

Heather Sweeney, RN

Improves the lives of others - Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic.

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Heather Sweeney returns home at night being grateful for a career that improves the lives of others.

"It feels good and sometimes it's humbling," said Sweeney, RN, Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic.

Sweeney was a medical assistant when she got married 23 years ago. She wanted to be part of a team of compassionate and caring nurses. Compassion is the main reason people become nurses, she said.

It often touches her heart to see children enter immunotherapy treatments for peanut allergies. The children come to the clinic every two weeks for nine months.

"A year later they come in and they're tested for peanuts and they're not allergic," Sweeney said. "You become very close to those families because you see them

every two weeks. I get emotional because it's moving to see they can do something like that and be a part of that journey."

Sweeney entered healthcare as a pharmacy tech before staying home as a mom. Once her children were grown, she gave more thought to becoming a registered nurse. At age 35, she earned her Associate degree in Nursing at OSU/OKC followed by her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, located in Weatherford. After graduating in December of 2019, she went to work at the Oklahoma Heart Hospital before COVID hit in March of 2020. She worked there until November of 2021 before joining the PACU at SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital until the following

"I was ready for a clinic job and this one happened to be open," Sweeney said. "It was probably the best decision I've made as a nurse. I like this field and the entire aspect of allergy and asthma. It's not just environmental allergies. It's food allergies and we get to help all kinds of people. So, it's been interesting learning about all of that and expanding my knowledge as a nurse being not just in a hospital but being in a clinic to help people."

Her career at the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic is in a family-friendly environment among both the staff and patients, she continued. She has the benefit of working with knowledgeable doctors who are willing to teach her. There is a lot of longevity among the nursing staff, which is rare to find, she mentioned.

"They're knowledgeable, so they'll teach you as well," she said. "I really like working here."

A typical day for Sweeney involves preparing patients to meet with their physicians by taking vitals to document the patients' visits. Patients may be prepared for patch testing or whatever else is required.

"Sometimes we do food challenges or oral immunotherapy where we up dose kids on peanuts or whatever they're allergic to. It

varies but we stay pretty busy," Sweeney explained.

Asthma can be serious enough to cause death, so educating patients is vital. She has met people who previously did not get proper education before coming to the clinic. It may be that they did not learn the proper use of inhalers which can make a major difference in their health. When and how to use an inhaler can improve outcomes.

"Especially in kids who play sports and things like that. I think knowledge is power. The more you know about it, the better you take care of yourself," she said. "I think that's one area our healthcare lacks we don't educate people enough when it comes to their health."

Depending on the severity of the asthma problem, some adults and children will only need a rescue inhaler to be taken before they exercise. Other people with fullblown asthma will need a daily inhaler.

"As long as people are using those inhalers correctly, most people do fairly well with asthma," Sweeney said.

Allergy shots can help people

See SWEENEY Page 3

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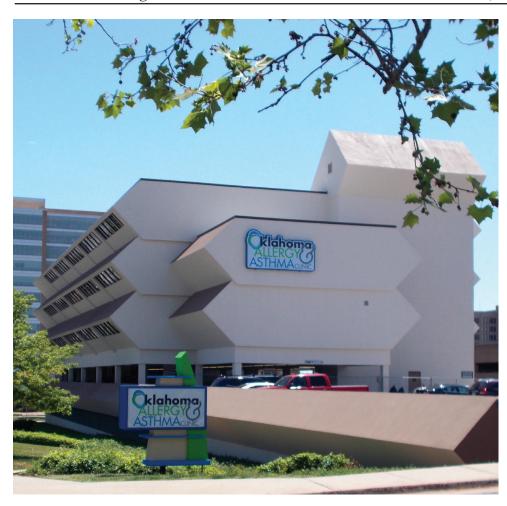
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Heather Sweeney, RN, has found her niche in nursing at the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic, located in Oklahoma City

SWEENEY Continued from Page 2

feel better. Even using a nose spray can help allergy patients relieve some of their symptoms, she added. School teachers can also help their students by becoming aware of the signs of asthma, she said. When problems are reoccurring, patients can contact their primary care doctor for a referral to a specialist for evaluation.

