

DeBakey’s Scientific Symposium a Success!

DeBakey High School for Health Professions held its annual “Scientific Symposium” on Friday, December 18th, 2009; about fifty health professionals participated, leading sessions which gave students snapshot views into a wide variety of fields—ranging from the training of therapy dogs to specialized surgery.

Three behavioral health professionals from the Houston community represented the Pathways Project, volunteering their time to attend the morning program. Dr. Sylvia Gonzalez, MD, psychiatrist, of Methodist Hospital,

Dr. Jay Solomon, Ph.D., psychologist in private practice, and Dr. Dana Smith, PhD., LMSW, social worker, of the Greater Houston Area Health Education Center (GHAHEC), joined together as a panel, facilitated by Sharon Wechter, to offer students information about their fields. The group focused on how they made their individual career choices, their education and training, and the tasks and responsibilities in their daily professional lives.

Students demonstrated their interest through many questions surrounding issues of ca-

reer choice and paid particular attention to details pertaining to mental health and coping with the stress of mental illness.



Inside this issue:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Nursing Rotation</i> | 2 |
| <i>Charlzetta Horton</i> | 2 |
| <i>Community Organization Course</i> | 2 |
| <i>UNIT Social Event</i> | 3 |
| <i>Pre-Tests Administered</i> | 3 |
| <i>Pathways Lessons Begin</i> | 3 |

Pathways’ New Website

The newly developed website for *Pathways* has been placed on the Greater Houston Area Health Education Center’s home webpage—a link to *Pathways Project* can now be found at www.ghahec.org.

The website will be monitored by a soon-to-be-hired webmaster/intern. *Pathways’* website will maintain up-to-date news about the project’s different activities and phases.



Development of Pilot Psychiatric Nursing Rotation



The Pathways Project has been working hand-in-hand with Coleman College's Nursing Department and Nursing Department Directors of Houston hospitals, in an effort to develop a new format for Coleman's Psychiatric Nursing rotation. It is hoped that the new model will be developed in time to be piloted during the Summer 2010 rotation.

The primary concerns of all parties are that stu-

dents be provided with a holistic picture of patients' lives, and that they become an integral part of a professional team.

Concepts being considered include rotating through intake, to inpatient, to outpatient for a full perspective of psychiatric care, a one-day symposium presented by psychiatric nurse experts, and special training and incentives for preceptors.

It has been decided that ten Nursing students will be selected for the pilot rotation, and to confine placement sites to two to three psychiatric settings in Houston.

Coleman nursing students will be encouraged to apply for the new rotation during the Spring semester; a committee of faculty members will review the applications and select those deemed most interested in psychiatric nursing.

Charlizza McMurray Horton to speak to Coleman nursing students

Charlizza "Charlie" McMurray Horton, Assistant Director of Nursing for Psychiatry at Harris County Hospital District Ben Taub General Hospital, will be featured as guest speaker at an evening event for nursing students at Coleman College on February 25, 2010. Ms. Horton re-

ceived her BSN and MS in Nursing from the University of Oklahoma. Trained as a Psychiatric/Mental Health Clinical Nurse Specialist, she has worked in Oklahoma, Missouri, Georgia, Kentucky, before coming to Texas. She has been a psychiatric nurse for patients of all ages, in a va-

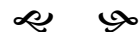
riety of settings and roles. In addition to her work at Ben Taub, she is an adjunct clinical faculty member for Prairie View A&M University. She is married to Stephen Horton, a social studies teacher at Northshore High School, and they have a beautiful 5 year old daughter, Sydney.

Coleman College Offers New Community Organization Course

The department of Human Service Technology of Coleman College is offering a course in "Community Organization", beginning January 2010. The skills learned in this class, when combined with a Certified Prevention Specialist certificate, will allow individu-

als to not only provide services to individual clients, but to whole communities. Combining prevention and community organizing skills, will enable students to assist communities in identifying challenges and effective approaches to benefit community behavioral

health. All students completing "Community Organization" during the Spring 2010 semester will qualify for a 50% tuition rebate through the Pathways Project.



Pathways Project & UNIT Hold Nursing Students' Social Event

UNIT and the Pathways Project will be joining together to present an evening social event for Coleman College's nursing students on February 25, 2010 at 5:30 pm.

The evening program, which will take place at Coleman College's Auditorium, will begin with a pizza dinner provided by UNIT, and special speaker, Charizetta McMurray Horton, who will present on "The Life of a Psychiatric Nurse."

Following the program, Sharon Wechter will present information to students about the new psychiatric rotation format being offered in the summer of 2010 to a select number of students. Students who are present that evening will be able to fill out applications.

The evening will end with the awarding of door prizes to a few lucky students!

UNIT, or "Undergraduate Nurses In Training," is the Houston Community College (HCC) chapter of the National Student Nurses' Association (NSNA). UNIT is located at the Coleman College for Health Science in the Texas Medical Center.



Pre-test Survey Administered to DeBakey High School Students

The pre-test survey developed by Dr. Peggy Smith and Dr. Ruth Buzi of the Baylor Teen Health Clinic was administered to all Ninth through Twelfth Grade students at DeBakey High School during the months of November and December, 2009. The survey is being used to evaluate stu-

dents' awareness and knowledge of the behavioral health fields, as well as their attitudes toward and interest in pursuing behavioral health careers. The survey was administered to the students prior to the Scientific Symposium, and will be used as a post-test following the implementa-

tion of specially designed lessons for the classes.



Pathways Lessons Begin at DeBakey

The Pathways lessons for Grades 9 and 11 at DeBakey High School are now being taught by Sharon Wechter. The two grades have two scheduled lessons each, which have been created with their curriculum and developmental issues in mind. Grade Nine will be exploring the differences

and similarities between four Behavioral Health professionals: Psychiatrist, Psychologist, Social Worker and Psychiatric Nurse. Grade Eleven will be reviewing these four fields, analyzing individual situations which require psychiatric assistance, and assessing how these professionals

are portrayed on TV. Grade Ten will be serving as a control group while a number of Grade Twelve students will be participating in a behavioral health externship. All four grades will be administered a post-test survey after lessons and activities have been completed.



The Pathways Project

Sharon L. Wechter, LMSW
Project Manager
Greater Houston AHEC
5959 West Loop South, Suite 560
Bellaire, TX 77401

Phone: 713.592.6411
Fax: 713.592.6415
E-mail: swechter@ghahec.org

[www.
ghahec.org](http://www.ghahec.org)

The mission of the **Network of Behavioral Health Providers, Inc.** (the Network), a non-profit organization, is to serve its members, promote the advancement of effective behavioral health services, and advocate for people in need of supports in the greater Houston community. Network members represent all aspects of mental health and substance abuse service provision including public agencies and for-profit and non-profit private organizations providing the full range of behavioral health services from prevention to crisis intervention to long-term residential care and recovery management.

Executive Director: Marion Coleman, Ph.D.

The Greater Houston Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is a non-profit organization that seeks to improve the health of our population, especially the underserved, by creating partnerships with and among community and academic organizations.

MISSION

Improve the health of the communities we serve (Harris, Ft. Bend, Waller and Montgomery counties) by developing a quality health workforce and helping address health needs.

VISION

Optimal health for all people.

Executive Director:

Dana S. Smith, Ph.D., LMSW, MPA



The Meadows Foundation

HOUSTON ENDOWMENT INC.

A PHILANTHROPY ENDOWED BY MR. AND MRS. JESSE H. JONES