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Summer Camps
Education & Activities

Camps Help Fight Brain Drain

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Summer often evokes images of pool splashing and backyard barbequing. For some educators though, warm weather months represent a potential loss of skills acquired during an academic year. Known as "brain drain," this concept refers to research that shows that, on average, students lose one to three months of learning when they are not engaged in academic activities during summer months. Academic camps can address this loss of academic skills while allowing children to enjoy summer fun.

"... Students have the opportunity to explore a topic in depth, without juggling competing scholastic demands or intramural activities," said Dr. Janine Dewitt, professor of sociology at Marymount University in Arlington.

For example, campers at Summertimes Camp at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School in Alexandria will have an opportunity to choose from a variety of specialized camps ranging from physics and French to zoology and rocket and space science.

"Specialty camps are great ways to try new things, to expand horizons and to challenge yourself," said Jim Supple, associate dean of students and director of summer programs at St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School.

Campers at 3E (Explore, Enrich, Enjoy) Summer Camp at Marymount University will explore science through nature and electronic gadgets, mathematics through making boats and geodesic domes, language arts through writing stories, and fine arts through creating dramas and cartoons.

For parents concerned about balancing the need to maintain academic skills with the need for downtime, Dewitt says that, "Parents can prevent academic burnout by limiting the number of scheduled activities over the course of the summer, and selecting only those that foster their child's natural curiosity. Summer courses that allow students the freedom to select different types of learning activities can be both energizing and fun."

Nursing Camp for HS Students

Campers will get a real-world view of the nursing profession.

By MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

This summer a group of high school students with an interest in health care as a profession will get a chance to experience the real-world work of nurses when they attend a nursing camp at George Mason University. "Our goal has been to introduce high school students to what nursing is, and what it is not," said Carol Urban, Ph.D., R.N., associate professor and director, School of Nursing George Mason University. "We find that we have students come to Mason who declare nursing as their major, but have never had any experience with nurses outside of their health care provider's office or the school nurse. We want to introduce them to nursing as a career, and the many opportunities that exist in nursing beyond working in a hospital."

The camp will provide small group projects and hands-on simulation to introduce core concepts of nursing. Nursing faculty hope to expose students to the diverse career paths available to those with a degree in nursing.

Urban says that students will be taught healthcare



PHOTO BY ALEXIS GLENN/CREATIVE SERVICES/GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

GMU College of Health and Human Services Nursing student Megan Holmes works in the Simulation Lab at the Fairfax Campus.

skills, such as how to take a blood pressure and how to check a pulse. "We will provide ... time in our nursing simulation laboratory where we have our human simulators," she said. "[Campers] will have observational experiences in a hospital with nurses and will be given an opportunity to talk with nurses we have on our faculty who have been in unique career fields including a forensics nurse, and a researcher who works globally in sub-Saharan Africa."

The camp will also expose students to new trends in healthcare. "Healthcare delivery is changing and

SEE NURSING, PAGE 4

Camps and Classes!



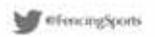
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Introduction To Nursing

FROM PAGE 3

the camp is exposing the students to the changing healthcare climate,” said Christine M. Coussens, Ph.D., associate dean of Community Engagement in the College of Health and Human Services at George Mason University. “In the newer healthcare models, nurses will have a significant role in how and when healthcare is delivered and they will continue to be leaders for ensuring the health of patients and communities.”

DURING A TYPICAL DAY at the camp, students will spend several hours in the nursing skills laboratory learning basic skills and techniques.

“They may also spend some time in one of our Mason and Partners clinics, learning how nurses care for patients in a clinic setting and how valuable educating patients about their health is to improving their health,” said Urban.

Students will also have an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with nurses to gain insights into real world experience. “They’ll have conversations with nurses about their careers and learning what education and experiences they needed for that kind of a job. For example, what does a forensics nurse do?” asked Urban.

Coussens hopes that students will leave

the camp knowing the diversity of options that a degree in nursing can offer. “A degree in nursing opens possibilities for students to work in hospitals, healthcare management positions, policy positions ... globally in clinics and with aid organizations, in forensic roles [and] research institutions,” said Coussens. “There are limitless opportunities. A degree in nursing can open doors because of the clinical license and analytical ability.”

Admission to the nursing camp is competitive because of the limited number of available spots.

“We’ve run this camp before and it has been well-received,” said Urban. “Graduates’ of the camp have said that it really opened their eyes to everything a nurse does, and the great career potential that nurses have. They are amazed at the various opportunities a nurse can have. It also makes them aware that nursing is hard, but rewarding — it isn’t just what you see in the media, it’s real work. But more importantly, they see the passion that nurses have for that work, and the reward of seeing a patient and family member helped by the work that nurses do.”

The camp will run from July 10-14. The cost is \$275. For more information, visit chhs.gmu.edu/nursing/camp/index.cfm.

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