Educating professionals in the field of nursing is a continual process. And that works well for Sweeney, who is a people person and likes to talk, she said.

"In the state of Oklahoma, they don't make you take continuing education classes if you work more than 500 hours a year," Sweeney said. "So, it's really up to you as a nurse to stay up on what's new and coming out.

Doctors at the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic provide occasional classes for nurses while discussing what's on the horizon in healthcare. Sweeney also likes reading articles to stay informed. She's interested in becoming a certified asthma educator.

"I really like this job. I think there are so many areas that you can teach and educate," she said.

For more information about the Oklahoma Allergy & Asthma Clinic visit https://oklahomaallergy.com/about/join-our-team/

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OCU's KSN offers Nurse Educator Track in Doctor of Nursing Practice Completion Program



Kramer **School of Nursing**

OKLAHOMA CITY UNIVERSITY

Oklahoma City University has introduced a new graduate nursing program focused on training educators who can help prepare and guide the next generation of nurses.

OCU's Kramer School of Nursing (KSN) is accepting enrollments for a January start for its new Nurse Educator track in the school's Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Completion Program. OCU now is the only university in Oklahoma to offer a Nurse Educator track within its DNP program.

Cene' Livingston, Chair of Advanced-Practice Programs at KSN

said enrollment across the nation for PhD programs in small nonresearch driven institutions has been diminishing over time.

'We were trying to figure out how to continue to serve those that want to specialize as nurse educators and obtain education at the doctoral level," she said "We put together a task force of our PhD faculty, and after research, the determination was that a DNP nurse educator track would be an excellent option, and consistent with national trends. We've had a great deal of interest in the program track."

Livingston said enrollment for the new program has garnered increased interest.



"Enrollment is (going) excellent," she said.

Kramer School of Nursing Dean Gina Crawford said the move is significant because while much of the recent conversation about the nursing shortage has focused on growing the number of nurses in patient-care roles, it is equally important to consider the educators who train and support would-be nurses.

"Nursing retirements and attrition impact not only patient-facing health care, but the teaching and instruction environments as well," Crawford said. "The demand is significant right now for highly educated nurses who can shape the next generation both within a classroom setting and in administrative roles in hospitals."

OCU's DNP Nurse Educator track focuses on preparing nurses function within educational administrative roles, to impact health policy, and to participate in research, Crawford said.

Livingston said the program is designed with working adults in mind, with 100 percent online coursework.

Students can complete the course in as little as two years and must have previously earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree to be eligible to enroll. Graduates who go on to pursue faculty appointments may be eligible to participate in loan reimbursement programs to help recoup educational expenses.

"Students can start any semester, fall, spring, or summer," Livingston said. "(Before enrolling) we have a

conversation (with students) just to make sure that the program option aligns with the nurse's professional goals".

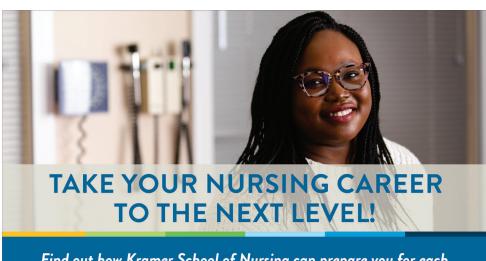
Livingston said OCU Kramer School of Nursing also offers a Master's in Nursing Education.

"KSN offers RN to MSN and BSN to MSN tracks in nursing education." she said. "The BSN to MSN track is five semesters and is delivered completely asynchronously online. These options are user-friendly and perfect for those wanting to become professional nurse educators."

The introduction of the Nurse Educator track follows a series of moves by OCU to help address the nation's nursing shortage. In February, the university announced five-year scholarship and employment partnership with SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital aimed at junior and senior nursing students, and in September the school introduced the state's first in-person 12-month accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree.

"We certainly feel we can play a vital role in the nursing profession and when it comes to the betterment of health care and health outcomes," Crawford said. "We will continue to pursue programming and initiatives that can help move our community forward."

