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Read Stephanie's story on page 2

Inside This Issue Page 4, United Way Raises Over \$17 Million Page 11, Redlands Community College Prepares Nurse Grads

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H E A L T H VIEW OUR INTERACTIVE AD ON PAGE 5

FEBRUARY 26, 2024 VOL. 25 ISSUE 9

Stephanie Grimes, RN Received her ADN from Redlands Community College, BSN from UCO, certification for PALS,

HCS-D and ACLS

story by Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Among the exceptional nurses and staff members at Carter Healthcare, you will find Stephanie Grimes, RN. Known for her compassion and friendly demeanor, Stephanie always goes the extra mile to assist patients and colleagues alike.

Stephanie's upbringing took her to various parts of Oklahoma; Pauls Valley, Union City, El Reno and then Yukon. "When I was younger, the idea of becoming a nurse never crossed my mind. My aspirations leaned towards modeling, and my mom even took me to see what it was all about. However, walking in and seeing a multitude of others girls, gathered there for the same reason, it made me realize the path of modeling wasn't for me," she said with a laugh. "Later, I focused on a career where I would serve a purpose, making a difference in others' lives. What better career than nursing? I love being a nurse and have enjoyed it for the last 30 years."

Over the years, Stephanie has contributed her expertise at various institutions including Parkview Hospital in El Reno, as a school nurse in El Reno Public schools, at Integris in Yukon, with Mays Home Healthcare and she has been a valued member of the Carter Healthcare team for nine years.

"Being a nurse is such a rewarding job. I've worked in difference medical facilities, taking care of different age groups but I enjoy working with the older patients the most. It's as though they become part of my family. It takes a lot of patience, a willingness to learn and a positive attitude from me and the patient. Sometimes, the older ones just want someone to given them a smile and a listening ear. At times, their stories are told over and over but that's okay because it makes them happy. I think it's good therapy for both of us. I have a big heart for others, knowing that I am making a difference in their lives," Stephanie explained.

Carter Healthcare is a leading healthcare provider focused on delivering the highest quality of Home Health, Hospice, At-Home, At Home Medical Equipment and Pharmacy Services to thousands of clients in the comfort of their home. Overall, there are 121 nurses with 88 nurses in Oklahoma.

There are certain qualities that a caregiver needs to possess. Flexibility is all about being able to accommodate the patients. Honesty and trustworthy are indispensable. Time management is important as a caregiver, following a schedule involving dedicated times for medications and making sure the patient's needs are met. Stephanie is an outstanding nurse, receiving her ADN from Redlands Community College, BSN from UCO, certification for PALS, HCS-D and ACLS. Stephanie was recognized as the Employee of the month for August 2019, and also mentors the new nurses at Carter Healthcare.

"I usually have a set schedule but that can change at the last minute depending on the patient's needs or when an emergency might arise. Whether it is wound care, infusions, teaching the patient how to stay focused on getting better or just being with a patient for moral support, I am there to care for my patient," Stephanie commented.

Home healthcare duties transport Stephanie from OKC to Yukon, Edmond, Bethany or Guthrie, ensuring she delivers her nursing services with the utmost professionalism and dedication.

When asking Stephanie what advice would she give to someone that is thinking of becoming a nurse, she replied, "I would tell them that they need to have a

Seeg GRIMES Page 3

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AA/EOE/M/F/D/V



Stephanie Grimes is a registered nurse at Carter Healthcare in Oklahoma City.

GRIMES Continued from Page 2

real desire to help others. The nursing field offers a multitude of opportunities across various specialties, providing endless avenues for exploration. While it can be challenging at times, the rewards make it all worthwhile."

Stephanie had a mentor before becoming a nurse. "While attending school for my associate's degree, there was a clinical instructor who initially seemed tough on me, and I encountered my fair share of struggles. However, as time passed, I came to admire her greatly, feeling as though she had taken me under her wing. Through her excellent teaching, I learned a great deal and now consider her a true mentor. It's remarkable how certain individuals can leave a lasting impact on us."

