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## A willingness to learn LPN meets daily challenges



Carla Hicks, LPN, stresses the importance of being team player at The Wilshire Skilled Nursing and Therapy, located in Oklahoma City.

by James Coburn - staff writer

Carla Hicks is known for her flexibility as an LPN at The Wilshire Skilled Nursing and Therapy, a skilled nursing facility with 56 certified beds in Oklahoma City. She has accepted opportunities and as a result, the residents have benefited from her helping hand.

Wilshire has always given her the opportunity for new challenges. She began there as a part-time floor nurse and transitioned to MDS coordinator and now wound care. Wound care requires a diligent observation on a daily basis.

"I just keep learning new thing all the time," she said. "I have also done home health and

hospice. And I've also done work with addiction recovery in a methadone clinic. I like to learn new things. So, I've experienced a lot of different areas of nursing."

As a result, she brought a diverse set of skills to her profession, and now a new learning experience. The pandemic came as a shock to the public at large. Nurses galvanized their strength to work together for the common good. The nursing staff has been steadfast through the entire pandemic,

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## ANA Supports Mandated COVID-19 Vaccinations



The American Nurses Association (ANA), representing the interests of the nation's 4.2 million registered nurses, supports health care employers mandating nurses and all health care personnel to get vaccinated against COVID-19 in alignment with current recommendations for immunization by public health officials.

Increasing circulation of new variants, lagging COVID-19 vaccination rates, and continued public skepticism calls for nurses to uphold their professional and ethical obligations to model the same prevention measures as their patients. For our nation to maintain the momentum of recovery efforts from this persistent pandemic, enough individuals and communities must get vaccinated to reduce the risk of further infections, hospitalizations, and deaths.

"The scientific rigor to swiftly develop effective COVID-19 vaccines and the monumental efforts to ensure all Americans get vaccinated is nothing short of amazing. Vaccination is both a significant public health victory and a scientifically proven strategy to slow the spread of COVID-19 and prevent the loss of more American lives," said ANA President Ernest J. Grant, PhD, RN, FAAN. "As the largest group of health care professionals, nurses are critical to all facets of COVID-19 response efforts and must strive to remain physically and psychologically safe to function optimally to care for themselves, their patients and their communities. Nurses must get vaccinated."

ANA's decision to support COVID-19 vaccine mandates for nurses aligns with its longstanding position on immunizations, which emphasizes that effective protection of the public health mandates that

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# HICKS

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she said.

Consistency of care is one of the best practices the staff does not let lapse at Wilshire. Nurses and CNAs are well seasoned in their longevity of care. In-turn, the residents enjoy familiar faces and know there is a compassionate voice they can call whenever there is a need. They appear to miss her after she has been gone for couple of days.

"Some of them will ask where you've been, did you have some days off or go on vacation, just depending how long you were gone," Hicks said. "And they get excited when you walk into their room."

Friendships have grown between the nursing staff and residents who have come to be like family. Hicks said she stays busy during her 40-plus hours and often spends more time with the residents than with her own family.

A one of the kind residents likes to shake visitors' hands at the door. He's known as the door greeter. The staff endeavors to let

everyone settle comfortably in their own place in life.

"To work here as an LPN — we have trained brand new LPNs and RNs — so the qualities needed are a willingness to learn and an ability to learn. Being a team player is important and there's plenty to learn here," Hicks continued.

Prospective nurses can take her advice that long-term care and skilled nursing can be busy, fun, happy and sad, she said. Student nurses need to be ready.

Hicks earned her nursing license in 2007 at Platt College and has been with Wilshire for nearly six years. Nurses soon learn how to navigate with the residents — how to keep everybody happy and smiling and live the best life they can have.

"The patients are great," she said. Restoring one's health to their personal best is a gift. But Hicks said patients give her a gift with their attitudes or wisdom of their years.

"I am happy when people get to go home to their lives and back to as much as their normal life before is possible," she said of temporary stays in the skilled nursing unit.

Some residents have found their new home at Wilshire, and understandably may not be accustomed to an unfamiliar environment when they first arrive.

That's when the staff does their best to make them feel at home by asking them what they need. At times the new resident is not comfortable telling someone what they want. So, the nursing staff helps re-orient the resident to a trusted environment where they can maintain their individuality with a sense of freedom.

"We'll ask them if there is a certain time when they would like to do certain things, if they want to shower at this time — what time would they want to get up," Hicks said. "They participate in their care as much as possible."

Maintaining heart-felt personal experiences is part of her circle of

care for her own revitalization.

"I like to go for walks. It's also getting a pedicure every now and then," she said. "I have my animals that I care for and hang out with."