For information about the new DNP Nurse Educator track, email, at cllivingston@okcu.edu. Additional information about nursing programs at Oklahoma City University is available at https://www.okcu.edu/nursing/home.



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Metro Tech EMT Program Expands

Since its establishment in 2022, the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program at Metro Tech has equipped its students with the essential skills required to obtain their EMT license, addressing the prevalent workforce shortage in the industry. As the 16-week program embarks on its second year within a new facility on the South Bryant Campus, officials have introduced a state-of-the-art training apparatus that offers students real-world emergency medical scenarios.

In an installation funded by the 2019 Community Bond Initiative, the program's new Classroom Ambulance Simulator designed by Simulator Solutions resembles the body of a modern-day ambulance without the front cabin and engine attached. Specifically, the device installed within the lab at the newly constructed Public Safety Academy is the manufacturers' Platinum, Enclosed Learning Model.

"This is one of the most realistic training opportunities they can get outside of being hands-on in the field," Program Instructor and EMT Kara Owens said. "Not only do we have the new Ambulance Simulator, but the bond also funded a new

classroom and a variety of new EMS equipment as well. Our students are really benefiting from all of it."

In its entirety, the Simulator moves on pneumatics, simulating road conditions, and includes fully functional interior storage. Additionally, training instructors can control the Simulator's movement, watch their students perform through the CCTV cameras, and relay information through an intercom system. The exterior of the Simulator features custom-made vinyl complete with the Metro Tech logo, realistic ambulance lights, and a siren.

"Thanks to the unwavering support of our community, we're able to focus our efforts on providing our students with the best industry-standard training available," Metro Tech Superintendent Aaron Collins said. "State-of-the-art equipment combined with a new building, classroom and lab ensures a seamless transition into the workforce."

The next EMT course at Metro Tech starts January 30th, and enrollment is now open. For more information and to enroll, visit https://courses.metrotech.edu/short-term.

Dao Goodnight, APRN Accepting Patients

Dao Goodnight is now accepting patients at Norman Regional's Primary Care—Waterview East at 2601 SW 119th St., Suite A in Oklahoma City.

Dao Goodnight is an APRN, graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, and did her residency at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center

Dao, a board-certified nurse practitioner specializing in family medicine, speaks English, Vietnamese, Cantonese Chinese, and some Mandarin Chinese and decided to specialize in this field to deepen her knowledge and to play a broader role in the healthcare system. She is passionate



Dao Goodnight, APRN.

about working with patients to achieve their healthcare goals and build preventative care strategies.

Special interests include asthma, COPD, geriatric and chronic care management, hyperlipidemia, hypertension, preventative medicine, and type II diabetes.

Dao is a compassionate and caring provider who brings a comprehensive, holistic approach to help them achieve positive health outcomes.

In her free time, Dao enjoys swimming, biking, jogging, and hiking. She loves sightseeing and is always eager to visit places with beautiful beaches or mountains.





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What do you hope for in 2024?

"Better health and less stress."



Markisha Kelley, CHHA

"To get my husband on the right path of feeling better."



Lahna Garrison, CHHA

"For people to be more happy and healthy."



Amber Annesley, CHHA

Oklahoma City

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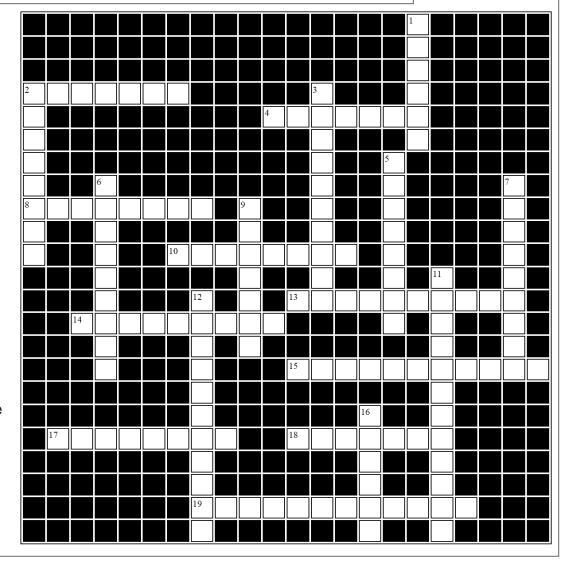
Across

