



Shelley George believes patients deserve the fullest, most deserving care possible at Community Hospital North, located in Oklahoma City.

Story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Shelley George, RN, HPI Community Hospital North, located in Oklahoma City. She serves as the relief house supervisor to ensure patients get the care they need and deserve.

George appreciates the processes Community Hospital offers so that patients are not rushed through surgery. Patients receive the fullest care

possible, she said.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has given Community Hospital a 5-Star Rating. George said that patient care is our highest priority at Community Hospital.

The Medical/Surgical department has all private rooms, close and convenient to the nurses' station.

With low nurse-to-patient ratios, the nurses have the time to provide outstanding service to its patients and their families.

Patient care touches George's life.

"It's very rewarding. Not everyone knows what you do for someone. But you know what you do for

See GEORGE Page 2

GEORGE

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someone, and it makes you feel good," George said. "You know how you've changed somebody's life and helped them. Especially if they've been here a day or so, I feel I've made an impact with my personality or something I've done for them by being thorough or extra caring."

She was a licensed practical nurse for six years and became a registered nurse in 2020. She graduated from OSU/OKC during the COVID-19 pandemic. A lot of her coursework was online except for her clinical studies with SSM Health and INTEGRIS Health hospitals.

She was loving her work in orthopedic surgery when a friend persuaded her to apply at Community Hospital in 2021. George knew that nursing is a diverse career offering a variety of opportunities. And she hopes to explore those different areas of nursing throughout her career. She likes that healthcare is diverse for recruitment reasons during a shortage of registered nurses. They can teach or work in different departments such as case management.

"There's so many areas of nursing that you have to find what's right for you," she explained.

Nurses fresh out of school can expect to work alongside a mentor or

preceptor for a 90-day period. There are some things a nursing student will not be taught in school that they can learn on the floor, George said.

"Me, I'm very tactile. I want to

"There's so many areas of nursing that you have to find what's right for you." Shelley George, RN

tough it out and do it myself. So, they get the opportunity to fully delve into that for their 90 days," she said. "So, they are more comfortable when taking patients on their own. It's safer for the patients than just having someone brand new from nursing school."

George said the staff is what impresses her the most about Community Hospital, especially the way they care for patients from the moment they check in for surgery and leave for home, George said.

Because of her soft spot for people, George has always been an empathetic person.

"I definitely feel like it has made me stronger," she said.

George is not naive to the circle of life. Life is valuable, she said.

"Nursing makes you realize that, especially if you're having a bad day

when you see what you go through sometimes or in other places, people fighting for their lives and things like that, it makes you more positive about being appreciative about every day."

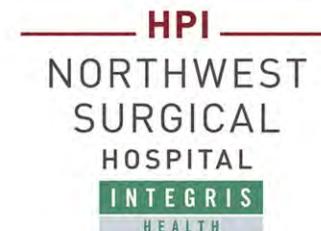
nursing staff to enjoy. She signed the card, "To George and staff."

"There are sweet little gestures. I've had a note before to thank me and it feels good," she continued. "I love people and that's why I'm in this job. I love talking to people. I love being around people. I love helping people."

A bedside nurse should always be caring and empathetic to the patient with a positive attitude, she added. Nurses working in the operating room may not get as much patient interaction. But nurses working the med/surg floor are with their patients sometimes for 12 hours a day, George said.

George likes living life to the fullest. She and one of her best friends at work recently bought an above ground swimming pool.

"We like to shop and hang out with our friends. We'll go out and have a nice dinner. But the pool right now is important. It's too hot outside."



For more information about HPI Community Hospital North or to join the team, visit <https://communityhospitalokc.com/careers>.

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CAREERS IN NURSING: PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES - ER NURSE ENJOYS VARIETY AND TEAM SPIRIT

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

One-on-one patient contact is what Tracy Allison loves about being a nurse. The well-seasoned LPN is a clinic nurse at Mercy Clinic Primary Care - Guthrie Academy, located on the campus of Mercy Hospital Logan County.

"I like it when I find someone that I'm able to help, maybe that has a special need," Allison said. "I will go above and beyond to help take care of that for a patient."

Allison said she was very quiet and shy in high school before becoming a nurse.

She has gained self-confidence. During nursing school, she realized that opportunities would present themselves through learning.

