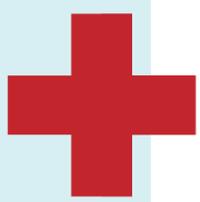


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# The school nurse, the first line of healthcare for students



Submitted photo

From left, JJ Lewis, Tamara Gutierrez, Carily Epps, Anita Smith, Ana Rodriguez, Kendra Ruth.

By JOHN LEE

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Twitter: @jcl1987

Whether it's a cough, a tummy-ache, a broken bone or a scrape, school nurses are the first medical professional students see when they don't feel good at school.

Tamara Gutierrez, BSN (Bachelor of Science in Nursing), has been with Pampa Independent School District for 16 years and is the head of the District nursing department.

Generally, the District has a nurse for each of the six campuses, but lately PISD has been short-handed, leading to logistical changes for this school year.

"I cover a campus right now but I also have to cover all of the nurses and make sure they are up to standards and any new laws," Gutierrez said. "The education system likes to change the laws often."

There is one other registered nurse in the District's nursing department, JJ Lewis, BSN, at Lamar, and the others are LVNs: Carily Epps (PJHS), Ana Rodriguez (Pampa High School), Kendra Ruth (Medically fragile- PHS) and Anita Smith (Travis). Gutierrez covers Wilson and Austin Elementary.

Gutierrez said the main difference between nurses in schools and in the hospital is they cannot call codes and have to care for the students or

staff until EMT's arrive.

"We have a lot of the care but it's pretty equal," Gutierrez said. "We still have to follow doctor's orders like you were in the hospital. Sometimes school is where the first seizure happens or other emergencies. You have to know how to care for those and treat those. Those are the things I go over with our nurses, to make sure they are prepared in case those things happen."

Gutierrez said sometimes their role is not always necessarily medically-related. Sometimes the school setting is more of a mental-emotional challenge.

"Sometimes we are the ones that give the hugs or talk to students into going back to class if they are

PISD cont. on page 6

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- in photo.....
- Linda Lantz
  - Stacy Hillyer
  - Trish Coats
  - Pam Crain
  - Anita Myers
  - Meagan Richards
  - Carla Johnson
  - Barbara Davis



- in photo.....
- Connie Baten
  - Gail Bush
  - Brenda Fields
  - Jonna Jones
  - Dusti Ott
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# Linda Lantz: An advocate for the patient

By JOHN LEE

pampanewseditor@gmail.com

Twitter: @jcl1987

Interim Director of Nursing Linda Lantz has been a nurse for 45 years and got into the field after spending a lot of time around nurses as a young child.

"I was an extreme premy," Lantz said. "The pediatric wing in Hendricks Hospital in Abilene overlooked the nurses dormitory. I spent a lot of time in the hospital. I was born at 26 weeks in 1952 and my parents were told I wouldn't live. I was fascinated because the nurses then still wore navy-blue capes and whites. When I started nursing we still had caps and whites."

Lantz was a "candy-striper" by 13 years old until she was old enough to be an aide at the high school at 16 years old.

"A candy stripe was a teenage volunteer who went and got blood, did orders, took patients to x-ray, etc.," Lantz said. "They were called candy strippers because they wore red and white."

Lantz went to a private school in Abilene to get her LVN before working in a private clinic.

"We were two blocks from the hospital and they sent us all of their emergency work," Lantz said. "We did lots of suturing, pumped stomachs, etc. It was a clinic but [the director] wanted all of his nurses to become EMTs and this was in 1977. I became an EMT and worked on the ambulance service also."

Lantz eventually moved to Borger, worked in their hospital for eight months, before coming to Pampa in 1979.

"I did not go to work here because

I had a son and married someone who had more children, but I did work scout-day camps, taught at Red Cross and youth first aid courses at schools and 4-H," Lantz said. "So I was active, but I did a lot of things to use my license for."

In 1990, Lantz went to work for Shephard's Nursing Home Health.

"Things had changed a great deal in nursing, so I wanted to eventually go back and get my RN and had a lot of classes to take," Lantz said. "I had let my nursing license lapse, which wasn't a big deal, but I had to do some re-education."

Lantz went back to school at Frank Phillips before finishing at Amarillo College. In 1996, she went to work in the emergency room.

"I wound up in nursing management," Lantz said. "We had three departments, which was busy. I did that for four-and-half years."

