

FIRST-HAND LOOK

Portage High School senior Tyesha Plummer helps Cambria Care Center resident Tim Wilson with his prize at the end of the Story of St. Patrick game. Members of the school's Challenge Program toured the facility Friday to get information on job opportunities, as well as participate in games and conversation with the residents.

TODD BERKEY/THE TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT



Students interested in medical field visit care center

BY JOCELYN BRUMBAUGH
JBRUMBAUGH@TRIBDEM.COM

EBENSBURG – Students from Portage Area High School interested in pursuing a career in health care had the opportunity Friday to experience first-hand what it would be like to be on staff at a local nursing home.

Through a partnership with The Challenge Program, about a dozen students visited residents at Cambria Care Center and

learned more about the variety of positions there, growth opportunities and educational incentives available to employees.

Sara Jones, of The Challenge Program, said tours with local employers allow students to connect with jobs that won't require them to leave the area or take on student debt to be hired.

"I think tours like this show kids there are opportunities here," Jones said.

Katie Hastie, who works to recruit health care professionals to work at Cambria Care

Center and other medical facilities, said an increase in retiring nurses and a growing aging population has created the perfect storm for a nurse shortage.

"The nursing shortage is real, and it's getting worse," she said.

Dee Nasri, administrator at Cambria Care Center, said on-the-job training, flexible scheduling for those pursuing further certification and tuition assistance are all

Please see **CARE**, A2

CARE

Continued from A1

possibilities at the Ebensburg facility and the medical field as a whole.

"Health care is a great field to go into if you're compassionate and want to make a difference in people's lives," she said.

Tours like those held Friday allow students to get into a medical environment, meet people who serve different roles and learn more about the steps earn the positions they want.

"This is an opportunity for them to see the

positions available," she said.

Hannah Fuller, a junior at Portage Area High School, said she became interested in the health care field after she saw her grandparents encounter medical problems.

"I just want to learn about how to help older people," she said.

Classmate Allyson Freeman said she's volunteered at a local senior center and had plans to become a paramedic.

"After this, I'm sure I want to go into this field," Freeman said.

Follow Jocelyn Brumbaugh on Twitter @JBrumbaughTD.