

New Orleans CITY BUSINESS

THE DOLAN
COMPANY

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER OF METRO NEW ORLEANS

MAY 27, 2011

NURSES

Lynette Collins

2011
CITY BUSINESS
HEALTH CARE
HEROES

Title: Daughters of Charity Services-Bywater family nurse practitioner

Age: 56

Family: husband, Frank; children, Wendy, 21, Julie, 23, Billy, 24, Sarah, 25

Education: nursing diploma, Touro Infirmary; bachelor's degree in nursing, Loyola University; master's degree in nursing, Louisiana State University; pursuing doctor in education, Walden University

Lynette Collins' achievements could tend to make even accomplished people feel a little less so.

As a family nurse practitioner, she attends to about 25 patients during each shift at the Daughters of Charity's St. Cecilia Health Center in the Bywater. Her clients run the gamut in age and background, though most lack health insurance and conventional access to medical care.

She's simultaneously pursuing her doctorate in education, with a research focus on preconception care and reproductive-life planning.

Thanks to her nurse-practitioner credentials, Collins possesses a level of authority typically reserved for physicians. But she prides herself on her slower-paced, palliative approach.

In 2003, Collins moved to a remote village in southwest Alaska. In her three years there, she established a pediatric primary care program and provided medical care for members of the Yupik Indian tribe. She moved back to New Orleans in 2006 and spent much of her time working in a mobile unit to provide prenatal and health care in some of the areas hardest-hit by Hurricane Katrina, such as St. Bernard Parish.

Collins said a key to her mission is providing a ready ear to listen and teaching patients to better care for themselves.

"We're brought up through the nursing model first," Collins said of nurse practitioners. "There's a little bit more hand-holding, a little bit more listening, a little bit more being there for the patient. ... Sometimes just patting the patient's hand makes a difference. Saying, 'I'm here for you.'"

She realizes she could make more money practicing at a private clinic but finds a different, imminently rewarding type of remuneration in her current post.

She points, for example, to a woman she recently treated for diabetes. The patient had been off her treatment regimen for a year because of the high cost of care. When Collins told the woman she could get her a free meter and access to medicine at a reduced fee, the woman broke into tears.

"It's not always about the money," she said, "Life is not that simple."•

— *Emilie Bahr*



photo by Frank Aymami

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PROFESSIONALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Felice Hill

Title: Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans medical social work case manager

Age: 42

Family: husband, Fred; children, Cody, 17, Dylon, 10, Kayley, 8

Education: bachelor's degree in psychology, University of New Orleans; master's degree in social work, Southern University of New Orleans

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HEALTH CARE
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In a time of reduced social services and acute homelessness, Daughters of Charity Services of New Orleans case manager Felice Hill devotes her energy to matching patients with available resources.

"The homeless population in the New Orleans area has increased dramatically in the last several years," said Hill, who also cofounded the Forgotten Angels Program. It provides gifts and meals during the winter holidays to more than 200 children throughout the area.

"Before there were already a lot of people who were just making their way," she said. "But now we have people who were affected by the oil spill and the downturn in the economy, not to mention the people who came in but didn't find jobs rebuilding the city."

That means Hill and her colleagues are trying to help people who were homeless before Hurricane Katrina, those who became homeless after the storm and now those who are homeless because of the economy.

Hill coordinates the DCSNO medical and social services, working with the group's mobile unit, which provides medical care and assistance to nearly every pocket of the city.

All of the homeless shelters in the New Orleans area refer to Daughters of Charity, and in return DCSNO coordinates its efforts with agencies such as the city's Healthcare for the Homeless program, which provides free care.

"When we can't match a person with a service, we try to piecemeal it with a variety of other organizations that can give a little here and there," Hill said. "It's frustrating because we feel that we are not doing enough, but even a little is better than nothing at all."

She recently worked with a homeless 5-year-old kidney transplant patient and his mother to coordinate medical care for the boy and find a place for them to stay. The mother gave up her family home and job to relocate to another city where her son could receive treatment. When they returned to New Orleans, Hill and her team helped coordinate medical services through Tulane Medical Center and housing through the Harry Thompson Center. •

— Garry Boulard



photo by Frank Aymami

Daughters of Charity Services medical social work case manager Felice Hill, right, talks with Albert Winding, who is staying at Ozanam Inn.

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PHYSICIANS

Willard Dumas

Title: Daughters of Charity Health Centers of New Orleans staff dentist
Age: 68
Family: wife, Karin; children, Willard III, 42, Jay, 37, Cherie Nobles, 33
Education: bachelor's degree in biology, Xavier University; doctor of dental surgery, Howard University College of Dentistry

&

Jay Dumas

Title: Daughters of Charity Health Centers of New Orleans director of dental services
Age: 37
Family: single
Education: bachelor's degree in biology, Xavier University; doctor of medical dentistry, Temple University School of Dentistry



When Willard Dumas began practicing dentistry 40 years ago, preventive dental care in New Orleans was mostly reserved for the well to do. Dental insurance was a novelty.

But Dumas believed everyone should have access to dental care, instilling such compassion in his son, Jay, that he would later join his father in private practice.

"I was inspired by his coming home every day and not complaining. I never heard my father complain about the practice of dentistry," said Jay, who worked with his father in private practice for nearly 10 years.

The duo had been renting space in the nonprofit's Bywater clinic since 2006 for their private practice, but DSC approached the two in 2008 about offering dental care at its new health centers. The older Dumas saw an opportunity to provide state-of-the-art care to the masses without incurring the rising costs of private practice.

The health centers provide dental care based on a patient's ability to pay, allowing the father and son to reach a larger group. Jay practices dentistry at the Carrollton facility, and Willard works from the St.

Cecilia Medical Center in the Bywater.

"We treat health care as a luxury in the U.S.," Jay said. "It should be a right. I believe everyone should be afforded the right to receive dental care."

The Dumas team goes beyond the scope of the clinic to volunteer their expertise in various programs to help those unable to pay, including the Donated Dental Program, Give Kids a Smile, Team Smile and the Colgate Dental Van Services.

"It's an important part of my life to be a volunteer," Willard said. "My parents raised us to give back."

The two treat all patients with respect, regardless of their financial standing.

"We treat every patient the same," Jay said. "We learned a long time ago not to judge patients by their appearance. We offer each person the best dentistry available."•

— Diana Chandler