- 2. Replication of cells
- 4. Evaluating the degree of maturity of tumor cells
- 8. Having the ability to enter and destroy surrounding tissue
- 10. Containing dead tissue
- 13. Spread of a malignant tumor to a secondary site
- 14. Cancerous tumor made up of cells of epithelial origin
- 15. Agents that cause cancer; chemicals, drugs, radiation, and viruses
- 17. Detailed plan for treatment of an illness
- 18. Return of symptoms of disease
- 19. Treatment with drugs

Down

- 1. Noncancerous tumor
- 2. Change in the genetic material (DNA) of a cell
- 3. Relieving but not curing symptoms
- 5. New growth; benign or malignant tumors
- 6. Invasive tumor
- 7. Partial or complete disappearance of symptoms of disease
- 9. Cancerous tumor derived from connective or flesh tissue
- 11. Treatment of tumors using radiation
- 12. Chemical substances that inhibit the growth of cells
- 16. Disease caused by abnormal and excessive growth of cells in the body

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12



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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

MNTC – Proudly Supporting Nurses, Every Step of the Way



TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Oklahoma ranks in the top 5 states for the highest concentration of Licensed Practical Nurse employment according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Oklahoma ranks in the top 5 states for the highest concentration of Licensed Practical Nurse employment according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This field is expected to grow up to 12% in the next five years, making jobs in nursing both high-demand and readily available to individuals looking to join or advance in this rewarding industry. Moore Norman Technology Center is dedicated to training the next workforce generation of nurses and continuing to provide continued classes for existing RNS to grow in knowledge, technical skills, and experience.

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a career in nursing or healthcare, can start training junior year. MNTC offers multiple career programs that utilize a realistic clinical setting for training students in basic nursing care. Students have the opportunity to participate in clinical rotations at local medical facilities and offices, and upon completion, sit for industry certifications leading to employment. High school students enrolled in the Moore and Norman public school districts can start applying in November for classes that start in August of the following year.

Adults making a career shift into the health field can complete their training between 10 - 16 months. MNTC full-time adult-only classes focus on developing more advanced skillsets, preparing nurses to have practice in a clinical setting, hospitals, home health, and assisted living facilities for a direct patient care experience. Applications for adult-only health programs typically open in January and close in April.

MNTC advanced training for nurses doesn't stop after they join the work force. We believe in the power of technical skills development at every stage. Existing nurses can take a variety of continuing education classes to renew certification like CPR BLS for HealthCare Providers, DDMAT Update, Opioid for Healthcare Providers, and 30+ other options to improve their skills and enhance their career. Shortterm classes are offered both online and in-person to meet the needs of individuals with full-time demanding careers.

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Wherever you are in your nursing journey, MNTC is available to support you through technical training by qualified instructors who know what it takes to get trained, get certified, and get hired. If you are considering a nursing career, or looking to develop existing skillsets, visit mntc.edu to learn more.

For more information visit: https://www.mntc.edu/



(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

RSU Building Legacy of Compassionate Nurses

The RSU Department of Health Sciences offers programs in nursing and pre-allied health fields. Nursing programs include the traditional BSN in nursing, leading to RN licensure; the RN2BSN online program which allows registered nurses with an associate degree to complete a bachelor's degree; and the bridge to traditional BSN entry for LPNs or paramedics to earn their bachelor's degree. Allied health sciences options include pre-athletic training, prephysical therapy and pre-occupational therapy. The Master of Business Administration (MBA) program at RSU now offers a concentration in Healthcare Management.