When asked to describe herself in three words, Stephanie replied with, "Honest, dependable and caring." These qualities undoubtedly suit her perfectly.

In Stephanie's spare time, she enjoys spending time with her three grown children, and her seven grandchildren, ages 5 through 16. She also has four cats and two schnauzers, all rescue pets.

For more information about Carter Healthcare or to join the team visit https://www.carterhealthcare.com/Career.aspx.

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United Way of Central Oklahoma Raises over \$17 million for Health and Human Service Programs

Roberta B. Fields, Edie Roodman, David Rainbolt named Volunteer Award winners as UWCO wraps up 100th Anniversary year

United Way of Central Oklahoma (UWCO) celebrated the close of its centennial fundraising campaign Jan. 26 with the 23rd annual United Way Gala at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. A grand total of \$17,060,864 was raised.

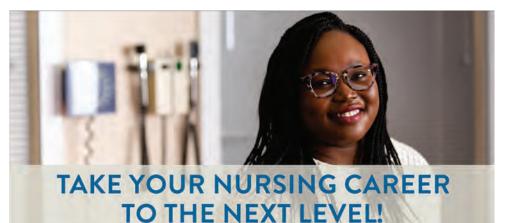
"We are simply amazed by our community's support," Natalie Shirley, UWCO centennial campaign co-chair, said. "We are incredibly grateful to wrap up our United Way's 100th Anniversary with this outstanding success. Thank you to our generous donors, volunteers and Partner Agencies for sharing compassion with our neighbors who need it the most."

The United Way Gala also honored three community leaders who exemplify compassion for others, with the organization's most prestigious volunteer awards.



United Way of Central Oklahoma

Roberta B. Fields, a trial lawyer with McAfee & Taft, is the recipient of the Ray Ackerman Leadership Award. This honor recognizes those who share Ackerman's tireless efforts and devotion to United Way's mission and set the standard for



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GRAD 405-208-5094 • gadmissions@okcu.edu volunteering, leadership and caring. Fields has been involved with United Way for many years and currently serves on the board of directors, as well as the Human Resources Committee's chair. She has been a loyal contributor for the past decade and is a member of United Way's Women's Leadership Society (WLS).

Another honoree is Oklahoma Israel Exchange Executive Director Edie Roodman. Roodman received the John and Berta Faye Rex Community Builder Award, which recognizes individuals who share the Rexes' vision in finding longterm solutions to community needs. Edie serves on more than a dozen nonprofit boards throughout the central Oklahoma community and has been a WLS member for the past several years.

BancFirst's Executive Chairman, David Rainbolt, is the recipient of the Richard H. Clements Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors individuals who have a lifelong dedication to volunteering, leadership and philanthropy not only to United Way but to the community as a whole. Rainbolt is a long-time supporter of UWCO and chaired the organization's fundraising campaign in 2017, raising more than \$16 million. He and his wife, Kim, are Platinum donors to UWCO, giving to the nonprofit for more than 20 years.

"Roberta, Edie and David



Rachel C. Holt, President & CEO of United Way of Central Oklahoma.

exemplify leaders in our community who dedicate their time and resources to building a stronger, healthier and more compassionate community. It was an honor to celebrate them this evening along with all of our generous donors, who truly make an impact in addressing the critical needs of central Oklahomans," President & CEO of United Way of Central Oklahoma, Rachel C. Holt, said. "Thank you to our Centennial Campaign Co-Chairs, Natalie Shirley and Robert Clements, for leading a successful campaign and to our dedicated Board and Board Chair Shane Wharton for all they do to support United Way."

During the event, other award winners, volunteers and Partner Agencies were recognized for their efforts throughout 2023, as well. ReMerge received the Doug Stussi Financial Stewardship Award for advocating for mothers and families through affordable housing initiatives. Moore Youth & Family Services was awarded the Wharton Family Mental Health Award for putting the mental and physical wellbeing of Oklahomans first.

UWCO has been serving the central Oklahoma community for 100 years, and this gala wrapped up a century of compassion.



