

NEWS

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Their professors are medical doctors with years of experiences and training behind them. Their textbooks are lab charts. Their classroom is the new 11-story St. Peter Hospital in Olympia.

"They" are nine student interns from The Evergreen State College and their career goals are all related, in some way, to medicine.

Each wanted to have a taste of the real world of a hospital, of doctor's daily routine and of devoting their working hours to helping others.

The exposure has deepened the students' understanding of medicine and, for some, has drastically changed their future plans.

Joy Van Camp, a pretty brunette from Spokane, said she originally wanted to be an actress. A serious student in high school, Miss Van Camp shied away from science courses to protect her grade point average.

"At Evergreen, I decided to take some science studies and found out I was more capable than I thought," the daughter of a scientist said. Interested in medicine, she added, "I'd always thought only men were doctors but wanted to see if I could handle working in a hospital."

Assigned to Dr. Philip Vandemann, a pediatrician, Miss Van Camp worked as his shadow, following him on hospital rounds, helping him at a local clinic, and assisting in patient care.

"I've learned that I really do want to be a doctor---a gynecologist," she said. "Equally important, I've learned that a doctor has to be continually aware of what patients are thinking. You can't disregard their feelings and expect good results from their treatments."

(more)

Dick Nichols, Director
Information Services

Eight other students are also working at St. Peter through the Evergreen Office of Cooperative Education. Their experiences range from assisting in the Emergency Room to working with a dietician, from photographing hospital activities for a slide/tape program to conducting diagnostic research for future computer programming.

"Learning something new every day" is the only routine Joe Bushnell, a third-quarter Evergreener from Gig Harbor, has discovered in the Emergency Room.

"My main job is keeping up with the flow of patients in ER," Bushnell said. "But I've had a chance to assist in handling everything from severe lacerations to delivering a baby in the hospital parking lot."

Bushnell, who plans to become a doctor of emergency medicine, said he's gained experience in taking vital signs and in admitting and preparing patients. "I've found that handling physical problems is exciting, but I'm most touched by the psychological problems persons face in an emergency."

"Joe is one of the few students we've allowed to work in ER," Barbara Soule, coordinator of in-service education for St. Peter, said. "He has experience as a fireman, and holds advanced certificates for Red Cross First Aid Training and Industrial First Aid.

Mrs. Soule, who coordinates the study programs of all the Evergreen interns, said "Many of the students provide a real service. They complete a wide variety of tasks and supplement nursing care by taking the extra time that nurses seldom have to talk to patients."

"In short," she added, "They provide that extra helping hand we so often need --- and they get a good practical education in the process."

Gaining skill at offering that helping hand is Richard Cohen, an Olympian who says he spends his spare minutes visiting with elderly patients and taking them for afternoon strolls.

Cohen, who is working as a nurses' aide and plans to become a doctor, said his internship has taught him that "nurses really deserve a lot of respect. I've also found out that, for me, working in a hospital is really a very satisfying thing.

"The greatest satisfaction comes from watching patients progress from the time they

enter the hospital until they're ready to leave."

Not all the Evergreeners working at St. Peter are planning to be physicians.

Janet Copeland, an Olympian, wants to be a dietician, St. Peter has provided her the opportunity to work with Mrs. Rita Sinka, hospital dietician, and to personally help patients plan their diets.

Miss Copeland works at the hospital five hours a week as a supplement to her academic work, which includes three part-time study programs --- in pre-calculus, physiology and nutrition.

"I'll eventually have to transfer to the University of Washington to complete my work in nutrition," she said. "But, in the meantime, I'm able to take some very structured academic work in the natural sciences with the advantage of small classes and close contact with faculty members."

Research skills are also being developed at St. Peter by Michael Smithson, of Bellevue, who is working closely with Dr. Johann A. Wulff, an internist.

Smithson spends 24 hours a week helping Dr. Wulff complete profiles on five of the most common diseases.

"Dr. Wulff has kept computerized patient histories for a long time," Smithson explained. "He's trying to determine which diagnostic tests are the most effective for such diseases as anemia, hypertension, the common headache and liver ailments."

St. Peter also provides the training ground for Bruce Wolcott, an Evergreen student photographer, from Lansing, Michigan, who is working with Mrs. Carol Gamino, hospital public relations director.

Wolcott's task is to provide materials for a slide/tape presentation which will explain hospital services to the community and help orient new staff members.

All in all, more than 20 interns from Evergreen have worked at the new hospital. "The experience, for the most part, has been highly successful --- for both students and the hospital staff," Mrs. Soule said.

"It's rewarding to help students gain a realistic view of the careers they have in mind," she explained. "And their input, of ideas, time and patient care, helps us do a better job."