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Pharmacy Student’s Brother Inspired Him to Study Medicine

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Helping people through a career in pharmacy is the goal of Joel Sweeney, a junior pharmacy major from Shawnee, Kansas. And, it was a family tragedy that pushed Sweeney toward his career choice.

In 2003, his 10-year-old brother passed away from heart issues. From that point on, Sweeney, who was recently accepted into Cedarville University’s graduate pharmacy program, dedicated his life to caring for people and their prescription drug needs.

At the time of his brother’s passing, Sweeney was just 6 years old. Still, the impact of the loss led Sweeney to follow in his family’s footsteps in medicine. His father, uncle, and sister all are in the medical profession, something Sweeney looks forward to after graduating from Cedarville University’s Doctor of Pharmacy program.

“I wanted to improve what I saw when I was young,” said Sweeney. “I thought about a lot of different medical career options, but I enjoyed biology and I wanted to be able to spend time one-on-one with people and build relationships. Pharmacy allows me to do all of that at once.”

While searching for pharmacy schools online, Sweeney clicked on a link to Cedarville and found it was exactly what he wanted: a private Christian school based on the word of God.

“The Christian background at Cedarville is definitely preparing me for my future,” said Sweeney. “I’m being taught how to think critically, collaborate well and grow in the area of servant leadership. Cedarville’s pharmacy program is based on real-life experience, and you can tell the professors love what they do.”

“Joel is sincere and approaches life with eagerness,” said Dr. Rocco Rotello, associate professor of pharmaceutical sciences and Sweeney’s advisor. “He has a genuine personality and seeks to help others and understand everything there is know about pharmacy. He seeks out wise counsel among faculty and friends, and he desires to have a quality day in every area of his life. Our program is excited to see how he will flourish and become an innovator in his field.”

With four years of graduate school ahead of him, Sweeney is still considering possibilities for the future. He will marry his fiancée, Meagan Grotte, a junior early childhood education major, in May, and is considering several types of pharmacy practice including pediatrics, ambulatory care or Indian Health Service (IHS), which provides health care for Native Americans and Alaskan Natives.

“The more I get to know Joel, the more I realize how well he will fit into the medical field,” said Grotte. “I love that he took his passion for science and applied that to a field where he gets to spend time with and help others.”

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,963 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.