

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

## Mobile screening program offers information, free screenings to families of children with special needs

Families in southern Oklahoma who have children with disabilities learned about services to assist their children during a mobile screening program offered by the McCarty Center on Oct. 5.

Families had the opportunity to meet with the McCarty Center's screening team from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Johnston County Library, 116 W. Main in Tishomingo, to find out about resources available to children through the McCarty Center and through state and federal programs.

The hospital's team also offered free autism spectrum disorder screenings and free screenings to families to determine if their children qualify for inpatient evaluation and rehabilitative services at the McCarty Center.

Typically, a family must travel to Norman for a screening. Now, the mobile program brings that service to them, along with information about other programs in the state that can benefit children with special needs.



Susan Long, RN, (left) and Sandra Myers-Johnson, psychological clinician, evaluate Layla Gonzales at the Johnston County Library in Tishomingo on Oct. 5.

The screenings consisted of interviews with parents and their children about the child's medical, social and behavioral history. The screening team is made up of a nurse, social worker and psychological clinician.

The team shared information about the hospital's comprehensive inpatient evaluations, inpatient respite care and outpatient services, said Richard Mann, the hospital's director of social services and a

coordinator of the mobile program.

The McCarty Center started the mobile program in April to reach more families in Oklahoma and learn more about the needs they face. The McCarty Center provides medical care and physical, occupational, speech and language therapy for children on an inpatient and outpatient basis and serves children from birth to age 21.

"We want to create opportunities for more of Oklahoma's children with special needs to be reached and served by our staff," said Vicki Kuestersteffen, director and CEO of the McCarty Center.

Kuestersteffen said another goal of the mobile program is to reach out to families who live in counties that are underserved by the hospital. Last year the hospital provided services to children from 57 of Oklahoma's 77 counties.

"We're trying to eliminate that distance barrier by going to them," she said. "We're bringing our staff and their expertise to them."

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## Mobile Screening Program

Tishomingo was selected by the McCarty Center as a mobile screening site because it's located in Johnston County, which is one of the counties identified as being underserved by the hospital. Employees looked at places that have not received hospital services within the last year. The majority of those counties are along the state's borders.

The mobile program's first stop was in Holdenville in April, and Kuestersteffen said plans are to do the mobile screenings two to four times a year to help reach families in the targeted counties.

She said the program also gives employees the opportunity

to talk with families about hospital programs that can benefit them where they live, such as the tele-therapy program that uses interactive video to provide therapeutic and follow-up services to children.

Kuestersteffen said overall she believes the mobile program will help the hospital build relationships with more families and connect them to services that can benefit their children.



The Tishomingo mobile screening team (l-r) of Richard Mann, director of social services, Susan Long, RN, and Sandra Myers-Johnson, psychological clinician, pose outside the Johnston County Library before the screening process begins.



Former State Representative Paul Roan of Tishomingo stopped by the mobile screening to visit and learn more about the program. Shown here (l-r) are Roan, Vicki Dewett, baby Caden's grandmother, Richard Mann, baby Caden, a sibling of a screening patient, and Sandra Myers-Johnson.

## Art with heart

*ECU student says interning at the McCarty Center has been inspiring, educational and life changing*

Kyla Beasley has a heart for art and a passion for working with people with disabilities.

That's why she considers herself fortunate to have an internship that combines both.

Beasley, a senior at East Central University, is spending this fall semester working at the McCarty Center.

Beasley paints, plays games and makes posters with the patients. She also assists with special events at the hospital, such as setting up games for children to play during festivals. She also joined the kids on a field trip to the Oklahoma State Fair.

"I love it at the center so much and I love these kids," she said. "I wake up every morning and I look forward to my job."

Beasley, 22, said the internship also gives her the chance to use her skills in art to help kids express themselves. That has included working with the children on coloring pages or creating banners that highlight their handprints.

She also savors the sweet moments she shares with the kids, like giggling with an 8-year-old girl while they played catch and holding a 4-year-old as he

## The Building Block

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# Hughes Scholars bring stomp music to McCarty Center patients

Hughes Scholars from Rose State college are an elite group of 10 students whose mission is to expose kids to various forms of art, music and theater.

Hughes Scholars Jondi Dyer, a sophomore music engineering major from New Orleans, La, and Micayla Eddy, a freshman art major from Harrah, fulfilled their mission when they brought stomp music to the patients of the McCarty Center.

Stomp was created in Brighton, England, in the summer of 1991 by co-creators Steve McNicholas and Luke Cresswell. Stomp uses a variety of everyday items like push brooms, trash cans, trash can lids, paint cans, 55-gallon drums, pots and pans to create rhythmical, percussion music. Anything that someone can use to beat out a rhythm is an instrument of stomp.

Dyer and Eddy brought large metal and heavy plastic trash cans, small plastic buckets and small metal paint cans for the kids to use to produce a variety of sound and rhythm along with colorful drumsticks. The Hughes Scholars donated this equipment to the hospital.

Stomp performances have been seen in venues all over the world, as well as in TV commercials and as part of the closing ceremonies of the 2012 Summer Olympics.

