



Gilgamesh Eamer, a second year student in the medical program at UNBC, uses a model to show youngsters from Raft River the parts of the brain. Originally from B.C., he decided to become a doctor after working as a translator for healthcare workers in Honduras.



UNBC nursing student Lara Clark acts as guinea pig as Ben Butcher listens to her heartbeat with a stethoscope.

All photos by Keith McNeill



Drea Pinnegar, a student in the medical program at UNBC, demonstrates how to use a ventilator as the university's first-ever multidisciplinary healthcare traveling roadshow makes a trial visit to Clearwater on Friday, June 11. Helping her is Raft River Elementary student Juniper Wadlegger (l) while Grayson Panko and Josee Cooperman watch.

Clearwater helps pioneer new healthcare roadshow

KEITH MCNEILL

What is the best way to encourage young people in small rural communities to consider the healthcare professions as careers? How can small rural communities attract more healthcare professionals?

Those were two of the questions wrestled with during last year's symposium on rural healthcare in Clearwater – and Clearwater once again is helping find answers.

On Friday, June 11, the community played host to the first-ever multidisciplinary healthcare traveling roadshow, an experimental initiative by University of Northern British Columbia.

"Clearwater will be known as the first community to step forward and help make this tour a reality," said Sean Maurice, UNBC senior medical laboratory instructor and one of the tour's organizers.

The roadshow has three objectives, he said.

The first would be give

elementary and secondary school students in rural communities access to information about working in the healthcare field.

The second would be to give healthcare students studying in places like UNBC the opportunity to learn about working in small communities such as Clearwater.

Objective number three would be to allow interdisciplinary learning and experiences for healthcare students.

"I think the tour went fantastically well," Maurice said. "We were well received by all the teachers and students, and we're pretty sure that at least a few seeds were planted in the minds of your youth. We were very well accommodated during our stay and found the community incredibly warm and welcoming."

The tour participants were all impressed by Clearwater's new hospital, he reported. They felt it well thought out and a place where staff appeared to be happy working.

"We enjoyed our tour of the community and surroundings, including the farmers market, Wells Gray Park, rafting the Clearwater River in perfect weather, and the wonderful hospitality we experienced throughout the trip. We all left with fond memories of the whole experience," said the UNBC senior instructor.

The visit to Clearwater was a trial run to see if the roadshow would achieve its objective. If successful, then it likely would be expanded to include much of northern and rural B.C., said Maurice.

The roadshow started Friday morning at Clearwater Secondary School. About 40 students chose to take part and they were so enthusiastic that the session, which had been scheduled for one hour, was extended to two.

Friday afternoon the show moved over to Raft River Elementary. There, pretty well all the students participated and showed plenty of enthusiasm as well.