



Deron Dunnington, RN, CCRN-CSC enjoys working at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital and is a volunteer as the Program Coordinator with the Oklahoma City Area Chapter of OKCAACN.

by Vickie Jenkins, staff writer

Compassion and dedication come natural to Deron Dunnington RN, CCRN-CSC. Deron is a Cardiovascular ICU, CVICU nurse at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital. He is also

volunteering as the Program Coordinator with the Oklahoma City Area Chapter

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INTEGRIS Health Encourages NO Visits to Emergency

As COVID-19 cases continue to increase in our state, health systems are once again feeling the burden. In addition to ongoing concerns due to the lack of ICU and inpatient hospital beds, our emergency departments are being inundated with people wanting to be COVID tested without emergent medical needs, when experiencing more mild COVID-like symptoms. While some of these ED visits may be warranted, others are most appropriate for a COVID testing location, allowing emergency departments to conserve resources.

Emergency departments play a critical role in caring for urgent and emergent medical needs, which does include more severe COVID symptoms such as respiratory distress, severe shortness of breath or high and persistent fever. However, we need to reserve the ED's valuable resources for those who are significantly ill.

Testing continues to be an important part in managing the spread of COVID-19, and INTEGRIS Health encourages testing if people are concerned they may have the virus. Many community testing sites are available, and many offer free PCR as well as rapid antigen tests.

The below are just some of the many testing sites available throughout the state. Visit the links to identify the best testing site for you.

- COVID-19 Testing OKC (testokc.com)
- DLO COVID Testing
- IMMY Labs OKC Metro
- OSDH-IMMY Labs Regional Markets
- OSDH Testing Options by County

HEART

Continued from Page 1

of AACN (American Association of Critical Care Nurses or OKCAACN)

Deron has been a nurse for twenty-two years. "I'm employed in the CVICU at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital at 4050 West Memorial. I love Oklahoma Heart Hospital and it truly has become my work home. ICU Nursing at OHH has a heavy reliance on hemodynamics with our cardiac population of patients and recovering open heart surgery is one of my true loves. As an ICU nurse you always have to be ready for the just in case moments. We train hard at OHH to make these moments count so that our patients and families can have the best outcome. There is a lot of heart that goes into being an ICU nurse because sometimes, we are caring for more than just the patient. In those moments, I rely on my faith to help families cope with comfort care and sometimes, death. I feel that God is using my spiritual gifts of mercy, service and healing daily as I work with a great team around me at the hospital."

Growing up in Nashville, TN, Deron moved to Oklahoma City, finishing high school at PC West and then, onto Southern Nazarene University for Nursing School.

Asking Deron what he wanted to be as a child, he replied, "I always wanted to be in healthcare. I think I decided nursing because of the male nurses that I saw taking care of my dad with his

cancer in the hospital in 1985," Deron said. "It was definitely my dad that influenced me to be a nurse," he added.

When it comes to excellent qualities of a nurse, Deron stated that those qualities should be, someone that can ask questions, listen intently, emphasize when needed, think critically fast, and can deliver effective messages while still being real and authentic with patients. It is obvious that Deron possess all of these qualities.

The mentor that stands out to Deron the most is leadership preceptor, Cindy Masse. "She taught me about being authentic and real, pushing me into the nursing pool and letting me work. She always kept a careful eye on me and jumped in to save me occasionally. It was a great experience."

Deron considers being a nurse very rewarding. "There are several big awards as a bedside nurse. 1. Seeing a past patient walk back into the ICU months later to say hello and thank you. 2. Precepting nursing students and interns on days that big concepts finally make sense and nursing ownership becomes evident while watching them care for patients. 3. Volunteering since 2012 to work behind the scenes as the Program Coordinator for the OKCAACN Chapter planning, setting up, and implementing nursing education for seasoned OKC nurses events like the annual Spring Symposium, the CCRN/PCCN Certification review course, and monthly vendor dinner

meetings," Deron explained.

Deron stays busy throughout the day. "I work 12-18 shifts a month so I'm probably seeing twenty patients monthly. My day begins by checking my assignments for the day. Upon meeting my patient, I starts my conversation with, "Hi, I'm Deron. I'm going to be your nurse today. You can call me De-Ron because that is what they call me around here," he said.

Deron is definitely a leader. "Leading is done by example," he said. "Taking initiative, building up those around me and taking responsibility." As far as Deron furthering his education, he commented, "You're never done with education in the medical field. I plan to continue my Nursing education through lectures, journals and continuing education classes. I will not rule out a masters degree for my future."

