

Blessed with Kindness



Erica Arrocha, RN, BSN is Team Manager in the ICU at Integris Deaconess Hospital. Erica has been blessed with the gift of kindness.

by Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Erica Arrocha, RN, BSN is the team manager in the ICU at Integris Deaconess Hospital. Erica has been a nurse for seventeen years and has worked in ICU from the beginning. "Patient care is absolutely my passion and I love being there for my patients and my patients' families." Erica said. "Sometimes, working in ICU, we

definitely have to deal with very difficult situations and I feel like God has blessed me with a gift to be able to have those conversations with my patients and their family members."

Asking Erica what her favorite part of her job is, she replied, "That would be patient care. When I explain and educate the patient, they are more willing

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OMRF named Oklahoma's top workplace



In rankings based on a survey of Oklahoma workers, the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation has once again been named the state's top workplace.

In ratings based on surveys compiled by Energage, an independent polling firm, OMRF took the top spot in the firm's annual Best Places to Work competition in the large organization category (350-plus employees).

OMRF conducts research on diseases such as cancer, lupus, heart disease and Alzheimer's. The Oklahoma City-based nonprofit has now won the competition's top prize two of the past three years, and ranked in the top 10 every year since the Best Places to Work contest began in 2013.

"Our aim is to create a work environment in which our employees feel like they are stimulated intellectually, growing professionally, and recognized for their efforts," said OMRF Vice President of Human Resources Courtney Stevens Greenwood. "While we constantly examine our practices to find ways to do better, these results tell us we're on the right track."

One of the factors that makes OMRF special, said Greenwood, is the diversity of the foundation's workforce. "We have employees here from almost 30 different countries," she said. "They bring fresh ideas and different approaches, and that really

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BLESSED

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to participate if they know the why of why we are doing what we do. It is a true blessing to deal with the patients and their needs."

What is your biggest challenge? "I wouldn't say it is necessarily a challenge but more of a passion of mine; I impart my knowledge to our new grads and new nurses to help them grow in their nursing profession," Erica replied. "It is nice to be able to help out a new nurse if they run into a situation that needs my help. It's all part of learning," Erica added.

What did you want to be when you were little? "I wanted to be a vet but my father said 'No, I don't think so' and suggested that I be a nurse," Erica said with a laugh. "I do love animals but a vet? I'm certainly glad that my father persuaded me to be a nurse," she added. "I also had an aunt that was a nurse so I am sure that she influenced me a little too."

There were several people that stood out to Erica, not so much during school but after she became a nurse. "One important person that I looked up to was Michelle Engles. She was actually the manager here at Integris Deaconess back then and was the one that hired me. She was always so helpful to me. Also, one of the day shift lead nurses that I worked with and looked up to was Darren Dinnington. He is at Oklahoma Heart Hospital and he was a big help to me," Erica commented.

Asking Erica what qualities make a good nurse, she replied, "It takes quite a few qualities to make a good nurse and they are usually qualities that come natural to that person. In my opinion, the number one quality is kindness. I also think that a nurse needs to have medical knowledge and be able to continue on learning and educating, never stopping. They need to be flexible, mentally not physically," she said with a

laugh. "Of course, physically doesn't hurt either."

Erica's advice for someone going into the medical field? Put their self in the patient or the patient's position and try to understand what they are going through. "Since I have been here for seventeen years, I have run into tons of experiences. When a new nurse runs into the same situation for the first time, I feel like I can bring a wealth of knowledge to them, regarding the facility, and the situation. At the same time, educating myself with the latest new practices and studies and sticking with it," Erica commented.

One of Erica's qualities here in ICU is relating the patients in a special way. "If the patient is unable to speak and cannot carry on a conversation, due to be ventilated, I can read into their facial expressions and body language."

Asking Erica to describe herself, she said, "I always try to be a kind person and smile a lot. I feel like a smile is a very disarming quality, helping others feel relaxed. I have been married to my wonderful husband, Reuben for twenty-two years. We have four dogs, three pit-bull mix, and one Australian shepherd; Duke, Laxi, Jake and Hope. My hobbies include, running, working out, reading, scuba diving, traveling, especially to the beach!"

Erica's recognitions include: Nurse of the Year for 2019, Board member of AACN, Nurse Exemplar and Daisy Award. "I feel honored to work here at Integris Deaconess Hospital," Erica said. "We believe in teamwork and I work with great co-workers. The physicians here are outstanding; some of the best in the city," she added.

