

Gutter Dance turns sweet 16 this year

Team registration is open

The Gutter Dance, a charity bowling event presented by the Hal Smith Restaurant Group, turns sweet 16 this year. This event was created to support the McCarty Center's Camp ClapHans, a residential summer camp program for kids with special needs ages 8 to 18.

In the early years the Gutter Dance proceeds went to develop a camp tuition scholarship fund. Now that fund is sustainable and proceeds go to the actual operations of the camp.

Gutter Dance 16 will be held Thursday, May 16, at the Sooner Bowling Center, 550 24th Avenue NW in Norman. As a part of the sweet 16 celebration, participants will be treated to snow cones provided by Eskimo Sno from 6-7 p.m. and birthday cupcakes from Abbey Road Catering during the event.

According to hospital spokesperson Greg Gaston, the Gutter Dance is \$200 for a team of four. Team registration includes dinner catered by Johnny Carino's Italian Restaurant, bowling ball and shoes, two lines of bowling and a chance to win a

trip for two to Branson, MO, courtesy of Reynolds Ford.

At the end of the Gutter Dance, the bowler with the most strikes will win the trip. In case of a tie, the number of spares will be counted. If a tie breaker is still needed, the high score will win.



Chris Autry was last year's winner of the Branson trip for two. Autry rolled 12 strikes for the win.

The trip is 3 days , 2 nights, with accommodations at the Dutton Inn in Branson. The package includes free breakfast and 2 tickets to The Dutton's music show. The

Dutton's were finalists on NBC's "America's Got Talent." "What makes this trip unique," said Gaston, "is that there are no blackout dates or limitations. Accommodations are based on availability."

Check in and dinner for the Gutter Dancers is from 6-7 p.m. with bowling from 7-9 p.m. Dinner is also available for spectators for \$10. Dinner tickets are available at the door.

Bowling teams will be competing for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and last-place trophies. There will be a prize for the most creative bowling shirts, as well as prizes for making a strike with a color pin in the rack. Additional door prizes will also be drawn at the end of the event.

Bowlers who are rolling too many gutter balls may buy a "ringer" to bowl frames for them to improve their pin count. Ringer tickets are \$5 and can be purchased as many times as needed.

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Sweet 16

Corporate sponsors of the Gutter Dance include Reynolds Ford, Johnny Carino's Italian Restaurant, Republic Bank & Trust, Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, Norman Family Dentistry and The Norman Transcript.

Registration forms are available at the Sooner Bowling Center, corporate sponsor locations, at Hal Smith Restaurants in Norman and Moore or by contacting Gaston at ggaston@jdmc.org or 405.307.2807.

Bowlers can register online by going to soonerbowl.com and click on the Gutter Dance reservation link.

Deadline for Gutter Dance registration is Tuesday, May 14.



The Building Block

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JDM celebrates 'Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month'

Food trucks, fun fashions and fantastic talents were some of the highlights of the McCarty Center's activities in March to celebrate "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month."

Activities included a week of different clothing theme days -- from "Merica Monday" to "Fitness Friday" -- a visit from the Red Bird Coffee Cart and the Boardwalk Burritos food truck and the annual hospital talent show that showcases a variety of skills from patients and staff.

March also included a visit from a literacy class from the University of Oklahoma who read to patients and activities hosted by the rehab department that gave employees a chance to experience physical therapy, speech and occupational therapy sessions.

In addition, the hospital was the recipient of generous donations from businesses in the community. Starbucks, La Baguette, Old School Bagel Cafe', Waving Wheat Bakery and Bistro, Eileen's Colossal Cookies and Dunkin' Donuts donated treats to employees and patients. Also Elite Trophies of Norman donated trophies for the talent show winners.

The hospital began hosting events in 2014 for "Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month."



Therapists (l-r) Keturah Knight, Danielle Geary, Elizabeth Le and Taylor Epling show off their patriotism with patient Ethan Fitzhugh on 'Merica Monday.'



Maria Greenfield (left), director of occupational therapy, and Dean Bischoff, therapy department technician, enjoy some bagels and hot coffee during a free breakfast.



Director of Nursing Becky Melsek (left) and Tina Martinez, director of human resources, are ready for their 'Fitness Friday' activities. The two recreated the "Hanz and Franz" routine from "Saturday Night Live."

EMI dance program prompts a new career choice

Volunteering in a dance program helped Leigh Hibbard discover a different career path.

In the spring of 2015, Hibbard got involved with the Expressive Movement Initiative, a student organization at the University of Oklahoma that works to introduce the art of movement as an expressive outlet for children with developmental disabilities.

The group has led dance classes for children with special needs at the J. D. McCarty Center since 2013. The students and dancers end each semester of classes with a recital for the public.

The experience with EMI helped inspire Hibbard to pursue a career in speech-language pathology. She now works here at the hospital.

Hibbard heard about the program through a friend and information from OU. She had an interest in dance after taking ballet classes as a child, and thought the program would be beneficial since she was considering a teaching career.

The dance program proved enriching and educational.

"I enjoyed giving kids another way to communicate," she said. "I felt it was very empowering for them."

The program also gives

college students a one-on-one opportunity to work with kids with special needs, while giving the children the chance to learn dance moves, make new friends in the class and perform in front of an audience.



Then OU student Leigh Hibbard (left) poses with EMI student Kaylynne Ackerson and fellow EMI member Amy Ma.

"For me, it expanded the whole way I thought about communication," Hibbard said about the experience.

She said the dance program also gave her the opportunity to meet some speech-language pathologists at the McCarty Center and find out more about their work. Hibbard also was impressed by the collaboration between the speech, physical therapy and occupational therapy departments at the hospital.

"I really liked how interdisciplinary this facility was," Hibbard said.

That semester, she decided to pursue a career in speech-language pathology. Hibbard later graduated from OU with a bachelor's degree in

English and a master's degree in speech-language pathology from Vanderbilt University.

During her job search, she saw an opening at the McCarty Center and applied. She started working at the hospital in December 2018.

"I'm really pleased with the way it turned out," she said. "I'm very happy to be back."



Leigh Hibbard, speech-language pathologist, (left) works with McCarty Center patient Jade Wesley. Hibbard's volunteer work at the McCarty Center helped to plot her career path into speech-language pathology.



Members of EMI and their students participate in the big finale of last spring's dance recital.

