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Saving Lives: ***Oklahoma Children's*** ***Hospital***

Read his story on page 2

**Inside
This Issue**

Page 4, Stellar Care
Brings Growth

Page 13, NOC Nursing Students
Participate in White Coat Ceremony

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PAGE 2

Dana Adams, RN and Randy Stroud

Neurosurgery OR at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Dana Adams, RN, knows why she became a nurse and has been grateful to help children ever since she graduated from nursing school.

"I feel it's rewarding getting to help them," said Adams, who is part of the neurosurgery operating room team at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, located in Oklahoma City.

In 1991 Adams earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing. She worked as a CNA at the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit before graduating from nursing school.

She sees a lot of children living with hydrocephalus, a neurological disorder caused by an abnormal buildup of cerebrospinal fluid in the ventricles deep within the brain. This excess fluid causes the

ventricles to widen, putting harmful pressure on the brain's tissues.

"These kids come back routinely through their lives," she said. "We do a lot of brain tumors, brain or spine."

Parents will sometimes come into the OR while their child is receiving anesthesia. Not every child except those depending on their stress level will be given a sedative to help them relax prior to surgery. Some children may have special needs, said Randy Stroud, a neuro surgical technician. Each child is different as the nursing team does what they can to keep them calm.

"We interact with them and try to make them comfortable," Adams continued.

She and the team explain to parents the process of their child's surgery, including the intravenous injections, lines, and Foley catheter.

Children who are age appropriate are also educated about how the process will help them. Adams said it's best not to spring something on a kid.

"You want them to be aware, to know," Adams said.

Following surgery children are awakened just enough for a neuro check to examine their movements. Adams and Stroud say that saving a child's life and helping children to live a better life is why they accepted their calling in health care.

"We like surgery, we like helping people, we like working with kids," Adams said.

Stroud said the neuro team has so much in common that they often finish each other's sentences during a surgery. They have worked together so long and so well that they are always aware of what other team players are doing.

"It's nice to have a partner," said Stroud, who graduated from surgical tech school at Wes Watkins Technology Center in Wetumka. He joined Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health in 1996.

He had initially wanted to earn a living as a musician. But like

the synchronicity of a fine tune, he found a proper tempo and rhythm in life as a nurse tech. Health care is also a stable career choice to depend on, he said.

"The evolution of neurosurgery — the machines we used when we started to what we use now is amazing," Stroud said.

A cavitronic ultrasonic surgical aspirator (CUSA) is a suction device that helps surgeons remove pediatric brain tumors. The CUSA uses ultrasonic sequences to emulsify the tissue. What was once a big, gigantic machine rolled into an operating room has been replaced with technology inside a small box. In addition, robotic surgery has simplified the insertion of screws into the spine, Stroud said.

Another procedure is known as cranioplasty, involves neurosurgeons peeling back layers of the scalp to custom implant bone remnants into the proper cranial location. Adams said the procedure often expands room for a healthy brain to grow.

"It's usually a combo case

See ADAMS Page 3

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Dana Adams, RN; and Randy Stroud, a neuro surgical technician, know how modern technology and compassion improve the lives of children in the neurosurgery OR at Oklahoma Children’s Hospital OU Health.

ADAMS

Continued from Page 2

with a plastic surgeon and a neurosurgeon. So those are pretty cool,” she said.

The operating room is made to provide a relaxed environment for the medical staff’s focus. Music may fill the room.

Adams said she has always been intrigued with the human body and how it works. She inspired others along her career path. Her mother opted for a nursing career after Dana became one.

“I’ve always liked it,” she said.

A nurse working in the operating room needs to be a quick thinker and strong willed in order to be a patient advocate, Adams said. Do your job without taking anything personal, said Stroud.

Stroud said the surgeries he had

as a child left him mortified. The experience has helped him to be more empathetic in his career.

“You can’t scare a child. You have to comfort them,” he explained.

His surgery in 1977 would be a better experience today if performed by the caring staff at Oklahoma Children’s Hospital OU Health, he said.

Adams said she admires the resilience children bring to a fast recovery.

Both Adams and Stroud take time to make the best of their own lives. Stroud loves to ride his motorcycle to release stress. And Adams has two children who keep her busy.

For more information about Oklahoma Children’s Hospital OU Health or to join the team visit <https://www.ouhealth.com/careers/>.



