

# BUSINESS

## Program winner to attend presidential inauguration



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**A**lthough he is not old enough to vote, Nicholas Petrilla has been invited to the inauguration of the next U.S. president in January.

The opportunity came when Petrilla, a junior at Shanksville-Stonycreek High School, attended the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine in Washington, D.C., this past summer. Students who completed the 10-day forum were invited back to the capitol for the inauguration.

The forum allows high school students who are interested in pursuing careers in medicine to educate them-

selves on important medical topics, as well as to meet distinguished professionals from the field.

The program offers 23 summer sessions in eight cities across the country and accepts 350-400 students per session.

Still, the selection process for the forum is extremely competitive. Students must be recommended by school administrators to apply for the program and must demonstrate a grade average of B-plus or better to be accepted.

Petrilla excels in math and science and aspires to become a pharmacist.

He said the forum was the opportunity of a lifetime.

"(The forum) really cemented my interest in pharmacy," Petrilla said. "It was an eye-opener about the kind of work I'll be doing and the amount of school I'll need."

Petrilla plans to further his knowledge about pharmacy by working part-time for Finley's Pharmacy in Somerset.

For now, the job consists primarily of maintenance and housekeeping. But Petrilla hopes his interaction with the pharmacists and the overall atmosphere of the store will benefit his career preparation.

Aside from securing a job at Finley's for the new school year, Petrilla will maintain a busy academic life - participating in activities such as golf, baseball, band, chorus and National Honor Society. He also volunteers with Angel Food Ministries, a national nonprofit organization that provides food relief to low-income households.

"I realize that my future is important, but I also need to be well-rounded," Petrilla said. "That's why I get involved with different kinds of activities."

Petrilla is the 2008 recipient of The Challenge Pro-

gram's Most Community Service/Sophomore Award.

*The Challenge Program Inc. is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Johnstown that provides financial incentives to students for successes they achieve while still in high school. The program awards students in the areas of highest grade-point average, best attendance, most community service and most improved. The program also aims to provide a bridge between high school students and the local business community.*