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2 **Nurse Resident** Nurse Resident - Nursing Med-Surg - Days 23 Nurse Resident - Nursing Med-Surg - Nights 23 Oklahoma City, OK, United States . Posted on 02/09/2024 Enid, OK, United States . Posted on 02/07/2024 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 teal 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 Click Here For More N 2 **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 23 \$ 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 2 Nurse Resident - S.T.A.R. - Davs 2 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 re to those who have entrusted INTEGRIS Health with their healthcare needs. If \$ N 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

February 26, 2024

Oklahoma's Nursing Times

What keeps you motivated while you're at work?



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a teacher, advocate, and I

am thoroughly dedicated to

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Bretta Williams, RN



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RSU Students Attend Higher Education Day at the State Capitol

of Collinsville (front left).

Students and staff from Rogers State University joined representatives from other state system institutions in Oklahoma City this week for Higher Education Day at the Capitol.

Held Thursday, Feb. 8, Higher Education Day at the Capitol is an event organized by Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to demonstrate the value and importance of the state's system of higher education to Oklahoma's current and future workforce development and economic growth.

RSU students in attendance were Gracelyn Dill of Owasso, Aubrey Haught of Altus, Kaylee Blair of Claremore, Connor Tranquill of Florence, South Carolina, Garrett Ringler of Skiatook, Ethan Lester of Claremore, Aidan Williams of Meeker and Corbin Harris of Collinsville.

Over the course of the day, students visited with Oklahoma legislators in their offices to discuss issues important to higher education in general and those specific to RSU, such as the university's growing nursing and STEM programs, and the university's seeking state funding to assist with the construction of a new STEM building on campus.

Among legislators who visited in their office with RSU

students were Rep. Terry O'Donnel of Catoosa, Sen. Blake Stephens of Tahlequah, Rep. Mark VanCuren of Owasso, and Sen. Ally Seifried of Claremore. Seifried is a Rogers State University alumna, with a degree in Political Science.

In a more informal gathering, Rep. Mark Lepak of Claremore, Dr. Larry Rice, for lunch.

Rep. John Kane of Bartlesville, Rep. Rusty Cornwall of Vinita, and Ally Seifried met with the students and RSU staff, including RSU President

Students also had the opportunity to pose for a group photograph with Oklahoma

See STUDENTS Page 11

THE MISSION IN OUR LIFE **IS IMPROVING YOURS.**

Local RSU students in attendance were Gracelyn Dill, of Owasso (back left), and Corbin Harris,

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SCAN ME



February 26, 2024 (AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2023 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)



Alyssa Rapoport is congratulated by Redlands Community College President Jack Bryant during the nursing pinning ceremony in 2021.

REDLANDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE *PREPARES NURSING GRADUATES FOR WORKFORCE*

Nursing is a career that attracts graduating high school seniors but also provides a second career for those who are ready for a change.

Some students are ready to enter the field as young adults, but many people see the importance and value of nursing care through their own life experiences and then choose to make a career change.

Redlands Community College in El Reno, Okla., is not only preparing these students for a successful future in health care but also working to address the staffing shortage in rural and tribal health care facilities. The college received a grant that is providing more resources to expand programs designed to support and retain nursing students as well as implement educational programs to attract youth to the field.

With a **100% job placement rate**, Redlands offers a two-year degree program that prepares graduates to successfully take the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) for licensure as a registered nurse and to enter the workforce immediately.

"The benefit of earning an associate degree in nursing at Redlands is that graduates are well-prepared for the licensure exam that will allow them to begin working quickly," said Dr. Jalelah Abdul-Raheem, director of Redlands' Nursing Program. "Once they have completed this stage, they are able to focus on their career as a registered nurse or continue their education at a university to earn a bachelor's of nursing degree."

Redlands has two nursing program options: the traditional RN program and a track for Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs). Students



Redlands Community College nursing students gain valuable experience in the campus' simulation lab.

who are enrolled in the LPN-to-RN cohort earn articulation credits in the first semester, allowing them to graduate in three semesters instead of four. This helps get them out of the classroom and into the community where they can do the most good.

