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Summer sample of med school

By YASMIN PARSLOE Correspondent

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Sarasota-area students got a peek into a future in the medical field after attending a College of Medicine Summer Institute.

A week of fast-paced learning hosted by Florida State University gives high school students an extensive view into the careers and lives of physicians and doctors.

With more than 60 participants each summer, the program aims to introduce graduating students to the medical profession by offering problem-based learning, seminars hosted by the College of Medicine's faculty and opportunities to shadow local physicians specifically chosen based on an applicant's interests.

Striving to inspire students that are less represented in the medical field, Doug Carlson, director of communications of the FSU Medical School, said the aim of the Summer Institute is to foster "the realization that you don't have to be superhuman to go to medical school."

Amanda Ortiz, a rising senior at Sarasota High School, showed enthusiasm for long hours filled with activities such as college advising, physician shadowing, faculty workshops, ethics discussions and research projects.

After attending the program at FSU's main campus in Tallahassee for a week, Ortiz said the experience confirmed her lifelong aspirations to become a pulmonologist.

"I want to do so much and inspire people like my doctor inspired me," Ortiz said about her longtime physician, Dr. Robert Miller.

The requirements and application process to attend the summer session are not easy.

Students are eligible if they have a 3.3 GPA, present letters of recommendation from teachers and complete college-level math and science courses.

Ortiz surpassed all of the academic elements in addition to involvement in community service projects, honors courses and an internship at Sarasota Memorial Hospital.

Kaley Cochran, a Venice High School student who wants to become a pediatric oncologist, also received a scholarship to attend the university's Summer Institute.

Cochran also has worked at the Venice Wildlife Center.

"I have always been the person to want to take care of others," Cochran said.

The Summer Institute presented Cochran an opportunity to learn about her chosen career and intended focus on children's medicine.



Amanda Ortiz, left, a student at Sarasota High School, learns from a mechanical patient during the Summer Institute at the Florida State University College of Medicine. Also pictured are Rachel Candela of Jensen Beach High School and Austin Wynn of Taylor County High School. PHOTO PROVIDED BY FSU SCHOOL OF MEDICINE / COLIN HACKLEY



Ortiz and Cochran said they view attending a university as the next step toward fulfilling their career dreams. With a strong work ethic, extracurricular activities and understanding of the medical field, they want to become the physicians of the future.

Attendance at the Summer Institute gives them the experience to triumph over the proven challenges of medical school.

Hard work is the key, Ortiz said.

"There are long days and hours, but it's definitely something that I want to do, and this is my choice," she said. "I know what I want to be."

Kathman scholarship awarded to future educator

Lindsey Cleckner, a 2011 Riverview High graduate, has received this year's Ann Kathman Memorial Scholarship.

The memorial scholarship gives \$1,000 to one Riverview High graduating senior who will pursue a four-year degree in education with the intent of teaching in the public school system.

The award was presented to Cleckner on June 14. It was not presented at the annual Riverview High School Senior Awards night in May because of a scheduling conflict.

Cleckner will attend Anderson University in South Carolina to earn a degree in early childhood and elementary education.

"This scholarship gave me confidence," Cleckner said. "It means a lot that they support me and my education dreams."

The scholarship honors the late Ann Kathman, who was a religious education teacher and in public schools for 23 years. She spent 16 years teaching at Riverview. She retired from the school in 2008 and died in March 2010.

The scholarship is "a way of remembering her and something she would want for other students," said Jeanne Herrington, Kathman's daughter.

Criteria for the scholarship includes the student's high school academic record with a minimum 2.8 GPA, school community activities, three letters of recommendation with one being from a teacher and an essay explaining why the student decided to pursue a career in education.

Other scholarships awarded in May were the Georgiades Family Scholarship to Brianna Miller, Riverview High School Foundation "Career" Scholarship to John Wong, Dr. Patrick & Yvonne Rodi Engineering Scholarship to Kirk Cherney and Ronald Frymire Memorial Scholarship to Tyler McDuffie.

Teachers are not left empty handed. An anonymous donor annually gives \$10,000 to the Riverview High School Foundation for Teacher Enhancement Travel Grants.

This act of altruism has enabled teachers to travel to such places as Europe, China and Japan. The high school is able to provide a travel opportunity to at least four teachers via the donation, rationing a maximum of \$2,500 per teacher selected.

"It's simply about enriching their lives," Riverview High School Foundation Coordinator Cyndi Forgeur said. "They become better people from the experience and, in turn, better teachers."

For more information about the foundation, visit www.rhsfoundation.org.

– Megan Hammerling,

H-T intern

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