

## Dr. Mandi Johnson joins First Care Health Center: Rural medicine attractive to family practitioner

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**By Sue Matcha**

Dr. Mandi Johnson recently joined the medical team at First Care Health Center in Park River. The family practitioner from Grand Forks began seeing patients on Sept. 6 and finds the small town atmosphere much to her liking.

At the clinic she is known as Dr. Mandi to avoid confusion with long-time First Care family practitioner Dr. Joel Johnson who serves the clinic on a full-time basis. She is at the clinic office for patient appointments Tuesdays and Wednesdays some weeks and sometimes on Mondays and Fridays.

Dr. Mandi is not a stranger to Park River, local residents may see her face and find it familiar. Before she joined

the First Care staff on a permanent basis, she moonlighted at the hospital approximately six weekends each of the past three years to give Dr. Joel a much needed break.

A native of Grand Forks and still a resident there, Dr. Mandi said she doesn't remember ever wanting to be anything except a doctor. She attributes that to the exceptional medical care provided by the family medicine physician she saw while growing up and who still cares for her family today. Dr. Mandi is a graduate of Central High School and Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., where she earned a bachelors of social work. She attended the UND School of Medicine and earned her Masters of Public Health at the University of Minnesota. She com-



pleted her three-year family medicine residency at Altru Health System in Grand Forks.

*(Continued on page 3)*



## Athletics Can Take Their Toll: FCHC Physical Therapist Talks Sports

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**By Allison Olimb**

Sports injuries have been gaining in attention in the media recently. Concussions are being taken more seriously than ever with the likes of former quarterback Brett Favre admitting having memory loss as a result of injuries on the field.

As a part of continuing his education, First Care Health Center physical therapist Joe Karas attended a sports symposium sponsored by Sanford Orthopedics & Sports Medicine earlier this year to learn about some of the latest research on sports injuries.

The symposium featured a tendonitis expert, a sports doctor for the military academies, a couple of orthopedic surgeons who do treatments of shoulder injuries, a head sports trainer from a major university and concussion doctors.

Karas said that they discussed being prepared on the field and having plans in place to treat head and back injuries as well as new rules to go by on concussions such as the three concussions and out rule.

He added that one of the speakers that he found most interesting was the tendonitis expert from Australia who works with the Australian Olympic

teams. He said that tendons are extremely hard to treat. She said that it takes a combination of rest and exercise to get tendons back to where they need to be.

Since the symposium, Karas said he has been able to utilize some of the techniques she discussed to treat a case of Achilles tendonitis.

"Sometimes with injured athletes it's a matter of managing the injury," Karas said explaining the importance of building back up slowly to return to play because studies show that the only way to predict the odds of a person becoming injured is if they have sus-

*(Continued on page 3)*

## First Care Health Center

### Administration:

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Lori Seim, RN

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Mandi Johnson, MD  
Tammy Clemetson, PA-C

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## Administrator's Corner



Reflecting on the past year and how we lived the Mission of First Care Health Center is something that I do often especially in December. A year ago in December, we were shocked and saddened at the sudden death of Dr. O. S. Omutunde. First Care had been Dr. Omutunde's work home for nearly 25 years and he dedicated his life to living the Mission of healing both here and in Africa.

In May when all of the rain and flooding happened, First Care lived its Mission by becoming a temporary home for some of the patients of Pembina County Memorial Hospital and Wedgewood Manor. We were thankful that we were able to be here for them as friends and neighbors and that the flooding they experienced wasn't as bad as they thought it might be. In September, First Care Rural Health Clinic was able to continue its Mission to the rural area by becoming the new work home for Dr. Mandi Johnson, a family practice physician who is enjoying meeting and caring for patients here.

Our "swing bed" patients have done their rehabilitation therapy at First Care and we provide that homelike atmosphere which helps them recover and return to their own homes. Plus, people enjoy another benefit of home cooking which is definitely part of the healing Mission!

First Care continues its Mission by caring for those who find that illness prevents them from being in their own homes. Throughout this past year, First Care has been home for several Hospice patients who spent their final days on earth at First Care with hospice care provided by the Altru Hospice. We have been blessed because we are able to be their home for a while on their journey.

Many of our services (telemedicine, outpatient surgeries, chemotherapy treatments, physical therapy) are provided here so people can be closer to home.

The song *There's No Place like Home for the Holidays* reminds me of our Mission "to continue the healing Mission of Jesus in a rural setting" by being "home" to the many who have entered our facility this past year. Our gift to the people of this community and for those in our neighboring communities is to live our Mission and be home for those in need. It is our privilege and we appreciate your support in our efforts. May your home be blessed this Christmas Season and in the New Year.

