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Arline Nicole Willis, left, winner of the Outstanding Intern award, is congratulated by Elaine Smith.

Nurses Celebrate Completion Of Intern Program

As a high school student, Arline Nicole Willis knew she wanted to be a nurse. On Friday, August 1, during ceremonies honoring 54 regional nurses who participated in the Mountain States Health Alliance summer nurses' intern program, Willis was recognized as the "Outstanding intern." It was just one more sign, she said, that she is on her way to where she wants to be. Willis and the other nurses are enrolled in either associate or bachelor's degree programs at local colleges, studying to become registered nurses. They brought their enthusiasm with them to the celebration of the completion of the eight-week summer intern program. "It brings the clinical experience to heart," Willis said. "I had really good preceptors who helped me a lot. They knew what I was particularly interested in and they'd come get me and let me watch a lot." Each nurse was presented a completion certificate. The purpose of the program, said Candy Redd, one of the nurse educators who helped conduct the summer program, was multi-faceted. "It was to provide nursing students an opportunity to expand patient care. It gave them time to see what nursing is about outside the classroom and away from their important study time," Redd said. Elaine Smith, Mountain State's Chief Learning Officer, said students were enrolled from East Tennessee State University, Milligan College and colleges in Pennsylvania, among others. One nurse came from Africa to take part in the intern program. Nurses are dedicated and you'll find that time and again in this program," Smith said. The Mountain States nurses' summer intern program has been ongoing for the past 10 years.

Smith added that the nurses worked in all of Mountain State's facilities and were given the opportunity to select two different areas of concentration. "For instance, some chose medical/surgical, the emergency department or labor and delivery; we worked with the students to determine their interests and they were pleased to be allowed to choose." In addition to the accolades Willis, 22, received from friends and fellow nurses in the summer program, she was given a \$500 award as the Outstanding intern. She will graduate in December from ETSU as a registered nurse.

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