

VIM & vigor

WINTER 2015



Healthy Holidays

79 tips for a safe and celebratory season

PLUS How **Tom Hanks** manages diabetes, like millions of other Americans this season

AGING WELL
PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY
AND SPIRITUALLY

WK Rehabilitation Institute takes shape in new, central location

PATIENTS HELP
ONE ANOTHER IN
SUPPORT GROUPS



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Fun and Fellowship

This woman enjoys so much about living at The Oaks, including one activity she never thought she would.

WE'RE FAMILY

With everyone's dedication to our community, the future is bright



The end of the year is a time for family, a time for joy, a time for reflection. As I look back over this year, I am reminded of the kindness and thoughtfulness that abound here, the wonderful people and the many connections we have to each other. I especially am grateful for the WK family that extends throughout our community, people who are not just dedicated to caring for patients but who embrace our larger mission to the community. From the employee who tutors in a special-needs learning program, to the employee who donates food, to the physician who treats people in a homeless shelter, and of course to all the parents who are volunteers at their children's schools and in their churches—I am proud to be “related” to all of them.



As we gather and reflect, we also look to the future with hope. The future is bright for healthcare and senior living, the two largest initiatives for our health system. The solid healthcare foundation we have established will be enhanced by the opening in the spring of the WK Rehabilitation Institute. Learn more about its development in Marilyn Joiner's feature on page 52.

Our Willis-Knighton Cancer Center and its revolutionary WK Proton Therapy Center have expanded treatment options for patients with cancer from Shreveport-Bossier and the surrounding area. We are addressing the large increases in patients with expansions of our services to them, including the variety of support groups. Cancer support groups are just one of the many groups we offer. Darrell Rebouche gives insight into them in his story on page 54 and explains why December is a special month for Coping with Cancer participants.

Terrie Roberts loves to write about the many interesting senior adults she encounters in her job as assistant public relations director at The Oaks of Louisiana. Look for her feature on page 49 that covers the seven dimensions of wellness and her profile of resident Louise Choate on page 56.

I offer thanks to all of those who have contributed to this publication during the year, and especially to you who read it. May you enjoy the blessings of the holidays and a healthy, happy new year.

James K. Elrod
President and CEO

VIM & VIGOR

PRESIDENT AND CEO, WILLIS-KNIGHTON HEALTH SYSTEM

James K. Elrod

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FUNCTIONAL FITNESS FASHION

Follow these tips for a safe, comfortable exercise experience



Courtney Herzog

You've joined a wellness center and now you're wondering, what do I wear? At WK Fitness & Wellness Centers, you don't have to worry about your clothes being loud, trendy or expensive.

We're all about the experience and the objectives, not the fashion. There are a few pointers to keep in mind, however, when choosing your exercise attire.

→ **SHOES.** Proper footwear is the most essential part of your outfit. Athletic shoes specific to the activity

you are doing (running shoes for running, cross-training shoes for weight training, shoes with less traction for dancing, etc.) will ensure your comfort and safety. Never exercise in loafers, dress shoes or open-toe shoes. Always avoid smooth-bottom shoes, as they do not offer the traction, protection and support you need while exercising.

→ **FABRICS.** Synthetic materials such as spandex and polyester or natural materials like bamboo wick away moisture and sweat, keeping you drier and cooler during your workout. Cotton is not the best option, because it absorbs sweat easily. Working out in a sticky shirt is unpleasant.

→ **FIT.** You don't want your shirt and pants so loose that they get caught in exercise machines. Conversely, you also don't want them so tight that they constrict your movements. Do a few practice exercise moves before you leave home to make sure your clothes offer a good range of motion and cover you properly during exercise.

→ **BRAS.** Ladies should wear a sports bra, not a regular bra, when exercising. Sports bras are designed to support a woman and minimize bouncing, pain and discomfort while she dances, runs or lifts her way to better health. I recommend that a sports bra fit snug, not tight, with enough room to glide one finger around the rib cage band and two fingers under the shoulder straps. A good sports bra should be fashioned from wicking, synthetic material that allows for a good range of motion when moving.

→ **ACCESSORIES.** Leave the rings, necklaces, earrings and other fashion accessories at home or in your gym bag. Electronics, fitness trackers, etc., should be secured in an arm pack, a fanny pack or a carrier.

Fitness attire should be about comfort. Comfort = feeling good. Feeling good = a better exercise experience. ■

CALL



All Dressed and Ready to Go?

Head to your nearest WK Fitness & Wellness Center and ask about becoming a member. Or call **318-212-4475**.

HOLIDAY INVITATION: COME SEE THE TOUR OF TREES

The holiday season is approaching and so is the Tour of Trees at The Oaks of Louisiana. Beautiful holiday trees are decorated and placed throughout the campus to delight residents and their families. Residents enjoy opening their home to the public at this time of year.