Since graduating from a 12-month nursing program at High Plains Technology Center in Woodward, Allison's career has been rich in a variety of nursing experiences. Many years were spent working at what became AllianceHealth Woodward.

She worked 10 years there as a scrub nurse in surgery helping to set up the surgical procedures.

Her career has also involved skilled nursing, radiology, anesthesiology, and two years at a smaller rural hospital in Alva. There was a nursing shortage at that time, too. So, Allison learned a variety of surgical skills in Alva before the role of a licensed practical nurse became more limited regarding patient care. Allison had done a lot of things that an LPN today would not do.

"The types of surgeries I did, working in the emergency room, ICU, helping put in PICC lines, there's a lot of things I did that they have limited LPNs to do now," she said.

She loved the surgical aspects of nursing but found the hours too demanding to blend with her family life when she and her husband were raising their

children. Due to staffing shortages, she was on call every other night.

"So, we would get called out and work during the night and have to turn around and be there for surgery in the morning," Allison said.

But being a nurse offers her options. She discovered clinical nursing back in Woodward, and it allowed her to be home in the evenings with her family when most moms were home. She didn't have to work nights, weekends, and holidays. But she would sometimes work in the ER and ICU during staffing shortages.

"There are nursing shortages everywhere, but it's really hard in the rural areas. Schools aren't necessarily available, so there's a lot of challenges," she explained. "I've got to see people with a lot of different backgrounds, economics, different races, different religions. As a nurse I've got to see amazing cool things, both good and bad.

I've got to be there when babies were born, and I've also held the hand of people when they died and had to comfort their family, she said. "I've done things where it's routine on a clinic day, but I've also done codes on patients, and helped with traumas like when the tornado hit Woodward."

Eventually, her career took her to Edmond where she was a supervisor of a large clinic. But being a supervisor, she wanted to have more contact with patients. She enjoys her conversations with them.

She and her husband live their country life just outside of Guthrie. Their children are now adults. And Allison likes working in smaller rural areas. So, Mercy Clinic Primary Care - Guthrie Academy became a perfect fit.

"The lady that's the manager here — I've worked with her before — she is very kind and a hard

continued next page



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Tracy Allison, LPN, is a clinic nurse at Mercy Clinic Primary Care - Guthrie Academy where she offers smiles and a friendly personality that blends well with patient care.

ALLISON

Continued from Page 4

worker," Allison said. "I really admire her, and I wanted to be more involved in the community I actually live in."

Each area of nursing has been meaningful in her life. Mercy Clinic Primary Care has opened another door to humanity. While working with Dr. Jacob Fisher and Angela Corrine Baustert, APRN-CNP, Allison meets people of all ages, including pediatric work.

During her career, both joyful and sad experiences have made her who she is today.

"I think I'm a much stronger

person. I've learned to stick-up for what is right," she said.

She tells students who have shadowed her through the years to do a good job and work hard, and that having good morals and scruples are important.

"And it's not just when someone's watching," she said. "You need to find it in yourself to do what's right."

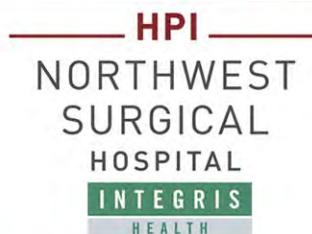
She takes care of herself by gardening and reading. Allison spends a lot of time with her adult children and grandchildren.

During COVID she and her husband discovered kayaking. It's a physical activity where she can go out in the quiet and relax.

For more information about Mercy Clinic Primary Care - Guthrie Academy or to join the team, visit <https://careers.mercy.net/>.



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OSU's RN to BSN program offers convenience, flexibility

Oklahoma State University RN to BSN student Sage Holder had long known she was interested in a healthcare career. When two of the most important people in her life – her grandfather and mother – received a cancer diagnosis in the same week during her first year of college, her career path came into focus.

“I knew I wanted to be in the healthcare system. I just didn’t know exactly where or what that was going to look like when I started college. I knew I wanted to be successful, a person that others needed, and to care for the sick,” Holder recalls.

Holder began taking pre-medicine classes but during the second semester of her freshman year, she had what she calls an “aha” moment.

“I was either in class or in the hospital, spending time with my family during my grandpa’s chemo treatments or my mom’s cancer appointments. I began to notice the nurses. I wanted to be the person that the patient could look to for a smile, a laugh, or a shoulder to cry on.”