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CAREERS IN NURSING: STELLAR CARE BRINGS FAST GROWTH - AFFINITY CARE OF OK

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

The emergence of Affinity Care of Oklahoma shines in the community, said Crystal Grilley, RN, clinical director. Caring for patients with all the love in the world has been a blessing, she said.

Grilley became one of the original employees of Affinity Care of Oklahoma, located in Oklahoma City, when it opened its doors just over a year ago.

"I had great expectations for us because I knew we came into it by wanting to do the right thing for people," Grilley explained. "In the year we've been open, we have 20 employees taking care of 100 patients."

Grilley and Executive Director Mandi Price had worked together at different hospices when Grilley was recruited to Affinity Care of Oklahoma.

Grilley said she was impressed when Price told her she wanted to take care of patients the way they need to be taken care of, and not the way someone else is telling them how to do it.

"As a nurse you want to give someone what they need," Grilley said. "It gets very frustrating as a nurse to have someone say, 'You can't do it. That's not in our budget or that's not what we do,'" she said. "Especially as a nurse, that's all you ever want — to care for patients."

Grilley had always wanted to become a nurse since childhood. She entered the healthcare industry by becoming a CNA during high school. She climbed the ladder of success as an LPN by becoming a registered nurse by earning her nursing degree at Oklahoma City Community College.

Her transition nearly 20 years ago as a labor and delivery nurse to hospice care was not such a far stretch as people might think, she said.

"You're part of someone's life whether it be life or death," she said. "And so, it really is a beautiful thing either way."

Making a difference for a patient or their families is life changing for everyone, she said. Taking care of people and being part of the end of their life is of the utmost importance, Grilley said. She has

cared for patients from ages 20 to 102.

"They've lived this life, and unfortunately it comes to a point where they're not going to be with us any longer. So, we help them die with dignity and hopefully pain free," she continued.

It's important for nurses to ask patients and their families what their goals are in hospice care, she said. One of her former patients wanted to enjoy the sunshine after being hospitalized for six months.

"That was the first thing we did when we got him home. We let him sit out for hours. It's just really important for us to be able to help patients do what is important for them," Grilley said.

Not every patient is ready to share their thoughts about the end of life. They may never have expected their physician to recommend hospice. So, they need hospice nurses with compassion, understanding, and patience, Grilley said.

"They majority of our job is providing education to families, to caregivers, to facilities — to everybody that's involved in the patient's care," Grilley said.

Affinity Care of Oklahoma prides itself for having conversations about palliative care multiple times when patients and families have a lot of questions.

Meet patients where they are in life and allow them to express their feelings, she said. Listen to their questions and explain what hospice offers, she added.

"Some people think we come in and medicate them and they're no longer alert enough to sit with their family. That is not the case at all," Grilley said. "People that come onto hospice, especially early in their disease process usually feel so much better at that point and are able to do things they haven't been able to do in a long time."

Some patients will say they wish they had entered hospice care sooner. Patient care is individualized based on what they need. Every case is different.

"If that patient needs to be seen every day, we're going to see them every day," she said. "If that patient



Affinity Health Care of Oklahoma provides all the resources nurses need to excel in patient care, says Crystal Grilley, RN, clinical director.

only wants to be seen once a week, we're only going to see them once a week."

Nurses shine with confidence. There is relief in knowing hospice provides symptom management, pain relief, chaplains, grief counseling, and providing social workers to navigate through end-of-life preparations.

Volunteers spend time with patients by helping them write letters or cards, playing games or whatever they need.

She recognizes that everyone has their own need to relax or energize. Grilley and her husband

love to travel anywhere from day trips or a weekend trip.

She has two adult daughters. One will turn 23 in December and her other daughter is 19.

"Traveling is my big thing. They're always joking around here that, 'One of these days we know you're just not going to come in.' And you're going to say, 'Sorry, I'm getting on a plane to go somewhere,'" she said. "That's not going to happen. But traveling is really the way that I decompress."

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information about Affinity Care of Oklahoma.

The University of Tulsa welcomes new dean for Oxley College of Health & Natural Sciences

TULSA, Oklahoma – Following an international search, The University of Tulsa today announced the selection of Dr. Susan Pepin as the inaugural dean of TU's recently reorganized Oxley College of Health & Natural Sciences. Pepin brings a wealth of experience and expertise to the role, having served as managing director of health and clinical partnerships, senior adviser to the executive vice president, and clinical professor in the College of Health Solutions and Edson College of Nursing & Health Innovation at Arizona State University. She will begin her duties Jan. 15, 2024.