You are invited to get into the spirit of the season and visit The Oaks, 600 E. Flournoy Lucas Road, on Saturday, Dec. 12, and Sunday, Dec. 13, from 1 to 3 p.m. Tour guides will share information about the inspiration for the trees and decorations. Enjoy complimentary holiday refreshments served in the Clubhouse, adjacent to MarketPlace at The Oaks.

Want a photo with Santa? Bring your camera. He will be in the Clubhouse to greet the young and young at heart.



**Rhonda Peters,
WK Hyperbaric
& Wound Care
Center manager,
and Steven
Kitchings, MD**

TOP ACCREDITATION FOR HYPERBARIC MEDICINE AND WOUND CARE



The staff at Willis-Knighton Hyperbaric & Wound Care Center are enjoying the pride of accomplishment at having received accreditation by the Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMS) earlier this year. Achieving accreditation in a discipline most often involves a rigorous process to scrutinize services, and that is especially true in the medical field.

According to the Hyperbaric & Wound Care Center's manager, Rhonda Peters, UHMS not only reviewed the center's standards and guidelines for conformance to national standards

but also sent a surveyor to observe and conduct interviews to determine that patients did in fact receive the high level of care anticipated.

"We received Level One accreditation," Peters says, explaining that this level is reserved for hyperbaric centers that offer a full scope of services for patients, including 24/7 care available for emergencies, especially those whose life or limbs are threatened.

Willis-Knighton has three full-time physicians in hyperbaric and wound care: Steven Kitchings, MD, and Victoria Everton, MD, in Shreveport and Kirk Grantham, MD, in Bossier City.

EXCELLENCE IN STROKE CARE

When someone is exhibiting signs of stroke, WK Pierremont Health Center is ready to deliver quality results.

Paige Cancilleri is patient care coordinator at the hospital's emergency room and the registered nurse who organized a planning committee for the hospital's stroke center of excellence with the support of Gaye Dean, the hospital's chief nursing officer, and Kim Willis, critical care coordinator. The impetus for the center came from neurology hos-



Paige Cancilleri,
emergency room
patient care
coordinator

pitalist Alan Little, MD, who helped the group make significant strides in the development of enhanced stroke protocol plans.

Susan Cash, RN, director of Willis-Knighton's emergency department, is pleased with the efforts, especially when it means patients can stay close to home and friends and not have to go out of town or out of state for care. "Physician coverage 24/7 with a qualified neurologist is critical for this, and we have it," she says. Having developed protocols, educated staff and worked

on core measures, Willis-Knighton will seek Joint Commission accreditation for stroke, hoping to gain it in 2016.

With the great strides they have taken in early identification of stroke, staff members at WK Pierremont are sharing their expertise and protocols with colleagues at other WK hospitals, providing the foundation for enhanced stroke care in all WK hospital emergency locations.

WEBSITE



The Latest Health News Every Day

Do you like being in the know when it comes to wellness? Willis-Knighton Health System's website has a special "Health News" section that gives you the latest information every day: healthlibrary.wkhs.com/news. This service is just one way Willis-Knighton provides the community with credible information and tools to support their health and answer their questions about disorders and conditions.

BY THE NUMBERS



WILLIS-KNIGHTON
CARE PROVIDERS



1,051
DOCTORS
ON STAFF



1,546
NURSES
ON STAFF
(RN/LPN)



201
CERTIFIED
NURSING
ASSISTANTS



213
NURSE
PRACTITIONERS/
PHYSICIAN
ASSISTANTS

PROTON THERAPY CENTER LEADS THE WAY IN ADVANCED CANCER TREATMENT

The WK Proton Therapy Center treated its first patients just over a year ago. Today, the center has become known nationally and internationally for the care delivered there using the ProteusONE pencil beam scanning system, which delivers a beam of protons with pinpoint accuracy to destroy cancer cells. This advanced equipment is providing new options for patients, including some who were never before eligible for proton therapy.

Unlike traditional radiation, protons stop inside their target. This, plus the precise and narrow targeting, helps to protect surrounding tissue, which makes it an excellent option for treating tumors around critical internal organs. Among the cancers being treated with proton therapy at Willis-Knighton are esophageal, lung, breast, brain, head and neck, and prostate.

Willis-Knighton is also conducting groundbreaking research in cooperation with Harvard, Mayo Clinic, University of Pennsylvania and MD Anderson Cancer Center to provide more access to proton therapy than ever before. These studies include research funded by grants from the National Cancer Institute and the National Institutes of Health. Willis-Knighton's participation in these trials is critical, because



Greg Sonnenfeld,
WK Cancer Center
administrator

no other center in the world has access to the advanced proton therapy system available here in Shreveport.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The Oaks transforms into a winter wonderland for the entire community

 Lela Smith loves Christmas but was glad to turn holiday preparations over to someone else when she and her husband, Will, moved to Tower at The Oaks.

