

Southwestern Colorado



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SWCAHEC Summer Health Careers Camp Inspires 27 Young Students to Explore a Career in the Healthcare Industry

DURANGO, CO – Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center (SWCAHEC) hosted the Health Careers Camp for area teens last week. The camp held on the campus of Fort Lewis College on June 7, 8, 9 and 10th drew twenty-seven 8th, 9th and 10th grade students from the eight counties: Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel. With support from The Colorado AHEC Program, The Telluride Foundation, and Alpine Bank, among other sponsors, 44% of students were able to attend the camp with a scholarship.

Students had the opportunity to explore various fields within the healthcare industry from learning hands-on medical activities such as application of sutures, checking for vital signs and being a first responder from Durango Fire and Rescue, to shadowing professionals in their medical facilities.

One of the highlights included a tour at the Durango Tech Center with Easton LaChappelle, a 20-year old prodigy pioneering prosthetics using 3D printing. As owner of Unlimited Tomorrow, LaChappelle's mission is to make technology accessible to those who need it most. Students were able to touch the 3D objects and see a robotic limb fully operational. They learned that through web research, a bit of genius and hard work, one could achieve the unthinkable.

The Health Careers Camp founded 3 years ago by Kathleen McInnis, Executive Director of the Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center, has continued to grow the camp each year, expanding their reach to engage a diverse group of students.

"In 2015, 30% of campers reported that the camp helped them decide on a health career," said McInnis, SWCAHEC's Executive Director. "By using an interactive approach to learning about

health careers, we hope to inspire students to pursue a career in the healthcare industry,” said McInnis. On June 27th, McInnis will travel to Washington, DC to speak on the importance of Summer Health Career Camps at the National AHEC Organization Conference, the AHEC national leadership and networking organization.

SWCAHEC is a regional non-profit organization in Southwestern Colorado that broadly focuses on improving access to quality healthcare in eight counties; Archuleta, Dolores, Hinsdale, La Plata, Montezuma, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel. SWCAHEC provides support and coordinates programs for the community, health professionals and students interested in advancing health.

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