Asking Erica how she would sum up her life in one word, she replied, "BLESSED."

INTEGRIS

Deaconess

OMRF

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supercharges our organization."

For the rankings, Energage, which specializes in assessing workplace dynamics, conducts confidential online surveys of staff members at as many as 800 Oklahoma employers each year. Workers rate their employers on a variety of factors that include job satisfaction, management quality, pay and benefits, and opportunities for growth.

This year, OMRF also received a special award for receiving the highest marks among all organizations in all categories for the quality of its managers.

"It's quite an honor to be named number one by your own employees," said OMRF President Stephen Prescott, M.D. "We strive to give every person at OMRF not only the resources and support to succeed, but also the freedom to achieve the work-life balance that is essential to long-term job satisfaction."

The end goal, Prescott said, is simple. "We want to make OMRF a place that talented people choose to call home for their entire careers."



2019, Chili Cook-Off team Bujana Allushi, Joanna Papinska, Umesh Deshmukh, Harini Bagavant.



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CAREERS IN NURSING

URGENT CARE: WORKING IN THE FAST LANE

by Vickie Jenkins - Writer/Photographer

SSM Health Outpatient Center in Urgent Care is where you will find Kelly Dugan, MLRT. "We stay busy most of the time," Kelly said. "Working in several areas, I like working in Urgent Care the best, I like the fast-pace of it all. We deal with a lot of different kinds of elements and different situations and I feel like I am able to take care of the patient right away. There is such a variety of things going on, all at once and sometimes, it can be overwhelming! I never know who is going to show up or what kind of problem they will have. I find working in urgent care very interesting," Kelly explained. "Even though this is a small center, a lot of people would much rather come here than go to a big hospital. Patients from several surrounding areas come here; Moore, Shawnee and Edmond. I think most patients would prefer to come to a smaller

place anyway. We are concerned about our patients and take care of them as quickly as we can."

Growing up in northwest Oklahoma in the small town of Lahoma, Kelly knew that she wanted to work in the medical field when she graduated. "Actually, when I was little, I really wanted to be Wonder Woman. I had the Wonder Woman under-roos and everything," she said. "Of course, my Wonder Woman days are over now or are they? I might be the new version," she said with a laugh. "When I was growing up, I had a lot of friends that were nurses and I suppose that influenced my life a lot. That was back when I was in my twenties and all of my friends were in their twenties so in a way, it seemed like a natural progression to us," she explained.

What is your favorite part of your job? "I like helping the

patients with their immediate needs. The patients like that too and afterwards, they are ready to enjoy the rest of their week!"

What is your biggest challenge at work? "The biggest challenge that I deal with here at work is trying to make everyone happy at the same time. Do you realize how hard that is to do?"

Asking Kelly to describe herself, she replied, "I take great pride in being well organized about everything. "I know this might surprise a few people around here," she said with a smile, but I really am big on organization. I can multi-task too," she added.

"I am very goal oriented and set my goals high, ready to move forward. I can deal with the patient's pretty well, most of them anyway. There is always that one patient that wants to stir things up a little. When I am at work, I try

to add a little fun to everything. Come to think of it, when I'm not at work, I try to add a little fun to it. I guess that means I like to have fun!"

What motivates you every day? "I have a drive to do things for other people. I also make sure to do things the right way the first time. I try to be efficient too. I think that I feel that way because of my former jobs. One of my first jobs was working in a dentist office and then, I worked in an OR in a hospital. I guess I felt like I had to do things right the first time," she said with a laugh. "Of course, that is the way it should be!"

Asking Kelly how she deals with the patients that come in to urgent care, she replied, "I feel like I handle the situations pretty well. At first, the patients are scared and they don't know what to expect

