



Eighth-grader Jessica Heidemann, right, of Potter mixes soap and glue to learn a concept in science experiments, as fellow eighth-grader Courtney Conrad of Sidney and UNMC graduate student Mike Dixon observe.

Eighth-graders exposed to careers during annual meet

Fifty-five eighth-grade students from 20 schools across Nebraska attended UNMC's 10th annual Eighth Grade Health/Science Meet June 6-8 for an educational and fun experience. The meet's goal is to inspire students, especially those from rural communities, to pursue careers in health care.

The students qualified for the meet by submitting science projects in regional science competitions, in which more than 200 students competed. The expense-paid meet exposes students to the health professions.

Students spent their time learning

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American Indian youths enjoy college-like experience at camp

Almost 50 American Indian middle school students were exposed to college life and many health career opportunities in June, thanks to professionals at Little Priest Tribal College, Wayne State College and UNMC.

Students from Winnebago and Walthill public schools and the St. Augustine Indian Mission in Winnebago attended the five-day college experience at Wayne State College.

Gail Thompson, director of the GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Project for Little Priest Tribal College and co-organizer of the week at Wayne, said the week's hands-on educational activities featured career options that the American Indian students wouldn't normally experience.

"The kids don't have any idea what their options are, off of the reservation," Thompson said. "If they leave the reservation, they usually go to visit their relatives. This week really made them aware of the possible options that they have."



Pilar Aldrich, a sixth-grader at St. Augustine Indian Mission, does some taste testing in an experiment led by Maurice Godfrey, Ph.D., associate professor in the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute.

Roxanna Jokela, director of the UNMC Rural Health Education Network and a co-organizer of the event, said affording more opportunities to American Indians is part of UNMC's mission to reach out to underserved populations.

"This was really a neat way for us to show the students what some of the health careers are

Continued on page 9

CN-AHEC anticipates great news on grant

A year has already gone by since we received the first official word of funding of the new Nebraska Area Health Education Center. Many of you living in Central Nebraska have hopefully heard about the activities of the first official AHEC center office, which began operation with the hiring of its first executive director in February of this year. Since that time, the staff at the Central Nebraska AHEC Office (CN-AHEC) have been moving by leaps and bounds in the development of their office and strategies to move the organization forward. Sarah Cunningham and her board of directors have gotten off to a jump start with the opportunity to apply for a major Robert Wood Johnson (RWJ) grant. We are optimistic that the CN-AHEC will be announced as a recipient of this grant within the next couple of weeks. We truly applaud the efforts of the CN -AHEC Board and representatives from organizations across the CN-AHEC in the development of this project to train dedicated Hispanic medical interpreters. Watch

Roxanna Jokela

Director, Rural Health Education Network



your newspapers for the announcement of this project in the coming weeks!

The next great news is that the Northern Nebraska AHEC received notice of funding, effective Sept. 1, 2002. The Northern Nebraska AHEC will cover 22 counties and will be based in Norfolk. Its board of directors is busy applying for their 501-C3 designation and advertising for the hiring of the NN-AHEC's first executive director. Special thanks need to go to the leadership of the NN-AHEC for their diligence and patience in making this long-awaited project a reality. If you are interested in learning more about the executive director position, please contact our office.

The NN-AHEC Board hopes to fill the position by early November.

In the Panhandle, there is a grassroots effort to look at the feasibility and interest of forming a Panhandle Area AHEC. Meetings will begin this October to gather interest and partnerships to apply for a Panhandle AHEC to be formed in 2004.

The new 2002-2003 Health Career booklet is at the printer and will be available for distribution in mid-September. The booklet serves as a resource for teachers, advisors and individuals to learn more about the health career education programs offered through Nebraska institutions. A special thank you goes to the Nebraska Hospital Association and the Nebraska Community College Association for their financial support in the printing and distribution of this booklet. If your school, hospital or community group does not receive a copy of this booklet by mid-October, please contact Dan Chambers at dcchambers@unmc.edu or by phone 402-559-3398.

West Point native joins RHEN office

There is a new face in the Rural Health Education Network Office, though it's a familiar one on the UNMC campus.

Lisa Sheldon is now the staff assistant for RHEN. She has worked at UNMC for more than four years. She worked in the department of pathology and microbiology for more than a year, moved to UNeCard Photo ID office, and most recently was employed in the department of surgery.



Lisa Sheldon

A native of West Point, Sheldon grew up on a farm. After graduating from high school, she left West Point to attend school, and moved to the Omaha area about 20 years ago. She and her husband, David, have

one son and one daughter. Lisa still visits family in West Point as often as possible.

Dan Chambers, program coordinator for the Rural Health Education Network, feels that Sheldon's rural background will be an asset to RHEN.

"I think Lisa's experiences and knowledge from growing up in rural Nebraska will give us better insight and help us with our programs," Chambers said.

Through her new position, Sheldon sees an opportunity to do something important for communities such as the one she grew up in.