She has two dogs and an assortment of exotic birds. Sometimes her macaw will call the dogs.

"My macaw talks a lot and calls the two dogs over," she said. "My big dog has looked at him a few times when he did it, but my biggest dog is scarred of him."

10-year-old Lucy comes to work with Hicks and acts as the little gray mascot of The Wilshire Skilled Nursing and Therapy.

"Lucy just makes everybody happy," she said. "She visits the residents. She will just roll over and let them rub her belly," Hicks said.

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## ANA

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all individuals receive immunizations against vaccine-preventable diseases. ANA also believes that the safety profile of authorized COVID-19 vaccines is stable and has included the three COVID-19 vaccines being administered under the Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization. ANA maintains its stance to not support philosophical or religious exemptions as reasons not to get vaccinated.

"A significant number of nurses working in a variety of health care settings across the nation have diligently fulfilled their ethical duty to protect themselves, their colleagues, patients and loved ones by getting a COVID-19 vaccine," said Dr. Grant. "We would absolutely be remiss to not acknowledge these nurses and applaud them for leading the charge and setting an example for their patients."

In a survey of over 22,000 nurses conducted by the American Nurses Foundation between January 19 and February 16, 70% of nurses said they had received at least one COVID-19 vaccine. Most recently, in a survey of

over 4,500 nurses conducted by the COVID-19 Facts For Nurses Campaign between April 12 and May 4, 83% of nurses reported that they had received the recommended dose regimen of two COVID-19 vaccine shots.

Nurses might desire more understanding about the safety profile of COVID-19 vaccines as they decide whether to get vaccinated and there are legitimate reasons that a nurse might decide not to take the COVID-19 vaccine, such as severe allergies, compromised immune systems, and other serious health conditions. ANA will continue to provide all nurses education and resources to guide their understanding and consideration of COVID-19 vaccines.

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the premier organization representing the interests of the nation's 4.2 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, bolstering the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on health care issues that affect nurses and the public. ANA is at the forefront of improving the quality of health care for all. For more information, visit [www.nursingworld.org](http://www.nursingworld.org).

## Red Cross: Emergency need for donors

The American Red Cross has an emergency need for lifesaving blood amid the ongoing severe blood shortage. Blood donations continue to be critical to meet hospital demand and the public is urged to make an appointment to give now.

The Red Cross has been distributing about 12% more blood products to hospitals across the U.S. compared to this time last year. The Red Cross needs to collect more than 1,000 additional blood donations each day to meet the current hospital demand and end the severe blood shortage. Donors of all blood types are needed, especially type O, which stands at just a one-day supply right now.

To thank donors who help ensure a strong blood supply in August, all who come to give Aug. 1-15, 2021, will automatically be entered for a chance to win an exclusive, VIP trip for two to the sold-out 2021 Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival. Those who come to donate throughout August will also receive a free 4-month subscription offer to Apple Music by email (new subscribers only). More details are available at [RedCrossBlood.org/FeelTheBeat](http://RedCrossBlood.org/FeelTheBeat).

Donors who give now will help stock the shelves as we wind down the summer season. Schedule an appointment to give blood by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org), calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enabling the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device.

In most cases, those who have received a COVID-19 vaccine can donate. However, knowing the name of the manufacturer of the vaccine they

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# CAREERS IN NURSING

## FIND YOURSELF AN ENCOURAGING 'CATHERINE': HOMESTEAD OF BETHANY

By Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Homestead of Bethany offers assisted living in Bethany, Oklahoma. You or your loved one can receive the care you need while remaining as independent as possible. Their assisted living care is provided by friendly and experienced professionals.

Here at Homestead of Bethany, you will meet a very dedicated nurse; Jessica Stinebrickner, LPN. She is the Resident Care Coordinator of Assisted Living. Jessica started out when Homestead was known as Brookdale of Bethany in July of 2019. "Midwest-Health bought the community in December of 2019. That's when I took a few months off in September 2020 to spend more time with my children but returned to work July 2021," Jessica said. "I attended ICTC Tahlequah and became an LPN in 2013."

Growing up in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Jessica had a desire to be a teacher when she was younger. "I

worked at Boys and Girls Club after school and learned quickly that my love for children was best served but NOT in a classroom setting."

Jessica was known to volunteer with different activities throughout the summers at the local nursing homes in Tahlequah. "I was always around geriatric patients and so when I completed the PN program my first job was at Grace Living Center in Tahlequah as a charge nurse," she commented. "I was trying to figure out what to do my sophomore year of college. At this point in my life, I was attending School at Northeastern State University and was on track for a degree in elementary education, I was at a stand still in life, and one of my cousins had completed the PN program at the Indian Capital Technology Center in Tahlequah. She told me to apply and I did."

