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CELEBRATING

# **Setting an Example** LPN Earns Mission in Motion Award

Read Tracy's story on page 2

Inside This Issue Page 4, Heart of a Cowboy

Page 10, NRH Nurses Honored for Contributions

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FEBRUARY 19, 2024 VOL. 25 ISSUE 8

## Tracy Larson, LPN

Recipient of the Mission in Motion Award for SSM Health Bone & Joint at St. Anthony.

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Tracy Larson, LPN, is the recipient of the Mission in Motion Award for SSM Health Bone & Joint at St. Anthony.

Larson works in the preadmission testing department where she helps patients come in to get all their pre-op testing done. They go over their instructions to make sure they are medically optimized prior to surgery.

The award is for an exemplary employee who displays the mission of SSM in their daily work.

The SSM mission statement is, "Through our exceptional health care services, we reveal the healing presence of God..."

She has been with SSM for nearly 28 years come November. Larson said it's the people she works with and the enriching work she does as a team member that keeps her loyal to SSM Bone & Joint at St. Anthony.

Her nursing career has influenced the way she sees the world and her own life. She has learned that with all the different types of people, they all have similar needs, and all want the same quality of life.

"I just want to treat people the way I would want to be treated," she said. You can't go wrong doing that."

Some people have struggles about things other people take for granted, she said.

"I think it has taught me to be patient and be kind with people and to try to put myself in their shoes .You know you're part of something that gives good quality care to people," Larson said. "I just like being part of that."

She admires the nursing staff's commitment for doing their best for

the patients.

She embarked on her nursing journey at Kiamichi Tech, located in McAlester.

"It was a good experience. I was very young and learned a lot," Larson said. "I had really good instructors who really helped. They prepare us for working in healthcare."

Her grandmother worked in a nursing home as an activities director and her mother, Joy Trolinger, is a registered nurse serving in hospice care. Larson listened to her mother speak highly of a nursing career.

"I admired her because she gave her all," Larson explained.

She learned that being a nurse was hard work from her mom's work ethic. Her mom is a nurturer. They continue to chat about how nursing changed their lives when they see one another every day.

"I just really wanted to serve people. I like taking care of people, too," she said. "It's important for nurses to be patient because our patients are in pain."

Larson is one of the first faces patients see when entering the

hospital. A big part of what she does is putting nervous patients at ease.

"I think telling them what to expect helps, and I think being a kind, friendly face reassures them that they will be taken care of," she added.

By collecting pertinent health information, she provides a good picture about individualized patient care after surgery. Her effort helps to identify anything that might complicate their recovery or ability to undergo anesthesia. Anesthesiologists, surgeons, and the hospitalist team take note.

A lot of people have knee surgeries and return at a later date for a hip replacement. It's always nice to see how patients have improved following a surgery, she said.

"That helps me tell the next person it's going to be a long recovery, but it will be worth it," Larson said.

Some people have endured pain for several years. So, Larson said it's very rewarding for nurses and the healthcare team to know

See LARSON Page 3

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February 19, 2024





Tracy Larson's exceptional patient care has earned her recognition by earning the Mission in Motion Award at SSM Health Bone & Joint at St. Anthony.

patients."

"You have to be able to

communicate well, not just with the

patients but the surgeons' offices,"

she explained. "I call facilities all

the time, trying to get records on

been helped by Bone & Joint. Her

and recently her mom injured her

shoulder and chose SSM Health

Larson is keen on balancing all

time with her family. Cooking a

new recipes brings her joy.

good meal every night and trying

aspects of life. She loves spending

Bone & Joint at St. Anthony.

nephew had an ACL reconstruction

Her own family members have

#### LARSON Continued from Page 2

they have alleviated discomfort for the best quality of life.

"Most of them say they're doing really well, and they are really pleased," Larson said.

Spouses will sometimes have a joint replacement, too and choose SSM Health Bone & Joint at St. Anthony.

Success for nurses comes by paying attention to detail, she continued. They need to be alert to ask questions for evaluating health status, she said.

For more information about SSM Health Bone & Joint at St. Anthony or to join the team visit https://jobs.ssmhealth.com.

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## The Heart of a Cowboy: Kohn's Surprise Acceptance to OSU's Opportunity Orange Scholars

Being a Cowboy isn't in our clothes, it's in our character.

