

*Displaced students
get funding*

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LOSFA LOOP

July 2008 Edition

Volume 1-3

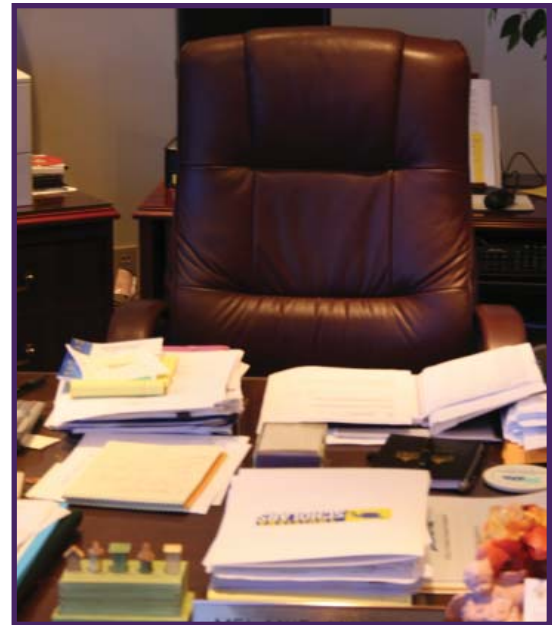
From the desk of the Executive Director

I ended last month's editorial by informing everyone about the College Goal Sunday Recognition Luncheon for members of the College Goal Sunday task force, site coordinators, volunteers and supporters. This month I want to start by thanking all those who attended that luncheon at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette last week. In addition to recognizing everyone who helped to make Louisiana's very first College Goal Sunday event an overwhelming success, everyone who attended provided invaluable input and suggestions for insuring that the College Goal

Sunday event in February 2009 will be an even greater success and a major component of the LOSFA mission: to promote and provide college access to Louisiana residents. If you were a volunteer at the 2008 College Goal Sunday event, but unable to attend the recognition luncheon, just look for the LOSFA table at the upcoming LASFAA Conference in October so we can bestow upon you a token of our appreciation for your hard work and dedication.

One of the attendees at the recognition luncheon was Dianna Frank, Louisiana GEAR UP Coordinator. LOSFA also worked with Ms. Frank this summer

*Where's
Melanie?
She's off to
the
Capital
again, mak-
ing sure
Louisiana
students
have the
money they
need for
college.*



as we participated in the LA GEAR UP camp experience. Read about this program which benefitted nearly 200 students in this issue. Also in this issue: learn a little more about our Scholarship and Grant Division. Everyone seems to be familiar with one schol-

arship they administer, TOPS, but there are so many other programs they are responsible for that you may be surprised. Also, find out which Louisiana resident and LSU graduate was accepted into a program which denies over

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Legislature approves TOPS funding for eligible hurricane displaced students

A bill that makes it possible for students who were enrolled in grades 9-11 in an eligible Louisiana high school on August 29, 2005, who evacuated to another state following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and subsequently graduated from an out-of-state high school in 2007, or will graduate from an out of state high school in 2008 or 2009 to return to Louisiana for postsecondary education and allow them to receive the state's Taylor Opportunity Program for

Students (TOPS) merit-based scholarship has been approved by Gov. Bobby Jindal and the State Legislature

Current contact information for all eligible students is being collected by LOSFA.

Students who were enrolled in the 9th, 10th or 11th grade in an eligible Louisiana school at the time of Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita and are considered displaced due to the storms may qualify for a TOPS award



based on the alternate residency and academic requirements that were made available to displaced students

who graduated from high school in 2006. For more information on who is considered a

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In every issue of LOSFA LOOP, we will highlight a specific division within the agency. This issue we highlight:

Scholarship and Grants

With three divisions -- TOPS Initial Eligibility, Special Programs and TOPS Renewals -- and only eleven staff members, the Scholarship and Grants division of LOSFA administers TOPS, Go Grant, Dual Enrollment, the Rockefeller Wildlife Scholarship, and SLEAP and LEAP grant programs. This fall, an additional program, the Allied Health Educator Loan

Forgiveness program, will be added.

That's in addition to monitoring other programs -- the TOPS Teacher Award and the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship -- that are no longer funded for new applicants, but have students still benefiting from the programs.

So, what does it mean, to administer these



Director - Scholarships/Grants

Juanita Rougeau



Initial Eligibility

Ron Landaiche and Susan Bohall. Not pictured: Leslie St. Angelo



Special Programs

Caliesha Clark and
Bonnie Lavergne. Not pictured: Miracle Davis.



Renewals

Sarah Davis, Cynthia Hathaway and Belinda Tate.
Not pictured: John Bell

programs?

In the case of TOPS, it means determining who is eligible by collecting student information from schools and ACT. It means sending out award letters, maintaining a master roster of eligible students, processing payments, following up on students' academic progress, determining continuing eligibility, sending out letters of cancellation or suspension, processing refunds and -- well, "making sure everything happens," Bonnie Lavergne, with Special Programs, said.

The work involves a lot of money and students -- \$15 million and and 10,000 students for the GO Grant alone last year.

For some programs, like TOPS and the GO Grant, S&G processes residency affidavits.

For other state programs -- all those things the division does for TOPS? It does all that for them too- except for determining who gets the funding.

That decision is left up to the schools. Everything else falls on S&G's shoulders.

Some programs, like SLEAP and LEAP, are federally funded and require additional reporting. Although they are not large programs, the federal grants affect several thousand students at 82 Louisiana schools.

Last year, the SLEAP grant was approximately \$500,000 and the LEAP grant was funded at approximately \$1.4 million.