With a history of over 40 years of academic excellence, RSU's nursing program provides academic rigor and a reputation that gives RSU graduates an edge in the competitive job market. Upon graduation, RSU nursing graduate NCLEX pass rates exceed the state and national average. Approximately 95% of students report having obtained an RN position before graduation. These outcomes are credited to a quality curriculum, outstanding students, and a caring

and dedicated faculty. RSU's nursing faculty have more than 130 years of experience in both academic teaching and practical experience. Several low and high-fidelity laboratories are utilized to provide hands-on learning so that students are well prepared to deliver safe, highquality nursing care in a variety of settings.

Students interested in attending medical school complete their undergraduate studies in medical/ molecular biology. RSU's biology program has seen more than 150 students move on to professional medical and schools pursuing healthcare careers.

RSU consistently earns national recognition for affordability, both for traditional classes and its online programs. The university is routinely recognized for having one of the region's lowest student debt loads with nearly half of its graduating class earning a diploma without any student loan assistance.

The traditional BSN and RN2BSN nursing program is fully accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).



Being the only public residential university in the metropolitan Tulsa area, RSU gives students traditional college experience. With the university's proximity to Tulsa, RSU is strategically positioned geographically, fiscally and reputationally to be Oklahoma's first choice in BSN education.

RSU is committed to building a legacy of compassionate and virtuous nurses who advocate for their patients and serve the community for years to come. For more information about RSU's nursing programs or to schedule a campus tour, visit https://www.rsu.edu/nursing or call 918-343-7631.



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Empowering Dreams and Transforming Lives: Keisha's Inspiring Journey at SNU

Graduating with a Master of Science in Exercise Science with a Health Promotion concentration from Southern Nazarene University (SNU) in Bethany, Oklahoma, Keisha Williams is not only a graduate but a beacon of inspiration and hope.

Keisha's educational journey began with earning a Bachelor of Science in Family Studies and Gerontology at SNU in 2012. Driven by determination, this single mother embraced the challenges of full-time work, raising two daughters, and pursuing her degree – setting a remarkable example for her children. After graduation, Keisha's passion for fitness led her to become a personal trainer

However, life took an unexpected turn when her mother fell ill. Keisha shares, "After my mother developed an illness, I desired to learn more about how to age in a healthy manner and action steps to take not only to manage an illness but also how to prevent them. I desired to help others learn about health and wellness and wanted to encourage them to live a more healthy lifestyle in an effort to increase their quality of life."

Keisha discovered the Master of Science in Exercise Science Health and Wellness Promotion Track and determined that it would be the perfect fit for her future goals. In addition, the program included service learning opportunities, hearing from community leaders, and building connections. Pursuing her Master's at SNU was also rooted in Keisha's positive experiences during her undergraduate years. The university's unique qualities—its Christcentered focus, caring professors, and flexible evening classes allowing for work and life balance—set the stage for her success and allowed her to balance caring for her mother, working, and going

Dr. Sylvia Goodman, SNU School of Rehabilitation and Sports Sciences, noted, "Keisha was very driven to succeed while carrying a heavy load with financial responsibilities and providing care for mother and being a parent. She overcame hardships with grace."

During Keisha's time in the program, one guest speaker especially stood out. Keisha shares, "I recall Claire Dowers coming to our class and sharing



Keisha Williams graduated with a Master of Science in Exercise Science with a Health Promotion from Southern Nazarene University in Bethany.



information regarding the Healthy Living Center on Rockwell. We also had an assignment that required us to have a tour of the facility. During her presentation, she shared future plans for a Wellness Center in Northeast Oklahoma City." During that visit, Keisha began to pray that God would allow her to be a part of this innovative project one day. Her prayer, sparked by that moment, was answered when she secured the role at the Maps 3 Senior Health and Wellness Center.

Keisha's Master's degree not only equipped her with knowledge but opened doors to her role as the Branch Manager of the Maps 3 Community Health Recreation and Wellness Center. This position blends Keisha's passion for health and wellness with her commitment to community service. "This is a dream come true and exactly what SNU prepared me for!" Keisha shared, expressing gratitude for the opportunities her Master's in Exercise Science program has brought her way.

