

COMMUNITY

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U P D A T E

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“Just by exposing students to college options, we give them a choice.”

Robin Retana, GEAR UP coordinator of Palomar College

FULL STORY ON PAGE 4

Finding Funds for College

Federal Financial Aid Makes Higher Education Affordable

As more Americans attend college than ever before, the cost of a higher education is becoming more affordable due in large part to an increase in federal support. Federal student aid has doubled from \$22 billion to \$50 billion, providing the greatest investment in higher education since the G.I. Bill.

With new and expanded loan and grant programs, tax credits, and work-study opportunities, virtually anyone who wants to attend college now can afford to do so. And millions of student borrowers can benefit from lower fees when they repay their loans on time or

consolidate them into the direct loan program.

New Flexible Repayments

Beginning in the 2000–01 academic year, students will be eligible for a rebate worth 1.5 percent of loans made through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Student Loan Program, saving borrowers \$150 for every \$10,000 in loans.

“We have worked hard to make college more affordable and accessible for students and their families during the past eight years,” said Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley. The U.S.

Department of Education helps fund college costs for more than 9 million students across the country.

Students who consolidate their loans through the loan program also will receive additional savings with a new, low-interest rate that is 0.8 percent lower than what they are currently paying, saving students with \$10,000 in loans more than \$500 each. This lower rate applies to loans consolidated between October 1, 2000 and September 30, 2001.

These new measures add to the current discount offered by the Department that gives a 0.25 percent

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COMMENTS

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How Upward Bound Changed My Life

By Robert Collier, *Jackson, Mississippi*

I am a sophomore transfer at the University of Mississippi with a 3.5 grade point average, majoring in political science with an emphasis in pre-law. After college, I plan to attend law school and later become a corporate lawyer.



I enrolled in the Tougaloo College Upward Bound Program in the summer of 1996, before my first year in high school, hoping to get a head start on college. Not knowing of the impact it would have on my life forever, I entered the program an insecure adolescent and came out a confident and well-rounded young man.

The mentors, tutors, and staff instilled in me the characteristics of a productive and responsible citizen, the respect I have for others, and the dedication it takes to be successful.

Sometimes I wonder what my life and character would be like if I had not attended the program.

As I matriculated into college, I was well prepared to work and think effectively. My grade point average was a 3.6 and due to the ACT preparation program at Upward Bound, I was able to bring my ACT score up from 16 to 22. I was also able to go on an all-expenses-paid trip to California to visit several colleges in the Bay area. Coming from Mississippi to such a diverse area was an opportunity that I had never dreamed of having.

I would encourage any student entering high school to enroll in the Upward Bound Program. It promotes scholarship, strong values, merit, and perseverance. Most importantly, it provides troubled youth with love, opportunities, and support.

Upward Bound, initiated in 1965, is the oldest and largest of federal TRIO programs designed to prepare economically disadvantaged students for postsecondary education. There are currently 772 Upward Bound projects. For more information, visit <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/trio/> or call 202-502-7600.

Resources on the Web

Families and communities can now access a variety of learning resources with the click of a mouse. Many Web sites offer services and information about children and education. A few of the more popular sites are listed below:

www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool

College Opportunities On-Line allows users to find the right higher education options for them by searching through 9,000 colleges, universities, career, technical, and trade schools in the

United States, based on location, program, or degree offerings.

www.cns.gov

The Corporation for National Service (CNS) provides opportunities each year to more than a million Americans of all ages who volunteer to do community service. Students can also help finance their college education and pay back their student loans by volunteering through CNS.

www.ed.gov/free

Federal Resources for Educational

Excellence provides hundreds of resources supported by federal government agencies for teachers and students on subjects that range from an architectural tour of the National Gallery of Art to a tour of the universe through NASA's Observatorium.

www.thegateway.org

The Gateway to Educational Materials—a one-stop access to lesson plans, curriculum units and other education resources for grades pre-k through 12—connects users to over 140 Web sites.

interest-rate reduction to direct loan borrowers who repay their loans through electronic debit accounts.

