

## **RVUCOM's M.A.S.H. Camp Motivates Middle School Students**

Fourteen young, aspiring health care professionals from 10 areas schools attended Rocky Vista University College of Medicine's (RVUCOM) first annual M.A.S.H. (Medical Academy of Science and Health) Camp. The day camp which was held from June 22 through 26 at the university was designed to give students an opportunity to learn more about their own health and wellness, help them acquire habits that will lead to more healthy lifestyles, and encourage their interest in careers within the health professions.

The format of the camp which was designed primarily for students in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades consisted of interactive class room discussion as well as opportunities for daily laboratory exercises. Students attended classes that included instruction in Diet and Exercise, Smoking, Treatment and Medications, Research and other subjects. Their laboratories included hands on experience with making and applying casts, treating and dressing wounds and suturing (they sutured pigs feet). They also had the opportunity to view human anatomy first hand when they visited Rocky Vista University's anatomy lab where they examined cadaver organs and witnessed the actual location of organs in the body. On the final day of their laboratories they had a simulated diagnostic experience. During this exercise, groups of students were asked to evaluate and diagnose an "undetermined" illness and to identify the injuries suffered by a bicyclist who had taken a bad fall. All of the classes were designed and taught by current RVUCOM student doctors who volunteered their time and efforts to assist in organizing the camp and developing the camp's curriculum.

The camp ended with a graduation ceremony where RVUCOM Interim Dean, Thomas Mohr, D.O., provided the graduation address and awarded each camp graduate a Certificate of Achievement indicating their successful completion of the camp.

Julie Rosenthal, Director of Admissions and one of the RVU staff sponsors of the camp said, "This was our first effort at operating the M.A.S.H. Camp and we have been very pleased with the outcome. We were fortunate to have had a great group of students participating and a group of student doctors who worked well with the campers. Our goal is for the camp to grow to a larger number of students next year. We may even consider offering both a regular M.A.S.H. camp for new students along with an advanced camp if this current group of students is interested in returning for further instruction."

RVUCOM used an application and a selection process to identify students for participation in the camp. All students who were chosen attended the camp at no charge. Among the criteria used for selecting student participants in the M.A.S.H. Camp included: strong academic aptitude, a demonstrated interest in science and health care, and a letter of recommendation from the student's science teacher and school guidance counselor.