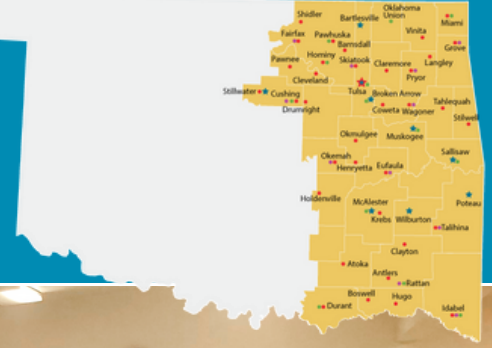


# SERVICE IN ACTION

March 2023



## Porta Caeli House

Porta Caeli - "Heaven's Gate" in Latin - extends Christ's love to those in need through compassionate end-of-life care, when dying at home is not an option.

Families and their loved ones experience a very peaceful and comforting family environment. This includes a living room and study, a beautiful dining room, multiple areas where families and visitors can meet and congregate. Only individuals being treated as part of a hospice program and who are nearing the end of life are eligible to stay in the facility.

The facility, located west of CCEOK's main campus, is structured around two wings of six rooms in each wing. Every guest room has a pull-out couch, a medical bed, and a door that opens to a patio. Patio views are either towards the east and the rising sun, or towards the lovingly landscaped courtyard. Each room also shares a bathroom with another guest room. Home-cooked meals are provided to guests, their visitors, and their families; lunch and dinner are planned each day, but breakfast is a little more spontaneous.

The facility operates on what is known as a "social model", in contrast to a "medical model". In this way, the hospice agency determines the plan of care and medical treatment for their patients. The implementation of this plan is carried out by PCH staff during the time the hospice patients are our guests. PCH is the physical place where guests are being cared for, 24/7, by a hospice provider, but who might not be able to visit a patient every day.

Dr. Mary Nole, the new Volunteer Coordinator, manages the dedicated army of volunteers that are required to keep PCH functioning. About 45-50 volunteers are needed on a weekly basis to visit with guests and families, prepare and serve meals, do housekeeping, and staff the reception desk. No specific qualifications are required, but Mary does try to match what a volunteer can offer, and what their needs might be with what specific jobs she has available.

Last month, PCH hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Retreat to help volunteers get a better appreciation for the difference their volunteer work makes.

To volunteer at PCH please contact Mary at 918-935-2600, or the Volunteer Office at 918-508-7187.



# A Behind the Scenes Look at Cooking Up Compassion

A magical evening like Cooking Up Compassion (CUC) takes the work of many hands.

CCEOK's annual fundraising event was held this year on Friday, February 3rd, in the new Grand Hall at the Cox Business Convention Center downtown. And like all CCEOK programs, this is an event that simply could not happen without a dedicated staff of volunteers and employees. This team became the "face" of Catholic Charities not just towards our clients, but in this case, towards our benefactors and donors.

Leading up to the event, Patron Committee volunteers, working under the Event Chairs, contact potential donors for patron sponsorships.

Well before the date of the event, volunteers from Cascia Hall prepared the beautiful, festive table decorations. The night before the event, these were assembled by two groups of volunteers – National Charity League and the Bishop Kelley National Honor Society students. The CUC team – led by our CCEOK Development department set up all the table decorations, floor decorations, registration areas and raffle stations in just three hours.

The night of the event, employees and volunteers helped in a variety of areas ensuring the night went smoothly for guests. Yes! Employees volunteer too! At 11:00pm, when the event concluded, the clean-up began. CCEOK employees and core volunteers Mark Marston and Jerry Brueck, as well as a group from TU's Newman Center, removed all of the non-venue décor and tables, packed them into the box truck, which returned to the Main Campus to be unloaded and stored for next year.

Back on campus, youth volunteers from St. Anne Catholic Church worked to disassemble the acrylic table decorations from CUC.

A big thanks to all of the volunteers and employees (staff) who made the night a great success!



# HANDS OF CHRIST

By Deacon Craig Victor

Before I started my full-time employment with Catholic Charities, I had the wonderful opportunity to serve as a volunteer chaplain at Porta Caeli House.

I had recently decided to leave the corporate world (courtesy of a company layoff) and felt called to work more closely with my diaconate vocation. Deacon BD Tidmore had asked me to join him in serving the guests by visiting them and their families several times a week.

During this time, I was able to interact with guests on such a profound level that it changed my perception of death and dying. I had quickly become a friend with Jack, who was dying of cancer. Our time together was always light hearted and it seemed that throughout his life Jack was always outgoing and didn't know a stranger. He could tell a story and make the room laugh, even as he fought through the pain.

As that final evening came and Jack was drawing his last breaths, I was called in to be with the family and to offer final prayers (even though they weren't Catholic) before the funeral home arrived. Jack had not taken a breath for several minutes and I had turned away assuming that he had passed. As I was offering my condolences to his wife and family Jack took one large final gasp of air and startled all of us!

Before I could think, I turned and said "Dang it Jack, you just always have to have the last word don't you!" I was quickly mortified that I had just said that in front of his grieving family and turned to offer an apology when they all broke out laughing.

His wife came to me, gave me a big hug and thanked me for bringing a smile to their faces and spending time with Jack in his final days. The moral of the story is that you never know how it is that you may touch someone's life as the hands of Christ!



A big CCEOK

WELCOME

to all of our newest volunteers!

Allison Barrett – Counseling/Disaster  
Piper Boswell – Dental  
Amy Beckman Enis – Dental  
Maria Guerra – Dental  
Donn Birmingham – Education  
Jackie Birmingham – Education  
John Mort – Education  
Aaron Betz - Education  
James White – The Market  
Christine Joly – The Market  
Victoria Friddell – Mary Martha Outreach  
Conner McFarlane – Ministry of Compassion  
Michael Doak – Muskogee  
Tina Presley – Porta Caeli House  
Anne Foster – Porta Caeli House  
Ashley Warner – Porta Caeli House  
Cynthia Gowen - Sallisaw





**Kitchen Volunteer  
Retreat Feb. 20th**

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

March 4 - ShamRock the 'Ville

April 16-21 - Grief to Grace  
Retreat

Apr 16-22 - National Volunteer  
Appreciation Week - Keep an eye  
out for fun events & prizes!

Spring Break - March 13-17

Have an event happening in your  
CCEOK program or location? Email  
volcommunications@cceok.org  
to have it included in the newsletter!

## WHAT'S GOING ON

CCEOK has recently added a new program - Healing from Abuse. This new program facilitates healing Grief to Grace retreats. Grief to Grace is a process for helping survivors of abuse to discover spiritual healing and transformation. It was created to end isolation and secret pain and suffering of abused survivors within a supportive and confidential retreat setting. Men and women participants will embark on a 5-day restorative journey led by a professionally trained team. Our next retreat begins April 16th - 21st.

Please visit our website [cceok.org/healing](http://cceok.org/healing) for more information.



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(918)508-7122

## GET INVOLVED



Volunteer with us! [cceok.org/volunteer](http://cceok.org/volunteer)  
Join our Facebook Group!

For story ideas, feedback, etc.,  
email: [volcommunications@cceok.org](mailto:volcommunications@cceok.org)