"I was interested in the position at RHEN because I grew up in a small town and I care about the quality of health care for rural areas of Nebraska," Sheldon said. "I really see the need to get health professionals to practice in these areas."

Sheldon can be reached by phone at 559-9509, or by e-mail at lsheldon@unmc.edu.

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Fifteen students attend Cultural Competency Workshop

Fifteen undergraduate students took part in the second Cultural Competency Workshop May 19-23 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha.

Students from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Wayne State College, Hastings College and Midland Lutheran College attended the workshop, which was coordinated by the Rural Health Education Network.

During the workshop, students were familiarized with the cultural differences of Nebraska's growing diverse population. Students learned about cultural differences and similarities; studied factors that determine health disparities; completed research projects; shadowed professionals in underserved areas; conducted mock patient interviews; and worked on sensitivity training. Upon completion of a 20-hour practicum at an underserved clinic, the students received credit for



Molvina Carter, workshop presenter, speaks with students during the Cultural Competency Workshop in May.

one hour of study.

"Some of the students from rural Nebraska aren't exposed to cultures other than their own, so their understanding and comfort level with people who may not look or talk like them is not at an optimal level," said Roxanna Jokela, director of RHEN. "The Cultural Competency Workshop provides an opportunity for these students to begin to gain an understanding of Latino, Asian, Native American, African-American and other cultures."

Students who attended:

Aurora: Katie Wagner, freshman, UNL;
Beatrice: Carrie Riha, junior, Hastings College;
Bertrand: Carrie Wilcox, freshman, UNL;
Columbus: Brett Bieber, sophomore, Midland Lutheran;
Elm Creek: Hilary Reichert, junior, UNK;
Fremont: Adam Lamprecht, sophomore, Midland Lutheran;
Hastings: Michelle Willmes, senior, Hastings College;
Litchfield: Heather Riessland, senior, UNL;
Manley: Daniel Witte, freshman, Midland Lutheran;
Mills: Elizabeth Shepperd, junior, UNK;
Nairobi, Kenya: Leonard Ogomo, freshman, UNK;
Ord: Ann Philbrick, sophomore, Wayne State College;
Seward: Andrew Miller, freshman, Midland Lutheran;
West Point: Emily Persson, freshman, Hastings College

The workshop was funded in part through the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund. Those funds come through the state's settlement with tobacco companies and are awarded on a competitive basis.

National Rural Health Association celebrates 25 years

The National Rural Health Association met for its national conference May 15-17 in Kansas City, celebrating 25 years of existence. NRHA began with a different name, but its mission and challenges have always been the same — to advocate access to basic health services for rural residents, to ensure the best quality of health services for rural residents, and to establish equity in the treatment of both rural residents and rural health providers.

The conference opened with five former presidents — including the founding president, David N. Fenton, and UNMC's Keith Mueller, Ph.D. — discussing the NRHA's mission, its growth through various organization mergers, the association's development as a policy expert and the future of the NRHA.

On Thursday, the keynote speaker of the conference was Emily Friedman, noted as a provocative writer, lecturer and health policy analyst. Friedman

spoke about the changing face of rural America. Current social, cultural, political and policy changes are presenting new and difficult challenges in rural health care. Patient needs and attitudes are changing as well, and health-care providers must be aware of these and change also, Friedman said.

During the conference, attendees also heard from the Rev. Michael Place, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Catholic Health Association of the United States, who spoke of rural Catholic health care.

Dr. Place stated that with 28 percent of Catholic hospitals located in rural areas the CHA has developed a rural initiative to ensure that its health-care ministry in rural areas receives appropriate attention. Rural Catholic health-care provides an invaluable service to an often overlooked segment of the population, a segment that suffers significant socioeconomic poverty and whose health status is significantly vul-

nerable. Dr. Place discussed this new rural initiative and spoke about how the CHA and the NRHA must work together to give rural areas the best possible health care.

Rural Health Education Network Director Roxanna Jokela, Jose Romero, M.D., and Lisa Jewell, all of UNMC, gave a presentation titled, "Not So Wild A Dream — Minority Health Professions Pipeline," on Friday morning at the conference. The presentation indicated what UNMC is currently doing to increase the number of minority students entering health professions.

Throughout the last 25 years, the NRHA has been instrumental in bringing about changes to improve the quality of health care in rural America. The national conference provides an opportunity for those working for this goal a chance to network, share ideas and enthusiasm, and to learn new ways of meeting the challenges facing rural health care.

UNMC touts successes of rural programs to University of Nebraska Board of Regents

UNMC's rural health professional programs are on the forefront of rural health care nationwide, UNMC officials say.

On May 31, several UNMC rural health experts addressed the General Affairs Committee meeting of the University of Nebraska Board of Regents. The topic was UNMC's rural health programs.

Michael Sitorius, M.D., professor and Regents-named chairman of the UNMC family medicine department, said UNMC's presence in more than 130 communities in Nebraska shows its commitment to serve as a 500-mile-wide campus.

