

Gift of Life The Power of Organ Donation

Read AnnaBelle's story on page 2

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Page 7 in This Issue



AnnaBelle Little, RN-BSN, ORC-P, CPTC, TNCC

Graduated with a BSN at age 21, and saving lives by managing the organ donation process.

story and photo by Vickie Jenkins, staff writer

LifeShare is a nonprofit organ procurement organization dedicated to the recovery of organs and tissues for transplantations. The LifeShare team consists of a wonderful group of caring professionals who are united by their core purpose: saving lives.

AnnaBelle Little, RN-BSN, ORC-P, CPTC, TNCC shines bright as she takes on the many responsibilities of an Organ Recovery Coordinator. In this role, she is tasked with directing, overseeing, and optimizing the organ donation and procurement process. She works closely with the advisor on call, donor family advocates, hospital staff and physicians and the medical

director. AnnaBelle is also responsible for managing donors and ensuring that organ functions are optimized, playing a crucial part in the success of each donation.

To be employed at LifeShare, a nurse undergoes an extensive selection process that takes into account their background and work history. Successful candidates then participate in a comprehensive 6-8 month orientation program. This program includes a combination of classroom training, practical exams based on real scenarios, and hands on trauma training in the field with a preceptor. Nurses at LifeShare are known for their exceptional dedication and skill in

their work.

When asked why she became a nurse, AnnaBelle replied, "I've always been fascinated by the medical field and found the human body intricate and intriguing. My desire is to continue learning about it, combined with the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life every day, drew me to nursing. Growing up in a family of doctors and nurses provided the stepping stones that guided my path. It was my junior year of high school, when my dad underwent a triple bypass, that I realized the impact nurses can have. Seeing the care had a profound effect on me, making that year a life changing and inspiring moment."

"I grew up in Sedgwick, Kansas, and moved to Oklahoma to attend Oklahoma Christian University. My first nursing job was Trauma ICU RN at OU Medical Center. Additionally, I gained valuable experience by helping my mom care for her hospice patients. While I found fulfillment in these roles, I was seeking a greater challenge.

This desire led me to Trauma ICU at OU, where I had the opportunity to work closely with LifeShare. I witnessed firsthand how LifeShare impacts lives, offering hope to families in need. I've now been with LifeShare for five years, and I am fully dedicated to saving lives every day."

When asked if she had any mentors, AnnaBelle gave a heartfelt response. My mom has always been my biggest mentor and still is to this day. She is truly my superhero. I remember how we would make study guides together, and I would call her with countless questions, to which she always had answers. With her unwavering support and my determination, I graduated with a BSN at age 21. Over the years, my life has been filled with God's blessings. I'm incredibly grateful for all the encouragement and the countless hours that helped me pursue my dreams."

AnnaBelle was just five years old when she decided she wanted to be a doctor. "My

Continued next page

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AnnaBelle Little, RN-BSN, ORC-P, CPTC, TNCC, is the Organ Recovery Coordinator at LifeShare. LifeShare is a non-profit organ procurement organization dedicated to the recovery of organs and tissues for transplant purposes.

LITTLE
Continued from Page 2

mother tells me I used to walk around with a stethoscope around my neck all the time," she recalls. "One day, my mom came home to find me watching a 'brain surgery' on the Discovery Channel." She couldn't help but laugh. "My parents often watched different medical shows after I went to bed, but I would sneak out of my room, sit at the top of the stairs and listen in. Between watching ER and hearing all those medical conversations, I knew from a young age that I would grow up to be either a nurse or a doctor," she added.

When asked what qualities make a good nurse, AnnaBelle replied, "A good nurse needs

to have compassion, and the ability to lead while also being a team player. It's important to be someone who can relate to others and be willing to put in the hard work the job demands."

AnnaBelle's strongest quality as a nurse is her ability to offer grace and support to grieving families, empathizing deeply with them during their loss. "I form close connections with the families, and I believe if I can make a positive impact on even one person's life, I'm doing my best," AnnaBelle explained.

