



Joyful career

RN renders gift of empathy

Adella Owen, RN, brings a holistic approach to patient care at Wolfe Living Center.

by James Coburn - staff writer

God opened the door for Adella Owen's nursing career at Wolfe Living Center, she said. She leads infection control at Wolfe Living Center where she has worked for nine months.

Her family life ushered in the need for a new chapter in life. She needed more flexibility in her nursing career.

"It ended up being a God-send so I could make sure I could see my grandkids and my kids," she said. "I never thought I'd work in a nursing home."

She had visited the Harrah nursing home as the director of nursing at a local hospice. She

knew what the place was like, and that it was different, she said. She knew that it was small and very personable. So, seeing an advertisement for an infection control nurse was enough to lure her to check out the possibility of working there.

"I've always been attracted to smaller hospitals and smaller companies because I like that family like atmosphere, not just with employees but also with your patients and residents," Owen said. "That's what I love

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# A Gift of Gratitude for Healthcare Workers



By Chellie Mills

Valir Health employees will tell you there actually is such a thing as a free meal, actually it is a free Thanksgiving feast.

This season they were treated to a feast -- turkey, pies, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes the works! For the second day, Tuesday, Valir Health employees lined up to get everything needed to make a Thanksgiving feast - turkey, pies, mashed potatoes and more.

"It really makes us feel that we are part

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# OWEN

Continued from Page 1

about being here — it's small. Right now, we have under 40 in here, so you really know them."

A compassionate nursing staff at Wolfe Living Center instills patient-centered care. Their dedication comes from a desire to make Wolfe Living Center a safe and enriching place to live, Owen said.

"I told somebody I feel like if we fixed one thing it would be the best facility in the world. And, someone said, 'What would that be?' And I said, to see everything through their eyes. And if so, we would fix all the problems. That's what it's about — it's about making this the best place for them."

Owen grew up invested in the role of a caregiver. Kindness directed her to make a difference in the health of others. She worked part-time for the City of Chandler's police department when her husband had a massive heart attack at age 37. Her life changed. Owen needed a full-time job to support her children.

The city manager offered her a job at the town's water plant. No female had ever worked there before,

and it was a very hard job. But Owen was up to the task of digging ditches.

"It gave me an opportunity. I read meters and got in the ditch with the guys and did whatever I had to do," she said. "But I always felt I was called to the medical field."

Owen told the city manager she needed to go back to school. It was then that her offered to send her to school to be a paramedic. He didn't want to lose a good employee. And so, Owen worked for the City of Chandler's fire department before beginning her nursing career journey. Owen became a licensed practical nurse before advancing her career as a registered nurse in 2007 at Seminole State. Before coming to Wolfe Living Center, she worked in hospital emergency rooms, and held administrative roles in hospice.

"I started researching what nursing paid," she said.

She loved living in Chandler and began working in the emergency department of a hospital in Stroud. A nursing career has become a hard choice to make, she said.

"There weren't all the obstacles that there is now that you have to look at when everything has

changed," Owen said. "I still wouldn't trade it. I've been very blessed. God has been very good to me in allowing me to have this job. There's nothing more rewarding than when that resident looks at you in a way of saying thank you in a way that you can't even describe."

Patients living with co-morbidities can sometimes be seen moving their shoulders to the rhythm of Owen's dancing. It's her way of making them smile.

"None of us would want to leave our homes and go away to a nursing home," she explained. "I try to look at it through their eyes. It doesn't matter if we're the best place in the world — I don't want to stay in the best place in the world and leave my home forever. And so, it's trying to make it where this is truly home for them."

Owen had a good education in life while working with seriously ill kids at Children's Hospital at OU Medical Center in Oklahoma City.

"To look at them and the things they are going through, and the things they're having to endure. And they're running around smiling and they're laughing and just going on with life," she said. "If we all just

looked at life that way, and know things aren't always good and not always as they should be — but they find a joy — they find something happy. I know God has done that for me at this point in my life. He's my peace, he's my joy."