"UNMC's mission is to improve the health of Nebraskans through premier educational programs and outreach to underserved populations," said Dr. Sitorius, a Cozad native. "We're starting to see the fruits of our labors with some of our programs, and we're continually trying to form partnerships and new programs to meet the needs of rural Nebraska. It can be difficult to stay ahead of the curve, but we've made tremendous strides over the last couple of decades."

At May's committee meeting, Dr. Sitorius was joined by several other UNMC rural health officials. They were:

■ Roxanna Jokela, director of the UNMC Rural Health Education Network;

■ Keith Mueller, Ph.D., professor of preventive and societal medicine and director of the Nebraska Center for Rural Health Research;

■ Mary Haven, associate dean, UNMC School of Allied Health Professions;

■ Carol Pullen, Ph.D., associate professor of the UNMC College of Nursing's rural nursing education;

■ Edward Roche, Ph.D., associate dean, UNMC College of



Mike Sitorius, M.D., chairman of the UNMC family medicine department, addresses the NU Board of Regents at its General Affairs Committee meeting in May. Other UNMC officials who addressed the regents included, from left, Brian Lange, Ph.D., chairman of dental practice management; Edward Roche, Ph.D., associate dean of the College of Pharmacy; Carol Pullen, Ph.D., associate professor of rural nursing education; Mary Haven, associate dean of the School of Allied Health Professions; Keith Mueller, Ph.D., professor of preventative and societal medicine; and Roxanna Jokela, director of the Rural Health Education Network.

Pharmacy; and

■ Brian Lange, Ph.D., professor of dental practice management, College of Dentistry.

Jokela said that there are many key facets to having successful rural professional programs. Recruitment, training and retention all are necessary, she said.

"If we never get rural students in the door, or we don't get them interested in health-care professions, we can't serve the rural areas well," Jokela said. "Once they're enrolled, we have to provide them with training in rural areas to show them the benefits and disadvantages of those areas. When they start practicing, we need to make sure they're not isolated. Among other things, we need to provide them with the means to get further degrees and continuing education through the Internet or satellite transmission."

One way in which UNMC has interested students in health-care careers is through its annual eighth-grade health science meets, which are currently in their 10th year. Each year, students participate in regional meets across the state, with about 60 stu-

dents coming to Omaha in June for a week on the UNMC Omaha campus.

This fall, the first eighth-grade science meet alumnus to be accepted into medical school will begin classes at UNMC. Already, another alumnus is in his second year of dentistry school and a third has graduated from the College of Nursing.

"One of the greatest rewards of working at UNMC is the opportunity to see an eighth-grader participate in a science meet, take classes several years later at the Medical Center and then serve as a health-care professional in a rural community," Jokela said.

Other highlights of UNMC's rural health professional programs include:

■ The Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP), in which accepted students spend between two and four years at either Chadron State College or Wayne State College. Provided they complete their education at those institutions with approved minimum grade point averages, they enroll at UNMC to study to become dentists, dental hygienists, pharmacists, medical technologists, physician assistants, physical therapists, physicians, radiation science professionals and nurses. From 1990-1999, about 70 percent of RHOP students in the allied health professions returned to rural areas to practice.

■ The Family Medicine Residency Program Rural Training Track (RTT), which began in 1991 as one of the first three rural family medicine residency programs in the nation. Since then, 37 graduates — the most of any such program in the nation — have completed the RTT in Grand Island, Kearney, Scottsbluff and North Platte. Of those, 30 are working in rural Nebraska.

■ Distance education, through

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New officers in the Student Association for Rural Health (SARH) were elected for the 2002-2003 school year. The officers include Casey Beran, president; Dave Meduna, vice president; Dave Ensz, secretary; and Joe Hansler, treasurer.

UNMC touts rural successes

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■ Distance education, through which UNMC has educated hundreds of students in rural areas. Notably, the UNMC College of Nursing delivers undergraduate and graduate courses to 23 sites in Nebraska. Ninety-eight percent of rural registered nurses who receive their bachelor's degrees via distance education have stayed to practice in their rural communities.

Dr. Sitorius said none of the programs would be possible without the support of the rural communities, hospitals, volunteer faculty, state government and organizations throughout the state.

"We've all realized that to deliver the best health care to rural Nebraska, we need to work together on all of the pertinent issues," Dr. Sitorius said. "We've made some great strides, and we look forward to staying on the cutting edge."

RHEN Web site updated, has more information

The Rural Health Education Network's Web site has been updated, and now includes information on all RHEN events and the role that RHEN plays in Nebraska health care.

"We're very excited that we

now have another avenue through which we can help attract potential health-care professionals to UNMC," said RHEN Director Roxanna Jokela.

The Web site can be accessed at www.unmc.edu/RHEN.

Communities of Color Target Tobacco Use

Participants in a minority tobacco-free conference in April learned how to build coalitions to help prevent tobacco use in their communities, and how tobacco companies use marketing and advertising tactics.

The "Why Target Us?" conference was sponsored by Tobacco Free Communities of Color. It took place April 26 at College Park in Grand Island. The Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center (AHEC) co-sponsored the event. About 40 people attended.