AnnaBelle is a caring and compassionate individual who is always striving to grow and push her limits. She loves spending quality time with her family, and of course, with her four-legged, best friend, Baker Mae, her red Golden Retriever.

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Urgent Care Excellence: A Nurse's Commitment to Care

story and photo by Vickie Jenkins, staff writer

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic provides culturally sensitive and wellness services from talented and devoted providers. There services are designed to address a spectrum of health needs, offering preventive screening, chronic disease management, and personalized care to foster overall well-being.

One of the standout nurses at Oklahoma City Indian Clinic is Robert Bullard, LPN, who brings a decade of nursing experience. Robert is an invaluable member of the team bringing both expertise and compassion to his role. Specializing in urgent care, Robert thrives in the fast-paced environment, where each day presents new challenges and opportunities. "In urgent care, we see about 40 to 50 patients a day, so we stay pretty busy" Robert explained. His ability to manage such a high volume

of patients with efficiency and care is a testament to his skill and dedication. Despite the demanding nature of the job, Robert finds it very rewarding. "Every day is different, and that's what I love about it," he said. "We're constantly on our toes but it's fulfilling to know that we're providing immediate and necessary care to those in need.

Raised in the small town of Okmulgee, in Eastern Oklahoma, Robert grew up in a family deeply impacted by alcoholism. During his childhood, his grandmother moved in with his family when she was no longer able to live independently. This early exposure to caregiving played a significant role in shaping Robert's passion for nursing. This is when Robert developed an interest in learning about the disorders of the brain and nervous system. Robert knew from an early age that he wanted to pursue a career in the



An outstanding nurse at Oklahoma City Indian Clinic is Robert Bullard, LPN. Being part Cherokee himself, Robert feels like he can give back to the people in the community. Robert shows his expertise as he tends to people in urgent care.

medical field, with aspirations of becoming a neurologist.

While still in school, Robert began his journey in healthcare by working as a Certified Nursing Assistant at a long-term care facility. It was in this environment that he found fulfillment by providing hands-on-care to patients and making a difference in their lives. Motivated by this passion, he continued to pursue further education and training. After graduating from Grand County Technology Center,

Okmulgee, OK, he advanced his career by becoming a Certified Medication Aide. His dedication and hard work quickly paid off, and by the age of 19, he had achieved his LPN certification. This early start not only gave him a solid foundation for his nursing career but also demonstrated his commitment to serving others in the healthcare field.

Robert explained why he enjoys working at the Indian

Continued next page

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BULLARD

Continued from Page 4

clinic. "First of all, it's the atmosphere," he said. "The environment here is great. We truly are like a close-knit family. We all get along well and are supportive of one another." Beyond the supportive work environment, Robert feels a deep connection to the clinic's mission. "I love working here because I am part Cherokee," he explained. "It gives me the opportunity to give back to my community and work directly with the Cherokee people. Being able to contribute to the health and well-being of my own community is something I am deeply proud of." This sense of belonging and purpose is what drives Roberts' dedication to his work every day. "I am proud to work here at the Indian clinic."

When asked about his greatest reward as a nurse, Robert paused for a moment. "I think it's those moments when a patient walks in feeling absolutely miserable, and by the time they leave, you can see a noticeable

difference that they feel much better," he said. "There is something fulfilling about knowing that we have provided the best care possible and made a real impact on their well-being. It might sound a bit selfish but helping someone feel better also helps me. It gives me a sense of purpose and reminds me why I chose this path. Seeing the positive change in a patient is not just a reward, it's confirming that the work we're doing here is meaningful. This connecting to patient care is what continuously inspires me as a nurse."

Robert's hobbies include, buying house plants, woodworking, camping and hiking. "Really, I like anything that gets me outdoors. Also, I like to travel," he said. Beyond his love for nature and hands-on projects, Robert cherishes quality time with his family. "My daughter just started kindergarten, and she's five years old," he said with a proud smile. "My wife and I are having a lot of fun with her different activities. It's been an adventure, and we're enjoying every moment."