Sincerely,  
Louise Dryburgh, CEO

## SAVE THE DATE 2.13.14

# MISSION: POSSIBLE

**Giving Hearts Day**  
Hosted By: [impactgiveback.org](http://impactgiveback.org)  
24 Hour Online Fundraising Event  
2.13.14

## Dr. Mandi Johnson joins First Care Health Center...continued from Page 1

"I grew up in Grand Forks and I was bound and determined that I would not complete my residency there. I wanted to go elsewhere to see how other people do things and experience different trainings," she commented. "I interviewed in Minnesota and South Dakota before interviewing in Grand Forks. I really felt that Grand Forks had the strongest program, so I stuck around."

While in Grand Forks, she practiced family medicine in the clinic, hospital and nursing home settings. She gained experience in everything from the emergency room to obstetrics. Dr. Mandi commented that although she enjoys treating patients of both genders and of all ages, as a young female physician, she seems to attract young female patients.

Although First Care Health Center no longer has an obstetrics department at the hospital, Dr. Mandi said she still provides prenatal care for pregnant

women and also does well child visits for newborns. She said she is comfortable providing that service because it is a lot of what she did in Grand Forks.

"I chose family medicine because every day is different, no two days are the same," she commented.

The young doc said in addition to a good diet and regular exercise, an integral part of good health is getting an annual physical.

"I encourage my patients to have a visit once a year when they are healthy and the only thing we talk about is how to prevent illness, staying healthy and keeping a good quality of life," she remarked. "It is important. When you are sick and need to be seen, it is also important to come in."

In addition to her responsibilities at First Care, Dr. Mandi occasionally helps at the medical school with training and picks up a shift at Altru's Urgent Care Clinic to "stay in the loop."



The part-time schedule gives her more time to focus on another important aspect of her life – spending time with her husband, three-year-old and one-year-old daughters.

Practicing family medicine in a rural area is just what the doctor ordered. Dr. Mandi enjoys the small town atmosphere and finds everyone to be super friendly. She likes it that every one knows everyone and over time, she will come to know everyone as well.

## Athletics Can Take Their Toll: FCHC Physical Therapist Talks Sports...continued from Page 1

tained a previous injury.

At First Care, Karas said, he can take direct access cases, which means the patient can come to him directly, however, he prefers to have a doctor's order to verify that the injury isn't something more serious. He said that he likes that doctor, physical therapist relationship because they can work together to access the patient's pain.

"It takes time to heal," he said. "If you're looking for the magic potion, it's not out there."

When he looks at a patient to find the source of their pain, he said, he starts at the feet, then the knees, then the hip and pelvis area, checking for tightness and weakness.

One thing he has found in his experience has been young athletes straining themselves to achieve visual results in the weight room. He said that before age 16, more focus should be put on

speed, coordination, and agility. While it is possible to work on lifting gradually, heavy weightlifting at too young of an age can be damaging.

Karas said that the majority of cases he sees from male athletes are a result of contact sports, whereas with females, the primary problem that arises is knee pain.

Often, he said, those types of knee injuries are a result of female anatomy. Hormones as well as hip width, which can affect knee alignment, can be a factor. Building up quad muscles helps to strengthen the knee to help prevent injury.

Often, he said, when he sees athletes come through First Care it is after an ACL or shoulder repair for rehabilitation.

Next year will be 40 years in the PT business for Karas. He graduated from the University of North Dakota in 1974.

He said he was a football player going for a physical education degree, but he didn't love it. After an injury, he found his calling.

"My goal was to be an athletic trainer at a university, but it never worked out," he said.

He ended up serving two years as a physical therapist in the army and then joined the staff at the Medical Center Rehabilitation Hospital in Grand Forks. Then, before he came to First Care he was the head physical therapist at Langdon. He has been serving First Care for around 20 years.

The best advice he has for young athletes is "anytime they can go to a speed camp, I'd recommend that." He also recommends athletes use "anything they can to protect themselves." And, he stressed, that the only way to predict an injury is by having a previous injury.



# First Care Health Center Memorials & Honor Gifts



First Care Health Center is grateful for the following memorials and honor gifts received as of 12.15.13

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Honor of 90th Birthday of **Anna Marie Huseby** from Sanford & Mayvis Jallo,

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Your help means that First Care will continue to provide you and your family with quality and compassionate care. Please consider a year-end gift to First Care Health Center or the DMF—First Care Health Center Charitable Endowment Fund. All gifts are important and greatly appreciated. Every gift is appreciated, and every gift makes a difference.

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For more information about the DMF—First Care Health Center Charitable Endowment Fund  
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