“Oooh, I’m so glad I no longer have to worry about decorating, putting everything out and then back up again. I can sit back and enjoy the beauty of the season,” she says.

Smith and fellow residents at The Oaks of Louisiana enjoy a maintenance-free lifestyle, which means at Christmastime, the independent living, assisted living and skilled-nursing residences are gaily packaged in holiday decor from top to bottom without residents lifting a finger!

Every other year, when The Oaks’ Tour of Trees is held, the packaging is even more elaborate and breathtaking.

Tour of Trees began as a gift to residents and their families and has extended to the community, showcasing what an Oaks lifestyle offers, especially during the holidays. (All of the magic, none of the headache.)

Kim Bickham, nutritional services director for Willis-Knighton Health System and The Oaks of Louisiana, is the creative force behind the holiday event. She is assisted by Rhonda MacIsaac, independent living director, who enlists and coordinates the tour guides, and a team of “elves” who decorate.

Bickham is the daughter of an artist and the granddaughter of florists, so it’s

no wonder her creative genius bubbles to the top for events like Tour of Trees.

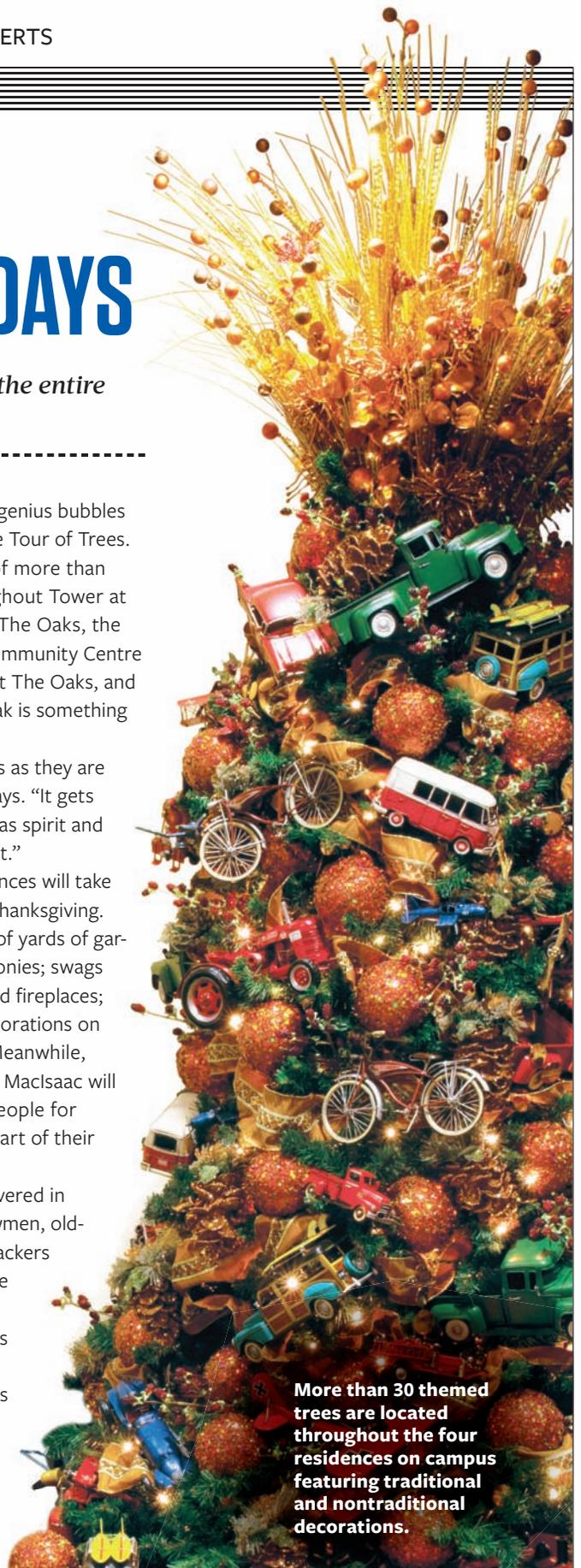
The transformation of more than 30 themed trees throughout Tower at The Oaks, Savannah at The Oaks, the Alta and John Franks Community Centre at Garden Apartments at The Oaks, and Health Center at Live Oak is something to behold, Smith says.

“I love to see the trees as they are being decorated,” she says. “It gets everyone in the Christmas spirit and gives everyone such a lift.”

Decorating the residences will take place the week before Thanksgiving. It will include hundreds of yards of garland and ribbon on balconies; swags on mantles, armoires and fireplaces; and complementary decorations on tables and credenzas. Meanwhile, tour guides recruited by MacIsaac will prepare for the many people for whom Tour of Trees is part of their family holiday tradition.

They will see trees covered in reindeer, red birds, snowmen, old-fashioned Santas, nutcrackers and angels. There will be whimsical pickup sticks; a tree with books, globes and magnifying glasses; and a tree with treasures from the sea.

