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BJC HealthCare

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

BJC TODAY

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BJH nurse takes to the ice

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Stephanie Torrence, Barnes-Jewish Hospital clinical nurse educator, gets a ride on the Zamboni machine during the second period break at the BJC Night at the Blues hockey game April 9. | Photo by Alex Paz

Barnes-Jewish nurses continue their 'adventure'

Register for Adventures in HealthCare Camp by May 19

by Patty Johnson

BJC | Christie Lewis recalls exactly how she felt a decade ago, when she first toured Missouri Baptist Medical Center as a BJC Adventures in HealthCare Camp participant. "I remember taking the tour of the whole hospital and getting so excited to be in the hospital atmosphere," she says.

She also remembers the feeling she got when she listened to BJC caregivers talk about their professions. "I don't specifically remember what types of nurses presented to us, but I loved how positive all the presenters were and how passionate each health care worker was about his or her profession," she says.

Today, as a staff nurse at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Christie now shares her passion for her profession with others — as does her twin sister, Katie, who's also a nurse at BJH.

The two participated in Adventures in HealthCare Camp in 2006 and served as junior volunteers for the next few years. Both say the camp experience helped them decide on their future careers.

"I realized from this camp that health care was an interesting and exciting field," says Katie. "The camp taught me about all the different professions and what they involved, which is something I probably wouldn't have learned on my own until much later in life."

"The camp definitely influenced my decision to work in health care, because I got so excited simply being in the business and excitement of the hospital atmosphere," Christie says. "I remember that employees from a variety of medical specialties gave presentations to us. And there was so much hands-on training,



Barnes-Jewish Hospital nurses — and twins — Katie Lewis, left, and Christie Lewis say participating in BJC's Adventures in HealthCare Camp influenced their decision to become nurses. | Photo by Jay Shelp

which kept all the campers engaged.

"I remember a pediatric ER physician showing us how to practice putting in sutures on a banana, checking each other's blood sugars, learning about good food choices and doing physical activity with the dietitian each day, and taking cultures from germ areas around the hospital and checking them for growth a few days later," she says.

This year's campers will participate in many of those same activities — all while gaining firsthand knowledge about health care careers. Sponsored by BJC School Outreach and Youth Development, Adventures in HealthCare Camp will be offered July 10-14 this year. Participants will explore adventures in occupations such as nursing, radiology, pharmacy, respiratory care and health information technology. In addition, BJC School Outreach and Youth Development health educators will present various health topics, empowering youth to make healthy decisions related to tobacco, alcohol, nutrition and the importance of physical activity.

Who can attend Adventures in HealthCare Camp?

Incoming seventh- and eighth-grade children of BJC employees can attend the annual camp at one of several locations: Barnes-Jewish Hospital, Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital, Christian Hospital, Missouri Baptist Medical Center, Parkland Health Center, Progress West Hospital and St. Louis Children's Hospital.

"Camp is a great way for kids to see as many health care professions as possible," says MBMC professional practice resource center and archives coordinator Betsy Mueth, who coordinates the camp at MBMC. "They get a feel for what each profession does and what's involved in becoming a health care professional. It's also fun and action-packed."

"It is such a great learning opportunity," adds CH talent acquisition coordinator Tanya Sisk, who coordinates the camp at CH. "Where else can this age group of children get an opportunity in health care like this?"

"I remember how exclusive it seemed to be and just how many of the areas of the hospital we were allowed to see," says Katie.

Opening kids' eyes to a world of possibilities

BJSPH clinical engineer shows children — and parents — the technology side of health care

by Scott Beck

BJSPH | As a clinical engineer with BJC for 22 years, David Miller had answered a lot of questions about his job. But until he volunteered to share his expertise at a recent STEM Night at Progress South Elementary School in the Fort Zumwalt School District, he had never been asked burning questions that second-graders think about.

"How much money do you make?" one child asks.

Miller deftly and politely answers the child's question by emphasizing that there are more important things about his job

than money, like job security, for example.

"My goal was to make the students aware that there's more to the health care field than doctors and nurses," Miller says. "I wanted to demonstrate to them that jobs on the technology side are equally important to patient care."

Miller brought samples of some of the equipment he works on, like a ventilator and test lung, which drew a lot of interest from the families in attendance.

"The parents also had a lot of fun with the pulse oximeter," Miller says. "It was fun seeing them as interested as their children were in the equipment."

He explained to the families that his job isn't just about repairing medical equipment in a timely fashion, but that it also includes performing preventive maintenance to try to keep things running smoothly at all times.

Miller also directed children who showed a special interest in his work to load up in STEM-related classes, which represents the academic disciplines of science, technology, engineering and math.

"The advice I gave the students was to get a strong background in math, anatomy, physiology and electronics," Miller says. "And, as with all jobs, good communication skills are very important."

Miller says he enjoyed working the BJC booth at the school, and looks forward to future opportunities to educate the next generation of health care workers.

"Events like these are important," he says. "We want to continue to get our name out there and help kids realize the variety of positions in health care."

"I think we opened up a lot of eyes to a whole new field."

Scott Beck, scott.beck@bjc.org

Since the camp began in 2003, more than 650 students have participated. And, like the Lewis twins, several campers have chosen careers in the health care field.

Christie Lewis has definitely found her calling. "I love my patients and the people I work with," she says. "I love being able to educate my patients and form a relationship with them. I love asking them about their life outside the hospital and giving them tips on how to improve their health to get back to that life. And the team on my floor is fantastic. Health care is such a team-oriented field. I would be lost without the other nurses, therapists, managers and doctors on my floor."

Both sisters highly recommend Adventures in HealthCare Camp and other opportunities for young people to learn about health care careers. "Even if your child doesn't express an interest in going into health care, the camp may just change his or her mind," Katie says.

"I would tell young people to get in the hospital atmosphere as much as possible. Take tours, shadow in areas you're interested in, volunteer if you can," says Christie. "You won't know for sure if health care is for you until you get involved in it."

How does my child apply for camp?

Each camp site has limited openings. Applications include a completed registration form, recommendation letter from the student's school, a short essay and \$40 fee, all due by May 19. The \$40 fee includes lunch and other activities for the week.

The application for the camp can be found on the BJC School Outreach and Youth Development website, www.bjcschooloutreach.org. For more information, call the BJC School Program Line, 314-286-0460.

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Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital clinical engineer David Miller participates in a recent STEM night at Progress South Elementary School. | Photo by Theresa Daly