Confident in her decision to pursue nursing, Holder completed prerequisite courses and went on to earn an associate degree in May 2021 and become a Registered Nurse (RN). She landed a job at the Emergency Room at Stillwater Medical Center.

Ready to continue her education by pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Holder found the perfect fit in OSU’s fully online RN to BSN program.

“I knew the program would offer flexibility with my lifestyle and allow me to continue working as an RN while taking classes,” Holder said. “The faculty have been approachable and easy to reach and to communicate with. I feel like they want me to succeed.”

OSU’s RN to BSN program, which launched in Fall 2017 and is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), provides students with a convenient and flexible option to complete their bachelor’s degree in as little as one year.

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“Our students are challenged with a wide array of topics that range from leadership and current trends in nursing to global, cultural and public health, as well as nursing theory,” RN to BSN program director Dr. Alana Cluck said.

Ultimately, the mission of the RN to BSN program is to prepare nurses to practice professional nursing that meets the dynamic



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health care needs of individuals, families, groups, communities and global populations. With this degree, graduates are qualified for leadership roles in a variety of healthcare environments.

OSU’s RN to BSN program enjoys a 100 percent satisfaction rate among its graduates. Faculty offer personalized attention and are committed to student success.

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

Kobey Trower, a 2019 graduate of the program, appreciated the experience of his peers and the collaborative nature of courses.

“All of the students were working full-time jobs,” Trower said. “We had some people who worked in ICU, some in labor and delivery, others in clinic and research settings. The accessibility of the coursework helped us keep on the same page for group projects. It was super convenient for me to work full time and still have a life without being tied down. That aspect of it helped keep my attention and keep me moving through the program.”

Holder’s experience as a student in the program has been first rate. She encourages any RN considering a four-year degree to explore OSU’s program.

“Set up a meeting or a zoom call with a faculty or administrative member and give them the chance to provide information and answer questions that are of concern. That is what I did and it sold me. The faculty were so welcoming and flexible.”

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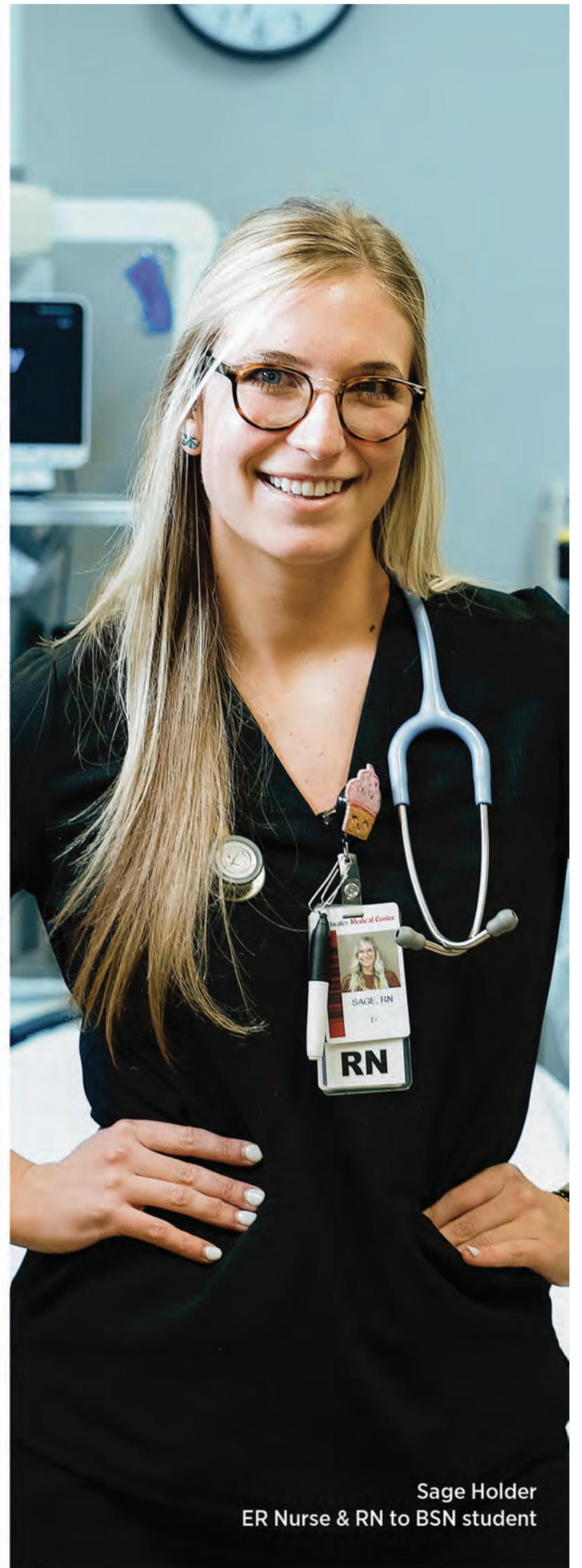
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- Kayce (Tuter) Brown, RN to BSN student