Theola Cooper, outreach/prevention coordinator for Tobacco Free Communities of Color, said the conference offered an opportunity to provide information to those looking to make an impact in their communities. It also gave participants an opportunity

to learn more about each other and their cultures, as well.

Jose Soto, vice president of affirmative action/equity/diversity at Southeast Community College, told participants that tobacco companies have tied their product to relevant cultural events in order to sell more tobacco, and so minorities will be more aware of the events the companies sponsor instead of the effects of tobacco. Minorities were targeted by tobacco companies, Soto indicated, because the companies felt they could have great success with minority youths. Soto said that communities must be educated about what tobacco companies are doing in the context of their ethnicity. He noted that lung cancer is the top cause of death among Hispanics.

Carole Anne Heart, executive

director of the Aberdeen Area Tribal Chairmen's Health Board, said that tobacco was used originally by Native Americans only in sacred ceremonies. More American Indians are smoking than any other ethnic group, said Heart. She opined that tobacco advertising should be discontinued and tobacco access for teenagers should be extremely difficult. Also, culturally appropriate ads should emphasize the negative effects of smoking and tobacco.

Aida Giachello, director of the Midwest Latino Health Research, Training and Policy Center in Chicago, said that tobacco and smoking are universal issues, but are having a greater impact on minorities. She urged all participants to get out into their communities and do all they can to stop tobacco use.

AHEC official: Awareness, encouragement keys to increasing numbers in careers

Dori Bush admits that before she was hired as the Central Nebraska AHEC education and outreach coordinator, she was a bit naïve to the vast array of opportunities awaiting health-care professionals.

Now, it is Bush who has the opportunity to educate potential health-care professionals about their many choices.

“We traditionally think of health careers in a limited sense. For most of us, that means doctors, nurses and possibly pharmacists,” Bush said. “My job is to make people aware of all health-care career opportunities available, and then to encourage them to consider those careers.”



Dori Bush

Bush has intimate knowledge of the life of a health-care professional, as her father was a pharmacist and her brother is a pediatrician. She also knows firsthand the types of information that go into a young person’s career decision.

Some 25 years ago, she was a residence hall director for five years at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Most recently, she was the admissions counselor for Bellevue University’s Grand Island degree completion courses.

In addition to encouraging students and adults to work in health-

Faith, public health collaborators’ meeting to include Nebraska group

Dori Bush, education and outreach coordinator for the Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center, is a member of a five-person team that will attend the inaugural Institute on Public Health and Faith Collaborations Sept. 9-12 in Atlanta.

The team, from Grand Island, was one of 12 chosen nationwide to participate in the program. More than 100 teams applied for participation.

The Institute for Public Health and Faith Collaborations, a program of the Interfaith Health Program, fosters the capacity of public health systems and communities to improve the complex and enduring behavioral and social conditions under girding health disparities. The program trains teams to instigate faith-based initiatives within the medical community and

the community at large in their respective areas.

Bush thinks that “developing and expanding collaborations of faith communities working with public health and health-care delivery groups recognizes the connection of spiritual and physical health and the benefit that can be obtained when these organizations work together in areas of wellness and public health awareness activities.”

In addition to Bush, other team members from Grand Island who will attend the conference include Sonja Simpson, director of the Central District Health Department; Colleen Babcock, health educator; the Rev. Julio Calero, a pastor in Grand Island; and Susan Haeker, director of health ministries at St. Francis Medical Center.

related careers, Bush will work to educate the general public in central Nebraska about health and wellness issues. Many of the wellness issues affecting central Nebraskans are related to being overweight: diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma being just a few.

“If I could wave a magic wand, it would reduce the incidence of overweight-ness,” Bush said. “Central

Nebraska, not unlike the rest of Nebraska, is just friendly; we like to sit around a table, and we like to eat.”

Bush lives in Grand Island with her husband, Dave, a county judge. The couple has two children. Matt, 25, is a graduate student studying Spanish literature at the University of Colorado, while Tyler, 21, is a fourth-year pre-pharmacy student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Students key in on health careers

When the Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center turned the ignition key in February to start the organization, the first stop was to partner with area agencies to help sponsor summer camps.

Together with Hall County Cooperative Extension Office, the CN-AHEC sponsored "Tri-County Safety Day" for youths from Hall, Merrick and Hamilton counties. During the day-long event in Central City, 34 youngsters, ages 6 to 12, learned about the prevention of potential injuries related to summertime activities such as lawn-mowing, sun exposure and activities involving farm activities and fires.

CN-AHEC and Central Community College co-sponsored five

Health Occupations Academies. Students were chosen based upon recommendations received from their high school counselors. Four of the camps focused on nursing careers; dental hygiene and assisting; medical assisting; physical therapy assisting; radiology; laboratory technology; respiratory therapy; and surgical technology, while the fifth academy focused on dental hygiene and assisting.

