Meet Amber-Rose Hawkins . . .

Like her paternal grandmother, Amber-Rose Hawkins wanted to be a nurse. Having lost her father at an early age, it was this dream, along with her mother and brother that were the biggest constants in her life. As a senior in high school, Amber-Rose and her brother were accepted to the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) Health Careers Opportunity Program (HCOP). There, she spent the summer participating in activities like research in juvenile diabetes, activities that helped her shed the fears and worries that were holding her back. She enjoyed the program so much, Amber-Rose worked extra hard her senior year to gain admission to UTHSC for college, and was then accepted into the HCOP program again during her second year of undergraduate studies. Amber-Rose obtained a Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing, and is currently a pediatric oncology nurse at St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis.

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About the Program

- HCOP is authorized under Title VII of the Public Health Service Act. Together with the Centers of Excellence (COE), HCOPs function to increase the representation of minority and disadvantaged students in the health professions.

- The University of Tennessee Health Science Center is committed to assisting disadvantaged students to enter and graduate from a health professions school to alleviate the shortage of disadvantaged health professionals.

- The program offers academies during the summer and the academic year, with activities to enrich and accelerate students’ academic pursuits in math and science studies.

- More information on activities offered, including seminars, shadowing, and classes, is available on the program website:
  http://www.utmem.edu/HCP/

According to Amber-Rose . . .

I spent a summer at UTHSC participating in HCOP. During this time, I fell in love with the school and the professors I met. Participating in HCOP reaffirmed my goals of becoming a nurse, and the program helped me refocus in school. Because I knew I wanted to reach my goals, I was more determined than ever to make my last year really count. HCOP offered a venue for me to alleviate my fears of cadavers during our gross anatomy labs. This program also allowed me to truly appreciate other health care professions besides my own (such as dentistry) by simply sending me into those areas to shadow.

HCOP also forced me to interact with my peers on a professional as well as personal level. In the past, it was always easy to collaborate with older individuals, and I avoided interaction with those of my own age group for various reasons. In HCOP, I met a lot of great individuals, some of whom I am still friends with. It has meant the world to me to be part of such an opportunity. The one-on-one tutoring, the internship experiences, and more, shaped me and helped me to get to where I am today. I will certainly miss this great opportunity not being here for my brother next summer!