A gift for residents, their families and the community, indeed. ■



More than 30 themed trees are located throughout the four residences on campus featuring traditional and nontraditional decorations.

EUROPEAN DELIGHTS

Two recipes from Willis-Knighton and The Oaks of Louisiana

Beef Goulash

INGREDIENTS

Olive oil, enough to coat pan
6 slices of bacon, diced
4 pounds boneless short ribs, diced (1½–2-inch cubes)
2 red bell peppers, diced
2 yellow bell peppers, diced
4 celery stalks, diced
1 large yellow onion, diced
2 carrots, diced
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon caraway seeds, toasted
1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
3 sprigs fresh thyme and 3 sprigs rosemary, tied together
5 cups low-sodium beef broth
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
3 cups red wine

Seasoned flour:

3 cups all-purpose flour
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

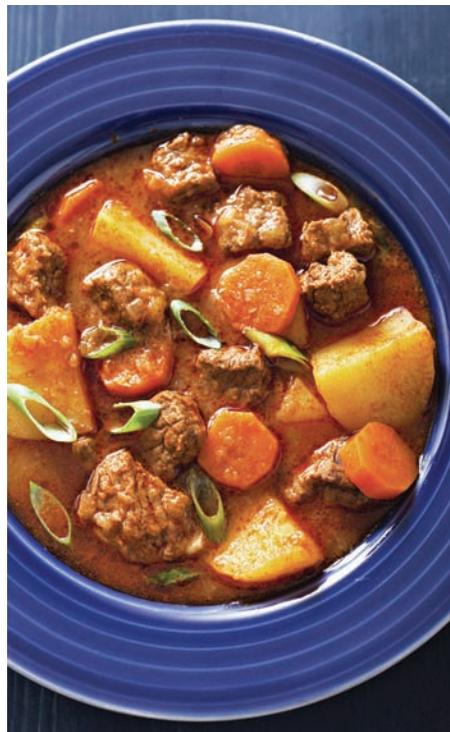
Coat pan in olive oil. Sauté bacon in the pan until browned. Coat beef cubes in seasoned flour.

Add beef to the pan with bacon and cook until browned. When beef is brown, add all vegetables except tomatoes, and salt and pepper to taste. When vegetables are sautéed, add garlic and toasted caraway seeds. Stir ½ cup seasoned flour into vegetable mixture. Add tomatoes and fresh herb sprig. Stew uncovered for 10 minutes. Add beef broth, vinegar and red wine. Simmer 1½–2 hours.

Serve over pasta (egg noodles recommended, but any short pasta will do).

Yield: 8–10 servings.

Recipe from William Wiethaupt III, chef at Tower at The Oaks.



Black Bean Hummus

INGREDIENTS

1 15-ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 clove garlic
2 tablespoons high-quality extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons tahini
Juice of ½ lime
1–2 teaspoons cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder
2 tablespoons (packed) chopped fresh cilantro
2 tablespoons fire-roasted diced green chilies, optional
Sea salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine black beans, garlic clove, olive oil, tahini, lime juice, cumin and chili powder into a food processor and blend until smooth.

If additional liquid is needed to form desired consistency, add 1–2 tablespoons water.

Stir in chopped cilantro and diced green chilies (if using). Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Note: If you prefer a completely smooth hummus, blend green chilies and cilantro with the other ingredients.

Recipe provided by Julie Hartley, RD, Willis-Knighton Diabetes & Nutrition Center.



MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Invaluable Resource



When **Lisa Maxey** speaks of her tenure at Willis-Knighton Health System, which began in 1982, there is so much enthusiasm that she needs time to organize her thoughts. "I take a lot of pride in what we do, especially for the community," she says.

Maxey is director of resource management. "People don't understand what that means," she says, smiling.

Her many areas of influence across Willis-Knighton include customer service, as well as the ongoing pursuit of keeping everyone compliant with the stringent standards of The Joint Commission, a national accrediting agency for healthcare organizations.

Armed with a degree in health information management from Louisiana Tech, Maxey started at Willis-Knighton South (then SouthPark Hospital) as director of medical records. Along the way, she earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Centenary College.

A steady career ascent took her through classifying diagnosis-related groups, managing insurance precertification for patients, working in the medical staffing office, and so on. For more than three decades, she has been a key player in keeping the health system running effectively, and the relationships she has formed along the way sustain her.

"All my friends are here," she says. "Willis-Knighton truly is part of my family."

WK Employees Active in the Community



Charlene Martin faced several health issues but was surprised when she lost circulation in her legs, leading both to be amputated above the knee. This was life altering for her and her family, making something as simple as leaving home a major challenge.

Her co-workers at the Willis-Knighton Physician Network Resource Center rallied to her aid. More than 50 colleagues donated money to fund the construction of a wheelchair ramp to help her have access to her car. "Her family was carrying her to the car," explains Karen Frazier, who spearheaded the fundraising efforts. Frazier smiles as she discusses how social Martin has been around the office, where she has worked since 2006. Frazier recalls thinking, we need to do something, and we need to do it now.