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**GIFT**

Continued from Page 1

of a family," said Kirsten Paschal-Wilson, an occupational therapist at Valir who stopped by after her shift to pick up her gift. "They always do everything to go out of their way and take care of us."



Leadership at Valir Health handed out hundreds of bags filled with Thanksgiving staples. It is their way of showing their team how much they are appreciated.

"This is all about our employees. They are our number one asset, and we love them to death," said Bruce Hayden, Valir Health chief financial officer.

"I must admit, it's my favorite event of the year," said Chris Cummings, chief administrative officer for Valir Health.

This marks the 14th year for the giveaway, but Cummings explained this year was especially meaningful as the nearly 500 healthcare workers at Valir Health have spent the past year and a half grappling with the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It's a stressful year but one of the things that was not in short supply was the passion for the patients and we have that at every level of our organization," Cummings said.

The gifts were handed out Monday and Tuesday, to all Valir Health employees in Oklahoma City and delivered to those working at outpatient clinics beyond the metro, some as far as an hour away.

It may seem really small, but it's very meaningful to us," said Paschal-Wilson.



Valir Health leadership handed out hundreds of turkeys, pies and all of the fixings for Thanksgiving feasts to each of their health care employees this week to show their gratitude for their hard work in the midst of a pandemic that has stretched into a second year.

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# Thankful for a New Lease of Life this Thanksgiving

## *An Oklahoma Man Shares His Heart Transplant Journey*

With a renewed lease on life, this Thanksgiving will be extra special to Jack Chappell, 57. After showing signs of heart failure nearly a decade ago, this father of two began the fight of his life.

In 2012, Chappell fell ill with persistent symptoms. "I felt like I had a cold I couldn't get rid of," he says. "I coughed a lot. I couldn't get rid of it. I just felt lousy. I also felt like I was putting on weight." In 2013, after a business trip and at the urging of his wife, he was diagnosed with heart failure due to a severely weakened heart muscle by his primary care physician and was connected to cardiologists at INTEGRIS Health.

2015 was a difficult year for the Chappell family, and Jack especially, as his father tragically succumbed

to terminal heart failure at the age of 82. Within a short time after his father's passing, Jack's heart failure also worsened to the point where his life was in imminent danger. He was admitted to INTEGRIS Health under the care of Douglas Horstmanshof, M.D., co-director of INTEGRIS Advanced Cardiac Care (IACC), and underwent placement of a life-saving HeartMate 2 Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD). Chappell recovered quickly and was able to leave the hospital just over two weeks after LVAD surgery. He rapidly returned to work and an active life, supported by his LVAD. After the need for a LVAD replacement in 2019, the IACC team recommended pursuing a heart transplant, and in 2020, Chappell was placed on the transplant list to

begin the search for a new heart.

"Jack is an individual who exemplified the value of being at the only hospital in Oklahoma that has access to all options to treat his worsening heart failure - in this case a LVAD that allowed him to work, care for his family and live successfully for years with a good quality of life," states Horstmanshof.

Jack's journey to a new heart was prolonged after contracting COVID-19 in November 2020. Despite a successful recovery from COVID under the care of the IACC team, his health declined again in early 2021, and he was admitted to the hospital for ongoing care while awaiting his new heart. He would spend four long months in the hospital waiting for his heart transplant. "That's a long time to be in the hospital for

sure," he admits. "But I got used to the routine of being there. I'd wake up, eat breakfast, do my labs, and work remotely from my hospital bed. I was able to stay busy."

In July 2021 he received the life changing news that he was getting a new heart. Chappell says he was in shock and then broke down in tears. "I honestly don't remember going to surgery. I just remember waking up in the ICU with a brand new heart and a second chance at life."

"After getting his new heart, every member of the INTEGRIS Health staff that was involved in his care celebrated with Jack and his immediate family," Horstmanshof remembers. "Our whole team remains

See JOURNEY Page 5

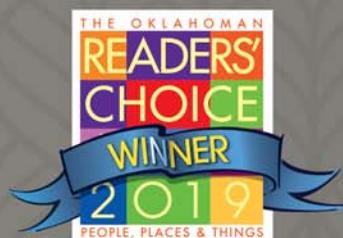


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## JOURNEY

Continued from Page 4

so proud of him for his dedication and grace throughout his journey and looks forward to many more years of knowing and caring for him as his INTEGRIS Health Family!"