Sage Holder
ER Nurse & RN to BSN student

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Valir Hospice Earns National Distinction as Top Care Provider

Valir Hospice has earned top distinction among hospice care providers nationally.

HEALTHCAREfirst announced it has selected Valir Hospice as recipient of the 2023 Hospice Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems Honors Award.

"We are so excited to receive this prestigious award," said Amy Walkup, RN, administrator for Valir Hospice. "I believe it showcases the tremendous effort put forth by our team daily as we aim to provide top quality hospice care to the patients we serve."

Valir Hospice is one of only a handful of Hospice companies in all of Oklahoma to receive the award, and the only one based in the OKC metro area.

"At Valir Hospice, we believe life should be celebrated at every stage and that caring for those who are at the end of life is an honor," said Brad Yazell, President of Valir Hospice.

"We are so proud of our team at Valir Hospice for the work they are doing each day as they strive to make a difference for the patients they serve," said Chris Cummings, Chief Operating Officer at Valir Health. "We couldn't be prouder of our team for earning this national recognition."

The HCAHPS award is the culmination of an intensive annual review. It recognizes agencies that continuously provide a positive patient experience and high-quality care, as measured by the patient and caregiver experience. The highest performing agencies are chosen by analyzing the performance of the HCAHPS survey satisfaction measures. The 2023 award is based on survey results gathered between April 2022 and March 2023.

HCAHPS Honors acknowledges the highest performing agencies by analyzing performance on the Willingness to Recommend question as a qualifier and then analyzing



Valir Hospice employees (L to R) Deohone Dobbins, Daphne Chapman, RN, and Neva Wadsworth, HHA, pose with the HCAHPS award certificate. photo provided

performance on 18 other questions that comprise the publicly reported measures. HCAHPS Honors recipients include agencies scoring above the HEALTHCAREfirst National Average on at least 85% of the evaluated questions.

"We began our Annual Hospice Honors Award program more than ten years ago as a way to highlight those agencies that are truly leading the way in providing and demonstrating quality patient

care," said Ronda Howard, Vice President of Revenue Cycle and CAHPS at HEALTHCAREfirst. "We congratulate Valir Hospice on their success and are so proud and honored that they have chosen to partner with us in helping drive success for their agency."

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NURSE TALK



Which period in history would you choose to visit if you could go back in time?



HPI Community Hospital North

"I think the 1920s because that's when a lot of women's laws were starting to be acknowledged."



Briley Davidson, RN

"I think I would want to go back to the founding of our country, just because there were big people with big ideas."



Davina Overman, RN

I would like to visit the New England area in the early 1900s to kind of see the impact as far as medically and civil."



Susan Bennett, RN



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AONP board member Toni Pratt-Reid had the honor of presenting awards to two outstanding leaders in nursing!

Trish Farmer, DNP, APRN-CNP, received the Advocate State Award for Excellence, honoring her many years of service in AONP and her leadership at Pediatric Practitioners of Oklahoma. Patricia "Trish" Farmer, DNP, APRN-CNP, is a pediatric nurse practitioner at Pediatric Practitioners of Oklahoma. She has been practicing in the Claremore, Oklahoma, area since 2011.

Gina Crawford, DNP, APRN-CNP, FNP, CNE, took home the NP Oklahoma State Award for Excellence for her accomplishments as Dean of Oklahoma City University Kramer School of Nursing.

Join us for a VA Benefits Seminar at Acclaim Living Independent Retirement Community on July 19th from 1:00 to 3:00 pm, 12525 N Pennsylvania Ave, OKC, OK. Steve will speak about, "Three missteps of military retirees." Staff members from the VA Hospitals Community Engagement Team will also be present to answer your questions..