This is the final phrase of the Cowboy Code, uniting Oklahoma State University students and alumni everywhere.

Josie Kohn embodies the spirit of the Cowboy Code, so surprising her in a big way with her acceptance to OSU's Opportunity Orange Scholars program made perfect sense.

From an early age, Kohn refused to let Down syndrome define her or limit her aspirations according to her sister, Rylee Cole.

"When she was little, it seemed like most people put limits on her and focused on what they thought she couldn't do," Cole said. "But at every turn, she proved them wrong."

Kohn set her sights on attending OSU at a young age.

"Josie told me at 9 years of age that she was going to OSU like her sister and Dad," said Robin Kohn, Josie's mother. "We just smiled and told her that would be so fun, never dreaming it would happen.

As Josie progressed through high school, her parents learned about the Opportunity Orange Scholars program, suggesting she could attend OSU through that pathway.

From then on, Josie's dream of becoming a Cowboy never wavered.

"She was invited to apply to OU's secondary education program, but refused because she was going to OSU, just like her sister, dad, aunts and uncles," Cole said. "Not getting into Opportunity Orange Scholars was never an option in her mind."

When the time came to tell Josie the news of her acceptance, Cole wanted to do so in a big way.

Josie would soon be participating in the Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma Fashion Show, a fundraising event highlighting the unique and beautiful personalities of individuals with Down syndrome.

Cole, who is the Program Coordinator at DSACO, arranged for Dr. Jennifer Jones, director of



Emotions were high for everyone watching.

"Mike was jumping for joy and hollering; I was shocked and speechless. Josie was overjoyed," she said.

What others may see as stubbornness, Josie's family sees as the grit and determination making her a true Cowboy at heart.

Just as the Cowboy Code says, Josie dreams "as big as the sky, ending each day knowing she gave it everything she had." Whether it is her academics or putting on a memorable performance during a fashion show, Josie continues to rely on her determination to push her to new heights.

Dr. Jones said she is excited about the incoming class of OOS, including what Josie will contribute to during her time here.

"The Cowboy family is a vibrant and inclusive culture

Josie Kohn walks the catwalk right before her surprise acceptance.

— and Josie represents everything we look for in a Cowboy," Jones said. "We are excited to welcome her to campus in August and look forward to seeing how Opportunity Orange Scholars can support her academic and career goals and turn her interests and drive into knowledge, passions, skills and talent that will take her as far as her dreams can go."