Deron is happily married to his high school sweetheart Deawn and they have been

married for twenty-two years. They have two teenage daughters, Hannah and Hailey. Deron's hobbies include riding his road bike around the trails of Oklahoma. He enjoys being around family and friends, and watching Cincinnati Reds baseball. Asking Deron if he had any hidden talents, he replied, "I was a car mechanic and a lock smith while going through nursing school."

Summing up his life in three words, Deron replied, "Be the best." It sounds like an excellent description of Deron's life at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital.

For more information about Oklahoma Heart Hospital visit: www.okheart.com.



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OU College of Medicine Researcher Named President-Elect off American Pancreatic Association

Min Li, Ph.D., George Lynn Cross Research Professor of Medicine, Surgery and Cell Biology in the OU College of Medicine, has been designated president-elect of the American Pancreatic Association. He will begin serving as president in November 2022.

The American Pancreatic Association (APA) is the largest professional organization for physicians and researchers specializing in pancreatic diseases. Recognizing that progress in understanding, diagnosing and treating pancreatic diseases requires multidisciplinary analysis, the APA encompasses multiple disciplines, including surgery, medical oncology, gastroenterology, radiation oncology, pathology, and basic science research. The APA also works closely with non-profit organizations to raise funding for pancreatic cancer research.

"Serving as president-elect of the APA is a big honor for me, and it is a recognition of our work on pancreatic cancer research," Li said. "I am thrilled to join the APA leadership and serve this amazing organization to help people suffering from devastating diseases. My goal is to work with other leaders in the field to raise more awareness for pancreatic cancer research and treatment nationwide, and to expand the APA family. Our mission is to foster clinical and basic science research needed to cure diseases of the pancreas and to train the next generation of pancreatologists."

At the OU College of Medicine, Li has earned a significant amount of federal funding for his research on pancreatic cancer and continues to advance the field with his investigations. He has published articles for several consecutive years in the journal *Gastroenterology*, the

world's leading journal on GI tract disease.

His latest publications have focused on the protein ZIP4, which transports zinc throughout the body. Each study has focused on a different role for ZIP4, which serves as a "master switch" for several things to occur in pancreatic cancer. In one publication, his lab discovered that ZIP4 plays a role in the onset of cachexia, a muscle-wasting condition that affects at least 80% of people with pancreatic cancer. The next publication focused on how the overexpression of ZIP4 causes pancreatic cancer cells to be more resistant to chemotherapy. In the most recent study, his lab found that when ZIP4 is overexpressed in patients with pancreatic cancer, it essentially prompts the tumor cells to transform themselves in a manner that allows them to stealthily travel to the body's other organs.



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A Christmas Miracle: Largest Fundraising Campaign in Mercy History Complete for Love Family Women's

Mercy Health Foundation reached its \$40 million fundraising goal for the Love Family Women's Center thanks to an early Christmas donation from a generous local family. Mark Davenport and his mother, Pat, together gave \$1.5 million to close out the two-year campaign for the women's center project, the largest fundraising goal in Mercy's nearly 200-year history.

"This women's center project will have a direct, lifelong impact on our community," said Mark Davenport, chairman of Quail Creek Bank. "Having a state-of-the-art dedicated women's center here in Oklahoma City is a meaningful way my mom and I could honor my three sisters who died early in their lives. This

project also allows us to invest in future generations of Oklahomans, including the youngest generation of Davenport girls, all four born at Mercy."

Over the last 10 years, Mercy has seen a 34% increase in childbirths. The hospital, built in the 1970s, was designed to accommodate up to 3,000 births annually, but the hospital makes room for nearly 4,000 births per year. In the last six months, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City has seen an additional 217 births compared to the same time period in 2020.

The new 175,000-square-foot women's center will have 30 additional patient rooms, increasing the capacity for deliveries by 40%.

"We started this campaign in December 2019, a few months before the beginning of the pandemic with no idea what was coming," said Jim Gebhart, community president of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. "Raising \$40 million during normal times was a lofty goal, but three months into the campaign, COVID changed everything. We were all suddenly in a time of overwhelming uncertainty, and at times, we really wondered if we'd be able to pull this off."

Campaign co-chairs Judy Love and Cathy Keating led the way in raising more than \$30 million from Oklahoma families and businesses to complete the campaign.

The Tom and Judy Love family,

for whom the center is named, gave a \$10 million lead donation to kick off the project. The Sunderland Foundation of Kansas, the only out of state donor, gave \$7.5 million.

