

Journal

Therapists travel abroad to help kids

Two JDMC occupational therapists embraced new challenges and shared their expertise with others during medical mission trips this summer.

This summer, Chelsea Miller ventured to Paraguay and Jackie DeSpain visited Uganda.

Both describe the experiences as once-in-a-lifetime trips and said they are grateful for the programs they participated in and the people they met.

Raising awareness

Miller's 10-day trip gave her the opportunity to meet with students in a new occupational therapy program at a university, help with medical clinics and visit programs that provide healthcare services to adults and kids.

She traveled with a group with the Paraguay Baptist Medical Center Foundation that included a friend of Miller's, who is a certified occupational therapy assistant, a nurse, pharmacist, pediatrician, cardiologist and ophthalmologist.

Miller said most of her time was spent talking with students

in the new OT program at the Universidad Centro Medico Baustista in Asunción, the capital of the South American country.

She discovered that there are only five occupational therapists in Paraguay, so the need for more is great. Miller offered lectures to the students and she and her friend hosted presentations and did hands-on lab activities.

Miller and the team also got to observe therapies and visit a facility similar to the McCarty Center that offers outpatient services and an onsite school.

She noticed how therapy and the goals to help patients overcome obstacles and enhance their independence are the same no matter the country.

Miller also was impressed with the excitement and eagerness of the students to learn more about occupational therapy.

She also talked about the McCarty Center, and the students were mesmerized by a picture of the center's



Chelsea Miller, an occupational therapist at the center, participated in a medical mission trip to Paraguay. While there, she presented lectures to students in a new OT program and visited a facility similar to the McCarty Center. PHOTOS PROVIDED



therapy gym. Miller said their reaction gave her a greater appreciation for the center and its amenities.

Miller said the experience in Paraguay was enriching in a variety of ways, personally and professionally.

Prior to this summer, she had been out of the country once in high school for a mission trip to Mexico. Traveling to Paraguay was "my first big trip adventure by myself."

She was initially hesitant about going on the trip but her husband, Patrick, encouraged

her to go for it.

Miller's glad she did. "It showed me that I can step out of my comfort zone."

That included standing before a crowd and presenting lectures. Miller said she "breaks out in hives just thinking about public speaking" but was able to speak to the group "and I really enjoyed teaching about my profession."

Raising awareness about occupational therapy was another reason she enjoyed the trip.

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Miller said she's grateful that she got to work with the mission team and have the opportunity to teach and encourage the OT students.

Her hope is that the effort results in more occupational therapists in Paraguay.

"It's groundbreaking to be a part of it," she said.

A heart to help

DeSpain knew from the start that she wanted to go on the mission trip.

She was attending a conference in 2018 when representatives from T.O.R.N. Ministries talked about a trip to Uganda and the need for occupational therapists to join them. T.O.R.N. ministries is a nonprofit that is focused on "Teaching Others and Reaching Nations," according to the organization's website.

"I decided seriously at that moment," DeSpain said. "It's been on my heart to do mission work."

She was part of a group of 10 people that included occupational therapists, a student in occupational therapy and representatives from the organization.

Their work included assisting at the Gem Foundation in Kampala, which serves children with special needs who have been abandoned,

orphaned or abused.

The team worked with the staff to offer education on feeding and swallowing, play, seating and positioning. The group also revamped wheelchairs by installing new seatbelts and repairing brakes.

The crew also got to interact with the children and staff during play times, dancing, drumming and singing.

DeSpain said she was amazed by the children and their joy and resiliency, as well as the care and compassion shown by the staff.

"All the kids are so happy and loved," she said.

The team's next trek was to Jinja where they worked with Sole Hope, an organization that aims to help people in the area have healthier lives and freedom from foot-related diseases. Part of the group's work includes providing shoes to help Ugandans avoid jiggers, a parasite that burrows into a person's skin and latches onto blood vessels and leads to infestation, pain, itching and infection, according to information from Sole Hope.