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#### **Nurse Resident** 53 Nurse Resident - Nursing Med-Surg - Days 5 Nurse Resident - Nursing Med-Surg - Nights 5 Enid, OK, United States . Posted on 02/07/2024 Oklahoma City, OK, United States . Posted on 02/09/2024 Enid, OK, United States . Posted on 02/07/2024 Nurse Resident - Surgery - Days - INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center Surgery INTEGRIS Health, Oklahoma's largest not-for-profit health system has a grea INTEGRIS Health, Oklahoma's largest not-for-profit health system has a great Center opportunity for a Nurse Resident in Enid, Oklahoma. In this position, you will work opportunity for a Nurse Resident in Enid, Oklahoma. In this position, you will work with our INTEGRIS Health Bass Baptist Health Center Nursing Med-Surg team ith our INTEGRIS Health Bass Baptist Health Center Nursing Med-Surg team providing exceptional care to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health with their providing exceptional care to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health with their. 3 N **Nurse Resident - Emergency Room** Nurse Resident - Med Sura THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS INTERACTIVE. Woodward, OK, United States . Posted on 02/09/2024 Woodward, OK, United States . Posted on 02/09/2024 JUST CLICK THE POSITION FOR Nurse Resident - ER - INTEGRIS Health Woodward Nurse Resident - Med Surg - INTEGRIS Health Woodward MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY 2 2 2 Nurse Resident - OB/GYN Nurse Tech - Cardiac Stepdown - Days Nurse Tech - Burn Center - Nights PRN Woodward, OK, United States . Posted on 02/09/2024 OK, United States . Posted on 02/12/2024 Oklahoma City, OK, United States . Posted on 02/12/2024 Nurse Resident - OB/GYN - INTEGRIS Health Woodward INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center, Oklahoma's largest not-for-profit health Nurse Tech - Burn Center Nights - INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Cente system has a great opportunity for a Nurse Tech in Oklahoma City, OK. In this position, you'll work 7a-7p, Part Time, with our Cardiac Stepdown team providing al care to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health with their healthcar k Here For Mor nation Or To Ap Nurse Tech - Med Surg - Nights 53 Nurse Resident - S.T.A.R. - Davs 5 Nurse Resident - S.T.A.R. - Nights 23 Edmond, OK, United States . Posted on 02/08/2024 Spencer, OK, United States and 1 more . Posted on 02/09/2024 Spencer, OK, United States and 1 more . Posted on 02/09/2024 INTEGRIS Health Edmond, Oklahoma's largest not-for-profit health system has a great opportunity for a Nurse Tech in Edmond, OK. In this position, you'll work the night shift from 6:45p to 7:30a with our Nursing Med Surg team providing exceptiona are to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health with their healthcare needs. If \$ 2 N Nurse Resident - ICU - Nights **RN Supervisor of Nursing - Abdominal Clinic Nurse - Woodward Primary Care - Days** Enid, OK, United States . Posted on 02/07/2024 **Transplant Stepdown** Woodward, OK, United States . Posted on 02/12/2024 Oklahoma City, OK, United States and 1 more • Posted on 02/07/2024 INTEGRIS Health, Oklahoma's largest not-for-profit health system has a great Clinic Nurse - INTEGRIS Health Medical Group Woodward - Dr. DeCarvalho - Signopportunity for a Nurse Resident in Enid, Oklahoma. In this position, you will work On Bonus \$2,500 INTEGRIS Health Baptist Medical Center, Oklahoma's largest not-for-profit health with our INTEGRIS Health Bass Baptist Health Center ICU team providing system has a great opportunity for an RN Supervisor of Nursing in Oklahoma City, exceptional care to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health with their healthcar sition, you'll work Full Time with our Abdominal Transplant Stepdo care to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health wit

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Oklahoma's Nursing Times

Spring is around the corner. What do you think about that?

"I'm looking forward to the sun and being outside with my boys. They play sports."



SSM Health Bone & Joint Hospital at St. Anthony



Dionne Morton, RN





Tracy Larson, LPN

*"I really don't like spring because of tornadoes. It's better than winter. I garden a lot."* 



Terry Meler-Flinn, RN



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## Equipping servant leaders in a professional community

ince 1975, the mission of Harding University Carr College of Nursing has been to develop nurses as Christian servants. Faculty and staff are eager to get to know new students and nurture their journey through the program. The University's mission permeates classroom and clinical instruction taught by highly professionals from a trained Christ-centered worldview. Close faculty-student relationships and mentorships foster personal, academic and professional growth. Offering undergraduate and graduate programs prepares students to perform well in any healthcare setting.

What nursing tracks does Harding offer? The undergraduate tracks are designed to meet the individualized needs of students, all leading to a Bachelor of Science in nursing degree. These include:

• Four-year, full-time/part-time traditional rack

16-month hybrid, accelerated first • or second degree program located in Northwest Arkansas. Classes are online, and laboratory experiences are held on site. Clinical sites include local hospitals and community health centers.

• Individualized track for students who hold a current unencumbered nursing

individualized degree completion plan is collaboratively designed with the student (full-time/part-time available)

• Honors classes

The graduate tracks are designed to meet the individualized needs of professionals, resulting in a Master of Science in nursing. These include:

- Family Nurse Practitioner
- Full-time and part-time options
- Admissions three times a year: spring, summer or fall

• Customizable options for those who already have an Master of

- Science in nursing • Eligibility to sit for national certification exam upon program completion
- Delivery: hybrid format, with online courses and three on-campus

intensives throughout the program

Master's Entry into Professional Nursing

• *Traditional bachelor's entry or accelerated* bachelor's to master's options

• Eligible to sit for NCLEX-RN exam upon program completion

• Delivery: on campus with some online classes

What sets Harding trained nurses apart? The undergraduate nursing program has a 97.4% first-time

license without a bachelor's degree. An NCLEX-RN pass rate since 2018 and has been ranked the No. 1 Nursing Program in Arkansas by RegisteredNursing.org for four years in a row. This ranking is based on how well a program supports students toward licensure and beyond.

