



# LOSFA LOOP

December 2014 Edition

Volume 7-12

## From the Desk of the Executive Director



"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Maya Angelou

Dr. Sujuan Boutté Those of us who proudly serve in the college access field touch the lives of students and families every minute of every day. Sometimes those interactions are pleasant and sometimes they are difficult; making the quote above a sort of 'True North' to abide by.

Although I deem this quote to be a constant truth, I believe it to be especially present during the holiday season. This is a time when the air is literally filled with sounds, sites, scents and songs that evoke memories for us all. One such song for me is the tune My Favorite Things. No matter what time of year I hear it, it evokes for me the spirit of the holidays; demonstrated best by the simplest things in life which often bring us the greatest joy.

So here's my take on My Favorite Things. A tribute to all of the wonderful staff here at LOSFA and the wonderful folks in the field like you who help us help families feel that access to college is possible instead of insurmountable...

My Favorite Things (LOSFA Style)  
Staff out on field trips and students out with them  
Colleges helping our students to reach them

Families with questions who email or ring  
These are a few of my favorite things

Apps being completed for college submissions  
Students all pumped up regarding admissions  
Recruiting emails- How we love that ding  
These are a few of my favorite things

FAFSA forms tell schools your family's condition  
Go Grant awards that improve your position  
TOPS data runs that go smoothly in spring  
These are a few of my favorite things

When the glitch comes  
When negativity reigns  
When I'm feeling sad  
I simply remember my favorite things  
And then I don't feel sooooo bad!

Happy Holidays!

Best,  
S.

P.S.

"Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."

Maya Angelou

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## LOSFA Conducts Annual STS Training for Non-Public School Counselors

Representatives from LOSFA's Public Information and Communications (PIC) division once again conducted workshops for non-public school personnel who use the Student Transcript System (STS). These workshops were open to anyone who uses STS or supervises someone who uses STS, and anyone who would find it useful to know how STS works.

The 2014 STS Workshops were conducted by Ebony Holmes and Kate Herke on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> at Louisiana Technology Park. There were a total of 55 attendees at this year's workshops that ranged from beginner level to advanced.

Topics covered included the usual data entry techniques but also addressed upcoming changes to STS like the addition of a Student Privacy Consent Flag to indicate whether the school has received parental consent to share a student's transcript information needed for TOPS eligibility processing, postsecondary admissions for seniors, and evaluation of progress toward earning a TOPS award for underclassmen.

Attendees were offered their choice of three classes:  
**Beginners/Intermediate Half-Day Classes:** appropriate

for beginners and for intermediate users who wanted or needed a refresher.

**All-day Classes:** appropriate for beginners, for users unsure of their expertise, and for users who are familiar with STS on an everyday basis, but not experienced beyond the basics, as well as users who wanted or needed a refresher. This class included practice with one's own school's data.

**Advanced Classes:** appropriate for intermediate and advanced users. Included instruction (primarily about non-standard situations), practice, and discussion, with emphasis on solutions one school uses that may be useful to other schools.

Feedback from workshop attendees has been positive as many of the counselors feel that the training gained in the workshop is crucial to correct data entry for the students at their school.

One counselor stated, "The class is extremely helpful, especially for new folks! It was the only way that I learned what I needed to do when I came my first time two years ago. I had no one here at school to help train me."

## 2015 Marine Corps Scholarship Applications Will Be Accepted January 1 – March 1

The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation provides scholarships to children of Marines and Navy Corpsmen who served with Marines attending accredited community colleges, colleges, universities, and vocational/technical institutions, to those who have demonstrated financial need, giving particular attention to those whose parent has been killed or wounded in action. The needs-based scholarships provided are \$1,500 to \$40,000. Applications will be accepted from January 1, 2015 to March 1, 2015 for the 2015-2016 academic year. Visit [www.mcsf.org](http://www.mcsf.org) for a list of qualifications and to apply.