The late Francis White Hughes was a longtime educator, community leader and former

Rose State Regent. Through her Hughes Scholars program she helps students accomplish their dreams in the field Francis White Hughes loved - fine arts.

Students apply, are interviewed and then selected for the Hughes Scholarship. It is available to full-time Rose State College students majoring in art, music, theater, music engineering and art librarian.

According to Eddy, the next trip to the McCarty Center by Hughes Scholars will be to introduce the kids to theater. "We'll read stories to the children and then help them act out the story," Eddy said.



Direct Care Specialist Brandi Taffies (left) assists Wynter Huett in beating out a rhythm as they follow Hughes Scholar Jondi Dyer as he hammers out a rhythm on a metal trash can during a Stomp music presentation.



McCarty Center patient Randal Al-Dabbagh, right, matches Rose State College Hughes Scholar Micayla Eddy lick for lick as they bang out some rhythms on the metal trash can. The Stomp music presentation taught the patients that they can make music using almost anything at hand.



Kyla Beasley, a Sulphur High School graduate and a senior at East Central University, is an intern this fall at the McCarty Center. Her work has included painting and playing games with the patients. One of her projects involved creating banners for the hospital's recent "Thunder Appreciation Day."

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## Kyla Beasley

napped on her shoulder.

"I go home every day wishing I could take them all home," she said. "They are all beautiful."

Beasley's interaction with the children has impressed Jennifer Giamelle, the McCarty Center's volunteer coordinator and the student's supervisor at the hospital.

"The connection she has made with the children is a bond that cannot be broken. The kids know they can go to her and she is someone who they can relate to. She is a role model, and I am proud to have Kyla as a hospital volunteer," Giamelle said.

Beasley said working with kids with disabilities is rewarding and inspiring. Before the McCarty Center, she worked with children at the Oklahoma School for the Deaf in Sulphur. Her mother is an employee at the school, so Beasley would visit and spend time with the students at school activities.

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## Kyla Beasley has a heart for art & the kids

Beasley's family has also influenced her desire to work with people with special needs. She has a grandmother who is deaf and blind, and a grandfather who is deaf. Beasley also has a younger cousin with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. Through him, she learned about the therapeutic benefits of art since he used coloring and drawing as a way to improve his mood and focus.

"I just think everyone needs something that they love and are passionate about, that can make them feel good about themselves and something they can use for tough times."

Beasley said in her own life she uses art as a way to have fun, build confidence, reduce stress and express her feelings. She enjoys photography, free-hand drawing, dabbling in watercolors and creating scratchboard art projects.

Beasley said she knew in high school that she wanted to pursue a career in art but also wanted to use her talents to make a difference in someone's life. Once she got to college she decided to major in human services counseling and minor in art. She will graduate in May 2013 with a bachelor's degree from ECU.

Initially, her plans were to become an art therapist and work in hospitals with kids who are terminally ill. She changed her focus after taking a class on the

aspects of disabilities.

Beasley said the class renewed her interest in working with kids with special needs. "Just being around them is heartwarming and so pure."

She talked with Regina Robertson, an assistant professor of human resources at ECU, about her interests, and Robertson helped coordinate the internship at the McCarty Center.

"I thought of Kyla for the internship because she is a wonderful young woman with a delightful personality and one of the most creative students we have had. So, I just had a sense that she would be ideal to work with the population at the McCarty Center," Robertson said.

Beasley's time at the hospital has proven to be more than just fun, festivals and finger painting. It's also altered her career path.

She now wants to expand her focus to include recreational therapy, which uses activities such as arts and crafts, animal therapy, games and field trips to help people with disabilities or illnesses maintain their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Beasley plans to become a certified recreational therapist and said the field excites her because she can use art and other activities to help kids with special needs find their creative outlet.

"If it wasn't for the McCarty Center, I wouldn't have realized more about recreational therapy and realized that's what I really think I'm meant to do. I believe wholeheartedly this is where God wanted me to be," she said. "I'm learning things at

the center that I couldn't learn from a book or from a class. It's sending me on the right road."



ECU intern Kyla Beasley paints McCarty Center patient Kyle Clark's hand as they make hand prints on a banner project.

## McCarty Center "Thundered Up" this fall

Patients and employees at the McCarty Center got rowdy for Rumble in September.

Rumble, the mascot for the Oklahoma City Thunder, visited the hospital for a special "Thunder Appreciation Day." He was also joined by two Thunder cheerleaders.

The hospital hosted the "Thunder Appreciation Day" to spotlight the patients and employees' love for the team. During the NBA finals in the spring, some of the patients participated in a video to encourage the team. The video - titled "JDMC Kids Thunder Up!!" - is on YouTube

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"Fear the beard." As a part of "Thunder Appreciation Day," Kyla made James Harden beards for the kids to wear during a visit from the OKC Thunder mascot Rumble and Thunder cheerleaders.

# Thunder Up

and was produced by therapists at the hospital.

Representatives from the Thunder organization watched the video and then contacted the McCarty Center about having Rumble visit the kids.

