

Making Learning Infectious

Posted by [petehurrey](#) On 11/26/2008

Preventing and healing infections is an integral part of life at every hospital. Nutrition, diet and pharmacy also play a key role in infection control. Twenty-two sophomores from a Great Mills High School biology class, along with teachers Jean Illingworth and Allen Skinner, visited St. Mary's Hospital in Leonardtown on Oct. 30 to learn about the basics of infection. Two hospital volunteers from St. Mary's College of Maryland also participated in the day's activities.

After donning personal protective equipment, students toured the operating room's Central Supply to learn about the importance of disinfection and sterilization before surgery. Next, in the laboratory, they observed various bacteria plates. In the nutrition/diet portion, students discussed the effect of nutrition on patients, read a case study on Crohn's disease and analyzed the nutritional value of their lunches.

They were able to observe bags of peripheral parenteral nutrition, prepared by the hospital's pharmacy, as well as taste test elemental formula. Finally, students toured the pharmacy and learned about the sterile hood.

Student Peter Offenbacher, who said he is interested in a math career, enjoyed learning about the peripheral parenteral nutrition. Claire Weber agreed and said the nutrition section was informative. "It showed you how to apply things in everyday life," she said. She also enjoyed learning about bacterial resistance.

These Great Mills students are part of the STEM Program, which emphasizes mathematics and science with an infusion of technology and engineering.

This program, offered to all St. Mary's County Public School students, is housed at Lexington Park Elementary School, Spring Ridge Middle School and Great Mills High School. In the future, the students may volunteer at the hospital or participate in a job shadowing program. The hospital's partnership with STEM will help encourage growth in healthcare careers and may alleviate the shortage of healthcare workers in Southern Maryland.

Copyright © 2020 thebaynet.com. All rights reserved.