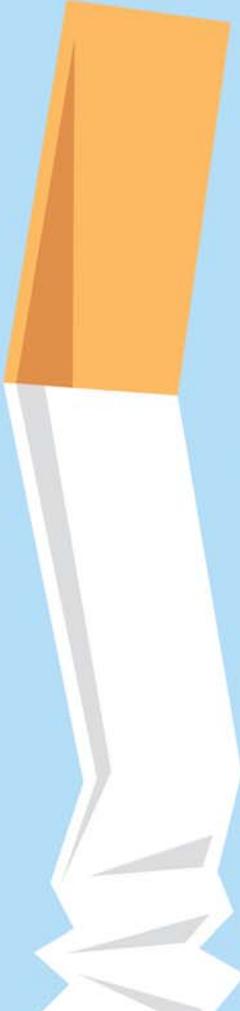
Chappell recently joined other LVAD patients and completed the 5K in the Oklahoma City Marathon. He routinely stays in touch with the LVAD team and speaks to other heart transplant and LVAD patients as an advocate for the program.

A group of people posing for a photo Description automatically generated Jack enjoyed a fulfilling and active life with his LVAD, but is looking forward to rediscovering swimming or being in water without concern for his device. Now, after his transplant, he is getting back to traveling, going to football games, all while knowing he has more time to spend with his family. However, there will always be a special place in his new heart for the hospital he called 'home' for so long.

"We've got the best heart team right here in Oklahoma City. I don't know why anyone would go anywhere else."



Jack Chappell, 57. After showing signs of heart failure nearly a decade ago, this father of two began the fight of his life.



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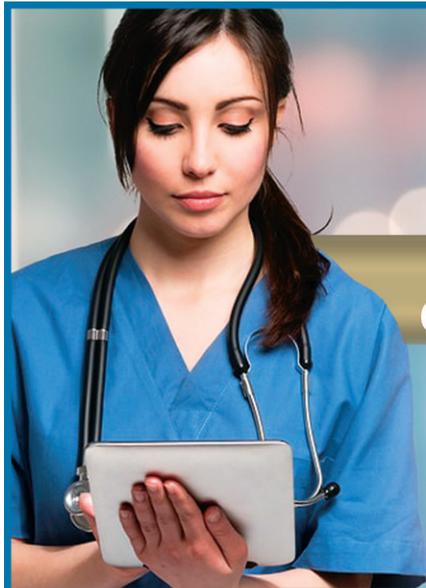
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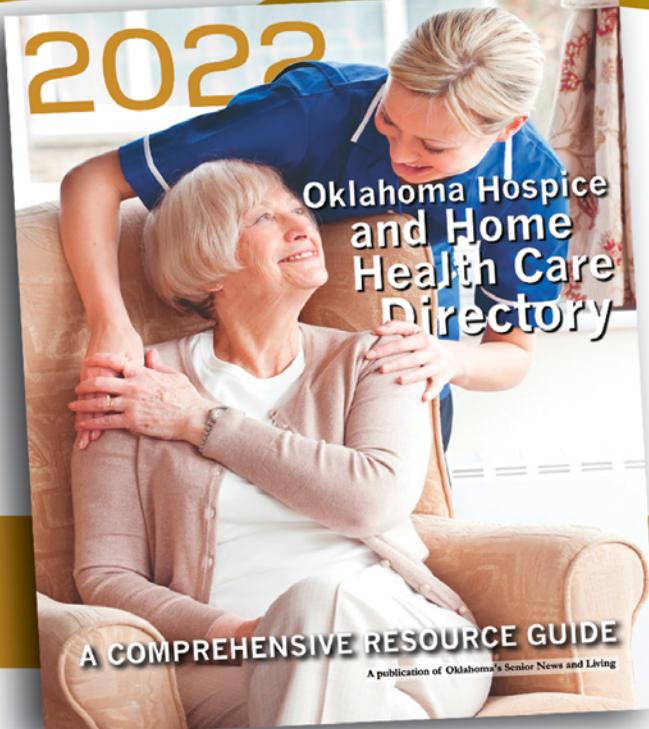