"For 52 years the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation has been honoring Marines and Navy Corpsmen who served with Marines by educating their children. Louisiana has a proud heritage of service in all branches; particularly the Marine Corps and we award too few scholarships in Louisiana," said K. Patrick Sirmon, Col. U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.). "We have a goal of increasing scholarships awarded to Louisiana post high school students by a factor of three in the next two academic years," he added.

## LA GEAR UP State Officer Training

In November, 14 student state officers, parents, and staff attended Explorers' Club State Officer Training at Louisiana State University at Alexandria. During this training, participants engaged in activities to improve the clubs at their respective schools and to engage in leadership and team-building activities. An additional emphasis was placed on professionalism and leadership, including various points of etiquette and appearance.

Program Coordinator Timenee Thomas worked with students on program and position-specific officer responsibilities. State officers will play key roles in implementation of spring 2015 events such as College Goal Sunday, the LOSFA FLY Tour, and the annual LA GEAR UP Explorers' Club Conference and Leadership Summit.

Upon return to their high school campuses and under the supervision of LA GEAR UP Explorers' Club sponsors, State Officers are expected to exercise their leadership skills and use every opportunity to share their knowledge about college access strategies to help

fulfill the LA GEAR UP mission to increase the number of students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Specific action steps include the creation of social media accounts on Instagram for photo updates and activity highlights and a LA GEAR UP 2015 Facebook group for fellow classmates and high school students. These avenues will provide a means to direct communication, motivation, and support to students across the state.

### State Officer Take-Aways

I enjoyed the help with public speaking—*Alexicia Thomas.*

LA GEAR UP helps me feel like college is inevitable for me—*Dorian Campbell.*

I learned a lot about how to improve myself as a leader—*Patrick Martone.*



**Timenee Thomas, LGUP Program Coordinator; Tireka Cobb, LGUP Assistant Director; and Latrell Armstrong, FOCUS Training Consultant, guided LGUP State Officers through their leadership training.**



**State Officers Left to Right: (seated) Ariel Battley, Alexicia Thomas; (standing) Dorian Campbell, Patrick Martone, Oscar McClain, Jr. Not pictured: Destiny Payton**

## Important End-of-Year Deposit Deadline Reminders for START Account Owners

With the busy Holiday Season approaching we want to remind you of some important tips.

If you wish to open a new account for a new beneficiary and take advantage of the 2014 state tax incentives, new applications with deposits must be submitted prior to 3:00 p.m. on December 31 in order to be processed timely. The deadline for receipt of START Saving Account deposits to be eligible for exclusion from income reported on your 2014 Louisiana state tax return is 3:00 p.m. CST on Wednesday, December 31. Deposits must be received, not simply postmarked, by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance or the START Saving program by that date. Deposits not received by December 31 may not be deducted until your tax return for 2015 is filed. You **DO NOT** have until April 15 to deposit to your account and still deduct it from your 2014 state income taxes.

Deposits should be payable to the START Saving Program and may be delivered in one of the following ways:

1. Regular mail addressed to START Saving Program, Post Office Box 91271, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9271. Please allow mail time since deposits must be received and not simply postmarked.
2. Overnight delivery addressed to 602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802.
3. In-person START deposits can be made in the Mobile/Manchac Room on the first floor of the Galvez Building (602 North Fifth Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802) from 8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. **Monday, December 29 through Wednesday, December 31.** Parking is available in the Galvez

Parking Garage on North Street and parking can be validated by the START representative who assists with your deposit.

4. Online payment for START account deposits is now available on the START Saving website, [www.startsaving.la.gov](http://www.startsaving.la.gov). Account owners are now able to log into their START account, select the "Deposit Forms" option from the menu, and click the "Online" link to complete and submit your form online. You may add funds to your active account(s) by using your credit or debit card or by using an electronic check drawn on your bank or credit union account by using PayPoint. To make a PayPoint deposit, start by entering the desired deposit amount for each account you choose, **up to five (5) accounts**, and click the **Total Accounts** button. After clicking either **I wish to use my credit card** or **I wish to use my checking account** buttons, you will receive specific instructions on how to complete the transaction.

**NOTE:** If credit card payment is selected, the account owner will be charged 1.83% of the total amount deposited, while electronic check account debits are charged only 23 cents per transaction.

