MED STUDENTS TALK COUNTRY IN HAVANA

Posted by Sandi Beare in News
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First-year medical students, as well as nursing and public health students from the FSU College of Medicine visited Havana last Friday, spending an hour at the Havana library to discuss rural health issues with members of the public and learning about life in a rural community.

Many of the students expressed interest in making their career path move into rural health. Led by longtime Gadsden teacher Linda Jones and Havana activist Nell Cunningham, organizers expressed hope that they could recruit some of the healthcare newbies to their area.

Each resident was paired with one or two of the students to interact and tell them about their community and its needs. This correspondent was able to interview two very charming and committed med students who had quite similar goals in mind. Tracy Pook from Jacksonville and Stephanie Podeau of Miami said most of their class seemed to want to go into primary care medical practice, a dire need in most communities these days. They expressed great interest in the needs in Havana and wanted to be sure we understood they wanted to help people, and with compassion.

Many of the students told attendees what they had learned after interacting with Havana area residents: ‘Havana is a good, small community;’ ‘Havana has both insured and uninsured citizens;’ ‘there are VA concerns in the community;’ ‘medicine has changed since the olden days when medical responses were home remedies;’ ‘Gadsden County needs young doctors;’ ‘we want to pay it forward - if this is our calling, we have to pay it back;’ ‘many people seem to have a multitude of health care issues;’ ‘this is a tight-knit community;’ ‘there are prenatal care needs;’ ‘we want to build relationships in the community;’ ‘everyone needs doctors who care about their patients;’ ‘doctors need to be sure they’re familiar with their patients’ medical history when they see them.’

Every speaker stressed the biggest, most important part of health care - compassion.

“Don’t lose your dream. Take courses in patient-doctor communications,” said Nell
Cunningham.

The students previously had toured the Gadsden County Public Health Department and Capital Regional Medical Center’s Gadsden Memorial Campus.

FSU medical students discuss what they have learned after talking to residents of the Havana community.