



LOSFA LOOP

April 2011 Edition

Volume 4-4

From the Desk of the Executive Director

Spring is here! Its abundant beauty was extremely evident as I traveled to and from Monroe last week for the LASFAA conference. In spite of my eagerness to see my financial aid brethren, I was not looking forward to the long drive. My dread soon turned to elation as my journey was breathtakingly beautiful! Mother Nature had painted a magnificent landscape of wildflowers, azaleas and dogwoods under a crystal blue sky, just to elevate my gloomy mood it seemed. If I may be so bold as to make a rather hokey correlation -- as you prepare for the busiest time of the financial aid processing year, I hope you "take time to smell the roses" and see the beauty in some small everyday routine tasks that you would otherwise dread. The students you are helping may not take the time to say thank you, but their success depends on you and there is true beauty in that!

As I returned to the office after the conference, the LOSFA staff immediately began to work on a plan to deliver more user function and training on the LOSFA Award System. I am happy to report that soon the financial aid offices will receive information on how to submit questions and constructive recommendations that we can turn into training opportunities, likely through a webinar that can be viewed from a desktop computer with internet access. We are excited to have this

technology and think it will be an efficient and effective tool.

Encouraging news for Louisiana was recently reported by the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Louisiana followed only Washington D.C. in the greatest increase in average income per person over the last decade (2000-2010). Over that period, the average annual income per person in Louisiana grew by 63% to \$38,446. The national average saw a 34% increase. There is no doubt that we are still a high poverty state, but as incomes increase for our residents, so too may the opportunity for saving for college and paying for higher education expenses to defray the need for borrowing. As tuition and other college expenses continue to rise, our hope is that families realize that financial aid alone will not be enough, and will be proactive in their preparation to financially meet these challenges. LOSFA has the tools and we continue to be Louisiana's first choice in college access.

--Melanie

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LOSFA Outreach

Earl E. Start at Baton Rouge Parents Magazine's 16th annual Camp Fair & Summer Vacation Expo

Earl E. Start was on hand, along with members of LOSFA's Financial Literacy and Development section and Public Information and Communications division, at the 16th Annual Camp Fair and Summer Vacation Expo held at the Paula G. Manship YMCA on March 26, 2011.

The Expo, sponsored by Baton Rouge Parent's Magazine, is designed to provide children and parents with information on summer activities. Representatives from various camps, learning centers, recreational education programs, summer schools, tutorial services and athletic camps were present for face-to-face meetings. LOSFA representatives emphasized the importance of starting to save for college early, providing information to parents as Earl entertained the children.



If you'd like to meet Earl E. Start, and get information about the START Saving Program, come to the Kid's Healthy Fun Fest at the Mall of Louisiana in Baton Rouge on April 30, 2011. Earl will be there from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Dates to Remember

April 7: General Financial Aid presentation for Holy Family Homeschoolers: East Baton Rouge Library, Bluebonnet Branch, 7 p.m.

April 12: TOPS and FAFSA presentation for homeschoolers: ULL, Lafayette, Bayou Bijou in the Student Union, 1 p.m.

July 10 - 12: Trailblazer Camp: Northwestern State University, Natchitoches

July 17-19: Trailblazer Camp: Nicholls State University, Thibodaux



**APRIL IS
NATIONAL FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH!**

NCAN Regional Meeting

On March 25, LOSFA hosted the National College Access Network (NCAN) Regional Meeting in New Orleans at Delgado Community College. College Access representatives from across the region gathered to share information and discuss topics including Engaging Policy Makers in Collaboration, Developing a Statewide Framework for College Access and What is Meaningful Data and How to Measure it.

One of the highlights of the meeting was a dramatic performance by LOSFA's Financial Literacy for You (FLY) Team. It was the debut of the program developed by LOSFA and Big Buddy of Baton Rouge's Wordplay Teen Writing Project. LOSFA representatives and Big Buddy participants used music, drama and poetry to convey the importance of financial literacy. The production toured the state, stopping at high schools and community venues.



LOSFA participants in the FLY Tour included (left) Public Information and Communications (PIC) representative Justin Marshall, (right) PIC's Britt Kelly and (below left) Default Prevention representative Lisa Baumer. LOSFA PIC representative Kendra Woods is pictured in the center of the group photo below.



LASFAA Spring 2011 Conference

The Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) held its Spring 2011 Conference the week of March 23rd with a theme of "Setting the Pathway for Success." Several LOSFA representatives attended, presenting on numerous topics.



Jennifer Guhman (below right), Financial Literacy and Development (FLD) representative, presented at the new aid office "Boot Camp" on student eligibility, specifically on how to resolve conflicting information. She and Sigmund Morel (left) also manned a display table featuring LOSFA programs available to colleges and universities. These programs included TOPS retention seminars and financial literacy workshops.

Morel also took part in a discussion panel about how LOSFA communicates with students. The panel focused on primary (mail and email), as well as secondary (social media) ways of contacting students.

LOSFA Executive Director Melanie Armhein updated the assembled group on LOFSA programs, including the new Award System.



Jump\$tart to announce poster contest winners

The winners of the Jump\$tart 2011 Young Money Super \$tars poster contest have been decided and will be announced by the Louisiana Jump\$tart Coalition next month. Winners of the contest are being awarded a START Saving account to begin saving for their college educational.





LOSFA's Social Media



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



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



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



www.Flickr.com/LOSFA



<http://www.louisianatopsprogram.com/>

Pam Abbott retiring at the end of the month



Loan Administration's Pam Abbott has been working for the state since she was 16, but the days until she's no longer a state employee are numbered.

She will be retiring at the end of the month, after 32.5 years of state service, 16 of which were with LOSFA.

While she is ending her LOSFA tenure as Loan Administration Supervisor, she began working on the now-defunct Dayvox system making collection and pre-claim calls. She also worked on skip-tracing, tracking down borrowers when the agency had no contact information for them, and with default prevention.

When it comes to the Loan Division, she has worked in "every section but Claims," she said. While she'll miss the people she works with, she's looking forward to retirement.

"I anticipate being very busy during my first year of retirement and plan to spend a lot of time with my huge family," she said, "especially my mother and grandchildren. I also plan to remember how to relax and enjoy some traveling, take photography classes, gardening, swimming, and fishing! Oh, maybe I'll even sleep past 7 AM once in a while."

Of her work experience, she said, "Being a 'people person' means I love people, and every job I have ever had was working directly with people from all walks of life. In my early career days while employed at Earl K. Long Hospital, I became a volunteer with social services taking in many battered women and children. Now I am looking into the possibility of being a part-time volunteer for another worthy program along those lines."



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