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**Campus and Community Effort Brings
New Equipment to County Health Clinic**

Miami, Okla. (Friday, May 8, 2009) -- The effort of one Northeastern Oklahoma A&M student became a cause for many.

In January, Sarah Smith, a nursing student, received a Carter Academic Service Entrepreneur Award that supplied the Ottawa County Health Clinic with \$1000 toward the purchase of a new vitals machine. Smith, who graduated on May 7 from the NEO Nursing Program, had served clinical hours at the free Health Clinic and saw first-hand that the non-profit agency was in need of such a machine.

“With their current dated equipment, the person operating the vitals machine must have medical training,” Smith said. “There were times that a doctor would have to take blood pressure readings. Having a new vitals machine that can be used by a layperson would mean that all volunteers can easily and accurately take those readings.”

With the excitement of receiving the \$1000 grant came the urgency to fund the remaining \$2500, said Smith.

Through the aid of NEO faculty, an alumnus and representatives from the Health Clinic, Smith’s efforts will not go unrewarded. Additional grants from the Oklahoma State Regents and the Zarrow Family Foundation, a contribution from NEO and a donation from Jim Conard, NEO alumnus, will allow for the purchase of a state-of-the-art \$3500 vitals machine.

The machine should be in the hands of the Health Clinic volunteers by the end of May.

“It is so fulfilling to see that this has finally been done and that so many people worked this hard to achieve one goal,” said Smith.

Conard, a former employee with Chevron, said that he learned of Smith's quest on the NEO website. Conard said he was impressed by the hours served by NEO's nursing students at the Health Clinic. Smith's desire to go above and beyond what was required of her convinced Conard that he, too, should take up her cause.

"In the future, if Sarah continues with this kind of initiative, she will have a meaningful impact on the health care field and society," Conard, a resident of Stone Mountain, Ga., said.

Conard, a retired employee from Chevron, said he participates in the Human Kind Program offered by the company. Chevron rewards employees and retired employees who volunteer their time or services by making a donation to a non-profit organization of the employee's choice. Through his work with the college and its Development Foundation, Conard had 20 hours that he donated toward the purchase of the vitals equipment.

Alicia Weatherby, nursing instructor, Susan Waldron, secretary of the Board of Directors for the Clinic, and Mary Garrette, director of the Clinic, were awarded a \$1500 Zarrow Family Foundation grant for non-profit agencies. This Tulsa-based Foundation provides grants based on an organization's cause, the number it serves and its need, said Weatherby.

John Lomax, dean of the School of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, and Edie Ingram, executive director for the Development Foundation, jointly applied for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education's Economic Development Grant for the Partnership Recognition Program. This funding was designed to improve partnerships between higher education institutions and local businesses. The State Regents agreed to match NEO's contribution of \$500 toward the vitals machine, said Ingram.

Dr. Jeffery Hale, president, said Smith's achievement will empower her fellow students to realize the impact they can have on the world around them. During the Nursing Pinning Ceremony on May 7, Smith was presented with the Outstanding Community Service Award by Waldron and Garrette.

"We are proud of Sarah for not only recognizing a problem but having the determination to find a solution for it," Hale said. "The college is also grateful to Jim Conard, the Health Clinic, Alicia Weatherby, John Lomax and Edie Ingram for their efforts to see Sarah's goal into fruition."

Waldron said equipment that is accurate and user-friendly is crucial for an organization such as the Health Clinic that relies solely on volunteers. A vitals machine monitors patients' pulse, blood pressure and temperature. Waldron said high blood pressure and diabetes are the primary health problems for patients at the Health Clinic.

"This machine will free up our ability to use any volunteer," said Waldron. "This means that when we do not have volunteers such as the NEO nursing students who have medical

training, we can still provide accurate screening information to physicians so that they may prescribe medication.”

Weatherby said the new vitals machine has six sizes of blood pressure cuffs, a pulse oximetry meter to measure oxygen concentration in the blood, a temperature probe and a device to print out the readings.

A total of \$4000 was raised for the purchase of the \$3500 machine. Waldron said the Health Clinic would like to use the remaining \$500 to purchase an ophthalmoscope, which is used to examine eyes and ears.

“Anyone who has spent any time in the Clinic can realize that they have a need,” Smith said. “I am proud of the joint-efforts to bring this equipment to Ottawa County.”