Students learned various basic health-care skills, such as taking blood pressures and giving injections. Students also were able to shadow health professionals in Kearney and Grand Island. A panel of local health professionals topped off the experience, allowing students the opportunity to

quiz panelists about their professions to gain insight into the reality of health careers. Twenty-six students participated in the academies.

Going to the mall this summer for nine students meant exploring health careers rather than shopping. CN-AHEC partnered with the Hall County Medical Alliance and St. Francis Medical Center to kick off "Health Career Camp." The camp took place July 29-31 at the Wellness Works/Por Su Salud center at the Conestoga Shopping Mall in Grand Island.

The three-day event included seminar-fashioned presentations by professionals as well as games and videotapes related to exploring health career opportunities.

Roy hired as CN-AHEC administrative assistant

Mary Roy has been hired as the administrative assistant for the Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center.

Roy brings with her a background in education, distance learning technology and government.

Raised in the small rural

community of Greeley, Roy recently graduated with an associate's degree of applied science in the area of information technology from Central Community College.

She and her husband, Matthew, have a 15-year old daughter, Kate. Her husband is the behavior consultant for the Grand Island Public School system.



Mary Roy

Several agencies combine to solve health-care professional shortage

Representatives of the Nebraska Department of Education, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Central Community College, Grand Island Public Schools, St. Francis Medical Center, Hall County Medical Alliance and Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center have begun to create a plan for addressing the critical shortage of health-care workers in central Nebraska.

An eight-member team participated in a fact-finding visit of Utah Health Science and Technology Education secondary and postsecondary facilities and program in early May. In June, educators and hospital administrators met to begin designing a curriculum framework that would allow students to see the relevance of their studies in health-care careers.

The workshop began the process of creating a Health Science and Technology Education program. The program will be based on:

- Employment needs of the health-care community;
- Individual needs of students;

■ National Health Care Skills Standards;

■ Health care leadership and technical skills;

■ Postsecondary education requirements.

Sarah Cunningham, Ph.D., executive director of the Central Nebraska Area Health Education Center, said it was a great experience for both the health-care professionals and the educators to come together to create a framework that will benefit students, schools and communities throughout the state. The framework will consist of career awareness activities in elementary school, career exploration in middle school; and orientation and preparation in high school. The high school activities will create linkages to health-care educational opportunities and employment. Members from UNMC in attendance included Karen Nichols of the School of Allied Health Professions, Kate Nickel of the College of Nursing, and Jan Tompkins and Karen Honeycutt of the Medical Technology program.

Grand Island physician: Rotations symbiotic for students, clinicians

At his office in Grand Island, Neb., David Colan, M.D., uses the opportunity of practicing away from the large urban areas to show internal medicine residents a broad perspective of medicine. Without the number of sub-specialists to take patient referrals that cities have, Dr. Colan sees a wide variety of patients and ailments.



David Colan, M.D.

“Our goal here is to demonstrate to residents what practice in Nebraska is like,” Dr. Colan said. “Not practice in Omaha and Lincoln, but practice in a medium-sized community.”

For more than 20 years Dr. Colan has organized and led the Greater Nebraska Internal Medicine residency rotation in Grand Island at his group practice, Internal Medicine Associates of Grand Island, PC. In recognition, Dr. Colan was named UNMC’s Volunteer Faculty of the Month for February 2002.

“Approximately one-half of the residents that have graduated from our residency program during the past 20 years have spent two months of their training rotating to Dr. Colan’s practice in Grand Island,” said John Gollan, M.D., Ph.D., chairman of the department of internal medicine. “Obviously, Dr. Colan has had a tremendous impact on approximately 120 physicians and their understanding of Greater Nebraska medicine.”

Dr. Colan’s association with UNMC dates back to his medical school days. He earned his medical degree from UNMC in 1973, then served a two-year internship in inter-



“Our goal here is to demonstrate to residents what practice in Nebraska is like. Not practice in Omaha and Lincoln, but practice in a medium-sized community.”

-- David Colan, M.D.,
Grand Island physician

nal medicine before moving to Grand Island in 1978 to join the internal medicine group practice.

“Grand Island was exactly what I was looking for,” Dr. Colan said. “There aren’t as many sub-specialists as there are in the cities, and it provides the opportunity to see patients of all kinds.”

In addition to his medical practice, Dr. Colan is the co-founder and medical director of Grand Island’s community-based cardiac rehab program, the first of its kind outside of Omaha and Lincoln.

In 1979, he started offering his practice as a place for residents to gain experience in a more rural setting. Dr. Colan finds that residents

benefit from their time in Grand Island for the same reasons he does.

“There’s no infectious disease person or geriatrician in town, there’s just you,” he said. “You can consult with Omaha or Lincoln, but the patients come to see you. Residents have said that they see more interesting cases in their two months here than their entire time in other places.”

Although residents are supervised, Dr. Colan says that he gives them a fair amount of latitude when they treat patients. Every experience with a patient teaches the resident something, even if it means making occasional mistakes.

“I believe in forcing them to become responsible for their own decisions,” he said. “We back them up 100 percent and their work is supervised, but the only way to learn is to do.”

