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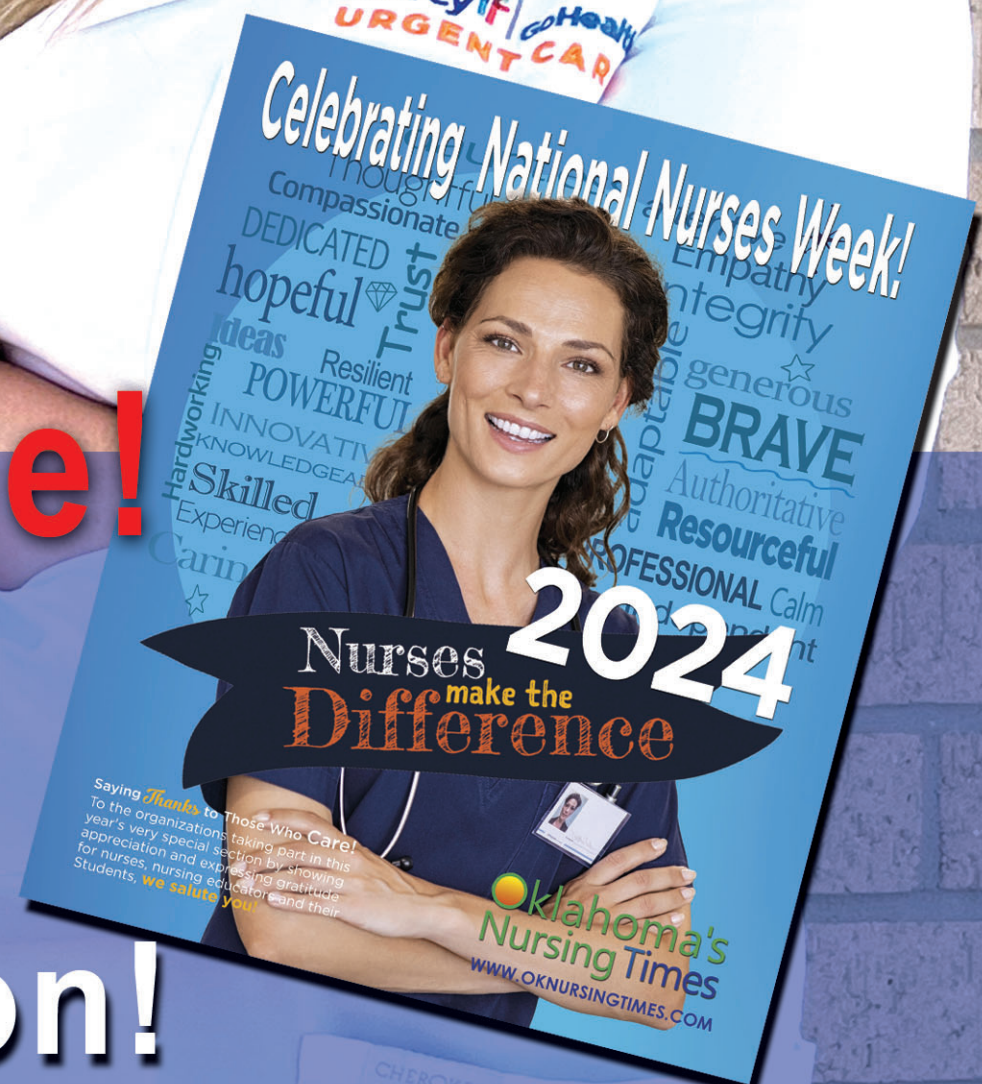
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MAY 6, 2024 | VOL. 25 ISSUE 19

APRN Brings Friendliness and Compassion

In This Issue!

2024 National Nurses Week Special Edition!



Jennifer Parrott, APRN, FNP-C, ENP-C

Enjoys various activities with her family, such as, biking with my husband, hiking and cheering on her daughter at soccer games.

story by Vickie Jenkins, Staff Writer

Mercy GoHealth Urgent Care has several locations in Oklahoma City and the surrounding areas. It's easy to see why Mercy GoHealth is popular among families. A visit to one of their centers puts you in the hands of highly credential providers to attend to your immediate needs.