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Oklahoma City Indian Clinic

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Amanda Robnett, LPN

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Sheryl Christ, LPN



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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

Bringing Innovation and Entrepreneurship to Nursing

“Be Curious” is one of the defining values of the University of North Texas System. The University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth is cultivating that curiosity with the launch of its College of Nursing. Starting in fall 2024, students can expect to gain entrepreneurship and innovation skills to bring scalable solutions to the health care market.

HSC has a proud history of providing innovative solutions to pressing health care problems. HSC Next is a unique program at HSC, guiding innovators to develop and scale their health care solutions for the masses. HSC Next also works with the Techstars Physical Health Fort Worth Accelerator to connect entrepreneurs from around the world to revolutionize the physical health industry through new technology.

Nursing professionals coming to HSC will have a solid base of support for developing technologies, ideas and strategies to address health care challenges. Incoming students also will benefit from all that makes HSC a first-class health science center.

From the outset of their experience with the college, HSC nursing students will gain interpersonal connections formed with peers. The connections formed between students in different degree programs serve both patients and the larger community by creating health care teams that have known and learned from each other for years.

Students also will have access to some of the best health education facilities in Texas and the region, including the state-of-the-art Regional Simulation Lab, as well as a team of diverse, field-leading faculty. Associate Dean for Research, Tonychris Nnaka, PhD, MPH, RN, CPH, recently brought his expertise in digital health to the 2024 VIVE Conference, a leading digital health technology meeting. Assistant Dean for Clinical and Outreach Affairs Kate Taylor, DNP, APRN, FNPC, CPPS, FNAP, is bringing innovation to home-based primary care for older adults through her work with HSC's Center for Older Adults House Calls program.

HSC understands that training the next generation of nurses, physicians and health care professionals must also be financially accessible. The UNT System has kept tuition the same since 2016, and the College of Nursing has awards and scholarships, including a developing mentorship program, to ensure that students' education and professional development is supported financially.

As it welcomes students for the Registered Nurse to Bachelor of Science in Nursing (RN to BSN) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) in Nursing Practice Innovation degree programs, HSC's College



of Nursing aims to help professionals not only advance their clinical skills for better patient outcomes, but also use their unique experience to create solutions for the complex health care challenges that face urban, rural and specialized populations.

One innovation for fall 2024 is nursing microcredentials, short, affordable and intensive courses designed to train professionals in an area of acute need. Studies have shown the enormous positive impact of microcredentials on student education and outcomes. The HSC College of Nursing will offer microcredentials for health care management, correctional nursing and substance use disorder nursing, all areas of critical need across the region and state.

With an increasing general population and nurse turnover affecting the nursing gap in Texas, the time is now for an institution to prepare nurses to address society's most pressing health challenges. As the College of Nursing adds programs, students and faculty, it will continue to be guided by the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship that has defined HSC since its beginning in 1970. HSC's College of Nursing is proud to develop nurse innovators who are ready and willing to bring their experience, leadership and solutions to improve health outcomes in their own communities and throughout Texas.

For more information about the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth visit <https://www.unthsc.edu/oklanursing>.



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Great 100 Nurses Foundation Honors 19 OU Health Nurses

Oklahoma City - Nineteen registered nurses from OU Health have been recognized by The Great 100 Nurses Foundation on its 2024 list of exceptional nursing professionals in Oklahoma. These nurses provide their expertise and care at Oklahoma Children's Hospital OU Health, OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center, and OU Health University of Oklahoma Medical Center.

Individuals recognized span from across OU Health, representing nurses working in pediatric intensive care, oncology and obstetrics, as well as advanced practice providers and clinical specialists.

