

TOURO COLLEGE

Touro College

For Immediate Release

Contact: Barbara Franklin

212-463-0400 x5530

barbara.franklin@touro.edu

Touro College's "Project Aspire" Mounts Halloween Eve Program for Harlem Children

*More than 200 Children from Harlem's P.S. 197 Examine Skeletons, Enjoy Healthy Halloween Treats
and Learn About Candy Safety*

New York, N.Y., November 3, 2011 – More than 200 children from P.S. 197 in Harlem examined real-life skeletons and watched professional chefs prepare healthy treats in a Halloween-inspired event organized by Touro College's Project Aspire on the eve of their 'trick-or-treating.'

Project Aspire is a public health initiative of the Children's Health Education Foundation at Touro College, which brings real-life, interactive health education lessons and demonstrations into classrooms to encourage students to lead healthy lifestyles and to inspire them to explore careers as doctors and other healthcare professionals.

"A lot of kids are afraid of going to the doctor," said Eric French, a first year medical student at the [Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine](#) in Harlem, who, with his fellow students, helped the curious youngsters examine life-size bones and giant eyeballs, and explain why they need calcium. Mr. French said he experienced similar fears when growing up in working-class Dorchester, Mass., until he started visiting a trusted pediatrician.

"After they have casual interaction with a doctor it diffuses the 'white coat' syndrome so when they go to their pediatrician they will ask questions. If you get them early, it changes their entire view of health care and health maintenance," Mr. French said, adding he hopes eventually to work in Harlem or another underserved community. "It's great to get out of the classroom and remember what I'm doing here [at TouroCOM]."

After speaking with the student doctors, eight-year old Tatjana Quinones said she "Learned about health," citing as examples, the importance of "eating broccoli...drinking milk...and orange juice...and carrots...and salad."

To learn more about healthy eating – and what might substitute for candy - the children watched eagerly as professional chefs trained by the Natural Gourmet Institute prepared for them healthy holiday recipes. They enjoyed fresh fruit drinks, bananas covered in dark chocolate with bug eyes fashioned into ghosts, as well as apple slices with almonds that substituted for vampire teeth. The food preparation was sponsored by The Palette Fund, a non-profit organization that provides grants for education.

Faculty and staff from the [Touro College of Pharmacy](#) taught the children about the dangers of unattended prescription and over-the-counter medicines at home using an animated video by Emmy award-winning writer Ian Ellis James. The video, entitled "Medi-Ready," was developed by Touro College under a grant

from the National Institute of Health and the National Library of Medicine. The video featured vitamins, aspirin and cough medicine as characters dancing to a rap beat with the voiceover: *“If you see me on my own, turn around and leave me alone.”* The students also examined jars containing either medication or candy and guessed at the correct contents. Additionally, the children heard how pharmacists help people understand the role of Vitamin D, good nutrition and healthy behaviors in building strong bones.

“Tonight they’ll be going out. The message is to not take anything unless you’re told by your parents to take it. It may look like candy but may not be,” said Dr. Dipan Ray, director of experiential education at the College of Pharmacy.



Eric French (far left), a first-year medical student at Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in Harlem, taught 8-year-old Tatjana Quinones (bottom row, far right) about healthy bones at a Halloween event at her elementary school, P.S. 197, also in Harlem. At the event, sponsored by Touro College’s *Project Aspire*, more than 200 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 2 learned about anatomy and bone health (using life-sized skeleton models), Halloween candy safety, pharmaceutical literacy and healthy holiday recipes.

Touro is a system of Jewish-sponsored non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was established in 1971 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American community. More than 18,000 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro College has branch campuses, locations and instructional sites in the New York area, as well as branch campuses and programs in Berlin, Jerusalem, Moscow, Paris, and Florida. Touro University California and its Nevada branch campus, as well as Touro College Los Angeles, are separately accredited institutions governed in common by the same Board of Trustees as Touro College. For further information on Touro College, please go to: <http://www.touro.edu/media/>.