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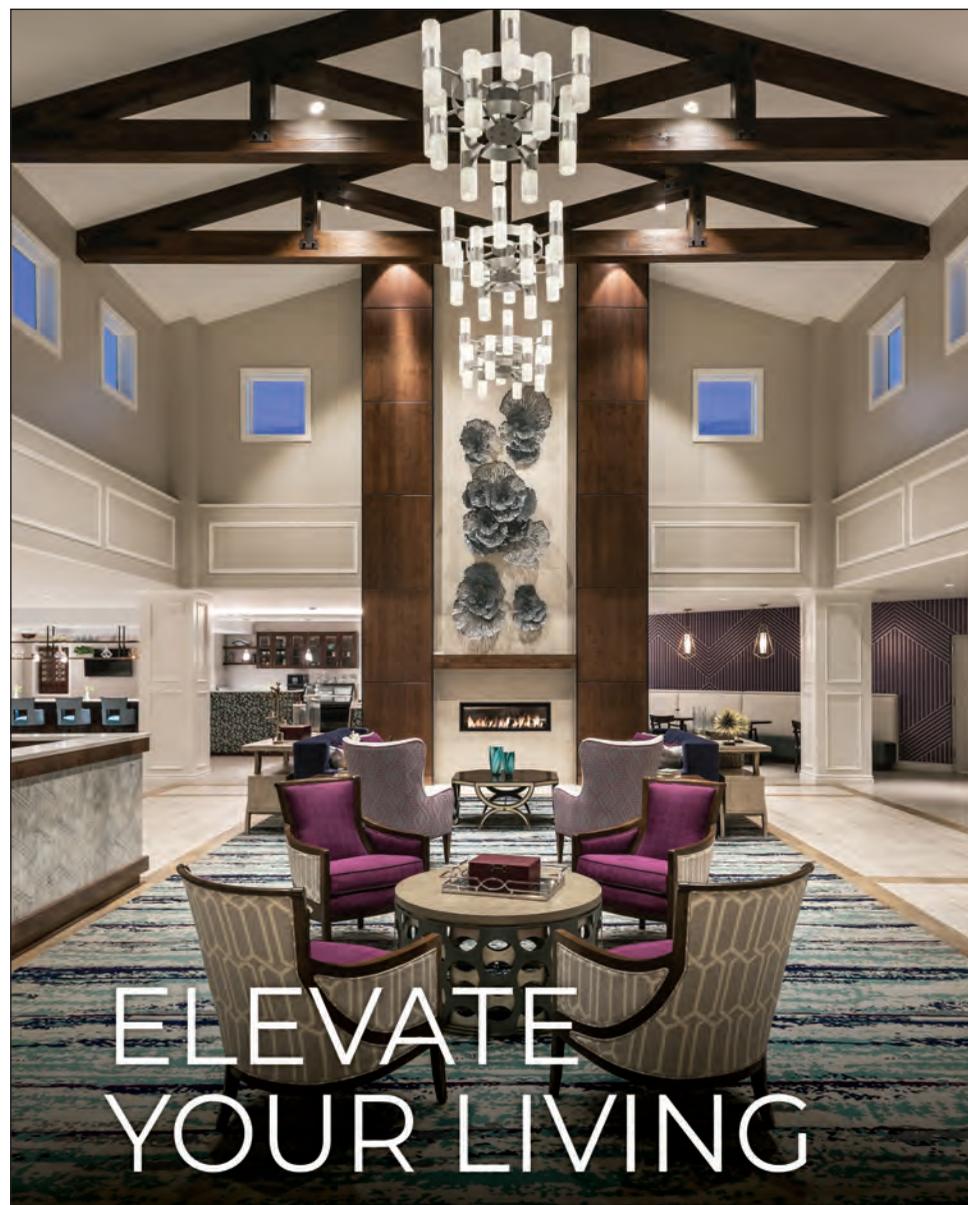
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Nurse Practitioner Kayla Birchfield to Care for Patients in Hometown

Kayla Birchfield dreamed one day she'd get the chance to provide health care for friends and family in her hometown. Birchfield, a family medicine nurse practitioner at Mercy, grew up in Crescent and graduated from Crescent High School. She is now seeing patients at Mercy Primary Care - Crescent.