Jessica started out helping others when she was a little girl. "I played

bingo with residents at Grace Living Center while my grandmother called out numbers. I remember being pushed up and down the hallways on people's walkers and I remember giving everyone hugs and that feeling of being loved," Jessica said with a smile.

"In middle school, I spent my summers assisting my grandmother taking care of my great grandmother. I will never forget ramming her electric scooter in the wall and my grandfather teaching me how to fix the wall," Jessica said with a laugh. "Throughout high school, I had a mad passion for educating people on the effects of tobacco and alcohol and vowed to never smoke."

Jessica sees about ten patients per month according to the census of assisted living. Jessica considers herself a leader. She has the qualities of a professional nurse; Detail oriented and organization plays a very important part of being

a nurse. She has the compassion, empathy and passion and tries to obtain a work life balance as much as possible.

Jessica knows that being a nurse is a very rewarding experience. "Every day the residents I care for sing praises of how well they are taken care of and how happy they are. This makes me so happy because being in Assisted Living, the residents have a choice of where they go and who takes care of them. I love the fact that they have chosen Homestead to be taken care of."

Asking Jessica what advice she would give to someone wanting to go into the medical field, she replied, "When I was in school, my teacher was Ms. Renee Sherril and she was AMAZING! One of my best friends I met in nursing school is Catherine Harper. She has been

See STINEBRICKER Page 5



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## STINEBRICKER

Continued from Page 4

a constant friend, being there for me since I became a nurse. My advice to a new graduate is to find an encouraging Catherine. Have a buddy that can help you through the hard days and someone who understands nursing and your feelings."

Another person that inspired Jessica to be a nurse was her aunt, Debi Davis. "She was a single mom, worked as an LPN, got her BSN, then an NP. Her determination and drive has really inspired me throughout my career," Jessica said.

Always reaching out to others, Jessica was a Fellow with the American Legacy Foundation and a board member back in 2013. She has done volunteer work through Delta Zeta, her college sorority. Also, she was a member of OKSWAT in high school and spoke throughout the country on the effects of tobacco. Helping others seems to come natural to Jessica.

When asking Jessica to sum up her life in three words, she replied, "Happy, Trying, Forward."



Jessica Stinebrickner, LPN is the Resident Care Coordinator of Assisted Living at Homestead of Bethany, where she finds her job very rewarding.

## BLOOD

Continued from Page 3

received is important in determining donation eligibility.

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Michelle Griffin, LPN

*Definitely SpongeBob!*



Madison Jose, RN

*I would be Courage the Cowardly Dog!*



Gwendolyn Lewis, LPN

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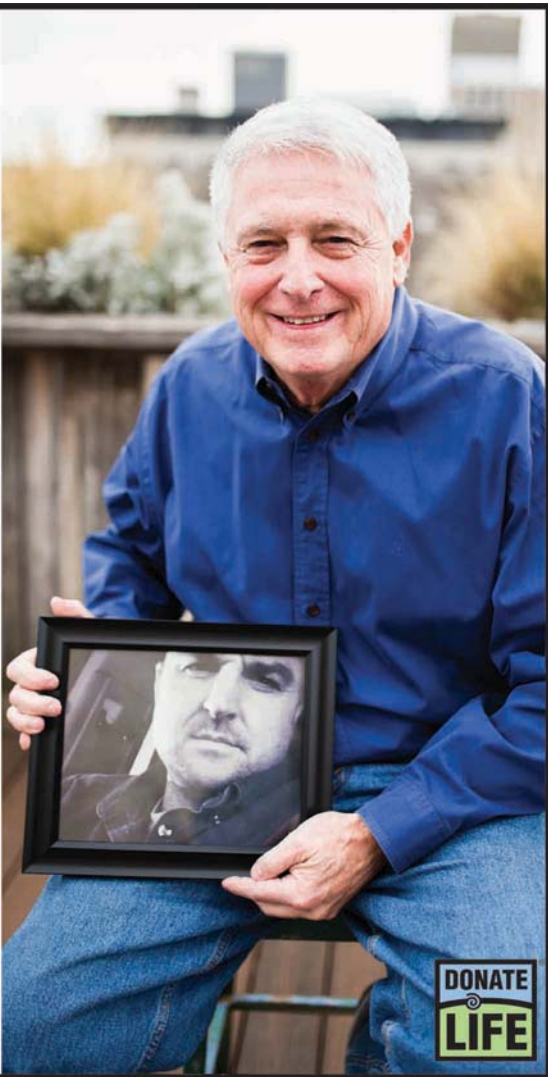


