

A New Prescription for Success



Clark College President Robert K. Knight and Columbia Credit Union President Steve Kenny cut the ribbon signifying the official opening of the simulation pharmacy.

More than 40 people gathered at Clark College at the Washington State University campus in Vancouver on September 30 for a ribbon-cutting event for the Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy. The celebration honored the community credit union for its \$65,000 gift that led to remodeling the 500-square-foot pharmacy and purchasing new lab equipment and supplies.



The crowd cheered as the ribbon was cut on Clark's new Columbia Credit Union Simulation Pharmacy.

Clark's Pharmacy Technician program relocated to Clark College's building on the WSUV campus last year, in the process expanding the program's footprint and enhancing the college's quest to be the premier Pharmacy Technician program in the region. The new lab allows students to practice skills and simulate activities they will encounter on the job in pharmacy settings, such as setting up sterile IV bags and packaging medications.

Clark College President Robert K. Knight and Columbia Credit Union President Steve Kenny cut the ribbon signifying the official opening of the simulation pharmacy.

"We appreciate our community partners that bring that margin of excellence to Clark College," said Knight, adding, "Columbia Credit Union is a partner we can always count on."

Kenny said the bank has served the community since 1952. "We are proud to support higher education," he said.

Kenny added a personal story about his son, a Clark alumnus, who began as a Running Start student, enrolled in a medical program at Clark, and is now a licensed X-ray technician "who, at 26, just purchased his first home," he said. "Education truly makes a difference."



Pharmacy Technician student Dixie Fisher gave a tour of the simulation pharmacy following the ribbon cutting.

Pharmacy Technician student Dixie Fisher is excited about the way education is reshaping her life. Fisher, who was on hand to give tours of the new simulation pharmacy, shared her own story with visitors. A year ago, she was a stay-at-home mom with six children when a storm flooded her home and forced her family to take shelter in a hotel for eight months. With time on her hands and her job prospects bleak, Fisher visited Clark College; she'd heard about its Pharmacy Technician program and wanted to learn more. Now Fisher, 36, is in the last quarter of the program and hopes to get a job at Kaiser Permanente, where she's been interning, and perhaps return to Clark one day to teach in the program.

Pharmacy technicians are in high demand because of the large number of locations that employ technicians and an aging population who require care. In the state of Washington, more than 1.2 million residents will be age 65 or older by 2020, according to a panel convened by the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council.



Pharmacy Tech instructor Heidi Fey and department head Dawn Shults attend the opening of the new Columbia Credit Union simulation pharmacy.

Sixteen states in the nation require certification for pharmacy technicians, and only six require licenses. Washington is one of the six that mandates a license, says Dawn Shults, Pharmacy Technician Department head.

Clark students can earn a certificate and be workforce-ready in a year or go on to earn an Associate in Applied Technology degree that prepares them for leadership roles within a pharmacy setting. They can transfer to Central Washington University for a Bachelor of Applied Technology degree in business management.

To see more photos from the event visit our Flickr site.

Photos: Clark College/Jenny Shadley