From a young age, Redlands nursing graduate Cory Michael Williamson knew he wanted to be a nurse. His life had been impacted by a nurse who cared for his father after a terrible car wreck. "When my father was in the hospital, there was a male nurse who really showed kindness and compassion to me during that time," Williamson said.

Since graduating from Redlands, Williamson has worked in different intensive care units while he pursued a bachelor's degree at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, and now he serves as a nursing supervisor in a tribal health clinic. Williamson said his experience at Redlands taught him to look beyond a patient's diagnosis. He learned "to get to know my patients and their families to help them in more ways than just what they came to the hospital or clinic for."

Redlands is a solid, affordable choice for students because of the scholarships available as well as the personal attention and opportunities it provides. The college's partnerships with several area health facilities provide students with challenging, hands-on experience during their clinical rotations.

"Fortunately, our location just outside of Oklahoma City gives our students the opportunity to serve in both rural and urban areas, exposing them to the different types of nursing care available and helping them figure out what is the best fit for them" Abdul-Raheem said.

Alyssa Rapoport chose nursing because she wanted to be able to help others on their worst days and celebrate with them on their best days during recovery. A 2021 graduate, Rapoport appreciated Redlands' convenient location, affordability and caring faculty, especially Professor Kayla Zimmerman.

"She was always there to listen and support me and my classmates," Rapoport said. "I felt like she was someone who respected the students as much as we were taught to respect the staff."

With a Cooperative Arrangement Development Grant from Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institutions (NASNTI) Part A to support outreach and retention efforts and additional funding to update campus simulation labs, the Redlands Nursing Program is providing a highquality learning experience led by dedicated and well-trained faculty.

"At Redlands, everyone is friendly, and the faculty is excited to be part of students' lives," said Abdul-Raheem. "We are committed to helping our nursing students succeed, and our faculty and staff are dedicated to supporting them throughout their time in the program."

The five-year cooperative grant is designed for Native American and low-income students and is 100% funded by the U.S. Department of Education as part of the NASNTI program.

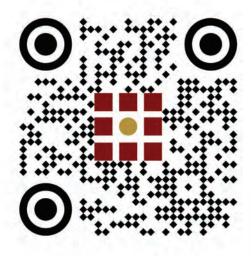
Visit https://www.redlandscc.edu/nursing-program for more information and to apply for scholarships. The deadline to apply for the general nursing program is April 15, and the deadline for the LPN-to-RN program is December 1. Apply for scholarships by May 31.

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UCO Designated a Purple Heart University, Recognized for Service to Military-Connected Faculty, Staff and Students

The University of Central Oklahoma was designated a Purple Heart University by the Military Order of the Purple Heart Monday, Feb. 19, in a ceremony held on UCO's campus. Central was awarded this honor for its longstanding commitment to serving military-connected faculty, staff and students, specifically those who were wounded in combat.

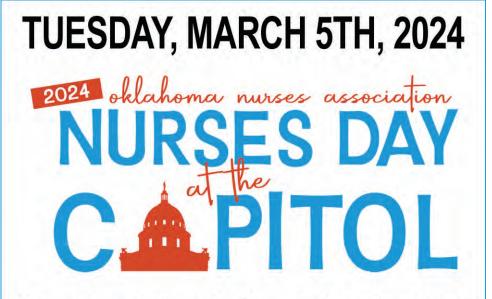
"It is an extreme honor for the University of Central Oklahoma to receive this designation as a Purple Heart University," said UCO President Todd G. Lamb.

"This designation represents the dedication of UCO to serving those who have served. We are grateful to our military-connected students, faculty and staff for their service and sacrifice and are honored to help them as they pursue their next steps."

To become a Purple Heart University, institutions must develop a purposeful approach to supporting not only those who are military affiliated, but also those who have sacrificed themselves in some way to defend



The University of Central Oklahoma was designated a Purple Heart University by the Military Order of the Purple Heart Monday, Feb. 19, in a ceremony held on UCO's campus. Pictured, back row from left to right: Major Joel Dickson, Lieutenant Colonel Lukas L. Toth, James Battles, Joe Story, Gary Lewis and Michael Manning. Bottom row: UCO President Todd G. Lamb and Larry Van Schuyver.