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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2021 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

# OCU continues to lead



As a preeminent nursing program, Oklahoma City University's Kramer School of Nursing continues to innovate its offerings to produce some of the most highly skilled nurses in our region. The school fosters a learning environment where students are challenged to think critically and holistically, encouraging them to use their passion and knowledge to advance the profession of nursing. With students consistently exceeding the national licensure pass rates for the traditional Bachelor of Science degree and certification pass rates for the Doctor of Nursing practice family nurse practitioner, and high job placement rates after graduation, it's not a surprise to see that OCU's Kramer School of Nursing was included in the Nursing Schools Almanac's 2020 rankings of the best U.S. nursing schools.

The fall of 2020 brought additional career advancement opportunities for OCU's Kramer School of Nursing students. LPNs now have the option of an LPN-BSN degree track. Nurses who want to pursue their master's degree, but need flexibility, can choose the MSN-HyFlex program. Nurses who work within the context of population-focused care have the option of getting an MSN in the Community Based Public Health (CBPH) track, which is also offered as a DNP Completion track. In addition to the programs, OCU's KSN enrolled their first cohort in the BSN-DNP, Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner track, the first BSN-DNP PMHNP program in the state.

The Meinders Simulations Center offers a seven-bed high-fidelity laboratory mirroring the hospital environment, allowing students to practice with realistic patient care scenarios.

Crystal Westmoreland, PhD, MSN, RN, Chair of Traditional BSN Education at Kramer, states, "I love the collaboration between faculty, staff and students. The mentorship program allows faculty and staff to really get to know students as individuals, helping them through life's obstacles as they pursue their degree. As with all of our programs, Kramer doesn't have wait lists and offers students a variety of full-time and part-time options."

KSN offers an outstanding RN-BSN program in which RNs can complete their BSN in just two semesters, with no prerequisites required. "We have small, individualized classes taught by a group of amazing faculty, who love working with practicing nurses" said Pam Tucker, MSN, RN, Chair of the RN-BSN program. "The RN-BSN program continues to be an excellent career advancement path for nurses." The program features the best of both worlds with nursing courses meeting face-to-face half day per week and the remaining elective/general education courses offered online. The program is currently offered at OCU, Mercy Hospital-OKC, and Norman Regional Hospital. No nursing exams, care plans or clinical hours are required. RN-BSN students are awarded a discounted tuition rate from the standard OCU tuition.

## ADVANCING PRACTICE

Vanessa Wright, PhD, MSN, RN, Associate Professor and MSN Program Coordinator notes the MSN program is now offering Hy-Flex program delivery options where students may choose to attend face-to-face, synchronously using video conferencing, asynchronously fully online, or some combination of the three based on their life schedule and preferred learning modality.



The MSN currently offers tracks specializing in Education and Leadership, and Community Based Public Health.

Elizabeth Diener, PhD, RN, PNP, CNE Chair of Graduate Education discusses the Doctor of Philosophy degree. "The PhD degree prepares expert nurses in the roles of nursing education, research, and leadership to serve the community, state, and nation," she said. Students meet on campus for 2-3 days at the beginning of each semester and then complete courses online over the remainder of the semester.

The Doctor of Nursing Practice Completion program is for nurses with careers in all types of health care settings who already hold a master's degree in nursing, advanced practice, or a related field. The program is 30-32 credit hours, post-masters. Focus areas include clinical, community based public health, and executive leadership in organizational or educational settings. Post master's certificates are also available for advanced practice nurses who

seek additional certification in an advanced practice role.

Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, Assistant Dean and Chair of Advanced Practice Programs points out, "Kramer School of Nursing was the first to offer a post-bachelors Doctorate of Nursing Practice program in the state of Oklahoma. It's been very fulfilling to see this program grow and see the success of our alumni who are now working in a variety of clinical settings and some who own their own clinics." Kramer School of Nursing is the first in Oklahoma to offer the BSN-DNP Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner option.

OCU'S KSN is offering a virtual information session for the Community-Based Public Health programs monthly from 5:30-7 pm. Prospective students can join an informative webinar and then participate in a breakout session to meet with program advisors and faculty for information specific to the program of their interest. For more information, visit:

[www.okcu.edu/nursing](http://www.okcu.edu/nursing).

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# Norman Regional Honors Liana Gray as Healer of the Year

Congratulations to Liana Gray, supervisor of Volunteer Services, on being selected as Norman Regional's Healer of the Year for Fiscal Year 2021!

