



Friday 1 June 2018

Health students supported by Workforce Development Scholarships

Twenty three students from a wide variety of health studies were awarded scholarships by Pegasus Health last night (Thursday 31 May) at a community event.

Each year Pegasus Health invites students who identify as Māori, Pasifika or from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, studying medicine, nursing or allied health to apply for the scholarships.

Seungjun Lee, known as Steve to his friends, has just finished a nine week work placement in Ward 19 at Christchurch Hospital. The placement is part of his Bachelor of Nursing Degree. Choosing exactly which area of nursing to focus on once he completes his degree is going to be hard for Steve who has volunteered and worked in many health areas from the deaf community to aged residential care and supporting people with autism.

“I have really enjoyed all my work experiences. In my last placement I was able to watch a patient having surgery and then be responsible for helping them through their post-operative care. I was impressed that the nurses had so much knowledge and they were willing to share it with me. The teamwork was amazing. My intention though, has always been to help people with disabilities. I’m so glad I chose nursing as a career,” says Steve.

Medical student Lucy Munro has a deeply personal interest in healthcare. As the oldest tamaiti (child) in her whānau, Lucy was around while her mother was pregnant and during the birth process (with her siblings). She has enjoyed helping with them as they grew.

After studying health science for a year in Dunedin Lucy decided she wanted a more ‘hands-on’ medical career. She is currently in her fifth year of medical study and will graduate as a doctor at the end of 2019.

“I’m looking forward to moving more towards the practical application of my knowledge,” says Lucy who plans to go on to specialise in obstetrics which she finds “fascinating”. She is also keen to help make health care for Māori and Pasifika people easier to use.

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Currently living in her home town of Christchurch, Lucy has plans for a rural general practice placement and a medical elective in Tanzania next year.

“The plan was always to come home and practice medicine in Christchurch. The rural placement and overseas elective will be wonderful experiences. However, they do cost and that’s where the Pegasus scholarship will be so useful,” says Lucy.

Phillipa Muza is a Zimbabwean student who is passionate about community health. Her goal is to work in primary health with clinicians once she completes her Bachelor of Health Sciences Degree. Phillipa has been in New Zealand for 13 years and has previously worked in a number of community health roles. As Health Promoter and Community Engagement Co-ordinator for the

New Zealand Aids Foundation she has come to understand that women of all cultures are at risk. She is especially dedicated to improving health education for girls and women.

Savanah Stewart chose radiography as a career because it spans science, physics and study of the human body.

“I enjoy all those areas so radiography is a great career for me,” says Savanah.

She is in her third and final year of a Medical Imaging Degree. In addition to her medical studies Savanah has completed a certificate in Te Reo. Once she has graduated she will then go on to fulltime postgraduate study – a Diploma of Advanced Image Interpretation and a Diploma in Māori Studies. She hopes to find a job in the new section of Christchurch Hospital once it opens.

One scholarship recipient, Raina Tekii will be using his skills in the area of mental health nursing. At last night’s ceremony Raina spoke of the support he had received from his tutors and family as he “battled his way through” his Bachelor of Nursing Degree. He also said that being a Pasifika male in what was predominately a career for pakeha and females, was quite daunting but highlighted the need for more Pasifika and Māori males in nursing.

Suli Tuitaupe, who is already a Registered Nurse and is about to complete a Master of Health Sciences, said he was looking forward to using his clinical expertise to advocate for Pasifika health.

“My voyage of becoming a Pasifika nurse has the goal of improving health equity for all,” says Suli.

Rangatahi (youth) health is an area of focus for Leigh McConchie, a third year nursing student and scholarship recipient. She certainly keeps herself busy combining her current study and work placements with two part time jobs. Leigh has been especially enjoying her current placement at a general practice in Rolleston where she gets to do everything from flu clinics and enrolments to wound care and smoking cessation education.

When deciding on a career after High School, Leigh singled it down to two options – Primary School teaching or nursing. She says she was really lucky to get accepted into nursing at Ara.

“I was just so excited, I cried. I’d love to work in the paediatrics ward at Christchurch Hospital once I’ve completed my training,” says Leigh.

Vince Barry, CEO of Pegasus Health says “Pegasus is proud to offer these scholarships to such a hardworking group of health students. There is no doubt they will all contribute significantly to their respective fields and that patients will benefit. We are particularly aware of the long standing inequities in health for Māori, Pasifika and people from CALD communities. These scholarships are just one small way we can help support patients from these communities,” says Vince Barry.

Seven students received Māori Scholarships this year and Pacific scholarships were awarded to eight Pasifika health students. Eight CALD students received scholarships.

Pegasus Health established the Māori scholarships in 2001 and followed up with Pacific scholarships in 2007. Scholarships for CALD health students became available in 2014. Each of the applicants had to write a 500-word essay about their backgrounds and their reasons for pursuing a career in health.

Full list of scholarship recipients:

Māori scholarships: Matthew Sollis (Medicine), Nikola Fraser (Medicine), Lucy Munro (Medicine), Kylie Walker (Nursing), Leigh McConchie (Nursing), Savanah Stewart (Medical Imaging), Talei Stuart-Eason (Social Work).

Pacific Scholarships: Mosana Evagelia (Medicine), Raina Tekii (Nursing), Marita Naoupu (Nursing), Jessica Tolo (Nursing), Faamele Tuipulotu (Psychology/ Education), Samsara Guillemot-Mene (Science/ Psychology), Alice Makaafi (Speech/ Language), Suli Tuitaupe (Health Sciences).

CALD scholarships: Kemintra Phongkaso (Nursing), Rakhi Kuttikattu Prakash (Nursing), Dilsa Davis (Nursing), Seungjun Lee (Nursing), Maria Zawari (Medical Imaging), Sirwan Mohamadi (Social Work), Phillipa Muza (Health Science), Zane Stankuna (Science Nutrition).