

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Ridge Academy Students Attend Open Heart Surgery**

Last month eleven seventh and eighth grade students from Ridge Academy were offered the unique experience of witnessing open heart surgery in real time.

Advocate Christ Medical Center's Cardio Unit, in conjunction with Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, offered the students unprecedented access, via a live computer facilitated video and audio connection, with the surgeon and his team during the entire operation.

The students, their teacher, and school principal Ken Koll, participated in this unique program, called "Live From the Heart". The group attended an advance preparation session, providing information about the functioning of the cardiovascular system, different forms of cardiovascular disease, tips on how to avoid these consequences, and how to keep their cardio systems healthy. The participants then went into the museum's E-Suite and from there were able to witness the surgery being conducted at Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn as it happened.

During the procedure the lead cardiovascular surgeon, Dr. Antone Tatoes, talked to the students, explaining every step of the operation. The students were allowed to ask questions of anyone in the surgical team at any point of the surgery. They were also allowed to handle the instruments used for the procedure, such as the saw used to cut the breast bone. At one point, knot tying kits were handed out, allowing the students to practice tying surgical knots they witnessed the surgeon using.

After viewing the procedure, the students were allowed to interact with “STAN” a human-like robotic device, the museum would like to integrate into their programing. STAN simulated all bodily functions and several medical problems, allowing the students to diagnose and treat him. The students were surveyed to analyze what they had learned from their robotic experience.

“Live From the Heart” is a program designed to introduce young people to the world of medicine. When asked if anyone in the group would consider a career in cardio surgery, they all agreed that it is an awesome responsibility, holding someone’s heart in your own hand.

Ridge Academy is the innovative primary school located at 2501 W. 103<sup>rd</sup> Street in Chicago, offering classes from first through eighth grade.