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A PUBLICATION OF MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

JANUARY 2017

VOLUME 4

ISSUE 1

SANTA DAY IS A SEASONAL HIGHLIGHT FOR ONE AND ALL



BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Gene Miller, who used to live in New Orleans, said the atmosphere on Santa Day reminds him a little of another high-spirited celebration – Mardi Gras.

“This is a whole lot of fun,” said Miller, a retiree who was the first Santa to arrive and suit up on Dec. 21. “It’s something the patients really love. You can tell it’s a big day for them. Everybody loves Santa.”

The gathering of Santas and their

helpers on Building 71 is a festive occasion in its own right. Many of the volunteers are longtime participants in Santa Day, which was started in the 1970s by former MSH Director James “Jimmy” Stubbs, and Santa Day is much like a reunion.

“I’ve done this every year since I’ve been at UMMC, which was 2000,” said Carl Mangum, an Associate Professor of Nursing at University of Mississippi Medical Center. “And I did it for five years before that when

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2. To ensure patients and residents receive quality services in safe settings and utilize information/data management to enhance decision making and service delivery.
3. To provide administrative oversight and management to effectively and efficiently administer services.

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Aspire is published monthly by Mississippi State Hospital, PO Box 157-A, Whitfield, MS 39193, (601) 351-8000. ©2014.

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Senator Hillman Frazier hands out gifts to residents.

I worked out here. So that's 22, 23 years."

Mangum always brings a small pack of elves – typically UMMC nursing students – to assist him on his rounds to the Male Receiving Units, Buildings 201 and 203.

"I do enjoy this very much," Mangum said. "It's one of the highlights of the holiday season for me."

As former MSH Police Chief James Blackwell, another frequent Santa, said, "It's hard to say no to being Santa Claus."

Judge Tom Broome of Rankin County Youth Court not only brings his own "elves" but also his own Santa suit.

"I wouldn't miss this for anything," Broome said as he headed off to Building 46, where he handed out gift bags and led the patients in singing a number of Christmas songs in the day room.

Bill Bobbs, a longtime Friends of MSH, Inc., board member, estimates he has been a Santa close to 30 times.

"I'm so glad to be asked every year," Bobbs said. "I look forward to it. I've got three granddaughters who can't

wait for me to get back home and tell them all about it. They enjoy it as much as I do."

State Sen. Hillman Frazier was one of the original Santas in the mid-'70s and has missed only one Santa Day, when he was in Asia on business and could not get back to Mississippi in time.

"This is THE highlight of the season for me," Frazier said. "I enjoy seeing all the people out here every year. It's just outstanding."

"It makes you count your blessings coming here for the holidays. The people being served here ... this is their Christmas. It's so good to see the smiles on their faces when they get their presents. The innocence in their eyes just brings about the spirit of Christmas."

Santa Day is the grand finale of the MSH holiday season, which begins before Thanksgiving.

This year, 86 parties were provided on campus by church groups, civic groups and others. A total of 2,005 volunteers hosted those parties, aided with gift and fruit bag preparation or worked in the Christmas House on B-71.



Chris Allen, Marcus Monger, Christina Brown, Dominique Sutton, Deborah Bland, Cintarrio Palmer, Stacey Davis, Lucas Washington, Janice McDonald, Lashelle Steele, Jackie Martin, Ester Jiles, Tralecia Rollins, Robbie Rhodes, Raven Darby, Brionna Epes, Courtney Taylor, Marilyn Purvis, Michael Bilbrew, Shaun Davis, Raisa Ford, Iesha Williams, Angie Ware, Kenitra Walker, Albert Jeffries. Not Pictured: Jestyne Mcgee, Holly Haralson, Karl Calendar, Brandon Tarrio, Alisa Ross, Kelvin Moore, Terrence Brown, Shonnett Wilson, Joseph Jenkins, Jacarran Crump, Brad Elmore, Anthony Brown.

"These volunteers contributed more than 8,020 hours of their time valued at more than \$190,074," said MSH Director James Chastain. "Donors contributed \$12,715 in monetary gifts to our Christmas activities this year, and gift donations to date total \$17,880.

Monetary and gift donations literally come from every corner of the State and represent a wide variety of individuals, groups, and businesses both public and private."

Among the groups making donations were the Church Women United of Greenville, who bring a busload of items to the Christmas House every year; the Mental Health Volunteers of Jackson County; Winona High School; Collum Food Processing Company from Greenville; and Lakeland Presbyterian Church Deacons of Flowood.