The ramp was built, with money left over to help Martin with medical expenses.

"It fills my heart with nothing but love," Martin says with a deep sigh. She's grateful for newfound mobility, and also for cards, flowers and visits from her friends at work. "It's just so uplifting."

"In an instant, her life changed," Frazier says. "She's had the most positive attitude the entire time."

With money raised by her Willis-Knighton co-workers, Charlene Martin now has a ramp to help her get to her car.

Aging Well in Every Dimension

Oaks of Louisiana residents find fulfillment physically, mentally and spiritually **BY TERRIE M. ROBERTS**



Kurt Strauss participates in most of the exercise classes offered at Tower at The Oaks' Spa & Wellness Center. "I do it to stay alive," he says.



At 93, Kurt Strauss is a poster child for aging well and doing so by engaging in what the International Council on Active Aging calls the seven dimensions of wellness.

The seven dimensions of wellness is a holistic model that integrates physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Wellness is commonly viewed as having seven dimensions: physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, environmental, occupational and emotional. Each dimension affects the other and contributes to one's sense of wellness or quality of life.

The Oaks of Louisiana, where Strauss has lived for 3½ years, embraces the seven dimensions model and provides residents a quality way of living where they thrive and



The Oaks of Louisiana's Page Turners book club takes lifelong learning to a higher level through discussions and different viewpoints. The intellectual stimulation promotes mental wellness.

live happier and healthier. People today are living longer and want to be independent for as long as they can. The Oaks of Louisiana lifestyle helps them do that.

Strauss certainly can attest.

He and his wife, Lynn, moved to The Oaks in February 2012 at the gentle prodding of his daughter, Vona Weiss, of Shreveport. The couple, married 50 years, had lived in Tucson, Ariz., for 45 years before moving here. One year later, Lynn lost her battle with lung cancer.

Strauss continues on.

He engages in a variety of activities, pursuits and practices to maintain physical, mental and spiritual health, confident his wife would be proud of him and cheer him on with a "Keep it up!"

PHYSICAL Well-Being

On any given day, Strauss can be found at the Spa & Wellness Center, an impressive natatorium that features a refreshing and healthful saltwater pool, and state-of-the-art hydraulic fitness and cardio equipment designed for older adults.

Strauss takes almost every exercise class that is offered, says Holly

Winterrowd, manager/senior wellness coordinator for The Oaks of Louisiana and group exercise coordinator for Willis-Knighton Fitness & Wellness Centers.

Water aerobics on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Total Body on Tuesday and Thursday. Walking around Lake Eleanor in the evening. Occasional workouts on the LifeTrail outdoor wellness system.

"I do it to stay alive," Strauss says with a laugh, when asked why, at an age when many have slowed down, he continues to push himself to fatigue.

"Actually I do get tired, and I'm tired for most of it, but I want to stay well mentally and physically," he says about his workouts.

Adds Winterrowd: "Senior adults, especially, need to exercise. It is key to feeling good and living longer. It keeps them healthy, active and energetic. It helps them keep and improve their strength so they stay independent. It gives them more energy to do the things they want to do. It helps prevent or delay health conditions like diabetes, osteoporosis and heart disease.

It also perks up their mood, gives them a positive and joyful attitude, and reduces depression."

The Oaks' wide-ranging health and fitness activities as well as the Spa & Wellness Center and LifeTrail outdoor wellness system are proof of the level of commitment to healthy, active living for all residents at The Oaks.

"Physical wellness is crucial to living independently and maintaining a healthy quality of life," Winterrowd says.

MENTAL Well-Being

As committed as Strauss is to challenging his body, he is equally dedicated to keeping his mind sharp.

"I audit classes at LSU-Shreveport in the spring and the fall," he says. He favors history classes, because history is a collection of stories, with the professor the storyteller. His eyesight is

failing, so, he says, “I need classes where I don’t have to read and somebody tells me what to do.”

He would love to take a German language class. “I was born in Germany, and German was my first language,” he says. “I seem to have lost it completely.” He chuckles and recalls a language class he once audited at Tulane University. “It was a disaster!”

Strauss also attends the monthly University at The Oaks lecture series on ancient civilizations led by Cheryl White, PhD, an LSUS history professor, and participates in The Oaks Chorus. “I like to sing,” he says.

Challenging the mind is crucial to brain health and cognitive function. Those who engage in lifelong learning activities that stimulate creativity and imagination and support effective decision making have a lower risk of developing dementia, says David Henry, MD, of Family Medical and Geriatric Center.

