

## Mock pharmacy RX for real- world experience

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#### Greater Lowell Tech alum donates CVS supplies to help launch program

By Amelia Pak-Harvey

TYNGSBORO — At **Greater Lowell Technical High School**, students will be filling out prescriptions.

Those prescriptions are actually beans and labeled for “Mickey Mouse,” but the setup is all part of a mock CVS Pharmacy to add even more hands-on experience to health and medical assisting students.

The “pharmacy,” donated by alumnus Jonathan DaSilva, features racks of fake medicine bottles, labels and empty prescription containers just waiting to be filled.

The real-life training will help students when they take the Pharmacy Technician Certification Exam after graduation.

The school is also operating a mock CVS store this year, stocked with donated CVS products and managed by the marketing students. They’ll take stock of items, fill out orders and keep count of the register.

Money from the store will fund an annual scholarship for seniors.

Please see **TECH/ 8**



Senior Mikayla Rutledge counts “pills” in the new mock CVS Pharmacy at **Greater Lowell Tech** recently as part of the school’s pharmacy technician program.

community that helped him later in life — staff that helped him tie a tie, taught him how to be innovative and pushed him to run for class president, he said.

“Now it’s time to invest in the future as it was invested in me,” he said.

DaSilva got the idea when a temporary CVS store closed on Cape Cod. He took apart actual parts of the pharmacy and brought them to Tyngsboro.

Meanwhile, construction students helped build the store that now holds all kinds of convenience-store items — deodorant, mini toothbrushes, pens, notebooks and lip balm.

“Greater Lowell is a school full of opportunity for its students,” DaSilva said. “Not only an opportunity for an education, but an opportunity for a career for life.”

Health and medical-assisting students will learn pharmaceutical skills through an online CVS curriculum that could help them land a job at CVS after graduation.

In her health shop, senior Mikayla Rutledge is learning how to count pills — or rather, beans — with a pill counter. She’s also learning different methods of delivering drugs.

For Rutledge, who wants to become a certified nursing assistant and attend UMass Lowell for nursing, the pharmacy training provides a nice career backup.

“If I wanted a break from doing something like that, I could have this,” she said. “This is cool because once you get certified as a pharmacy technician, I can work anywhere in the U.S., not just Massachusetts.”

Senior Rachel Flanders said the course gives her more variety in her medical-assistant program.

“I’m unsure of what I want to do in the medical field, and this is one thing I actually do enjoy,” she said. “So I could work as a pharmacy technician while I’m still trying to figure out what I want to do.”

The school is also working on setting up co-ops with 11 local CVS stores to complement the curriculum.

Even if they don’t end up working in pharmaceuticals, students still see a value to the pharmacy in their own school.

Senior Emily Dowd, who wants to go into epidemiology, argued that outbreaks can also be because of prescriptions.

“It’s really nice to gain that knowledge of different drugs, different levels of the danger of the drugs,” she said. “And just knowing what different drugs do.”

*Follow Amelia Pak-Harvey on Twitter and Tout @AmeliaPakHarvey.*