

An e-newsletter of the J. D. McCarty Center for children with developmental disabilities

Sher retires after decade of serving on McCarty Center's commission

Norman resident said experience was rewarding

Joe Sher knows first-hand how a child's life can be enhanced at the J. D. McCarty Center. He knows because it happened for his daughter.

Kristen Sher, who has Down syndrome, came to the McCarty Center for a summer program when she was a teen in the late 1980's. She enjoyed working on art projects and also got to perform the song, "New York, New York."

"That two weeks was the highlight of her life," Sher said.

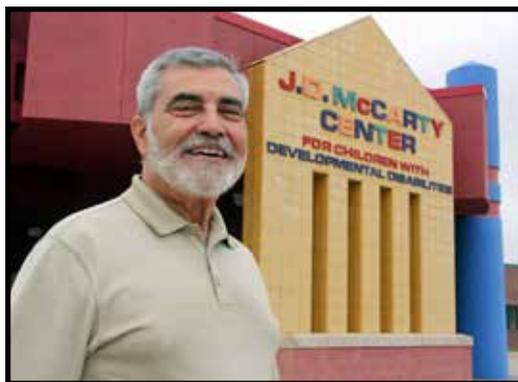
That positive impact is one of the reasons why Sher wanted to get involved with the hospital, which he did through his service on the Cerebral Palsy Commission. The commission is the governing board for the McCarty Center.

Sher, of Norman, retired in July from the commission after serving 10 years.

"It has probably been the most rewarding thing that I have ever done," he said. "I have seen so many plans come to fruition

that have benefited so many people that I would have never been involved with if I hadn't been on the commission."

Sher learned more about the commission through Curt Peters, the former director of the hospital. The two attended the same church, and Peters told Sher about an opening on the board.



Joe Sher retired in July after 10 years of service on the Cerebral Palsy Commission, the governing board of the McCarty Center.

Commissioners are appointed by the governor to serve on the five-member board. Members are appointed to three-year terms and can be reappointed by the governor for an additional term.

Karen Rieger, a fellow commissioner, said Sher's business background was an asset to the board.

"He has been particularly helpful in analyzing financial data and focusing on the continued financial strength of the hospital," Rieger said.

Sher, 70, has a background in finance, insurance, purchasing and personnel. He retired in 2014 as the chief financial officer for Norman Plumbing Supply Company.

Rieger also said that Sher's passion for the hospital's work was evident.

"In addition to his service as a commissioner, Joe has devoted countless other hours to the hospital, volunteering at golf tournaments, the Norman Conquest and other activities that benefit the McCarty Center, as well as parties and activities for the kids. We will miss his contributions to the board, but know he will remain committed to us."

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See Sher Retires

Sher Retires

Sher said he enjoyed working with fellow commissioners and appreciated their varied backgrounds, such as those who are veterans to members with experience in business, banking, insurance and law.

He also believes that even when commissioners had different viewpoints, they worked together to blend those ideas and come up with actions that would lead to the “betterment of the hospital.”

One of the projects he’s proud of is the efforts to open Camp ClapHans, a residential summer camp for kids with special needs located on the McCarty Center’s campus. The camp opened in 2013 and is an outreach program of the McCarty Center.



Joe Sher greets riders in the Norman Conquest bicycle tour as they come into the hospital’s conference center to register. The Norman Conquest was just one of the many events that benefited the McCarty Center that Sher volunteered his time to support.

Sher is a member of the J. D. McCarty Center Foundation, a non-profit that supports programs, services and capital needs of the hospital. The foundation raised money to build the camp, and Sher believes the camp has helped expand the quality of life of children with special needs.

Sher said he’s also proud of the outreach efforts that the commission has supported to help educate people about the hospital’s services. That includes a mobile screening program that aims to reach more families in the state.

Members of the mobile screening team travel to different communities and meet with families to give them information about hospital services and community, state and federal resources.

Sher said he also enjoyed participating in events at the hospital, including Christmas parties for the patients and fundraising activities for the McCarty Center. He also was impressed with the monthly presentations made to the commission by different departments at the hospital. Sher said that gave commissioners insight into the innovative programs and services that are being done at the McCarty Center.

to the staff and operation of the J. D. McCarty Center, from the top to the bottom,” he said. “It’s just a class act.”