Virtual visits are a safe and increasingly popular alternative for patients and their providers today. They are able to diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions.

Jennifer Parrott, APRN, FNP-C, ENP-C brings friendliness and compassion to Mercy GoHealth Urgent Care. With 17 years of combined health experience, she sets her goals high, making it a point to reach them. In 1998, she attended Central Christian College

in McPherson, KS, earning her Associates degree and attended the University of South Alabama earning her BSN. She was also an Assistant Clinical Professor, PA Program at the University of Oklahoma College of Physicians Assistants, OKC, OK.

When I asked Jennifer what she wanted to be when she was little, I was surprised by her answer. While most little girls dreamed of being schoolteachers, princesses, or nurses, Jennifer wanted to be a 'firetruck.' "I don't know why I wanted to be a firetruck," she laughed. "Maybe, I was attracted to big, loud, red trucks," she commented with a chuckle.

Jennifer was questioned about her decision to pursue a career in nursing. "When my baby was born, the nurses attended to me in

a manner that deeply affected me as a new mother. I felt nurtured and supported, as several nurses dedicated their undivided attention to me. Their steadfast commitment served as inspiration, propelling me to pursue nursing. The memory of feeling safe and secure will be remembered."

Jennifer's compassionate and reliable care has shown proven ability and in-depth understanding of providing patient care in any environment, along with enhancing patient education regarding preventative care. Jennifer also showed years of extensive experience in providing emergency care to the patients in a Level 1 Trauma Center and Nurse Practitioner in Level 2 Trauma Center in rural communities. She demonstrated multi-tasking skills and abilities while performing diverse tasks, including patient care in an emergency unit and basic nursing care. She has the ability to work in a fast-paced setting and environment demonstrating calm and flexible attitude with critical thinking skills and work ethics.

If someone were to ask Jennifer what advice she would give to someone going into the

medical field, she would offer, "For those considering nursing, I would emphasize the importance of dedication and passion. It's crucial to understand that nursing requires hard work and a genuine desire to help others, the journey becoming immensely rewarding. The sense of pride that comes from making a difference in people's lives make the challenges worthwhile."

Jennifer's greatest strength lies within her open-mindedness, committing to embracing every learning opportunity throughout her education journey and seizing each door that opens for her. "The variety of possibilities excite me, and I am determined to further my education continuously. As for my greatest challenge, I find it to be communication; communicating medical information to patients. For instance, explaining the distinction between a sinus infection and viral sinusitis, and persuading patients to adhere to their prescribed medication regimen."

When asked about her hobbies, Jennifer shared, "I enjoy various activities with my family,

See PARROTT Page 3

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Jennifer Parrott, APRN,FNP-C,ENP-C has 17 years of combined health experience, starting with attending a Christian college in Kansas.

PARROTT

Continued from Page 2

such as, biking with my husband, hiking and cheering on my daughter at her soccer games twice a week-officially making me a soccer mom! I also find joy is spending time with our pets, including a tortoise, fish, cats and one magnificent Great Dane. Plus, we couldn't resist adding a parrot to our family, with our last name of 'Parrott.' It just seemed fitting," Jennifer laughed.

Jennifer remarked, "I

sometimes wonder if my son, now a fireman and EMT, ever imaged that his mom once dreamed of becoming a firetruck." Glancing at her daughter, who is a lifeguard and reflecting on her own profession as a nurse, she added,"With my son being a fireman/EMT, my daughter as a lifeguard and myself in nursing, it's gratifying to know that we possess the skills to save lives.

A big THANK-YOU to all the nurses that give tender loving care to their patients, touching others' lives in a special way.

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OU College of Nursing Showcases State-of-Art Simulation Center



Chase Haas, a senior soon to graduate from the ABSN program, talks about the new state-of-the-art simulation center at the OU College of Nursing. (photo provided)

by Van Mitchell - staff writer

National Nurses Week is May 6 - 12, and members of the media were recently toured the newly renovated second floor of the University of Oklahoma College of Nursing.

