



JANET L. MATHEWS/The Columbian

Katie Nyukeyeva carries newborn Braydon Haygood along a hallway at Southwest Washington Medical Center as his mother, Jaynee Haygood, is helped by certified nursing assistant Carol SeEVERS. Haygood's parents, Linda and Ben Cavaness of American Falls, Idaho, follow.

Did you know?

■ The Youth Workforce Program, which includes the career academies, was one of six programs to receive the Governor's Award for Workforce Best Practices in 2005.

SUMMER ACADEMIES BOOST CAREERS

Young people get taste of health care, other job fields

By **TOM VOGT**
Columbian staff writer

Katie Nyukeyeva helped a newborn baby go home for the very first time. Kaneesha Brooks stapled registration forms, while Kirby Light did some maintenance chores.

It's all temporary summer work, but it could be a big career boost for the Vancouver teens. They are interested in health care careers, and are working at Southwest Washington Medical Center as part of a summer academy.

Nyukeyeva already has earned her certified nursing assistant credentials and is involved in patient care, working in the hospital's birth center.

The Clark College student said she hopes to become a

physician's assistant.

"I like to make a difference," Nyukeyeva said.

Brooks handles registration paperwork in the emergency department, while Light also helps out in the emergency department in addition to working with the maintenance staff.

It's not direct patient care, but a job in the emergency department offers a pretty good look at the health care field, said

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Academy:

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Brooks: "People come in with amputated fingers; we get a lot of car crashes, and motorcycle accidents.

"I promised my grandpa I would be a doctor," said the 16-year-old Heritage High School student, who hopes to become a pediatrician.

"I'm not sure what field I want to go into," said Light, a Mountain View graduate who is headed to Clark College. "But working in a hospital, you see all different kinds. The maintenance guys go everywhere. I'm not in the whole medical thing, but I'm up there seeing it."

The health care program is one of seven summer career academies operated by Educational Service District 112, a regional agency that connects local schools with state and federal resources.

The other academies focus on

construction; early learning and child care; hospitality; technical communications and video production; business; and small business, based at an in-house coffee shop at ESD 112.

The summer academies are part of a larger Youth Workforce Program that serves about 400 young people. Participants interview for about 45 slots in the summer academies.

The winners get seven-week placements, earning the state's minimum wage of \$7.63 an hour. Each 32-hour week consists of three days on the job, plus a day of professional and personal development.

"That can include interviewing, preparing résumés and leadership training," as well as handshake etiquette, said Jeanne Bennett, ESD 112's director of work force programs. "It all will allow a student to become a good employee."

The program focuses on low-income young people — some are students, some are no longer in school — who face



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Kaneesha Brooks, 16, of Vancouver, left, does paperwork in Southwest Washington Medical Center's emergency department. She works with Kerri Catching of Amboy, a registration coordinator, right.

barriers to employment.

"I am the only one in my family to graduate from high school," said Sarah Ellis, who is in the early-learning academy. Ellis, who works at a day-care center on the campus of Washington State School for the Blind in Vancouver, doesn't want to stop with her family's

first high-school diploma. Ellis said she will go to college and become a teacher.

Not all the summer workers are on a college track. Six are members of the construction academy, which is supported by the Oregon Building Congress and Associated General Contractors.

But even the students without college ambitions are urged to get more career training, said John Martin, an instructor in the construction academy.

"We push union programs, or some other organized learning program," said Martin.

The Youth Workforce Program got about \$1.2 million this year in federal funding, distributed by the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council.

Now in their fourth year, the summer academies are paying off in trained workers, with a 92-percent completion rate. The health care academy hosted by Southwest Washington Medical Center has a particularly good track record. Rebound Orthopedics and Neurosurgery, which is based on the hospital campus, has hired 15 young people from the health-care academy, and 14 are still employed there.

While students pick up crucial career skills during their

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SUMMER ACADEMY PARTICIPANT

seven weeks in the academy, they also get personal growth through leadership training and teamwork exercises.

That can pay off too, said Natcole King, a member of the business academy. Cole, a summer office worker for the city of Vancouver, cited her team's hike up a mountain.

"It's hard to climb a mountain, but we kept on going," she said. "In the business world, you've got to keep on climbing to get to the top."

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