

Na-ha-shnee Provides High School Students Health Career Experiences

by Stevee Chapman

It's already time to start making summer plans. Native American high school students interested in careers in health fields should consider participating in the 18th Annual Na-ha-shnee Health Science Institute.

Na-ha-shnee is a twelve-day summer camp at WSU Pullman that provides Native students the opportunity to explore health careers. Native Americans currently represent less than half of one percent of professionals in the health care industry, said Robbie Paul, director of the Native American Health Sciences program at WSU that sponsors the Na-ha-shnee camp. The purpose of Na-ha-shnee is to encourage Native youth to explore health careers, and to encourage them to pursue these careers when they enter college.



Na-ha-shnee participants learning CPR.

When the camp first began in 1995, its sole focus was on nursing. However, once students began expressing interest in learning about other career areas available in health care, the camp expanded to respond to these interests. Now, Na-ha-shnee includes workshops on nursing, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, exercise physiology, speech and hearing, and brings Native American health care providers in to be teachers and role models for the students.

Paul said that the experience is both an academic and social one for those in attendance. In addition to taking English, science, and leadership classes, students get to experience different aspects of college life such as living on campus, dorm life, and having a roommate.

"I have heard from many students that going away to college is both scary and exciting," Paul said. "The camp gives them the opportunity to experience what college life is like, and to also learn how to find all the buildings on campus for classes."

Paul said that in general, health careers require people with compassionate hearts who want to help, and enjoy working with people.

Na-ha-shnee is open to high school students who will be entering the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades in fall. The application process includes a written essay on why they want to come to camp and also explaining their interest in health care. Applicants must also have a minimum 2.5 GPA, have at least taken Algebra I, and have at least a C in their math and science classes.

This year's camp will run from June 17th-June 28th. Applications are now being accepted and are due no later than April 26th 2013.

Anyone who may be interested in getting more information or applying should visit <http://nursing.wsu.edu/Academic-Programs/nahashnee.html>

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