

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

Stanek named director of Camp ClapHans

Summer camp for kids with special needs to open June 2013

Megan Stanek believes summer camp offers children the chance to build confidence and camaraderie and to unwind, unplug and undertake a new challenge.

“It gives them the chance to have a good foundation of believing in themselves,” said Stanek, an outdoor educator.

Now she is leading a camp that will offer these experiences to children with special needs.

Stanek is the new director of Camp ClapHans, a residential summer camp for kids with disabilities that opens in June 2013. The camp is an outreach project of the J. D. McCarty Center and is being built on the hospital’s campus in Norman at 2002 E. Robinson Street.

Stanek started the position in April and said she is thrilled about the opportunities and potential of the camp. She believes Camp ClapHans will offer kids a place to meet other children with similar disabilities, develop friendships and gain self-esteem.

“Being able to be a part of



Megan Stanek is the new director of Camp ClapHans, a residential summer camp for kids with disabilities that opens in June 2013. The camp will feature two cabins and an activities building (pictured). The buildings are located next to an 11-acre lake.

such an amazing organization and building an entirely new program is incredibly exciting,” she said. “I feel blessed to be a part of this adventure.”

Stanek’s professional background includes serving as an outdoor education director and instructor, as well as experience in managing budgets, developing curriculum, managing staff and creating partnerships with community groups.

Vicki Kuestersteffen, director and CEO of the McCarty Center,

said she was impressed with Stanek’s background and her excitement about outdoor education.

“I knew Megan was the Camp ClapHans director the moment she walked in for the interview,” Kuestersteffen said. “She brings a wealth of experience with her, the passion to work with kids with special needs and she believes in what we are creating with Camp ClapHans.”

[See Camp Director Stanek on page 2](#)

Camp director Stanek

The camp is for kids ages 8 to 16 and will feature two cabins and an activities building. The buildings are also located next to an 11-acre lake.

Activities will include archery, arts and crafts, canoeing, fishing, field games and a challenge course. Also, the camp program will include weekly themes that will focus on nutrition, sensory issues and different disabilities, such as autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and physical disabilities.

Campers will also learn about social skills, such as how to transition from conversation topics and how to work together as a team. In addition, the camp will give kids the opportunity to play and interact with nature to

help improve their cognitive abilities, Stanek said.

“You really need to have time for kids to just play and get outdoors,” she said. “Anytime you get children to go outdoors, there’s positive rewards for them.”

She also believes the camp can help kids learn life skills, such as independence and being willing to try something new, be it maneuvering a challenge course or riding a horse.

“Camp gives them the chance to do something they thought they couldn’t do before.”

Stanek said she loves seeing the “lightbulbs go off” for campers -- that moment of clarity when they realize how to overcome a challenge or grasp a new concept.

She had her own lightbulb moment when it came to choosing a career.

The Omaha, Neb., native was a sophomore in college and went on a weeklong backpacking trip to the Grand Canyon. She loved the scenery, the exercise and the fun of discovering something new. After the trip, she decided to switch her major to focus on outdoor education.

“What made the Grand Canyon trip so powerful and life altering was the sense of balance and calmness I experienced,” she said. “I packed everything I needed to survive for a week in a backpack. I completely disconnected to every man-made sensory, which allowed me to take a new perspective of

what is really important in my life.”

“In a sense, the trip made me stop to smell the flowers, instead of rushing off to the next class or write the next paper. It was a freeing moment to set a standard of what I really needed to survive and live a new lifestyle.”

Stanek later graduated with a bachelor’s degree in exercise science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and received her master’s degree in natural resources from North Carolina State University.

Now, another adventure awaits Stanek as she prepares to open a new camp. Her first year as director of Camp ClapHans will include developing programming, writing policies and procedures, training camp staff and seeking accreditation from the American Camp Association.

Her objective is to create a camp environment that will be exciting, enriching and educational for campers and the volunteers who will serve as camp staff. Stanek said she is also grateful for the support and resources from the McCarty Center that will be available to the camp.

“The McCarty Center staff approach kids with special needs from every angle to establish goals and progress for these children,” she said. “Camp ClapHans has access to utilize all of the professional staff for their skills, passion for helping children with special needs and drive for quality programming.”

