



Grant aims to foster science, medical careers

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SARASOTA COUNTY — Students in Sarasota County will soon get a taste of Florida State University’s medical programs through a \$500,000 grant from the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation.

The five-year grant will establish a chapter of the FSU College of Medicine’s Science Students Together Reaching Instructional Diversity, or SSTRIDE, in Sarasota. SSTRIDE aims to encourage students to pursue a career in STEM and “a possible future in health care.”

“SSTRIDE is a proven program. We were able to look at data from around the state and see that it is a program that has success in attracting students to study and pursue careers in STEM,” said Barancik Foundation president and CEO Teri A. Hansen in a statement.

More than half of the students who have gone through the SSTRIDE program have chosen majors in math, science or health upon entering college.

The program consists of in- and after-school resources that provide academic instruction to inspire an interest in STEM. It also offers support services to assist students in developing the motivation, responsibility and focus required for a career in their chosen field.

In Sarasota County, SSTRIDE will recruit students from McIntosh Middle School and Sarasota High School. The 40 accepted students will begin their SSTRIDE summer orientation in early August.

SSTRIDE works well in conjunction with public schools, said Stephen Cantees, executive director of high school education for Sarasota County.

“The SSTRIDE programs provides all of those components that are hard for us to duplicate in a public school system,” Cantees said.

With its introduction into the area, SSTRIDE now has chapters in eight Florida counties.

The Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, founded in 2014, is a private family foundation in Sarasota.