Combined with earlier improvements in lending programs, these incentives would enable a student to save more than \$1,300 for every \$10,000 in loans.

In addition, teachers who serve in high-need areas will benefit from a new loan-forgiveness provision that waives up to \$5,000 in loans after five consecutive years of teaching at needy schools.

Financing at No Cost

Students can benefit further from grants and scholarships that are based on need and merit and do not have to be repaid. Pell grants now provide up to \$3,300 to low-income students—\$1,000 more than in 1993. In the FY2001 budget, the president has requested an increase to \$3,500 per grant.

Some of the most important innovations in financial aid, however, have been in the form of two tax credits proposed by President Clinton in 1996 and enacted in 1997.

The Hope Scholarship tax credit provides up to \$1,500 in tax relief for the first two years of college. The scholarship pays nearly all of the tuition and fees at an average-priced community college.

A second tax incentive that allows families to claim tuition expenses on their federal income tax is the Lifetime Learning tax credit, which provides up to \$1,000 in tax relief for college juniors and seniors, graduate students, and adults seeking job training. The president's proposed College Opportunity Tax Credit is a significant expansion of the Lifetime Learning Credit and would provide up to \$2,800 in tax relief annually to help American families pay for college.

Work-study programs provide students another option to finance their education. The federal government pays up to 100 percent of the wages of college students who tutor children and, in some cases, adults in

reading and math. Students can work in elementary schools, childcare centers, after-school programs, community agencies, well-child clinics, and libraries.



Contact the U.S. Department of Education for information to help students and their families finance a college education.

By phone, call:
1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243) for information on government grants and loans.

On the Web, visit:
www.ed.gov/studentaid for comprehensive information on federal financial aid programs, including eligibility, loan and repayment options, and other essentials.

www.students.gov—a student gateway to the U.S. government. It offers information on federal and state programs, as well as links to scholarship search engines and databases.

www.fafsa.ed.gov for the fastest way to apply electronically for federal financial aid and renew applications online.

For free publications, call 1-800-4-FED-AID to order the following:

The Student Guide includes an overview of various types of financial support. Also available online at www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/StudentGuide/2000-1/index.html.

Funding Your Education is a step-by-step guide to applying for federal financial assistance. Also available at www.ed.gov/prog_info/SFA/FYE.

Looking for Student Aid explains positive and negative aspects of using scholarship search services and suggests alternatives.



OCTOBER Satellite Town Meeting

Challenging Standards and High Expectations

As challenging content standards help raise the level of excellence in classrooms across the country, participants in the October Satellite Town Meeting will imagine the future of teaching and learning in America.

Broadcast live on Tuesday, October 17 from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time, this satellite teleconference will share examples of schools where teaching and learning are meeting the demands of the new century. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley and his guests will discuss critical issues, including the new recommendations of the National Commission on Mathematics and Science Teaching for the 21st Century; the need for arts and foreign languages; strategies for engaging parents and communities in standards-based learning; high school reform; and the ongoing challenge to ensure high-level reading for all students.

For program and technical information about the Satellite Town Meeting series, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327), or visit registerevent.ed.gov/. Updates are also available from STM-List, a free, read-only service providing current information about programming and teleconferences, which can be joined by sending an e-mail to Satellite_Town_Meeting@ed.gov.

The Satellite Town Meeting is produced by the U.S. Department of Education in partnership with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Alliance of Business, with support from the Bayer Foundation, the Procter and Gamble Fund, and Target Stores.



GEAR UP

Builds Pathways to Colleges for Disadvantaged Youth

GEAR UP—Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs—is a national initiative that teams middle schools and colleges with business and community organizations to put low-income students on a path to higher education. This school year, GEAR UP will serve approximately 750,000 students across the country.

Enacted in 1998 as a program of the U.S. Department of Education, GEAR UP currently provides \$200 million in five-year grants to states and to local partnerships of universities, high-poverty middle schools, community organizations, and businesses.