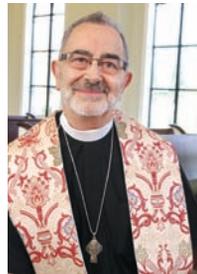
“Keeping your mind active and sharp is a lifetime pursuit,” he says. “There are ongoing studies that have been published that encourage new activities one has never done before and gaining a new proficiency in a new skill.”

It is imperative for mental wellness, Dr. Henry says. He says challenging the mind activates new patterns of brain activity and builds new synaptic connections (pathways) in areas of the brain that correspond to the skill learned. Studies show that older people who maintain mental sharpness create brain pathways to accomplish the same tasks as younger people.

“The majority of older people want to learn new skills,” Dr. Henry says. “I think there is an ageist attitude that people attribute to the elderly, a lack of motivation and desire, when there is just as much in older adults as younger. Their body may slow them down and they may have illnesses to deal with, but they are eager and excited to learn.”

SPIRITUAL Well-Being

Early Saturday morning, Strauss is dressed and waiting in the Grand Foyer of the Tower for an Oaks transportation driver to take him to Agudath Achim Synagogue, a conservative congregation. His faith is important to him; he honors Jewish holidays and worships weekly among some of the city’s most faithful.



The Rev. Andrew Comeaux says, “People need to identify things in life that give them a sense of inner peace, comfort, strength, love and connection.”

He honors Jewish holidays and worships weekly among some of the city’s most faithful.

The Rev. Andrew Comeaux, director of spiritual life services at The Oaks of Louisiana, says spiritual wellness absolutely affects mental and physical health.

“It is one of the components of our

life, and if we neglect any of them, we are going to suffer,” he says.

Signs that there is an imbalance between physical, mental and spiritual health include loss of direction, hopelessness and helplessness, feeling alone or empty, bitterness, and anger at God or a higher power.

“Spirituality is different for each person,” the Rev. Comeaux says. “For many people it is God. Jesus Christ is part of that. Someone beyond us that holds importance in our life and how we relate to that being.”

The Oaks is a multifaith community that offers a variety of spiritual life activities and events to promote spiritual wellness: Bible studies, vespers, Communion services, prayer and healing services, Sunday school and worship services, Spiritual Pathways—a monthly lecture on world religions—among others.

“People need to identify things in life that give them a sense of inner peace, comfort, strength, love and connection,” the Rev. Comeaux says. “Set aside



Bible studies and services such as weekly prayer and healing with the Rev. Andrew Comeaux help residents achieve spiritual wellness.

time every day to do things that help you spiritually—praying, taking nature walks, having quiet time, attending religious services.”

Most important, he says, is to have a belief system. “Gather with others who have the same system, but be tolerant of others,” he says. “God is the father of us all.” ■

CALL



Live Here and Love It!

Take the first step toward a longer, happier independent lifestyle. Speak to a leasing specialist about your options at The Oaks. Call **318-212-OAKS (6257)**.

GROUP

Rehab

As the WK Rehabilitation Institute takes shape, excitement builds for the health services that will move there

BY **MARILYN JOINER**



The central location of the new WK Rehabilitation Institute is evident in this early renovation photo featuring Tim Wilcox (left) and Chris Mangin.



Carla Edmonds (left) and Elana Tompkins look forward to their new location at the WK Rehabilitation Institute.

Synergy. This is what results when two or more groups combine efforts to achieve a result greater than the sum of what they could achieve individually.

Synergy is also a word used by Tim Wilcox and Chris Mangin as they talk about the transformation of the former Doctors' Hospital into the WK Rehabilitation Institute. Wilcox, who heads the system's behavioral medicine unit, and Mangin, who oversees physical medicine and rehabilitation, anticipate achieving that synergy when each moves to the renovated building early in spring 2016.

Both departments will bring inpatient beds to this new location, freeing space to accommodate the growing volumes at Willis-Knighton Medical Center and Willis-Knighton South.

The anticipated synergy is obvious to both Wilcox and Mangin, each of whom often needs support of the other's services. With both in the same location, it will be easier. They even propose cross-training of staff and cross-programming.

Expanding Capabilities

Wilcox acknowledges that his behavioral medicine department will "disappear" in the building because of

the need for anonymity for his patients. But the behind-closed-doors environment will be greatly enhanced, with a traditional adult unit and one devoted specifically for geriatric patients. Each unit will have more spacious surroundings, plenty of sunlight and a more home-like setting. With a separate geriatric psychiatry unit, Wilcox's staff can implement techniques designed specifically for those patients, like memory strategies and reminiscence therapy, focusing on long-term memories for dementia patients. "We'll be playing music from their era while they are dining. That's something we cannot do when we have a more general population," Wilcox explains.

Space for inpatient physical rehabilitation will increase. "This takes us from a 25- to a 31-bed unit in the hopes that we can better serve a wider range of patients," Mangin says. Patients undergoing physical rehabilitation will appreciate larger rooms, a common dining area, a movie theater and an area designed specifically for recreation. Inpatient services will be joined by the outpatient clinics moving from Willis-Knighton North, outpatient therapy, The Spine Institute and the Lymphedema Clinic, all together on the ground floor.