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 our nation and earned a Purple Heart. Institutions must also meet and exceed standards in providing aid and programming to support Purple Heart recipients' academic endeavors.

"UCO is honored to receive this recognition of our Purple Heart recipients and military-connected students," said Tom McShane, director of TRIO Student Support Services – Veterans at UCO.

"We are grateful to the Military Order of the Purple Heart for this designation, which acknowledges our veteran and military-connected students, and the services UCO provides to them."

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is chartered by Congress for combat-wounded veterans and is composed of military men and women who received the Purple Heart medal for wounds suffered in combat or by an act of international terrorism.

"We are honored to have UCO as a Purple Heart University," said James Battles, Oklahoma State Department junior vice Purple Heart commander and Purple Heart chapter 820 commander.

"Having UCO support the military and those who have sacrificed for our freedoms humbles me and my fellow veterans. Having UCO support their military students and staff shows the military community that they are not alone in their service and sacrifice for their nation."

UCO prides itself on our commitment to military-connected students, which is evident in our multiple national rankings and awards.

UCO ranks as a top 100 institution nationwide for providing services and support for military-connected students for the eighth consecutive year on the 2023 Military Times "Best for Vets: Colleges" list. Central was also named a gold-level Military Friendly School in the public universities category with more than 10,000 students by Viqtory Media's 2023-24 Military Friendly Schools list. In 2023, Central was awarded a grant from the Boeing Foundation to address the emotional, physical and educational needs of military-connected students.

Central provides services and support for veterans and military-connected students through the Veterans Higher Education Resource and Opportunity Center (VetHERO) and federally funded programs. These programs provide services such as assistance with educational benefits certification, enrollment services, mentoring and campus and community engagement opportunities.

To learn more visit https://www.uco.edu/student-resources/vss/.

Southern Nazarene University's Dr. Delilah Joiner Martin Named 2024 Oklahoma Mother of the Year

Southern Nazarene University (SNU) proudly congratulates Dr. Delilah Joiner Martin, Program Director of the Family Studies and Gerontology program, on being named the 2024 Oklahoma Mother of the Year by American Mothers Inc. This prestigious award, bestowed upon outstanding mothers who exemplify dedication, compassion, and community service, recognizes Dr. Martin's exceptional contributions to her family, her students, and her community.

Dr. Martin's journey is one of resilience. perseverance, and leadership, and her role as a professor and Program Director at SNU reflects her commitment to empowering individuals through education. Dr. Delilah Joiner Martin stated, "The SNU Family Studies and Gerontology program students are primarily adult women, and many are mothers. In our studies, as the program director, I have the privilege of impacting mothers and future mothers in very practical ways. They are equipped and can take what they are learning immediately into their personal lives with real-world applications. It is an honor to work in higher education as an extension of the church."

Dr. Delilah Joiner Martin embodies the values of care, nurturing, and dedication. Dr. Melissa Lewis, Vice

Governor Kevin Stitt, and later,

gathered in the House Chamber for

a formal program, during which, they

heard addresses from the governor,

Oklahoma House Speaker Charles

State

attending

Education Day demonstrated a

McCall and several others.

Rogers

students

STUDENTS

Continued from Page 7

President of Academic Affairs, shared, "Dr. Joiner-Martin is an incredible colleague, and we are proud of her selection for this high honor. Her dedication to the community and her ongoing efforts to bless others is a testament to her strong faith."

In addition to her remarkable contributions to academia, Dr. Martin's selection as the 2024 Oklahoma Mother of the Year is a testament to her unwavering commitment to her family and community. From being the first high school and college graduate in her family to her leadership roles at SNU, Dr. Martin's journey exemplifies resilience, perseverance, and service.

The journey leading to this honor is marked by

profound tragedy and unwavering strength. On April 13, 2014, Dr. Martin's world was forever altered by the unexpected loss of her beloved 27-year-old daughter, Kaytie Lenee Joiner. Amidst the grief, Dr. Martin and her family found solace in spreading kindness and celebrating Kaytie's life through #27actsofkindness, a movement that continues to touch the lives of others. Dr. Martin's commitment to #livelikekaytie and extend kindness echoes her daughter's vibrant spirit.