Lantz left the hospital after her mother, who cared for her son, had some medical issues and home health was a better fit for Lantz' life at the time.

Lantz came to interim in 2014 but had worked home health continuously since 2001.

"I left the hospital in 2006 to go to Shephard's and roughly in 2014 I came to Interim," Lantz said. "I plan to retire here."

Lantz said while she loves emergency work, she says it didn't fit into what she was doing at the time. But Interim, has been perfect for her.

"I love my boss," Lantz said. "I have a great team. It's a great group of people. I occasionally still get to go be a nurse. I did more in the beginning than I do now."

Each place Lantz has worked has



brought unique, and even strange, opportunities.

"When you're really young and eager as a nurse, you want to see everything unusual and strange," Lantz said. "I think the opportunity to help people wherever they are is something that is unique to nursing. Whether it's when they are taking their last breath or their first breath. The first breath you are there with family and everything is joyous. Sometimes when you're taking your last breath, you're there with family and it can be joyous."

Prayer has always been a big part of Lantz' ministry and said she has never had it refused.

Lantz said in home health, relationships are built over a long period of time while the emergency room and

hospital visits tend to be short-term.

"I always like to maximize the impact I can have with the patient whether it's through education and to be the patient advocate," Lantz said. "Sometimes being an advocate means you go to the doctor and say that's not what the patient wants or the patient will ask you to talk to the family. You are their advocate, not the family's or the doctor's."

Nursing has afforded Lantz several different opportunities to build relationships and places to work.

"If I had a life to do it over again, I would still be a nurse," Lantz said. "I may have done some different things in nursing, but I'd still be a nurse."

For more information on Interim Home Health and Hospice, call -806-665-1445.

## Deidra Garcia, LVN

By CALEB DORN

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Deidra Garcia has been a nurse for more than years now. Her reason for joining the healthcare industry is one that is close to her heart.

"I had a bunch of elderly family members, and my aunt that raised me was a nursing assistant and she would take me with her to the house she did home health at. I just thought it was something I would be good at and I had a passion for it. So once I started I realized it was for me." Deidra Garcia said.

She started as a CNA and held that profession for five years before taking a job as a nursing assistant in a doctor's office in Lubbock, but once the head doctor en-

couraged her to become a nurse she applied back home in Pampa at Clarendon College. She moved back in 2015 and completed the program to become a nurse. She has her basics in nursing, as a certified LVN.

"Being a nurses assistant laid a good foundation for me to become a nurse because

its the starting position and it teaches almost a customer service of nursing," Garcia said. "I think nursing has evolved since Covid. Even just sense I was a nursing assistant because you're always going to be under-staffed, and you always have to advocate for your pa-

**GARCIA** cont. on page 6



## Rosio Rios: An asset to Meredith Place residents

By JOHN LEE

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Twitter: @jcl1987

While many businesses and organizations celebrate their employees with "Employee of the Week" honors, Meredith Place (located at 812 W. 25th Avenue), can say they have an employee a step above those commendations.

Rosio Rios, Meredith Place lead med-tech, was recently named West Texas Region's Employee of the Month for Meredith Place's parent company, Enlivant.

"It was unexpected," Rios said. "When Crystal (Arreola, director) sent out the message she said, 'Congratulations, Rosie' and I wasn't sure what for. Then she sent another text saying it. I want to thank my bosses Crystal and Heather, for always being here when we need them."

Rios has been with Meredith Place for more than four years and said training was done in-house and was grateful for the opportunity.

"I've always wanted to be a nurse,"

Rios said. "We have lots of fun. I enjoy doing their hair and the parties. I'm loving the residents. I'm here for everything they need."

Kristie Fuller, Life Enrichment Coordinator, said Rios is an "asset to the Meredith Place residents."

"She is the most caring human being," Fuller said. "I can here her from my office taking care of the patients. She was made to be a nurse and made to care for folks."

