



LOSFA LOOP

February 2012 Edition

Volume 5-2

From the Desk of the Executive Director

As we transition into the month of February, which is Financial Aid Month as well as the month that includes College Goal Sunday and America Saves Week, it is only appropriate that the beginning of this month also marks the conclusion of our statewide media tour to promote the comprehensive college access and career planning portal, Louisiana Connect (<https://www.louisianaconnect.org>).

As we mentioned in last month's LOOP, the Louisiana Connect portal has been launched and is available for students and parents to activate their accounts. Student accounts are for the purpose of allowing students to access all the components of the portal, while parent accounts allow them to track the activity of their children. During the latter half of January, our staff made appearances at high schools in Alexandria, Shreveport, Monroe, New Orleans and the Houma/Thibodaux area to assist students with the activation of their accounts. Most of these workshops were covered by local television and print media. In addition to these events, our staff also conducted television and radio interviews in Baton Rouge, Lake Charles and Shreveport. Hopefully, you were able to view the coverage of one of the Louisiana Connect workshops or interviews in your local area. Thanks to the cooperation and dedication of several guidance counselors and our Trailblazers, by the end of the media tour we had almost 3000 active accounts. That's a very promising start, but we realize that we have a long way to go before every student in Louisiana from the 8th grade through the 12th grade has an activated Louisiana Connect account along with an accompanying parent account.

Although many dedicated guidance counselors and teachers have conducted special workshops in their schools to assist students with the activation of their accounts, students can also activate their accounts on their own without assistance. The only information needed is name, social security number and school name. It's that simple and once the account is activated students can begin building their own network of colleges and employers, receive personal alerts about scholarships and other opportunities, search and compare colleges and learn how to finance post secondary education. It's also just as simple for parents to activate their accounts. Once a parent account is activated, parents can track their child's progress against important college and career planning activities, search for colleges, compare costs and make recommendations to their children. We're confident that when every eligible student and parent has their Louisiana Connect account activated, it will revolutionize college access and career development in the state of Louisiana, but it's going to

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LOSFA Outreach



America Saves Week is an annual opportunity for organizations to promote good savings behavior and a chance for individuals to assess their own saving status. LOSFA is once again participating, with an online Savings Quiz that will direct participants to the START Saving page and LOSFA's online cost calculator.

Additionally, there will be Financial Literacy presentations at LSU-Alexandria and a START Saving presentation at Slaughter Elementary School that is open to the public on Feb. 23rd.

For more information, go to <http://americasavesweek.org/>.



February is Financial Aid Awareness Month

The purpose of Financial Aid Awareness Month is to let Louisiana students and their families know that a college education is not just a dream, but is in fact attainable. There are numerous sources of financial aid available. February is the key time to begin the application process in order to be considered for all aid programs offered at state and federal levels.

A listing of LOSFA's scheduled events for February can be found at our Web site at <http://www.osfa.la.gov>. If you would like to schedule an event, please contact Jerri Mack at 1-800-259-5626, ext. 7583.

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take a collective effort on the part of all concerned Louisiana residents to make this a reality.

If you're a high school guidance counselor for students from the 8th grade through the 12th grade, please make sure that you organize workshops in your school to assist students with the activation of their account and familiarize them with features of the portal. Feel free to contact a LOSFA representative to conduct the workshop if that is your preference. I also realize that many of my financial aid colleagues make presentations to high school students and parents. Please mention Louisiana Connect during your outreach activities and stress the importance of account activation. Feel free to contact our office for promotional materials or to let us know how we can assist you. Finally, I believe that we can have an impact beyond the boundaries of our professional roles. Some of you reading this may not have much contact with high school students in your professional capacity, but perhaps you belong to a faith-based or some other community organization that places you in contact with high school students and their parents. Please make them aware of Louisiana Connect as well. Again, feel free to contact us for promotional items or to schedule a presentation.

I am going to thank all of you in advance for your assistance in making Louisiana Connect a success and the unparalleled college access and career planning resource for Louisiana's children.

