

Graduates of Eastside High School Medical Skills program making a difference in patient care

Although she never actually sees the patients she helps, Amaya Monroe knows that the work she does is essential to their health and well-being.

Monroe works in the UF Health Shands Sterile Processing Center. She and her colleagues at the Center have the crucial job of cleaning, sterilizing and processing reusable medical equipment used at the hospital—everything from surgical instruments to carts.

“It’s a big responsibility,” said Monroe. “We could be doing this for a family member, or it could be us lying on the operating table. We have to think about that every day.”



A few months ago, Monroe graduated from the Eastside High School Medical Skills program established in 2017. Since the program began, coordinator LaMonica Davis has been helping her students explore the many careers available in healthcare and develop the skills to be successful in those careers.

“It takes multiple disciplines to keep society in peak health,” said Davis. “All of the various jobs are essential for the smooth operation of a medical facility, and I want them to have the best opportunities when they graduate.”

An essential part of preparing the Eastside students for success in the industry is the Medical Skills program’s close partnership with UF Health. Students serve internships in a variety of departments in the organization using the skills they’ve learned at Eastside High and mastering new ones. Their knowledge and hands-on experiences give them a significant head-start on the many high-demand and high-wage careers available in the field.

“From the organizational perspective, we have been very pleased with the education and preparation this program provides,” said William E. Lukens, Workforce Development Coordinator for UF Health Shands. “This experience has fostered multiple hires for the hospital and we consider it a win-win for both the students and UF Health Shands.”

“This has been a magnificent partnership,” said Davis. “UF Health has offered many opportunities for employment and educational growth for our graduates, and really helped them achieve success.”

Of the 26 students who graduated from the EHS Medical Skills program earlier this year, 13 now have full-time jobs at UF Health. Several are also continuing their education.

After spending more time at her current job, Monroe is considering taking advantage of the opportunity offered by UF Health to train as a surgical tech tuition-free. She’s also considering other options. The good thing, she says, is that there are so many in healthcare.



“There are hundreds, maybe thousands of jobs you can do in the hospital or the medical field that you don’t normally think of or know about,” she said. “Being in the Eastside program and doing the internship, it gave me the push to work toward my career.”

Students or families interested in the Eastside High School Medical Skills program can call the district’s Career Tech Education Office at (352) 955-6849.

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