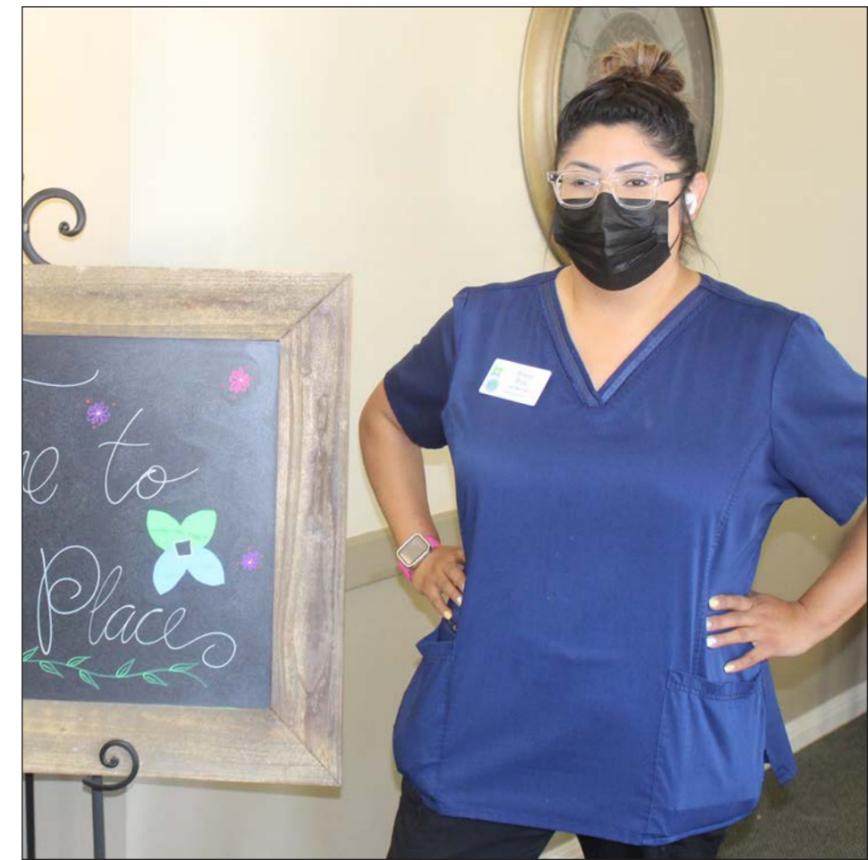
Rios said some of the challenges of the craft can be dealing with patients who have dementia.

"I just love caring for these patients. Some families tell me I'm doing a good job and thank me for taking care of them," Rios said.

Rios added she wouldn't trade her job for the world and oversees about six staff members under her.

Rios has two children, Sergio and Axel, and said Pampa is a great place for her family.

For more information on Meredith Place, call 844-216-8463.



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**Happy National Nurses Day**

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# Harvester Family Medical Clinic



Submitted photo  
From left, Kenleigh Kinnison RN, Paula Smith LVN, Ramie Malone FNP-C, Jeanine Malone FNP-C, Beverly Aycock FNP-C, Tiffany Reames LVN, Linda Keller LVN, Maria Garcia LVN.

# Accent Care of Pampa



Submitted photo  
Front, from left, Carigan McGinty, RN, Case Manager, Patti Alexander, LVN, Crystal Molina, RN, Clinical Supervisor and Monte Mitchell, LVN, Scheduler. Back, Dezaree Moon, RN, BSN, Director, Ashlee Reeves, LVN, Tasha Tripplett, RN, Case Manager and Erica D'Jesus, LVN, Office Coordinator.

## Clarendon College Nursing Program Instructors



Submitted photos  
Left, from left, Darla Watson, Mike Beimer and Sherrie Denham. Bottom left, Ashley McKinney. Bottom right, Katherine Noud. Not pictured, Carly Rodriguez, Alicia Hunter, Deb O' Neal, Karra Jiminez, Anita Simpson, Connie Wildcat, Beth Rice (Administrative Assistant) and Ryan Bennett.



*Thank you Janie...  
We appreciate all you do!*



*Janie Yates,  
LVN*

**Kaylynn Johnston, FNP-C**  
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# Clarendon College: preparing the next generation of nurses

By JOHN LEE

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Twitter: @jcl1987

Clarendon College offers a pathway for Pampa students to earn nursing degrees while staying and working in their hometown.

The College's Nursing Department has several who lead and teach these students, including Ryan Bennett, Darla Watson and Sherrie Denham.

Bennett joined the staff in Jan. 2021 while Denham and Watson have been with the College four and five years respectively.

Bennett has a bachelor's degree in nursing and went to work in the hospitals right out of nursing school.

