

UTMB students bring health fair to Holy Family



Courtesy Photo Sunday, October 10, 2010 12:00 am

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Front row Brittany Scoggins Courtney Johnson Juan Pena Julie Ly Chidiebere Ohalete Emily Nimon; second row Natalie Pulido Michelle Garcia Crystal Ugarte Binny Patel Sidoni Findong; third row Rachel Suter Danielle Orchard Miles Farr; back row Roven Excanillas Greg Tacquard.

UTMB students bring health fair to Holy Family By Kay Sandor

Nursing students at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston gained valuable experience this summer by developing partnerships in the community while participating in an important service-learning activity.

The students began by collecting data for a needs assessment survey of Holy Family parish.

Of the 646 parishioners surveyed 168 replied they would be interested in a parish health fair and specifically in screenings for blood pressure diabetes and cholesterol.

Based on the survey results Corinne Oppermann coordinator for the community health nursing course at UTMB reached out to other schools and programs on the UTMB campus to plan and conduct a health fair for the Holy Family parish.

On Sept. 26 an inter-professional health care team of students and faculty spent the day conducting the "Healthy Living" event in the auditorium of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Galveston.

The health team provided health education and screening services for about 150 parishioners of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds.

In addition to health screenings the team provided counseling and referral services as needed to participants.

Informal evaluations found parishioners were extremely positive about the event and many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to participate.

Members of the health team included 46 students and four faculty members from the School of Nursing 14 medical student volunteers from the Frontera de Salud service organization and one faculty member and five student volunteers from the School of Health Professions.

Other faculty participants from the School of Nursing included Betty Douzar Suzanne Alton Cheryl Juneau and Yolanda Davila. Juan Pena of the University of Texas Community Outreach program and Jane Finely in the department of clinical laboratory sciences in the School of Health Professions also contributed their expertise while Bonnie Webster and I served as representatives of the Holy Family parish health ministry.

Special recognition and commendations are extended to student leaders Julie Ly and Crystal Ugarte in the School of Nursing and Miles Farr in the School of Medicine for their work in guiding the event and building on their knowledge and experience gained from previous health fairs as student volunteers for Frontera de Salud.

Kay Sandor is a professor in the School of Nursing.