

HCHS Sophomore Olivia Hensley attends Congress of Future Medical Leaders

Harlan County High School Sophomore Olivia Danielle Hensley recently attended the Congress of Future Medical Leaders sponsored by the National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists Congress.

Held in Boston, Hensley heard presentations from many medical professionals and others who are considered the cutting-edge leaders in the medical field.

“Before going, I was determined to be an endocrinologist. After seeing all this and what they’ve done, I want to become a pediatric surgeon. It really made me think of all the career options. I want to be in a field that I can help people every day. I want to help others. I want them to have the best care possible.”

She said the conference was a “flash of reality. With hard work and staying determined, that could be me speaking one day.”

One presentation that left a tremendous impression on Hensley, she said, was the lady who received the world’s first full face transplant. Carmen Blandin Tarleton’s estranged husband broke into her home and doused her with industrial strength lye and beat her severely with a baseball bat. Following a lengthy medically induced coma, she was blind and permanently disfigured. She shared her struggles and then talks about the success of the face transplant.

In addition, she was impressed by the presentation from Shree Bose, who at the age of 17 triumphed over 10,000 other entries to win the first-ever Google Global Science Fair in 2011. She discovered how ovarian cancer cells grow resistant to a chemotherapy drug called cisplatin. Her work opened new avenues for research and medicine.

Approximately 25 other speakers gave presentations about leading research and treatments in the medical field.

“I’m so thankful for the opportunity given to me from attending this camp. It has opened my eyes to the endless possibilities I have in the medical field. And it has given me a love and drive for helping others,” she said.

Hensley, who was named a Torch and Laurel Scholar, will study in Vietnam next summer.

She is a member of the National Society of High School Scholars, the HCHS tennis team and the Gear Up Club. Last summer she attended the University of Kentucky Rural Health scrubs camp in Hazard.

Hensley is the daughter of Tammy Shepherd of Cumberland and stepdaughter of Donald Shepherd.



