



August 2018

From: Missouri Area Health Education Centers

Hannibal Hosts Second Rural Immersion Program

The Rural Immersion Program hosted in Hannibal, Missouri was a four-day experience for health professions students who are interested in living and working in a rural area. This is a non-clinical experience designed to highlight the social and communal aspects of rural life. Through group activities and meetings with community leaders participants got a preview of life as a rural healthcare professional. By participating in the Rural Immersion Program, 18 students from medicine, pharmacy, public health, speech pathology, dietetics, and nursing experienced working with other healthcare professions in a collaborative environment.

This experience was designed to provide students with the opportunity to explore the non-clinical aspects of life as a rural provider. Students broke into groups that include members of different healthcare disciplines to foster a diversity of thought and experience. Each group spent time interviewing community leaders from one of the four emphasis areas (business and government, education, healthcare, and natural resources). At the end of the experience, students presented their findings to the other student groups and members of the community.

Students from the University of Missouri Sinclair School of Nursing, UMKC School of Pharmacy at MU, School of Health Professions at MU, MU School of Medicine, and Master of Public Health Program at MU joined the program. Some of the organizations and people in Hannibal who were instrumental in the success of the program include: Susan Wathen, McKenzie Disselhorst, Mary Lynne Richards, Susan Johnson, Michael Gaines, Joe Anderson, Todd Ahrens, Brent Allen, Paul Ewert, Stephanie Cooper, Todd and Donny Hayes, Hannibal Regional Hospital, Douglass Community Services, Hannibal LaGrange University, Beth Haven, the Hannibal Rotary Club, General Mills, the Hannibal Police Department, and all of the members in the community who opened their doors to the health professions students.

MU Area Health Education Center (MU AHEC) sponsored the event this year. Becky Dawson, Executive Director for the Northeast Missouri AHEC (NEMO) in Kirksville, attended the culminating presentation to learn more about the students' insights because her office provides exposure activities for youth from Hannibal and surrounding towns who are interested in the health professions. These insights will potentially help to reinforce their desire to pursue a health career and then return to practice in Hannibal or other towns in the region.



Rural Immersion students toured Sodalis Park, home of endangered bat population

MAHEC is a partnership of seven locally-governed organizations and three university-based health professions education programs working statewide to increase the numbers of Missouri youth entering stable, high-paying jobs as healthcare professionals and the numbers of professionals caring for underserved populations.

The MAHEC partners include:

- A.T. Still University –
 - Kirksville
- University of Missouri –
 - Columbia
- Saint Louis University
- Northeast Missouri AHEC -Kirksville
- Northwest Missouri AHEC
 - St. Joseph
- West Central Missouri
 - AHEC – Lexington
- Mid-Missouri AHEC – Rolla
- East Central Missouri AHEC– St. Louis
- Southeastern Missouri AHEC – Poplar Bluff
- Southwest Missouri AHEC
 - Springfield

MAHEC: Connecting students to careers, professionals to communities, and communities to better health