

OSCVI students awarded for attending med school camp

By JIM ALGIE

SUN TIMES STAFF

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James Mitchell, a Grade 12 OSCVI student, is seriously considering a career in rural medicine and already he's on the radar for medical school.

Mitchell and another OSCVI student, Brittani Rawn, received presentations at the school's Christmas assembly Friday from MedQUEST. It's an outreach program of the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario (UWO) in London.

Organized and financed locally by members of the Brockton area physician recruitment and retention committee, it provides medical career job shadowing during a one-week summer camp supervised by UWO medical students.

Friday, Mitchell, who is also the school's student council co-president, received the director's award from a MedQUEST camp held in July in Walkerton and at hospitals and doctors' offices throughout southern Grey-Bruce. Rawn received a copy of the 2007 camp's closing ceremonies.

It's part of continuing promotion for the two-year-old annual camp, MedQUEST committee chair Myrna Inglis of Walkerton said. Inglis has begun recruiting interested Grade 10 and 11 students for the 2008 camp to be held July 7 through July 11.

Mitchell and Rawn were among 30 area students to participate in the 2007 camp, up from 24 in its inaugural year in 2006. Participants learn how to take blood pressure and other vital signs, they practise sutures on chicken legs and work with an obstetrics mannequin used for training area nurses and physicians.

"The idea is to expose students when they're just finishing Grade 10 and 11



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Myrna Inglis presents a MedQUEST award to OSCVI's James Mitchell Friday.

to health care careers in the broader sense and to interest them in health care in their own community," Inglis said. "They can see how things happen in their own community and hopefully they will decide I like what I saw in my small community . . . I prefer to be a rural medical person than a big city person."

The camp also includes two-and-a-half days of medical job shadowing with area doctors, dentists, paramedics and pharmacists. It's a long-term project to acquaint potential medical workers with rural practice. Most participants are at least five years from medical school and there's another six years after that before they can begin actual practice.

However, Inglis said the program al-

so provides its medical school counselors with a good look at the region and may ultimately attract new doctors. Her committee raises funds to finance annual costs of between \$4,500 and \$6,000.

So how do students stand up to the pressure aimed at convincing them to come back home to practice medicine? For Mitchell, who has been seriously interested in medicine for two years, it's a matter of staying self-motivated.

"My decisions are totally based on what I'm interested in, what I want to do as a career," he said in an interview before Friday's assembly. "I do not feel pressured by MedQUEST, or UWO or parents to go into medicine and come back to Grey County or Owen Sound."

Even so, that's the likely plan for Mitchell. He expects to make up final applications over the Christmas school break for undergraduate studies either in nursing or health sciences at Ontario universities before medical school.

He's thinking of nursing because his mother, Rosemary Mitchell, is a nurse and it provides quick access to clinical training and actual health care practice.

"It's so applicable . . . and you're definitely learning skills you can transfer to medicine," Mitchell said.

Students interested in applying for this year's MedQUEST camp can find further information on the Schulich school's website at www.cdos-women.caa/medaquest.php.

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