

# Marshall Independent

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## Job shadowing puts Yellow Medicine East junior on medical frontlines

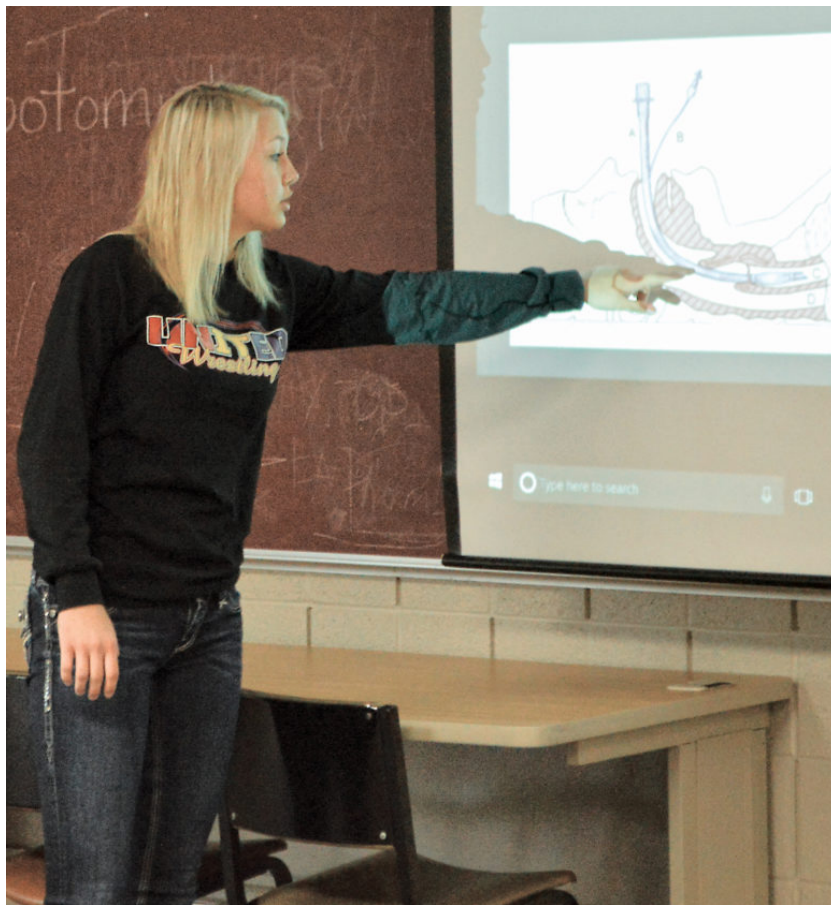


Photo by Jenny Kirk Hayley Brovold, a junior at Yellow Medicine East, was one of 15 high school students to give a presentation at the end of a piloted medical careers class offered this past semester through Minnesota West Community and Technical College.

GRANITE FALLS — Yellow Medicine East junior Haley Brovold had the opportunity to job shadow a critical care nurse as part of a pilot medical careers class that was held at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Granite Falls.

The high school students balanced learning in the class setting on campus as well as on their own, gaining valuable experience while job shadowing at various facilities in the area. The students finished off the semester by giving presentations on the medical professions that interested them the most.

*“I enjoyed this class,” Brovold said. “I want to go into nursing in the medical field. My family: my aunt, my grandma, my dad and my mom are all in nursing. And I really enjoyed job shadowing.”*

In researching, Brovold found that nursing careers are projected to grow 16 percent from 2014 to 2024, according to the Bureau of Labor statistics. Education requirements include an associate’s or bachelor’s in nursing, obtaining a licensure by state board exam, followed by training in intensive care unit (ICU) for at least six months for basic training and then specialized training after that, she said.

*“When I job shadowed, I got to witness a tracheal intubation, which is a placement of a flexible tube into the trachea to maintain an open airway,” Brovold said. “I also got to see a Ballard being used, which is an endotracheal suction to remove the fluid. This is connected to the intubation tube and there’s a suction on the end that you push down — you push down into the intubation tube down into the lungs to suck all the nasty fluid out. On the very end of the suction, there’s a clasp you have to undue and you have to measure out all the fluid you get from their lungs and chart it.”*

Brovold originally thought she wanted to be an emergency room nurse.

*“I love having to be on my toes and having that thrill, but then when I went to the ICU — the first day was really quiet, but then the second day, they ended up having a code blue — they ended up resuscitating for three hours,”* she said. *“I thought it was going to be all older people, too, but there was an 18-year-old in there that had brain issues. She ended up having to go into surgery. I think you have to remember more because you’re constantly taking vitals and charting every half hour.”*

MACCRAY student Tenille Jacobson shadowed a surgical technician named Jan.

*“I learned from Jan that when you help the surgeon with as much as you can before the surgery, in return, you’re actually helping the patient,”* Jacobson said. *“I also learned that in Minnesota, surgical technicians make between \$38,000 and \$45,000 a year.”*

Montevideo student Kayla Kittleson shadowed a registered nurse (RN).