“Thunder Appreciation Day” included photos with Rumble and the cheerleaders, free food and basketball-related games.

The Thunder connection has continued at the hospital. In October, some of the patients were invited to attend a game as participants in the “Tickets for Kids” program that provides children from schools and community youth organizations the opportunity to attend a game through player-donated tickets.



Connor Miles, grinning ear-to-ear, poses with OKC Thunder cheerleaders during “Thunder Appreciation Day” at the McCarty Center.



Eagle Scout candidate Zachary Burkett works on one of 26 light posts he helped install as a part of his Eagle Scout project. The posts will have solar lights installed that will light the way down the Camp ClapHans entry road.

## Student chooses Camp ClapHans project to help earn Eagle Scout rank

Zachary Burkett, 17, of Norman is working to earn the rank of Eagle Scout and installed light posts this fall at Camp ClapHans for his project.

Eagle Scout is the highest rank bestowed by the Boy Scouts. Burkett and other members of Troop 217 placed 26 posts on the road leading to Camp ClapHans, which is a residential summer camp for kids with disabilities that opens in June 2013. The camp is an outreach project of the McCarty Center.

Burkett said he was excited about being able to help the camp. “I like doing hands-on projects like this. You just get a good feeling.”

He was grateful to have the support from other members of his troop.

“The project went much faster than I had anticipated. The outcome of all the scouts who had showed up was way beyond what I was expecting,” Burkett said. “We were basically finished in a few hours, and every post turned out great. I really

(l-r) Maria Greenfield, director of occupational therapy, Vicki Kuestersteffen, hospital director & CEO, and Candace Munson, OT, do their best James Harden impressions during “Thunder Appreciation Day.”

enjoyed doing my project and getting my hands dirty. I can't wait to return the favor to the scouts who helped me when it's time for their project.”

Burkett's older brother, Brandon, also selected the McCarty Center for his Eagle Scout project years ago and built a pavilion on the hospital grounds.



Tom Burkett (left), helps his son Zachary Burkett set a rustic lamp post in cement along the entry road to Camp ClapHans. The lamp post project was Zachary's Eagle Scout project.



Teri McCullar, left, her mother, Dorothy Harkins, and Cara Taylor, a speech-Language Pathologist at the McCarty Center, display lap blankets that Harkins donated to the hospital's patients.



Judy Churchwell, left, and Sandra Johnson are employees with the Norman Public Schools' transportation department. The department collected toys for the McCarty Center's hospital units this Christmas.

# Christmas parties come in threes at the McCarty Center

Three big events traditionally mark the coming of Christmas at the McCarty Center: The Lighting Party, The Oklahoma Municipal Contractors Association Christmas Party and the McCarty Center's Children's Christmas Party honoring the 40 et 8.

The Lighting Party kicks off the Christmas season on the first weekday of December. The party is for inpatients, outpatients, families, staff and invited guests.

Party activities include the ever popular golf cart parade, a visit from Santa Claus, entertainment and snacks for everyone.

"The creativity and engineering that goes into building a float on a golf cart is really amazing," said Dani Phillips, the originator of the golf cart parade. "The golf cart floats are also great team building projects for



First place in this year's golf cart parade was hospital unit #4 with the Abominable Snowman topping the Christmas tree.

Second place was The Island of Lost Toys by the psychology department.

Finishing in third place was the Nutcracker from the therapy department.

## OMCA donates record \$52,000

The Oklahoma Municipal Contractors Association kicked off their annual Christmas party for the kids by presenting Vicki Kuestersteffen, director and CEO, with a check for \$52,000. The funds will go to support Camp ClapHans, a residential summer camp project of the McCarty Center.

OMCA conducts a golf tournament each September at the Twin Hills Golf & Country Club in Oklahoma City. The proceeds from the event go to putting on a Christmas party for the kids, with the balance being donated to the hospital.

The final party in the Christmas trifecta was the McCarty Center's Children's Christmas Party with the 40 et 8 of Oklahoma.

This was the 64th year that the 40 et 8 have helped Santa Claus deliver presents to the inpatients of the McCarty Center.

*At left, the Abominable Snowman puts a tree topper on the Christmas tree. This was the first place float presented by hospital unit #4. This year's theme was famous Christmas characters.*



*OMCA presented a record donation to the McCarty Center at this year's OMCA Christmas party. Participating in the check presentation are (l-r) Santa and Mrs. Claus, OMCA president Craig Parker, Rick Moore, OMCA executive director, Vicki Kuestersteffen, McCarty Center director and CEO, and Megan Stanek, Camp ClapHans director.*

The 40 et 8 of Oklahoma is a veterans group, and the original founders of what is now the J. D. McCarty Center.

Close to 500 people attended this year's children's Christmas party.

In keeping with a long-standing 40 et 8 tradition, all children ages 12 and younger were invited to visit Santa's workshop after the party to pick out a gift for themselves. The 40 et 8 want to make sure that every child has a gift for Christmas.



*Santa Claus, aka Jason Wheeler, and McCarty Center inpatient Bryanna Ward have a serious conversation about what she might want under her Christmas tree this year.*