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# Saints Santa Run returns to Downtown In December

Downtown Oklahoma City Partnership's family-friendly holiday run is bringing all ages, and even pets, to downtown Oklahoma City on Saturday, Dec. 4 for the city's most festive race, the Saints Santa Run. The Santa Run is one of Downtown in December's signature events and includes a 5K race, a one-mile Fun Run, and a free Kids' Dash.

After shifting to a virtual event in 2020, Downtown OKC Partnership is excited to return to an in-person run with a new route and start/finish located at SSM Health - St. Anthony in Midtown. The 5K route takes runners through the Midtown district and historic Heritage Hills neighborhood and allows family, friends, or coworkers stay active and spread holiday cheer.

"SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital values all of the exceptional work done by Downtown OKC Partnership to support revitalization and growth

in Midtown," said Sandra Payne, Regional Vice President at SSM Health - St. Anthony Hospital. "We have especially enjoyed participating in events such as the Santa Run which supports a healthy lifestyle for families as well as provides an opportunity to highlight all that downtown Oklahoma City has to offer."

Participants in the 5K and Fun Run are also invited to dress up like Santa or in their most festive holiday costume for a chance to win the costume contest. Cash prizes for Best Santa and Best Non-Santa costumes will be awarded immediately following the race. Cash prizes will also be awarded to the top overall male and female 5K race winners.

The registration fee is \$20 for the one-mile Fun Run and \$35 for the 5K Walk/Run. Registration is currently open online at [DowntownInDecember.com/Santa-](http://DowntownInDecember.com/Santa-Run)

Run and will close Friday, Dec. 3 at 5 p.m. but will re-open for day-of registration at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4 on-site. Registration fees increase by \$5 for day-of registration. All 5K and Fun Run participants will receive a commemorative 2021 Saints Santa Run t-shirt and finisher medal.

The 50-yard Kids' Dash for runners age 8 and under will take place at 8:45 a.m. before the races and there is no cost to participate.

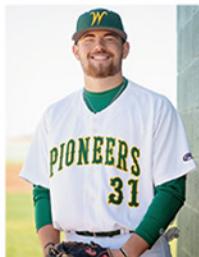
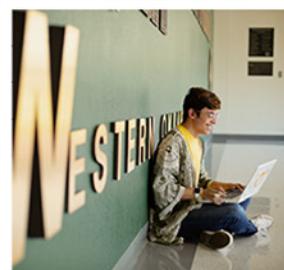
Day-of packet pick up will begin at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 4 at the SSM Health - St. Anthony campus located at 1000 N. Lee Avenue. Runners can also retrieve their packets early on Friday, Dec. 3 at the drive-thru pick up at SSM Health from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or the walk-up pick up at OK Runner (708 N. Broadway Ave.) from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- follows:
- 7:30 a.m. - Day-Of Registration, Packet Pick Up & Festivities
- 8:45 a.m. - 50 Yard Kids' Dash begins
- 9 a.m. - 1-Mile Fun Run/Walk begins
- 9:30 a.m. - 5K Run/Walk begins
- 10:15 a.m. - Race Results & Awards
- 10:30 a.m. - Costume Contest

Proceeds from the Saints Santa Run benefit Downtown Oklahoma City Partnership. Downtown Oklahoma City Partnership, Downtown Oklahoma City Initiatives, and the Downtown Business Improvement District collectively provide services to the downtown area. This event is made possible through the generous support of SSM Health - St. Anthony. For more information and a list of holiday activities happening in downtown Oklahoma City, visit [DowntownInDecember.com](http://DowntownInDecember.com).