Pepin is a highly accomplished scholar, educator, surgeon, and clinician. She holds an M.D. degree from the University of California, San Francisco, and a master of public health from the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice. Pepin studied psychology, philosophy, and physiology as a Rhodes Scholar at

Oxford after completing her bachelor's degree in molecular biophysics and biochemistry at Yale University in 1987.

"I am honored and excited to join The University of Tulsa as dean of Oxley College of Health & Natural Sciences and look forward to working with the students, faculty, staff, alumni and greater Tulsa community," said Pepin. "Together, we will build on TU's extraordinary history and establish a transformative college for science education, scholarship, and public impact for the 21st century. I plan to foster interdisciplinary collaborations, robust engagement in meaningful research, and a student and faculty experience that is distinctive to TU and its impact on our communities."

A tireless advocate for health equity and student success, Pepin served four years as president and CEO of Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust where she managed a \$550 million endowment and oversaw

grants in health, arts and culture, and educational programs. She also is chief medical officer for Paxauris, a startup in hearing protection and wearable technology.

"Sue shares TU's vision to continue to be one of the nation's best colleges for students on the pre-med/pre-health career track as well as innovators and entrepreneurs who seek to make our world healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous," said University of Tulsa Provost George Justice.

In November 2022, The University of Tulsa announced the formation of the Oxley College of Health & Natural Sciences. A structural change through which the biology, chemistry, geosciences, and physics departments joined nursing, kinesiology & rehabilitative sciences, and communication sciences & disorders to create fertile ground for TU's growth in the human health sciences. At The University of Tulsa,



Dr. Susan Pepin dean of TU's of Oxley College of Health & Natural Sciences.

the percentage of successful applicants to allopathic programs from 2014 to 2022 far exceeded the national average.

Pepin succeeds Ron Walker, who has served as interim dean of Oxley College since spring 2022 when then-Dean Robin Ploeger was promoted to a vice president position.

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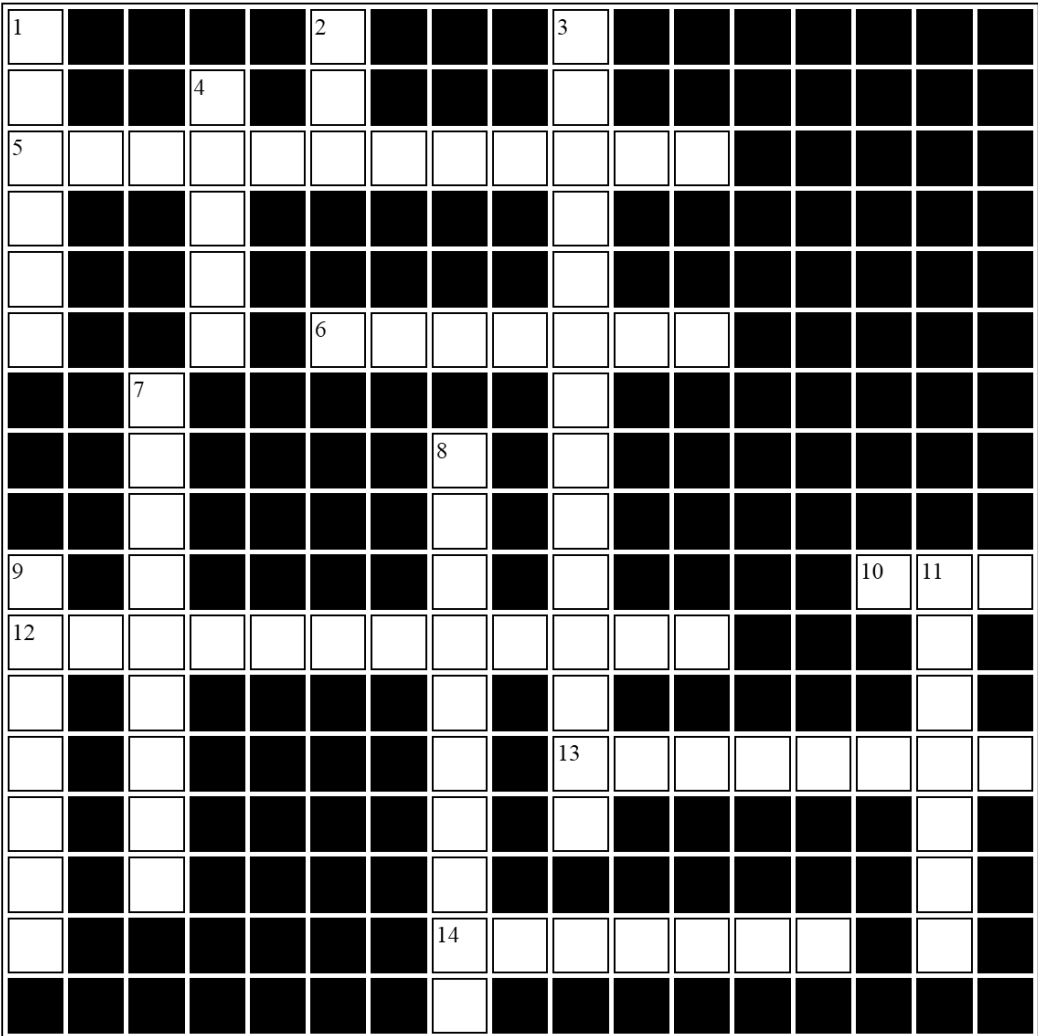
OKNT CROSSWORD: Asthma & Arthritis