"It's so fitting that we're completing this monumental goal around Christmastime," said Lori Cummins, vice president of Mercy Health Foundation Oklahoma City. "These donors really are helping to create more room in the inn at Mercy. When we look at who is on that list, it's our Oklahoma neighbors and leaders. This is a project that will impact generations of Oklahoma families because of their support."

See MIRACLE Page 5



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MIRACLE

Continued from Page 4

The Love Family Women's Center will be a four-story building on the campus of Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. It will feature an obstetrics emergency department staffed by obstetricians and the state's only hospital-based low intervention birthing center. The unit will be run by accredited midwives who are also registered nurses in collaboration with obstetricians.

The first floor of the building will have a caesarean section unit with three suites that connect to the hospital via the existing hospital surgery suite. This strategic design allows for quick, safe access to additional services if medical emergencies occur during delivery. The second floor will house all labor and delivery suites and an antepartum unit. Postpartum rooms will be on the third floor of the facility that will connect to the hospital via a skybridge, giving mothers of babies needing a higher level of care direct elevator access to the neonatal intensive care unit on



Love Family Women's Center campus view rendering.

the fifth floor.

Mercy will serve women of all ages at the Love Family Women's Center and have a dedicated area for women recovering from

surgeries. Outpatient therapy services, specifically pelvic floor therapy, will also be offered. A large conference center will host support groups and classes on everything from

childbirth, infant care, CPR and more.

Construction kicked off in July and is expected to be complete in fall 2023.



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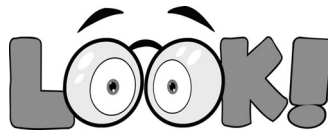
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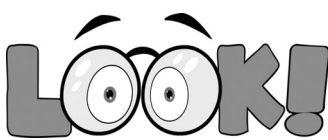
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OMRF crew tries experiment in rock

For some Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation employees, clocking out means it's time to tune-up.

After months of joking about their shared musical interests, OMRF scientists Jakub Bunk, Jacob Brown, Ph.D., and Joe Woodward decided to get serious about their extracurricular jam sessions. The group needed to turn up the sound with a drummer. The only problem? They couldn't find one.

Enter Taylor Conner. A research technician, Conner had a musical resume. But it didn't include percussion. She played the flute. In marching band.

"I didn't think they were serious when they first asked me to play drums, but I figured I could try," Conner said. "Turns out, I had a hidden talent."

With the band assembled and a name selected – Potoo, after a South American bird known for its large eyes and haunting, high-pitched call – weekly rehearsals and song-writing sessions picked up momentum. "Everything stopped for months because of Covid," said Brown, "but we finally got to play a couple of shows over the summer."

Woodward calls the band's music loud, fast and "pretty hardcore." When other OMRF scientists come



Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation employees (from left) Chase Pierce, Jacob Brown, Joe Woodward and Taylor Conner (front), make up the band Potoo. The quartet met at work.

to see them, "it can be kind of shocking."

Tim Griffin, Ph.D., who has led a lab in OMRF's Aging and Metabolism Research Program since 2008, found himself in one of those audiences over the summer. He encourages his team members — who include percussionist Conner — to find hobbies and share them with others.

"In a lab environment, you have to depend on coworkers, which requires a lot of trust," said Griffin. "We have a network within the lab where people are invested in each other as individuals, not just for scientific contributions."

Though science and the stage might seem far apart at first glance, the researchers don't see their performance life as so different from that of the lab.

"In science and music, you're problem-solving. You're always tweaking something to make it

just right; we just happen to do that with guitars and drumbeats," Woodward said.

After the group's first two shows, founding band member Bunk began his Ph.D. program in Canada, so the band took a brief hiatus to reorganize.

Luckily, the group found a perfect fit in OMRF Research Café chef and guitarist Chase Pierce.

"I was just playing guitar with no real goal," said Pierce. "Now the band is really stretching my comfort zone, and I've already gotten so much better."

The members don't have any dreams of hanging up their lab coats for the studio, but they're looking forward to more shows.

"It's been cool to see us go from hanging out at work to now making all this noise together," said Woodward. "We'll get back on stage soon."

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NURSE TALK



What are your favorite pastimes?



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"I love spending time with my kids. I have four of them. I love massages. I go to church."



Christa Perry, LPN

"I like to play poker. I do a lot of reading and spend time with my granddaughter, my children."