> Harding's nursing graduates are well-equipped to enter the field, with high job placement rates and a 97.3% first-time Family Nurse Practitioner National Certification pass rate since the program's first graduates in 2017.

> The first of its kind in Arkansas, the master's entry into professional nursing program prepares graduates for eligibility to take the national licensing exam to become Registered Nurses. The program provides on-campus, state-ofthe-art simulations and diverse clinical experiences in Searcy, Little Rock and surrounding areas to aid students in understanding patient clinical skills, administration and leadership in nursing. Applicants with any undergraduate degree can apply. There are Arkansas nursing prerequisites.

> What if I have a degree in another field but have decided healthcare is my passion? The Master of Science



in nursing - master's entry into professional nursing option is a great path for students who already have a bachelor's degree in another area of study. The accelerated Bachelor of Science in nursing in Northwest Arkansas is a good option as well.

How do the programs interact with the community? Students assist in a variety of community clinical settings that serve diverse patient populations. They also provide health screenings at area churches and various Universitysponsored events.

Does Harding offer a study abroad program? For more than 40 years, Harding has been training nurses for careers not only in traditional healthcare settings but also in health missions.

Medical mission opportunities exist locally and abroad in short-term and long-term options.Opportunities are open to graduate and undergraduate students.

#### For more information visit:

https://www.harding.edu/academics/colleges-departments/nursing



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#### (AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

## Half-century success Northern Oklahoma College going strong

Northern Oklahoma College nursing turns half a century this year and the success keeps coming.

Northern Oklahoma College, the State's first public community college is a multi-campus, land-grant institution that provides high quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities and services which create life-changing experiences and develop students as effective learners and leaders within their communities in a connected, ever-changing world.

Northern offers a two-year Associate of Applied Science Degree for the RN. A two-year RN's focus is providing care at the bedside regardless of whether the bedside is located in the hospital, clinic, doctor's office, hospice, nursing home or community.

The program also focuses on how to manage care for groups of patients.

To celebrate the 50-year milestone, a two-day event at NOC Tonkawa's Renfro Center was held where faculty, staff, and nursing alums gathered to share their experiences. The event included time with NOC President Dr. Clark Harris, attendance at a campus jazz concert, and campus tours culminating in a dinner for the attendees.

NOC is also participating in The Daisy Award, an award that recognizes extraordinary faculty. Students, faculty, staff, and alums may nominate anyone deemed worthy of the prestigious award.

NOC instructor Kim Brewer earned the award in 2022, the first year for the program at NOC.

Fifty years of success include more than a few accolades including:

• Top 10 Nursing Program in the state, according to Nursing Hub

• RN Associate Degree Program (Traditional Pathway or LPN to RN Pathway)

• Partnerships with RN-BSN Programs

• Academic Practice Partnerships with Paid Clinical Internships in Final Semester

• High NCLEX Pass Rates

• High Employment Rates and Employer Satisfaction

• The associate degree nursing program at Northern Oklahoma College is accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).

NOC offers programs at the Tonkawa, Enid, and Stillwater campuses.

Under the direction of Dr. Nikole Hicks, NOC Nursing Division Chair, the program is rigorous and innovative.

Academic Practice Partnership opportunities are available for select students in Tonkawa, Enid, Stillwater, and Tulsa with paid clinical internships in the final semester of the nursing program.

Graduates of NOC's nursing program earn an Associate degree in Applied Science and are eligible to apply for licensure as a registered nurse. There is an entry pathway for current LPNs to enter the program with advanced standing.

NOC partners with several RN-BSN programs to provide graduates with opportunities for advanced education. Additional majors include the Associate in Science Pre-Baccalaureate/Pre-



Dr. Nikole A. Hicks, PhD, RNC, CNE, Nursing Division Chair - Northern Oklahoma College

Professional Program.

Nursing students are also a part of the Student Nurses Association and Alpha Delta Nu National Associate Degree Nursing Honor Society.

NOC also received grant funding that will improve technology in the nursing practice and simulation labs to provide state-of-the-art equipment to prepare practice-ready graduates.

For more information, please contact the nursing program at nursing@noc.edu or **580.628.6679** or at NOC's web site at:

https://www.noc.edu.