- Across**
- 5. The body’s own _____ attacks healthy joint tissue. (2 words)
 - 6. Asthma affects the _____ to the lungs.
 - 10. Rheumatoid arthritis can happen at any _____.
 - 12. What is bad for people with asthma? (2 words)
 - 13. Rheumatoid arthritis _____ the joint lining or synovium.
 - 14. People with asthma use this.

- Down**
- 1. Arthritis affects the _____.
 - 2. _____ is the most common risk factor of osteoarthritis
 - 3. What is the most common form of arthritis
 - 4. When an asthma attack happens, the air tube begins to fill with _____.
 - 7. Allergy attacks are usually brought on by _____.
 - 8. What type of arthritis attacks its own immune system?
 - 9. What does the Greek word asthma mean?
 - 11. _____ factors play a role in rheumatoid arthritis.

By Brittany Wilson and Karen Mullen

ANSWERS ON PAGE 12



UCO Honors Students for Top Academic Achievement as Fall 2023 Class Marshals

The University of Central Oklahoma has named five students as Class Marshals of their respective colleges for the fall 2023 semester, recognizing them for their academic excellence.

Students earn the title of Class Marshal for achieving the highest academic records within their colleges during their time at Central.

Among those Honored was Ayaneli Noemi Deleon.

Ayaneli Noemi Deleon is a nursing major with a 4.0 GPA in the College of Mathematics and Science. A native of Washington, D.C., she is a member of the Student Nursing Association and received placement on the President's Honor Roll.

"My experience at UCO was wonderful—I feel that being a student at UCO has made me more independent and knowledgeable, which is something that I can carry with me for years," Deleon said.

"The staff is approachable and genuinely cares for your well-being as well. I will be forever thankful to all who I crossed paths with in my time at UCO."

Following graduation, Deleon will begin her nursing career at OU Children's Hospital as a NICU nurse in their nurse residency program.



Ayaneli Noemi Deleon, was honored for Top Academic Achievement at UCO.



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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

Ranger Pride *Northwestern grows healers*

Leslie Collins, DNP, MS, RN still remembers the conversation with her Northwestern Oklahoma State University mentor.

"They said you educate every day and I think you could make a difference in students' lives," Collins recalls.

From there, she took a job in her alma mater's nursing program skills lab. Thirteen years later, she's chair of **Northwestern Oklahoma State's Charles Morton Share Trust Division of Nursing.**

And she couldn't be more proud of the impact her faculty has on students.

"I love it because of our ability to make a difference, to be one-on-one with the student and really help them," Collins said. "I stay here because of the faculty and our administration. Our administration's support is like no other."

"It was a starting point for me and I love being that starting point for students."

Northwestern Oklahoma State University is a public regional university that has received national acclaim for its combination of

a high quality academic program and affordability. While Northwestern primarily serves the vast geographical area of northwest Oklahoma and the Panhandle, its students come from more than 40 states and 20 countries.

Northwestern offers a bachelor's of science in nursing, an **online RN-to-BSN program**, as well as a hybrid BSN-to-DNP program.

Collins matriculated from Northwestern not only debt-free but with a solid nursing foundation forged by instructors who poured into her.

"I think it makes all the difference in the world, specifically when it comes to nursing," Collins said of the personalized instruction she received. "It's something we do at Northwestern across our degrees and programs and it makes a difference in the student. It makes them know they are more than a number. It's about their education and what they need."