Sher, who will continue his service on the hospital’s foundation, is also a member of the 40 et 8 of Oklahoma, the veterans’ organization that founded the McCarty Center.

Sher said he wants to continue to raise awareness about the McCarty Center so that more families will know how the services can improve a child’s life.

“My kid blossomed because of her two weeks at this hospital. I want to give that opportunity to others,” he said. “I see what the hospital does. I can see because of my daughter what the McCarty Center has meant.”



Joe Sher often acted as MC for McCarty Center events, including the annual 40 et 8 Christmas Party and Open House. Standing at the podium with Sher is Vicki Kuestersteffen, director and CEO of the McCarty Center.



“I cannot give enough praise

The Building Block

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Director: Vicki Kuestersteffen
Editor: Greg Gaston
Associate Editor: Sharla Bardin

Cerebral Palsy Commission:
Karen Rieger
Rob McCalla
Chuck Thompson
Joe Steil
Bill Hart

J. D. McCarty Center
for children with developmental disabilities
2002 East Robinson Street • Norman, Oklahoma 73071
405.307.2800 • 800.777.1272 • www.jdmc.org

Bill Hart

New commissioner ready to learn more about McCarty Center, address needs

Bill Hart's initial involvement with the McCarty Center was during a Christmas party for the patients.

He handed presents to Santa and watched the excitement on the kids' faces as they received their gifts. Hart said it was a memorable moment that captured the spirit of Christmas for him.

Hart now has another opportunity to give back to the patients at the McCarty Center. He is the newly appointed member of the Cerebral Palsy Commission, the governing board of the McCarty Center. Hart replaces Joe Sher, who retired from the commission in July after serving for 10 years.

The Yukon resident was appointed by Gov. Mary Fallin to serve on the five-member commission. Commissioners are appointed to three-year terms and can be reappointed by the governor for an additional term.

Hart is retired and worked for 30 years with AT&T.

"I'm really excited to get involved and see what I can accomplish in the next several years," he said.

Hart also is a member of the 40 et 8 of Oklahoma, the veterans' organization that founded what has become the McCarty Center. He served two years in the Army, including a tour in Vietnam. His work with the



Bill Hart is the newly appointed member of the Cerebral Palsy Commission. Hart takes over for Joe Sher, who retired after 10 years of service to the commission.

40 et 8 is what led to a visit to the hospital. The organization hosts an annual Christmas party for the patients and their families.

"It's impressive," Hart said about the McCarty Center. "The people are just so caring. They're dedicated to their work."

Joseph Steil, a commissioner, knows Hart through their work with the 40 et 8 and looks forward to serving with him on the commission.

"I think Bill will be dedicated, hardworking, understanding and considerate," Steil said.

Hart said as a commissioner he wants to look at ways to bring more awareness about the hospital and look for additional funding sources that can enhance services. He has seen some of the needs that children with disabilities encounter, including the needs faced by his grandson, who has cerebral palsy.

Hart said he wants to know more about the services that could help children with disabilities and find ways to address those needs through his work on the commission.

"I want to get a feel for what's going on then finalize some ideas of what else we can do to help these kids."

About Bill Hart

Hart grew up in Clio, Mich. He began a radio and carrier career with Western Electric in 1964. Hart was drafted by the Army in 1965 and worked as a radio and carrier operator for two years.

Hart later worked for 30 years with At&T. After retiring, he also worked as a truck driver for 10 years.

Hart has been involved in the American Legion for 28 years, the Veterans of Foreign Wars for 12 years and the 40 et 8 for eight years.

Hart and wife, Marilyn, have a daughter and son and four grandchildren.



Commissioners Bill Hart, right, and Joe Steil, present an appreciation plaque to Dani Phillips who retired from the McCarty Center after 27 years of service.

20th annual Norman Conquest provides \$5,000 to Camp ClapHans scholarship fund

Five hundred forty-one riders left the McCarty Center on Saturday morning, July 11, at 7 a.m. to cruise the scenic and hilly roads of eastern Cleveland County as a part of the 20th annual Norman Conquest bicycle tour hosted by the Bicycle League of Norman (BLN).

Five hundred forty-one riders completed the tour hot, tired and with a satisfaction that they conquered the heat and the hills that have made the Norman Conquest one of the top 50 rides in America, according to Bicycling Magazine. This year is the second time the national cycling magazine has named the Norman Conquest a top ride.

