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FESTIVE SANTA DAY CAPS HOLIDAY SEASON AT MSH

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN



There was a new twist to Santa Day in 2018. The Santas, all 16 of them, did a “Santa Walk,” displaying some signature moves on the concrete runway as they exited Building 71 one by one to make their appointed rounds.

It made for a festive start to Mississippi State Hospital’s 35th annual Santa Day on Dec. 21 – and it was captured on video at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUBS_rrYmKU&feature=youtu.be.

Santa Day was initiated in 1984 by James C. “Jimmy” Stubbs, who was MSH Director from 1975-88, and it has become one of the hospital’s most-anticipated events. Every MSH patient and Jaquith Nursing Home resident receives a personalized gift delivered to their building by Santa. The gifts are made possible through donations to MSH’s Christmas House.

Santa Day is the culmination of the holiday season at MSH, which began with Thanksgiving parties in November and ran through Dec. 22. There were more than 80 holiday parties and other activities for the patients and residents this season provided by a wide range of church groups, civic groups, families and individuals.

Some 1,200 volunteers provided those parties and activities, helped with gift and fruit bag preparation or assisted with preparations in the Christmas House, which operates every year on Building 71 starting on Dec. 1.

These volunteers contributed over 4,800 hours of their time valued at more than \$115,000.

Monetary and gift donations came from all over Mississippi, contributed by a wide variety of individuals, groups and businesses.

A few examples: The Junior League of Jackson donated \$300. Brandon Baptist Church donated gifts valued at more than \$400. Holmes Community College and Nursing Program delivered 387 gifts valued at more than \$1,500. Church Women United brought gifts valued at more than

\$7,000 plus a monetary donation of more than \$1,000.

“We are grateful to each and every individual who decided to drop a pair of socks, a bottle of shampoo, or a game in a donation bin, participated in and/or coordinated a party, or made a monetary donation,” MSH Director James Chastain said.

“We would not be able to provide the activities and gifts to our patients and residents without support from people just like yourselves who give generously and selflessly of their time, talent and resources year after year.”

Chastain, as he usually is, was among the Santas, a list that also includes Jason Ball; Lee Bidwell, University of Mississippi Medical Center; Tom Broome, Rankin County Youth Court Judge; Don Dees; Daniel Elliott, Vice President at Bancorp South; state Sen. Hillman Frazier; Martin Keil; VP at Community Bank; MSH Police Chief Jeff Luckey; Gale Martin, former President of Friends of MSH; John McCrory; Gene Miller; Patrick Fontaine, Fontaine Insurance Services;

Larry Taylor, financial advisor with VALIC; Lance Varner, pastor at Calvary Baptist Church of Braxton; and MSH’s Andy Wogoman.

Many of the Santas are longtime participants. Sen. Frazier has missed just one Santa Day; he was in Africa at the time. Some others were making their debut in the red suit and white beard.

Making a return engagement as a Santa was Jason Ball, son of long-time MSH Volunteer Services Director Gerald Ball, who passed away earlier in the year. Bidwell of UMMC pinch hit for veteran Santa Carl Mangum, an instructor in the UMMC School of Nursing who was unable to attend. The gaggle of “elves” – nursing students – that Mangum typically brings with him came along with Bidwell.

Each of the Santas received a commemorative gift of a handcrafted wooden Santa, hand-painted by MSH Volunteer Services Director Sheila Shows.



EMERGENCY OPERATIONS EXERCISE RATES PRAISE

BY MIKE CHRISTENSEN

The incident on Dec. 5 wasn't real, but the response was. The rush of activity around Building 29 on that cold winter morning was part of Mississippi State Hospital's Emergency Operations Exercise.

In the drill scenario, which involved months of planning, a simulated boiler explosion on the former Jefferson Inn building caused a fire and a gas leak. An announcement of an emergency was made on the hospital's P.A. system, and staff sprung into action.

MSH Police Chief Jeff Luckey and other officers quickly arrived and assessed the scene. Hospital emergency and transport vehicles were summoned, along with medical staff and support personnel. Several outside agencies, including the Pearl Fire Department, Pafford EMS and the AirCare helicopter from University of Mississippi Medical Center – which landed in Friends Park -- also responded.

Damien Pyles, Jackson CRI Coordinator for the Mississippi Department of Health, attended the drill and praised it as “by far the best one I've been to.”

There were multiple injuries and two fatalities in the simulated incident, and other residents of the nursing home needed to be evacuated to another unit.

MSH police established a staging area outside the building. Triage and treatment areas were set up by medical staff. A command center was established at Building 22 to help track and coordinate the activities. The drill even included the arrival of a concerned family member of one of the victims.

Following the drill, which was completed in about an hour, an After Action Review was conducted to evaluate the procedures.

There were some glitches in the process – including issues with triage cards -- but identifying potential problems is a primary purpose of these exercises, said Wes Pegues, MSH Safety Officer and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator.

“Overall, I was very impressed with what went on out there,” Pegues said. “Once things started to fall into place, they fell very well.”



EMERGENCY OPERATIONS EXERCISE RATES PRAISE



CONGRATULATIONS JANUARY EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH



Clinical Service
Janice McDonald,
IPS Building 201 (Ward 2) - A Shift

Janice McDonald has been named Mississippi State Hospital's January Employee of the Month for Clinical Service.

McDonald, a Laurel native who now lives in Jackson, is a Recreation Therapist working on a Receiving unit. A graduate of Mississippi Valley State University, McDonald has worked at MSH since 1993.

"In the past several months, Ms. McDonald has really showed what MSH Core Values is all about," said Anthony Brown, who nominated McDonald. "She was asked to cover two different buildings along with her building in a 3-to-4 month span. ... She did not complain, frown up or show slack in the buildings she was covering nor did she miss days from work.

"(She) provided groups for these buildings and made sure documentation was also kept up ... (and) she even attended treatment teams."



Support Services
Martha Robinson
IPS Building 21 - A Shift

Martha Robinson has been named Mississippi State Hospital's January Employee of the Month for Support Services.

Robinson, who grew up in Philadelphia, Miss., and now resides in Pearl, is an Administrative Assistant II who works the switchboard and hostess desk in the Administration Building.

"Martha is a very caring person who works the switchboard and the hostess desk," said Donna Boykin, who made the nomination. "Martha makes sure that the visitors to MSH get the best reception when they arrive on Building 21 ... (and) does this with a friendly voice and smile on her face.

"Martha is the type employee that everyone wants. She comes to work when she is scheduled. She is willing to work over or do extra shifts if needed. She is willing to assist others or train others when they are joining the switchboard/hostess desk."



Direct Care
Gwendolyn Hughes,
IPS Building 81 - C Shift

Gwendolyn Hughes has been named Mississippi State Hospital's January Employee of the Month for Direct Care.

Hughes, a Byram resident who was born in Columbus, is a Mental Health Technician Supervisor in Inpatient Services (Substance Use Service). She has worked at MSH for 5½ years.

Hughes "displays a high degree of character and initiative during C-shift," said Daniel Myers, who made the nomination. "(She) always makes recommendations on how we can improve the programming for the patients on B-81. (She) ensures each patient is accounted for and their needs are met on a daily basis. ...

"(She) is always willing to share her knowledge and expertise with her co-workers ... (and) displays a caring attitude toward both patients and co-workers."

The MSH employee recognition program is sponsored by Friends of Mississippi State Hospital, Inc.