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Bringing joy and comfort Therapeutic cardboard cut-outs bring smiles

Epworth Villa Community Liaison Shelley Stutchman, at left; and Hope Knight, RN, say moments of joy are preserved for hospice patients by the use of therapeutic cardboard cut-outs of iconic actors.

by James Coburn - staff writer

Laughter is great therapy. Epworth at Home Hospice has discovered a way to brighten up the days of hospice patients receiving palliative care, said Hope Knight, a registered nurse with the Epworth at Home Hospice team in Oklahoma City.

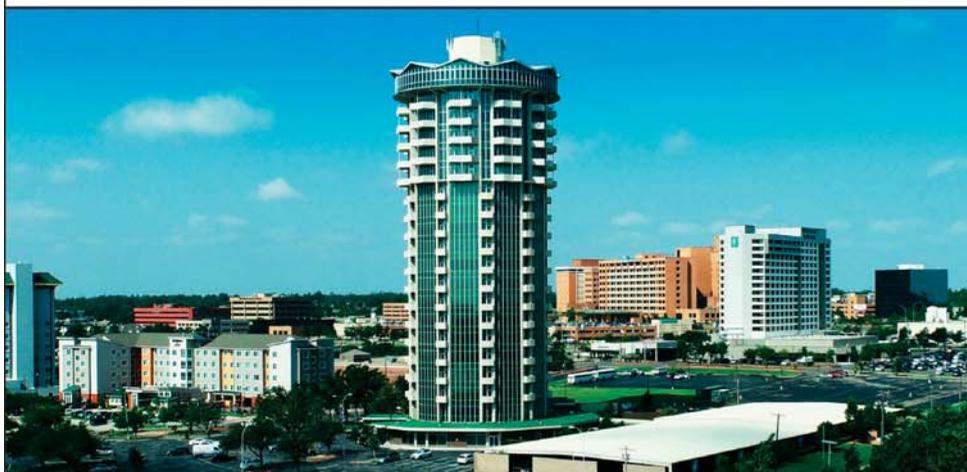
Seniors receiving hospice care or home health care from Epworth at Home will often find humor and a glimpse of nostalgia by therapeutic cardboard cut-outs of classic movie stars. Carol Burnett, John Wayne, Audrey Hepburn, and Elvis Presley have

made steady appearances. A cut-out of actor Will Smith will soon join the collection of stars.

Patients get a ray of sunshine, something that makes them smile, Knight said. Hospice is a ministry, said Knight, who has been a nurse for

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EPWORTH

Continued from Page 1

30 years and a hospice nurse for nearly six years. Her history includes emergency room and intensive care nursing.

"We'll place it in a common area of their room. We will just see smiles and maybe they will point at them. We don't know what's going on in their head a lot of times, but we can see some joy in their faces," Knight said.

The idea clicked in the mind of Community Liaison Shelley Stutchman just before an open house in May. She had been storing the cardboard inspirations in her office and wondered what to do with them.

"Even though John, Elvis, Carol, and Audrey were only cardboard, we could imagine them smiling as our guests took selfies with their favorites of the group," Stutchman said.

Her role includes visiting with patients in the skilled nursing unit. She said there have been a few home health and hospice patients who have chosen hospice care. She will inform them about hospice and home health options when applicable.

One day she greeted a woman who was feeling a little depressed about her health. She looked at Stutchman and said she gets always feels more courageous and stronger after watching a John Wayne movie.

"How about I have John Wayne come visit you?" Stutchman said.

The woman thought Stutchman was joking, knowing the actor had died in 1979. Stutchman said she needed an hour to prepare her surprise.

"The patient just laughed and went to the therapy gym," she said. "I attached a personalized note to the John Wayne cutout and snuck it into the patient's room while she was in therapy. When the patient came back, she lit up like a Christmas Tree."

The woman came from a hospital after having a leg amputation and felt blue. But soon she was texting photos to family and friends and laughed about how Duke Wayne startled a nurse who came in her room that night. Wayne was standing at the head of her bed holding a gun at his side. Her life was falling apart, but the therapy

cut-out changed her attitude.

