

Students See Service Above Self as Path to Health Care Career

Helping others is the passion giving them the push

As teenagers, all of us remember the pressure of deciding what our career path would be. With so many options, it's not easy. But then there's the added anxiety of making the right choice.

Recently, OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center played host to a group of nearly 50 middle and high school students faced with wanting to take the correct path to a rewarding and fulfilling profession.

Coming from all across the northern half of Illinois, the students were attending a week-long health careers camp at Rockford's University of Illinois College of Medicine campus.

Just by attending the camp, the students already know that health care might be right for them.

"Everything I'm doing this week is kind of peaking my interest more," says Julie Orlando, sophomore at Stillman Valley (IL) High School. "I really like to see the different - just how everybody work together, I think is really interesting. All of the different components involved and just, like, the whole treatment that everybody get - just all the different people and aspects that go into patient care."

At OSF Saint Anthony, the students toured the lab, women's center, and retail pharmacy and heard from the manager of physical therapy. They learned about the types of jobs each area has to offer and the education needed to work there.

Students said it really opened their eyes to the myriad of possibilities in the field. However, for some, this choice of career is all about being there when needed.

"Definitely helping people", says Chell Alexander Gossett, senior at Byron (IL) High School. "It's serving the community, getting to people when they're in their worst and trying to motivate them and support them and get them to a functioning level in society where they can perform as they use to or perform as they want to."

OSF Saint Anthony's Paula Carynski also addressed the group and told them that health care offers them a wide variety of career opportunities and potential for growth with an organization, like OSF. She would know. She first became a nurse at the medical center after receiving a degree from the, then, Saint Anthony College of Nursing. Today, she is the president of the medical center.