Focusing on low-income youth, these partnerships provide rigorous courses and college preparation classes, along with opportunities for teachers to obtain more specific training in their content areas. In addition, the partners, which currently number over 1,000 nationwide, provide tutoring and mentoring support and, in some instances, scholarships.

GEAR UP targets students starting no later than the seventh grade because research shows that students who take and pass more challenging courses, including algebra, in middle school are much more likely to succeed in high school and go on to succeed in college.

Interest in GEAR UP has far exceeded available funding, which is why President Clinton is requesting \$325 million for FY2001 to extend the program to 1.4 million students. Of the 678 grant applications last year, only 164 were funded.



GEAR UP also has a number of free publications for mentoring initiatives. Most of these resources are available at www.ed.gov/gearup/, which also includes information on possible funding opportunities. Also, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327) for more information.

Here are examples of ways that GEAR UP programs are making a difference in local communities:

WEST VIRGINIA

GEAR UP funds benefit middle and high school students in more than 40 schools in West Virginia, where only 12 percent of the adult population hold bachelor degrees.

The grant awarded to Fairmont State College is the largest of the 1999 grantees at over \$21 million and the only one made to an institution in West Virginia.

In its first year, nearly 3,000 seventh-graders and over 600 teachers were provided services and academic enrichment activities that included after-school tutoring, campus visits,

parent nights for college and financial planning, and professional development events for teachers.

One of the highlights of the year was the Home Computer Scholarships given to 129 students. Each student's household received a computer, a printer, software, and free Internet access for five years.

"We had parents in tears. They thought there was a catch, but there was none," said Denise Whittaker, vice

Only 47 percent of high school graduates in 1999 went on to college or trade school, compared to 82 percent of high school graduates in 1980.

—National Center for Education Statistics
Condition of Education 1999

president for enrollment management and student affairs at Fairmont.

She says, in addition to the computer fund, the greatest impact of the partnership has been in providing transportation for students who receive after-school tutoring. Many of the students that live in this rural area travel two hours each day to attend school.

The grant is also extending opportunities to educators. This summer, a teacher from each of the schools traveled to New York City for an educational trip focused on multicultural diversity.

For more information on Fairmont

State College GEAR UP programs, call Denise Whittaker toll free on 1-877-385-0896 or visit www.fscwv.edu/gearup.

INDIANA

In the rural community of Orange County, Indiana, GEAR UP will reach 1,325 seventh-graders through a partnership among local schools and businesses, and Indiana University.

“Usually this kind of program comes to urban areas, but we have the same kind of problems, the same things that get the kids derailed,” says Amy Drake, project coordinator, “so it’s really exciting to do something on a small scale but with a large impact.”

The county is looking to raise student achievement at its three junior-senior high schools—Orleans, Paoli, and Springs Valley—by awarding mini-grants to teams of educators, parents, and business partners that will steer a School Improvement and Innovation Project.

pension. One school with an enrollment of just over 400 had more than 100 suspensions and expulsions last year.

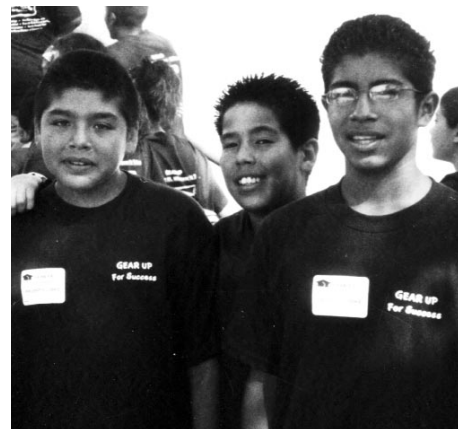
Parent involvement is also at the center of Orange County’s plans to equip students for higher education. Parents will take training classes to give workshops in math and science for other parents, for which they will receive a small stipend.