On or before the third week of January, START account owners will be mailed a notification of total deposits made in 2014 to be used for state income tax return filing purposes.

Should you have any questions or need assistance, please call us (800-259-5626). As always, we do appreciate your continued support of the START Saving Program.



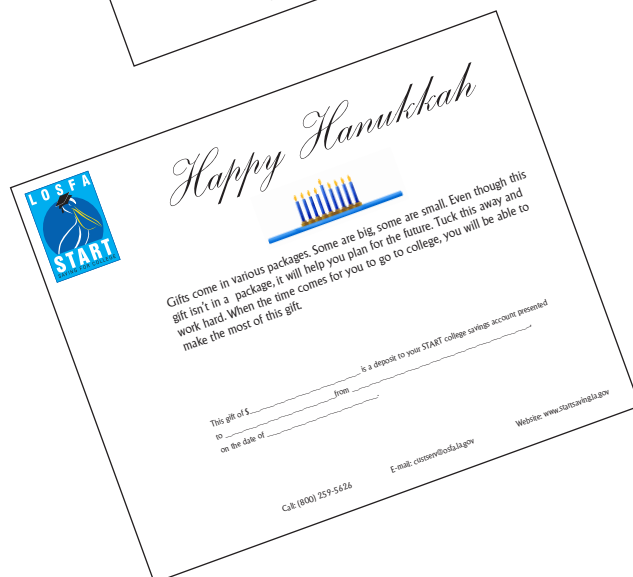
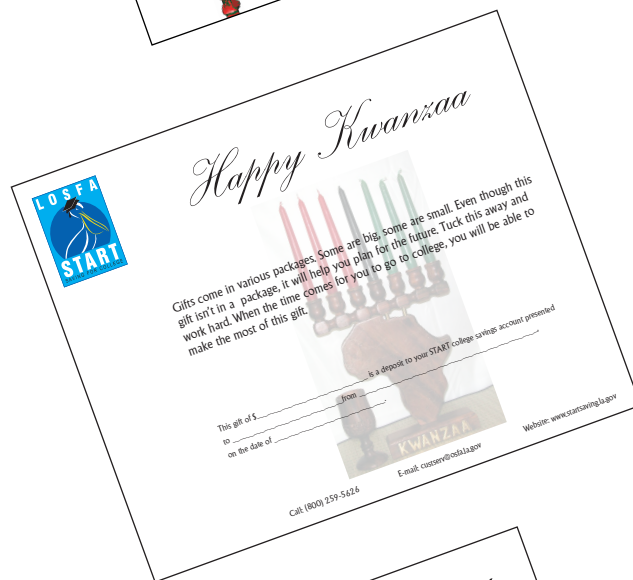
# Give the Gift of Higher Education

Are you looking for the perfect gift for a loved one this holiday season? Consider giving the gift of higher education through a START Saving account!

With the rising cost of education, students find themselves with more expenses than scholarships and grants can cover. This is why it is so important to start saving for a child's college education early.

You can contribute to your loved one's future education this holiday season by opening a START Saving account in their name or donating to their existing account. To open an account, simply complete the application online at [www.startsaving.la.gov](http://www.startsaving.la.gov) or download, print, and complete the paper application and submit it to: START Saving Program, P.O. Box 91271, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9271.

Printable gift certificates are available at <http://www.startsaving.la.gov/savings/forms.jsp>. Show a special child in your life how invested in their future you are today by giving them the gift of higher education!



## LOSFA's Social Media Sites



<http://www.facebook.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.twitter.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.youtube.com/LOSFA1000>



<http://instagram.com/LOSFA001>



For more information, contact the  
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance:

By Phone: 800-259-5626

By E-mail: [custserv@la.gov](mailto:custserv@la.gov)

By Mail: P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202

Web Address: [www.osfa.la.gov](http://www.osfa.la.gov)

For submissions, opinions, or comments for the LOSFA LOOP,  
please contact Gus Wales at [Gus.Wales@la.gov](mailto:Gus.Wales@la.gov).