

Washington Academy Students Experience A Day At DECH

Machias-Fifty-seven chemistry students from Washington Academy recently visited Down East Community Hospital (DECH) for an in-depth introduction to the Hospital's Lab and Radiology Departments. Hospital staff also provided a tour and introduction to all Hospital services including nursing, cardiopulmonary, rehabilitation services and information services.

This day-long event was the first step in the exploration of establishing a formal clinical



affiliation between the Hospital and Washington Academy. A process to iron out the details of the affiliation are underway involving Nicole Phinney, Director of Clinical Services at DECH, Marci Grabarits, Lab Technical Supervisor, DECH trustee Walter Plaut, chemistry instructors Don Sprangers and Malcolm Holmes and guidance counselor Kay Richmond from Washington Academy. Beginning in January of 2007, interested students will begin a formal internship in the Lab or

Radiology Departments at DECH for credit.

"Our goal is to broaden the high school students' knowledge base of the opportunities that exist within the field of healthcare" said Nicole Phinney. "We hope this program will spark excitement in students about healthcare as a career and inspire them to remain here in Washington County to contribute to both the physical and financial viability of our community."

Washington Academy chemistry instructor, Don Sprangers commented, "The hospital tour provided students the opportunity to see science concepts and technologies learned in the classroom being applied real-life situations. Students observed multiple applications of spectrophotometry, bacteria cultures, radiology, and histology. Many students were awakened to professional career opportunities available in the medical field and learned that these careers are attainable. The hospital tour was a great success in developing career aspirations and reinforcing the need for good quality academics."



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Students were equally enthused by the opportunity to tour the hospital. "My favorite part of the tour was the lab. I would love to job shadow or intern in the laboratory because I think it's very interesting" said student Ashley Noyes. "The tour was really neat. I found I had an interest in things that I didn't know I did. I hope to get the chance to job shadow someone" added student Christina Trevolta.

Wayne Dodwell, President and CEO of DECH commented, "I am very pleased that the Washington Academy students responded so positively to this program. The demand for healthcare services is growing and this means that the demand for qualified healthcare professionals is also ever-increasing. Healthcare is a dynamic field and I hope the students will continue to be excited about the opportunities our profession has to offer. We look forward to growing this partnership with the Academy."

Down East Community Hospital's goal is to expand this program to other area high schools once this pilot program with Washington Academy has been fully implemented and evaluated for maximum impact.

Photo 1 Cutline: Washington Academy student peers intently through a microscope in the Lab at Down East Community Hospital during a recent tour and introduction to the facility.

Photo 2 Cutline: Marci Gabarits, Lab Technical Supervisor at Down East Community Hospital, demonstrates the inner-workings of the lab to chemistry students from Washington Academy.