The Building Block

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Bio Box

Megan Stanek

Director
Camp
ClapHans



Norman Sibshops program begins third year at JDM

Norman Sibshops, a program for the brothers and sisters of children with developmental disabilities or special health needs, kicked off its third year at the McCarty Center on Saturday, September 15.

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

Sibshops are not therapy, group or otherwise, although their effect 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 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 sibling's 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.

Norman Sibshops are broken down into two age groups, 6 to 9-year-olds and 10 to 13. The 6 to 9-year olds will meet on Saturdays, November 17, February 16, 2013, and April 20, 2013, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The 10 to 13-year olds will meet on Saturdays, October 20, November 17, March 9, 2013, and April 20, 2013 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The cost of each Sibshop is \$6 per child or \$20 per child for all four sessions. Lunch is included. For multiple siblings there is a discount. The cost is \$15 for each additional sibling if all sessions are paid up front.

In the spring of 2005, University of Washington colleagues Amanda Johnson and Susan Sandall conducted a survey of Sibshops grads (ages 18-34) to see if there was any long-term impact on Sibshops participants' relationships with their siblings. From comments from Sibshop grads and their parents, it appeared that it did, but until the 2005 study there wasn't any research to confirm the observations.

The study concluded that the positive effects of the Sibshop program are not only apparent, but also enduring. A few of the findings included: more than 90% of the respondents said Sibshops

Education: Bachelor's degree in exercise science from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Master's degree in natural resources from North Carolina State University.

Experience: Worked as the outdoor education director for Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma; Sales manager for Backwoods Equipment Co.; Assistant director of Outdoor Pursuits at the University of Texas at San Antonio; and graduate assistant of the Outdoor Adventures program at North Carolina State University.

The Camp ClapHans Chronicle

To sign up for the monthly camp newsletter, e-mail Megan Stanek at mstanek@jdmc.org.



The Chickasaw Cabin, donated by the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, was the first cabin to be completed at the campsite.



The activities building is completed and waiting to receive its first campers in June 2013.

[See Sibshops Study page 4](#)



Camp ClapHans

Fast Facts

Opening: Weekly camp sessions will begin June 9 and end July 26, 2013

Age Limit: The camp is for kids with special needs ages 8 to 16.

Camp Location: The camp is located on the south side of the McCarty Center's 80-acre campus in Norman, next to an 11-acre lake. The camp currently features two cabins and an activities building.

Construction Update: The second cabin is almost complete. The cost of construction to date is \$768,000. Funding for this project is through money donated by individuals and groups to the J. D. McCarty Center Foundation.

Camp's Namesake: Camp ClapHans is named in honor of Sammy Jack Claphan, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and an Oklahoma native.

Claphan played football at the University of Oklahoma and graduated with a degree in special education. He played in the NFL for several years and after retiring returned to Oklahoma to coach and teach special education. He died in 2001.

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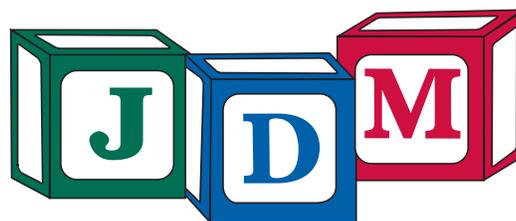
Sibshop Study

had a positive effect on the feelings they had for their siblings; Sibshops taught coping strategies to more than two-thirds of the respondents; three-fourths reported that Sibshops affected their adult lives; and 94% said they would recommend Sibshops to others.

The authors of the study also stated that the "results show that many aspects of the Sibshop program appeared to serve as protective factors for siblings of individuals with disabilities, a population who is frequently considered at risk and the study shows that these positive results last into adulthood."

Norman Sibshops are sponsored by the McCarty Center, Oklahoma Developmental Disabilities Council, The Oklahoma Family Network, Sooner Success Child Study Center Program, Down Syndrome Association of Central Oklahoma and Sooner Bowling Center in Norman.

Norman Sibshops are coordinated by Kerri Brooks and Amy Wood. For more information contact Brooks at 405.249.1925 or at normansibshops@gmail.com.



