



The Caring Connection

www.bcbsok.com • For Friends of The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc. • Fourth Quarter 2003

The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc.

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Foundation continues to meet critical needs



The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc., continues to play an important role in helping to improve the health of Oklahomans.

While our current emphasis is on critically needed immunizations, we continue to offer free primary and preventive health care coverage to children whose families meet the income criteria.

In 2003, the Oklahoma Caring Van program expanded its immunization services in two significant ways.

Outreach services were provided to communities outside Tulsa County, thanks to the addition of a fourth Caring Van co-sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma and Bank of Oklahoma, and flu shots were administered this fall to at-risk adults and seniors in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.

In addition, we have been able to respond to the flu crisis this year by offering flu shots to children.

Since the Oklahoma Caring Van program began in 1999, nearly 19,000

children have received more than 43,000 vaccinations.

In the eight years since the Oklahoma Caring Foundation began, I have watched the programs grow from concept to reality.

While my satisfaction in knowing that these programs are helping children is immense, it is important to remember that they would not be possible without the support of many generous contributors and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma.

Working with the Oklahoma Caring Foundation has been one of the most rewarding parts of my long career, and I will miss it when I retire in January.

I ask for your continued support of the Oklahoma Caring Foundation and its mission to improve the health of Oklahoma children. Your generosity makes a world of difference.

Sincerely,

Ann Metcalf, Executive Director
The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc.

First Lady tours Oklahoma Caring Van

First Lady Kim Henry toured the Oklahoma Caring Van during her visit to the Patti Johnson Wilson YWCA Early Learning Center in Tulsa, Oct. 29. The visit was part of her tour of Success by Six centers across Oklahoma.

Mrs. Henry discussed the Oklahoma Caring Van program with Caring Van Coordinator Cindy Hurst and expressed her thanks for providing such a valuable service for the children of Oklahoma.



WHAT'S INSIDE: Hispanic outreach / Flu shots for seniors / Memorial gifts / Donors

Memorial gift honors loved ones

During the time of loss of a dear friend or family member, it can sometimes be difficult to express how much it meant for you to have shared in the person's life.

A memorial gift is an ideal way to express your caring feelings in a way that will help improve the health of Oklahoma children.

Giving a gift to The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc., in memory of someone special to you is simple, easy, and will be used to help children across the state.

In Memory Of
Lawrence A. Harrell, Sr.

From
Southwest Child Development Center

When your memorial gift is received, a letter is promptly sent to the family of the person honored telling them their loved one has been honored in this way. The amount your gift is never mentioned. As the donor, you will receive an acknowledgment of your gift and a tax-deductible receipt.

To make a memorial gift, fill out the information box on the inside flap of the donation envelope provided in this newsletter.

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Third Quarter 2003

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Oklahoma Caring Vans expand Hispanic outreach

The Hispanic population in Oklahoma is steadily increasing, but not all Hispanic children receive the immunizations they need to stay healthy.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children who are members of a racial or ethnic minority, who are poor, or who live in inner-city or rural areas have lower immunization rates than children in the general population.



Yolanda and Jesus Gomez, pictured with Marilyn Mullen, R.N., received vaccinations at the Xavier Medical Clinic, Dec. 3.

The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc., evaluated this issue and determined that the language barrier and lack of information about the services available are two main obstacles to immunizing Hispanic children.

The foundation then explored the best methods to address these needs based upon resources and partnerships across Oklahoma.

To tackle the language barrier, the Oklahoma Caring Foundation partnered with Inter Lingua, Inc., a translation service in Tulsa.

Inter Lingua has translated several materials, including a Caring Van informational brochure and the immunization consent form, into Spanish. The Caring Vans are now able to communicate effectively with the Hispanic community.

The Spanish translation of materials has led to a partnership with the Xavier Medical Clinic, which predominantly serves the Hispanic community in north Tulsa.