It's not just the space that has appeal. "We will offer expanded services to our community, extra technology and a

The WK Rehabilitation Institute will feature plenty of parking and a large drop-off area at the front.



synergy of services,” Mangin explains. His staff are treating more patients with traumatic brain injury as well as those referred from the new stroke center of excellence at WK Pierremont. He also anticipates hosting related support groups in the auditorium there.



Convenience for Dialysis Patients

Joining these two inpatient departments at the WK Rehabilitation Institute will be Willis-Knighton’s outpatient dialysis program. Carla Edmonds, a nurse and patient care coordinator for dialysis, says renal dialysis gives a good quality of life to patients with renal disease who come in as instructed. Moving outpatients to this site will offer enhanced comfort and space.

Elana Tompkins, RN, head nurse and manager for outpatient dialysis, is excited. “We’ll have the same number of patients and staff in double the space,” she says.

Patients will see a dramatic difference, starting with larger treatment rooms

with enhanced privacy and light. And the equipment is special, too. Having worked in for-profit environments, Edmonds brags that as a nonprofit WK doesn’t “pinch pennies” when it comes to improving patient care. One example is the heated, massaging dialysis chairs patients will enjoy. And she is pleased with the reverse osmosis machine coming from Germany, the most advanced of its kind for purifying the 300 to 400 gallons of water needed each day for the unit.



‘Revitalization of the Hill’

One of the most visible changes will be the building’s orientation. Historically, it had a Louisiana Avenue address, but the building’s entrance is moving to Line Avenue for greater convenience.

Wilcox notes that the building will be a more convenient location for Shreveport-Bossier residents. “And residents from Bossier City will barely have to cross the river,” Mangin adds. Plenty of parking and a large drop-off

area at the front will make things easier for patients and their families.

Both directors are proud of Willis-Knighton’s role, helping to revitalize an area that has been virtually abandoned by others. Terming it the “revitalization of the hill,” a reference to its prominent elevation, Wilcox explains, “We see it as an investment in the revitalization of the downtown and the Highland area, bringing in more people and more business for the businesses and restaurants nearby.”

Starting with a building that was in fairly good condition has made the going easier, despite the numerous rainy days early in the renovation process. “It was in remarkably good shape, especially compared to Bossier Medical Center [now the WK Innovation Center], which had been trashed when we went through it,” Mangin acknowledges. Clearly the building was loved and well cared for, as it will be with Willis-Knighton.

Transformation and rehabilitation—synergy for a building and for the lives of those who come to it for care. ■

In GOOD Company

A wide range of support groups helps people cope with their health conditions BY **DARRELL REBOUCHE**



This 2015 calendar, published by the American Society of Clinical Oncology, features a painting created by the General Cancer support group at the Willis-Knighton Cancer Center.

Jennifer Edwards has spent more than 20 years as an oncology nurse, and she has learned that cancer's effects reach well beyond the patient. "It takes a family to get through it," she says. "You can cry through it, but you'll get through it better if you're laughing." As the clinical nurse educator at Willis-Knighton Cancer Center, Edwards has become heavily involved with the myriad support groups there. "Cancer patients are very inspirational," she says. "They realize life can be short; so they find humor and happiness in the smallest things."

Cary Crawford of Shreveport, a prostate cancer survivor, has fully embraced the Cancer Center's abundant support offerings. Diagnosed in May 2014, Crawford felt understandably anxious as he arrived for his initial treatment at the WK Proton Therapy

Center. He found the General Cancer support group and attended it at noon, prior to his 1:30 treatment. "When I was leaving for treatment," he explains, "one of the participants in the group, because I was alone that day, offered to go with me to my first treatment." Since that day, Crawford has leaned on the people he calls "my cancer family" for support. "There are things I talk about with people in the group that I won't broach with anyone else," he says.

Crawford speaks of "travails you have in dealing with your cancer" and agrees that sometimes patients need a distraction.

FLEUR-DE-LIS Therapy

Edwards looks for things patients can do to bring humor and fun into their lives. One group activity has involved light, color and art. Dozens of participants in the Coping with Cancer support group gathered easels, brushes, canvases and



An instructor from Painting With a Twist helps patients at Willis-Knighton Cancer Center with their fleur-de-lis paintings.



Cancer patients Cary Crawford (left) and Jack Jones (center) look on as Paul Lerchie discusses his diagnosis with members of the General Cancer support group at Willis-Knighton Cancer Center.

paint. Using Louisiana's iconic fleur-de-lis as inspiration, they created paintings that represent their journeys with cancer. "Everybody was there," Edwards recalls. "There was music, laughter, dancing on tables. There was partying and pizza. We had fun. It was family, it was friends. It was a representation of what they were going through, what gave them strength."

