more DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 on exposed skin for protection which lasts several hours. *Use products containing 0.5 percent permethrin only on clothing and gear, such as boots, pants and tents. Permethrin should not be used on the body. *Check with a veterinarian about tick control for pets. Dogs and cats can get tickborne illnesses too, and they are a vehicle for bringing ticks into a home if not on a tick-preventive regimen.

St. Gregory's to offer Certification in Catechetics summer program

St. Gregory's University is now enrolling for the Certificate in Catechetics summer program being held on June 9–10, June 16–17, and June 23–24. Students can earn their certificate in three weekend courses, or sequentially over a three year period.

This summer program is ideally suited for catechists, Catholic teachers, parents, or anyone else interested in participating in the New Evangelization and the revitalization of Western culture.

Upon completion of the requirements for the Certification in Catechetics, students will be able to:

- * Describe the historical development of and critically interpret the primary symbols and beliefs of the Christian faith
- * Articulate how the study of Scripture and theology conforms and shapes one's attempt to live as a critically reflective disciple of Christ

* Integrate theological reflection and pastoral practice

The program cost is \$50 per weekend, or \$150 for all three weekends. The tuition includes registration, a wine and cheese social on Friday evening, as well as a continental breakfast and lunch on Saturday. Housing on campus is available for an additional fee. The course credits are transferable to degree programming, however costs will vary.

For more information, or to register, visit www.stgregorys.edu/catechetics or contact Admissions at admissions@stgregorys.edu or (405) 878-5100.





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. I work in an environment that has a high potential for violence and injuries. (People have been seriously injured). I see the danger and voice my concerns. I find it perplexing when another coworker acts like it really isn't that big of a deal. So am I overreacting or is she under reacting?

A. I think you might be describing the use of a defense mechanism by your coworker. For many of us, any situation that brings uncertainty triggers an unconscious protective measure that allows us to cope with unpleasant emotions. And in the short term, many mechanisms can be adaptive. We keep ourselves in a better state.

Yet in the long run, the effect is actually the opposite, as routine use of defense mechanisms can actually reduce the effectiveness of emotional processing.

Here are some of the more common defense mechanisms: **DENIAL**

When a situation or fact becomes too much to handle, you may simply refuse to experience it. By denying reality, you are essentially protecting yourself from the having to face and deal with the unpleasant consequences and pain that accompany acceptance. -----In other words, your coworker may not want to accept the reality and threat of violence as "that bit of a deal." What would that mean to her; the need to look for another job, the possibility of a really serious injury?

MINIMIZATION

When a situation is scary or dangerous, this defense mechanism is used to say, "oh its really not that bad." "He hit me and I had a concussion but I am still alive." So when does it become reality to say, "Oh my God, he hit me, I got a concussion and I am out of here." Maybe never. -------Another good example is one frequently heard by battered women, "he only hits me when he is really drunk and doesn't remember it the next day." BUT HE HIT YOU!!!!

RATIONALIZATION

In the simplest of terms, rationalization occurs when you try to explain someones bad behavior away. This mechanism helps you justify why you put up with something, you make excuses or you blame some other reason for the behavior occurring. And your apparent acceptance of it. -----You say your coworker seems to make light of these dangerous situations, she may do that with other things that occur in her life. Danger is danger. You can't sugar coat it. But this is a powerful defense mechanism. It is hard to make someone see the reality if they don't want to.

Unfortunately you cannot get another person to stop using these defense mechanisms, but you can take action when you see red flags and try to protect yourself. Remember when you get that gut feeling that danger is imminent, take action.



During severe weather where's your safe spot at home? Integris Southwest Medical - Women's Center

My big, behemoth eyesore of a storm shelter. I like it though.



Donna Leachman,

Under the stairs.



Susan McCaleb, RN

Each week we visit with health care professionals throughout the Metro

Email: news@okcnursingtimes.com or mail to Oklahoma's Nursing Times P.O. Box 239 Mustang, Ok. 73064

My in-ground garage shelter with snacks and water.



Laci James, RN

My hidey-hole is my bedroom that has no windows.



Krystel Huddleston,



You generously gave more than \$19.1 million in a challenging economic environment. Your contributions will impact the lives of more than 800,000 central Oklahomans.

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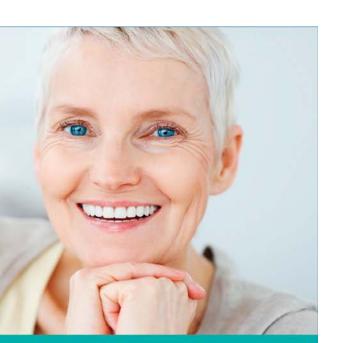






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