

AT OUR BEST



CARIN SCHOPPMAYER

Backers champion Children's

Foundation lights Beacon of Hope

Arkansas Children's Northwest is open for business as of Jan. 9, and some 430 lead donors gathered Jan. 6 on the new campus to celebrate the opening.

Marcy Doderer, Arkansas Children's president and chief executive officer, told backers that 14,000 donations in the past two years brought in \$80,000 for the construction of the region's first and only children's hospital.

Highlights of the evening included an announcement from Mandy Macke, associate director and secretary for the Willard & Pat Walker Charitable Foundation — a capital campaign gift of \$8 million from the foundation to the hospital, one of the foundation's largest ever given. The brightly lit stairwell of the hospital building can be seen from miles away. "Tonight, it's my honor to light and name this tower the Pat Walker Beacon of Hope. May it lead the way for every child and every family who needs Arkansas Children's Northwest."

Two other areas on the campus will be named in the Walkers' honor: the Willard Walker Helipad in support of the Angel One Transport Team that transports some 350 critically ill children from 11 counties in Northwest Arkansas, and the Pat & Willard Walker Family Outpatient Clinics, which will house more than 15 pediatric subspecialties. Some of the subspecialty programs will be able to expand their programs in the new space.

Barbara Tyson announced a gift of an endowment from the Tyson Family in honor of Terri and Chuck Erwin, chairman of Arkansas Children's Northwest Board of Directors.

The new hospital includes a

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Cindy Arsaga



NWA Democrat-Gazette/ANDY SHUPE

The Arsaga's establishments "have heart because of Cindy," says her husband, Cary Arsaga.

It's all about community

LARA JO HIGHTOWER
NWA DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Most of us count ourselves lucky to have had one great adventure, to have found one career we love, to create one lasting legacy by which we'll be remembered after we've left the planet.

Cindy Arsaga isn't like most of us.

Sure, the co-founder of the popular Arsaga's coffee houses and restaurant in Fayetteville and talented artist looks like you and me. She's certainly approachable and down-to-earth, with a warm and frequent laugh, but when she opens up about the journey she's taken in her decades on Earth, it's clear that the mettle she's made of is beyond the norm. She struck out as a young adult to live off the land, has made her mark in the art world, worked for 13 years as a nurse in a high-stress surgical environment and is one-half of the team that created one of Fayetteville's most beloved chains of business — an unusual trajectory by anyone's measure.

Born in California as an only child, Arsaga says she and her parents didn't stick around there for very long. They settled first in Memphis, Tenn., where Arsaga's mother had family, but they relocated to Little Rock when Arsaga was still a baby. Arsaga grew up there before moving, for a brief time, to live with an aunt in Tunica, Miss., when she was a teenager.

"My parents were both alcoholics and not good alcoholics, in any way," she says with a tight smile. "By the time I got to high school, I was looking for someplace else to live. The father of a friend of mine called my aunt, who agreed to let me come live with [her and her family] in Tunica during 10th grade."

Arsaga quickly settled in to her new environment. For the first time she could remember, there

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PERSONIFIED

Caring for the most vulnerable



File photo

Shannon Thomas cleans a mirror in preparation for a previous Walk a Mile in My Shoes sale. This year's fundraiser for Ozark Guidance will be April 13-14 at the Holiday Inn Springdale with a VIP Pre-sale Party on Friday and a public sale on Saturday morning.

Editor's note: A new Sunday feature, Personified will put a face on area organizations. We begin this week with Justin Hunt, senior vice president and chief medical officer at Ozark Guidance.

Tell us about your organization: Ozark Guidance is a private, local nonprofit mental health center. We are committed to meeting the mental health needs of individuals, families and the broader Northwest Arkansas community.

Mission: Saving and changing lives by providing compassionate, quality mental health services.

Services provided: We provide a wide range of services, including school-based mental health and therapeutic day treatment for children and adolescents, recovery services for those who struggle with addiction,

Justin B. Hunt, M.D., M.S.

Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer
Ozark Guidance, Springdale



and intensive services for patients with severe and persistent mental illness.

Service area: Our staff of more than 400 employees provides services in seven locations in Washington, Benton, Carroll and Madison counties. Our main campus

is located in Springdale with other centers in Fayetteville, Bentonville, Siloam Springs, Berryville and Huntsville.

Our school-based services are in many schools throughout the region.

Average number of people served annually: Ozark Guidance serves more than 11,000 people annually.

How is your organization's mission unique? As the safety net mental health provider in NWA, we are charged with caring for the most vulnerable among us, including children in the foster care system and individuals with severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia.

What part of your job fills the most of your time? My outpatient clinical duties fill the majority of my time, but I also have time devoted to administrative activities including supervi-

sion of our psychiatrists and advanced practice nursing providers.

What have you learned on the job that you didn't expect? The amazing diversity of the population we serve and the sometimes overwhelming need present in the community.

What challenges face your organization? Incoming transformation of the state's mental health system funded through Medicaid.

What upcoming fundraisers and/or other events does your organization have planned? Walk a Mile in My Shoes April 13-14 [and] the annual golf tournament, with morning and afternoon flights, June 25, at the Springdale Country Club.

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