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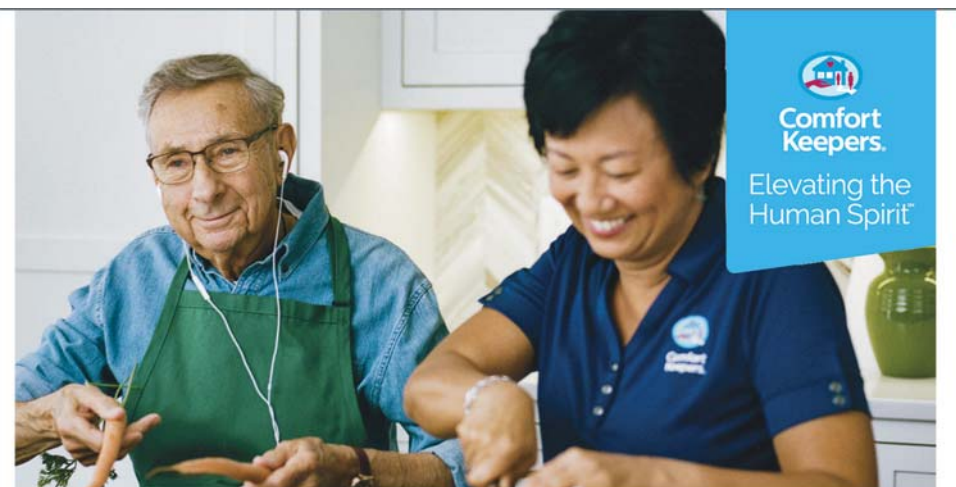
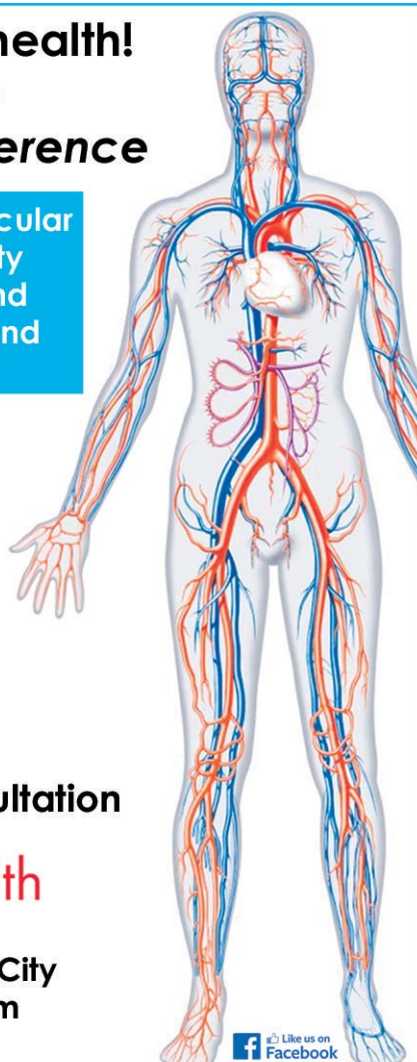
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Kelly Dugan, MLRT can be found in Urgent Care at SSM Health Outpatient Center. Caring for others in a fast-paced room comes natural to her.

DUGAN

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and they are overwhelmed. After a few minutes, they start to relax and open up a little. Each patient is different, yet they are the same in every emergency situation. It takes some patients a little longer to warm up to explain what is going on. After I explain what we are going to do, suddenly I am like

their best friend."

When not working, Kelly likes spending time with the love of her life; Hazel, her Basset hound. Kelly's hobbies include running, camping, kayaking and anything that has to do with the outdoors.

Asking Kelly to sum up her life in just one word, she paused for a moment and said, "Satisfied."

Lights, Camera... Cancer: *How a Young Oklahoma-born Actress Fought Back*

This Christmas, Claire Phillips is leaving the bright lights of Hollywood for a road trip back to her native Oklahoma. The young actress is on her way to spend the holidays with family and friends, and hopefully watch the Oklahoma City Thunder play on New Year's Eve.

Phillips graduated from Oklahoma City University in 2013 with a degree in Theatre Performance and Music. She headed for the West Coast and landed some lucrative roles in shows like ABC's "Speechless," "Fresh off the Boat," and HBO's "Togetherness."

But shortly after moving to Los Angeles, life threw her a curve ball.

"When I was 24, I was diagnosed with breast cancer," Phillips said. "Luckily it had not spread throughout my body yet. It was aggressive though, and the doctors moved very quickly."

Phillips said she had no family history, so her diagnosis came as quite a shock.

"Honestly, I had a three-week scare leading up to my diagnosis, and deep down I knew I had cancer," she said. "Once they started doing the tests, I had this gut feeling something was wrong. So, by the time they told me the results of my biopsy I had already accepted it in a way. I didn't cry, I was just numb. Two of my best friends held my hand and my parents were on speaker phone when they told me, then I went straight into fight mode."

She leaned on the resources of the American Cancer Society, and through her doctors at UCLA,



Claire Phillips graduated from Oklahoma City University in 2013.

Phillips began her journey attacking cancer.

"The American Cancer Society has always been an amazing resource for fighters to help take a small amount of the stress away during their battle," she said. "Whether it's a free wig, a ride to treatment, the 24-hour hotline, the research—the American Cancer Society is a valuable partner to have on your side."