Keisha's success story underscores

the importance of investing energy, effort, and dedication into education and personal growth. "Earning my degree did set me up for success," she affirms, emphasizing coursework and acquired skills provided the confidence to pursue her dreams.

Keisha's story at SNU highlights not just academic achievement but how her determination and prayer opened doors as the Lord guided her. As Keisha continues to impact Oklahoma City positively, she has dedicated herself to promoting holistic well-being while honoring the memory of her mother, who passed in 2022. "I will continue to honor her memory by working with others and teaching them the importance of being physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy," she passionately shares

Congratulations, Keisha, on your wonderful accomplishments! May the Lord continue to bless you on this journey of wellness and community service.

Learn more about the Master of Science in Exercise Science Health and Human Wellness program at SNU. visit

https://pgs.snu.edu/masters-in-exercise-science

NSU partners with Bacone to Provide Seamless Transfer Pathway for Students



Seminary Hall, on the Tahlequah campus of Northeastern State University.



Bacone College, formerly The Indian University, was founded in 1880 to educate American Indian students.

Northeastern State University has partnered with Bacone College to provide a seamless pathway for all Bacone students seeking to transfer and graduate on their current timeline.

The partnership between the two heritage-rich institutions ensures the longstanding commitment each has made to student success and a sustainable future for their diverse communities continues—uninterrupted.

"Northeastern is proud to be able to work with our partners at Bacone College to welcome these students into the RiverHawk family during this difficult time," President Rodney Hanley said. "Our commitment to their success began the moment we were made aware of the situation. We are determined that these students will not only achieve their education dreams but also flourish while doing so."

NSU transfer staff are working hand-in-hand with administrators at Bacone to close the gap for students affected by the school's recent challenges.

"The Bacone College Board of Trustees has regretfully made the decision to suspend classes for the spring 2024 semester. The spring will be a time for Bacone to restructure and rebuild. Our primary concern is the impact the suspension of classes is having on students," Dr. Rebecca Truelove, Vice President of Academic Affairs for Bacone College, said. "Bacone appreciates the support Northeastern State University is showing by reaching out to students during this enrollment process."

Northeastern officials are committed to removing barriers for the admission process, including application fees. The NSU advising team is hard at work scheduling Zoom meetings with Bacone students to identify and secure classes within their academic sequence.

"I am thankful that through this partnership Northeastern can provide a seamless option for students to stay on track to achieve their educational goals—close to home and with an institution that knows firsthand the sacrifices they and their families have made to get to this point," Dr. Carla Swearingen, NSU Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, said.

A national leader in American Indian education since 1851, NSU offers Native students the opportunity to enhance their academic experience in a supportive environment that values their cultural heritage. Bacone transfers can take advantage of diverse resources and programming offered by the NSU Center for Tribal Studies, more than 80 student organizations, as well as the opportunity to apply for numerous scholarships.

For more information about the Northeastern State University Nusing program visit https://nursingonline.nsuok.edu/



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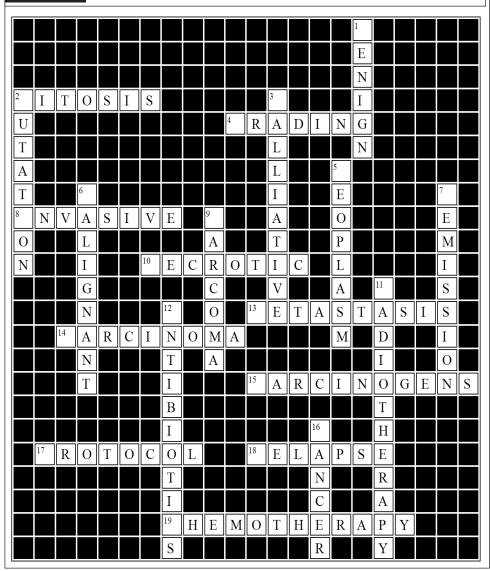
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SPECIAL - Corinne Givens

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Corinne Givens was recently honored by Dean Julie Hoff and Dr. David Surratt, OU Vice President and Dean for Student Affairs, with the Outstanding Senior Student Award for Nursing by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing. The honor was presented at a ceremony to celebrate and recognize Corinne, along with other students from across the university.