The second floor of the College of Nursing building in Oklahoma City underwent a transformative remodel, resulting in the creation of a state-of-the-art simulation center spanning 14,200 square feet. This expansion, in addition to simulation lab updates in Tulsa, Lawton and Duncan, aligns with the college's dedication to providing students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities, preparing them for the dynamic challenges of the health care industry.

Additionally, the university renovated a 25,000-square-foot space located in its Research Park on its Oklahoma City campus to accommodate students. This investment not only addresses the spatial needs arising from the expanding student body but also ensures a comprehensive and modern learning experience for all students.

"We are in the College of Nursing on the second floor in our brand-new skills lab," said College of Nursing Dean Julie Anne Hoff, PhD, MPH, RN. "The renovation of these spaces has allowed us to provide state-of-the-art education to our students as we prepare the next generation of nurses.

But having space like this has also allowed us to increase our capacity to prepare more nurses for the state of Oklahoma."

In an ongoing effort to address the growing demand for registered nurses in the state, the Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing at the University of Oklahoma now accepts all qualified applicants to the baccalaureate nursing (BSN) program for the third consecutive enrollment cycle.

Historically, the College of Nursing accepted approximately 20% of all qualified applicants; however, after working with university leaders and state legislators, the college began admitting all qualified applied applicants starting in Fall 2022, nearly doubling traditional enrollment numbers.

"The Fran and Earl Zigler College of Nursing is leading the way in addressing the evolving needs in health care, particularly in the field of nursing and workforce development," Hoff said. "Yet, I want to emphasize that we have been able to successfully increase enrollment without compromising our standards. Our commitment to excellence and innovation is what drives us forward, empowering the next generation of health care professionals."

Hoff said as a result of admitting more students between 2022 and 2024, the College of Nursing has



Dr. Julie Fomenko, Executive Director of Experiential Learning for the OU College of Nursing, discusses the creation of a state-of-the-art simulation center. (photo provided)

increased the number of graduates (new nurses) by 52%.

"We have gone from 290 graduates to 440 graduates, and I'm so pleased to report that a majority of those graduates choose to get licensed in Oklahoma," she said. "So, we are not only graduating the largest class in Oklahoma and we are keeping them here in Oklahoma for the people in Oklahoma."

Chase Haas, a soon-to-graduate senior in the College of Nursing's Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program, said his experience at the College of Nursing has prepared him well for his nursing future.

The Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) program is tailored for individuals who want to pursue a career in nursing and already have a bachelor's or higher degree in a non-nursing major. The nursing curriculum is 60 credit hours of courses incorporating theoretical and clinical content and designed to be completed in 14 months of concentrated study. Graduates receive a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree and are eligible to apply to take the National Council Licensure Examination (the NCLEX-RN®). Registered nurse license eligibility and requirements vary by state board of nursing.

"As an OU nursing student, I had the opportunity to do my clinicals with OU Health," he said. "There I was able to get an inside look on a lot of different specialties within the hospital, which has prepared me as a future nurse."

Gary Raskob, Ph.D., Senior Vice President and Provost of OU Health Sciences, said the faculty and staff of the College of Nursing are to be commended for rising to the challenge and leading the way in preparing the next generation of nursing professionals at all levels to meet the critical workforce needs of Oklahoma.

"The impactful work of the college not only benefits our students but also has a far-reaching impact, contributing to the overall health and well-being of communities throughout Oklahoma," he said.

Contact OU College of Nursing Student Affairs for more details at nursing@ouhsc.edu.



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Kristy Caudle, RN

"I would choose Elizabeth Bennett-to live as she did through Jane Austin's eyes would be my literary dream! I am an avid reader."



Brooklyn Boydston, RN

"I would change places with Olivia Benson. She is so powerful in her own rights. Working around a group of men, she demands respect."



Lisa Stephens, RN

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CAREERS IN NURSING:

IMPROVING WITH EDUCATION: CLINICAL EDUCATOR REMOVES BARRIERS

story and photo by James Coburn, Staff Writer

Lisa Stephens, RN, can't picture being in any career except nursing. She often tells nurses she teaches that nursing wasn't a choice for her.

"Nursing is a calling," said Stephens, RN, clinical educator, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital-Midwest.

Located in Midwest City, SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital - Midwest serves the health care needs of eastern Oklahoma County and surrounding communities.

