



Students practice suturing in the fifth annual Rural High School Scholarship Medical Summer Camp at the James H. Quillen College of Medicine.  
(Ron Campbell / Johnson City Press)

## **Sewing up college choices: Medical Camp gives high schoolers taste of profession**

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Bethany Williams doesn't yet know where she will attend college this fall, but the Unaka High School senior now knows she definitely wants to be in the medical field.

Williams was sure of this after attending East Tennessee State University's 2010 Rural High School Medical Camp this past week.

"I had several different things in mind of what I wanted to go into, dealing with health," said Williams, who is currently enrolled in dual high school/college courses at Northeast State Community College. "I really didn't know what I wanted to be and so I figured if I came to this (camp) it would give me a better understanding of what I want to do."

Williams was pretty sure she wanted to go into the field of trauma care, she said shortly after learning how to suture using a severed pig foot in the gross anatomy laboratory in the College of Medicine.

“I figured it would be a real joy for me, because you can save a lot of lives,” Williams said of choosing trauma. “This is the job for me. I know it is. I really don’t want to change my mind. ... I know I want to be in the medical field.”

Williams was one of 22 campers from across East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia to attend the camp, which began in 2002. The cost for the week-long camp, which includes suturing lessons, drawing blood samples, a mock emergency situation in the College of Nursing, talks with various doctors and a job-shadowing experience, is \$175.

Campers stay on campus and get movies at night, workout opportunities at the campus Center for Physical Activity and other evening recreational opportunities.

The group of medical campers had gathered in the gross anatomy lab Friday morning to stitch up gashes in pigs’ feet using a suture, tweezers and string. Everyone had successfully completed the task before the session ended at about 10 a.m.

“These are all students who have indicated that they want to be a physician or in some type of health sciences career,” said Carolyn Sliger, rural programs coordinator for the College of Medicine and the department of family medicine. “They have been introduced to all disciplines of medicine we offer here at the medical school.”

Joshua Eckelberry, from Walker Valley High School in Bradley County, said he will attend ETSU in the fall and plans to pursue a degree in medicine or biology or something related.

“We’ve been exposed to family medicine, phlebotomies, our suturing workshop we’re doing now, pretty much all aspects of medicine,” Eckelberry said. “I shadowed a physical therapist, had good patient interaction. It was fun.”

That was just the goal of the camp, Sliger said.

“We just want them to be introduced to medicine to see if this is truly what they want to do before they start into college,” Sliger said.