On Saturdays, honor society students from Indiana University will serve as mentors, providing academic enrichment activities that tie to their majors. As the role of the university unfolds, there are plans for the Indiana business school to cosponsor a business-education summit and for the admissions department to host campus visits.

For more information about GEAR UP Orange County, contact Amy Drake at 812-723-1122 or visit <http://gearuporange.org>.

ing, a math lab, and classes for reading, public speaking, and computers.

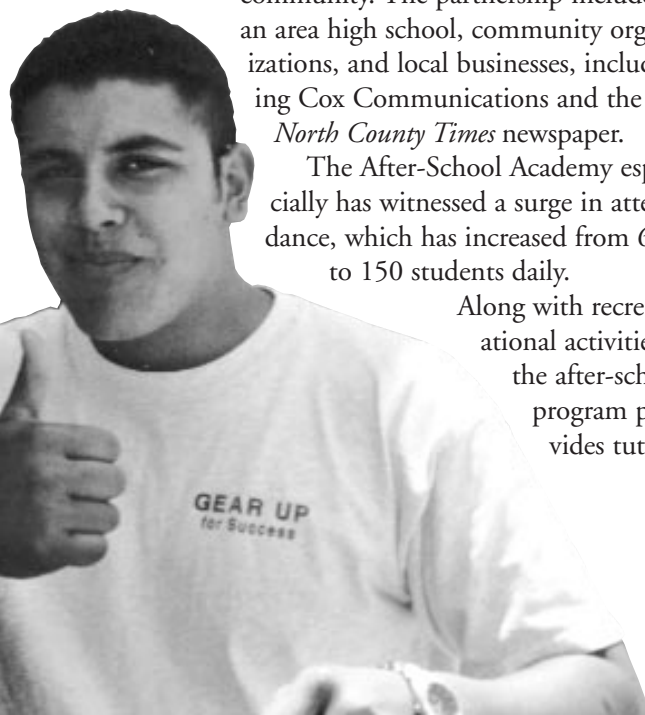
San Marcos Middle School is on a year-round, four-track system to accommodate the growing number of students, which PC GEAR UP coordinator Robin Retana says presents logistical challenges for the program. PC GEAR UP must run each event at least twice and sometimes as often as four times. Both English and Spanish are spoken at all student and parent events.



Low-income high immediately enroll school, compared high-income students.

s, U.S. Department of Education,

In another effort to keep students on track for college, GEAR UP Orange County initiated an early intervention program to tutor students at risk of dropping out of school because of sus-



CALIFORNIA

Having served 400 students in its first year, the GEAR UP program administered by Palomar College in San Marcos, California, will reach the entire population of 1,400 students at San Marcos Middle School for the second year of the grant.

The Palomar College (PC) project has received tremendous response from its largely Hispanic and partly rural community. The partnership includes an area high school, community organizations, and local businesses, including Cox Communications and the *North County Times* newspaper.

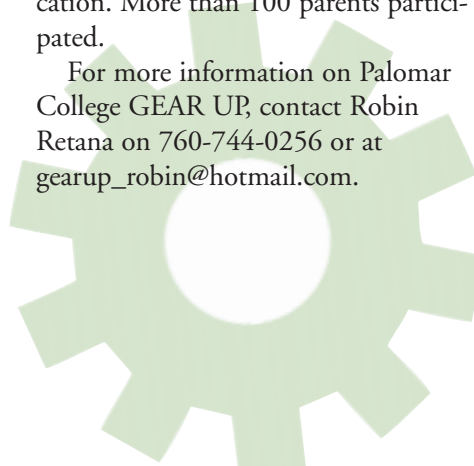
The After-School Academy especially has witnessed a surge in attendance, which has increased from 60 to 150 students daily.

Along with recreational activities, the after-school program provides tutor-

The partnership with Palomar College has afforded students a glimpse into university life along with campus visits to other colleges in the University of California system. “Just by exposing students to college options, we give them a choice,” adds Retana. The program also includes SAT-9 workshops and recently added a college-level class called “Preparing for College,” for which eighth graders earn half a credit.

