

TriCorner News

from *The Lakeville Journal*,
The Millerton News and *The Winsted Journal*

Published on *TriCornerNews* (<http://tricornernews.com>)

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By Katherine Doyle

WEBUTUCK — Webutuck High School Scrubs Club student members recently took a field trip to Sharon Hospital as part of the program's hands-on curriculum, giving them a first-hand introduction to various health occupations as potential career choices.

Students began their tour in the busy emergency room, becoming familiar with the hospital admittance process and the fast-paced work environment. They also visited the containment room, where patients with highly infectious diseases arrive before entering the facility. They were able to speak with a nurse who recently returned from Sierra Leone, working with Ebola patients.

After visiting the laboratory, where they got a behind-the-scenes look at how blood samples are processed and learned about the various technology used in pathology, blood typing and screenings, the students expressed an interest in seeing the morgue. There they became fascinated with "organ jars" and saw a genuine enlarged human heart. Lastly, they went to the birthing suites, reaffirming to the students the importance of all the health professions they explored during the tour.

Scrubs Club is a health career exploration program conceptualized by Catskill Hudson Area Health Education Center (AHEC), and designed to introduce students to various healthcare careers through engaging, hands-on activities, meaningful field trips and real-life experiences. Eleven programs have been implemented to date in area high schools, BOCES and community-based, at-risk youth programs throughout the Catskill Hudson AHEC 11-county region. In addition, the program is receiving national attention and has been sold to educational institutions outside the Catskill Hudson AHEC region.

Funding for the Webutuck High School Scrubs Club program was provided by the Foundation for Community Health, Eastern Dutchess Rural Health Network and Northeast Dutchess Fund, a fund of the Berkshire Taconic Foundation.

Catskill Hudson AHEC is a nonprofit organization devoted to improving the quality, geographic distribution and retention of healthcare professionals and stimulating interest in health professions careers through innovative programs across its 11-county service area. For additional information on Scrubs Club, go to www.chahec.org/programs ^[2] or call 845-883-7260.

Katherine Doyle is program and marketing coordinator for the Catskill Hudson Area Health Education Center.

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