Each two-month rotation has mutually beneficial rewards. Residents experience a different side of medicine than what they’re used to seeing, and Dr. Colan has access to residents with the most up-to-date knowledge of medicine.

“I like working with very bright people at that stage in their career,” he said. “It’s a tremendously rewarding experience for both sides.”

American Indian youths enjoy college-like experience

Continued from Page 1

about,” Jokela said. “I’m very grateful to the UNMC faculty who took time from their busy schedules to travel to Wayne, to share their experiences and to offer so many fun, educational activities to the students.”

In addition to providing the students with career information, the week was structured in a college-like environment. The students registered for classes, and then followed schedules that varied from day to day. Morning sessions were devoted to a variety of subjects in the arts, education and sciences, and afternoons were devoted to health professions.



Skyley Redhorn, a sixth-grader from Winnebago, looks at his options in allied health careers on the JUMPSTART Web site as Susan Langdon of UNMC Medical Technology leads the class discussion.

Students also took a morning field trip to a lake, collected samples and returned to the lab to analyze the samples.

Thompson said the students appreciated the week’s organization.

“They learned that college isn’t, ‘come over, play pool, hang out,’” Thompson said. “It’s a structured environment.”

Todd Young, Ph.D., assistant professor of physics and astronomy at Wayne State College and a co-organizer of the weeklong activities, said the willingness of Wayne State and UNMC faculty members to teach the courses helped to make the event worthwhile for the students.

“There was some terrific, very practical instruction from the professors of both universities,” Dr. Young said.

Eighth-graders exposed to various health professions

Continued from Page 1

what health-care providers and researchers do. Hands-on activities kept them involved as they learned science principles in an interesting way.

Students learned how properties used in research have different effects. They created “gak,” from solids and liquids, and watched as grapes frozen with liquid nitrogen are shattered and marshmallows turned into smoke. They learned about X-rays, organs, how blood is typed, blood disorders, how surgeons prepare for surgery and diagnostic tools of physical therapists.

Besides encouraging her interest in science, the meet had a personal meaning for Lethea Gerard of Arapahoe.

“My grandma just died of cancer, and I want to know how cancer forms,” Gerard said. “I really like science and plan to go to college to be a biologist. I’ve always liked it.”

When Gerard found out that UNMC graduate student Mike Dixon studies cancer, she took the opportunity to ask him questions after he was done showing her group science



Charlotte Gardner of Dix chews marshmallows frozen by liquid nitrogen, to demonstrate a concept in science experiments during UNMC’s 10th Eighth-Grade Health/Science Meet in Omaha.

demonstrations.

Gerard credits her eighth grade science teacher, John Paulsen, with getting her interested in science.

He said the key to getting students’ attention is to make the curriculum practical.

“I teach all hands-on,” said Paulsen. “It’s not book-oriented. Kids now need to see relevance and if they

don’t see relevance, then you lose their interest real quick.”

The meet hopes to sway other participants who may not know what direction in which they want to go.

“I thought it would be fun to come here,” said Mark Hooper of North Platte. “I’m still figuring out what I want to do.”

Dan Chambers, program coordinator for the UNMC Rural Health Education Network, said the meet seems to be a hit with the eighth-graders.

“It makes a tremendous impression on them,” Chambers said. “The students are all excited about being at UNMC and seeing the various things that we do here.”

“We make the activities interactive, which makes it more fun,” he said.

Students also had various opportunities for fun, including recreational activities and a melodrama at Mahoney State Park.

Students interested in competing in regional competitions for next year’s eighth-grade meet should contact their science teacher, school counselor or principal this fall.

Medical technologist enjoys multiple roles in smaller hospital in Minden

In addition to her role as a medical technologist at Kearney County Health Services in Minden, Laura Horner also administers electrocardiograms and x-rays of patients.

She wouldn't wish it to be any other way.

"I really enjoy the interaction with the patients," Horner said. "I would miss that if I were in the lab all of the time."

Horner can fill all of the positions at the Kearney County hospital, in part, because of a distance education opportunity that is provided by UNMC.

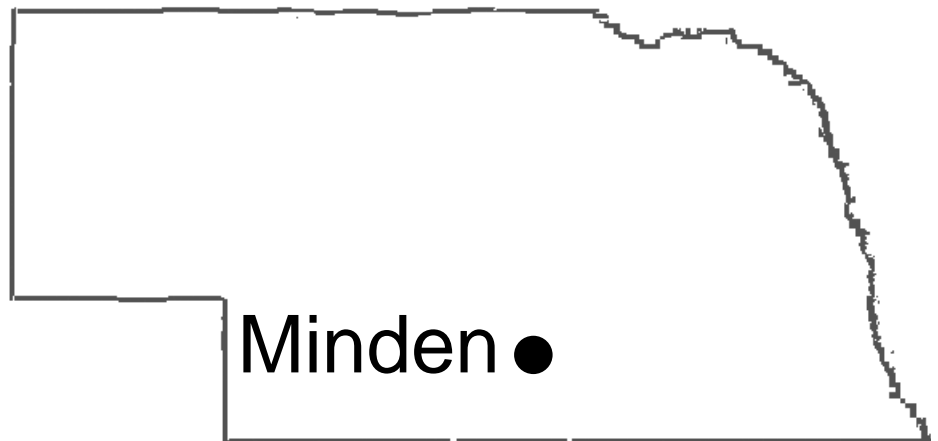
After receiving an undergraduate degree in biology from the University of Nebraska at Kearney in 1994, Horner worked as a phlebotomist at various hospitals in south-central Nebraska as she and her husband, Jeffrey, moved to different school districts where he taught English, speech and drama.

