

## Story Identification Idea

- Piggyback on a holiday. Take a look at upcoming holidays. In what ways can you connect the work of your organization to the holiday? Come up with several ideas, complete with contact persons, and get on the phone to news directors for your local TV stations and the assignment editor for your local paper.

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## 'FACES for the Future' Provides Multiple Benefits

By Megan Venzin

St. Rose Hospital's (Hayward, CA) FACES for the Future internship program provides high school juniors and seniors living under difficult circumstances the opportunity to explore careers in the health field. In addition to exposing participants to varying career options in the health profession, it also provides students with academic support, counseling services and leadership development skills. The balance of these four components has made the program stand out above other health-related internships in California and the rest of the country.

"We work very hard to ensure our program enables students to draw the connections between their academic work and their future success," says Program Coordinator Jasmine Nakagawa. "When they are held to high expectations, supported holistically and exposed first-hand to all of the possibilities and options available to them in the health professions, they realize their potential."

When St. Rose Hospital launched their FACES for the Future program in 2007, it already had a positive track record thanks to other California hospitals that had previously adopted the model. To date, the program has served 115 students, who have seen increases in GPA and college acceptance. Of the students who have participated, 59 percent were the first in their families to go to college, and 86 percent have pursued higher education after completing their internships.

Nakagawa says cultivating a successful internship program can lead to significant press placements, awards and valuable community partnerships, but that should not be the sole focus. "The hospital's public image is enhanced by offering a program like FACES for the Future because it proves that we care not only about the physical health of our patients but about the overall well-being of families in our community," Nakagawa says. "For an independent community hospital like St. Rose Hospital, a program like this is not solely about public relations — it is a sincere investment in the community we serve." Even so, their success rate has garnered attention from local and national media, including "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams," NBC local news, The San Francisco Chronicle and People Magazine. "The media coverage and awards have allowed the FACES for the Future Program to grow our 'extended family,'" Nakagawa says. "This has resulted in many benefits, including funding leads and opportunities to better collaborate with other community organizations."

For nonprofits looking to launch similar programs, Nakagawa recommends starting by investing and engaging members of their community. "Secure sustainable funding, actively seek effective community partners and, perhaps most importantly, gain the support of leaders and staff in the internship sites," Nakagawa says. "FACES for the Future at St. Rose Hospital is only successful because of the deep investment of the hospital administration and staff in making a difference in the lives of our students."

As with any internship program, Nakagawa says you should constantly look for opportunities to improve on the existing model. "At FACES for the Future, we survey our students, families and internship supervisors several times each year to gain insight into how we can grow and improve while still being aware of our capacity," Nakagawa says. "One of my big goals for the program is to never become stagnant or complacent; we constantly seek ways to improve our partnerships and increase the effectiveness of the program for our students."

Source: *Jasmine Nakagawa, Program Coordinator, FACES for the Future, St. Rose Hospital, Hayward, CA. Phone (510) 264-4103. E-mail: [jnakagawa@srhca.org](mailto:jnakagawa@srhca.org). Website: [www.strosehospital.org](http://www.strosehospital.org)*