Phillips chose a team of doctors at UCLA, then had a double mastectomy with full reconstruction, followed by chemotherapy.

Today, besides her work on TV and film, she is an advocate for ACS and cancer patients everywhere.

"I was so excited to hear about the beginning phase of Oklahoma's Hope Lodge," Phillips said. "Providing those who have limited funds a place to stay free of charge when traveling for treatment will be such an impactful way to

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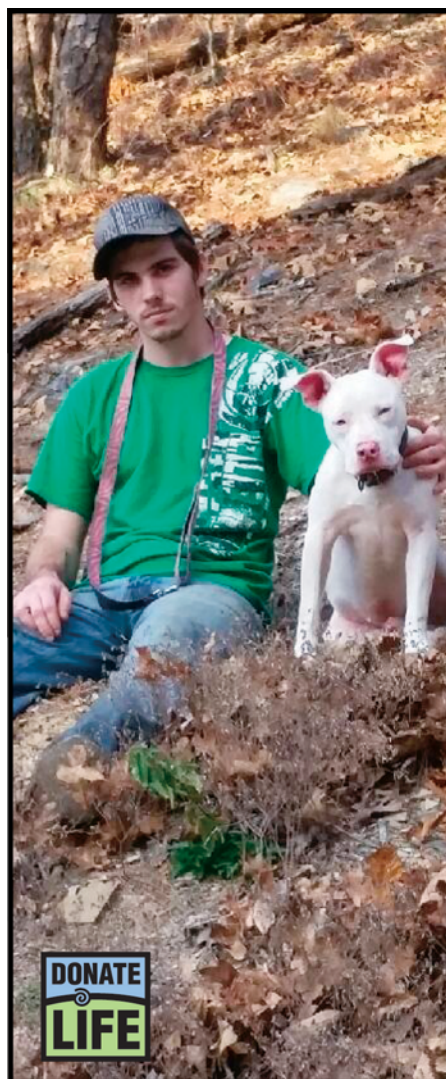
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Trina Armstrong (left), wellness coordinator III, Mercy Clinics - West Region; and Jaime Hargus, supervisor, health and wellness, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City, receive plaques for tobacco cessation efforts from the Oklahoma Hospital Association.



Dylan came flying into the world a month earlier than expected. He was a calm and content baby. Little did his family know that as soon as he could, he would be off and running!

He had a loving heart and never allowed anyone to wonder how he felt about them. He didn't have many worldly possessions because he gave his things to others who he felt needed it more. At the young age of 16, Dylan registered his decision to be an organ donor.

Organ, eye and tissue donation saves lives. Please make your decision to donate life and tell your family. Register to be an organ, eye and tissue donor on your Oklahoma driver's license or state ID card or register online at www.LifeShareRegistry.org. If you don't have a license or state ID card and do not have internet access, call **800-826-LIFE (5433)** and ask for a donor registration card.

LifeShare



Hospitals Helping Patients Quit (HHPQ), an initiative of the Oklahoma Hospital Association (OHA) and program of the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), recently recognized 21 hospital and clinic partners for achieving notable benchmarks in reducing tobacco use in Oklahoma. Organization leaders were recognized during the OHA Annual Convention on Nov. 13.

These visionary hospitals and clinics have made a critical commitment to their patients, employees, and communities to reduce Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death, tobacco use and related illness. Each of these organizations has implemented a permanent and standard best-practice protocol for identifying,

counseling and referring individuals to the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline (OTH) for coaching support and nicotine replacement therapy.

Organizations recognized for reaching notable benchmarks in the number of referrals to the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline are:

Cedar Ridge Behavioral Health, Oklahoma City, 100 referrals

Mercy Hospital Logan County, Guthrie, 100 referrals

Wagoner Community Hospital, 100 referrals

Northeastern Health System, Tahlequah, 150 referrals

Ascension St. John Jane Phillips, Bartlesville, 150 referrals

AllianceHealth Woodward, 200 referrals

(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2019 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

OSU RN to BSN:

Powering a better educated, healthier and more accessible world

Lacy Smith, a Texas native, considers herself a Cowboy for life. For her, choosing to complete her Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at Oklahoma State University was an easy decision.

The online program, which launched in Fall 2017 and is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), provides students with a convenient and flexible option to complete their bachelor's degree in as little as one year. With this degree, graduates are qualified for leadership roles in a variety of healthcare environments.

