

# Students work as nurses to gain real-world experience



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INDIANAPOLIS — Today's kindergartners who will graduate high school in 2031 may not recognize the labor market. For those in school now, there is a push to connect the classroom with a career.

It's a dose of reality for those working on their future.

With an aging population and a growing demand for nurses, students from Crispus Attucks High School are stepping outside the classroom and going to an American Senior Communities facility in Indianapolis instead. They're not only gaining real-world experience but getting a jump start on their careers.

"It's hands-on," Daniela Artiaga said. "At times it can get challenging but it's also a very good learning experience. When I'm here I feel much better than I would be in a classroom just sitting down."

Artiaga and Destiny Clark are two student certified nursing assistants tasked with helping residents at North Capitol Nursing and Rehabilitation get back on their feet, among other things.

"Brushing their teeth, combing their hair, feeding them," Clark said.

"They are even doing temperatures, blood pressures, pulse, and respirations and those are things you learn in basic nursing classes anyway," Lindy Kenworthy, CNA instructor, said.

Projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show the demand for nurses will only intensify over the next decade, as Baby Boomers age and the need for health care grows.

"These people need somebody to take care of them because at home it can be very difficult, it can be hard for their family," Kenworthy said.

The group is not only receiving training, but credit and certification while on the fast track to starting their nursing careers.

"It's a good opportunity to be able to already have this trait under your belt at a young age like this so you can already be prepared when you graduate to go into the nursing field, or whatever field you want to go into," Clark said.

Once students complete the required number of clinical hours and receive state certification, they are able to work at a facility, while getting paid.

New CNA's stand to make around \$12.50 an hour. Their instructors said it is a great pay rate for someone who is just 18 or 19 years old.