Liana was one of 12 healers in the running for the recognition after being selected as Norman Regional's Healer of the Month in November 2020.

Liana said she was surprised about being chosen as the Healer of the Year because she knows how challenging this past year has been for front line healers.

"We are a health system and obviously that's the bread and butter – patient care from the clinical staff. I was thinking though how nice it was that out of all the Healers of the Month, there were several that were not clinical. I was impressed

to see that our health system really recognizes all the pieces, departments and units that come together to really make the whole place run," Liana said.

Although Liana is not clinical, she and the Volunteer Services team played, and continue to play, a crucial role in the health system's response to COVID-19.

As supervisor of Volunteer Services, Liana supervises all teen, college and adult volunteers, coordinates all volunteer schedules, develops volunteer programs within interested departments throughout the health system, and supervises Nu-N-Nuf and formerly the

Doris Luttrell Hospitality House.

When COVID struck, Liana and the Volunteer Services team had to pause normal volunteer operations, while still running nine entrances, helping whenever and wherever needed, and coordinating the schedules of all healers screening at those entrances. Liana and her team also took every change, which happened often, in stride and made it all happen seamlessly – coordinating signage changes, helping inform departments of the current policies,

have the support and appreciation we need."

"Liana checks all the boxes in our department and the ICARE values," Wendy said. "She elevates all of us to be better, stronger employees and goes above and beyond in her daily work. We're so appreciative to you (Liana) and to all you do to make our volunteers and us feel appreciated."

When asked what she likes best about her job, Liana said she likes that it's never boring.




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having to do the hard job of turning visitors away or determining if someone needed to be in one of our facilities, etc.

"We always manage the entrances, but during COVID – that was a completely different beast. We had the task of enforcing the health system's policies to do what's best for our patients, while also sticking to strict COVID-related guidelines," Liana said. "I made a lot of new friends during that time though – people I wouldn't usually get to know. It's nice to recognize a lot more friendly faces around the health system now."

Liana said she feels like Volunteer Services is usually a "silent department" and not many people know what they do, but the COVID-19 pandemic helped get more people involved in the department and find out more about them.

Wendy Fiebrich, director of Volunteer Services, said comments about Liana often include her being caring, happy, pleasant and kind. One comment from a volunteer in particular said, "She encourages us as volunteers by making sure we

"I like that it's different every day, and the variety of it. I'm definitely a 'doer' type person, so I like that I'm always doing something. I also like there's always a new challenge," she said.

The other healers in the running for Healer of the Year included Janet Sherman, Melissa Whitaker, Patti Guthrie, Kathy Brougham, Ty Woodward, Rebecca Milam, Krista Stewart, Ken Fertitta, Sharon Reddig, Stacy Pattillo and Roy Pendergraft.

"One thing is certain and it's clear to me that these healers enjoy the work that they do, they have a passion for the work that they do, and they thoroughly enjoy the people they do that work with – their teams, their work environment, and their friends they meet across the organization – you're all truly an important part of our Norman Regional family and I thank you for your work each and every day," President and CEO Richie Splitt said. "You're all fantastic and deserving of the Healer of the Month award and the Healer of the Year award."



## SITUATION UPDATE: COVID-19

<b>COVID-19 Cases</b>	<b>478,858</b>
<b>New Cases</b>	<b>1,806</b>
<b>New Cases 7 day Average</b>	<b>1,268</b>
<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>10,679</b>
<b>CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths</b>	<b>8,723</b>
<b>Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**</b>	<b>Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations</b>
	<b>Cases (ICU)</b>
Region 1 (NW)	18 (10)
Region 2 (NE)	64 (19)
Region 3 (SW)	41 (12)
Region 4 (EC)	40 (14)
Region 5 (SE)	34 (8)
Region 6 (Central)	41 (11)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	246 (90)
Region 8 (OKC)	136 (32)
<b>Total</b>	<b>620* (196)</b>
<b>Other Types of Facilities</b>	
Focus Facilities	14 (5)
Rehabilitation Facilities	1 (0)
Tribal Facilities	23 (7)
<b>Other Facilities Total</b>	<b>38 (12)</b>

\*Includes 27 pediatric hospitalizations.

\*\*Focus, Rehabilitation and Tribal Facilities numbers are not assigned to a specific region as their patient populations reside across the state. Information provided through survey of Oklahoma hospitals as reported to HHS as of the time of this report. Response rate affects data. Facilities may update previously reported information as necessary.

Data Source: Acute Disease Service, Oklahoma State Department of Health. \*As of 2021-07-29 at 7:00 a.m.



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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.

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