As part of its outreach efforts, which includes home visits, PC GEAR UP has a parent institute that sponsored an eight-week program designed to strengthen family involvement in education. More than 100 parents participated.

For more information on Palomar College GEAR UP, contact Robin Retana on 760-744-0256 or at gearup_robin@hotmail.com.





PARTNERSHIP

for Family Involvement in Education

A coalition of more than 6,000 business, community, religious and education organizations nationwide. To join the Partnership, call 1-800-USA-LEARN or visit <http://pfie.ed.gov>.

Chicago Students Latch Onto a Star of Excellence

Every day of the school year, The Black Star Project is in Chicago area schools working to improve the quality of life in the African-American community through education and economics. The project encourages students to value hard work and self-discipline, develop confidence, and strive for academic excellence.

Since 1996, The Black Star Project has mentored more than 30,000 sixth-through eighth-graders and will serve more than 75 public, private and faith-based schools in the Chicago area this fall. It is funded entirely by proceeds from membership fees and fundraising drives.

The project includes the "Celebrity Readers" initiative to encourage primary school students to read and teaches students of all ages the importance of how to earn, save and invest money while opening interest-bearing



Actor Danny Glover joins Jackson (left) and students for a mentor session.

savings accounts.

Some of the most important work done by The Black Star Project has been in the area of college preparation. Statistics show that African-American males are more likely to drop out of college in their first year. A program called "The Wall" helps students get past the obstacles that hinder them from succeeding in their freshman

year. More than 1,200 students and their parents have taken this seminar over the past three years.

The Black Star Project also sponsors college fairs for students in the eighth grade and guides these students on what courses to take in high school to prepare them for successful college enrollment.

"It's time-out for the excuses. It's time-out for those techniques that have not worked in the past," says Phillip Jackson, founder of The Black Star Project. "Some of what is called 'the minority education gap' is a gap in effort, a gap in planning, and a gap in implementation." Jackson is also chief for education initiatives for the city of Chicago under Mayor Richard Daley.

For more information about The Black Star Project, call 312-842-3527 or e-mail Blackstar1000@juno.com.

Ford Motor Company Distributes \$1 Million in Scholarships

Every time a new Ford or Lincoln-Mercury vehicle is sold or leased in selected markets, a portion of the proceeds goes to a fund that provides \$1 million worth of college scholarships. Sales from eight participating dealerships in Texas, California, and Florida, help fund the Ford Salute to Education program providing scholarships for nearly 1,000 high school seniors.

"One thing I really like is that Ford recognizes student contributions to the community and academic performance, and rewards them through these scholarships," says award recipient Natalie Trevino, who is a freshman studying physics at Texas Lutheran College.

Another Ford scholarship recipient at an awards ceremony last year in San Diego, California, won a 1999 Ford

Ranger in addition to the \$1,000 aid.

The application deadline for the scholarship is in February, and dates vary for each location. For specific information on the Ford Salute to Education program in Texas, visit www.salutetoeducationtx.com, or call 210-225-3353 to also learn more about the program in San Diego, California, and Miami, Florida.

America's Promise Prepares Kids for College and Life

General Colin L. Powell is leading a crusade to help young people build the character and competence they need to become successful adults. Representing America's Promise: The Alliance for Youth, Powell speaks for nearly 1,000 partners—from corporations to congregations to communities. All of these partners have made promises to provide youth with five key supports: caring adults; safe places; a healthy start; training in marketable skills; and opportunities to serve.

In fulfilling its commitment, as a partner, the University of Houston—Downtown reaches more than 1,500 children through its programs, including enrichment courses for potential first-generation college students. “The teachers expected a lot from you,” said one student participant. “They made

you reach out and think. It gave me the opportunity to know what college is all about.”