## Mercy Hospital OKC Opens \$2.6 Million ER Expansion

Project funded by Herman and LaDonna Meinders in honor of Dr. Richard Vertrees Smith

Mercy is celebrating the expansion of the emergency department at its hospital in northwest Oklahoma City. The \$2.6 million project was fully funded by local philanthropists Herman and LaDonna Meinders. The addition includes a new CT scanner to serve patients experiencing emergencies like strokes, trauma, abdominal pain, chest pain and other neurological conditions.

More than 50,000 patients seek care at the Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City ER annually, and nearly half of these patients require at least one CT during their visit. Before the expansion, patients were transported to a different floor in the hospital to get the imaging needed for a diagnosis. Now the latest technology steps away in the same is department.

"Our ER team provides incredible care, but having a CT scanner in the ER helps make that care more streamlined for our patients and co-workers," said Dr. Lance Watson,



Left: New CT suite at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City ER; Right: Herman Meinders and Dr. Lance Watson, Mercy ER physician

chair of the emergency department at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. "For stroke patients, getting a CT



Join us for the 2024 ONA Nurses Day at the Capitol taking place on Tuesday, March 5, at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. We look forward to seeing you! For more information click on this ad or email ona@oklahomanurses.org



6608 N Western, #627 | OKC, OK 73116 405-840-3476 | www.oklahomanurses.org scan that will lead to a diagnosis as quickly as possible is critical to provide lifesaving care and decrease the possibility of long-term disabilities."

Mercy's hospital is an Advanced Comprehensive Stroke Center certified by The Joint Commission, the highest level of stroke certification awarded exclusively to hospitals able to treat the most complex stroke cases. This special designation means Mercy has the most advanced imaging capabilities, 24/7 availability of specialized treatments and staff with the unique training and experience to care for patients who have experienced a stroke.

The Meinders made the donation in honor of Dr. Richard Vertrees Smith and his decades of service to the Oklahoma health care community.

Dr. Smith joined the medical staff at Mercy as a neurosurgeon in 1974 when Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City first opened the doors at its current location. He was a part of the original group of physicians who founded Mercy's Meinders NeuroScience Institute. Dr. Smith led the team that created the first comprehensive stroke center in Oklahoma, Mercy's gamma knife radiosurgery center and the Meinders Center for Movement Disorders.

He continues to serve as a physician liaison with the Mercy Health Foundation and still practices medicine at the Crossings Clinic, providing free neurological care to the underserved.

"Dr. Smith's visionary leadership and compassion have had a direct impact on my life and the lives of countless others," said Herman Meinders. "His skill and dedication have advanced neurological care in Oklahoma for 50 years, no doubt saving thousands of lives."

The Meinders have also made a lifesaving impact on countless patients as the largest donor in Mercy Oklahoma history, with more than \$16.2 million in gifts since 2018.

In addition to fully funding the ER project, the Meinders donated \$7.5 million in August to build the Kathryn Ann Meinders Digestive Health Institute at Mercy. They previously funded the Herman Meinders Center Movement Disorders for and purchased the equipment to perform deep brain stimulation for patients with Parkinson's Disease and other neurological conditions and donated to the Love Family Women's Center that will soon open at Mercy.

"The Meinders' generosity is endless, and their giving is evident all over Oklahoma City," said Lori Cummins, vice president of Mercy Health Foundation Communities. "We are so blessed to have their support at Mercy. Their kindness has changed so many lives for the better and will impact generations of Oklahomans."

#### Page 11

### Norman Regional Nurses Honored for Contributions to Community

Norman Regional Health System recently honored multiple nurses for their commitment to patients and the community at the 2023 Norman Regional Health System Physician, Provider and Nurse of the Year Awards.

Norman Regional announced the 2023 award winners for the Advanced Practice Provider of the Year, and Nurse of the Year.

#### **Advanced Practice Provider of the Year**

**Kimberly Franks-Martens, APRN**, won the Advanced Practice Provider of the Year award for 2023.

Kim is a certified Family Nurse Practitioner, assisting surgeon John Chace, MD in their clinic, Oklahoma Surgical Associates, and in the operating room.



Kimberly Franks-Martens, APRN - Advanced Practice Provider of the Year.

Kimberly graduated from Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas with a post-master's degree in 2009. Kim obtained her master's in 2003 from the University of Oklahoma as a Clinical Nurse Specialist.

