

Eastern SHS Health & Medical Sciences Academy Senior Awards Ceremony

BY ELIZABETH NELSON

For the 14 graduating seniors of the Health & Medical Science Academy (HMSA) at Eastern Senior High School, the Senior Awards Ceremony on June 4 was a long-awaited, much-anticipated event. It marks a major transition in their lives, from the struggles and successes of their high school career to the new challenges they will face in the adult world. For these students, this means entering college. Every single one has been accepted, some to local schools including Trinity College and the University of the District of Columbia. Others will be venturing far afield to South Carolina State University, Clark Atlanta University or Iowa State University. Wherever they go, they will have been well prepared. Each has had the opportunity for “real world” experience through internships and job-shadowing, and each has completed a minimum of 200 hours of community service.

The ceremony was held in the historic (and sumptuous) Charles Sumner School, designed by Washington architect Adolph Cluss, and featured many special touches. In lieu of year books, each student was given a framed class photo to be personalized with messages from their mentors and classmates. Each student received a “goody bag” that included a stethoscope and smock (useful to anyone in the health care fields) and an inspirational book on the importance of a positive attitude toward serving others (useful in any walk of life!).

Academy Director Craig English advised the graduates that “you are on your own now with no one to wake you up or encourage you to



TOP to BOTTOM: 1. HMSA graduates and faculty
2. Graduates say goodbye to EMT instructor Louis J. Mann.
3. Graduates personalizing the group photo.

study” but expressed confidence that they “all have the inner power to succeed.” They may make mistakes but must not lose focus on their goals. And that “it is not succeeding every time that makes you a winner – it is doing your best every time.” The evening ended with a delicious buffet supper for the students and their supporters.

The school year that just ended has been an eventful one. New courses were added, Pharmacy Technician and Emergency Medical Services, and the faculty to support them. But English, who headed the academy since its inception and more-or-less willed it into being, is no longer in the classroom. In January, he was promoted to central administration at DCPS and is now managing eight programs District-wide – good news for the other seven programs but not so much for HMSA. However, he continues to take a proprietary interest in the program and recently pulled off a major coup ... Eastern is under construction (as most everyone knows), and when the roof was removed for replacement, Craig worked out a deal to drop a decommissioned ambulance into one of the classrooms. Future students will be able to practice their emergency management skills using a genuine, fully stocked ambulance. If that doesn't excite learning, nothing will.

Eastern Senior High School is located at 1700 East Capitol St. NE. If you would like to have more information, schedule a visit to the HMSA, or make a donation, please send an e-mail to englishca@gmail.com or 202-442-5071. ★