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15 doctors to graduate locally

By Susan Burgess

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FORT PIERCE — Fifteen newly minted doctors will graduate this month from the Fort Pierce Regional Campus of the Florida State University College of Medicine.

This is the third class to graduate from the 4-year-old campus on Virginia Avenue. Graduation takes place on May 21 in Tallahassee. The local campus is hosting a dinner in honor of the graduates at the Pelican Yacht Club at 6 p.m. Wednesday.

Orlando Medical Examiner Dr. Jan Garavaglia, perhaps better known as Dr. G. from her “Dr. G: Medical Examiner” television series on the Discovery Channel, will address the class at the yacht club.

“I think this is a very hard-working group of students, and they’ve enjoyed their time here,” Regional Dean Dr. Randall Bertolette said. “I think they will do exceptionally well in their residency programs.”

The students spent two years at the FSU College of Medicine in Tallahassee and then left for Fort Pierce, where they spent the remaining two years of medical school learning in real-life situations in hospitals and doctors’ offices. After graduation, the new doctors go into residency programs in hospitals where they can study their chosen specialty.

Zarna Dahya, 25, an Okeechobee resident who has commuted to school in Fort Pierce for the past

GRADUATES

- Alvaro Bada
- Zarna Dahya
- Desmond Fitzpatrick
- Vaishali Gajera
- Glivery (Ivey) Gayahan
- Jackson Hatfield
- Danielle Henry
- Jeremy Jones
- Ashley Kelley
- Sarah McIver
- Steven Moore
- Stephen Nobles
- Cianna Pender
- Stephanie Reed
- Tina Tso

two years, plans to study internal medicine during her residency at the University of Louisville Hospital in Kentucky. Afterward, she intends to return home to Okeechobee to practice medicine. She has a special interest in ge-

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Dr. Randall Bertolette, regional dean

riatric medicine, she said.

“There is a great need for doctors in Okeechobee,” she said. “My younger brothers, who are twins, were born prematurely in West Palm Beach at St. Mary’s because this kind of specialized service was not available in Okeechobee. Seeing what kind of hardships they had to go through made me realize the need.”

Now 21, one of the twins, Vishal, is in his first year of medical school at Florida State, she said. Her other brother, Vikash, is

studying dentistry.

Zarna Dahya said that while in Fort Pierce she did a surgery and an internal medicine rotation at Lawnwood Regional Medical Center & Heart Institute, nephrology and obstetrics at Indian River Medical Center and studied family medicine at a hospital in Immokalee. She also studied at several physicians’ practices.

“What I liked is that everyone had a very supportive staff,” she said. “Doing well really comes down to balancing your studies with practice.”