"Every gift, every dollar, and every hour donated that you

heard about today reflects an individual or a group somewhere in the State who was moved to help us bring joy to the patients and residents we serve," Chastain said. "This day would not exist without each and every one of those individuals and people like yourselves that are willing to give of their resources, time and talent for others."

Santas for 2016 also included Chastain, Tony White of the MSH Rehab unit, Gale Martin, Larry Taylor, Billy Moorehead, Martin Keil, Rusty Varner, Don Dees, Daniel Elliott and Patrick Fontaine.

Therapeutic Recreation staff also helped out on Santa Day.



SPIRIT OF GIVING SHINES DURING HOLIDAY SEASON AT MSH

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN



Staff on Building 45 stirred up some holiday fun by holding an Ugly Sweater Contest in which the winner is actually the loser.

The holiday season began at Mississippi State Hospital in mid-November and continued to build merry momentum through Santa Day on Dec. 21.

This year, 86 parties were provided on campus by church groups, civic groups and others. More than 2,000 volunteers hosted those parties or participated in other holiday activities such as Fruit Day.

In addition to the many church-affiliated volunteers who visited the campus, other groups that hosted parties or sang carols or otherwise spread holiday cheer were St. Richard Catholic Church Boy Scout Troop #30 of Jackson; the Junior Auxiliary of Rankin County; Jingle Belles and Beaus of Florence; and Delta Sigma Theta sorority.

Joining the many groups that made donations this year was Merit Health Rankin. A group from the Brandon healthcare facility dropped off a donation of sheets, blankets and socks on Building 34, Madison Inn, on Dec. 22. Merit Health Rankin employees took up the donations as



Pictured (left to right) are Nick Renda, Roscoe Greene and Melanie McMillan of Merit Health Rankin, Madison Inn Administrator Jerone Lacking and JNH Director Bill Bullock.

part of a Christmas project, which they plan to make an annual event.

For the second straight year, Puckett Machinery, through its Puckett Serves foundation, prepared a catfish dinner for MSH patients as a holiday treat on Dec. 7.

The company, which counts a facility in Flowood among its several locations in the state, sponsors catfish or chicken cookouts for roughly a dozen organizations around the holidays each year. Puckett volunteers cooked up a big batch of cat-

fish, fries and hushpuppies and then packed the dinner boxes, which included coleslaw and a dessert.

Puckett Serves is a faith-based, non-denominational foundation supported by the company and dedicated to serving people in need. "We give every one of our employees the opportunity and time to give back to the community through this mission," said Richard Puckett, the chairman and CEO of the company who also served as the head cook.



Boy scouts from Troop #30 of Jackson and volunteers from Puckett Machinery were among the groups that hosted parties at MSH in 2016.

WINDHAM ACHIEVES GOAL AS MLEOTA GRADUATE

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Terrica Windham has always had a wide range of interests. Growing up in the country, she's liked to ride horses and four-wheelers and go fishing now and again. She was a cheerleader in high school. She went to college to become a certified medical assistant.

But there was something else that occupied a corner of her mind.

"I've always been fascinated by police work," she said.

That fascination ultimately led her to the stage at the Brandon Civic Center, where on Dec. 1, she graduated from the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers Training Academy and became a certified police officer on the staff at Mississippi State Hospital.

"I'm the type of person that wants to help people, and that's what we do here," Windham said. "I felt like this was a calling."

Windham grew up – and still lives -- in Walnut Grove and graduated from South Leake High School. She



(From left:) MSH Police Chief Jeff Luckey, 2016 MLEOTA graduate Terrica Windham and MSH Risk Management Director Jody Donald.

attended East Central Community College in Decatur and later Virginia College with the intent to pursue a career in the medical field.

After a short time working at a clinic in Carthage, Windham opted to make a big change. She took a job as a corrections officer at the Mississippi Department of Corrections, where she worked for about five years.

She transferred to MSH as a police trainee in October of 2015. "I want-

ed to take the next step in becoming a police officer," she said.

The rigorous, 12-week MLEOTA program "gets you in shape, physically and mentally," Windham said, and is good preparation for the wide variety of duties faced by MSH police staff.

"I really like what I do," she said. "I like it here. It's become my home away from home."

THERAPY, HUDSPETH TAKE TOP HONORS IN CHRISTMAS PARADE

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN



An enterprising crew on Building 27, the Rehab Therapy unit, won the Judges' Choice award – and a \$100 prize – in the Mississippi State Hospital Christmas Parade, which rolled through campus on Dec. 2.

