

INSPIRATION



Jill Cooper, right, made the decision to apply to college at age 26 while pregnant with her daughter Virginia, left, who is now 12. Cooper received her nursing education from Cleveland State Community College and East Tennessee State University. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY JILL COOPER

Nurse of the Year dedicated to the future

Devarrick Turner | Knoxville News Sentinel | USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

Jill Cooper almost withdrew from nursing school during her first semester, but she pushed through. And now, more than a decade later, she's been honored as the 2024 Tennessee Valley Nurse of the Year. • "It absolutely means the world to me. I still cry whenever I think of what my students and colleagues and professors decided to do by nominating me," Cooper told Knox News. "There's so many amazing nurses in the world and for them to think that I was even somewhat worthy of this is just so very humbling."

The Cleveland-based nurse, who goes by Nurse Jill, was named the 2024 winner Jan. 29, beating out 11 other finalists. Cooper received a \$250 Food City gift card, and four Dollywood season passes along with the title. Food City, Dollywood and Hits 96 radio station sponsored the 2024 Tennessee Valley Nurse of the Year award.

Cooper says her calling is nurturing future nurses. She tutors students at Chattanooga Community College, Cleveland Community College and East Tennessee State University, where she received her nursing degree. And she provides tutoring services to students across the country through her website nursingmathtutor.com.

"I feel like I can help the world as one nurse a little, but I can help the world a lot more as feeding into these students," she said. "I'm just a little side-kick to the amazing amount of work that they do."

Cooper is a first-generation college graduate, having entered Cleveland State Community College at 26 after feeling compelled to make a change in her life while pregnant with her daughter. She then went on to East Tennessee State University.

It was during nursing school that she found her knack for tutoring. She often helped her classmates with dosage calculations, which is crucial when preparing medicines for patients. She created a simple formula based on dimensional analysis and algebra concepts to help

with the tricky calculations.

Helping students develop the important skill is Cooper's specialization. It led to her ETSU tutoring position, website and self-published book "Nurse Jill's Super Simple Dosage Calculation."



Nurse Jill Cooper of Cleveland, Tenn., is the 2024 Food City Tennessee Valley Nurse of the Year. She tutors students at East Tennessee State University and across the country. She specializes in dosage calculations using a simplified formula she developed.

It's "gratifying" for Cooper to see her students, whom she calls heroes, succeed, and she values the lasting supportive relationships within the profession.

"It's all like a big community and a family when you go to nursing school. You have that bond with other nurses for the rest of your life," she said.

Devarrick Turner is a trending news reporter. Email devarrick.turner@knoxnews.com. On X, formerly known as Twitter @dturner1208.

SPOTLIGHT

Seniors share treats, love with adoptable pets

A group of memory care residents from Concord Place in Knoxville recently shared home-baked treats and a little love with adoptable cats and dogs at Young-Williams Animal Village.

Residents from the Anthem Memory Care community baked dog treats as an activity for Random Acts of Kindness Week, according to a press release.

The group then visited the Young-Williams center to deliver the goodies, and to pose for pictures with cats to encourage pet adoption. They also gave the shelter a gift card to help cover adoption expenses for several cats, the release said.

"Many of our seniors have been involved in community service throughout their lives and dementia doesn't diminish their desire to help others," Lorie Warren, life engagement director for Concord Place, said in the release. "So many of them are animal lovers, and this was a great way to give back to the community while beginning loving relationships with the furry friends."

— Knoxville News Sentinel



Residents of Concord Place delivered home-baked dog treats to Young-Williams Animal Village in Knoxville and posed for pictures with cats at the shelter to encourage pet adoption. PROVIDED BY CONCORD PLACE

KINDNESS

'Angels' helped her cross icy road

Kathy Lane shared a heartwarming account of strangers helping to grant her birthday wish: a bowl of hot soup on a decidedly cold, wintry day!

"My birthday was well into the snow and ice adventure. I decided to take myself out to lunch with a good book for a warm bowl of broccoli cheddar soup at McAlister's Deli at Deane Hill. I didn't think that the center may not have yet been scraped of the snow and ice. The thoroughway beside the restaurant was still a sheet of ice. But I was determined to have my lunch. I gingerly started across when not one, but TWO, men exited the restaurant and helped me across the street! Birthday angels!"

— Knoxville News Sentinel

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