



From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dr. Sujuan Boutté

"He knows not his own strength that hath not met adversity."

Cesare Pavese

The students we work with who beat the odds of adversity, overcome obstacles and excel inspire us each and every day. LOSFA is proud to announce that for the second year in a row a student from our program was selected to attend the Beating the Odds Summit hosted by First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. Mr. Samps Taylor and Mr. Khristopher Hobbs represented LOSFA in The House!!

Mr. Taylor joined over 130 students sponsored by 66 non-profit organizations. Attendees came from across the country representing urban, rural, foster, homeless, special needs, and under-represented youth who overcame substantial obstacles to persist through high school and make it to a post-secondary institution. They participated in workshops, panels and break-out sessions aimed at sharing tools and strategies for successfully transitioning into college.



Mr. Taylor is a participant in LOSFA's intensive mentoring program, Aspire to Inspire, which is an initiative led by Mr. Khristopher Hobbs.

You met Mr. Taylor in the April 2016 LOOP. He was featured in the article entitled Community Partnerships Lead to Success.

Mr. Taylor was then a senior at St. Helena College and Career Academy (SHCCA). We are proud to announce that since that time Mr. Taylor has received a full band scholarship to Alcorn University. While we are sad to lose him to the state of Mississippi we are proud of his accomplishments.

At this year's Beating the Odds Summit, the First Lady joined a panel moderated by YouTube personality, Tyler Oakley, U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King, Jr., a current college student, and musical artist Jidenna, who also performed for the students.

Here's what Mr. Taylor and Mr. Hobbs had to say about the experience:

"The experience that I had today at the White House was one that I will never forget. It exposed me to a new understanding of politics and I had a chance to socialize with many other students who are preparing for the next phase of their life." **Samps Taylor**

"When you refuse to become a product of your environment, you can be anything. I am a living example of that and try to instill that belief in each mentee from Aspire to Inspire. Our mission is to produce confident, tenacious, open-minded mentees who discover their own truth and become proud, productive leaders of society. Samps Taylor exemplifies our mission every day and truly showed it in our Nation's Capital! The Beating the Odds Summit was absolutely amazing! Being surrounded by over 130 of the nation's upcoming

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leaders was inspiring and humbling. The networking we did, powerful messages we heard, and the beautiful White House that we saw, still has me in awe. On top of that, we had the opportunity to meet First Lady Michelle Obama and Jidenna. I am still smiling ear to ear. The work we do at LOSFA every day by promoting and providing college access to students across the state makes a difference! Our mentoring program, Aspire to Inspire, is just one of many great programs LOSFA has to offer. That is why so many students across the state consider us as their first choice for their future." **Khristopher Hobbs**

When Mr. Hobbs returned he received a thank you email from Mr. Taylor. Here is an excerpt:

"Thanks for the amazing trip Mr. Hobbs, it was an experience that I will never forget and I appreciate the amount of confidence that you have in me. I just wanted to say thanks and that I made it home safe. You are more than a mentor and I can't say thank you

enough. Here is what I have learned:

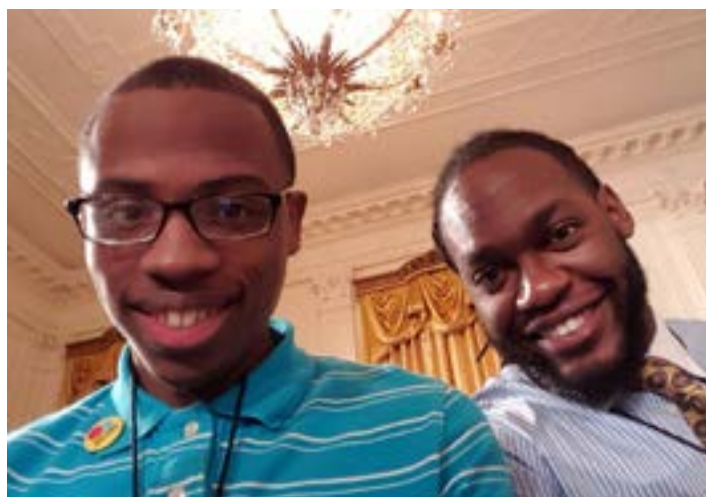
- I pray more for a better understanding of life.
- Always stay humble and remember to develop a relationship with the people who give you knowledge in life.
- Always remember that it's ok when you do not know something but what makes you an even better person is when you allow yourself to learn from others.
- Seize the moment and make the most of life.
- I have also learned that you are in my corner and that you will be here for me forever."

The students we serve are our 'True North'. We learn as much from them as we hope they do from us. We are as privileged to know them as we are proud! Keep reading because we've got pictures!!

Best-
S.

