

TOMORROW'S HEALTH LEADERS

Highland Park doctor helps students

By KENNETH L. R. PATCHEN

Twice, Dr. Steve H. Dayan of Highland Park was able to look beyond the surface of the situation before him and see what might really be there waiting to break out.

Both stories explain why he gives away \$25,000 scholarships through his Enhance Educational Foundation to high school students considering careers in medicine.

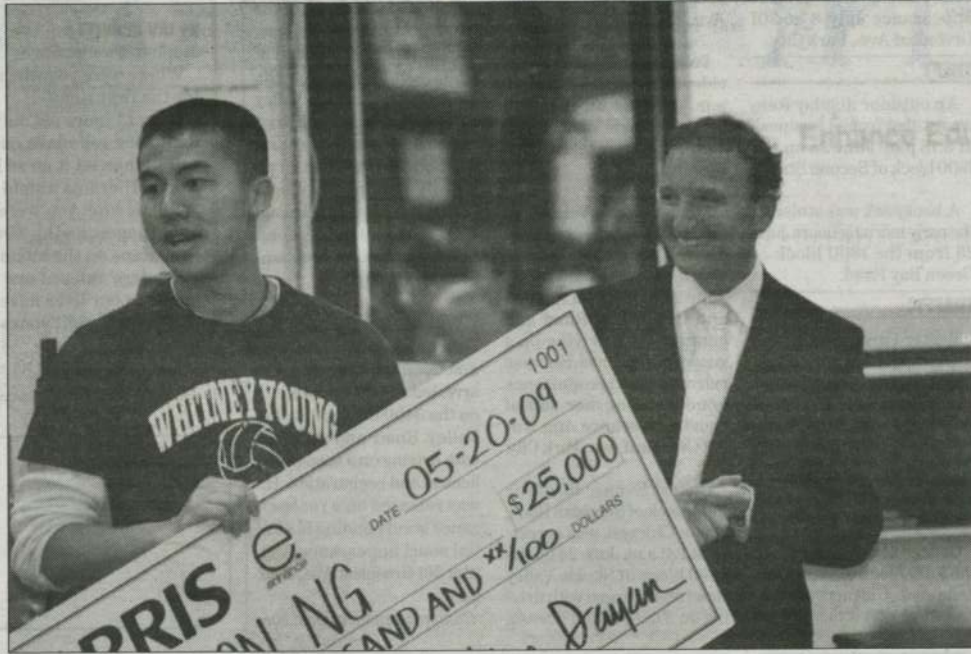
Since Dayan graduated from medical school at the University of Illinois 10 years ago, he has spoken to high school students about medicine. He himself is a plastic surgeon and appreciates the opportunity his skills give him to make people feel better about themselves.

When speaking to students, he noticed the questions he was asked in suburban schools were very different from those by Chicago Public School system students. Whereas suburban students might want to know about salaries and lifestyle issues of doctors, Chicago students wanted to know what surgery is like, who decides to seek help and what about all that blood? He much preferred the medicine-oriented questions from Chicago Public School students.

A second story Dayan recalls occurred two years ago. A student in the front row of one of his talks did not dress or sit in a way to suggest he belonged there. Later, teachers suggested that student was not a good candidate for an internship opportunity Dayan had in his practice. They did not think their student would involve himself.

Inquisitive student

But, the student "asked a lot of good questions," Dayan said. Moreover, his grades were good enough to get him an interview.



Brandon Ng (left) stands with Dr. Steve Dayan of Highland Park, when Ng received a \$25,000 scholarship from Dayan's Enhance Educational Foundation to help high school students considering careers in medicine. (Photo courtesy of Steve Dayan)

In both situations, Dayan said he learned students might be inspired to achieve dreams they had and to think about their future in a way they might not otherwise consider, regardless of how adults around them saw the same student.

The experience of former Dunbar Career Academy High School Roxanne Hermanstynne, 18, supports his view.

Year 2008 winner Hermanstynne now works as a pharmacy technician at CVS and attends Howard University in Washington, D.C., on the \$25,000 Enhance scholarship she received. She heard about the foundation at her school, made her interest known and was selected as one of 30 students, out of more than 300, who had a chance to explore a medical career through an internship program.

"I like it so far," she said. "I like (Washington) D.C.

I'm enjoying (the program) so far. The professors are always there for you."

A tremendous help

The Enhance scholarship made it possible for her to attend Howard and to manage her school-loan needs better. Hermanstynne is from Ghana and the scholarship was, therefore, very important for a goal she had.

"The main goal was to allow me to pursue my American dream," she said. "That's the main one."

Dayan said, "You hope to make a difference. I'm convinced education is a way to breakdown barriers, defeat prejudice and increase self-esteem."

Those values support his decision to create the foundation to move students toward their dreams in a strong way. He not only supports the annual \$25,000 scholarship but also awards smaller amounts, hosts a summer

internship in his practice, works with Starbucks on a special photography program, and, recently, after a vacation in Cambodia, is financing construction of a classroom building there for about 200 students.

Dayan brought his family to Highland Park six years ago where his children now attend school. Their home is close to his mother, who lives in Deerfield.

He grew up knowing he wanted to be a surgeon, but a relative who is a doctor dissuaded him from becoming a neurosurgeon. Instead, he selected plastic surgery, which also appealed to him and required surgical skills.

Author of books

He likes the creativity involved and has been able to combine his medical interests with the authorship of books, such as "Instant Beauty: The Complete Consumer's Guide to Quick, Safe and Effective Cosmet-

prise, but the family is on hand to see their child receive it. It is a celebratory occasion often including the grandparents.

He raises the money with fund-raisers. Each has been different and have attracted between 300 and 700 people. He reaches out to everyone he knows and beyond for financial support and help with management of the foundation. To date, Dayan has been able to raise \$130,000.

"It takes work," he said. "Once you get in there, and roll your sleeves up, it takes off from there."

Enhance Educational Foundation assists Chicago Public School students with scholarships, hosts a literacy program, "Dream to Be," and has an internship program to expose students to the field of medicine.

The first winner in 2007 was Roshea Williams of Julian High School, who is now half way through her premedical studies at Eastern Illinois University. The 2009 recipient is Whitney Young senior Brandon Ng, who will use it for premedical studies. His family was present May 20 when he received it.

This year four runner-up candidates received \$3,000 or more toward their education. Carline Joseph is studying biology and Aisha Saeed is pre-pharmacy, both at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Melissa Torres is a nursing student at St. Xavier University.

Enhance Educational Foundation obtains its money through fund-raisers. In addition, Starbucks supports a "What is Beautiful" scholarship with Enhance to encourage creative thought with photography. Photographs are displayed in Starbucks coffee stores and voted on by customers. The foundation may be reached at www.enhancefoundation.org.

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ic Procedures," proceeds from which help support the foundation.

Dayan himself learned state law makes it difficult to give students money for education. It is not a simple matter of handing over the dollars because there are tax impacts if it is done that way and insufficient accountability. Instead, funds are passed through a state office for distribution. The foundation conducts the application process, and candidate evaluations are done by a 12-person board.

"They interview the kids," he said. "Sometimes you want to cry when you hear them talk about their obstacles."

Occasion to celebrate

Students receive an annual \$25,000 scholarship to pay for tuition, books and other expenses over four years. Another four students receive about \$2,500. Awards are a sur-