DeSpain said the group helped assist people who were at a foot clinic for jigger removal. The mission team spent time talking and hosting activities with individuals waiting for the clinic.



Jackie DeSpain, an occupational therapist, traveled to Uganda this summer. Her work included visiting an orphanage for kids with special needs, assisting staff and helping to revamp wheelchairs. PHOTOS PROVIDED



The mission group also got to sightsee, including visiting the Nile River and experiencing a cultural dance night.

DeSpain said the trip left a lasting impression.

"I definitely realize how blessed that I am to have the opportunities I have."

She also was touched by the joy she saw from the people, no matter the circumstances they face. DeSpain said she was thankful to be able to use

her experience as a therapist to assist others, and she believes the mission team helped make a difference.

She also appreciates her team at the McCarty Center and the support she received for her first mission trip, not just financially but emotionally.

DeSpain said she wants to continue with mission work.

"It was an incredible trip," she said. "It was worth every second of it."

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Mammograms offered through mobile program



Laurie Chapman with the Breast Health Network's mobile mammography program visited the center on Aug. 16.

A statewide mobile mamammography screening program visited the J.D. McCarty Center in August to offer women convenient access to mammograms.

The mobile program, offered through OU Medicine and the Breast Health Network, serves business, towns and hospitals from across the state.

The program started in 1989, and has provided screenings for more than 200,000 women,

according to information about the program.

This is the second year for the mobile program to be offered at the center, and nine women were screened.

The digital mammograms are performed by trained and certified female technologists using state-of-the-art equipment that is FDA-approved and accredited by the American College of Radiology.



A heart for helping others

We were amazed by the affection shown to our patients from the Sharla and Chrystal Hedges family and the Cleveland County Oklahoma Home and Community Education group.

The Hedges' family, along with daughters, Lilyan, Olivia and Cailyn, donated toys for the center's patients.

The toys were collected during a celebration of the life of their late daughter,

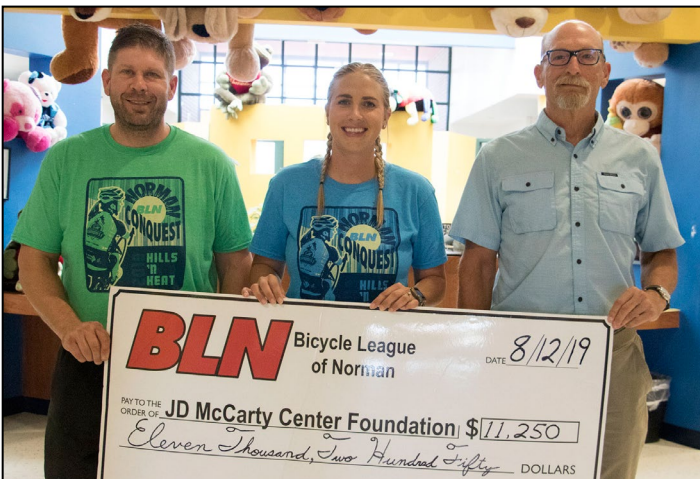
Anna, who was a former patient.

"The J.D. McCarty Center did so much for her and for us," said Chrystal Hedges. "It just made so much sense for her memory."

The Cleveland County Oklahoma Home and Community Education group also displayed an act of kindness to our patients by donating heart-shaped pillows to our kids.



TOP: Sharla and Chrystal Hedges and daughters, Cailyn, left, Lilyan and Olivia, donate toys to the center. BOTTOM: Jennifer Giamelle, left, the center's volunteer coordinator, receives pillows from Phyllis Tunender with the Cleveland County Oklahoma Home and Community Education group.



