



# LOSFA LOOP

August 2010 Edition

Volume 3-8

## From the Desk of the Executive Director

On Wednesday, July 21st, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced that the Facebook site hit a half-billion active users. As impressive as this is, the only reason I was interested in this statement is because our Trailblazers (Page 3) also told us that this is their primary mode of communication. Whenever our agency conducts our Trailblazer camps we always learn as much from them as they learn from us. For many of them, it's their first opportunity to be on a college campus, live in a college dormitory, make new friends from other parts of the state and acquire a thorough knowledge of financial aid and college access overall. Despite this, what we provide them is probably miniscule compared to how much they help us with our mission of promoting and providing college access. They had mentioned how easily we could communicate directly with them via Facebook last year, but we didn't have an actual Facebook page which would allow them to prove this assertion. This year's camps were the very first ones that we held in which our Facebook page (<http://www.Facebook.com/LOSFA>) and the College Knowledge section of our website (<http://www.osfa.la.gov/collegeknowledge>) were in place for them. I'm proud to say that the actions of our Trailblazers certainly confirmed what they had been telling us because after the Trailblazer camps, the number of people who "like" us on Facebook increased by 153 and the activity on our Facebook page increased by an overwhelming 4,400%. We also have close to 200 newly created profiles on our College Knowledge site. This impact is strictly from the students who attended our Trailblazer camps. Once school begins later this month and they encourage their peers to access these sites as well, the possibilities are endless. Our goal is to have over 15,000 people "like" us on Facebook by the end of this calendar year.

Whether we have 500, 15,000 or 100,000 people

"like" us on Facebook is meaningless if we don't recognize it as a major avenue in helping us to realize our vision of being "Louisiana's First Choice for College Access". This is why, as students get ready to go back to school later this month, we will launch the very first of several promotional campaigns that will originate within our network of social media sites which include our Twitter page (<http://twitter.com/losfa>), Youtube account (<http://www.youtube.com/LOSFA1000>) and Flickr Page (<http://www.flickr.com/losfa>) in addition to our Facebook page and the College Knowledge section of our website.

Our first campaign will be "Get Ready to Go" in which we will provide students at every level (middle school, high school and college) with pertinent information and useful tips for preparing to return to school, staying on track to get TOPS, keeping their TOPS award, etc. Continue to check our social media frequently for more information. If you "like" us on Facebook or "follow us" on twitter you will receive updates automatically. You can even receive automatic updates via your mobile phone by texting "follow losfa" to 40404.

Despite some initial trepidation on the part of the education community to embrace social media, it's obvious that our college students and potential college students have already embraced it fully. In order to effectively communicate directly with them, we feel the need to strategically embrace it as well. If it helps us to inform more students and parents about the START Saving Program, provide early college and

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## LOSFA Outreach



LOSFA Public Information Representative Scott Burke took part in Career Day at Laurel Elementary, part of the New Orleans Recovery School District. He spoke to parents, teachers and students about the benefits of the START Saving Program.

## Trailblazer Camp 2010 successful

Nearly two hundred high school juniors and seniors attended Trailblazer Camp in July, gathering information about financial aid to take back to their schools and share with their peers.

The camps, held this year at Northwestern State University and Nicholls State University, are offered free of charge by LOSFA. Students are nominated by their school counselors and spend two days immersed in workshops, presentations and activities focused on educating them about the college financial aid process.

In return, they agree to share what they learn with other students at their high schools.

This year, campers were introduced to the interactive College Knowledge section of the LOSFA Web site. Students created profiles on the site, which is geared toward providing additional college access information, as well as serving as a place students can pose and have questions answered.

The address is <http://www.osfa.la.gov/collegeknowledge>

The following four pages contain photographs from this year's camps. Additional photos will follow shortly in a special Trailblazers edition of the LOOP. Additionally, all the photos from this year's camps will soon be available on LOSFA's Flickr site, [www.Flickr.com/LOSFA](http://www.Flickr.com/LOSFA)

# TRAILBLAZER CAMP 2010

*Northwestern State University  
July 11 - 13*







# TRAILBLAZER CAMP

## 2010

*Nicholls State University  
July 18 - 20*







## New Name, Same Great Service

LOSFA's School and Lender Services (SLS) is no more. The section has been refocused and renamed Financial Literacy and Development (FLD), in response to the elimination of loan originations under the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP).

Sigmund Morel, FLD Supervisor, said "Most of our college outreach was through the financial aid offices. Since the elimination of FFELP lending, we are expanding to target other groups and offices on campus. We will still offer the same programs with the exception of guaranteeing new FFELP loans and Entrance/Exit counseling."

The products and services FLD offers to schools and organizations include:

- ▶ TOPS Retention Seminars - Offered to college students to make sure they understand what they need to do to keep the scholarship for 4 years
- ▶ Loan Workshops (twice a year) - Offered to financial aid officers to give them updates on federal and state programs
- ▶ Financial Literacy Training - Provided by a team, made up of representatives from FLD, Public Information and Communications, Default Prevention and Collections, that offers interactive training to middle school students, high school students, college students and professional students on 8 topics: Banking, Credit, Credit Cards, Budgeting, Debt, Money Management, Identity Theft and Student Loans
- ▶ Default Prevention Seminars - Offered to college students to give them information on how to stay out of default and the consequences of default
- ▶ Debt Management - Tips provided to college students on how to manage and pay down debt
- ▶ Customer Service - Offered to school professionals to give them tips on providing excellent customer service to students, parents, employees, etc.
- ▶ Marketing the START Saving Program - Marketed to businesses, organizations and individuals

Instead of focusing attention on the Financial Aid office, FLD will expand its offerings to other areas on campus such as Admissions, Student Services, Student Government Associations and Student Assistance Programs.

Anyone who would like to take advantage of any of the programs offered by FLD should contact LOSFA at (800)259-5626, ext. 1012.



### TOPS awarded to St. Angelo

Lexie St. Angelo, left, daughter of Scholarship and Grant's Leslie St. Angelo, has been awarded the TOPS Honors Award.

Lexie graduated from St. Joseph's Academy with a 3.8 GPA and a 27 ACT score.

Her mother has worked for LOSFA for 27 years. "I finally get to take advantage of what I do," she said.

## LOSFA Staff Attends NCAN Advisor Training

In state fiscal year 2009-2010, LOSFA's Public Information and Communications (PIC) Division made college access presentations at 300 Louisiana schools. In an effort to expand on that outreach, several PIC staff members attended the Advisor Training conducted by the National College Access Network in Washington, D.C. on July 27th and 28th. Among the items covered at the training were Early Awareness Advising, Standardized Testing and Adult Learner Opportunities. One of the highlights of the training was the introduction and demonstration of the new simplified FAFSA including the IRS data retrieval tool. More details about the new simplified FAFSA will be included in the September issue of the LOSFA LOOP



*LOSFA PIC representatives (left to right) Scott Burke, Justin Marshall, Kendra Woods and PIC Director Gus Wales took part in NCAN Advisor Training in Washington D.C. Not pictured is LOSFA Executive Assistant of Marketing and Outreach, David Roberts.*



and career awareness to middle school students, increase the number of high school students who qualify for TOPS and decrease the number of college students who lose their TOPS award then it's definitely a worthwhile venture. If we were to ignore this phenomenon we couldn't call ourselves "Louisiana's First Choice for College Access".

--Melanie



## 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.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](mailto:custserv@osfa.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 LOSFA LOOP, please  
contact David Roberts at [droberts@osfa.la.gov](mailto:droberts@osfa.la.gov).