"We find more and more students need to know the way they learn so they can continue to be lifelong learners, far past their graduation. That's so important for nursing and we can work with them one on one to help them be more successful. Caring

is a component that is threaded throughout our program, we feel it is important for students to be caring in nature and to learn resiliency in this process. We hope this, and have seen in the past, will translate into what type of nurse they become."

Collins said many Northwestern students go on to practice in rural settings, but others go on to larger facilities.

There's a common thread in the employer feedback Collins receives.

"They speak on how well-prepared our graduates are," Collins said. "Also, they speak about how professional they are, how caring they are and how they work well with the teams. Not only are they a good nurse, prepared and ready for patient care but they're also good team members and ready to make a difference in the nursing world."

Collins said the university is looking at expanding its offering to help meet existing needs throughout

healthcare, in whatever setting that may be.

"I feel like we do a really good job of ensuring students put patients and their families first and we also include how to have self care as a nurse and how important that is," Collins said. "For so long, it's been all about the patient and the client and it should continue to be, but we also have to remember we have to care for ourselves as well."



For more information about Northwestern Oklahoma State University, visit <https://www.nwosu.edu/school-of-professional-studies/nursing>



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Chickasaw Nation bestows \$5 Million gift to ECU

The Chickasaw Nation and Governor Bill Anoatubby have announced a lead gift of \$5 million that will go towards the construction of a new building that will house ECU's Nursing and STEM programs, and allow ECU to expand the School of Nursing even further.

"We believe it is important to support this new facility which will enable ECU to meet the growing need for highly trained nurses as well as the need to develop STEM programs that keep pace with advances in science and technology," said Governor Anoatubby. "This investment in education is sure to bring returns in the form of students who are better prepared to meet challenges, seize opportunities, and become industry leaders."

This generous gift, combined with \$7.3 million funding from Oklahoma's American Rescue Plan Act, will allow ECU to begin development on the project. "We cannot thank Governor Anoatubby and the Chickasaw Nation enough for their gift and support in the growth of ECU and the School of Nursing," stated ECU president Wendell Godwin. "This new facility will help us educate and graduate twice as many nursing students, making ECU the premier nursing program in southern Oklahoma."

Currently, the School of Nursing and Computer Science program is housed in Science Hall – ECU's oldest building, built in 1910. The new building will allow ECU to modernize instructional facilities and expand capacity for Nursing and other STEM



programs to address workforce needs in Oklahoma. The proposed School of Nursing will be located north of the Physical and Environmental Science Center, on the corner of N. Francis Ave. and E. 9th St.

"With the capability and capacity of the proposed building, ECU's nursing program can admit and graduate an estimated 150 students per year. By fall 2026, we project 375 to 400 admitted nursing students in the program., learning to be safety conscious, competent, and skilled nurses," said Dr. Darcy Duncan, director of ECU's School of Nursing. "We are so appreciative to the Chickasaw Nation and Governor Anoatubby for their generous gift and

helping take the next step in making this project becoming a reality."

Among the highlights of this facility include a simulation center, more than 25 hands-on learning labs and STEM classrooms equipped with the latest technology which will reaffirm ECU's commitment to educating students and to transforming students' lives for generations to come.

The Chickasaw Nation has a long history of supporting and partnering with ECU on several projects and initiatives that have supported a wide range of areas both academically and athletically.

For more information about East Central University visit <https://www.ecok.edu/>

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SSM Health Medical Group Opens New Location in Moore

SSM Health Medical Group is pleased to expand its offerings for the residents of Moore and surrounding communities by opening a new care facility in west Moore. The state-of-the-art 13,000 square-foot facility serves men, women and children by offering primary care and cardiology specialty care by appointment. SSM Health Medical Group moved to its new location on SW 4th between I-35 and Santa Fe Ave from its former location to the east of I-35 on 4th Street.

"This is our sixth SSM Health Medical Group location in our new and innovative model that offers leading-edge technology and convenience in an upscale environment," said Ryan Oss, Vice President of Operations. "We are pleased to open this facility for the residents of Moore, south Oklahoma City and Norman. For SSM Health Medical Group to be able to offer convenient cardiology provider appointments for the first time in Moore is a benefit for our patients who want exceptional care that is convenient and accessible."

