

How do you solve today's toughest healthcare challenges? You innovate. That's the approach OSF HealthCare Saint Luke Medical Center in Kewanee took in 2023. With staffing shortages a persistent concern in healthcare, the hospital asked its Mission Partners to come up with new ideas around rural recruitment.

The effort was part of a Trailblazer Challenge, which generated 25 ideas, mostly from Mission Partners on healthcare's front lines. OSF HealthCare leadership and the Jump Trading Simulation & Education Center supported their partners by providing the tools needed to turn innovative ideas into viable solutions.

PROJECT 1: Camp Med

Focusing on students entering grades 8-10, this five-day camp introduces professions in rural healthcare. The camp provides education and hands-on activities so the students could experience a wide range of careers in healthcare delivery.

"I believe that our youth is our future," said Volunteer Services Supervisor Brenda Streit. "This camp will give us a chance to demonstrate our culture of compassion to students and illustrate the benefits of working in a rural hospital."

PROJECT 2: No Degree? No Problem!

This project will develop marketing materials to educate the community on employment opportunities that don't require a college degree, but will still allow them to build a career path within OSF HealthCare.

"In 2020, 24% of Henry County high school graduates did not enroll in a two- or four-year college program within 12 months of graduation," said Rehabilitation Services Supervisor Breanne Cinnamon. "That means there's a large population of individuals entering the workforce who don't have a college degree and are looking for a stable job with good benefits."

PROJECT 3: Student Volunteers and Hospital Helpers

To help older students explore healthcare careers, an established volunteer program will expand into an on-site, unpaid internship for local students. The internships will be offered in four categories: clinical, technical, service-oriented or business administration.

PROJECT 4: OSF in the Classroom

Students of all ages will learn about different aspects of healthcare, leveraging digital tools, healthcare-themed toys and other materials in schools. Lessons will cover topics such as what occurs during a primary care appointment and how the emergency department functions.

"My goal with this program is to show kids what it's like to be a patient," said Public Relations and Communications Coordinator Sam Rux. "But at the same time, they are learning what it means to be a clinician or a caretaker in each of those departments."

PROJECT 5: A Day in the Life of a Mission Partner

This project will offer insight into the daily life of various healthcare professionals, with video and podcast content featured on the OSF Careers webpage, shared on social media, and used in area schools and career events.



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