"I took the traditional route they encouraged, started in Med-Surge and worked at BSA for six months," Bennett said. "After that I went into home health and took care of pediatric patients. The whole family becomes your patient, so it's an interesting dynamic teaching the parents. Sometimes the parents teach you."

Denham started nursing as a C.N.A. and then progressed to an LVN, RN with her associates, bachelors and masters degrees.

"I have worked in ER, Med-Surge, psych, teaching and I've done psych home health and worked in a clinic," Denham said. "I've been everywhere. I've done a little traveling and infection control."

Watson took her first class in 1991 and became an LVN in 1994. In 2004 she became an RN and got her bachelor's degree in 2016.

"I knew I ultimately wanted to end up in a college teaching someday," Watson said. "Maybe at one of my alma maters, and this is one of my alma maters. I took my basics here at Clarendon College. I have focused on correctional health and home

health. I would get bored with one and go back to the other. I liked the job stability of them."

The Board of Nursing recommends that instructors work part-time to keep up with modern practices, but there is also continuing education and professional development.

"We have to have professional development from the State of Texas and we have to have contact hours each two years otherwise we can't retain our license," Denham said. "Nurses are continual learners until you retire."

Clarendon College's curriculum is lab heavy as the profession is a more hands-on career.

"My philosophy is like the surgeons: learn one, do one, teach one," Watson said. "I like to show them how I expect it to be done, I like them to do it, then I like them to teach how to do it. We have high fidelity and low fidelity mannequins and allow them to listen to lung sounds, heart sounds, bowel sounds and feel for pulses/check blood pressures."

Denham said nursing is the best job because of how rewarding it is.

"We have been blessed that we see people at their most vulnerable and at their highest of highs," Denham said. "We see people at a very intimate. When their baby is being born, or telling their grandparents goodbye. That's a privilege. We want them (students) to know everything the book says, but we also want them to know the human aspect. You're privileged to be here. Not a lot of people get to see that."

Bennett added it's important for students to see themselves as more than a by-stander in an emergency.

"Being a nurse and walking into a clinical environment can be a very over-whelming experience," Bennett said. "We try to tackle that here with



Photo by John Lee

From left, Ryan Bennett, Darla Watson and Sherrie Denham.

the labs. Try not to get over-whelmed with so much information. They can set their own pace and their own routine to take care of patients and make good clinical decisions."

In the labs, students are allowed to "fail" usually resulting in the "patient's death," which opens the door for learning from mistakes.

"We debrief and walk through it," Watson said. "What could you have done different? What could you have done better? Let's start thinking that way now. You're allowed to make mistakes and learn from it."

Clarendon College has a mixture of students from fresh out of high school to older students looking for a career change.

"One of our oldest students was in her 70s and our youngest was straight out of high school," Watson said.

Denham said sometimes the young-

er students have a slight shock and learning curve when coming to the college.

"I've seen with older people, because they have life experience, they aren't as shocked as the younger people (about certain scenarios)," Denham said. "They (younger students) know logically they may have to bathe a person. But it hasn't hit them yet the person may be sitting there naked needing the bath. They are young and they know it'll happen. But that first time it can be a little unsettling."

Denham lives in Quanah and works at the Childress and Pampa campuses; Bennett and Watson both live in Pampa.

For more information on Clarendon College Nursing Program at 806-660-2014.

## Kaylynn Johnston - APRN, MSN, FNP-C

By CALEB DORN

calebwiththepampanews@gmail.com

Kaylynn Johnston is a nurse practitioner who works along side Dr. Giang Nguyen at his practice in town. She has been in the healthcare industry for 19 years, and a nurse for 17.

"I have been a nurse practitioner for over five years now and a nurse for 17. I do primary care, of all ages," Kaylynn Johnston said.

A nurse practitioner is a change between an LVN or RN on the scope of practice. An LVN does more technical nursing, an RN does assessments and triage. A NP is a healthcare provider, they see patients, assess them and diagnosis and issue a treatment plan.

"The difference between a NP and a doctor is just the scope of practice," Johnston said. "In the state of Texas we have to have a supervising physician so I hold a lot of doctor duties but because I am not a doctor I have limitations. There is independent practice states where I could have my own practice and stand alone but it's nice to have someone to stand along side with for advice or help instead of standing alone."