The staff on B-27 chose “Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer” as the theme for its float, suggesting that grandma might need a little physical therapy after such an incident.

The off-beat song is not a classic Christmas carol but gets a lot of play during the holiday season. Written by Randy Brooks, the song was originally performed by the husband-and-wife duo of Elmo and Patsy Trigg Shropshire in 1979, according to Wikipedia.

The Grand Marshal's Award, as chosen by the honored members of the Florentine Club of Florence, went to Hudspeth Regional Center, whose float was titled “It is Musical Magic.” HRC also received a \$100 prize and the honor of choosing the theme for the 2017 MSH Christmas Parade.

Building 41, Monroe Inn, won the Best Representation of Theme award (and \$50) for its “O Christmas Tree” float, and the Most Creative award (and \$50) went to Buildings 69 and 78, Jaquith Inn, for “A White Christmas.”

Other floats entered included: Frosty the Snowman (B-34/28); Run, Run Rudolph (B-29/33); Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer (B-39/45); Jingle Bell Rock (B-23); The Grinch that Stole Christmas (B-21); and The Twelve Days of Christmas (B-201/203).

The grand marshals were Dee Payne, Marilyn Garth, Jessie Buckley, Betty Harpe and Jeannie Pittman, members of the Florentine Club who have volunteered at MSH for more than 30 years. Each grand marshal rode in a vintage car. Bands from Raymond High School, Forest Hill High School, Jim Hill High School, Raleigh High School, Canton High School, Northwest Middle School, Rowan Middle School and Chastain Middle School marched, as did ROTC units from Raymond and Ridgeland High Schools.

There were also motorcycles, a fire truck, 4-wheelers and a vintage tractor. Patients, residents, staff and visitors lined the streets along the route on a warm, sunny day and scrambled for candy tossed from the floats.

As usual, Santa Claus brought up the rear of the parade – last but hardly least.



NEW YEAR BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES

Happy New Year to everyone in the DMH family. I hope you had a great time over the holidays and enjoyed the fellowship of your family and friends over the past several weeks. We know that with the new year will come new opportunities and challenges, but I know we are ready and willing to face them. As I mentioned in my last column, we are preparing for the 2017 legislative session, and I wanted to share some more information with you about what our priorities will be over the next three months.

First, we will continue to advocate a salary realignment for employees in our Direct Care Series. We have approximately 2,900 employees in this series, who all have unique difficulties and situations presented to them every day. We will do everything we can to ensure the Legislature understands the important role they have in taking care of the people we serve. We know many of these employees work multiple jobs in order to provide for themselves and their families. Due to the difficulty of the job and the low compensation, we have a high rate of turnover in this job series. We are requesting a realignment of at least \$2,300 to help ensure these employees will receive a salary that is appropriate with the difficulties this job presents.

Another important item in our legislative agenda will be an increased Medicaid match appropriation for the Home and Community Based Waiver. This waiver allows people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be successful in their homes and communities by reimbursing providers who serve them. This Waiver has been partially funded in the past by a Medicaid program that is no longer available. We want everyone we serve to be successful and resilient in their own communities, so our hope is that an increased Medicaid match appropriation will allow us to continue offering this service.

As I'm sure you are all aware, declining revenues forced DMH to make the difficult decision of closing some services in July 2016. We have requested funds to be able to reopen the 25-bed adult male chemical dependency unit at East Mississippi State Hospital. Though services are also available in the community, treatment at one of our programs can offer the first steps of long-term recovery for some Mississippians.

We are also requesting funding for the Forensic Services program at Mississippi State Hospital, which is the only state-operated program that provides forensic mental health services in the state. A new facility is needed to provide a higher level of security and safety, as well as additional beds to decrease the times people are waiting for evaluations.

Finally, we will be requesting continued funding to allow us to expand community-based services. Over the last several years, the Legislature has appropriated funding specifically to expand services like Mobile Crisis Response Teams and Programs of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) Teams. This funding is distributed in the form of grants to the Community Mental Health Centers, and we are requesting the same \$16.1 million that we have been appropriated for each of the past three fiscal years.

The session began on January 3. It will be quite a while before we know what our appropriations will be, but we will be meeting with legislators often in the coming weeks. As we begin the new year, I would like to share a quote with you by Toni Sorenson about change, "Change doesn't come in nickels and dimes. It comes in dedication and sweat." I know that each and every day you help the people we serve through your dedication and sweat and I thank you for that!