"Growing up I was always torn between wanting to be a teacher or a nurse. This is the best melding for both of those," she said.

She has learned a lot along the way. Stephens earned her Associate of Science degree in Nursing at Oklahoma City Community College. She set her career at the Midwest City hospital and went on to graduate with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at Chamberlain University. She is currently pursuing her Master of Science in Nursing degree at Western Governors University.

SSM invites people wanting to become nurses to apply for nursing school scholarships for an associate degree in nursing.

"I've been able to follow the natural course of being a nurse leader," Stephens said.

Her career has included working in PACU, step down, a charge nurse, floor manager, a preceptor for nursing students, med/surg, and case management in home health. She is preparing to train a group of international nurses coming to SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital-Midwest. Hiring international nurses has proven to be an asset in alleviating the nation-wide nursing shortage,

Stephens sometimes finds herself with nurses she has worked with before, whether at other hospitals or at Saints.

"The one thing that is fun here,

especially at Midwest, is that we get to see them come home. And that's been very enjoyable," Stephens said. "It's been the most beautiful thing to watch, especially since we've become SSM, to see them become part of the SSM philosophy, to grow in it and open their hearts and minds to what nursing can be."

Stephens sees nurses flourish while providing evidence-based care. And the care that's being provided is showing that.

"The community is recognizing that, and it just makes this such a joyful place to be," she continued. "From three years ago til today — it's like there's a glow. In watching that happen and seeing people come into work, ready to be here and happy to be here — what a blessing," Stephens said.

SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital-Midwest was purchased in April of 2021. And Stephens' role as educator expands as SSM continues purchasing and updating equipment such as a vein finder, new beds, and other services to enhance patient centered care. The American Heart Association CPR program has evolved to keep the hospital at a higher level with maintenance every 90 days.

Listening skills can be made more efficient. Understanding body language helps nurses get to know their patients.

"Patients are not cookie cutters. Everyone is a unique individual, so we want them to get to know patients," she explained. "That way they'll be able to help them in their unique positions because when (patients) come to the hospital they're at their worst level. And we want to be able to meet them there and be with them along their journey to wellness."

Reaching excellence as a nurse by going above and beyond the basics is becoming more of an expectation, she said. Patients rely on nurses to help them feel safe. Patients meeting their nurses for the first time want to know who they are, Stephens said. Patients need to feel secure in know



Lisa Stephens' career brings a wisdom nourished by compassion and experience.

they can bank on their caretakers. The patient is part of the teamwork of physicians, nurses, and medical professionals.

"So, you just need to get in there quickly, introduce yourself, reassure them that you're there for them. Be their advocate," she said.

Nursing has influenced Stephens' outlook on life. Stephens sees every person walking through a store as a unique individual. She observes humanity with a concern for their welfare.

"If I see someone who doesn't look well, I'll just kind of follow him. ...If I see someone struggling, I want to help them," Stephens said.

She advocates for herself as well by knowing education will help her to help others. When she's not busy after work studying for her Master of Science in Nursing degree at Western Governors University, Stephens ensures she spends her leisure time with her granddaughter or at church.

Being a nurse helps people become more sensitive to the needs of people around them, she said.

"It makes you more empathic," she said.

For more information about SSM Health St. Anthony Hospital-Midwest, visit <https://www.ssmhealth.com>.

Children's Health Foundation Receives Gift From Walmart #2803 **Walmart**



Children's Health Foundation is pleased to announce a \$1000 gift from Walmart #2803 in Edmond, Oklahoma in support of the Early Foundations program for children with autism. Early Foundations is a program of the Oklahoma Autism Center that provides services designed to each child's unique needs to prepare children with autism to enter pre-K with their same-aged peers. CHF celebrates Walmart's generous partnership to sustain this essential program.

Oklahoma is currently facing a significant shortage of certified autism specialists, and families

often face extended wait times or long-distance travel to have their children assessed and treated. To increase access and begin services as soon as possible, Early Foundations is open to any child with a developmental delay. The program is free of charge, has no income requirements, and does not require a diagnosis. Providing services as soon as a delay is identified improves long-term outcomes for children.

