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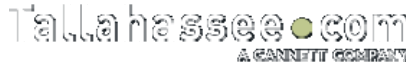
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Medical school comes to life for high school students

BY JORDAN CULVER • DEMOCRAT WRITER • PUBLISHED: JUNE 18, 2011 2:00AM

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T'Kayla Travis said she lives in an area where there are, at best, a "couple of physicians." The West Gadsden High School student's desire to become an obstetrician/gynecologist comes from a need to fill a void in a rural part of her county.



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Becoming a doctor, she said, is the best way to give back to her community.

Florida State University's College of Medicine is giving aspiring doctors a chance to see the medical world before medical school. The Summer Institute — or "mini med school" — reaches out mostly to local high school students from rural communities, giving them a head start on becoming the doctors of tomorrow.

The Summer Institute runs over the course of three separate weeks. Each week-long session includes team-building exercises, community outreach, panel discussions and opportunities to shadow doctors.

"Our goal for the Summer Institute is to recruit students from rural, underserved and minority backgrounds and, at the same time, recruit students from other parts of Florida who have a desire to work in medically underserved areas," said Thesla Berne-Anderson, director of college and pre-college outreach, in a news release.

Session One, which started Sunday and ended Friday, brought together students from Leon and surrounding counties after a rigorous application process. Requirements included a 3.5 grade point average, recommendations, an essay and participation in college-prep courses.

The sessions are not free, but nine local students received financial sponsorships to help them on the way to becoming members of the medical community. T'Kayla said students in her school

were interested but did not apply.

"It was kind of hard thinking about trying to pay for me to actually go to the program and to pay for the things I needed," she said. "I applied for the scholarship, which was worth \$875, and I got it."

T'Kayla said that while the workload has been heavy, she's enjoying herself far more than she thought she would.

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Lincoln High student Brandon Baker took part in the Summer Institute at FSU's College of Medicine. Below, T'Kayla Travis, a student at West Gadsden High, got a taste of medical school during this week's program. (Photo by Colin Hackley/FSU)

FOR MORE INFO

There are two more sessions of the Summer Institute. Session Two runs June 26-July 1. Session Three runs July 10-15. For more information, contact SSTRIDE Coordinator Roosevelt Rogers at 644-7678.

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Brandon Baker, a 16-year-old Lincoln High student who also received sponsorship, called the "mini med school" a great chance to prepare him to give back to his community.

"I really appreciate them going to rural areas and providing care for people in need," he said. "There are people who don't have doctors, people who don't have those influences. Doctors are more than a prescription for a patient. It's about that relationship."

Taylor County High School student Madison Thomas said her family and community are her main inspiration for entering the medical field. At 16, she already knows she wants to help find a cure for cancer.

FSU's Science Students Together Reaching Instructional Diversity & Excellence (SSTRIDE) program aided in gathering a diverse group of future medical students.

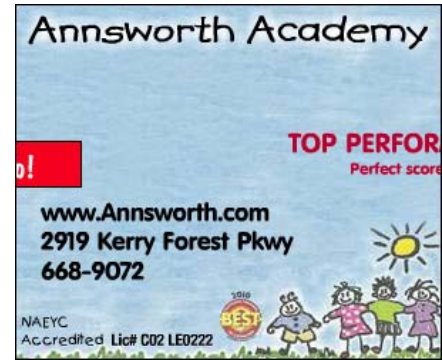
"The SSTRIDE mentors come and assist us in our science classes," said East Gadsden High student Brandi Pringley, 17. "They introduced us to the Summer Institute. It seemed very interesting to me."

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