Advancing and enriching her career is exactly what Smith plans to do after she walks across the stage with her diploma next fall. She currently works as a delivery/charge registered nurse (RN) for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at OU Children's Hospital as well as a staff nurse at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital. After obtaining her BSN, Smith plans to apply for a master's or doctoral program so she can become a pediatric nurse practitioner.

"My dream job is to be a Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioner-Acute Care (CPNP-AC) as a cardiac intensivist, which means I'd care for infants and children following cardiac surgery," Smith said. "I've always loved medicine. With nursing, I get to do it all. I never have the exact same day, and I love the challenge. I'm a caregiver at heart. I've always been most passionate about

my patients and their families. I see them on their best and worst days, and I always want them to remember the care they received in a positive light, even in a bad situation."

When Smith decided she wanted to complete her nursing degree so she could achieve her professional goals, it was important to find a program that accommodated her busy schedule. The full-time or part-time curriculum option offered at OSU was a huge selling point.

"The program is extremely flexible, which is necessary for someone like myself who has a husband, two jobs and no extra time,"

flexible, which is necessary for someone like myself who has a husband, two jobs and no extra time," Smith said.

In addition to flexibility, Smith sought an online learning experience that would be enhanced by personalized attention from qualified and invested faculty. That's what she found in the OSU College of Education, Health and Aviation.

"The nursing faculty truly want to see students succeed, and they make themselves readily available to help," Smith said. "This makes the whole



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& Aviation

experience."

As most would attest, communication in an online program significantly impacts student satisfaction.

"Our faculty communicate extremely well, especially considering it's an online program," Smith said. "They offer a variety of ways to share information and foster relationships with our peers, which allows us to be successful. It's easy to have a positive experience when you feel your efforts are not only noticed, but also celebrated."

Ultimately, the mission of the RN to BSN program is to prepare nurses to practice professional nursing that meets the dynamic health care needs of individuals, families, groups, communities and global populations. Faculty facilitate the education of students in the art and science of nursing to provide leadership with an emphasis on ethics, wellness, cultural competency and population-based and professional inter-collaborative practice.

The OSU College of Education, Health and Aviation is proudly preparing leaders

who power a better educated, healthier and more accessible world. Oklahoma State nursing graduates truly embody this through their passion, dedication and investment in providing the best possible care to patients and their families.

"There isn't another profession like nursing," Smith said. "My favorite nurses are caring and compassionate. We will do whatever it takes to help our patients be successful."

Applications for the BSN program for Summer or Fall 2019 are now open. Interested students can review admission and pre-requisite requirements and apply online at nursing.okstate.edu.

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PHILLIPS

Continued from Page 5

give back where it is needed. I was lucky enough to live in a major metropolitan city with some of the best doctors in the country when I was diagnosed, and I didn't have to travel far from home. But I know that is not always the case for all fighters. I am very happy Oklahoma is providing Hope Lodge as another resource to those who are battling cancer."

Last October, Phillips passed the

five-year mark, and says she feels great.

"My doctors are still staying diligent in my check-ups, scans and bloodwork," she said. "And we are keeping an eye on my little sister and my mother.

"Life is good," she added. "I live in Los Angeles with my wonderful boyfriend and new puppy, I have great family, friends and doctors, as well as resources like the American Cancer Society I rely on. So, this Christmas, there's much to celebrate!"



OHA

Continued from Page 8

Northeastern Health System
Sequoyah, Sallisaw, 250 referrals

AllianceHealth Seminole, 300 referrals

The Children's Hospital at OU Medical Center, Oklahoma City - Perinatal Program, 350 referrals

Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City, 500 referrals

INTEGRIS Deaconess, Oklahoma City, 700 referrals

Norman Regional Health System (Porter), 800 referrals

Norman Regional HealthPlex, 800 referrals

SSM Health St. Anthony Healthplex South, 800 referrals

INTEGRIS Canadian Valley Hospital, Yukon, 1200 referrals

INTEGRIS Southwest Medical

Center, Oklahoma City, 1500 referrals

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Oklahoma City, 1500 referrals

Mercy affiliated clinics, statewide, 3000 referrals

Chickasaw Nation Medical Center, Ada, 4000 referrals

INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center, Oklahoma City, 5000 referrals

INTEGRIS affiliated clinics, 5000 referrals

Through effective, health care provider-driven tobacco treatment services, HHPQ partner hospitals and clinics have referred more than 40,000 patients to the OTH, resulting in an estimated 28,000 years of life saved and millions of dollars in reduced health care costs as well as personal spending on tobacco products.