Jean Martin, LPN

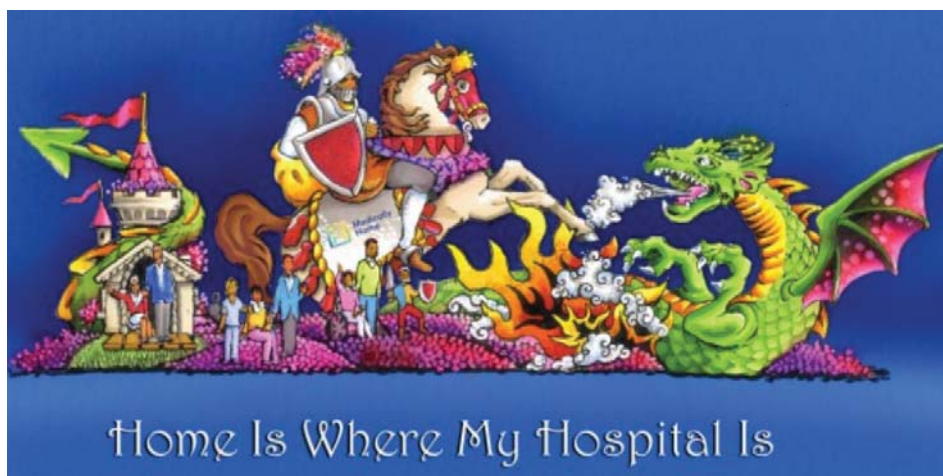
"I spend time with my daughter. We usually watch TV."



Martha Shipley, ACMA

INTEGRIS Health @ Home at the Rose Parade

For millions of people around the world, the Rose Parade is an iconic New Year's Day tradition. This year, Lisa Rother, the director of INTEGRIS Health@Home, will represent this newly formed program as a partner participant for the Medically Home Group, Inc. float. Rother and other representatives from partner hospitals will travel to Pasadena to participate in the float depicting the heroic journey undertaken to deliver a new era of hospital-level care for millions of patients and their families.



The Hospital at Home model provides hospital-level care to patients in the comfort and convenience of their own homes. It is only available through a handful of health systems across the country. Eligible patients typically suffer from common chronic conditions such as congestive heart failure, respiratory ailments, diabetes complications, infections like pneumonia, as well as COVID-19.

The "Home Is Where My Hospital Is" float represents the dragon of herculean obstacles that had to be overcome to safely hospitalize patients in their homes. The float symbolizes the spirit of perseverance of everyone involved to achieve this impossible dream - a global movement on behalf of patients.

"We are excited to be leading care delivery transformation in Oklahoma. Our partnership with Medically Home is also moving

INTEGRIS Health to a leadership position for this emerging care model on a national level," said Aric Sharp, the chief transformation officer for INTEGRIS Health.

The INTEGRIS Health@Home program is completing the design and build stage now and will be transitioning soon to the testing and training stage. The program is expected to officially launch in early February.

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2021 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

Love of life: Nursing Home enriches lives

Danelle Edgar loves seeing the smiles on the faces of the elderly while serving as a registered nurse at Perry Green Valley Nursing Home. Someone has got to make their sunset years special for them, she said.

"It's not something I initially thought I would do. But once I got in here, you just really bond, they kind of become your family," Edgar said at the long-term care and skilled nursing center.

The nursing home is not necessarily a place where the elderly spend their years being inactive. Each moment at Perry Green Valley is dedicated toward the enrichment of lives reaching their personal best.

"COVID has kind of thrown a wrench in everything, but we work around it, evolve and change. That's kind of how nursing is anyway," she said. "We have to do smaller group activities or even individual activities to fit in with the guidelines."

Edgar has been a registered nurse since 2017 when she earned her degree at Oklahoma City Community College. She began her career as a licensed practical nurse at Perry Green Valley.

Edgar works with both long-term care and rehab patients. Compassion, patience, empathy,

and teamwork combine to make the patient-centered home function well, she said. And there is not a high turnover rate among the nursing staff. Leadership and the staff pull together for the common.

"We've all been here together for a long time, and so we kind of know how each other works," Edgar said.

Working in a nursing home is not a job for everyone, she said. It takes a special type of person.

"Especially the CNAs, They're in there doing the hands-on work. They're our eyes and ears. They help our nurses tremendously. We could not do our job without them. So, I really admire that they have the heart to be in this line of work and continue to do what they are doing with the long hours and stress. They are very adaptable and compassionate."

