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NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR THE PEOPLE WHO BRING BJC HEALTHCARE TO LIFE

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The best gift of all



Precious little gifts, like Mason Lewis Evans, born at Parkland Health Center Dec. 13, will be going home in special wrapping from birth centers across BJC to celebrate the holiday season. | Photo by Ursula Warren

Helping students find their career path

by Becky Slatin

BJC ■ Having a career in health care is a goal for a lot of high school students, but knowing where to look and what career options are available to them can be a challenge.

Thanks to the BJC School Outreach and Youth Development career exploration programs, more than 70,000 students living in communities served by BJC HealthCare have been exposed to a variety of professions in the health care field since 2005.

These programs provide area students with front-row seats to BJC hospitals, physician offices and other facilities. Programs include health career talks in classroom settings, health career camps and fairs, job shadowing at area hospitals and with medical professionals in office settings, and extended internships for students with a high interest in health professions.

“With these programs, we have an opportunity to show students how rewarding a career in health care could be for them and the opportunities beyond being a physician or nurse,” says Jennifer Irvin, MHSA, a school-community health educator with BJC School Outreach and Youth Development. “We’re building a pipeline for students by exposing them to careers that benefit not only BJC but the entire community.”

Irvin works closely with local high schools and BJC hospitals to ensure students have unique experiences and knowledge about an array of opportunities — from the bedside on hospital units like obstetrics and ambulatory surgery to behind-the-scenes in areas like pharmacy, labs and radiology.

As a result of these programs, more than 100 former students have gone on to enter health care fields, and many are working for BJC. These include registered nurses, pharmacists, physicians and allied health professionals.

In addition, BJC School Outreach and Youth Development has developed a dedicated career exploration program in partnership with Parkway School District, Special School District and Barnes-Jewish West County Hospital. The program, Pre-Professional Health Sciences Academy, is led by Marianne Esser, school-community health educator. This structured program is currently tracking nearly 60 students enrolled in college studying in various health care professions.



Jennifer Irvin

“Through the career exploration programs, BJC School Outreach and Youth Development has remained committed to students who have shown an interest and aptitude for a career in health care by providing ongoing coaching and support,” says Diana Wilhold, director of BJC School Outreach and Youth Development. “Their progression through our programs, continuing education and ultimate profession has been supported both by our team and the many BJC health care professionals who become mentors to these students.”

Shadowing sparks a career

During high school, Kristy Duckworth was like a lot of her peers. She knew she would continue her education after graduation, but she wasn’t sure what path she should take.

Fortunately for Duckworth, the school nurse at Highland High School in Illinois was also her mom, and introduced her to Irvin.

“Meeting Jennifer was a big benefit for me, as it is for a lot of students,” she says. “Jennifer introduced me to possible career options through job shadowing at hospitals like Barnes-Jewish Hospital and a smaller community hospital in my hometown.”

Duckworth knows exactly which job shadowing experience made the greatest impact on her — the day she shadowed an investigational pharmacist who works with clinical trial patients at BJH.

“I was able to shadow multiple times and learned not just what I wanted to do but what I didn’t want to do,” she says. “I knew pharmacy was the career for me. I had thought I might want to be a dietitian or maybe another job, but pharmacy stood out.”

Today, Duckworth, 26, is a PharmD graduate of the St. Louis College of Pharmacy and works as an inpatient pharmacist at St. Louis Children’s Hospital.

“Jennifer continued to stay in touch with me after high school and while I was in pharmacy school,” she says. “She really cares about people and was always seeking out the best opportunities in helping me find a career.”

Irvin says former students and now BJC employees like Duckworth are what makes her role so rewarding. “I remember when Kristy shadowed the pharmacist at BJH. She was so excited,” Irvin recalls. “Even today she continues to stay plugged in by helping her mom with students and staying in touch. She was steadfast and knew what she wanted to do.”

Impact of being a patient

Kriston King didn’t have a typical childhood. She spent many days in and out of SLCH, where she was regularly treated for asthma and epilepsy.

Having a history of being hospitalized would make some people shy away from a career in health care, but not King.

“I always knew I wanted to work in health care because of my own history. I know what it’s like to be a patient,” says the 21-year-old. “I know what it means to have people who are passionate about taking care of you, and I have that same passion.”

When King was a freshman at Hazelwood Central High School, she met Irvin, who would continue to guide her throughout high school and beyond.

“Jennifer was not only my mentor but a parental influence. I really look up to her and appreciate her working with me,” King says. “When I transferred to McCluer North High School in 2011, they didn’t have a formal program, but Jennifer stayed in touch with me and helped me shadow a few times at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and St. Louis Children’s Hospital.”

It was during her shadowing at SLCH that King knew becoming a pediatric nurse was her career goal. “By my senior year, I knew exactly what I wanted to do and the timeframe in which I wanted to have it done,” King says.

“Kriston knew she wanted a career in health care, and she was willing to work on her own to learn what was available for her through shadowing and taking classes,” Irvin says. “We’re always here for students, and we don’t want them to ever be frustrated. We’re here to talk and help them find the right opportunities.”

After King graduated from high school, Irvin encouraged her to enter the Patient Care Tech Academy at Christian Hospital, which she just completed Aug. 4.

Today, she is working full-time as a PCT in the hospital’s rehabilitation department and going to school full-time at St. Louis Community College-Florissant Valley, where she’s taking general studies courses.

“I plan on attending nursing school to become an RN and then earn my BSN,” she says. “The help from Jennifer and the School Outreach programs provided me with a foundation for what I wanted to do. It showed me the pros and cons of different health care careers. I hope one day I can give back to the program.” ■

Becky Slatin, rebecca.slatin@bjc.org

Pediatric critical care medicine director named

by Kristina Sauerwein

SLCH, WUSM ■ Juliane Bubeck Wardenburg, MD, PhD, a nationally recognized physician with expertise in bacterial infections, has been named director of the division of pediatric critical care medicine at Washington University School of Medicine. She also will treat patients at St. Louis Children’s Hospital and will begin her new position in January.

Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg comes from the University of Chicago, where she is an associate professor of pediatrics and microbiology, as well as chief of pediatric critical care in the department of pediatrics. At Washington University, her alma mater, she will continue her research, funded by the National Institutes



Dr. Juliane Bubeck Wardenburg

of Health, on the infectious bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacteriodes fragilis* in the critically ill.

“Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg is an outstanding physician-scientist who is equally adept at patient care, research and teaching,” says Gary Silverman, MD, PhD, the Harriet B. Spoehrer Professor and head of the WUSM Department of Pediatrics.

Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg succeeds interim director F. Sessions Cole, MD, vice chair of the department of pediatrics, director of the division of newborn medicine, chief medical officer at SLCH and the Park J. White, MD, Professor of Pediatrics.

“I look forward to building upon the existing strengths in patient care, education and research in the division of pediatric critical care,” Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg says.

Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg began her academic career at Washington University, earning an undergraduate degree in biology in 1993 and graduating with accolades from the

Medical Scientist Training Program in 2001. While there, her research contributed to defining how signals inside immune cells lead to the cells’ activation.

After completing her residency and fellowship in 2008 at the University of Chicago, Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg became a faculty member there. The major focus of her research was and continues to be examining infectious bacteria’s role in causing serious illness in adults and children.

A member of the Society for Pediatric Research and the American Society for Clinical Investigation, Dr. Bubeck Wardenburg has received nearly two dozen awards for research, patient care and teaching.

“I’m both delighted and honored to return to Washington University School of Medicine,” she says. “The rich environment provides an unparalleled opportunity to integrate clinical medicine and research to improve child health.” ■