Sun, Sweat and Watermelon Seeds

Employees show off Olympic talents during JDM games

London wasn't the only place this summer with Olympic stars. The McCarty Center also had its share of stellar athletes who shined during the 2012 "JDM Employee Olympics."

The games took place July 31-Aug. 10 and included volleyball, trivia, basketball, a dutch auction, a watermelon seed-spitting contest, floor scooter races and a talent show.

Other games included the McCarty Center's versions of the "Amazing Race," "Top Chef," "The Voice" and "So You Think You Can Dance."

All the games featured prizes for the first,- second,- and third - place winners. The prizes included free JDM T-shirts, jeans days, free lunches in the cafeteria, gift cards and vouchers for new JDM cups.

Plus, employees were given raffle tickets in each game they played to put toward some amazing big-ticket items. These items included an iPad, digital camera, e-reader, Warren Theatre gift card, Redhawks game tickets, BJ's Restaurant and Brewhouse gift card, O'Asian Fusion gift card, Amazon gift card, iTunes gift card and cash prizes.

[See Games on Page 5](#)

Employee appreciation week at JDM

It's a long-standing tradition at the McCarty Center to celebrate our staff and the dedicated work they do in support of the kids and families of Oklahoma that we serve. It's simply called "Employee Appreciation Week."

This year, employee appreciation was the week of September 24. During the week a special lunch, dinner and breakfast were held to honor employees from all shifts.

During these meals, 24 employees were awarded J. D. McCarty Center service pins representing 180 years of service. Longevity of McCarty Center employees is one of the elements that contributes greatly to the continuity of care provided to our patients.

Five years:

Vickie Brady
Dena Evans
Julie Richards
Hellen Holcomb
Rob McCalla
Karri Hokett
Heather Warner
Sarah Quinnett
Patrick Grose
Tabitha Moyer
Darrell Green
Tiffany Sullivan
Ashli Velez
Sandra Diehm
Heather Terpening
Michelle Eaton
Michelle Carr

Ten years:

Michael Hathcock
Lydia Zackery

Fifteen years:

Sandy Atherton-Burgin
Kristi Obermiller
Lucy Naugle-Scales

Twenty-five years:

Dean Bischoff



Cerebral Palsy Commissioner Joe Steil (left) and Debbie Barrett, director of human resources, congratulate Dean Bischoff for his twenty-five years of service to the McCarty Center.



A festive, Las Vegas themed buffet table was set for McCarty Center employees for the annual Employee Appreciation Week luncheon.

At right, Direct Care Specialist Jennifer Roberts smiles with delight as she gets ready to eat her employee appreciation lunch.



Staff member Dani Phillips makes her way through the Employee Appreciation Week lunch buffet. Making sure employees are taken care of are human resources staff Tina Martinez (left) and Debbie Barrett.



Some of the hospital's dietary staff get a chance to eat someone else's cooking for a change during the annual Employee Appreciation Week luncheon. Seated left to right are Dencia Wilson, Kyong Shields, Linnie Richie, Anita McKinney and Cheryl Sosa.



Occupational therapists Caleb Reed, Candace Munson and Robin Massey enjoy an Employee Appreciation Week lunch prepared by the McCarty Center's Conference Center Executive Chef Galyan Oliver and his staff.



Games

The games were hosted by the newly formed Employee Activities Committee. The committee used proceeds from the recent hospital T-shirt sales to spend on the games and prizes.



The secret ingredient for this employee "Top Chef" throw down was bacon. Top Chef judges (l-r) Ray Bradley, Cindy Lewis and Darrell Green sample contestants gourmet offerings featuring bacon. Michelle Eaton (right), the Top Chef contest coordinator watches as the judges begin their sampling.



Employee volleyball teams competed for prizes and bragging rights during the 2012 Employee Olympics held July 31-August 10.



Speech-Language Pathologist Maria Bratton zips across the floor during the McCarty Center's Employee Olympic Games event of scooter racing. In the inset, Public Information Manager Sharla Bardin takes a breather after her scooter race.



Darrell Green serves for match point during the Employee Olympic Games volleyball match.



Cheryl Sosa of the dietary department places her watermelon seeds through the obstacle course that makes up the watermelon spitting contest. Keeping score is Kyle Cottrell (left), occupational therapist.