Beating The Odds Summit

Khristopher Hobbs and Samps Taylor meet First Lady Michelle Obama during their visit to Washington D.C. for the Beating The Odds Summit.



Samps Taylor and Khristopher Hobbs snap a selfie in The White House.

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Beating The Odds Summit *(continued)*



Left: Khristopher Hobbs and Samps Taylor visit the Lincoln Memorial during their stay in Washington D.C.



Above: Khristopher Hobbs stands below the Presidential Seal in the White House.



Left: Khristopher Hobbs and Samps Taylor wait for the First Lady to begin speaking at the Summit.

It's Time for Baton Rouge to Complete to Compete



For the city of Baton Rouge, the challenge is on. In May, the National College Access Network (NCAN) selected Baton Rouge as one of 22 cities to receive the FAFSA Completion Challenge Grant. Each city chosen received up to \$55,000 in grant funding to strengthen urban postsecondary

ecosystems by increasing FAFSA completion among high school seniors. In addition to the grant funding, all of the cities will compete for 3-5 prize awards totaling up to \$300,000. These awards will be allocated based on the cities who showcase the most creativity and innovation, the largest growth rate, and the highest completion rate among all of the cities. Both the grant funds and the monetary prizes are to encourage the cities to increase their FAFSA completion rates by at least 5 percent. LOSFA and its partners, however, have set an even higher completion goal for the city of Baton Rouge. The goal of Baton Rouge's campaign, Complete to Compete, is to increase the completion rate by 10% for the current year. To do this, the campaign partners will utilize the grant funds to implement innovative and effective initiatives across the city to encourage FAFSA completion.

LOSFA, a program under the Louisiana Board of Regents, will partner with the Louisiana Department of Education, the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, Louisiana Education Loan Authority (LELA), Career Compass, the Baton Rouge Area Chamber of Commerce, and College and Career Transitions Coordinators of Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC). The partners will collaborate to implement programs and initiatives that encourage FAFSA completion in the city of Baton Rouge. The first initiative that will be implemented in the Complete to Compete challenge is a texting

campaign designed to keep students and their parents well-informed. Weekly text messages will be sent out to provide information on deadlines, updates, and events associated with the campaign. In addition to the texting program, media and marketing material will be designed and displayed across the city of Baton Rouge to create awareness of the challenge as well as to encourage participation.

Both the texting and the marketing efforts will be utilized to highlight the events and activities associated with the challenge. First, to further encourage competition and FAFSA completion, high schools in East Baton Rouge Parish will be having their own FAFSA completion competition within Complete to Compete. Schools will compete against each other for prizes ranging from gift cards to pizza parties. Next, within the participating schools, LOSFA and its partners will conduct FAFSA completion workshops utilized to aid students in the various aspects of completing the FAFSA. These workshops will occur throughout Complete to Compete, even during events such as Match and Fit Workshops and Louisiana College Application and Access Month (LCAAM). Also, the partners will collaborate with LSU, Southern University, and BRCC to host FAFSA completion events on college campuses. Not only will students benefit from the campus events by completing the FAFSA, but they will also benefit from the increased exposure to campuses of their prospective college choices. Finally, another notable initiative for Complete to Compete will be FAFSA Fridays, which will be held monthly beginning in October. FAFSA Fridays will be held at public locations such as libraries, hospitals, and state agencies. Parents will be encouraged to attend FAFSA Fridays to complete their portion of the FAFSA and receive assistance from LOSFA or one of its partners.

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It's Time for Baton Rouge to Complete to Compete *(continued)*

The FAFSA Completion Challenge Grant and Baton Rouge's Complete to Compete competition are intended to strengthen the ecosystems of urban college campuses across the state. For the city of Baton Rouge as well as all other cities in Louisiana, the

programs will serve as much more. In fact, both the grant and competition will serve as a sign of what is to come for Louisiana: a push to achieve record-setting FAFSA completion rates.

Attention High School Counselors and Digital Media Instructors in Greater New Orleans!



You are invited to join GNO, Inc. for its IT Everywhere program beginning this fall. The semester-long program will focus on the introduction and implementation of technology in the workplace. Participants will visit an array of employers ranging from city government agencies to the Saints and Pelicans sports teams to better understand the region's increasing demand for talent within the technology sector. Each participant must commit to and attend at least three of the four employer visits. In addition to the visits, participants will attend virtual lectures from notable guest speakers utilizing the GNO Nepris platform, and a free license will be included. Participants will be required to view at least four of the eight Nepris sessions.

If interested in participating in the IT Everywhere program, e-mail Ashley Aleman at aaleman@gnoinc.org.

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

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

Web Address: www.osfa.la.gov

For submissions, opinions, or comments for the LOSFA LOOP,
please contact Gus Wales at Gus.Wales@la.gov.