*“When you’re an RN, you have to have a lot of basic communication skills,”* Kittleson said. *“You need to be able to understand what your patient is going through. If you’re not able to understand the concepts or you’re not good at communicating, this is definitely not a field you’ll want to go into because communication is essential.”*

Kittleson said RNs can find jobs in schools, nursing homes, emergency rooms and clinics as well as be a nurse in pediatrics, long-term care, home health, hospice, oncology and many other areas.

*“The demand for the job is everywhere,”* she said. *“But the hours are what get to a lot of people. You could be working morning shifts, evening shifts and overnight shifts. Most the time, it’s anywhere from eight- to 12-hour shifts, but it can sometimes be as many as 20 hours if you work a double shift.”*

As of 2015, a regular salary for an RN is \$79,000, Kittleson said, noting that as you work your way up, an RN could make as much as \$170,000 a

year.

*“It’ll take quite a few years to get to that point, but your hard work does pay off in the end,”* Kittleson said.

Kittleson said her favorite shadowing experience was working on the ER floor.

*“They were able to have many patients coming in and out,”* she said. *“I helped restock everything. Then one time, someone came in who was completely unconscious and I got to see how they reacted in that situation — how they communicated with each other and how they figured out the next steps.”*

MACCRAY junior Braden Hoekstra said he really enjoyed his experience shadowing two different physical therapists.

*“I’ve always enjoyed helping people and I play a lot of sports so I exercise a lot, too,”* Hoekstra said. *“I thought the two together would kind of be a cool job.”*

When Hoekstra was in junior high, he tore the labrum in his hip and had to do eight weeks of therapy.

*“During that time, I started to gain a bigger interest in it,”* he said. *“It just made me want to be one in the future.”*

Hoekstra shared a video of a physical therapist named Rachel, who worked mostly with children who had permanent physical disabilities. She explained that it was a job that was near and dear to her heart and that she felt really good about coming to work every day. Her job is very physically demanding but also fulfilling because of the connections she made with the kids and their families.

*“The median annual salary is \$85,400,”* Hoekstra said. *“The job outlook, it’s expected to grow pretty good for physical therapists. From 2014 to 2024, it’s supposed to grow 39 percent, which is just about 72,000 new jobs.”*

During his experience, Hoekstra learned that the most common therapy patients were ones who suffered shoulder or back injuries.

*“I think what I enjoyed the most about shadowing was seeing the relationships that build up between the patient and the physical therapist,”* he said. *“It was really cool to see that.”*

YME student Lilly Irvine learned about pharmacy.

*“I don’t really like blood,”* Irvine said in response to someone’s question about what made her want to pursue pharmacy.

Irvine explained that it typically takes about eight years to become a pharmacist.

*“To apply for a pharmacy program, you’ll need to compete three or four years of undergraduate prerequisite courses, followed by four additional years,”* she said. *“Then there will be additional training after that.”*

Irvine noted that pharmacists make an average \$112,000 to \$119,000 a year in addition to benefits. While shadowing Carol in Montevideo, Irvine said she learned how to count and refill medications, individually package each prescription and how to mail them out.

*“I enjoyed shadowing a pharmacist because the job is really laid back,”* Irvine said. *“The only thing I didn’t like was the hours because they work every other weekend and holidays.”*

MACCRAY student Ellie Thein shadowed a physical therapist, family practice doctor and then a nurse anesthetist.

*“I thought the first two were pretty boring, but the surgery setting kind of interested me,”* Thein said. *I also knew they make a lot of money without having to go to school to be a doctor or surgeon.”*

Thein explained the differences between a nurse anesthetist and an anesthesiologist, noting that the midwest and especially in rural areas have the highest job outlook for nurse anesthetists.

*“Nurse anesthetists make between \$158,000 to \$188,000, depending on where you work,” she said. “In the Midwest, it’s a lot higher because out in the coastal areas, they have more anesthesiologists, so they don’t have as many nurse anesthetists. There’s a bigger demand in rural areas.”*

In the video Thein shared, students learned how communication skills, problem solving and genuine patient concern were extremely important. The nurse anesthetist in the video explained how it takes real skill to get someone to trust them with their life in the five minutes they interact with them shortly before their surgeries.

Thein was able to observe colonoscopies and learn about the different methods of sedation.

*“They sometimes use Propofol, which is the drug that killed Michael Jackson,” she said. “That’s what they all say.”*

Thein said she isn’t sold on the career but knows she does prefer the surgical setting over other less-intense ones.

Students also participating in the class include: Lakeview’s Emily Beck, Tiffany Kvendru and Gabby Hettling, MACCRAY’s Carly Orwick, Montevideo’s Katlyn Regnier, Brittney Backer and Megan Borstad, RCW’s Brooke Harder and YME’s Paytan Vonderharr.

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