MdBioLab Brings CSI to PHS

By Heidi Rosvold-Brenholtz

Poolesville High School biology students had a unique opportunity to go beyond their typical science studies when the MdBioLab made PHS its temporary home September 27 to October 1. The state-of-the-art research-grade laboratory housed in a forty-five-foot tractor-trailer contains equipment on par with lab settings typically found in bioscience companies throughout the state. This roving CSI is sponsored by the Tech Council of Maryland. Its mission is to help increase science literacy for Maryland’s high school students and to encourage interest in careers in the region’s technology and biotech industries. Maryland is a national leader in the number of biotechnology companies in the state.

This hands-on opportunity for students to see and use equipment county high schools normally can’t afford might just be the stepping stone for future careers in forensic and other similar sciences, according to Patricia Miller, PhD, a faculty member in PHS's science department. Competition for a visit by the mobile laboratory is tough. The MdBioLab visits approximately thirty-four schools each year in different Maryland counties, according to the Tech Council. This year is Montgomery County’s turn for a tour. As a result of a summer science workshop Dr. Miller attended at Towson University in conjunction with MdBioLab, PHS’s application received priority consideration for a MdBioLab visit.

“We just wouldn’t be able to do some of these things in the classroom,” said Dr. Miller, commenting on some of the experiments accomplished during the week-long visit, such as performing DNA-evidence analysis and studying oil-eating microbes. “It’s great to get the kids into a lab like this instead of just going on a field trip.”