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Willsboro Academy science students travel to Fletcher Allen

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Kelsey Reynolds, Kaitlyn Wilkins, and Margaret Frechette listening heart and lung sounds on the high tech mannequin.

Willsboro Academy students recently visited [Fletcher Allen](#) sponsored by the Hudson Mohawk Area Health Education Center M.A.S.H. program.

This program is a day long program where participants are introduced to healthcare career options through hands-on activities in various departments of a healthcare facility.

Students from [Willsboro Central School's](#) fourth, fifth, and sixth grade Academy competed to attend the day long events at Fletcher Allen. Students were asked to research and present a disease of their choice on a Saturday morning in front of a panel of professionals. Diseases researched include Calve Perthes Disease, Bulimia, Cystic Fibrosis, among many more. Judges included Scottie Ginn, former Vice-President of IBM and



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Programs the students experienced were Colonoscopy/Laparoscopy, Full Body Mannequin CPR, Heart and Lung Sounds, Working with Patients, and Solving the Unknown.

The day's events also included a presentation about how college works and a Healthcare Jeopardy game from UVM's College of Nursing and Health Services. Students who participated included fourth graders Regan Arnold, Robby Drollette, Myah Green, Stephen Leibeck, and Joelle Steeves; fifth graders Margaret Frechette, Trevar Koenig, Kelsey Reynolds, Erinn Walker, and Kaitlyn Wilkins; and sixth graders included Makayla Anson, Chad Denton, Aliceson Drollette, Benjamin Jackson, and Logan Polak.

"The idea for this project has been percolating for a few years," Academy science teacher, Derrick A. Hopkins said. "From what I've been reading, many of the job opportunities that will be available to my students will be in the Health Care profession. I have sculpted my teaching approach more towards medical coursework.

"I was so impressed with the presentations," Ginn said. "The students had researched, prepared, and dressed professionally. They were articulate and convincing, talking about how they wanted to be doctors and vets, and how if they were chosen to go to Fletcher Allen, it would be the best thing that ever happened to them."

"The youngsters performed with poise and confidence referring to their own PowerPoint presentations with an ease that I found outstanding," Klein said. "If part of the mission of the public school is to help students achieve to the highest level of their ability, then teachers like Derrick are priceless."

"Programs like this help generate excitement and enthusiasm for science and career aspirations," Superintendent Stephen Broadwell said. "This might ignite a spark for one of our students to pursue a career in the health care field."

"My main goal is to try to excite future medical professionals. This trip was a culmination of a year of planning. The students competed to attend the trip by researching and presenting a disease of their choice," Hopkins said. "Students did all the work on their own and did an outstanding job researching, organizing and presenting information, in addition to advocating to the judges why they wanted to go. I am so proud of my students."

Students presented on April 20 in Hopkins' classroom. All students received a certificate of participation and ribbon. Trophies and ribbons were awarded to the top three students. First place was awarded to Regan Arnold, fourth grade, for his presentation on Scleroderma. Second Place was awarded to Logan Polak, sixth grade, for his presentation on Leprosy. Third place was awarded to Aliceson Drollette, sixth grade, for her presentation on Huntington's Disease. The students traveled to Fletcher Allen on Wednesday, May 8. Students wore scrubs, masks, and surgical caps throughout the day's activities.

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