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June 21, 2011

Millions of children grow up hoping to be doctors and nurses, wearing white coats on Halloween or pretending ordinary strings are stethoscopes. This summer, 41 area teens will take one step closer to their dreams of becoming healthcare professionals through the "Code Teen" camp, sponsored by the Cleveland County HealthCare System and Charlotte Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Open to rising 10th-12th graders from area high schools, the annual Code Teen program offers students a glimpse into a variety of occupations in the healthcare field. This summer, 71 students applied to participate by writing an essay, securing a teacher recommendation, and giving a personal interview. The 41 selected students were divided into two groups, and the first will participate in the weeklong Code Teen camp from June 20-24, while the second will participate from July 11-15.

"During the week, we focus on different healthcare careers such as nursing—including surgical nursing, emergency department nursing, women's and children's services, community nursing, and intensive care nursing—laboratory, radiology, diabetes center, wound center, cardiopulmonary, cardio/pulmonary rehab, wellness, cardiac catheter lab, pharmacy, rehab services, radiation oncology, and infection control professions," said Code Teen Coordinators Ginger Norman and Doris Payne. "The teens also learn about interviewing, resumes, and cultural competency. Finally, after 20 hours in the classroom environment, the teens are allowed to job shadow in two areas of their choice."

For the first time, this summer the Gardner-Webb School of Nursing will host one group of Code Teen students on Wednesday, June 22, and another on July 13, introducing them to the nursing school experience and illuminating what a career in nursing actually looks like. Several nursing faculty have also volunteered to share helpful tips for how to prepare for and succeed in nursing school. "The School of Nursing has always wanted to have a nurse camp, but so far we have not been able to pull it together. So we are very excited and grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Cleveland County HealthCare System for this opportunity," said Dr. Susie Beck-Little, dean of the Gardner-Webb School of Nursing.

"We'll do a lab experience, a classroom experience, and we'll have one of our clinical faculty describe the clinical experience for the students, so they can see what nursing school is all about," Beck-Little added. "We've found that many students enter college hoping to become nurses, but they haven't taken the required high school classes for acceptance to our program. So we'll also discuss with the parents the classes their kids need to take to be prepared."

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University was founded in 1905 and is home to over 4,300 students from 37 states and 21 foreign countries. Gardner-Webb seeks a higher ground in higher education – one that embraces faith and intellectual freedom, balances conviction with compassion, and inspires in students a love of learning, service, and leadership.