Honorees are: Jessie Gage; Christen Hickey; Michelle Lindsey; Christine Washington; Micayla Watkins; Carmen Taylor; Rachel Bostwick; Alyssa Gillespie; Samantha Crytzer; Vanessa McGuire; Tamara Vernon; Juanita Underwood; Kathy Shipley Horton; Michele Abbitt; Karen Genzel; Crystal Gomez; Deborah Wright; Rhonda Coleman-Mannix; and Esther Muntzinger Lacelles.

"I am thrilled to extend my heartfelt congratulations to our exceptional nurses for being named to the Great 100 Nurses Foundation list," said OU Health Chief Nurse Executive Stefanie Beavers, DNP, R.N., NEA-BC. "This prestigious recognition is a testament to the unwavering dedication and outstanding care our nurses provide every day."

Established more than 30 years ago, the foundation has honored thousands of nurses across the south-central United States. Nominees are considered for recognition based on their demonstrations of concern for humanity, contributions to the profession and abilities shown in leadership and mentorship.



"These nurses' commitment to excellence is perfectly aligned with our Nursing Professional Practice Model, which emphasizes the core values of OU Health," said Beavers. "Our nurses embody these principles through their compassionate service, their pursuit of knowledge, and their dedication to improving the lives of those we serve. I am proud of these honorees and the work they do to set the standard for nursing excellence and patient care."

OU Health's nursing honorees will be recognized during the Great 100 Celebration on Sept. 24 in Tulsa. The funds raised through state celebrations are used not only to honor the nurses,

but to also support nursing advocacy, nursing scholarships and nursing research for the betterment of lives, publication of nursing discoveries and the implementation of those discoveries.



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TCC Metro and West Campuses Undergo Upgrades to Nursing and Allied Health Facilities

Several construction projects are taking place at Tulsa Community College's Metro and West Campuses, slated to be completed by the end of the Spring 2025 semester. These projects are focused on expanding and consolidating Nursing and Allied Health program facilities with funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

Key improvements include new and expanded nursing labs, a remodeled radiography lab and a new surgical technology operating room, scheduled to be finished in November. A new computer lab and new faculty offices are scheduled to be finished in the Spring. When upgrades are completed, Nursing programs will be housed solely at the Metro Campus. Currently, Nursing programs are housed at the Metro and Southeast Campuses.

These projects, designed and overseen by GH2 Architects, will



5. New equipment for nursing training, including simulation mannequins, hospital beds and medication dispensing systems

West Campus:

6. New operating room for the surgical technology program

"Expanding and modernizing our Nursing and Allied Health facilities is crucial to accommodating the number of students coming through our program and training them on the

further develop my skills," said Balsiger.

The College's Nursing program continues to add capacity each semester through Fall 2027 in an ongoing effort to strengthen the area's nursing workforce. This deadline reflects the end date of

the ARPA grant.

The median age of registered nurses is 46 years, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing. More than one-quarter of registered nurses report that they plan to leave nursing or retire over the next five years.



be completed using \$4.7 million in ARPA funds, and \$1.8 million from HRSA including \$866,000 requested by Sen. Jim Inhofe in 2021 for TCC's Nursing program.

Key improvements include:

Metro Campus:

1. Academic Building 5th floor new nursing lab
2. Alfred M. Philips Building 5th floor radiography lab remodel
3. Philips Building 4th floor expanded nursing lab
4. Philips Building 2nd floor new computer lab and faculty offices

latest equipment used in clinical settings," said TCC's Dean of the School of Health Sciences Jenny Fields, DNP, RN.

First-year TCC Nursing student Treasia Balsiger looks forward to the impact the upgrades will have on her education and training.

"I'm excited to learn in an environment that resembles a clinical setting. Having access to updated labs and equipment will better prepare me for real-world healthcare situations and help me

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Samantha Goza, Selected as EPIC President for 24-25

EPIC has announced their new officers for 24-25. They are Sam Goza-President; April Summerlin-President elect; Debbie Dahl, Treasure and Amber James, Secretary.