#### **Nurse of the Year**

Each year, physicians and Norman Regional Health Foundation provide an award for the exceptional care that was provided over the past year by Norman Regional's nursing staff. Four nurses are nominated and one is declared the Nurse of the Year.

Megan Mason, RN, Emergency Department, is this year's Nurse of the Year.



Megan Mason, RN - Nurse of the Year.

Megan has worked at Norman Regional since August 2015. Physicians say she is extremely trustworthy and provides excellent care to her patients.

The runner-up for Nurse of the Year was Sierrah Parduhn, RN,

Intensive Care Unit.



Sierrah Parduhn, RN - Nurse of the Year Runner-Up.

Sierrah has worked at Norman Regional since June 2018. Her nominators said she, "brings a light to bedside nursing."

The two other nominees for Nurse of the Year were Lynn Mayes, RN, Critical Care Coordination, and Seth Winters, RN, Rehabilitation.



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**CENTRAL OKLAHOMA** 

## TWO LANGSTON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS EARN AWARDS AT ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM



Two Langston University students took home awards at the annual Kansas IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (K-INBRE) Symposium Jan. 12-14.

Senior crop and soil sciences major Kayla Smith earned a 2nd place Award of Excellence in Oral Presentations for her research on "Impairments in Cerebral Autoregulation and Cerebral Reactivity in Cancer Survivorship." Junior biology major Daysha Isaac earned an Award of Excellence in Poster Presentations for her research on "Stalk Cell Movement in Drosophila: A model to understanding how migrating cells shape tissues and organs."

"My experience was fun and also interesting," Smith said. "It was my first time presenting oral presentations."

K-INBRE is a collaborative effort of medical and academic institutions in Kansas and Oklahoma to "promote multidisciplinary research networks with a focus on Cell and Developmental Biology," according to the K-INBRE website. Langston University is the only Oklahomabased institution partnered with K-INBRE.

The program offers LU students mentored research opportunities as well as opportunities to present their research at events like the annual Symposium. For example, Smith, a second-year K-INBRE participant, worked with researchers at Kansas State University.

This is Isaac's first year participating in K-INBRE. She was introduced to the program by one of her biology professors, Dr. Kj Abraham, who helped mentor her in presenting her research. She also received advice on the structure and presentation of her research from Dr. Lindsay Davis.

Isaac has enjoyed her time in K-INBRE so far, and she was excited to present her research at the Symposium. She studied the ovarioles present in female fruit flies' ovaries and tracked mutations and their effects on the stalk cells.

"This information allowed us to apply it to birth defects in infants," Isaac said. "No way are we trying to cure it but gather more information about cell movement to make a connection. Such birth defects we compared it to were spina bifida and microcephaly."

Smith is likewise passionate about the research she has helped conduct in K-INBRE, and she is confident her experiences in the program will aid her as she prepares to pursue medical school after graduation.

"I realize that my career goal is actually attainable," Smith said, "and practice does make perfect."

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Teen Leaders with Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation President Andrew Weyrich, Ph.D.

The Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation is seeking applicants for its 2024-25 Teen Leaders class. Applications are due March 15.

Now in its 12th year, the program is open to high school students entering sophomore, junior and senior years. OMRF's Teen Leaders program provides group activities, panel discussions with OMRF scientists and state civic leaders and time in the foundation's labs.

Students leave with the leadership skills and tools to be change-makers in their communities. The program also helps expand OMRF's reach to the next generation.

"Last year, we updated the program to include more time with our scientists," said OMRF's Katherine Jackson, who oversees the program. "This year, we're excited to offer students more individualized attention and exposure to our labs."

One student who has appreciated the programming change is third-year Teen Leader Parinita Varshney, a senior at Oklahoma City's Classen School of Advanced Studies.

"My experience has deepened my insight into the meticulous processes that occur in a laboratory setting," the aspiring physician-scientist said. "It also has sparked my curiosity to



system."

In addition to interacting with OMRF's researchers, selected students learn the fundamentals of nonprofit fundraising and development, networking, and creating impactful social media content. Teens will also enjoy a graduation dinner to cap off program activities in April.

Group sessions will begin in September and continue through the 2024-25 school year, generally on the second Tuesday afternoon of each month. Applicants must demonstrate good academic standing and attend school in Oklahoma. There is no cost to participate.

For more information and to apply, visit www.omrf.org/teen.

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