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NURSE TALK



Something for my daughter. I enjoy her happiness and seeing her enthusiasm.



Shelby Dudley, RTR

I like experiences more than material things so I'm hoping for time away with my family.



Teisha Gallegly, APRN

What do you hope to find under the Christmas tree?



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Emily Barry, RN

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Ashley Cochenour, LPN

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Here Comes Santa Claus

by Bobby Anderson - Writer/Photographer

The spirit of Christmas is alive and well.

At least it is when Jerry Chrisope steps into a room.

Chrisope is a member of the International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas.

He's one of thousands of individuals across the country dedicated to bringing the magic of Santa Claus to young and old.

"Even adults light up," Chrisope said. "I used to travel a lot before I retired. I could walk through an airport and turn around the corner and see people's faces light up. It takes them back."

"It's not just children."

Chrisope went to his first Santa School in 2009.

"You cover costuming, makeup, voice, entrances, exits, all kinds of things," he said.

SANTA ALL YEAR

Noshave November lasts for Chrisope through December before he takes off about half his beard and then starts growing it out in July.

Chrisope has mastered the look so much he's routinely identified as St. Nick while he's out and about – especially at the Oklahoma City Zoo where he works.

When kids question him he always points to "Jerry" on his nametag and brings a finger to his lips.

"I tell them it's a great place to see who's being naughty or nice," he said with a chuckle. "I have a card I give them that says 'I met Santa' on one side with my picture."

His card also has instructions for kids to follow about how to stay on the "nice" list including always looking for the best in people and always keeping Christmas in your heart.

CRUNCH TIME

Chrisope's Santa season starts in the middle of November. The recent Santa Market at the Oklahoma City Fairgrounds was his first event this year.

Chrisope says he's the atypical Santa when it comes to working – typically doing between 30 and 40 events per year.

He will be at the airport the week before Christmas this year so Santa can greet travelers coming and going.



Jerry Chrisope wows young and old alike by keeping the spirit of Santa Claus alive year round.

Do you have much home time in December?

"Mrs. Claus is shaking her head 'No,'" Chrisope said with a laugh and his wife of 56 years, Sharon, looking on behind him. "She likes it. She has her own persona."

The two team up for home events for larger families. Songs are sung, stories are told and photos posed for along with the traditional giving of gifts.

The job can be grueling.

"Take your typical mall Santa," Chrisope began. "Let's say on a conservative effort he only sees 400 children in a day – but he can see three times that. Let's say each child weighs 10 pounds so that's 4,000 pounds he's lifted onto his lap and off again."

"Many of the santas can't do that so they use workarounds – chairs, have the parents do it – because

nobody can do that day in and day out for an entire season."

He maintains three formal suits – one used for events that includes pets so he can prevent a reaction from children with allergies.

There's travel, setup, and being constantly aware that all eyes are on him whether he's in the suit or not. That means no drinking, no smoking, no foul language and always looking for the best in others especially when he puts on the crushed, red velvet suit.

"There's a lot more to it than putting on a red suit, sitting down and saying 'What do you want?'" he said.

MARCH 15, 270 AD

Chrisope's Oklahoma Driver's license shows he's passed his 78th birthday. But his St. Nicholas of Myra driver's license dates him a bit more.

Christian Bishop St. Nicholas,

who used his inheritance from his deceased parents to help the sick and poor, is widely believed to be the foundation for the modern day Santa Claus.

Maintaining the energy level is the hardest part of Chrisope's role. Nobody wants a "flat" Santa.

"Learning how to keep children happy without destroying the magic," he says as the hardest part of Santa to master.

Chrisope's business card includes ways to reach Santa when he's on his sleigh and when he's home at the North Pole.

This time of year you'll find members of his organization busy on their Facebook pages trying to cover all the requests for Santa to appear at an event in person.

And just like good ole' St. Nick that's how Santa makes it everywhere seemingly all at once.



PREPARE TO BE SURPRISED.

Meet the Maddox family. Their thirteen-year-old daughter, SaNiyah, has cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair. SaNiyah's entire life – her happiness, her health, her every need – all depends on her family and help from the team at Special Care. But they also have two adorable young sons, demanding jobs and – on top of everything else – they foster an infant who needed a home, too. It's more than most of us could handle.

But here's the big surprise. The Maddoxes not only receive help from United Way agencies, they find room in a budget stretched to its limit and they give to the United Way. **Can you?**

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