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Office of University
Communications

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Senior Riley Brock Conducts Research to Help Patients Diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes

Dr. Sarah Corathers of the Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Ohio was Riley Brock's mentor for the Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship. His research analyzed a program to help patients with type 1 diabetes.

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—A Gardner-Webb University senior worked this summer to analyze a program that helps patients manage type 1 diabetes. Riley Brock of Kings Mountain, N.C., conducted the study as part of his Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Ohio. The honor was personal for Brock, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when he was 9.

Instead of traditional research, Brock used Quality Improvement (QI) methodology to test and implement a web-based decision-aid tool for patients. While working on the project with Dr. Sarah Corathers of the hospital's Endocrinology Department, Brock understood the benefits of QI and academic research. "Quality Improvement consists of systematic and continuous actions that lead to measurable improvement in healthcare services and the health status of targeted patient groups," shared Brock, who hopes to attend the GWU Physician Assistant (PA) Studies program after earning his undergraduate degree in exercise science.

After completing his research fellowship, Riley Brock served as a counselor for a group of 10-year-olds at a camp for children with type 1 diabetes.

Along with conducting his own research, Brock was an assistant for two separate studies led by other physicians in endocrinology. He also had a chance to shadow medical professionals in the emergency room, gastroenterology, intensive care and neonatal unit. He scrubbed in to observe various procedures in the operating room, and spent a week doing hospital rounds with the endocrinology team. There was also time for cultural activities, and Brock, a member of the GWU men's swim team, lived on campus at the

University of Cincinnati and trained and competed with its swim team. At the end of the 10 weeks, he presented his research poster to over 100 medical professionals from the University of Cincinnati's medical center and Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

He admitted to being a little intimidated at first as he worked at the prestigious hospital surrounded by some of the best doctors in the country. But he was encouraged by the academic foundation provided by his professors in the GWU Department of Exercise Science, Dr. Jeff Hartman and Dr. David Granniss. "I came to the internship confident in my basic understanding of the research process," he observed. "I have been taught the basics of patient care and safety which helped me throughout the summer. Dr. Hartman reminded me to remain confident and vocal throughout my experience. This helped me grow and take in the great opportunity I was given. I never spent a day there feeling like I was working. It was an honor to soak in all of the knowledge and to be inspired by other passionate healthcare professionals."

Brock also had a chance to serve as a counselor for a group of 10-year-olds at a camp for children with type 1 diabetes. Each



group was also assigned a physician. He and the physician were responsible for checking blood glucose levels five to six times a day, at midnight and 3 a.m., and also administering insulin after meals. "I was also able to share my experiences growing up with diabetes," Brock elaborated. "I compared this experience with how the profession of a PA will potentially be. I fit in well in an interprofessional environment, and it just confirmed that I am choosing the right career path."

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.