Listening closely to lab-coated instructors and donning disposable scrubs for some of the hands-on activities, 57 biomedical science students from the Anaheim Union High School District’s elite Oxford Academy explored potential careers on a spring field trip to the Chapman University School of Pharmacy.

Oxford Academy is a 1,200-student multicultural school that has been ranked 12th in the nation by the U.S. News Best High Schools report. With only 200 spots for entering seventh-grade students available each year, students from the Anaheim Union High School District (AUHSD) attendance area are selected by application and exam.

Ron Jordan, dean of the School of Pharmacy, welcomed the students to the Rinker Health Science Campus in Irvine, and instructors introduced them to such topics as prescription compounding, deciphering prescriptions and applying to pharmacy programs.

“From learning how to read a label and counting ‘pills’ (they were candy), to putting on lab gear and mixing their own lip balm, the students where all hands in,” said AUHSD representative Noehmi Duran, who joined the students on the trip.

Chapman’s programs for entering undergraduates include the Pre-Pharmacy Freshman Early Assurance Program (FEAP), a 2+3 program for academically exceptional students who spend two years studying on Chapman’s Main Campus and receive a conditional acceptance into the three-year Pharm.D. program at the Rinker Health Science Campus in Irvine, enabling them to complete a doctor of pharmacy degree in five years.

Laurra Cook, Pharm. D., director of the Freshman Early Assurance Program, said the School of Pharmacy will fund the trip again next year and “looks forward to introducing another promising group of young people to the profession of pharmacy.”

ONE GIRL’S PATH TO CHAPMAN, HARVARD AND MENTORING OTHERS

Martha Rivera ’12 was 11 years old when she saw a sign for piano lessons at the Orange County Children’s Therapeutic Arts Center in Santa Ana.

“But we didn’t have money to pay the $5 for me to take classes,” Rivera remembers. “So my mom exchanged her cleaning services at their office for my ability to participate in the program.”

Rivera’s lessons didn’t stop at the piano. Her world expanded after meeting Ana Jimenez-Hami, Ph.D., the center’s founder and a part-time faculty member at Chapman University, said Rivera, the featured speaker at the most recent annual fundraising gala for Friendly Center, an organization in Orange that provides services to low-income families.

Jimenez-Hami would become one of Rivera’s many mentors, starting her on a path that took her to the Orange County School of the Arts and then to Chapman, where she earned bachelor’s degrees in psychology and Spanish before continuing on to the Harvard Graduate School of Education, earning an Ed.M. in human development. Rivera’s Harvard research focused on Latino men and the role mentors play in learning and higher education.

Today, Rivera lives in Anaheim and is the program director for Bright Prospect, a Pomona-based nonprofit that empowers high potential, low-income Southern California students to gain admission to and graduate from four-year colleges and universities. Two students Rivera works with were offered admission to Chapman this year, with more likely to follow.

“I have a junior who just asked me about Chapman. She really wants to go to a small school that will give her access to opportunities. That’s how I describe Chapman, a school with a lot of access and support in place,” Rivera said.

“Working with students is the greatest honor of my life. I have the opportunity to empower and provide students with support as they explore the world around them. My goal is to be like my mentors and transform lives.”

Martha Rivera ’12 has served as a mentor for college-bound students in Santa Ana, Pomona and beyond. (Photo/Nicholas Academic Centers)
More than 120 local youngsters enjoyed a treat over spring break at Chapman University as participants in the Orange County Gang Reduction Intervention Partnership (OC GRIP) soccer camp held in April.

The annual program sponsored by the Orange County District Attorney’s Office is operated with support from local universities and provides select students in grades four through eight with an organized sports experience and exposure to a college environment.

Soccer workshops led by professional players and law enforcement officers, a campus tour, a Chapman-hosted lunch and police dog demonstrations were among the highlights of the day.

One eighth-grade boy from Orange gave the experience high praise – and not just for the soccer.

“It teaches me to be more respectful than I was back in seventh grade,” he said. “It helps me to be responsible and respectful of others.”

Sgt. Phil McMullin from the Orange Police Department joins in the soccer drills at April’s OC GRIP camp at Chapman University.