

# Biomedical Academy students learn first-hand

By: Stacy Wright - *Carrollton Leader* – Star Community Newspapers

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Some R. L. Turner High School students are taking what they learn in the books to the hospital.

Jennifer Cook and Becca Wyatt are part of Turner's Academy of Biomedical Professions and have spent the last six weeks studying at the Veterinary Referral Clinic of North Texas in North Dallas. Instead of studying inside a book, the two have gotten an inside look at what it's like to be a veterinarian.

"I feel very privileged," Wyatt said. "I definitely know I want to be a veterinarian of some sort. I'm skeptical if

I want to be an orthopedic surgeon."

Wyatt and Cook have taken the opportunity to try to decide if they want to specialize.

Even though the students observe for the most part, they say it's been very helpful.

"When you are reading from a book and learning about these things, you can't imagine what it's going to be like in surgery," Cook said. Cook said she likes observing the surgeries the best. She has sat in on several including arthroscopic surgery.

"Basically, we observe a lot and if we have any questions about the procedure we ask," Cook said. "That's how we learn."

Cook has now found an interest in being an orthopedic surgeon. "It sounds like a hard road, but I think it's worth it," she said.

By taking part in the clinical rotation, Cook has been able to narrow what field of study she plans to major in once she goes to college.

"It's becoming more and more popular," program director Jacque Tindel said. "It's really great because the kids really learn a lot."

She said many of the students change their focus throughout the program. It gives the students a chance to get a feel of the career before thousands of dollars are spent at a college or university.

The academy is set up almost like a university. "It's like a school within a school, which is really good," Tindel said. "It's just like a high school major, and the students apply to it and have to meet certain criteria."

About 50 students per year are selected for the academy. The academy has between 180 to 200 students total. The students spend their entire four years in high school in the program.

The first two years, the students learn about medical history, terminology and other basic material. The last two years, students go out in the field and may participate in clinical rotations such as that at the Veterinary Referral Clinic.

"We have clinicals where they rotate through various professions of their chose and a health co-op program," Tindel said.

Mary Boos, clinical rotation coordinator, said the program has expanded into the Certified Nursing Assistant program. She said they hope to bring more specialty areas into the program, like geriatrics.

Wyatt likes the program because she can see the disadvantages and the advantages of all of the careers.

"Observing what each of these people do helps us decide what we want to do," Wyatt said.

The program not only helps students, but professionals like Dr. Joe King, Veterinary Referral Center Hospital administrator, say it will help the veterinarian profession as a whole.

"There is a more and more need for highly qualified veterans everywhere," King said.