Among her many initiatives, Dr. Martin's partnership with Villages OKC and her advocacy through #27actsofkindness after the tragic loss of her daughter highlights her deep compassion and dedication to supporting others, particularly mothers who have experienced loss.

Dr. Delilah Joiner Martin will be honored on the house floor of the state legislature in Oklahoma City this spring, and on April 27th, she will attend the 2024 National Mothers Convention in Omaha, Nebraska, where she will share

her inspiring story and represent the state of Oklahoma alongside other exceptional mothers from across the nation.

Join us in congratulating Dr. Martin on this well-deserved honor and in celebrating her profound impact on families and communities.

For more information about the Family Studies and Gerontology program at Southern Nazarene University, visit our website (https://www.snu.edu) or contact us.

deep commitment to their university, their community and investing in their futures and the future of Oklahoma.

View all the photos at Oklahoma's Nursing Times here: https://oknursingtimes.com/.

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Dr. Delilah Joiner Martin, Program Director of the Family Studies

and Gerontology program at Southern Nazarene University.

Mercy Launches "Joy" Chatbot to Revolutionize Employee Benefits Access

Collaboration with Microsoft introduces Mercy's first generative Al technology to serve co-workers as a personal benefits guru

Mercy, a leader in health care innovation, introduces "Joy," a groundbreaking chatbot that transforms how co-workers access information about their benefits. Developed as part of Mercy's collaboration with Microsoft, Joy leverages cutting-edge generative artificial intelligence technology that acts as a super-smart assistant.



"Joy addresses a long-standing challenge faced by our co-workers,"

Click to Chat in Full Screen

said Kerry Bommarito, Mercy vice president of enterprise data science. "Before Joy, navigating through tens or even hundreds of documents on our intranet for benefits information was time consuming and complicated. With Joy, it's as simple as having a conversation with someone who has all the answers and can respond to your questions and offer an explanation 24/7."

Ayanna Pierce, Mercy's vice president of benefits and talent relations center, emphasized the transformative impact the new chatbot brings because it reduces the volume of calls to her team, freeing them up to take on more complex issues and deliver quicker results.

"Joy is a game changer for our benefits team," said Pierce. "The annual health insurance open enrollment period is our 'Super Bowl' in the HR profession, when we receive the most requests for help all year. Our co-workers no longer need to sift through countless documents because Joy delivers answers instantly in a way that might even be more comprehensive than what a live agent would deliver."

Joy, powered by Microsoft Azure OpenAl Service and other Azure Al and data solutions, acts as a personal benefits guru, understanding questions and providing helpful answers instantly. The new chatbot utilizes a large language model, or LLM, which is like a giant library filled with knowledge that Joy seamlessly taps into. This technology provides accurate responses to co-workers' inquiries about their benefits in a way that feels familiar and even human. Joy can take a complicated question related to time off under the Federal and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and present an easy-to-understand answer without forcing the co-worker to spend time wading through multiple online documents.

"We are proud to have collaborated with Mercy to bring Joy to life as part of our ongoing collaboration," said Tyler Bryson, Microsoft's corporate vice president for health and public sector industries. "Joy is evidence of Mercy embracing a forward-thinking approach to AI, as well as a testament to the power of generative AI in revolutionizing the employee experience in health care. We are looking forward to continuing our work with Mercy as we identify additional opportunities for generative AI-enabled innovation across its organization."

"We introduced our first 'original' AI solution a decade ago, and our collaboration with Microsoft underscores our ongoing commitment to keep pushing forward by adopting tools that empower our co-workers' to better serve themselves and our patients," said Byron Yount, Mercy's chief data and AI officer. "Joy delivers on the first of three generative AI-powered solutions we committed to designing when we announced our collaboration with Microsoft last year. This is just the beginning. We'll be able to use what we learn from Joy to launch new patient-facing technologies and improve existing services."