The Norman Conquest, which benefits the McCarty Center's Camp ClapHans scholarship fund, attracts riders from all over the country and Canada. This year, the rider who traveled the longest distance to make the ride was Alexandra Stasiuk, 22 from White Rock, Canada. It's 2,107 miles from White Rock to Norman.

There were also riders from as far away as Houston, Texas; Palm Bay, Florida; Princeton, New Jersey; St. Louis, Missouri; Boulder, Colorado; and Arkansas.

This year's event resulted in a \$5,000 donation to the Camp ClapHans scholarship fund from the BLN. This fund helps to offset the cost of camp tuition for qualifying families.



Riders register for the 20th annual Norman Conquest at O'Connell's on Campus Corner in Norman on Friday night. Besides registering, riders were treated to a "carbo loading" pasta dinner courtesy of O'Connell's, which is a long-time event sponsor.



A bike sits on a bike stand for a last minute check before heading out on the 20th annual Norman Conquest bicycle tour.



And they're off to conquer the heat, conquer the hills!



"Fellowship of Hands" has been providing a free massage to riders after they conquer the heat and hills of the Norman Conquest for the past several years. Rocky Chen (front) and an associate work on riders in the air-conditioned comfort of the hospital's conference center.



Gaylan Oliver, the conference center's executive chef, begins grilling burgers and veggie burgers to be consumed by Norman Conquest riders as they come in off the road. Sous chef Jordan Oliver, and Gaylan's son, helps with the preparation.



A ride like the Norman Conquest brings out an interesting array of riding jerseys like this one worn by Andy Rieger, recently retired executive editor of the Norman Transcript.

Leaving a legacy

Claphan cousins volunteer at summer camp that honors their uncle

McKenzie Claphan and Shy-Annah Claphan had a memorable summer.

The cousins were volunteers at a summer camp in Norman for kids with special needs. They had the opportunity to help kids as they rode horses, paddled canoes on a lake, shot bows and arrows on the archery range and worked on arts and crafts projects.

It was more than a fun way to spend the summer. It was an opportunity for the girls to honor their family history.

The two were working at Camp ClapHans, which was named in honor of their uncle, Sammy Jack Claphan. The camp is an outreach program of the McCarty Center.

"I just feel like it's important to keep his legacy going," said McKenzie Claphan, 20, of Stilwell.

Sammy Jack Claphan, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and a Stilwell native, played football at the University of Oklahoma and graduated with a degree in special education.

He later played in the NFL for the Cleveland Browns and the San Diego Chargers. Claphan retired from the NFL in 1988 and returned to Oklahoma to become a special education teacher. He died in 2001 at the age of 45.

The camp opened in 2013 and is for kids ages 8 to 18 in Oklahoma who have a develop-

mental disability or special needs. The camp is located on the McCarty Center's 80-acre campus and features two cabins and an activities building that are located next to an 11-acre lake.

The first of five camp sessions began on June 14, and the last day of camp was July 22.



Shy-Annah Claphan, left, and her cousin, McKenzie, said they wanted to volunteer at Camp ClapHans to honor the legacy of their uncle, Sammy Jack, the namesake of the camp for kids with disabilities in Norman.

McKenzie and Shy-Annah Claphan, 17, said they got interested in volunteering after attending an open house for the camp in 2014 with their family.

"It was amazing," Shy-Annah Claphan, of Stilwell, said about seeing the camp for the first time.

The cousins decided they wanted to get involved as a way to pay tribute to their "Uncle Sam."

The two describe their uncle as a big "Teddy Bear" who was kind, lovable and had a great sense of humor. Shy-Annah Claphan remembers going to the movies with him, while McKenzie Claphan recalls a time they went sledding down a snow-packed hill.

"He was just really fun," said

Shy-Annah Claphan.

They also admire the compassion and encouragement he showed to his students. "He loved his job," McKenzie ClapHans said. "He just had a huge impact on a lot of the kids."

Like her uncle, McKenzie Claphan said she loves working with kids, which is another reason why she wanted to volunteer at the camp. She said it's fun to see the excitement on the kids' faces during the camp.

"You can tell they're just enjoying being here," said McKenzie Claphan, a junior at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va.

Shy-Anna Claphan, who is a senior at Stilwell High School, said what stands out for her about the camp is how there are activities available for all ability levels.

