



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## Youth army invades EACH for summer internship

By Allison Boswell, American Red Cross

If you see teenagers roaming the halls of Fort Carson's medical treatment facilities don't worry the hospital hasn't become the new hangout for summer break. They are a part of the American Red Cross Summer Youth Program.

Every summer the American Red Cross partners with Evans Army Community Hospital, to allow teens who hold a valid military ID card and are 14 to 17 years old to volunteer in the hospital. Many teens who participate in this program want to pursue careers in medicine, nursing or other healthcare fields and this is an opportunity to gain experience in a healthcare setting.

To begin that pursuit the teens had to complete a Red Cross application and go through an interview process. Once selected they were not yet ready to start their rounds – they had to receive some of the same training other workers in the hospital are required to have.

They had to complete all hospital requirements, to include, hospital orientation, HIPAA training, occupational health screening, and Basic Life Saving certification. Upon successful completion of orientation week students were issued a hospital badge and Red Cross T-shirts so they are easily identifiable as summer youth volunteers. In years past youth volunteers dubbed themselves the “red shirts” and took pride in this nickname.

This year there are 35 teens who are participating in the program during June and July. The teens are in over a dozen clinics and administrative areas, performing tasks such as patient transport or specimen transport.

For many of the teens this is their first opportunity to volunteer within a professional setting. As such they are required to sign a memorandum of understanding that outlines the expected behavior they must adhere to while volunteering. This includes no cell phones, notifying supervisors when they leave the area and when they can't come in to work, no gossiping and no fraternizing. They must also follow the schedule they set up with the Red Cross Office prior to their placement.

The young volunteers also agree to dress professionally, i.e. no shorts, capris or cutoff pants, no frayed, faded or torn clothes and no flip flops or open toe shoes. They are required to wear their Red Cross t-shirt, name tag and hospital badge at all times while volunteering.



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

Some of the teens who show an enthusiasm to learn more may be offered the opportunity to shadow providers and observe procedures being done in the clinical areas, with the patient's permission. It is emphasized to the teens during orientation that the opportunity to observe clinical procedures is a privilege that must be earned and is not a right.

The cooperation and support of the Evans hospital staff have made this program a great success in the past for both the hospital and the teens participating in the program.



Clara Huff, American Red Cross professional liaison volunteer, coaches Valerie Frederick (left) and Alexa Pellegrino, youth volunteers, on proper CPR technique. (Photo by Allison Boswell)