Knight said hospice families love taking pictures of the cut-outs with their loved ones. People smile as she carries Elvis, Carol, Audrey, or John Wayne down the hall. Ladies will prepare for a visit by Elvis in the rehab unit. They will fix their hair and put on their lipstick, so they will look nice for their photo with Elvis.

"It motivates them therapy-wise to take care of themselves," Stutchman said.

Another patient said one of the ladies told her she had the personality of Carol Burnett. When the cut-out was brought for an overnight visit to the woman's room, it became a source of laughter during her visit with her son. They began talking about the old Carol Burnett shows they saw together when her son was a little boy. Mother and son talked for almost two hours — something they had never done before.

"She said she was forever grateful for the Carol Burnett therapy cardboard," Stutchman said.

Family members appreciate being able to share joy during their loved one's hospice care, Knight said.

"It brings back good memories. We're all about memories in hospice," she said. "That's all we've got when people pass."

Even hospice patients living with dementia will interact with the therapeutic cut-outs. Older memories are more intact with dementia. And, even if a hospice patient does not have dementia, they will oftentimes pull back into their younger selves, Knight said.

"They will pull away from the world as they are transitioning from this life to the next. And so many times they just don't want to talk with people — they don't want to interact because they're pulling back and readying their spirit for when they pass on," Knight said.

Many nurses in general don't deal well with people passing away because they want to make them better, Knight said.

"But then, there are some of us that say sometimes we don't make them better, so let's make this transition the best it can be. Let's help them have the best life possible in as many days that they have."

For more information visit: www.epworthathome.org or call (405) 767-9033.

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INTEGRIS Health Celebrates 1500th Liver Transplant

The Nazih Zuhdi Liver Transplant program at INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City just completed the 1500th liver transplant since the program's inception in 1992. The milestone surgery took place on Sunday, Sept 12. John Duffy, M.D., was the primary surgeon with Drs. Nitin Abrol and Yi Huang assisting.

Vivek Kohli, M.D., the surgical director of liver transplant at INTEGRIS Health, says the event is something to be celebrated. "Only a handful of transplant centers in the United States have performed this many liver transplants," said Kohli. "The Nazih Zuhdi Liver Transplant program at INTEGRIS Baptist Medical Center provides outstanding services and care to patients in Oklahoma and surrounding areas being the longest standing and most successful liver transplant program in the state

with national recognition for patient survival. We have created a comprehensive transplant center that continues to grow."

The Liver Program at the INTEGRIS Nazih Zuhdi Transplant Institute uses the most advanced technology to treat all types of acute and chronic liver conditions, including treatment for hepatitis C, fatty liver disease, alcoholic cirrhosis, liver tumors and management of metabolic, autoimmune and hereditary liver diseases. The program has stepped up during the last 18 months of the pandemic to provide the increased complexity of care for immunosuppressed transplant and liver disease patients. Patients with liver disease seeking transplant come to the INTEGRIS Nazih Zuhdi Transplant Institute from Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico and Missouri.

OCU nursing school announces new scholarships

Oklahoma City University's Kramer School of Nursing received a new gift to continue "The Kramer Way" scholarship for the spring 2022 semester. The latest scholarship provides \$370,000 for seven new Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) students and six new Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) students.

"We are so appreciative to be able to offer this scholarship to our nursing students," said Gina Crawford, interim dean of the Kramer School of Nursing. "We have amazing students who exemplify the 'Kramer Way' attributes of caring, kindness and respect. This scholarship provides much needed financial support and helps address the need for exceptional nurses in the health care setting." In addition to helping students earn their first degree, the school's BSN program also allows those who have a degree in another field to earn a BSN in just 16 months.

Crawford said that scholarships for graduate nursing study are rare, further making this a unique opportunity. The school's MSN program features distance learning and a low residency model, which helps nurses living in communities outside of Oklahoma City successfully complete their degree.

For more information about the scholarship or enrolling in OCU's Kramer School of Nursing, visit okcu.edu/nursing.