Schedule for race day is as

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# LPN to RN: Evening or online at WOSC



Working full-time, the struggle is real for LPNs trying to get their RN.

Throw in family and the rest that life has to offer and it gets easier and easier to postpone your dreams.

Leaders at Western Oklahoma State College recognized that reality and answered the call to bring quality, affordable and convenient nursing education to those that needed it.

And as an added bonus, it's helped Southwest Oklahoma facilities find the trained staff they need.

"We really feel that our nursing program has a strong tie to workforce," said Chrystal Overton, M.S., R.N. and Vice President for Academic Affairs at WOSC. "I feel in our state Gov. Stitt is really pushing workforce development with colleges and universities and we feel like nursing is one of those programs that has that tie."

Located in Altus, Western Oklahoma State College was originally established as Altus Junior College in 1926, and is the oldest original municipal two-year college in Oklahoma. On August 16, 1974, Altus Junior College became Western Oklahoma State College by an act of the state legislatures.

The school's nursing program began in 1981 and graduated its

first class in 1983.

Two other locations are also offered: one in Lawton, housed at Cameron University and the other in Elk City, housed on the campus of Great Plains Regional Medical Center.

Accredited by the National League of Nursing Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation, the school offers a traditional program for general students and advanced standing placement for LPNs. A full-time day program is offered at each campus along with the LPN to RN online track offering an online didactic with face-to-face clinicals.

The evening track at the Lawton campus began last year through a partnership with Comanche County Memorial Hospital.

The fall of 2018 was the first online offering for LPNs to advance their education. No driving around after work and no classroom to sit in.

"This was very successful," said Stacey Machado, DNP, RN, and the Director of Nursing Education at Western Oklahoma State College.

The first cohort of 28 students graduated in May 2019 from the LPN-RN online program that included a clinical component.

In the fall of 2019, WOSC brought in its first cohort of students in the evening track at Lawton.



Opportunities for nurses to advance abound at Western Oklahoma State College in Altus.

Now 18 more are on track to graduate in the spring of 2021.

This evening program is a great option for many students. Having this additional option for students will increase the capacity at Western and as well as help provide southwest Oklahoma with the Registered Nurses needed to maintain healthcare in the rural parts of the state.

The program also had a goal of collaborating with clinical affiliates so students would have immediate options for work.

"It absolutely made sense," said Machado. "Our goal when our students graduate is they are immediately ready to go after passing boards. Also we wanted them to have an opportunity to work at their clinical sites."

The plan has been a win for everyone. Students are getting the hands-on experience they need and are able to scope out where they feel like they will fit in.

The clinical sites get on-the-job feedback to make offers before graduation. Machado knows facilities appreciate her students.

"A lot of feedback we get from area hospital nurses, managers and directors is that our students come out as great critical thinkers," Machado said. "They're self-reliant

and able to get on the floor and show they've come out of a program that has rigor in the training process."

The application window for the next spring period will begin November 1 for any returning or transfer students coming into nursing.

Applications for the following fall will open in December.

"To obtain an associate degree that leads to a high wage, high skill career and career is phenomenal," Overton said of the opportunity. "They can decrease the amount of student loan debt they have and be able to go out into the workforce after passing boards.

"That's pretty critical. A large number of students do go on for their bachelor's and some their master's. When you look at the economy and concern with high student loan debt, our program really makes sense."

Machado said the school's curriculum is aligned with most bachelor's programs meaning students won't be slowed down by having to take more prerequisites later on down the road.

For more information go to:

[www.wosc.edu](http://www.wosc.edu)

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# OU Public Health Dean Is Senior Author for Global Study

Blood clots are a major concern for people facing various health situations, including surgery, hospitalization and cancer. While current medications lower the risk of clots, they increase the chance of bleeding complications, to an extent that some people cannot take them. However, a new option may be on the horizon — a research study published today in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* shows promise for a new oral medication that is effective for preventing clots without increasing bleeding.

