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Madary to enter UTMB nursing program

Alice Matura Madary, daughter of Daniel and Inez Matura of Altair, was accepted into the bachelors degree of nursing program at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston beginning Jan. 3. She was also recently named a member of the National Honor Society.

Madary is currently employed at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. For the past five years, she has served as a senior research nurse for the Department of Surgical Oncology Clinical Research.

She is involved in research with goals of survival and prevention of recurrence in breast, melanoma, sarcoma, G.I. cancers which encompasses surgical techniques as well as drug therapy.

Madary plans to work towards her masters degree in nursing while at UTMB and eventually earn a PhD in research.

Congratulations, Alice!

Bible Verse of the Week

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." — Luke 2:14

Submitted by Neddy Phillips

Epps named 'Employee of the Year'

Riceland Regional Mental Health Authority (Riceland), providing mental health services for Colorado, Ft. Bend, Matagorda and Wharton Counties, recently named Karen Epps as its "Employee of the Year" at their annual holiday celebration.

Nominations were solicited earlier from each of Riceland's 12 continuous quality improvement groups. Epps, clinical secretary and business coordinator at the Colorado County facility, was the only candidate to receive two nominations.



"Karen finds something good in every situation," says Willie Welch, clinical supervisor at the Colorado County Service Center.

"Organizational changes can challenge employees and we've gone through a number of them in the past year. She takes them in stride, moves forward and adapts to the changes while maintaining a positive attitude."

When a fire damaged much of the Colorado County Center in July, Epps was cited for the many hours of work she devoted to the rebuilding of patient files. She worked at the office and at home to bring medical records back to a functional state.

And yet, Epps has also been recognized for setting priorities. Although files went home, they took second seat to the time spent with her family.

According to her nominators, Epps shows patience and understanding when working with clients. Employees praise the compassion and concern, a smile, a kind word, a card, Epps demonstrates with co-workers. She is described as trustworthy, dedicated, organized and friendly.

In addition to her positive attitude, says one nominator, Epps shows willingness in all areas of her work, which makes her exceptional, according to one of the nominators.

"I like working with the Colorado County staff," says Epps. "It's like working with family. We respect each other and help each other out."

Epps, who went to work at Riceland in 1991, holds an associates degree in applied science, office education, from Wharton County Junior College. She and her husband, Randy, live in Eagle Lake with their two sons.

"We feel fortunate to have her on our team," says Charlie Boone, Riceland's CEO. "Patient care is in the hands of our employees. With Karen and the other nominees on the job, we are continually reminded of the difference one person can make in the lives of others."

County Commissioners of Colorado, Ft. Bend, Matagorda and Wharton Counties formed Riceland Regional MHA in 1988 to provide community-based psychiatric service for the mentally ill and their families. It is governed by a board of nine trustees and treats those diagnosed with illnesses defined by the Texas Dept. of Mental Health & Mental Retardation.



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Thumb sucking during infancy may be considered normal. In fact, X-rays have shown that babies sometimes begin thumb sucking even before birth. This habit usually stops at 1-1/2 to 2 years. Even up to age 3 or 4 it isn't considered serious.

However, if around age 5 a child continues intense thumb sucking, it may cause permanent tooth buds, which are developing beneath the "baby teeth", to

be pushed forward. If this happens, the permanent upper front teeth, which usually appear at about age 5 or 7, may come in out of place. Thumb sucking can also delay development of mature swallowing habits.

If the thumb sucking habit persists, a dental consultation is advisable. Early intervention may prevent the need for more extensive orthodontic treatment later.

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Prevention and Treatment of Ear Infections

Middle ear infections (otitis media) occur in children as young as age 6 months. After age 6 years, the frequency decreases. Many ear infections occur following an upper respiratory infection. The child may experience fever, irritability, sleep disturbances, an aching in the ear, and temporary hearing loss.

Prevention: According to a recent report, parents can help prevent middle ear infections.

- Keep children away from cigarette smoke. Children in two-smoker homes are 3 times more likely to have ear infections than children in homes with no smokers.
- Keep children away from sick playmates. Children in day care settings are more prone to have ear infections.
- Breast feed infants. Bottle-fed children have more ear infections than breast-fed children.

Treatment: Bacteria often associated with children's ear infections are streptococcus pneumoniae and haemophilus influenzae. Amoxicillin is widely used to treat these infections. Antibiotics also may be prescribed as a preventative measure against recurring ear infections. Other preventative measures include the surgical insertion of ear tubes, removal of adenoids in children over age four, and immunization against pneumococci in children over two years of age.



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