--Melanie

First year of John R. Justice Loan Repayment Program a success

LOSFA has successfully completed its first year administering the John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program and has increased the number of awards available for the next year. The increase in number of awards was made possible by an increase in funding for the program. LOSFA chose to slightly adjust the size of the award in order to assist more people.

The John R. Justice Program provides loan repayment assistance for state and federal public defenders and state prosecutors who agree to remain employed as public defenders and prosecutors for at least three years. Last year, six public defenders were awarded \$10,000 each and 12 prosecutors were awarded \$5,000 each.

This year, the number of available awards has increased to 7 for public defenders at \$9,308 per award and 13 for prosecutors at \$5,012 per award. Below is a table showing how those awards will be distributed.

The application is now available and the deadline is April 30, 2012. To check eligibility requirements or to apply, go to <http://www.osfa.la.gov/> and click on the LOSFA Programs button. The John R. Justice program is listed there. There is no paper application for the award, the online application is the only accepted application.

How Funds are to be Awarded and Disbursed in 2012

Circuit	Public Defenders	Assistant District Attorneys
First Circuit	1	2
Second Circuit	1	2
Third Circuit	1	2
Fourth Circuit	3	5
Fifth Circuit	1	2
Total Awards	7	13
Award Amounts	\$9,308 per award	\$5,012 per award



The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) Presents:



A Special Financial Aid Call-In Night

Monday, February 6, 2012
6-9 p.m.

For one night only, we will extend our financial aid hotline hours
as a convenience to students and their parents.

Dial **800-259-5626, Ext. 1012** (toll free)
or **219-1012** (Baton Rouge local)

or **Chat Live on Facebook** (www.facebook.com/LOSFA)
to obtain the answers to your questions relating to all forms of
financial aid for higher education.

LOSFA staff will be manning the phones and computers to help you
with such varied topics as:

- *Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)
- *Other Scholarships and Grants
- *Student Loans
- *START Saving Program
- *Assistance in Completing the
Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

We Hope To Hear From You!
(800) 259-5626, Ext. 1012 or (225) 219-1012

MEDIA TOUR PROMOTES LOUISIANA CONNECT

Representatives from LOSFA and ConnectEDU toured the state last month, spreading the news that the Louisiana Connect portal is open for business.

David Roberts, LOSFA's Assistant Executive Director for Marketing and Outreach, and Brian Dennis, ConnectEDU's Louisiana State Director, traveled the state, hosting media events at area high schools. Those schools included Bolton High School in Alexandria, CE Byrd High School in Shreveport, Carroll High School in Monroe, and Dr. Martin Luther King Charter School in New Orleans. The pair also participated in local radio and news programs.

Students and professional school counselors had positive things to say about the portal.

Nancy Kennedy, Bolton High School counselor, said the new portal will save counselors a great deal of time on paperwork and gives the students greater ownership of their academic future.

Since students will be able to track their progress from any Internet capable device, the portal "gives them information and I think the more that they have, the more [easily] they can make responsible decisions."

Nick Collins, a senior at CE Byrd High School, also applauded the new portal.

"I think it's really cool," he said. "It integrates every part of your academic high school spectrum. You have your grades there, you have your test scores there. Then, you have your community service, your clubs, sports, anything you do, everything is all together in one place."



Above, Trailblazer Nick Collins, helps other students navigate the Louisiana Connect portal.



He's most excited about the scholarship search. "You can sort it in so many way. I just searched a scholarship for bowlers and had over 20 results."

Bolton High School Trailblazer Jordan Phillips praised Louisiana Connect. "I'm most excited about the scholarship findings and where you can go and do career matches,"

Left, Carroll High School Guidance Counselor Linda Smith and LOSFA's David Roberts oversee students activating their Louisiana Connect accounts.

She said. "That's very helpful for me in my stage of the process." The information about scholarship and financial aid opportunities has helped ease her mind, she said.

"I've been very nervous about the whole paying-for-college process, but because of all the things out there that are available to me I'm very excited."