Early Foundations uses evidence-based interventions to serve children 18 months to age five. Children with autism often struggle to communicate and interact with peers. At Early Foundations, students learn these skills in an age-appropriate, early-learning environment. Goals include learning to communicate wants and needs and interacting with same-aged peers.

Children's Health Foundation

Executive Director Kathy McCracken says, "We are very grateful for the ongoing support of Walmart and Sam's Clubs to ensure that critical programs like Early Foundations continue. With the support of Walmart #2804, children with autism in Oklahoma will have access to life-changing services as soon as possible. We are incredibly grateful for this gift that will help prepare children with autism to enter pre-K."

To support Children's Health Foundation, please call 405-833-3437 or visit <https://www.chfkids.com/>

Children's Health Foundation is a nonprofit 501c (3) organization that improves the health of children through its direct support of research, education, and care. Since its inception in 1982, Children's Health Foundation, through its volunteer board, vast community support, and



Kathy McCracken, Children's Health Foundation Executive Director.

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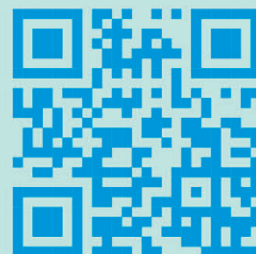
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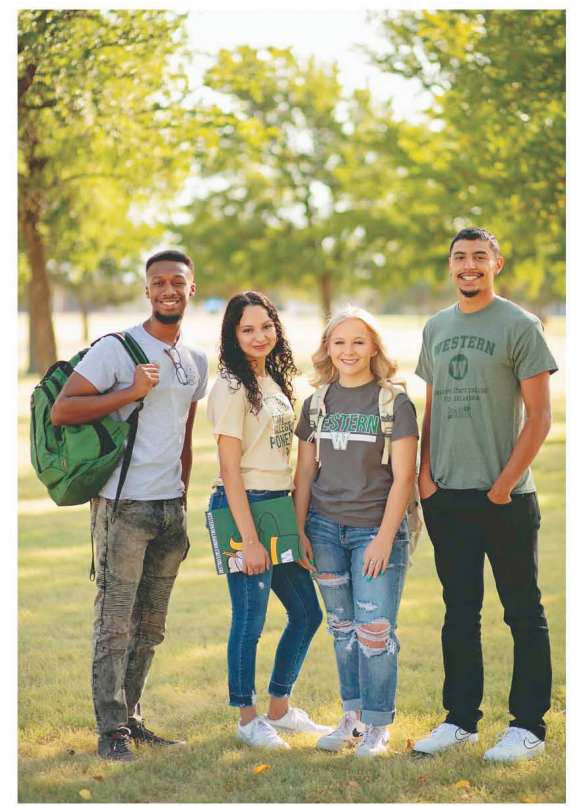
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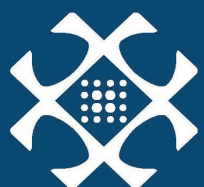
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OKC Hospital Earns Safety Watchdog Group Top Grade

Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City earned an A grade for spring 2024 from The Leapfrog Group, a national nonprofit watchdog for patient safety. Leapfrog assigns letter grades to general hospitals across the country based on more than 30 measures of errors, accidents, injuries and infections as well as the systems hospitals have in place to prevent them.

LEAPFROG
HOSPITAL SAFETY GRADE

Nationwide, only 29% of hospitals achieved an A grade from Leapfrog this spring. In Oklahoma, Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City and Mercy Hospital Ada are two of only 11 hospitals to achieve an A.

"A grades don't happen by accident; the recognition is earned when our teams put the safety and care of our patients first every single day," said Terri-Anne Bone, vice president of quality at Mercy Hospital Oklahoma City. "Our leaders and co-workers have created and implemented processes to prevent medical errors, infections and other patient harm, and this grade reflects their dedication and hard work."

"Everyone who works at Mercy in Oklahoma City should be proud of these A hospital safety grades," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "It takes complete dedication at every level and an ironclad commitment to putting patients first. I thank Mercy, its leadership, clinicians, staff and volunteers for caring so deeply for its patients and their safety."

