

Buffalo Healthcare Exploration (BHE) Program 2026

1st Week (7/27 - 7/29) Overview

Hosted through the ATLAS department at Roswell Park, the Buffalo Healthcare Exploration (BHE) Program launched its three-week summer session on July 27th, running Monday through Wednesday. The program provides high school students with an exceptional opportunity to explore the dynamic world of healthcare. Through interactive learning experiences and dedicated mentorship, BHE equips emerging scholars with valuable insights across diverse medical fields, fostering curiosity and driving passion for future healthcare careers. This summer, we are proud to welcome 49 students from high schools across Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and adjacent suburbs, supported on campus by 8 Teaching Assistants (TAs).

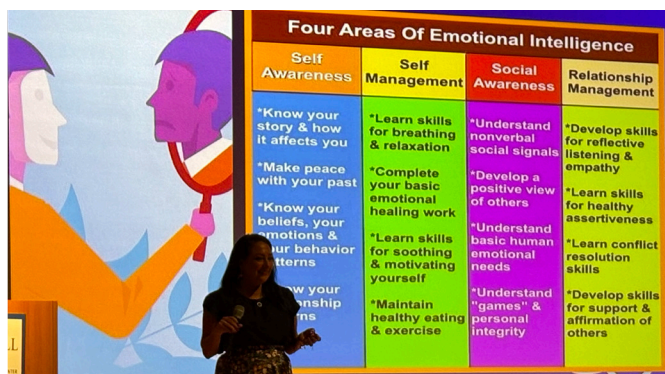
The BHE Program is built upon six core pillars:

- **Innovation**
- **Compassion for Community**
- **Empathy (Patient Education)**
- **Visualization of Complex Concepts**
- **Education**
- **Career Path Understanding**

During the first three days of the program, students participated in a robust lineup of sessions designed to build and enhance their empathy and compassionate communication skills:

Day 1: "It Is All About Listening"

Students began with an insightful lecture on emotional intelligence, active listening, and essential communication skills by Danielle Depalma, an art educator with extensive experience helping students navigate difficult emotional situations. This foundational session introduced the emotional wheel framework and prepared students for thoughtful, empathetic dialogue.



Days 2 & 3: "Expressing Emotional Wheel Concepts on Canvas"

Putting their training into practice, students engaged in small-group interview sessions with cancer patients, hearing personal journeys firsthand to build deep empathy and better understand the patient experience. Building directly on these conversations, students then translated these shared experiences onto canvas to complete the *Storyboard Project*, integrating visual storytelling, emotional depth, and patient-centered narratives.



It has been an inspiring and enriching start to the program, and we look forward to sharing more highlights and outcomes over the next two weeks.

For more information about the Buffalo Healthcare Exploration Program, please contact **Nancy Preskop** at Nancy.Preskop@roswellpark.org



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2nd Week (8/3 - 8/5) Overview

The Buffalo Healthcare Exploration (BHE) Program at Roswell Park, organized by the ATLAS Department, kicked off its second week with an emphasis on diverse healthcare career exploration, essential life-saving skills, and advanced clinical simulation.

Day 1: "Become a Healthcare Marketer"

In the morning, students toured the EDDY mobile screening unit before collaborating with the ATLAS Studios team, where they learned the important role of medical illustration and visualization in healthcare, designing promotional flyers for the EDDY outreach program.



The day also featured an interactive workshop led by the Aquarium of Niagara team, covering aquatic medicine, wildlife care, and hands-on laboratory science. Key topics included the One Health connection between human, animal, and environmental wellness, routine veterinary diagnostics, and positive-reinforcement training for non-releasable marine life. Students analyzed blood samples, measured packed cell volume (PCV), and examined slides under microscopes to evaluate species-specific health metrics. The session concluded with a squid dissection to study its anatomy.



Day 2: "Learning Life Saving Skills" & "Make a Difference with a Two-Year Clinical Laboratory Degree"

Students earned certifications through CPR and AED training led by Christian Prechtel, MD-PhD trainee, and a "Stop the Bleed" workshop led by Beth Moses, BSN, EMT. These sessions equipped them with essential life-saving techniques while emphasizing safety awareness, responsible decision-making, and driving safety.



Additionally, students explored various roles and career paths within the clinical



laboratory field, gaining a deeper understanding of how diagnostic testing directly supports patient care.

Day 3: "Practice Makes Perfect"

At the ATLAS Sim Lab, students gained experience in minimally invasive surgery through hands-on practice in laparoscopic peg transfers, precision cutting, and endoscopic simulation.



At the Marie E. Bogner Simulation Center, they explored Roswell Park nursing careers, experienced a mock code on oncologic emergencies, and rotated through skill stations covering IVs, wound care, chest tubes, and medication setup, capping off an engaging second week filled with hands-on activities.

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Final Week of the Buffalo Healthcare Exploration Program 2026

The final week of the Buffalo Healthcare Exploration (BHE) program brought an inspiring culmination to three weeks of hands-on discovery. From exploring community-based preventative nutrition and preparing for college to delving into research careers, students concluded their journey with valuable takeaways, new life skills, and a heartfelt closing celebration.

Day 1: "Holistic Wellness for a Healthy Lifestyle."

The week kicked off with a full-day field visit to Buffalo Go Green, where students discovered how



holistic wellness and preventative nutrition intersect with community health. Participants toured the greenhouses to

learn about produce farming and the vital role fresh, local food plays in disease prevention and management. Throughout the day, students explored key wellness concepts, including Nutrition 101, herbal medicine, the gut microbiome, and mindfulness through yoga. The visit also featured a culinary demonstration, where a chef guided students in making nutritious meals and fresh fruit salsa. To close out the experience, each student received a pot of soil and basil seeds, encouraging them to cultivate homegrown herbs in their own kitchens.



Day 2: "Marathon Not a Sprint" & "Success One Step at a Time"

The morning featured "Ready, Set, Launch," a college planning and life skills workshop led by Allen Booker. Students learned essential strategies for transitioning from high school to college and independent life, focusing on time management,



financial literacy, self-advocacy, and decision-making under pressure. In the afternoon, the Division of Employee Resiliency and EAP led an interactive seminar on building

personal resilience as foundational stepping stones for long-term healthcare career success.

Day 3: "Research Advances the World" & Program Celebration

PhD trainee students at Roswell Park opened the morning by introducing pathways in scientific research through laboratory activities and demonstrations. After the activities, students joined a panel discussion to gain insight into research pathways, exploring the daily routines and work-life balance of graduate researchers.



The three-week journey concluded with a closing luncheon and celebration. Students proudly presented their storyboards and received certificates of completion from

Ted Kuzniarek, owner of Upstate Pharmacy, whose generous sponsorship supported the 2026 BHE program. Dr. Khurshid Guru, Director of the ATLAS Program, delivered the closing address, offering meaningful advice and words of encouragement as the students celebrated their accomplishments and prepared for the next steps in their journeys.



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BHE
Buffalo Healthcare
Exploration



ATLAS
Applied Technology Laboratory
for Advanced Surgery

