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Bridgewater Raritan High School Science Students Explore Career Options at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

CINJ Faculty Offers Advice for Careers in the Sciences

New Brunswick, N.J., December 7, 2004 – Twenty-two students from Bridgewater Raritan High School’s SCORE (Science Career Opportunities, Resources, and Education) program visited The Cancer Institute of New Jersey yesterday for a glimpse into the careers of CINJ’s physicians, researchers and nurses.

Regina Cunningham, RN, Ph.D., CINJ’s Chief Nursing Officer, led the students on a tour through laboratories and other state-of-the-art facilities used for cancer research and treatment. One of the tour stops included a visit to the laboratory of Barton Kamen, M.D., Ph.D., Chief of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at CINJ and Professor in the Departments of Pediatrics and Pharmacology, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. There, students learned about Dr. Kamen’s work with folates and anti-folates in the treatment of childhood leukemia.

Other stops on the tour included the tissue culture facility and histology laboratory, where students were able to look at slides of various types of cancers; and the CINJ Resource and Learning Center, a place for patients and their families to research their diagnosis and learn more about how to deal with cancer.

Following the tour, the students broke into small discussion groups for lunch where CINJ researchers discussed why they chose their particular career, what they like about their job, what kind of schooling they had to complete, and other career-related questions.

Students at Dr. Daniel Medina’s (CINJ Researcher and Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School) table were interested to know how much time he spends in his lab each day and how his job has evolved since he first started as a researcher, while Michael Gallo, Ph.D., Associate Director of Population Science at CINJ and Professor of Environmental and Occupational

Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, fielded questions about the environmental factors that can cause cancer.

“The SCORE program exposes our students to various career options within the sciences,” said Stewart Richter, Chairperson of the Science Department at Bridgewater Raritan High School and advisor of the program. “By visiting community institutions such as CINJ, students can see the integration of different disciplines that make up the science profession and start building skills for their future.”

The SCORE program was started at Bridgewater Raritan High School through a grant from Johnson & Johnson’s Bridge to Employment Program and has grown into a self-sufficient club with elected officers and more than 85 active members. The goal of the club is to build enthusiasm for science by exploring various career options in the field. Members also take their love of science to local elementary and middle schools to teach science-based lessons. SCORE regularly schedules guest speakers and field trips on a variety of topics including the pharmaceutical industry, cancer, anatomy and physiology, etc.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state’s first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ’s physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice—quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

CINJ’s Partner and Affiliate Network is comprised of twenty hospitals and institutions throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important, valid discoveries into the community. CINJ Partners: Atlantic Health System (Morristown Memorial Hospital, Mountainside Hospital, Overlook Hospital), New Brunswick Affiliated Hospitals, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, University of Medicine and Dentistry (UMDNJ), UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. CINJ Affiliates: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Monmouth Medical Center, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton, Saint Peter’s University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, University Medical Center at Princeton

* Academic Affiliate

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Editor’s note: Photos from today’s visit will be available upon request.