The Xavier Medical Clinic is a free clinic, sponsored by

Saint Francis Health System and Catholic Charities, offering minor care for individuals and families without medical insurance. The Caring Vans now offer free immunizations at the clinic bi-weekly.

With the addition of the Spanish materials, the Oklahoma Caring Foundation is seeking additional partnerships to expand the services of the Oklahoma Caring Vans to meet a growing need in the state.

Caring Vans provide flu shots to at-risk Oklahomans

The Oklahoma Caring Vans expanded their efforts to improve the health of Oklahomans by providing free influenza vaccinations to seniors and at-risk individuals in Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

In Oklahoma City, the Caring Vans offered their services to the Oklahoma City County Health Department to provide flu clinics in areas of high need.

Working with the Oklahoma City Immunization Coalition, clinics were strategically planned in the areas of most need. These locations included two of the largest homeless shelters in the Oklahoma City area, low-income senior centers, community centers and churches.

“We provided a good service for people at risk in our community,” said Caring Van Coordinator Brooke Townsend. “The people who received free immunizations at these clinics are people who probably would not have been immunized if the Caring Van clinics were not free and available to them.”

The Caring Vans have provided 1072 vaccinations since the clinics began Nov. 4.

The Caring Vans in Tulsa partnered with the Tulsa Area Immunization Coalition and participated in a one-day free influenza clinic in north Tulsa, Nov. 22. More than 300 people received influenza vaccinations. Pneumonia and tetanus vaccinations also were provided.

The Oklahoma Caring Vans in Tulsa also partnered with the Tulsa City-County Health Department to provide free influenza vaccinations at most clinics this fall.

With such a virulent flu season in 2003, this has been a great benefit to many, Townsend added.

Perry joins Oklahoma Caring Van staff



The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc. is pleased to welcome Caring Van Clinic Coordinator Melissa Perry.

She will be responsible for facilitating clinics at child care centers, walk-up clinics and outreach clinics in the Oklahoma City-area and outside Oklahoma county.

"I'm excited about joining the Caring Van staff," Perry said. "Interacting with people in need is very fulfilling, and I love coming home from work knowing that I've helped so many kids."

Perry is a former marketing associate with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Oklahoma.

For More Information

Oklahoma Caring Vans

The Oklahoma Caring Vans provide free immunizations to children across the state.

To schedule a visit from the Oklahoma Caring Vans or for a list of walk-up clinics, call (405) 841-9783 in Oklahoma City or (918) 592-9487 in Tulsa, or go to www.bcbsok.com and click on Family of Companies, then Oklahoma Caring Foundation.

Caring Program for Children

The Caring Program for Children provides access to health care for children whose families earn too much money to receive financial assistance from the government, yet cannot afford to buy health insurance.

For more information, call (918) 592-9484.

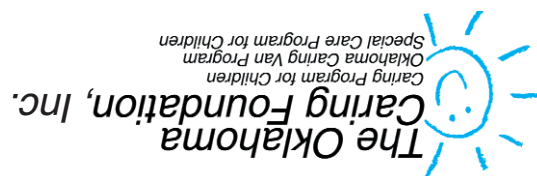
Caring Program Invitational

The fourth annual Caring Program Invitational was held at The Golf Club at Cimarron Trails in Perkins, Okla., Sept. 25.

This annual fundraiser for The Oklahoma Caring Foundation, Inc., raised nearly \$19,000 to help support programs that will improve the health of Oklahoma children.

Twenty-three health insurance producer firms from across the state sponsored the event, including: AON Consulting, Bankers Financial Benefits, BCS, Beale Professional Services, Benchmark, Birchall and Hampton, Capitol Benefits Group, Inc., Clark James Agency, Coates & Rourke Agency, Cole, Paine & Carlin, First Source, Inc., Gallagher Benefits, Horton Insurance Agency, Howell-Stone Insurance, Inc., HRH, Hudelson Insurance Agency, James Associates, Marsh Advantage America, Medley Gunter & Associates, Plan Benefit Analysts, Pro Financial, Roger Hicks & Associates, and Team Insurance Group.

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