When the couple and their children moved to Minden four years ago, Horner knew of an opportunity through which she could earn a medical technology degree, via distance learning, in one year. She decided to go for it.

"After my husband earned his master's degree, it all fell together that I could go after the medical technology degree," Horner said. "I had a college roommate who had gone through the program, and earning another degree was always a goal that I wanted to achieve at some point in my life."

So, for 11 weeks, Horner and six classmates took morning classes at College Park in Grand Island, with the lectures originating from the UNMC Omaha campus. During the afternoons, they would do lab work, then study at night.

In August, their coursework



"I like the hands-on experience with my patients and getting to know people in the community, through my job."

-- Laura Horner,
medical technologist, Minden

shifted to clinical training sites in North Platte, Kearney, Hastings and Grand Island. Horner was among two students who completed their clinical training at Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney.

"It was basically on-the-job training," Horner said. "We learned how to use specific machines, how to recognize when we got an error, how to perform maintenance on the machines, and how to read results to make sure they weren't in error."

During their clinical training, the students concentrated in the areas of chemistry, hematology, blood bank and microbiology. They also received a didactic lecture, originating from UNMC, twice a week. By spring, Horner had received her degree in medical technology, or

clinical laboratory science.

"For me, it worked out great," Horner said. "I didn't want to uproot my family, and I didn't want to travel to Omaha all of the time. It worked out absolutely wonderful."

A native of Kearney, Horner and her husband have three children, Austin, Jady and Kenan. Horner said she and her husband, who grew up in the 318-person community of Scotia, enjoy the smaller community setting. While Minden has only 2,800 residents, it is home to Harold Warp Pioneer Village, an annual Christmas festival and a renovated opera house, and the community is less than an hour from Kearney, Hastings and Grand Island.

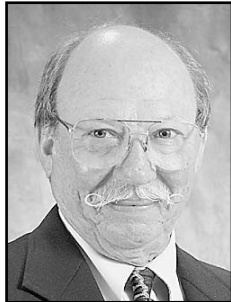
At the Kearney County Health Services, Horner works 10-hour days, three days a week, and she is on call every third weekend and two nights a week.

"I love it; I was hesitant to start here because of the big change in size between Good Samaritan Hospital and Kearney County Health Services, but it has been great," Horner said. "I like the hands-on experience with my patients and getting to know people in the community, through my job."

BRIN program provides to undergrads a taste of the latest high-tech research

Fifteen undergraduate students completed summer research internships this summer, thanks to a new program that was formed through a federal grant.

The Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network (BRIN) was formed in 2001, when UNMC received a three-year, \$6 million grant from the National Institutes of Health. Five Nebraska undergraduate institutions and three Ph.D.-grant universities are part of BRIN.



James Turpen, Ph.D.

“The students were very eager and excited to be a part of the Nebraska BRIN program,” said James Turpen, Ph.D., professor of genetics, cell biology and anatomy at UNMC and principal investigator of the BRIN grant. “They were happy to get in the labs and get their hands wet. They were eager for information and experience.”

The 15 BRIN scholars are students at Chadron State College, Nebraska Wesleyan University, the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Wayne State College and the University of Nebraska at Kearney. They completed their research internships under the guidance and mentorship of faculty at UNMC, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Creighton University.

The BRIN project is designed to enhance the competitiveness of biomedical research in Nebraska by developing the state’s own human resources and providing opportunities for those students to pursue research at the cutting edge of current technologies. The goal is not only to train

BRIN scholars study variety of topics

The BRIN scholars are grouped by the undergraduate institution that they attend. They are included with their mentors and research areas.

Chadron State College

■ Hope West studied fetal biology with Claudia Kappen, Ph.D., associate professor, UNMC department of genetics, cell biology and anatomy;

■ Chris Schweitzer studied environmental toxicology with Eleanor Rogan, Ph.D., professor, Eppley Research Institute molecular biology etiology program;

■ Julie Lancaster studied veterinary sciences with Clinton Jones, DVM, UNL department of veterinary and biomedical sciences;

Nebraska Wesleyan University

■ Gina Morgan studied virology with Charles Wood, Ph.D., director of the Nebraska Center for Virology at UNL;

■ Corita Steinkruger studied biological sciences with Jack Morris, Ph.D., director and professor of UNL department of biological sciences;

■ Mindy Teetor studied virology with Robert Weldon, Ph.D., assistant professor in UNL department of biological sciences;

