

## ***Graduation Ceremony Brings 50 Middle Schoolers One Step Closer to Realizing Dreams of Becoming Doctors***

Kaiser Permanente's West Los Angeles Medical Center celebrated the culmination of its Hippocrates Circle mentoring program on May 30, marking an important milestone in the lives of 46 seventh- and eighth-graders with dreams of a career in medicine. Students and their families were treated to a lunch reception at the DoubleTree Hotel in Culver City that featured a keynote speech by Sen. Holly Mitchell.

This year's participants were students from Crozier Middle School, Orville Wright Middle School, Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies (L.A.C.E.S.), Bethune Math/Science Technology Middle School, and Los Angeles Academy Middle School.

Designed to foster underrepresented students' interest in a medical career, the 12-week Hippocrates Circle Program offers students valuable exposure to health care careers and operations.

Hippocrates Circle is meant to encourage students like Gabriel Gonzalez, an 11th grade L.A.C.E.S. student from Downey, California. "There's no doubt that I am going to become a doctor," asserted Gonzalez, who was enrolled in the Kaiser Permanente West Los Angeles Hippocrates Circle Program in 2012. "I've always had an interest in science, but it wasn't until after this program that I believed I could actually be a doctor one day," he added. The eldest son of Mexican immigrants, he currently maintains a 4.3-GPA and is active in other Kaiser Permanente volunteer programs. "I want to be a doctor to help other Latinos in my community."

During the Hippocrates Circle Program, students take part in an interactive hospital tour and a medical school fair, engage with practicing physicians, and conduct lab science experiments. The program also features a "Health Care Ambassador's Day" where the students receive tools to promote healthier eating and increased physical activity in their schools and communities.

Additionally, students can connect with the director of volunteer services and are encouraged to network and apply for future internship/volunteer opportunities at the medical center.

For additional information about Kaiser Permanente's Hippocrates Circle Program, visit [www.kp.org/hippocratescircle](http://www.kp.org/hippocratescircle)