

July 2012	Fall 2012	Fall 2012	October 2012
New chemistry analyzer installed in hospital laboratory, serving the hospital and both clinics	HealthyRC Wellness Challenge began in September and wraps up in December; 67 Fitness5K competitors raised money for the RCHF Pink Fund	Urology and cardiology services added at the Outpatient Clinic	Dr. Thomas R. Plumeri joined Lyons Medical Center



RCH Nursing Department
Top row left to right: Connie Strohmeier, Bonnie Goans, Jen Konen, Brittany Fulton, Cassi Loutzenhiser; Bottom row: Cassie Look, Tanner Brown, Jimmy Hoskins; Not pictured: Angie Taylor, Holli Newman, Molly Zwick, Chandra Michaelis, Jacque Norez, Laynee Kempke, Melinda Brown, Jeanette Christenson, Tammy Togerson, Linda Zubillaga, Victoria Miller, Kaitlin Eskut, Melissa Bethea, Cameron Williams, Sarah Jay, Dawn Wilkey.



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Lyons 620-257-5412

“To all the Hospital’s employees - Thank You!”

RCH Lyons Medical Center Medical Staff
Left to right: Cynthia Peters, Dr. Roger Tobias, Melissa Wimmer, Rachel Loesch, Sarah Diasio, Karen Root, APRN; Not pictured: Dale Diener, PA, Dawn Joyner, Dr. Tom Plumeri.

Robert Behnke-Activity Director Swingbed Rice County District Hospital It doesn’t get any better than this!

By LOUANN COBB
If Robert Behnke could pick his dream job, it would be the one he has today as activity director at Rice County District Hospital Swingbed. His journey began in 1994 when he and wife Carolyn made frequent visits to the hospital to visit his father who was a patient there for nine months. Following his death in 1995, they continued to volunteer, Carolyn assisting the activity director, Jeanette Christiansen, and Behnke playing the piano. “Every time we visited I enjoyed myself and the stresses from farming disappeared,” Behnke said. In 2002 he made the decision to put those stresses behind him and enrolled in a CNA class at Hoisington Hospital, working one-on-one with a patient during his training. Behnke rented the farm to his cousin Mike, completed CNA training in June, finished his last wheat harvest and started working at the hospital a week later on the second of July. He said it wasn’t until he completed a spiritual gifts class that he realized everything happening to him was meant to be. While he and Carolyn were volunteering in the late 90s, the patients talked to him about changes they would like to see: a handicap ramp and a separate place to eat and have activities. As a volunteer, he presented their list to the hospital board. “Not having a handicap ramp is frightening to the patients,” Behnke

told board members. “They would also like to have a separate room where they can eat and have planned activities.” Bob Mullen, hospital administrator, gave Behnke a list of possible donors and told him if he could raise the money, they would build it. With a goal of \$250,000 and a donor letter composed with the help of Dorothy Behnke, he set out to accomplish the impossible. “I’ll never forget that day,” Behnke said. “It was a Sunday morning. I had just finished my chores and Carolyn told me to call Dutch Bolton. He had received the letter and wanted to donate the entire \$250,000 in honor of his living wife.” When the position for swingbed activity director opened up, Behnke was encouraged to apply. “I never thought one day I would be working at the RCDH Bolton Activity Center,” Behnke said. “I love my job, the activities and communicating with the residents. We have fun together. “We’re closer in age and can relate,” he said. “I didn’t go to a one-room school but I did my student teaching in one.” Behnke and the residents often reminisce about historical events and their lives. Each day ends in the activity room with a game of dominoes. When he’s in charge, every day is a new adventure, every holiday a celebration in 3-D and living color. Behnke said he often thinks about retirement, knowing it’s inevitable. “That’s going to be the hardest thing,” he said. “I may have to put it off until I’m in a wheelchair with them.”



KAREN ROOT- APRN
LYONS MEDICAL CENTER
Medical School/schools:
• Barton County Community College-undergraduate degree in nursing

• Graduate Fort Hays University
Preceptors:
• Dr. Matthew Schlotterback and Dr. Roger Tobias, Lyons; Dr. David Buller, McPherson; various specialists, Hutchinson Clinic.
Specialty:
• Family Practice Nurse Practitioner
Why did you choose to practice in a smaller rural community as opposed to a bigger urban hospital? What sets them apart?
“I have lived in Rice County most of my life.,

therefore my desire is to assist in providing health-care in this community rather than in an urban setting. I can devote a lot of time to each patient I see and I get to know their names, personal lives and specific health concerns. I feel that type of practice would be lacking in a large urban setting.”
What do you like most about your job?
“First and foremost, I enjoy caring for my patients. I like getting to know the people I see and I am thankful for the opportunity to help them when I can. Secondly, I am lucky to work within an organization that genuinely cares for the people they serve. The medical staff, nursing staff, and all ancillary departments are great to work with!”
Karen is married to Kyle. They have five children and seven grandchildren with another expected in July.

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