

# Floyd Medical Center Hosts Several Rome High Students in Volunteering Program Over the Summer



Most high school students graduate with no idea of what they want to study in college, or what type of career they would like to dive into once they finish high school. This is not the case for many Rome High School students, as they are given opportunities to expand their educational and career experiences before making those big decisions in life.

One of the many opportunities offered to students at Rome High School is the Volunteering Program operated through Floyd Medical Center's Volunteer Services Department. The summer program hosts a handful of Rome High School students each summer, giving them knowledge of hospital departments and learning about the health care industry.

RHS students who participated in the summer-long Volunteering Program at Floyd Medical Center were Jennifer Chavez, Katherine Maslanka, Rupal Patel, Guillermo Ramirez and Esha Sundrani. Each Volunteer was expected to attend one Lunch and Learn provided by Floyd, and complete at least 50 hours of service over a two-month period to successfully complete the program.

Carolyn Falcitelli, Director of Volunteer Services at Floyd Medical Center, said the Volunteering Program at Floyd is highly selective. "Each student must complete an application, write an essay and provide a reference to be chosen to participate in our program. We typically have about 90 applicants of which we choose 20 to 24 students to participate," explained Falcitelli. "Once selected, the students go through an orientation (just as other volunteers and staff are required to do) which

includes such things as hospital hygiene and confidentiality rules surrounding medical records and patients. Then, depending on the students' schedules and their interests, they are matched with an assignment."

Katherine Maslanka, Rome High School Volunteer participant, described her experience with the FMC Volunteer Program as one to remember. "I was assigned to the infection prevention duty and the magazine cart, as well as clinical education. During my rotation with clinical education, I assisted all of the new doctors and nurses who were going through orientation by helping with paperwork, giving nurse awards and even booking insurance cards," said Maslanka. "Being able to build relationships with staff members, patients and everyone in between was so important and fulfilling."

Guillermo Ramirez, RHS Volunteer participant, also worked in infection prevention, where he served as an undercover volunteer who essentially "tracked" the nurses and doctors throughout the hospital to collect data regarding handwashing compliance. "I felt like an undercover cop; it was so much fun," said Ramirez.

"On top of infection prevention, I also rotated to central supply on the first floor where our job was to stock and restock all medical supplies that were used throughout the entire hospital," said Ramirez. "I was able to learn things that most high school students do not get the opportunity to learn, and it was a very cool experience."

Esha Sundrani, RHS Volunteer participant, worked mostly with the magazine cart, which gave the volunteers the opportunity to go into each patient's room and hand out magazines, books and other reading materials. "The magazine cart was so special to me because I was able to see, first-hand, how much of a difference you can make in someone's life just by simply saying hey and giving them a magazine. You got that one-on-one experience with the patients, which is perhaps one of the biggest reasons I wanted to go into the medical field in the first place, was the patient interaction," said Sundrani.

"I think that my favorite job, however, was when I rotated into the pediatrics department and was able to watch an operation. It was the coolest thing in the world. I want to be a surgeon, so I was able to see what goes on before even moving into college," explained Sundrani.

During the program, not only were these five students given hands-on learning opportunities, they were also permitted to sit in on an informational session given by FMC employees called Lunch and Learns.

"Lunch and Learns are hosted by different departments at Floyd Medical Center and provide an in depth look at a particular field," explained Falcitelli. "Most students have very different interests, so it is important for the Volunteer Services Department to provide as much variety as possible in regards to the Lunch and Learn programs. This year, several Lunch and Learns were hosted by Rehab and EMS, and students were also able to visit the imaging center, the sleep lab and the morgue."

Maslanka sat in on an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Lunch and Learn and was able to truly see into the world of EMS, what they do, how hard it is as well as what it takes to work as an EMS employee.

"Just overall, it was a neat experience and I am very glad that I was given the opportunity to do it," said Maslanka. "I was able to meet new people from other schools that I may work with one day, and Floyd is an amazing environment to learn in because everyone was so helpful and eager to help when we were on the job. It was so just so amazing."

"The Volunteer Program really is quite amazing," Falcitelli said. "Our hope is that one day, these students return to us in another role.... nurses, doctors, phlebotomists. And, maybe after many years of a fulfilling career, once again a volunteer." That may become a reality from some Rome students. Katherine wants to be a physician's assistant in pediatrics. Guillermo hopes to be either a radiologist or a neurosurgeon, and Esha would also like to be a surgeon.