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GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME CASH TO FULFILL YOUR COLLEGE DREAMS!

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PHOTO/GRAPHIC PROVIDED BY THE YMCA OF GREATER CINCINNATI

“Where is the money going to come from to pay for college?” That is a pressing question facing soon to be high school graduates. “When kids do graduate, the most daunting challenge can be the cost of college.” said U.S. President Barack Obama in his 2012 State of the Union address.

There is light at the end of the tunnel...college financial aid.

Let's face it, applying for college financial aid can be confusing. It can be downright scary! But, thanks to local youth serving and education organizations, applying for financial aid has been made a little easier.

“There is so much college information out there that it's really hard for parents and families to process it all.” says Toni Miles, Executive Director of The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati Achievers Program, in an AboutGreaterCincinnati.com phone interview. “...it really is important for those of us who work with this every day.... come together and provide opportunities, a safe place where parents can come and ask questions and get all the information they need and get this done.”

For a second year, several groups with a common interest in the success of our future are coming together to help those in Hamilton County who are interested, get



Need cash for college? Free FAFSA events will help students and families get over the “getting cash for college” hurdle. The series of events occurring throughout February 2012 culminates with College Goal Sunday at Cincinnati State and Technical College on February 12, 2012.

through the maze of financial assistance for college. Several organizations have partnered to help students and their families get over the “getting cash for college” hurdle and submit for the first round of financial aid awards for 2012. In 2011, over 310 students benefited from the partnership's efforts. This year, the partnership is looking to assist even more in completing and submitting their FAFSA.

A goal of the partnership - remove barriers for students interested in applying for college aid.

To that end, organizations are working together to present a series of events where knowledgeable, professional volunteers will help students and their families complete AND submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

FAFSA? What's that?

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid or FAFSA is the federal application that is required annually to receive federal financial aid including the Federal Pell Grant, student loans, and need-based state grants. “The FAFSA is the single

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GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME CASH TO FULFILL YOUR COLLEGE DREAMS! (CONT'D)

most important application required for most scholarships, grants, loans and federal assistance.” states an event press release. “Studies show that a student is 50% more likely to attend college when they complete the FAFSA.”

Think completing and filing a FAFSA is an intimidating task and the process challenging? You don't have to go at it alone if you take advantage of the free FAFSA events in the area! Since demand for the free FAFSA assistance is expected to be high, pre-registration is encouraged for all of the events which are open to the public. Walk-ins welcomed.

“I attended [FAFSA] workshops when my daughter was a junior and a senior in high school.” Anita Montgomery of West Chester (OH) tells AboutGreaterCincinnati.com about her experience at similar events. “They were very helpful and helped explain the process and give info to help explain how to complete the form.”

The free FAFSA filing initiative is underway and began late January 2012 at the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. At these events, experienced volunteers are on site to not only assist completing the FAFSA but also submit/file the paperwork, answer questions, etc.

The free FAFSA effort culminates with College Goal Sunday, a national event to provide financial aid assis-

tance, which will be held locally at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College.

“We've been doing this [College Goal Sunday] for at least two years...” Robert White, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College Communications Coordinator and Media Relations, tells AboutGreaterCincinnati.com. “... our staff members are using their time and talents to help families -- mainly those that haven't sent a child to college before -- reach their goals.”

Want assistance filling out and submitting a FAFSA? Here is a schedule of free, confidential FAFSA events offered by the partnering organizations in February 2012:

Visit <http://learngrowthriveymca.com>

to get info and pre-register for

- ◆ February 11, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.
Su Casa Hispanic Center
7036 Fairpark Avenue; 45216
- ◆ February 12, 2012 at 1:30 p.m.
Tryed Stone Church
5550 Reading Road; 45237

Visit www.ohiocollegegoalsunday.org

to get info and pre-register for

- ◆ February 12, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.
College Goal Sunday
Cincinnati State Technical and
Community College
Welcome Center/Main Building
3520 Central Parkway; 45223

When attending any of the FAFSA events, be sure to bring:

- ◆ Student's IRS 1040 tax return and W2;
- ◆ Student's parents' IRS 1040 tax return and W2;
- ◆ Student's social security card;
- ◆ Student's driver's license;
- ◆ PIN (see www.fafsa.ed.gov); and
- ◆ Any other benefit and income information;

Locally, partners in College Goal Sunday and College Prep FAFSA events are the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati State Technical and Community College, Cincinnati Youth Collaborative, Ohio State Scholars, Project Grad, Gear Up, Upward Bound, Greater Cincinnati Foundation, Cincinnati Public Schools, We Need MORE (CPS initiative), University of Cincinnati, College of Mt. St. Joseph, Parents of Public Schools, Hobsons, and the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County.

For those who think college is financially out of reach, “RETHINK IT”! Sign up today for free FAFSA assistance and get on the road to fulfilling your dreams.

More information about other important FAFSA events including free tax filing at <http://learngrowthriveymca.com>

For other Greater Cincinnati locations hosting College Goal Sunday, visit www.ohiocollegegoalsunday.org

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