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Southern West Virginia Junior Nursing Academy offers eighth-graders true hospital experience

Beckley, West Virginia – This summer, eighth-grade students with an interest in the nursing profession will have a chance to spend time working alongside real nurses in real hospital environments during the three-day Southern West Virginia Junior Nursing Academy.

Students in the academy will attend classes on WVU Tech’s campus in Beckley, take skill labs with Bluefield State College professors at the Erma Byrd Higher Education Center, participate in a simulated operating room experience at Raleigh General Hospital and **engage in a simulated emergency trauma experience at Appalachian Regional Hospital.**

Dr. Crystal Sheaves, RN, APRN, FNP-BC, oversees the nursing department at WVU Tech. She said the program is a great way for young students to get a sense for what nursing is really like.

“At that age, they haven’t made up their minds about what career path they want to follow. This gives them a chance to see a variety of nursing paths up-close and in a real-life so they can see what a nursing career could mean for them,” she said.

Dr. Angela Lambert, BSC Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs added, “Bluefield State College is pleased to partner with WVU Tech, RGH and BARH to host the Junior Nursing Academy. This will serve as an excellent summer educational experience for those with an interest in nursing, as well as for others to explore the possibilities of the field. BSC welcomes the spirit of collaboration for the academy and the engagement of a younger group of students to higher education.”

Students will also be assigned a mentor – a faculty member or a college nursing student from BSC or WVU Tech – who will work with them to answer questions and explain what life is like in the field.

“This allows them to see what steps they need to take now to get a head start on their nursing career, if that’s what they decide to pursue,” said Sheaves. “We wanted to put them in touch with nursing faculty or nursing students so they have someone to guide them along the way.”

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Hillary Parcell, MSN, RN, is a nursing faculty member who helped to organize the program. She said the academy will leave students with a lot more than an idea of what nursing is. For example, each student will be CPR-certified on day one of the camp.

“They’ll earn a useful skill that can help spark their interest in the field. When they realize that they have the power as an eighth grader to save a life right now, that’s powerful,” Parcell said.

On the last day of the academy, students will participate in a graduation pinning ceremony.

The nursing academy is a partnership between the WVU School of Nursing at WVU Tech, Bluefield State College School of Nursing, Raleigh General Hospital and Beckley Appalachian Regional Healthcare. The program is presented with financial assistance as a grant from the West Virginia Center for Nursing.

To apply for the camp, students must be entering into the eighth grade in August, 2018. They must have a 3.0 GPA and must submit a brief essay on their interest in the nursing profession and why they want to attend the academy program.

“We’re looking for students who want to help people,” said Sheaves. “Outgoing students who are a little adventurous and aren’t afraid to try new things are really going to benefit from this program.”

Visit camps.wvutec.edu to apply or find out more. Academy spots are limited. Applications are due by mail on Monday, April 16.

A campus within the West Virginia University system, WVU Tech is a four-year institution that offers more than 40 academic programs and 9 ABET-accredited engineering programs. WVU Tech is ranked #1 in the state for annual student return on investment. For more information, visit wvutec.edu.

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