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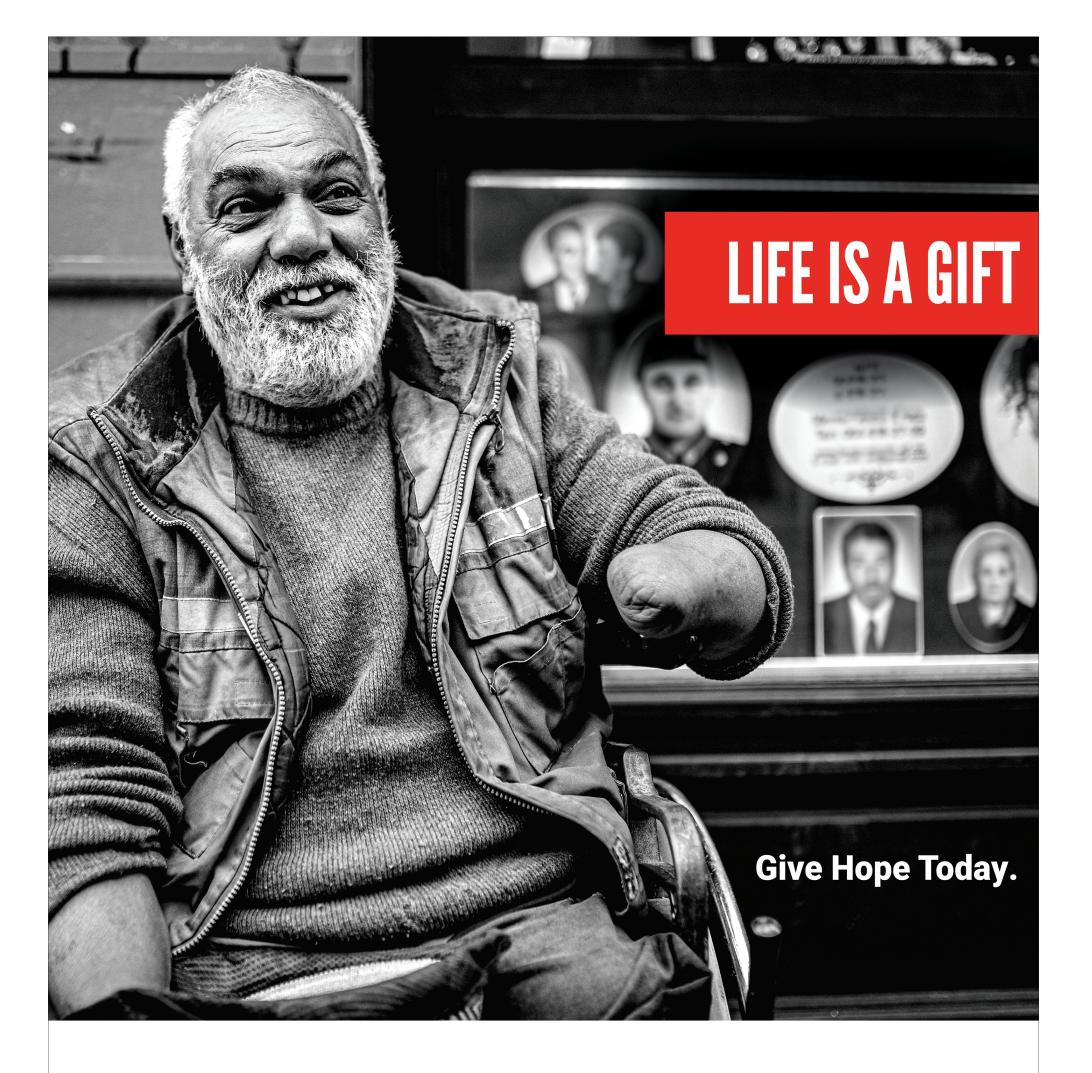
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