One piece stood out: a fleur-de-lis with wings. Did it represent flight, a journey with cancer? Heavenly hope? Everyone in the group wrote one word on the painting, a word that symbolizes what gets them through their cancer treatment and associated struggles.

The finished piece was chosen by the American Society of Clinical Oncology

to be part of the organization's 2015 "Expressions of Hope" calendar, which is distributed nationally to cancer patients and their families, as well as patient advocates, caregivers and others. More than 14,000 copies were sent out this year.

According to ASCO staff, the Willis-Knighton submission was "particularly inspiring because it illustrates the idea of collective hope and represents a group of individuals who chose to express their experiences with cancer together through positive words like 'love,' 'faith,' 'tenacity,' 'compassion' and 'grace.'"

SUPPORT in Many Forms

Throughout the year and across Willis-Knighton Health System, patients lift up

one another through a generous offering of support groups.

Those experiencing the loss of a loved one can find comfort at the Bereavement support group. Men and women with heart disease, multiple sclerosis and fibromyalgia and those who have endured a stroke can engage with like-minded people undergoing similar experiences.

Parkinson's patients have learned to have fun, too. Dancing with Parkinson's is offered in partnership with LSU Health Shreveport and WK Fitness & Wellness Centers. On Wednesdays, Parkinson's patients get together with a dance instructor and a live piano player to cut a rug. "It's one of the happiest, most fun things I've done," says Johnny Smith of Shreveport, who was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2013. "We won't be in the opera or anything, but we'll have a good time doing it."

Adds Holly Winterrowd, coordinator for group exercise at WK Fitness & Wellness Centers: "It's really good for their minds. It also may help the tremors that come with Parkinson's. Plus, it's a lot of fun. It's just a time to play."

Dave Buckley, a Parkinson's patient, agrees it is important to keep the body moving. He kiddingly suggests the group may be misnamed: "It's really more exercise than it is dancing. I'm an old rock 'n' roll dancer from the '50s; this is nowhere near that, but it's still a lot of fun."

SYMPATHY, Not Sorrow

Support groups at Willis-Knighton bring together people who help others cope with their travails, learning to live and laugh. Crawford knows the value of that, but perhaps can speak for many others when he says, "This is one of the few places I can come where people don't feel sorry for me. I can just be Cary again. They sympathize with the things you're going through, and they can advise on all these things, as well. But they don't feel sorry for you." ■



Preferring to be active, Louise Choate (left) attends church at Willow Point Baptist and Bible studies at The Oaks.

FUN AND FELLOWSHIP

Louise Choate says she has to do something all the time—and she's come to the right place



Louise Choate's broad smile is as warm as it is memorable.

It speaks volumes about how she feels about her life today at The Oaks of Louisiana.

Choate moved to The Oaks in September 2013, 7½ years after the death of her husband, 7½ years longer than she thought she would.

"My husband and I discussed moving to a community like The Oaks before he got sick. We thought we would move before we got too old," Choate says. "But he got stage 4 lung cancer and within five weeks went to be with the Lord."

She was left with her grief, her memories and too much house and too much yard.

"I always told him I would have a 'for sale' sign in the yard the next day if something happened to him," Choate says. "He said, 'Wait until I'm gone a year,' and I waited 7½, which was too long."

Although she has two grown sons, the decision to move was hers. "I wanted security and knew this was the place to come," she says. "I went to look at several different places, but I have friends here. I also wanted a place where I could stay as my needs change. I wanted a

place to go all the way through. It is family here. I have a built-in support system."

Beyond her desire to live in a secure neighborhood, Choate says she moved to The Oaks "to have fun and fellowship and not sit and deteriorate."

"Of course," she adds, "if you want to sit and do nothing here, you can, and if you want to be active, you can do that, too."

Choate prefers to be active!

She is still involved in her church—Willow Point Baptist—and attends Bible studies at The Oaks every Wednesday and Thursday. God and her faith take priority in her life, she says, sharing that she made her profession of faith when she was 8 years old.

She reads, crochets baby socks and afghans and can be seen quite often in the Alta and John Franks Community Centre playing chicken foot or Mexican train dominoes. "I am hyper," she says. "I have to have something to do all the time."

One activity that provides her more enjoyment than she provides ability, she says, is beanbag baseball. "I said I would never do that, thinking it was an old folks' game," Choate says. But she and friend and fellow resident Opal Wimberly observed The Oaks' Astros and Rookies teams at practice and wanted in on the fun.

"We both enjoy it so much," she says.

For Choate, it's been a wonderful two years.

Here's to many more. ■

Celebrate Independence Today

Residents at Tower at The Oaks and Garden Apartments at The Oaks celebrate independence every day. Why? Because they have learned that true independence and a longer and richer life don't come from staying at home alone. It comes from living where they have the freedom to pursue interests they enjoy and have freedom from the pressing chores and expenses of things like home and yard.

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