

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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2008 Ethel Lund Village Health Occupations Program (VHOP)

A great opportunity for high school students to learn about health careers

SITKA, March 4, 2008 — Few people get to watch real emergency room doctors in action, be with operating room staff during surgery or even watch a dentist performing a root canal. Southeast Alaska Native high school students can experience these and other opportunities when they participate in the Ethel Lund Village Health Occupations Program (VHOP).

Each year, the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) selects 12 students interested in the health field to visit Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka to learn about different health careers and educational requirements. Positions in these fields usually offer good pay and employee benefits, as well as the satisfaction of helping others.

This year's VHOP session is scheduled for April 7-11, with travel dates being April 6 and 12. Students who are selected to participate receive assistance to cover travel costs to and from Sitka, housing, meals and some evening entertainment.

“The goal of the program is to expose Native students from rural Southeast communities to different health careers,” SEARHC Tribal Recruitment Coordinator Roxanne Houston said. “Students will 'job shadow' with doctors, dentists, nurses, x-ray technicians and many other health professionals.” The experience enables them to evaluate their own strengths and decide which jobs might best suit them.

The deadline for applications is March 21. Application packets should include five items: application form; letter of recommendation from school superintendent, principal, counselor or teacher; student essay; agreement of conduct (signed by participant and parent); and student profile.

Completed applications may be faxed to 1-907-966-8527 or mailed to Roxanne Houston at SEARHC, c/o Human Resources Department, 222 Tongass Drive, Sitka, AK 99835. Because space is limited, interested students should apply early. Applications are available at high school offices, at local village corporations or by going to <http://www.searhc.org> and clicking on the link marked “Student Info” and then the link for the VHOP program.

VHOP is sponsored by SEARHC, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and the Alaska Center for Rural Health at the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Nursing. VHOP stresses hands-on experience and job shadowing as ways to immerse students in the healthcare environment at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital. For more information, contact Roxanne Houston at 1-907-966-8476 or by e-mail at rhouston@searhc.org.

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