OKNT FROM OUR FRIENDS ON FACEBOOK SNU School of Nursing Juniors Honored

Recently, we honored the dedication of the SNU School of Nursing juniors through our White Coat Ceremony. The program was led by our incredible nursing school professors, staff, and Dr. Newman.

We are so proud of our nursing students' commitment to service and excellence, both in their studies and in the community. We can't wait to continue watching you excel- congratulations on this significant milestone!



Presbyterian Health Foundation Awards \$1.1 million to OMRF

Presbyterian The Health Foundation recently awarded 16 grants totaling \$1.1 million to the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation.

These grants will support critical equipment needs and studies at OMRF in areas such as cancer, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, blindness, healthy aging and genetic heart defects.

"Investing in the incredible work of these OMRF researchers reflects steadfast commitment our to advancing medical science and improving lives," said PHF President McCune. "Our continued Rick partnership exemplifies our belief in the transformative power of research, and it underscores the importance of collaborative efforts in the pursuit of better treatments and cures."

PHF primarily supports the state's biotechnology, medical research and education organizations, with an emphasis on research and innovation taking place within the Oklahoma

Health Center campus in Oklahoma City. Its grants provide critical seed funding for research that bolsters applications for highly competitive federal grants, like those from the National Institutes of Health.

With this round of funding, OMRF physician-scientist Matlock Jeffries, M.D., will advance his work to develop treatments for osteoarthritis by screening samples from about 100 study volunteers with the condition. His team is searching for biomarkers in the blood that are associated with disease progression.

"The technology we'll use screens for more than 5,000 proteins and requires a much smaller sample size than previous technology, but the cost per sample is higher," Jeffries said. "We hope our results persuade a federal agency that this is worth pursuing on a much larger scale."

In another grant, PHF funds will enhance the computational capacity of OMRF's new Center for Biomedical Data Sciences, which provides cutting-edge analytic knowledge and support for OMRF scientists.

"Our research increasingly relies on artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms that require graphics processing units, or GPUs," said the center's founding director, Courtney Montgomery, Ph.D. "Most people associate GPUs with video games, but for us, they're tools to process complex biological data and images guickly."

Also in this round of grants, PHF awarded funds to support the recruitment of Jaya Krishnan, Ph.D., who recently joined OMRF from the Stowers Institute in Kansas City, Missouri.

Krishnan studies how some organisms live with high blood glucose and excess body fat without becoming ill. By understanding these survival strategies, she hopes to uncover new targets for treating human metabolic conditions like diabetes and obesity.

PHF grants within Oklahoma now total more than \$215 million since its inception in 1985.

"PHF has been one of our scientists' most consistent sources of support," said Courtney Griffin, Ph.D., OMRF's vice president of research. "It makes a difference at every level - from recruiting and retention to winning federal grants. We're all grateful for their trust in us as scientists and for their dedication to the state's biomedical research progress."

Have Questions? New to Medicare? Start With Us

WE CAN HELP!



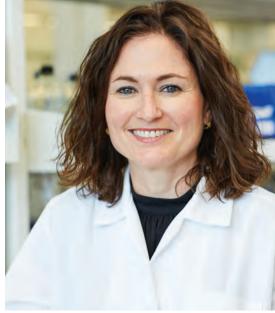
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Together we'll find the right products for your needs

Contact us for information on our upcoming educational only events (or to request an event) covering general Medicare education, Medicare premium help programs, Medicare with other insurance (employer insurance, Tricare 4 Life, veteran's healthcare). Food provided. For accommodation of persons with special needs at meetings call (405) 655-6098, TTY 800-522-8506.

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NEUROPATHY PAIN AND NUMBRESS CAN BE TREATED

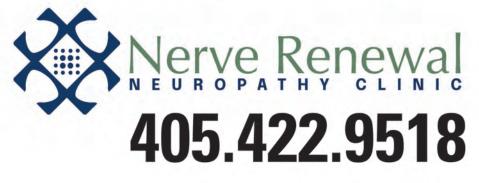
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