While the Rockefeller Wildlife Scholarship is awarded to only 25 to 30 new students each year, all the work to administer the program is done manually. "It's a very hands-on process," Juanita Rougeau said. Initial application, transcript review, posting of academic information for merit review, processing promissory notes, award letters, retention evaluation, working with Default Recoveries on defaulted scholarships -- Scholarship and

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displaced student and the alternate eligibility requirements, go to the LOSFA website at www.osfa.la.gov/comehome.htm.

Students who meet this description are asked to complete the information form located on the website. Students who are unable to access the Internet should call 1-800-259-5626, ext.

1012 for further instructions.

In addition to completing the information form on the LOSFA website, potentially affected students who graduated from an out-of-state high school in 2007 or 2008 are urged to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by as soon as possible. The FAFSA is used by Louisiana as an applica-

tion for the TOPS scholarship. July 1, 2008, is the Louisiana FAFSA completion deadline for students seeking funding from TOPS for the 2008-2009 academic year. The FAFSA can be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Gearing Up for Academic Success



LOSFA representatives took part in La Gear Up camps across the state this year. Above, Scott Burke and Jerri Mack man the display table, while at right, Jerri Mack gives a financial aid presentation to students and parents.

Nearly 200 students received information about programs administered by LOSFA this summer, as part of the La Gear Up camp experience.

A series of leadership training and educational camps held on college campuses across the state, La Gear Up provides students with an opportunity to delve

deeper into academics, as well as further prepare themselves for a successful college career.

LOSFA representatives were on-hand to provide

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Employee Highlight

Deputy executive director's son admitted to Duke medical school

The Duke University Medical School received over 5,500 applications for their incoming fall 2008 class. Out of those applications, only 673 were selected to receive an interview. From those interviews, only 108 students were admitted. You don't have to be a medical school student to realize that less than 2% of the applicants were admitted, thus representing a pretty exclusive and elite group. For this reason, LOSFA wants to extend our congratulations to LSU graduate Harold Boutte Jr. for his acceptance into Duke University Medical School.

At the age of 18 Harold decided that he wanted to go to medical school and originally attended Xavier University in New Orleans. "Xavier had the best turnover ratio as far as getting African Americans into medical school and students in general getting into medical school. They beat out Harvard, Yale and Stanford" remarked

Boutte. Despite his fondness for Xavier, hurricane Katrina forced him to transfer to LSU, but he didn't feel like it was to his detriment. "Xavier was a fine institution with a great faculty and then hurricane Katrina came...LSU is underappreciated. It's the flagship of the south in general, especially in Louisiana. It is somewhere you can progress from" In fact, in addition to God, his parents and his own work ethic, Boutte credits LSU with preparing him for admission to Duke, "I can honestly say that when I was in a room on

the very last day of interviewing, out of all 20 people I was the only one from a state school. I was in a room full of people who came from Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton and Cal-Berkley...When I returned for the second-look weekend, out of that room of twenty people I was the only one who got in! State school!"

In addition to the sound education that Boutte received at two Louisiana institutions, he is also grateful to the unique financial aid resources that Louisiana afforded him. "TOPS is wonderful",

he remarked, "That's why so many people who graduated with me and could have gone anywhere, stayed here. We have a great talent pool here in Louisiana...We can get and are getting into very elite universities. We are breaking stereotypes one-by-one. People from Louisiana, even named Boudreaux and Thibodeaux can get into Ivy League schools and clean up shop!"

Boutte already has extensive experience doing medical research having worked in five different labs over a six year period. In fact,

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Harold Boutte, Jr. poses with his mother, Sujuan Boutte, LOSFA's Deputy Executive Director. He was recently accepted into Duke University's medical school. Less than 2 percent of applicants are admitted.



Gear Up, continued from Page 4

information about TOPS, TOPS Tech, and Early Start.

The Gear Up camps are free for students in grades 7 -12, although enrollment is limited.

The camps offer tutoring, leadership training, math and science enrichment and college-life experience.

Topics of the camps include crime scene

investigation, biology exploration, sports medicine, bridge construction and engineering and technology and digital movie production.

For more information about La Gear Up, go to www.latech.edu/lagear-up or call 1-800-795-1475.

***Boutte, continued from Page 5***

his ultimate goal is to practice for a while in a chosen field to be determined later and then retire doing research on diabetes and other diseases. When asked what he would say to any student looking to pursue the medical field he offered this advice, "The number one thing to avoid is complacency. Complacency is what lulls you into a sense of comfort. Complacency is the thing that draws you into that sense of security, false as it may be. Complacency is the thing that makes you weak."



Future physician Harold Boutte, Jr., son of LOSFA Deputy Executive Director Sujuan Boutte.

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Grants does all that.

And it will be doing the same this fall for the new program -- Allied Health Educator Loan Forgiveness.

While the details are still being worked out on that program, Rougeau feels "it will be administered essentially as we have to do with the Rockefeller scholarship."

The division is in the process of developing procedures for the program now. Following eligibility guidelines established by Board of Regents, S&G will track academic progress of awarded students, track the completion of degree requirements as well as keep track of students after graduation to make certain they fulfill the employment requirements. And if they don't, the division will have to work with collections to make certain the money is paid back.

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98% of its applicants! Finally, in the June issue of the LOSFA LOOP we were seeking students displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and subsequently graduated from an out-of-state high school in 2007 or 2008, or will graduate from an out-of-state high school in 2009. We were seeking these students in anticipation of a bill that would potentially make it possible for these students to return to Louisiana for post-secondary education and allow them to receive the TOPS scholarship. Since that last issue the Louisiana legislature has approved this bill. Make sure and read the article on page 2 of this issue regarding information on this bill and what affected students need to do.

As always, thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter and your comments are very valuable to us.

-- Melanie



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.