Birchfield earned her nursing degree at Oklahoma Panhandle State University in Goodwell, Oklahoma, and a master's in nursing with a focus in family medicine from University of Phoenix. She has worked in various nursing roles in the health care field throughout the Oklahoma City metro since 2011. She joined the team at Mercy Clinic Primary Care - Yukon in 2022.

"I mentioned to our leaders to please keep me in mind if a position ever opened at Mercy clinic in Crescent," said Birchfield, APRN-CNP at Mercy. "I never imagined

it would happen so soon, but it's so important to me to be able to come back and serve in my hometown."

Birchfield and her husband, Grady, moved back to Crescent in 2021. Grady is chief of the Crescent Fire Department and a supervisor at Crescent Public Works. They have two children, a daughter and a son.

Dr. Lee Rittenhouse was Birchfield's primary care physician when she was growing up. He retired in 2019 from the clinic where she will soon work. As a family medicine provider, Birchfield cares for patients of all ages from infants to older adults. She loves to focus on preventive care and working with patients to find the best ways to improve their health.

"This move is bittersweet because I love my patients and co-workers in Yukon, but it's such



Kayla Birchfield, APRN-CNP at Mercy in her hometown of Crescent.

a dream come true to come home and care for my neighbors," Birchfield said.

There's one perk about her new gig

Birchfield said she's most excited about: "I live just a few blocks from the clinic, so I'll be able to walk to work to see my patients."



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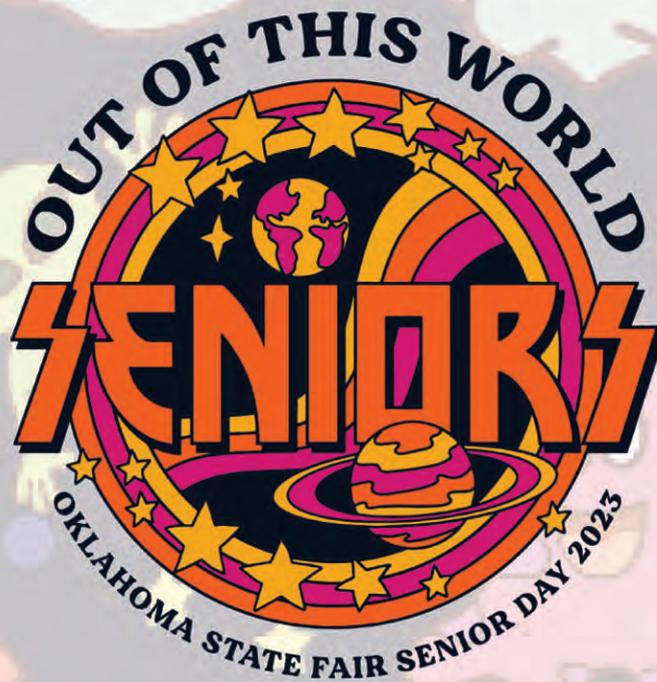


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46TH ANNUAL SENIOR DAY

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

EXHIBITORS, PHOTO BOOTH & FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS	10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
DOOR PRIZES	Session 1: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Session 2: 1 - 3:30 p.m. Session 3: 3:30 - 6 p.m.
OUT & ABOUT: SPACE WALK	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
SENIORS IN MOTION VIDEO VOTING	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
OKIE STOMPERS	10:05 a.m. & 11 a.m.
BLACK HOLE TOSS	10:35 a.m.
THE MILKY WAY - EXPANSIVE UNIVERSE OR DELICIOUS CANDY	11:30 a.m.
YMCA COMMUNITY TEAM	12 p.m.
LOVE YOU TO THE MOON AND BACK COUPLES CHALLENGE	12:50 p.m.
OUT OF THIS WORLD KARAOKE CONTEST	1:20 p.m.
IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE	2:20 p.m.
THE BIG BANG GAME SHOW	3:05 p.m.
SAVE THE FROZEN PLANET	4:30 p.m.
JIM GARLING	5 p.m.
OKLAHOMA CITY SWING DANCE CLUB	5:20 p.m.
ALIEN INVASION	5:55 p.m.
VOCAL SOUNDS OF OKLAHOMA	6:10 p.m.
ELVIS VISITS THE SPACE STATION	6:30 p.m.
SHAWN KLUSH - TRIBUTE TO ELVIS	7:30 p.m.
Chickasaw Country Entertainment Stage	

For more detailed information visit the Senior Day page on the Oklahoma State Fair website.

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