General Colin L. Powell

Corporate partner America Online includes resources for college preparation in its “AOL@SCHOOL” project, which reaches beyond college preparation to include school-friendly Internet software and other resources. The Web site www.school.aol.com compiles information on admissions, financial aid, and the college search.

Through the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, the Department of Education is expanding its collaboration with America's Promise.

To find out more about America's Promise and its partners, visit www.americaspromise.org, or call 1-888-55-YOUTH (1-888-559-6884).



ABOUT *our* PARTNERS

Parenting Coalition International (PCI) is a “clearinghouse of clearinghouses” for parenting resources that support greater family involvement in children's learning. PCI President Belinda Rollins (at right in photo)

created the organization in 1994 after Congress passed the “Parents Day” bill. “I saw a lot of frustration among parents. A lot of them just need good information, and I saw a need to bring it all together,” said Rollins.

PCI has a membership of 300 researchers, authors and parenting organizations with whom it partners to provide activities, meetings, publications, and broadcasts about parent involvement.

This fall PCI published its fifth edition of *The ABCs of Parent Involvement in Education*, in collaboration with the Washington, D.C. ABC-TV affiliate WJLA-TV and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory. The publication features the advice of experts from across the country and offers tips for parenting children from birth to the college age. Next month, PCI will launch *The Art of Parenting*, a free one-page newsletter.

For more information, visit www.parentingcoalition.org, or call 202-530-0849.



CALENDAR

October 12

Lights On Afterschool, a national awareness event, spotlights after-school programs across the country. To register as an event site, call 202-296-9378, or visit www.afterschoolalliance.org.

November 2–4, St. Louis, Mo.

National Middle School Association Annual Conference 2000. Call 1-800-528-NMSA (1-800-528-6672), or visit www.NMSA.org.

November 12–17, Houston, Texas

National Association of Partners in Education Conference, “Navigating Partnerships for Student Success.” Call 1-800-924-6273, or visit www.partnersineducation.org.

November 13

National Parent Involvement Day third annual observance. Call 202-530-0849, or visit www.parentingcoalition.org.

November 29–December 2, Reno, Nev.

National Community Education Association 35th Annual Conference. Call 703-359-8973, or visit www.ncea.com.

December 13–15, Washington, D.C.

Concludes a series of fall conferences for *Improving America's Schools*. The Partnership will hold a meeting and materials fair on the third day. For more information, call 1-800-203-5494. Visit www.ncbe.gwu.edu/iasconferences, or e-mail ias_conference@ed.gov.



ANNOUNCEMENT

The *Afterschool Action Kit* offers resources and tips for organizing after-school programs in local communities. For a free copy, call 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) with order number EA0117K, while supplies last. For an online version, visit www.afterschoolalliance.org/asaction.html.

While these resources are relevant to the mission of the Partnership for Family Involvement in Education, they are available from a variety of sources and their presence here does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.

IN THIS ISSUE:



Charting a Course for College

Because of the growing importance of a college education in today's rapidly changing economy, the U.S.

Department of Education—the largest supplier of student financial aid in America—has designed a number of resources to ensure students are prepared for higher education. The following publications are free-of-charge and can be ordered through the Department's Publications Center, by calling 1-877-4ED-PUBS (1-877-433-7827) with the order number below, while supplies last. Most of these resources are available online.



Think College? Me? Now? is a guide for middle and junior high school students, covering the benefits of a college education, academic preparation, and financial aid, among other topics (EN0154P).
www.ed.gov/pubs/CollegeMeNow/

Getting Ready for College

Early is another resource for parents of junior high and middle school students (EE0083B).
www.ed.gov/pubs/GettingReadyCollegeEarly/.



Preparing Your Child for College helps parents of high school students prepare children academically and plan for the costs of a college education. Available in both English (EE0104P)

and Spanish (EEA0017B).
www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare.

Also, check the Web site www.ed.gov/thinkcollege/ for a host of resources on educational opportunities beyond high school for learners of all ages.

For more information on preparing for college, call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1-800-872-5327).