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FSU med school throws 10th anniversary party for Jackson County

Deborah Buckhalter / Jackson County Floridan Feb 24, 2017



Dean of the FSU College of Medicine John Fogarty, left, and Dr. Anthony Speights, Director of Rural Medical Education at FSU, present the "Grandparents" of FSU medical students award to John and Becky Trott because of the couple's long-time commitment to provide free housing for the students while they study and work at Jackson Hospital and other local medical facilities. To the far right, Pat Crisp looks on. She, too, received special recognition for providing housing assistance to the students for the past few years.

Dr. Anthony Speights grew up in Jackson County, graduating from Marianna High School in 1992. The son of Charles "Pete" Speights of Marianna and Callie Forward, now a resident of Tampa, the doctor headed back toward home after he graduated medical school. He served on the medical staff at Jackson Hospital and in private practice here from 2005-2010. His practice, Women's Health Care of the Panhandle, was on 5th Avenue in Marianna.

Now the FSU College of Medicine's Director of Rural Medical Education, Speights put together a big celebration this month to mark the 10th anniversary of FSU's partnership with Marianna in a program that allows third-year medical students to work side-by-side with doctors at Jackson Hospital and other medical facilities as they work through their critical year of rotations, where they learn how to put to practical use the things they learned in the classroom about anatomy and what can go wrong in the human body. It's the year they start seeing patients. It's the year they begin to decide on their career specialties. It's the year they make some of their most important gains in becoming medical professionals, the year they learn so much more about things they can't find in any textbook. Jackson Hospital, local doctors, fire rescue, hospice facilities, home health care providers, and other medical professionals lend their expertise as the students go through rotations in five of the six specialties they experience throughout their third year. Since there is no psychiatrist in practice locally, that sixth specialty rotation is carried out in Dothan, Ala. and in Panama City.

Jackson County is definitely the hub of the third-year program, Speights said, and a community that richly deserved its 10th anniversary party that he put together with some assistance from Jackson Hospital.

Dr. John Fogarty, the Dean of the FSU College of Medicine, joined Speights on stage at the celebration, held at Rivertown Community Church, to bestow some awards that evening. Dr. Steven Spence is the rural campus administrator and was also part of the ceremony. There are 30 local doctors who allow the students to work alongside them, and those who have been part of the team for at least five years were recognized. More

than 30 FSU medical students have spent their 3rd year in the program. Many of them now care for underserved patient populations, including geriatric and rural residents.

Marianna residents John and Becky Trott got a special "grandparents" award. The couple has, almost from the inception of the partnership, provided free housing to at least one student every year.

Pat Crisp was also recognized for the housing assistance she has provided the students for the past few years.

The doctors involved in the program are listed here. Doctors recognized for 10 years of service were: Clerkship Administrator Steven Spence; Mark Akerson; Doyle Bosse; Jirayos Chintandilok, Joe Gay, Richard Goff and John Spence. Recognized for 5 years or more were physicians: Robin Albritton; Vechai Arunakul; Leisa Bailey; Josephina Baluga; Richard Brunner; Karen Chason; Richard Christopher; Teresa Goodpaster; Stacy Harbin; and Orlando Muniz. Others doctors serving with fewer years of service are: Vicki Alberts; Murray Baker; Melissa Caraballo; Leona Graham; Bianca Harbison; Dennis Harris; Patrick Hawkins; Yana Kirova-Pancheva; Ricky Leff; Murali Krishna Maddipati; Nelson Pichardo and Paul Wurst.

Speights and Spence say the FSU/Jackson County partnership is a living example illustrating the heart of the FSU College of Medicine's very mission. It was spelled out in statute when the medical school was established: "The Florida State University College of Medicine will educate and develop exemplary physicians who practice patient-centered health care, discover and advance knowledge, and are responsive to community needs, especially through service to elder, rural, minority, and underserved populations," the mission statement reads.

The doctors who allow the students to work alongside them are getting something out of the program, too, Spence and Speights say, keeping themselves sharp, feeling the satisfaction of helping young people learn and advance; and having a second set of hands are just a few of the advantages.

Jackson County itself also benefits, they say. With Jackson Hospital and other local health care providers as partners, FSU is saying to the world that the local medical community is a trusted learning environment with resources who care about the next generation of medical providers. It puts Jackson County on the map in many positive ways, Spence said.

And all that was reason for celebration as well.

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