University of Nebraska at Kearney

■ Raymond Baillou, Jr., studied cardiovascular neuroscience with Greg Bennett,

Ph.D., associate professor, UNMC department of genetics, cell biology and anatomy;

■ Lisa Walters studied cancer biology with William Chaney, Ph.D., associate professor, UNMC department of biochemistry and molecular biology;

■ Melissa Fladseth studied genetics with Shelley Smith, Ph.D., professor, Hattie B. Munroe Center for Human/Molecular Genetics;

University of Nebraska at Omaha

■ Julia Moeller studied cardiovascular development with Janee van Waes, DVM, Ph.D., assistant professor, UNMC department of cell biology and anatomy;

■ Matt Stansbury studied genetics with Maurice Godfrey, Ph.D., associate professor of pediatrics at the Munroe-Meyer Institute Center for Human Molecular Genetics;

■ Sam Recob studied developmental neurobiology with Bernd Fritsch, Ph.D., at Creighton University;

Wayne State College

■ Jeremiah Lubke and Chibawayne Ene studied with Dr. Sandor Lovas in the proteomics lab at Creighton University;

■ Marko Jovic studied bioinformatics with Simon Sherman, Ph.D., associate professor and program director, Eppley Research Institute Molecular Cell Structure Biology program.

more undergraduates in research techniques and recruit them into the state’s graduate programs, but also to encourage these students to stay in Nebraska and help build up the scientifically trained workforce needed to sustain biomedical research as an economic driver for the state.

“The scholars were very committed to doing a good job for their mentors and to enhance the program,” Dr. Turpen said. “They were candid and earnest in their evaluations of the summer program and we anticipate great things from them. They all were pleased with their experiences at UNMC, UNL and Creighton University, enjoying each experience and indicating that they learned a great deal.

“We hope to do more with the

scholars, especially in terms of group activities. The problem for us is that so many of the scholars live in different cities. Everyone is spread out and interaction is more difficult. But, we are confident we can find ways in the future for more group activities.”

Raymond Baillou Jr., a senior from UNK, said the BRIN program helped him establish a network with his peers and superiors.

“I wanted to absorb all the information I could and experience the actual setting in a laboratory,” said Baillou, a senior majoring in biology with molecular emphasis and medical technology. “I wanted to be exposed to the latest developments and procedures in the modern lab so I can incorporate this knowledge into my future studies.”

Mini-Medical School to focus on ear, nose, throat

UNMC and several sites across Nebraska invite the public to attend a free health educational series for four consecutive Thursdays, beginning Oct. 3.

The four-part UNMC Mini-Medical School series, titled "What's A-Head: Exploring research advances of the head, neck, ear, nose and throat," will have a myriad of topics, ranging from allergies to snoring.

The free series will be Oct. 3, 10, 17 and 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. CDT. It will be broadcast live from Omaha via satellite to: Columbus, Grand Island, Kearney, Lincoln, Norfolk, O'Neill, Red Cloud and Scottsbluff.

Anyone with NebSat2 can downlink the series, including hospitals and schools. The goal of Mini-Medical School is to educate Nebraskans on health issues that

The fall Mini-Medical School presenters all are members of the UNMC department of otolaryngology – head and neck surgery. This series' topics, and their presenters, include:

Oct. 3

"The Nose Knows" – Donald A. Leopold, M.D., professor and chairman. The presentation will focus on the nasal membranes and airflow, and how they affect smell, safety and quality of life.

"The Agony of Allergies" – W. Alan Ingram, M.D., assistant professor. Dr. Ingram will discuss new developments in diagnosis and treatment of allergies that are on the horizon.

Oct. 10

"The Sound of Silence: Surgical Restoration of Lost Hearing" – Gary F. Moore, M.D., associate professor. Participants will learn how clinical research at UNMC has become standard practice for hearing reconstruction.

"ABZzzzz's of Snoring and Sleep Apnea" – Anthony J. Yonkers, M.D., professor. Dr. Yonkers will discuss whether loud snoring is an indicator of sleep apnea.

Oct. 17

"It's More than the Blues" – William M. Lydiatt, M.D., associate professor. Participants will find out how UNMC researchers are combating depression in patients who have head and neck cancer.

"Sink Your Teeth Into It" – Thomas J. Salinas, D.D.S., assistant professor. UNMC dental specialists are working with industry leaders to significantly reduce the treatment time for dental implants of lost teeth.

Oct. 24

"Who Says Talk's Cheap?" – H. Steven Sims, M.D., assistant professor. Dr. Sims will help participants understand voice fatigue syndrome and the current research to establish guidelines for its prevention.

"Ups and Downs of Swallowing" – Barbara M. Heywood, M.D., assistant professor. Hoarseness and frequent throat-clearing can be symptoms of acid reflux. Participants will discover how UNMC researchers are learning to recognize and treat throat symptoms of acid reflux.

affect them, as well as highlight the strides being made in research and

treatment at UNMC. The series is geared for the public.

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