The brand-new facility serves as the new office for multiple established SSM Health Medical Group providers who call Moore home. Family medicine providers Mandi Rhodes, PA-C, Rebecca Carter, DNP and Randall Carter, PA-C have moved from their current practice location east of I-35 on 4th Street to the new location and continue their long-standing dedication to residents of Moore, south Oklahoma City, and Norman. Additionally, they will be joined by interventional cardiologists Dr. HeeKong Fong and Dr. Tanzeel Iqbal who provide compassionate heart care at this medical building. Both cardiology providers are fluent in multiple languages to better serve patients.



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NOC nursing students and nursing faculty participated in a White Coat ceremony at NOC Enid on Nov. 7. (photo by Shiloh Martin/Northern Oklahoma College).

NOC Nursing Students Participate in White Coat Ceremony

The Northern Oklahoma College Division of Nursing held a Fall White Coat Ceremony Tuesday in NOC Enid's Montgomery Hall.

The first White Coat Ceremony was created by Dr. Arnold P. Gold in 1993 to bring a focus on human caring back to the practice of medicine. The ceremony has expanded from medical schools to multiple healthcare disciplines, including nursing. During the ceremony, students are cloaked and recite a professionalism pledge to acknowledge the importance of human caring and the need to keep patients at the center of that care. The cloaking ceremony symbolizes the passing of the nursing profession to a future generation who have the responsibility to provide compassionate care with the most up-to-date evidence throughout their careers, leaving the profession better off when they leave than when they began.

"The white coat ceremony honors nursing's traditions and acknowledges the equal contributions nurses at all levels make to humanistic caring healthcare practices," said NOC Nursing Division Chair Dr. Nikole Hicks. "The placement of the ceremony for NOC nursing students marks their transition from the practice

lab to patient care settings within our communities."

Students earning their White Coats included from NOC Stillwater Kenleigh Aebi, Sierra Aviles, Cody Birchfield, Madalyn Bowman, Victoria Nowack, Kaelee Nunez, and Grant Shaffer.

From NOC Enid, Wendy Birdwell, Kendall Chmielewski, Ilyssia Gonzales, Cassandra Handley, Christopher Nace, Valrie Roblyer, Madison Solis, and Cerena Warfield. From NOC Tonkawa, Logan Burgess, Tristan Byers, Kalli Dinsmore, Allie Epperson, Aubrey Fredricks, April Graham, Emily Mireles, Becca Toles, Desiree Turner, and Kennedy Williams.

Northern Oklahoma College, the state's first public two-year community college, is a multi-campus, land-grant institution that provides high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services.

NOC serves nearly 4,000 students through the home campus in Tonkawa, branch in Enid, and NOC/OSU Gateway Program in Stillwater. Of these students about 80% receive financial aid and/or scholarships. 75% of NOC students complete their degree with zero debt.

The college is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and offers

associate degrees in three general areas: Arts, Science and Applied Science; the Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs; and the Accreditation Commission for Education

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For more information about Northern Oklahoma College please call (580) 628-6208 or visit the NOC website at <https://www.noc.edu/>.



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Tuttle Man Receives a Kidney from Living Donor

"I found out I was in kidney failure about twenty years ago," Mike begins. "I was monitored for years, doing everything possible to save my kidneys. They gradually got worse and stopped to the point of needing dialysis about four years ago."

That is when Mike London heard the words no person wants to hear. "I was told I would need a kidney transplant."

Some have dubbed Mike, the godfather of Tuttle wrestling. His roots have grown deep in the small Oklahoma community for decades. It's a place where he built a renowned youth wrestling program, winning multiple state titles. A man who has worn many hats, coach is just one of them. He has also been a dad, grandparent, fan and friend. People have known Mike for a long while. He's an integral part of the Tuttle community.

About ten years ago, Mike's path crossed with that of Jamay Smith. Her son is a wrestler. He grew up in a wrestling family – and Mike was his coach. Mike's grandkids were teammates with Jamay's son, but more than that, they were friends.

"I knew Mike was dealing with

kidney issues for a while," Jamay said. "I had no idea just how serious it was and how sick he had become until I saw the Facebook post." Mike's wife, Teresa, wrote a post asking if anyone would consider being a donor. "That hit me hard."

Jamay says she spent considerable time in prayer and ultimately decided to make a phone call. Then, she quietly filled out the paperwork. Unsure she would be a suitable donor, she kept her decision to herself. Months went by, along with several trips to the hospital for blood work, scans and tests. "Each time, good news kept coming back," Jamay states. "Prayers were being answered. God chose me to be a donor for Mike."