Sincerely,

Diana Mikula, Executive Director/DMH



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Over the last several years, the Mississippi Department of Mental Health and the public mental health system have continued to make great strides to improve the availability of community-based services for individuals with mental illness, substance use and/or developmental disabilities (IDD). Below are a few examples of the progress the State has made.

- **MOBILE CRISIS RESPONSE TEAMS:** In 2014, each of the 14 Community Mental Health Centers developed Mobile Crisis Response Teams to provide community-based crisis services that deliver solution-focused and recovery-oriented behavioral health assessments and stabilization of crisis in the location where the individual is experiencing the crisis. This service is available statewide. In FY 16, the Teams provided 15,442 face-to-face interventions. A total of 22,768 calls were received by the Teams in FY 16. Out of those calls, 17,036 people were diverted from a more restrictive environment.
- **PROGRAMS OF ASSERTIVE COMMUNITY TREATMENT TEAMS (PACT):** Mississippi now has eight PACT Teams operated by the following Community Mental Health Centers: Warren-Yazoo Mental Health Services, Life Help, Pine Belt Mental Health (operates two PACT - one on the Gulf Coast), Hinds Behavioral Health, Weems Community Mental Health Center, Region III Mental Health Center and Timber Hills Mental Health Services. PACT is a mental health service delivery model for facilitating community living, psychological rehabilitation and recovery for persons who have the most severe and persistent mental illnesses and have not benefited from traditional outpatient/community services. In FY 16, there were 85 new admissions to PACT Teams in addition to the 164 already being served.
- **WRAPAROUND FACILITATION FOR CHILDREN:** In partnership with the Division of Medicaid and the University of Southern Mississippi, School of Social Work, DMH has provided training to approximately 500 mental health professionals over the past three years. Wraparound Facilitation is family and youth guided and provides intensive services to allow children and youth to remain in their homes and community. In FY 16, 2,960 children and youth were served with Wraparound Facilitation.
- **PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING:** In 2015, the Mississippi Home Corporation received funding from the Mississippi Legislature to partner with DMH to develop an integrated permanent supported housing project. This will ensure people with a serious mental illness who are housed as a result of permanent supportive housing have the opportunity to live in the most integrated settings in the community of their choice by providing an adequate array of community supports/services. This program began implementation in March 2016. Known as CHOICE—Creative Housing Options in Communities for Everyone—it provided housing vouchers to 48 people during FY 16.
- **COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT TO BENEFIT HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS (CABHI):** CABHI is a three-year grant from SAMHSA to enhance/develop the infrastructure of Mississippi and our treatment service system to increase capacity to provide accessible, effective, comprehensive, coordinated/integrated, and evidence-based treatment services; permanent housing; peer supports; and other services to individuals who experience homelessness. In FY 16, there were 454 people served. CABHI also includes 1) The Mississippi Project for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness Formula Grant Program, which served approximately 700 people in FY 16 and 2) the CABHI/MH4R Enhancement that served 127 people from January to June 2016.
- **CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAMS:** DMH has utilized funding from the CABHI grant to offer Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) for up to 40 officers across the state each year from 2015 - 2017. In FY 2016, three classes of officers were trained, resulting in 38 officers receiving certification in Crisis Intervention Training.

CONGRATULATIONS NOVEMBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



**Direct Care
Dolly Hawkins,
IPS, B-81, A Shift**

Dolly Hawkins has been named Mississippi State Hospital's November Employee of the Month for Direct Care.

Hawkins is a Mental Health Technician who works on Building 81, Chemical Dependency Unit. She has worked at MSH for nine years.

"Ms. Dolly Hawkins does an excellent job with our patients and the staff she supervises," said Marcia Hardge, who made the nomination. "She ensures the day to day functions run smoothly while completing a number of other tasks. ..."

"Ms. Hawkins has a calm demeanor and always tries to accommodate any requests made of her. She readily accepts any job assignment with a positive attitude."



**Clinical Service
Kamekia Grant,
IPS, B-23, A Shift**

Kamekia Grant has been named Mississippi State Hospital's November Employee of the Month for Clinical Service.

Grant, a Mississippi College graduate, is Charge Nurse on Building 23, Oak Circle Center. Grant has been employed at MSH for five years.

"Ms. Grant is detail oriented and an effective communicator," said Candice Larkin, who nominated Grant. "Time and time again Ms. Grant provides a very detailed morning report with accurate information to the building leadership in order to brief and assess what needs to happen that day. ..."

"Ms. Grant is a trustworthy, caring employee, and she is dedicated to the patients she serves. Her attention to detail is as an asset to patient safety and the on-going care of the individuals served."