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CAREERS IN NURSING

CMA, PHLEBOTOMIST, X-RAY TECH: TOTAL HEALTHCARE PARTNERS

By Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Mixing professionalisms and friendliness together you will find Carissa Burpo, CMA, phlebotomist and x-ray tech who works for Anton Dreier MD, at Total Healthcare Partners. Being a CMA for twenty-four years has given Carissa true qualities of a nurse; empathy, patience and the ability to multitask.

Anton Dreier, MD, is a family medicine specialist who finds joy in caring for patients in all stages of life from newborns to seniors.

"Working for Dr. Dreier allows me to wear many hats. I triage, room patients, schedule appointments, do referrals, medication refills, give immunizations, teach self-care, assist with procedures and take x-rays," Carissa said. "I see an average of four-hundred fifty

patients per month. That can vary; there is not a day that is considered typical. I am both a leader and a follower, whichever is needed more at that time."

Born and raised in Kingfisher, OK, Carissa always wanted to grow up and be a mom. "That was my number one dream," Carissa said. "Secondarily, I wanted to be a teacher or a nurse. I taught pre-school for two years and then went into nursing. I attended AMTI and SWOSU."

Carissa had several mentors along the way. "There were so many but some of the fabulous originals were Bridget Keast, Virginia Grape, Betty McCully, to name just a few."

"My first job as a CMA was at Kingfisher Family Clinic and Kingfisher Regional Hospital. I

worked in Kingfisher until two years ago when I moved to THP and now work for Dr. Anton Dreier. I love my job here and enjoy the satisfaction of helping others."

"Being a Certified Medical Assistant is a very rewarding job. The biggest reward for me is helping people and coworkers, along with watching some of my littlest patients grow up," Carissa said. "My favorite part of being a CMA is the way I love the people I work with. I am with them more than my family. They really are more than co-workers. They are some of the most amazing nurses, mothers, daughters and friends that I have ever known."

What advice would you give to someone going into the medical field? "I would tell them to

embrace the changes. They are happening quick and often."

"Most people consider me an easy-going person but in my opinion, most nurses are. I think a lot of healthcare professionals try to take matters into their own hands and handle the situations themselves. We are movers and doers. As a CMA, we realize that when our patients call, they are hurt, scared or even worried about a loved one. Each situation is different and unique and we have to handle things in the appropriate way. Some patients don't know how to manage certain aspects of their health, perhaps, due to lack of prior healthcare. Not everyone is on the same level. Most diagnoses seem confusing and as a CMA,

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we need to make his or her condition understandable so they can make appropriate decisions. There also needs to be a certain type of tough-love where the patient has to participate for it to work. On a personal level, I try to combine my best aspects of a mom and a healthcare professional," Carissa commented.

How has the Coronavirus changed your life? Carissa replied, "It has brought new challenges daily in the form of constantly changing information as well as a completely new level of precautions for work and family life in general. Not to mention the toll it has taken. Frankly, it's exhausting."

Carissa is single, has four grown children, Austin, 29, Taylor, 27, Jordan, 25, and Lauren, 23. "I have two daughter-in-laws, Macey and Ashley, and a son-in-law, Payton. I have seven grandchildren who are my world."

When not working, Carissa enjoys spending time doing gardening but most of all, playing with all of the grandchildren. She has two shih tzus. "May become one if one of them doesn't quit chewing on the furniture, said Burpo.

Asking Carissa where she sees herself in five years, she replied, "I hope to be retired, living off of my lottery winnings - I should really buy a ticket - and playing with my seven grandchildren all day long while we travel the world. Most likely I will be working, playing with my ten grandchildren along with working in my flowerbeds."

Summing up her life in three words, Carissa replied, "Blessed beyond Measure."

Visit: www.thpok.com for more information.



Working for Anton Dreier, MD, is Carissa Burpo who has been a nurse for twenty-four years. She considers her job a real blessing as she cares for the patients and their families.



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Lorinda Adams, LPN

I would be an elephant because they are wise and knowledgeable.