Her life is often touched by the gains she witnesses in her patients' lives. She recalls when one of a gentleman was first admitted to Perry Green Valley on hospice about four years ago.

"We didn't think we had very long with him," she said. "He has gotten better over the years. When he first came, he was bedridden,



Danelle Edgar, RN, is a busy nurse with a heart of gold when it comes to time spent with each of her residents at Perry Green Valley Nursing Home.

didn't talk and was very contractured. And now he's walking — he's participating in activities

Continued on next page



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— he's very happy and gets along well with all the staff. We all love him. It was just really inspiring to see someone go from not being able to do anything, and now he's doing activities. He doesn't even use a walker. He is our miracle story."

It's important to understand that how a patient behaves with dementia is not the way they lived in decades past. Dementia changes them, she said.

"You just have to have a good relationship with the family, communicating with them to see how they were — what things did they like," Edgar continued.

Research points to redirecting people with dementia when they act

we're their kid, then you go with that, because there's more behaviors if you try to tell them 'No, you're wrong. You're not there. Your mother is dead,' or things like that. It's traumatic for them and they're having to relive that every five minutes, if that's how long it takes their brain to process. You just have to be in their world. That's what we are learning."

Many of the nursing home residents were farmers or farming wives. Many of them know and grew up with each other in rural surroundings.

"There's kind of that sense of friendship in here as well," Edgar said. For more info visit:

<http://www.greenvalleyhealthcare.net/>

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SITUATION UPDATE: COVID-19

COVID-19 Cases	708,938
New Cases	3,974
New Cases 7 day Average	2,104
Active Cases	19,720
CDC/NCHS Provisional Deaths (as of 12/30/21)	12,419
Acute Care OSDH Licensed Facilities/Location**	Recent 3 day Ave. Hospitalizations
	Cases (ICU)
Region 1 (NW)	39 (14)
Region 2 (NE)	64 (19)
Region 3 (SW)	107 (20)
Region 4 (EC)	25 (8)
Region 5 (SE)	28 (6)
Region 6 (Central)	67 (16)
Region 7 (Tulsa)	272 (82)
Region 8 (OKC)	211 (59)
Total	813* (224)
Other Types of Facilities	
Focus Facilities	32 (8)
Rehabilitation Facilities	2 (0)
Tribal Facilities	20 (3)
Other Facilities Total	54 (11)

*Includes 18 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 2021-12-31 at 7:00 a.m.

MIRACLE OR MEDICINE? A COVID STORY



COVID survivor Nelson Cresente and his wife Lola visit with nurse practitioner Ashley Henson, during a recent visit at Valir PACE in Oklahoma City.

As Nelson and Lola Cresente sit, holding hands they realize the special gift they've been given this year. The gift of life.

Nelson nearly lost a battle with COVID-19. When doctors at the hospital told Nelson and his wife that he needed to be put on a ventilator they refused. He had been battling COVID pneumonia, but they feared a ventilator would be the end. They chose, instead, to go home with hospice care, to enjoy what time he had left together.

"The doctor told me I was going to take him home to die," Lola said.

Just weeks ago, he was home on hospice care. A BiPAP machine aided his breathing. Ashley Henson, a nurse practitioner with Valir PACE, handled some of Nelson's care at home.

"We even helped them call a priest," Henson said. "It was that dire." Week after week, Nelson kept fighting back, doing what he could to regain strength.

"I'm a fighter, 100%," he said.

During one trip to their home,

Lola was explaining to Henson and a hospice nurse how a neighbor had stopped by the day before to pray over Nelson, specifically that his lungs would open.

That's when they witnessed what they all believe was a miracle.

"I listened to his lungs and his hospice nurse listened to his lungs. We looked at each other and were like, 'We're hearing air here. Air is moving,'" Henson said.

Lola was shocked.

"You know what I did. I cried. And he did too. And praised God for it," Lola said.

From there, Nelson continued to make improvements. He was moved off hospice care and began at-home therapies through Valir PACE.

Now, just a few weeks later, he can once again leave his home. He's no longer connected to the BiPAP machine, using a portable oxygen machine instead.

"I really think he's a miracle," Henson said. Henson said the

Cresentes were both vaccinated and she does believe the vaccine also played a role in his story. "I think even though he was vaccinated and came close to death, I think that probably would have been an inevitable thing had he not been

vaccinated," Henson said.

One of the few things Nelson has not regained is his sense of taste. He said he is really looking forward to the day he can enjoy tasting the delicious meals his wife makes - especially a steak dinner.



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