



Scouting Out a Career in Health Care

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Dr. Geoffrey Turner, far right, demonstrates some laparoscopic surgery while Boy Scouts, left to right, Ryan Haynes, Connor Haynes, Aaron Russell, Eric Ziino and Stephen Turner watch in the Alton Memorial Hospital Surgical Services Unit.

ALTON, IL -- Boy Scouts are taught to be prepared, and five of them got some early preparation recently for a possible career in health care, thanks to Dr. Geoffrey Turner.

Dr. Turner, an OB/GYN on staff at Alton Memorial Hospital, led five Boy Scouts on a tour of the hospital as part of the Medicine Merit Badge program. Dr. Turner is the Merit Badge counselor for Alton Boy Scout Troop 7.

“To earn the Medicine Merit Badge, they had to do a fair amount of book work on the history of medicine, famous people in medicine and on the medical systems of different countries,” Dr. Turner said. “They had to look into a variety of healthcare specializations from physicians to medical technologists as well as the requirements for each position.”

The Scouts included Stephen Turner, Ryan Haynes, Connor Haynes, Eric Ziino and Aaron Russell. The tour started at Dr. Turner’s primary care office in Alton Memorial’s Medical Office Building A, then involved a surgical skill lab, a tour of Pathology with Dr. Susan Rayne and a visit to Dr. Theodore Vander Velde in radiology.

In surgery, Dr. Turner was assisted by nurses Katie Sievers and Laurie Merle, who took over when Dr. Turner was called away to deliver a baby. Dr. Turner gave the Scouts a simulation of laparoscopic surgery, with various everyday items hidden inside a “body” while the Scouts operated the camera as well as the surgical tools to manipulate the objects.

“Although not a requirement for the badge, I thought that showing the boys how some of their video game skills might translate into the surgical suite might be fun,” Dr. Turner said. “Laparoscopic surgery requires a lot of hand-eye coordination that boys who play a lot of those games will develop.”

The Scouts easily discovered the difference between real life and the fantasy world of video games.

“They were all impressed with the one-handed surgeon's knot,” Dr. Turner said. “I asked them, ‘Aren’t all Eagle scouts good with knots?’ One of them responded, ‘The last time I put up a tent it wasn't bleeding.’”