Stephanie Mendoza, LPN

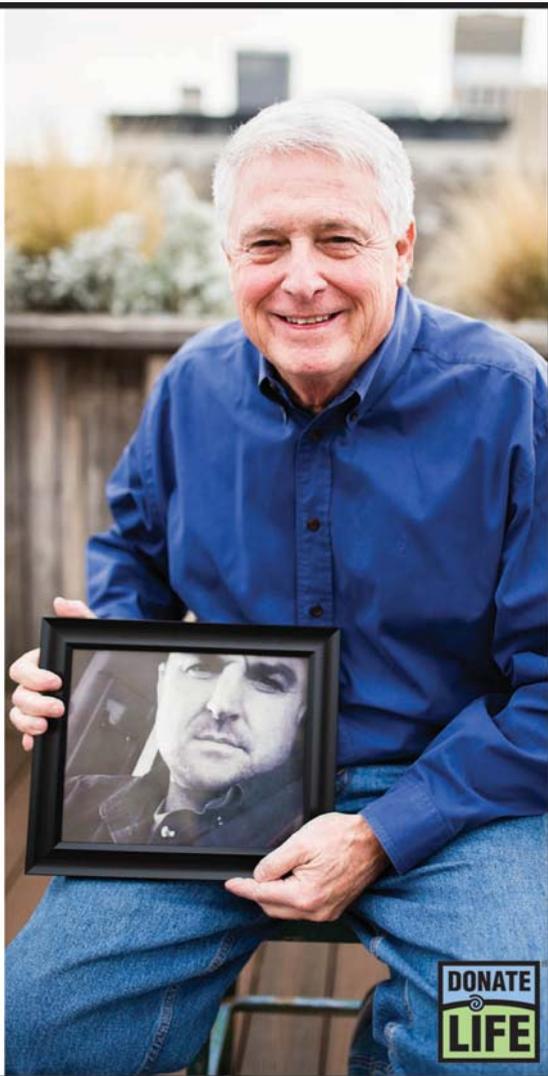


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The Northern Oklahoma College Nursing Program plays a vital role in the delivery of health care services to the citizens of Oklahoma, especially in rural areas.

The NOC program, headed by Division Chair Dr. Nikole Hicks, is future-oriented, learning-focused, connected, and distinctive. Hicks started as NOC Division Chair last fall.

"This is a transformational time in academic nursing education," Hicks said. "I am excited to work with the excellent faculty and



staff at NOC to prepare the next generation of nurses to improve

the health of Oklahomans in our region."

NOC's program focuses on preparing students for the work force. Over 90 percent of NOC students are employed before they graduate with 94 percent staying in Oklahoma after graduation.

NOC nursing students recently assisted with vaccinations at the NOC Tonkawa campus gaining valuable real-life experience. NOC nursing students and faculty have also been assisting county health departments administer vaccines within the communities they serve.

Hicks oversees 11 full time master's and doctoral prepared faculty members at three locations. The NOC program is approved by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing and is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing.

NOC has nursing facilities at Tonkawa, Stillwater, and Enid.

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Division Chair Dr. Nikole Hicks.

a high-fidelity computerized simulation mannequin that mimics real-life human functions and at least four mid-fidelity simulators including an adult, a birthing

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COVID-19 Cases	598,072
New Cases	1,720
Sunday's Cases	2,142
Saturday's Cases	2,136
New Cases 7 day Average	1,911
Active Cases	18,831
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths	9,892
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	38 (9)
Region 2 (NE)	82 (24)
Region 3 (SW)	171 (42)
Region 4 (EC)	78 (25)
Region 5 (SE)	73 (9)
Region 6 (Central)	103 (34)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	378 (103)
Region 8 (OKC)	351 (101)
Total	1,274* (347)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	70 (28)
Rehabilitation Facilities	2 (0)
Tribal Facilities	43 (14)
Other Facilities Total	115 (42)

*Includes 36 hospitalizations in pediatric beds.

**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 2021-09-20 at 7:00 a.m.

OBU

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simulator that provides students with the ability to experience labor and delivery, a pediatric client and a neonate. The mid-fidelity simulators give the student the ability to assess vital signs, master nursing skills and identify changes in a client's status.

NOC also provides health fairs, vital sign and handwashing clinics, health education to public and volunteer hours in the Tonkawa, Enid, and Stillwater areas.

