

WHERE THE DOCTORS ARE

A DAILY SUN SPECIAL REPORT



Photos by Bill Mitchell | Daily Sun

Sheila DePratter, right, a senior at The Villages High School, demonstrates an EKG on sophomore Jentri Emily at the Health Sciences Academy.



Sophomore Cheyenne Brogdon, left, practices drawing blood with the help of senior Emily Graham.



Jessica Rockey, a senior at The Villages High School, speaks about the Health Sciences Academy.



Seniors Morgan Stegner, left, and Jacob Stoffer talk with several sophomores about the program.

Villages High School Students Getting Ahead at Health Academy

By KATIE SARTORIS
Daily Sun Senior Writer

THE VILLAGES

The future of health care is in the hands of bright students such as those at The Villages High School.

Some even are getting a head start on their medical careers through the school's Health Sciences Academy.

The academy, one of VHS' two-year specialized tracks of studies, allows students to learn the basics of working in the health-care industry.

"During the first part of the program, students learn theory, the function of the body, medical terminology and calculations," said Stacey Townsend, the academy teacher.

Then as seniors, students start the hands-on work. They

learn on medical dummies and each other how to take vitals, draw blood and perform EKGs.

Student success in the academy also requires clinical time. So, students work in medical facilities in the community, interfacing with real patients in real situations.

And, if the students plan correctly, they actually will be able to graduate with some industry certifications.

"What's great about our program is that students can graduate with their high school diplomas, their associate's degree (through the dual enrollment program) and possibly their certified nurse's assistant, certified medical assistant, EKG and phlebotomy certifications," Townsend said.

If they didn't enroll in the health science program, the students would learn these skills at the beginning of their college

medical program, Townsend said.

Senior Jacob Stoffer is soaking it all in before he graduates high school.

"The (health sciences) class teaches you a lot of basics," he said. "I feel like I'll be really prepared for college and ready to learn more in-depth concepts."

Stoffer plans to earn an associate's degree at Lake-Sumter State College and then a nursing degree at the University of South Florida.

Students such as Stoffer are just what the nursing industry needs, said Dianne Morrison-Beedy, dean of the USF College of Nursing.

"If we think about how we are going to transform health care and transform people's lives over the next few decades, we really have to think about getting a more highly educated nursing workforce," she said.

“

I feel like I'll be really prepared for college and ready to learn more in-depth concepts.”

JACOB STOFFER
Senior, on the Health Sciences Academy at The Villages High School

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