All the while, Mike continued his treatment – waiting and hoping for good news. Dialysis works, but it can be very restricting. "We had to learn to take all the equipment when we went anywhere. Then, it suddenly stopped working, and I ended up in the hospital." The treatment to prolong Mike's life was also taking a toll on him physically and emotionally. Life was becoming difficult.

"That's when I got the call that I had an anonymous donor." Mike was grateful to receive the news, but three months went by, and Mike still didn't know the identity of the person who was going to save his life – until one Sunday afternoon. Jamay and her son decided to pay a visit to the London household. "I'm the one donating the kidney," she said. Right there, they all broke down and cried. "It's hard to describe. It was literally the gift of life," Mike remarks.

It's been just over a month since the transplant. Mike says he feels better than he has in years. He's no longer dealing with constant sickness. "I have my life back. Soon, I'll be able to travel and live my life to its fullest," a dream only made possible by a donor plus several doctors, caregivers and medical breakthroughs.

Jamay Smith's extraordinary generosity saved Mike London's life. The incredible caregivers and physicians at the INTEGRIS Health Nazih Zuhdi



Mike London, the godfather of Tuttle wrestling, recently received a kidney from living donor.

Transplant Institute have given Mike new hope for the future. The godfather of Tuttle wrestling has many days ahead to cheer for the program he built.

"I hope this encourages others to consider becoming a donor," Jamay concludes. "Although it isn't for everyone, it might be for you."



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HRSA awards \$4 million to VUSN to address need for nurse-midwives and access to care

Vanderbilt University School of Nursing has received a \$4 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration to increase and diversify the nurse-midwife workforce as a means of improving maternal health and increase access to care. The school will use the Maternity Care Nursing Workforce Expansion grant to educate nurse-midwifery students with a specialized curriculum and community-based clinical experiences focused on providing care in rural and underserved communities.

Students selected for Vanderbilt's Midwifery-Education—Access and Diversity for Optimizing Workforce (MEADOW) program will also receive scholarships and stipends totaling \$56,000 over three semesters.

"More women die from childbirth in the U.S. each year than in any other high-income country. Increased access to pre- and perinatal health care from nurse-midwives and other providers can reduce that rate," said Professor of Nursing Julia Phillippi, PhD, MSN'99, CNM, FACNM, FAAN, and principal investigator on the grant. "Research has shown that highly trained certified nurse-midwives can address nationwide maternity care shortages and improve maternal and neonatal outcomes, including decreasing maternal mortality."

Vanderbilt's MEADOW program will have two components: equipping nurse-midwifery students for practice in rural or underserved communities and recruiting nurse-midwifery students from diverse backgrounds.

VUSN has partnered with clinic sites from rural and underserved areas so MEADOW trainees will have clinical rotations in rural or underserved areas and sessions specific to employment in such sites. Because midwifery students must have more than 800 hours of clinical training—providing perinatal care and attending births—having clinical rotations in underserved areas is an important component of training a workforce ready to serve these populations. Students who gain such experience are more likely to choose similar settings for employment.

VUSN has developed new curricular content for all its nurse-midwifery students about social determinants of health, telehealth, rural care and provision of medication for opioid use disorders. MEADOW students will receive high-quality clinical training with a focus on providing locally appropriate, culturally sensitive care that meets the perinatal health needs of rural and underserved populations. Trainees also will take an additional course on advanced behavioral health focused on care for mental health conditions in pregnancy and postpartum.

Vanderbilt expects that the new MEADOW program will be a draw for incoming nurse-midwifery students, and that it will appeal to students from diverse backgrounds. There is a need for diversity in midwifery and nursing, Phillippi said, as currently, about 90% of nurse-midwives are white. A more diverse workforce will better welcome and serve all individuals and help them receive the care they need. Increasing diversity in midwifery will reduce bias in maternal care, resulting in better outcomes for both mothers and children.

The award is part of nearly \$90 million in awards that HRSA is investing in maternal health in support of the [White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis](#).

It is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number 1 T68HP52014-01-00 as part of an award totaling \$4

million with 0% percentage financed with non-governmental sources. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. government. For more information, please visit [HRSA.gov](https://www.hrsa.gov).



PI Julia Phillippi



The first MEADOW cohort of VUSN nurse-midwifery students meets with faculty and grant personnel. Photo: Caroline Taylor

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