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade is the only hospital ratings program focused exclusively on preventable medical errors, infections and injuries that kill more than 500 patients a day nationally. The Leapfrog grade is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

To see Mercy's full grade details and to access patient tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit <https://www.hospitalsafetygrade.org> and follow The Leapfrog Group on X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook.

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SCAN TO EXPERIENCE HARBORCHASE



From Base to Bedside: Air Force Veteran Pursues Second Career in Nursing at Georgia Southwestern

Georgia Southwestern State University's (GSW) non-traditional students bring diverse backgrounds and intriguing life journeys; although only one can say she has met four U.S. presidents, soloed the North American Aviation T-6 Texan, holds the record as the first female boxing champion at the United States Air Force Academy, and has jumped out of airplanes.

Kassie Prusko (age 30), a native of Chicago, is certainly one of a kind. She will soon graduate with her second degree, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), following an accomplished five-year career in the Air Force.

Following in her older sister Alexandra's footsteps, Kassie attended the Air Force Academy and graduated in 2016 with the rank of Second Lieutenant, while remaining inspired by her mother's extensive 30-plus year career in nursing.

"I'm a very caring person...so nursing was always in the back of my mind," Kassie recalls. "I probably would have majored in it if the Academy offered it. Instead I majored in Behavioral Science and minored in Arabic. I have always felt I could contribute more to society as a nurse."



Kassie Prusko will soon graduate with her second degree, a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), following an accomplished five-year career in the Air Force.

Continued on next page

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SCAN ME



PRUSKO

Continued from Page 10

Kassie's drive and tenacious spirit served her well while she attended pilot training in Oklahoma and soloed the T-6. Although she planned to become a pilot, her career pivoted, landing her at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland where she worked flight line protocol.

During this assignment, Kassie led several foreign dignitary missions, spearheaded former President Bush's funeral transfer into the base, coordinated with the Secret Service and welcomed distinguished visitors, including four U.S. Presidents. Part of her responsibilities included escorting VIPs between Marine One and Air Force One. She was often paired with the First and Second Ladies while the Colonels accompanied the Presidents. Throughout her service, Kassie had the opportunity to meet Presidents Donald Trump, Jimmy Carter, Barack Obama, George W. Bush, as well as First Lady Melania Trump and Second Lady Karen Pence.

"Mrs. Pence was super nice," said Kassie. "We talked about fashion and her dogs...she loved her dogs and would travel with them so I was able to meet them." Canine companions hold a special place in Kassie's heart as she owns two: Toph, a German Shepard,

and Korra, a husky/Samoyed mix.

After Kassie served five years in the Air Force, including a seven-month deployment to Kuwait in 2019-2020, she left the military and moved to Warner Robins, Ga.

She began researching nursing programs in the area and Georgia Southwestern in Americus came up within driving distance. "GSW took all of my previous college credit, and I only had to take three prerequisites. I had no idea when I applied that GSW had the #1 BSN program in Georgia!"

Kassie entered GSW in Fall 2022 and has found the nursing program both challenging and rewarding. Some of Kassie's favorite mentors have been her practicum clinical instructor Danielle Potts and GSW professors Bonnie Gary (also former Air Force), and Brandy Pfeiffer. "Brandy knew my potential and always ensured I was being challenged. She helped me realize that sometimes 'you gotta be like a duck - calm and collected on top of the water - but always paddling as hard as you can underneath.'"

Kassie credits the unfailing support of her parents, siblings, friends and professors at GSW for helping her push through the challenges she has faced to accomplish her goals. "Family is a huge part of my life...they have been my rock, and I know I can always



Kassie Prusko attended pilot training in Oklahoma and soloed the T-6.

count on them."

Kassie's plans after graduating include taking the NCLEX by early June and working in the ER in Columbus, Ga. for two years until she can earn her travel license. She is also interested in pursuing opportunities as a flight nurse.

"Working clinicals in the ER at St. Francis, despite being very hectic,

has made me realize the love and passion I have for nursing. Being in the military gave me leadership skills and a natural drive to always go above and beyond. It also helped me thrive in high ops tempo environments and to do well under pressure so the ER is perfect for this. The nursing program at GSW showed me this was what I was born to do."

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