Gary Raskob, Ph.D., Dean of the Hudson College of Public Health at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, is senior author of the publication and chair of the steering committee for the study. The study tested the drug Milvexian in patients undergoing knee replacement surgery, who have a high risk of developing clots in the deep veins of their legs. More than 1,200 patients undergoing surgery at 118 health centers in 18 countries participated in the trial. Results showed that a daily dose of 100 milligrams or more of Milvexian was more effective for preventing clots than the current standard of treatment and, importantly, it had a low risk of bleeding.

"We are encouraged by these initial results with this new oral anticoagulant that works differently from existing medications," Raskob said. "We may finally be able to realize the longstanding goal of separating the benefit of anticoagulant medication for preventing clots from its side effect of increasing bleeding complications."

There is an enormous need for drugs to prevent clots — two of the top 10 drugs sold across the world are anti-clotting medications, Raskob said. Blood clots can cause serious illness and disability. As the underlying cause of most heart attacks and strokes, and of clots in the legs that move to the lungs, they are responsible for about 1 in 4 deaths worldwide. Blood clots in the lungs, known as pulmonary embolism, are fatal for about 100,000 people each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Because so many people require the medications to reduce the risk of clots, researchers are devoting significant time and resources to developing new therapies that are effective and improve patient safety.

Researchers chose the drug Milvexian to study because of the way it reacts with a protein in the blood called Factor XI. People who have a genetic deficiency of Factor XI (a condition known as hemophilia C) have a lower chance of developing clots later in life, and they don't have spontaneous bleeding complications compared to people with other types of hemophilia. This suggested to researchers that if Factor XI could be reduced in at-risk patients, clots could be prevented without bleeding complications. Milvexian works by binding to Factor XI and inhibiting it, which reduces the risk of clot development.

Most of Raskob's research career has been devoted to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of blood clots, formally called deep-vein thrombosis, as well as pulmonary embolism, a blockage that occurs when part of a clot breaks off and travels through the bloodstream to the lungs. In July, he was an author for another publication in the *New England Journal of Medicine* about abelacimab, a monoclonal antibody injected under the skin, which also targets Factor XI for the prevention of clots.



Gary Raskob, Ph.D., Dean of the Hudson College of Public Health at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

# Nursing Home Employees Lend a Helping Hand to the Homeless

They say there's no such thing as a free lunch, but that's exactly what employees from St. Ann's Skilled Nursing and Therapy handed out Wednesday afternoon.

Bags filled with sandwiches and chips were put together to help the homeless in Oklahoma City.

"Our staff has really bought into this once-a-month event where we get to come out, we get to serve others," said Mary Peacock-Smith, St. Ann's administrator.

Each month, for the last few months, a group of employees from St. Ann's have assembled meals and then taken them downtown. They set up just north of the Embark bus station in Oklahoma City and hand out the lunches to anyone who asks for one.

On this month's visit, they brought 350 sandwiches, lunch sacks and bottles of water out to fill a void for some of those in need, but there is a greater purpose behind the lunch sacks both for staff members at St. Ann's and for the homeless.

"Being in lockdown and going through that traumatic event together, we needed something to bring us together and bring us a sense of community," said Peacock-Smith. "I think by serving others we really help ourselves in a positive way."

The lunch giveaway event is part of a partnership St. Ann's has forged with the local non-profit Oklahoma Citizen Advocates for Recovery and Transformation Association (OCARTA).

"They decided hey we want to help and so they've been doing the food and the water and helping support our mission, and we certainly support theirs," said Donna Woods with OCARTA.

OCARTA offers free services to those in need of recovery or mental health services. This monthly lunch event helps bring awareness to the homeless community about the services that are available. And it is making a difference.

"One of the clients that came through, he came by, had some of our food, and he ended up going to OCARTA and getting some help," said Peacock-Smith. "He has recently become sober and started utilizing some of their services. It feels great to know that what we are doing is making a difference."



**St. Ann's**  
Skilled Nursing & Therapy



Employees from St. Ann's Skilled Nursing and Therapy gather downtown to hand out 350 lunches to those in need. The group has partnered with OCARTA to provide the meals once a month.



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