**Support Services
Bridget Agbahiwe,
Information Mgmt., B-21, B Shift**

Bridget Agbahiwe has been named Mississippi State Hospital's November Employee of the Month for Support Services.

Agbahiwe, a Rankin County resident originally from Magnolia, is an Administrative Assistant and Switchboard Operator in the Information Management Department. She has been employed at MSH for nine years.

"Bridget has a very pleasant attitude and is always helpful to everyone," said Jenny Pittman, who nominated Agbahiwe. "As a switchboard operator, she has to make split-second decisions and deal with many things going on at one time that may include sensitive medical emergencies and 2911 calls. She handles this pressure well and professionally. ..."

"(She shows a) willingness to help anyone regardless of the situation, and by doing so, helps ensure the safety and well-being of the patients and employees of MSH."

CONGRATULATIONS DECEMBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Direct Care
Tammye Hutchins,
IPS, B-45, C Shift

Tammye Hutchins has been named Mississippi State Hospital's December Employee of the Month for Direct Care.

Hutchins, a Carthage native who lives in Jackson, is a Mental Health Technician Assistant Shift Leader who works on Building 45, Female Continued Treatment. A Jackson State alumnus, she has worked at MSH since 1992.

Hutchins was nominated by the B-45 Service Management Team, who pointed out that while her shift assignment is C she is often seen helping out on A shift:

"She demonstrates good teamwork, respect and accountability. She has been observed performing multiple tasks on both shifts, providing one-on-one service for patients, assisting patients with hygiene, deescalating situations in which a patient has become upset, in the chart room documenting – all with a smile on her face.

"Anything that is needed, Ms. Hutchins is always willing to provide her services to patients and staff."



Clinical Service
Donald Bickham,
WMSH, B-60, A Shift

Donald Bickham has been named Mississippi State Hospital's December Employee of the Month for Clinical Service.

Bickham, a McComb native who lives in Brandon, is a Licensed Practical Nurse II who works on Building 60, Whitfield Medical Surgical Hospital. The Southwest Mississippi Community College alumnus has been employed at MSH for 19 years.

"Donald is an outstanding nurse," said Aleshia Ford, who nominated Bickham. "He reports to the call of duty when he is needed. He keeps his phone by his bedside just in case a coworker needs help. He is very thoughtful and kind. Patients love to see Mr. Bickham coming to work.

"(What) prompts me to nominate Donald is his faithfulness to Building 60 and his dedication to patients."



Support Services
Barbara Magee-Morris,
JNH, B-41, A Shift

Barbara Magee-Morris has been named Mississippi State Hospital's December Employee of the Month for Support Services.

Magee-Morris, a Jackson resident originally from Natchez, is a Health Records Clerk who works on Building 41, Monroe Inn. She attended Lanier High School and Contra Costa College in California and has worked at MSH for 12 years.

"Ms. Magee-Morris epitomizes what it means to excel, to go above and beyond the status quo," said Mary Gooden, who made the nomination. "Her precision and mastery is evident well past her particular skill set. She is mechanical in keeping the charts updated and paperwork filed, but she is even more astute when it comes to the minutia – the smaller things. . . .

"But more than all of this, she is a down-to-earth, friendly person that everyone enjoys being around."

BEATTY FITTING IN AS MSH FINANCE DIRECTOR

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

Rachel Beatty's day job involves a lot of number-crunching. The recently named Finance Director at Mississippi State Hospital spends much of her leisure time absorbed in words, those of novels and hymns.

"I like to read, and I'm very active in my church, First United Methodist of Brandon," Beatty said. "I sing in the choir and help with children's choir."

Her choice in books? "I love romance novels," she said. "I'm a girlie girl."

Beatty previously worked at Hudspeth Regional Center as the Business Director. She moved across the road to MSH in October and says she is enjoying her new job, which is similar to what she did at Hudspeth but a little better fit.

"It's a blessing for me," she said.



Originally from Michigan, Beatty and her family moved to Mississippi when she was in 5th grade – with stops in Wisconsin and Virginia in between. She lived in Louisville for a time, then Magee, where she graduated from high school.

She received a degree in accounting from Southern Miss. Beatty said she enjoyed her time in Hattiesburg but has had to switch allegiances.

"Both of my boys went off to school at (Mississippi) State, so we're State fans now," she said.

Her oldest son, Patrick, is now an optometrist in Brandon, while Eli is a junior at MSU. She also has a stepdaughter, Amy Clark, and a grandchild, Liam Clark. Beatty and husband Randy, who works at Revel Hardware, live in Brandon.

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