Activities for campers include archery, arts and crafts, camp fires, canoeing, dance parties, fishing, horseback riding, talent shows, swimming and stargazing with members of the Oklahoma City Astronomy Club.

The cousins said they were grateful for the chance to volunteer at the camp and for the opportunity to honor their uncle and continue his work with kids.

"I just feel excited and I know he would be happy and proud of us," said McKenzie Claphan.

McCarty Center hosts Sibshops for sixth year

Norman Sibshops, a program for brothers and sisters of children with developmental disabilities and special needs, kicked off its sixth year on Sept. 12, here at the McCarty Center.

Sibshops is a program that seeks to provide siblings of children with special needs with opportunities for peer support. Because Sibshops are designed for school-aged children, peer support is provided within a lively, recreational context that emphasizes a kids'-eye-view.

Sibshops are not therapy, group or otherwise, although the program may be therapeutic for some of the participants. Sibshops acknowledge that most brothers and sisters of people with special needs, like their parents, are doing well, despite the challenges of having a brother or sister with an illness or disability. Consequently, while Sibshop facilitators always keep an eye open for participants who may need additional services, the Sibshop takes a wellness approach.

The goals of Sibshops are to provide the brothers and sisters of children with special needs an opportunity to meet other siblings in a relaxed, recreational setting to provide an opportunity to discuss common joys and concerns with other kids in similar situations; to learn how others handle situations commonly experienced by siblings of children with special needs; to learn more about the implications of their siblings' special

needs; and provide parents and other professionals with opportunities to learn more about the concerns and opportunities frequently experienced by brothers and sisters of people with special needs.

Sibshop Schedule Saturdays 10 am to 1 pm

September 12, 2015
October 31, 2015
November 14, 2015
February 20, 2016
March 19, 2016
April 23, 2016

\$6 per child per Sibshop
Lunch is included
Scholarships available

Andrea Williams is once again the Norman Sibshop coordinator. She is a first generation trained facilitator by Don Meyer, the Sibling Support Project director, and she's a sister to a little brother with a developmental disability. She is actively involved in her brother's care and is fully in tune with what siblings feel and the questions they have on their mind.

Besides Norman, Sibshops can also be found in Enid, Guyman, Muskogee, Fort Sill-Lawton, Edmond, Guthrie, Tulsa, Tinker AFB, St. Luke's Methodist Church Oklahoma City, Pryor, Stillwater, Shawnee, Poteau, Bethany and Mustang.

For more information, contact Williams at 910.478.6510 or normansibshops@gmail.com.



OMCA hosts 28th annual golf classic

The Oklahoma Municipal Contractors Association hosted their 28th annual OMCA/JDM Golf Classic at the Twin Hills Golf and Country Club in Oklahoma City on Sept. 14.

This year's event was another sold-out success for OMCA.

This annual event supports the operation of Camp ClapHans, the McCarty Center's residential summer camp program for children with special needs ages 8-18.

OMCA has a relationship with the McCarty Center that goes back more than 50 years. The hospital is the only charity that this group supports.



Kyle Cottrell, outgoing camp director, and Paxton Stieber, the new camp director, greet golfers on a special three pin par 3. Cottrell is leaving the McCarty Center to pursue a new career opportunity with the Albuquerque, New Mexico, School District. Stieber comes to her new role with a background in camps for kids with special needs.

Ride for Recovery raises \$2,000 for Camp ClapHans

Seventy-seven bikers took off on a hot Sunday during Labor Day weekend to raise money for Camp ClapHans. Camp ClapHans is a residential summer camp project of the McCarty Center.

The occasion for the "poker run" was the 3rd annual Ride for Recovery sponsored by the Survivors Clean and Sober motorcycle club. The Survivors are a national organization, a brotherhood of clean and sober bikers, whose primary purpose is to be in the community for the brother or sister who wants to stop drinking or drugging. Their members have all changed their lives through 12-step programs and carry that message wherever they go.

Bikers from central Oklahoma, Tulsa, Sallisaw, Fort Smith, AR, Hot Springs, AR, Rogers, AR, Amarillo, TX, Arlington, TX and Wichita Falls, TX left Oklahoma City and traveled east to Shawnee, then back to Norman where the ride ended at the McCarty Center where air conditioning and a barbecue lunch awaited the group.