Jerri Mack, PIC Supervisor, said former Trailblazers and school counselors helped make the events successful.

"We appreciate all their efforts promoting the Louisiana Connect portal and helping Louisiana students and parents activate their accounts," she said.



Right, Bolton High School Guidance Counselor Natalie Burgess assists her students in registering their Louisiana Connect accounts.

Links to media coverage of the Louisiana Connect Tour

<http://www.kalb.com/category/185185/video?clipId=6667077&autostart=true>

<http://www.thetowntalk.com/article/20120123/LIFESTYLE/201230304/Louisiana-Connect-helps-high-schoolers-plan-college-careers>

<http://www.shreveporttimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2012201250325>

FLY Tour returning

LOSFA's highly successful FLY Tour is returning for another year of informing and inspiring Louisiana students to think carefully about their financial futures.

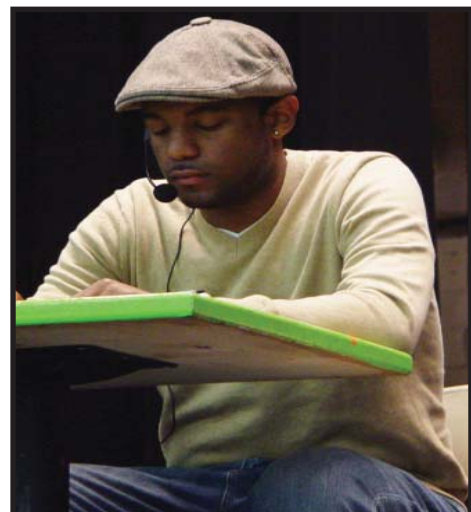
The tour combines music, poetry and drama to get students to consider the impact their economic decisions have on their lives and academic careers. The tour touches on creating savings, credit card debt and financial responsibility.

FLY Tour Schedule

- ▶ Tuesday, March 27 - 9am Grace King HS (Metairie)
- ▶ Saturday, March 31st - 9am - SLU Upward Bound program
- ▶ Monday, April 2 - 9am CE Byrd HS (Shreveport), 1pm Bossier HS (Bossier City)
- ▶ Tuesday, April 3 - 9am Carroll HS (Monroe)

More dates will be added.

Photos from 2011's FLY Tour include (right) Public Information and Communications Representative Britt Kelly providing musical accompaniment to various skits, (below left) Default Prevention's Lisa Baumer and (below right) Public Information and Communications Representative Justin Marshall in a skit.



College Goal Sunday



MMM... A Money Sundae?

Louisiana College Goal SundaySM is an event that will help you melt away the tedious process of filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in order to obtain financial aid. Free on-site assistance from area college financial aid professionals will be provided.

For more information, including what you need to bring, visit us at our Web site.
www.osfa.la.gov and click on College Goal Sunday

Louisiana College Goal SundaySM Locations 2012 February 26th, 2012 2 - 4 P.M.

Alexandria
Louisiana State University - Alexandria

Baton Rouge
Baton Rouge Community College
Southern University

Bossier City
Bossier Parish Community College

Hammond
Southeastern Louisiana University

Houma
Fletcher Technical Community College

Lafayette
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Lake Charles
SOWELA Technical Community College

Lutcher
Lutcher High School

Monroe
Louisiana Delta Community College

New Orleans
Delgado Community College - West Bank Campus
Dillard University
Xavier University

Tallulah
Louisiana Delta Community College

Check our Web site for additional site locations and specific room locations at each site.

The College Goal Sunday program was created by the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. and with supplemental support from Lumina Foundation for Education.

Louisiana College Goal SundaySM is sponsored by the Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) and the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) with funding from a Lumina Foundation for Education grant.

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



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



www.Flickr.com/LOSFA



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

By Phone: 800-259-5626, Ext. 1012

By E-mail: custserv@osfa.la.gov

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

Web Address: www.osfa.la.gov

For submissions, opinions or comments for LOSFA LOOP, please
contact David Roberts at droberts@osfa.la.gov.