“The Epidemiologist and Preventionists in Infection Control (EPIC) is a non-profit association. We exist to provide a collective voice for epidemiologist and preventionists in infection control regarding issues related to infection for improving and maintaining quality patient care and safety. We promote and foster networking and educational endeavors for all disciplines with common interests in infection control and prevention activities.” says Sam Goza, EPIC President.

It all began in 1974 as a grassroots organization established by professionals in infection prevention and control to expand the knowledge and networking among those dedicated to the safety of their patients and colleagues in healthcare. As a unique organization, we have a diversified membership group which includes epidemiologists, nurses, medical technologists, pharmacists, physicians and more. Having such a diverse network allows us to gain knowledge from the experience and expertise of each other.

Each year, EPIC holds an engaging and informative educational conference aimed at enhancing the knowledge and experience of attendees. Our conference is designed to bring together professionals from various disciplines, including epidemiologists and preventionists in infection control, to foster a vibrant atmosphere of learning and networking. We extend a warm invitation to individuals from all backgrounds and levels of expertise to join us for a full day dedicated to expanding their understanding and connections in the field. The 42nd Annual Educational Conference is scheduled for Nov 15th at the Cowboy Western Heritage Museum. For more information, please visit the EPIC website at <https://www.epicokla.org>.



Samantha Goza, EPIC President

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(AS PUBLISHED IN THE 2024 EDUCATION GUIDE TO NURSING)

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Are you considering a career in nursing? Look no further than Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU), one of the best universities in Oklahoma known for providing top-quality programs. With 14 nationally accredited academic programs, SWOSU is a senior regional university that offers an exceptional education.

The SWOSU School of Nursing has a reputation for excellence, offering five different nursing programs to fit the needs of all students. If you're looking to start your nursing career, the traditional BSN program taught on campus is an excellent option. Alternatively, if you're already an RN looking to advance your career, SWOSU offers four online degrees, including an RN to BSN degree and graduate degrees in nursing education and nursing administration.

But the nursing programs at SWOSU don't stop there. The university also offers online professional programs in Health Information Management and Information Management at the graduate level. Additionally, SWOSU has two contractual agreement programs for Occupational Therapy Assistant and Physical Therapist Assistant Programs in partnership with Caddo Kiowa Technology Center.

SWOSU is proud to have six nationally accredited programs in Health Information Management, Nursing, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology, and Medical Laboratory Technician. The university's professionally and academically qualified faculty are dedicated to mentoring students and helping them achieve their goals.

At SWOSU, students have access to a diverse selection of academic college courses and are rated as one of the most affordable universities in the region. Additionally, SWOSU's location in Weatherford is conveniently located on Interstate 40, less than one hour west of the Oklahoma City metro area. Whether you're a commuter or a traditional student, SWOSU provides accessibility and convenience.

SWOSU's nursing program is more than just traditional classroom learning. The university also boasts a nursing simulation lab that provides hands-on experience in a controlled environment. The lab features high-tech manikins that can simulate a wide range of medical conditions and scenarios, allowing students to practice and develop their clinical skills in a



safe and supportive environment.

SWOSU's nursing programs have a strong emphasis on community service and engagement. Nursing students can participate in various community-based programs and initiatives, such as health fairs and clinics, providing valuable service to the local community while also gaining practical experience and skills.

SWOSU's nursing faculty are experienced professionals who bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the classroom. They are dedicated to helping students succeed and are committed to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment. Additionally, the university offers a range of scholarships and financial aid opportunities to help nursing students achieve their academic and career goals.

In summary, SWOSU's nursing programs provide students with a comprehensive education that prepares them for a successful career in nursing. With a strong focus on hands-on experience, community engagement, and academic excellence, SWOSU's nursing programs provide students with the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to make a positive impact in the world of healthcare. Join us at SWOSU and pursue your dreams of becoming a nurse while receiving a top-quality education. We are dedicated to helping our students succeed. For more information on SWOSU's nursing programs visit:

<https://www.swosu.edu/nursing>.



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