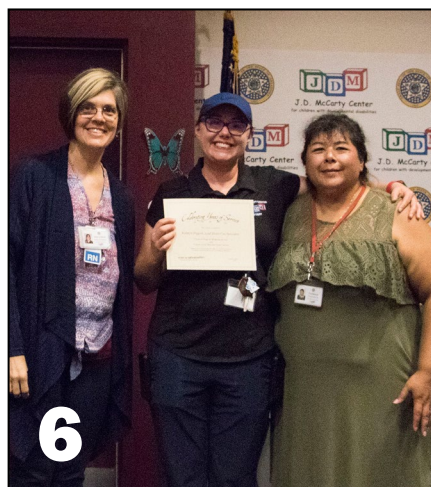
Bobbie Hunter, director of Camp ClapHans, accepts a donation from Brian Riecker, left, co-chairman of the Norman Conquest, and Hal Cantwell, right, president of the Bicycle League of Norman. The donation for the camp is raised through the annual Norman Conquest bicycle tour. Of the donation, \$1,100 is part of the Grimwood Scholarship that was created in honor of Michael Grimwood, who was killed in 2016 by a distracted driver.



Employees honored at annual event

This year's "Employee Appreciation Week" activities included a marvelous meal, great gifts and a celebration for those who have served multiple years at the center.

A big thank you to our human resources department, conference center staff and many other employees who helped decorate the conference center and gather gifts and treats for employees.



1. Employees get ready to enjoy a delicious meal. 2. Ray Bradley, center, is recognized for his service by Commissioners Joseph Steil, left, and Rob McCalla. 3. Desiree Sanders picks out a gift. 4. Angela Marshall is celebrated for her service. 5. This year's lunch featured a picnic theme. 6. Kathryn Higgins is honored for her service by Becky Melsek, left, and Tina Martinez. 7. John Every receives an award for his service. 8. Cynthia Franklin, left, and Tara Wilbanks enjoy the meal. 9. Jennifer Case is awarded for her service. 10. Employees enjoy the buffet line.

Wonder wheels

Car owners visit patients, offer gifts

Patients and staff got to check out some expensive and exotic cars when the Redline4Kids crew visited the McCarty Center on Oct. 5.

Redline4Kids is a nonprofit organization that involves owners of exotic cars who bring their vehicles to children's hospitals to help brighten patients' days.

Cars featured during the group's visit to the McCarty Center included a Ferrari and Lamborghinis. Members also gave patients free toy cars and T-shirts.

Chance Wynn, founder of the organization, said the group's mission is meaningful to him since he spent many years of frequent hospital

visits when he was a child. At 4 years old, he was diagnosed with systemic juvenile arthritis. Growing up, he missed out on typical activities, like playing sports, but grew fascinated with cars. A new hobby was formed, and now Wynn shares his passion with patients in children's hospitals.

"Now that my dream of owning my own exotic car has come true, I want to bring the same kind of joy to other kids fighting similar battles. I am hoping that other organizations will partner with Redline4Kids and join us in our quest to bring joy to kids, and hope to families, through an experience with exotic cars," Wynn said on the organization's website.



TOP: Chance Wynn, founder of Redline4Kids, and Kylee take a closer look at Chance's car.

BOTTOM: Bau checks out one of the cars on display during the visit from Redline4Kids.



TOP: Kaylee and her mom, Kathy, show off the free T-shirt that was given to patients.

BOTTOM: Our thanks to volunteers with Redline4Kids.



Calendar of events



Trunk or Treat

Oct. 29 • 6:30 -8:30 p.m.
Center parking lot

The center is hosting a free Trunk or Treat event for families.



Lighting party

Dec. 2 • 6 p.m.
Behind center building

The center's annual Christmas tree lighting party and parade will include decorated golf carts, the lighting of the Christmas tree and an appearance from Santa Claus!



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FREE!



TRUNK OR TREAT

Join the J.D. McCarty Center, Heartland Camaros and the City of Norman Parks and Recreation Department for a free trunk or treat event. We'll have cool cars to see, activities and plenty of sweet treats to eat.

Costumes are encouraged!

Got a car that would be great for this event? Want to participate? Contact Taryn Johnston at 405-307-2809 or email tjohnston@jdmc.org.

OCT. 29
6:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

J.D. MCCARTY CENTER



2002 E. ROBINSON ST., NORMAN