NOC also works with Career Technology Centers to provide LPNs the opportunity to further their education.

Northern offers 14 scholarships available specifically for nursing students along with many other scholarship opportunities.

For more information about

NOC nursing, call 580.628.6679.

NOC, a public two-year community college, serves nearly 5,000 students on the home campus in Tonkawa, branch in Enid, NOC/OSU Gateway Program in Stillwater, online, and the University Center in Ponca City. Of these students about 60% receive financial aid and/or scholarships. Over 80% of NOC students complete their degree with zero debt.

NOC is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and offers associate degrees in three general areas: Arts, Science and Applied Science. The associate degree fulfills lower-division course work which is applicable towards a bachelor's degree.

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OMRF contributes to nationwide genetics research

Sometimes in science, bigger is better. That can be especially true when it comes to learning from large sets of data.

That's why Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Courtney Montgomery, Ph.D., has been a member of the medical research collaboration TOPMed for nearly a decade. Sponsored by the National Institutes of Health, the Trans-Omics for Precision Medicine program collects whole-genome sequences from scientists nationwide studying heart, lung, blood and sleep disorders.

The nearly 1,000 researchers who contribute to the database can propose studies to analyze the DNA sequences. In those studies, scientists look for clues that might

not be evident in small batches of participants.

A new study published in the journal *Science* included Montgomery's lab's contributions. In it, a Harvard researcher mined the TOPMed database for patterns that could explain genetic mutations. The study detailed seven previously unknown genetic mutation processes that lead to numerous conditions.

"TOPMed allows researchers to dive deep into genetics in a way that would not be possible in a single lab," said Montgomery, a scientist in OMRF's Genes and Human Disease Research Program and a member of the steering committee for TOPMed.

Montgomery studies sarcoidosis,



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation scientist Courtney Montgomery, Ph.D.

a rare and painful inflammatory disease. When volunteers who live with the condition donate samples to her study, they have the option to share their samples with the TOPMed database. There, their DNA is anonymized, sequenced and ultimately, shared with researchers studying conditions like asthma, sickle cell disease and stroke.

"I'll never have a study of 30,000 people with sarcoidosis in Oklahoma," Montgomery said. "But when researchers can compare the DNA from lots of different diseases, we can find the commonalities that allow us to build off each other's work."

Montgomery has contributed more than 1,400 samples, and the database holds more than 155,000 DNA sequences. Research published last year from the database identified 400 million

genetic variants, more than 78% of which had not been described before.

And while Montgomery is on the hunt for answers to the mysteries of sarcoidosis, she hopes Oklahomans who opt in to sharing their data feel good knowing they're making a difference for people across the country.

"Our study participants may change the lives of people living with dozens of other conditions," she said. "That's something we can all be proud of."

For more information about sarcoidosis research at OMRF, visit www.omrf.org/sarc.



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Are you a nurse facing problems in the workplace?

ONA C.A.R.E.S. – About YOU!

Workplace Advocacy Program has been a benefit to Oklahoma nurses for a long time, however, due to the new challenges nurses are enduring, the program was updated to better serve as a key asset to today's working nurse.

The program is now known as, ONA C.A.R.E.S. (Consulting for Advocacy, Rights, Empowerment & Services), the program helps Oklahoma nurses handle stressful workplace issues by empowering them to share their concerns, learn about their options and advocate for themselves. ONA wants to help develop nurses who are knowledgeable about their options, skilled in avoiding common workplace conflicts and fully supported in speaking up when presenting real-life concerns.

The most common workplace issues for nurses can often be resolved by taking concerns through the chain of command. Before you consider the ONA C.A.R.E.S. Program, use this helpful online resource for practical tips and strategies to resolve problems.

Learn how to:

- Overcome workplace issues



before they start

- Increase your accountability so your voice is heard
- Build bridges within the chain of command for healthy communication
- Discover conferences and professional development opportunities focused on conflict resolution

When that chain of command breaks down, the ONA C.A.R.E.S. Program is here to help you find a solution to your workplace problems and get back on track.

Learn more about the ONA C.A.R.E.S. Program today at www.ona.nursingnetwork.com.



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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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