She became an LPN, in Texas an LVN, in New Mexico. After completing that program she worked nights in pediatrics for a year while continuing schooling to become an RN. In December of 2005 she graduated from schooling with her associate degree in nursing before taking the boards

to become and RN in 2006. A little while after she finished her bachelors of nursing at Eastern New Mexico University, before moving to Pampa in 2013. She fast tracked her schooling from there to become a nurse practitioner.

"As soon as I got to work here, I just new I wanted to complete my schooling to get my masters and become a nurse prac and hurried it along because I just really new that's what I wanted to do. I started as a CNA and then worked my way up to an RN then LVN and then to where I am now. But it was so good working up because you learn all the steps. It helps you have that appreciation for every level because you've done it all," Johnston said.

"I'd say some of the challenges are the tough cases. The ones where you've done all the diagnosis you can do and still don't have an answer. So then you have to start looking into different avenues because you can't just not have an answer. There are rewards, like seeing kids grow up. Or when someone comes in with a problem that they've had for a while and you help out and solve it. When I worked for the hospital here, I worked in Labor and Delivery so even getting to see some of those babies growing up after helping to deliver them and now I get to be the primary care provider for them. There are a lot of rewards, it's what makes it worth it and worth doing."

Johnston earned her LPN/LVN in New Mexico

on a compact license which actually allows her to be able to practice in the states included in the license.

"I wanted to become a nurse partially because my mother is a nurse but when my sister was born, I was 14 and I was able to help deliver her and take care of her. I got pregnant when I was young and I made the decision because I knew I could provide for my now family by doing it, and the immediate passion that came from helping my mom. I just had a passion and wanted to do what would provide the best life for my family," Johnston said.



## Garcia

Continued From Page 3

patient, doing what's best for them. I think one of the challenges along

with those are raising a family with the long hours it takes to be a nurse or the time it takes to really do what's best for your patient and raise a family."

Along with those

challenges, comes joys of being a nurse. Being a healthcare provider can be strenuous.

"The thing I think I enjoy the most is that it's never boring," Garcia said. "Every day

you're going in there and seeing something new. I sub as a nurse at the school some and you never know what you're going to see there. It also makes you have to rely on your own nurs-

ing judgment. I also do home health with elderly, which is different because you have to think of the patient that is at home and doing what's best for them where dealing with a school

level nursing differs."

Deidra worked for Pampa ISD, at different schools over time. She now works in home health out of Amarillo.

## PISD

Continued From Page 2

having anxiety," Gutierrez said. "Or we are just helping them through their situation. We are the lifeline or the open door for the students. If they come in every day with a stomach-ache we will ask them what's wrong or if they

are having trouble in a class."

Another difference between the hospital and the school is the "patients" are there for more than just a short period of time.

"You're on a different level with your patients," Gutierrez said. "You're with them for years at a time, instead of just a few days."

Gutierrez has been in the medical field since 1996 and after joining the District in 2006, continued to work at the hospital up until the last five or six years.

Gutierrez has to keep up with a number of certifications to be a school nurse.

"You have to have your vision, hearing and spinal screening certifi-

cations," Gutierrez said. "We train the nurses to be CPR instructors to teach staff and we are building the program to teach the students in the older grades. We are all also 'Stop the Bleed' instructor certified. We are going to be the first responders in an emergency at school."

Gutierrez said the injuries can be anywhere

from a skinned need to broken bones at the elementary level to as drastic as being hit by a car at the high school level. Conditions such as seizures and diabetes have become more common district-wide.

"We have a lot more seizures and every year procedures seem to grow such as catheterizations and Type 1 dia-

betics," Gutierrez said. "You have to provide the services through the public school settings."

Gutierrez earned her nursing degree at Amarillo College and earned her BSN from Grand Canyon University.

For more information on Pampa ISD or their nursing department, call Wilson Elementary at 806-669-4930.



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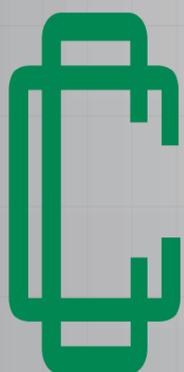
### STEP FOUR

#### *Registered Nurse*

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For more information about the pathways in Allied Health, please email: [nursing@clarendoncollege.edu](mailto:nursing@clarendoncollege.edu).



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