The Survivors Clean and Sober Motorcycle Club's poker run started in Oklahoma City, traveled east to Shawnee and then back to Norman where it ended with cool air conditioning and a barbecue lunch at the McCarty Center. Proceeds from the ride went to Camp ClapHans.

"We love the Survivors club," said Melissa Lewis, of Bethany, who rode with her husband, Tim. "They do the right things for the right reasons."

Anna Francisco of Norman and her husband, Johnny, were riding in the Ride for Recovery for the first time. "It was awesome," said Anna, "and the fun part was just knowing the cause that we're supporting."



Anna and Johnny Francisco get ready to ride in the 3rd annual Ride for Recovery benefiting Camp ClapHans. While not members of the Survivors club, the Francisco's joined the poker run because they love to ride and they like the cause the ride was supporting.

"Giving back to the community is very important to club members," said Willie "Farm Boy" Moore, president of the Central Oklahoma Survivors. "As addicts we spent a lot of time freely taking from the community. Giving back to the community is an important part of recovery for us."

Giving back was demonstrated by two riders who won the 50/50 raffle and the high poker hand. Each rider kept just enough to pay for their ride that day and donated the rest to



Recovery is everything. Without it members don't have their families or their jobs. Their recovery is worth protecting and fighting for everyday of their lives.

the camp. In both cases, the amount was over \$100.

Moore said that once the final accounting for the poker run is made, he estimates they will raise about \$2,000 for Camp ClapHans.



Members of the Survivors Motorcycle Club give McCarty Center patient Xavier Blade Smith an opportunity to sit on a Harley Davidson and feel the rumble of the engine at the end of the club's Ride for Recovery poker run that benefited the hospital's Camp ClapHans program.



Hospital employee Gary Curry made the Ride for Recovery.

Employee Appreciation Week

290 years of service to JDM celebrated

The J. D. McCarty Center celebrated its employees and the contributions they make in the service of the kids and families they serve throughout the year on September 22 with an employee appreciation luncheon.

Gaylan Oliver, executive chef of the McCarty Conference Center, and his staff prepared the luncheon, as well as dinner for the evening shift and breakfast for the overnight shift.

Vicki Kuestersteffen, director and CEO, awarded service pins to employees who had hit benchmark years of service to the hospital and/or the State of Oklahoma.

Headlining the list of awards were Drs. Elieen Fox and James Fields who have marked 30 years of service to the McCarty Center. Katie Stuart was presented a pin for 30 years of service to the state.

Following close behind was Lucy Naugle, physical therapist, with 25 years with the state.

Fifteen year awards for service to the hospital were given to Kerri Onken, direct care specialist, and Drs. Joseph Davey and William Puffinburger. Onken also has 15 years with the state.

Receiving 10 year recognition for their service to the hospital were: Beth Wann,

physical therapist, Lisa Lairson, RN, Carole Young, RN, Angela Moorad, speech-language pathologist, Gaylan Oliver, executive chef, Charles Dennison, direct care specialist, and Amanda Grady, housekeeping.

Awarded for 10 years service to the State were Vernessia Bunch, direct care specialist, and Amber Johns, RN, as well as Wann, Lairson, Young, Oliver and Dennison.

Achieving 5 years of service with the McCarty Center were: Kori Knapple, direct care specialist, Suzanne Trice, RN, Amanda Cross, direct care specialist, Alecia Johnson, housekeeping, Peggy Stinson, finance, Ashely Nett, direct care specialist, Gayla Autry, direct care specialist, Jackie DeSpain, occupational therapist, Beth Morton, physical therapist, Kathy Fleming, direct care specialist, Maria Bratton, speech-language pathologist, Lori Tooley, direct care specialist, and Chuck Thompson, cerebral palsy commissioner.

Also recognized for 5 years of service to the state were Knapple, Trice, DeSpain, Hill, Morton, Fleming, Bratton, Tooley, Kerry Flannery, direct care specialist, Ronald Thompson, direct care specialist, Taryn Johnston, direct care specialist and Ashley Bennett, direct care specialist.

All totaled, 290 years of service to the McCarty Center and 235 years of service to the State of Oklahoma were recognized.



Buffet table awaiting the arrival of McCarty Center employees.



Executive chef Gaylan Oliver scrubs up in preparation to serve the employee appreciation luncheon.



Recreational activities specialists Bobbie Hunter, left, and Darrell Green enjoy the special employee appreciation lunch prepared by Gaylan Oliver and his conference center staff.