



LOSFA LOOP

May 2015

Volume 8-5

From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dr. Sujuan Boutté

"If one advances confidently in the direction of one's dreams, and endeavors to live the life which one has imagined, one will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."

-- *Henry David Thoreau*

Thoreau's words resonate as I think about the journeys completed by many of the students we serve and the new beginnings that await them. Our jobs in college access and success provide us with the privilege of nurturing, facilitating and supporting our students' dreams. The beautiful thing about dreams is that they are only restricted by the limitations the dreamer puts upon him or herself. The beautiful thing about the job that we do is that we have the unique opportunity to facilitate the removal of those limitations.

I truly believe that we gain more from our interactions with the students we serve than they do from our service. It is revitalizing to see dreams in their infancy and minds filled with promise and anticipation. It is gratifying and humbling to see the influence the programs we operate have on the lives and aspirations of our students.

We recently caught up with our GEAR UP statewide officers to get their take on what the program has done for them. If we listen attentively we catch a glimpse of our younger selves in the enthusiasm, optimism and confidence exhibited...

"I have found who I truly am as I was working with Louisiana GEAR UP. I am a leader that likes to serve others and I thank Louisiana GEAR UP for bringing that leadership potential out in me."



Oscar L. McClain
LA GEAR UP Governor
Scottlandville High School
LSU Baton Rouge

"LA GEAR UP has taught me to listen more, talk less, and work harder."



Ariel Battley
LA GEAR UP Lieutenant Governor
Glen Oaks Magnet High School
Southern University and A&M College

"GEAR UP has affected me greatly. I wouldn't have challenged myself and made the changes that I would have needed to help me become a better person. GEAR UP has helped me find my inspiration to be successful in life and I'm very thankful for it."



Antonio Alexander
LA GEAR UP Treasurer
Marksville High School
United States Army

continued on page 2

In this edition. . .

<i>From the Executive Director's Desk</i>	1 -2	<i>529 Day Lunch and Learn Facebook Chat</i>	5
<i>May 11 LA GEAR UP Day at Capitol</i>	3	<i>LA GEAR UP Power of Story Awards</i>	6
<i>LOSFA attends LASFAA Conference</i>	4		

From the Desk of the Executive Director (continued)



"I love LA GEAR UP because of the experiences I have and the people I meet. It has helped me feel like college is inevitable for me."

Dorian Campbell
LA GEAR UP Speaker of the House
Marksville High School
Louisiana Tech University



"My experience with the LA GEAR UP leadership program was great. I feel as if we are getting many things accomplished to help students with a postsecondary education."

Alexicia Thomas
Bastrop High School
LA GEAR UP Secretary of State
University of Louisiana at Lafayette



The Louisiana GEAR UP program has encouraged, enhanced and equipped me with what I need to be successful. At a time when average was my only goal, this program encouraged me to be more than average. With the help of Louisiana GEAR UP (and some extraordinary educators), I have moved from a 2.0 GPA to a 3.871

GPA. I have been enhanced in my overall knowledge and understanding of life. My leadership skills have also been sharpened throughout my time in the Louisiana GEAR UP program. I have learned to excel in coursework, prepare for the future and lead my peers to higher education. Lastly, this program has equipped me with what I need to be successful throughout high

school and beyond. From the ACT prep and college visits to the community involvement activities and leadership trainings, Louisiana GEAR UP has helped mold me into an all-around better student and person. After being in Louisiana GEAR UP for more than five years, I can honestly say that Louisiana GEAR UP has prepared me for college and lifelong success."

Darius D. Spurlock
LA GEAR UP Attorney General and 2015 National GEAR UP ALUMNI LEADER
Scotlandville High School
LSU Baton Rouge

"Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so you shall become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil."

-- James Allen

Never stop dreaming☺

Best-
S.



May 11 is LA GEAR UP Day in Louisiana

Governor Bobby Jindal has proclaimed May 11, 2015, as Louisiana GEAR UP Day in Louisiana.

On that day, from 10 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. in the State Capitol Rotunda, members of the Louisiana Legislature will have the opportunity to meet a number of the outstanding students who have achieved college acceptance thanks to the efforts of LA GEAR UP.

GEAR UP, or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a federal college access initiative providing students and families the support and resources they need for college success. GEAR UP has improved educational outcomes for millions of low-income, minority and disadvantaged students from underserved communities who might be the first in their family to go to college.

To date, LA GEAR UP, administered by the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), has impacted over 20,000 Louisiana students, 17 Louisiana parishes, and 60 Louisiana schools through college and career readiness interventions such as tutoring, mentoring, financial literacy, college scholarships, campus trips, and student academic-year peer leadership clubs.

In the Proclamation, Governor Jindal states, "Whereas Louisiana GEAR UP currently serves 3,000 high school seniors in 30 schools in 12 Louisiana Parishes; and Whereas the State of Louisiana is committed to providing a quality education for all students and helping them to achieve their highest potential, I, Bobby Jindal, Governor of the State of Louisiana, do hereby proclaim May 11, 2015, as Louisiana GEAR UP Day in the State of Louisiana."

Current LA GEAR UP schools include:

Avoyelles High School
Bastrop High School
Broadmoor High School
Bunkie High School
Converse High School

East Iberville High School
East Feliciana High School
East St. John High School
Florien High School
Glen Oaks High School
Iberville Math Science and Arts East High School
Iberville Math Science and Arts West High School
Jeanerette High School
Landry-Walker High School
Mangham High School
Many High School
Marksville High School
Negreet High School
New Orleans Accelerated High School #1 CP
New Orleans Accelerated High School #2 WB
Plaquemine High School
Pleasant Hill High School
Rayville High School
Red River High School
Scotlandville Magnet High School
Tara High School
Union Parish High School
West St. John High School
White Castle High School



Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) Louisiana GEAR UP Program Overview

LA GEAR UP Mission

To increase the number of low-income, underrepresented students who graduate from high school and enter and succeed in postsecondary education

Students
20,000

Historically Supported Statewide

3,000

High School Seniors

Currently Supported in 30 schools across 12 parishes

Funding

\$3M

Annual Funding 2002-2008; 2008-2014 federally funded through USDOE

\$1.5M

2014-15 carry-over funding

\$0

2014 Louisiana Grant Application not funded

Impact

Scholarships to Students

\$2.7M

Awarded in Scholarships to date

Initiatives

- Credit Recovery
- Financial Literacy
- College Campus Trips/Tours
- College Applications
- Comprehensive Mentoring
- Advanced Placement
- Summer Programs
- Academic-Year Clubs
- Dual Enrollment

Impact

On Participating Schools

Increased:

- Attendance
- Promotion Rates
- Standardized Test Scores
- School Performance Scores

Decreased:

- Drop-outs
- Expulsions

Impact

on State

60

Louisiana Schools Supported to date

1500

Louisiana Teachers and Counselors Received Professional Development to date



www.lagearup.com

*Amount Based on Performance Based Funding Formula

LOSFA Attends LASFAA Spring Conference

LOSFA was well represented at the recent Louisiana Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (LASFAA) annual spring conference March 25-26, 2015 at LSU-Alexandria. The two day conference allowed professionals to share information and educate attendees on various facets of financial aid that can be shared with students and parents.

The first day consisted of a 'boot camp' where attendees were able to learn about the financial aid verification process, information on student loans and the collaborative process between the admissions and financial aid offices at the colleges. LOSFA's Director of Scholarships and Grants, Deborah Paul, gave a presentation on TOPS (Taylor Opportunity Program for Students) on behalf of LOSFA. This presentation included general information about the program and also included the TOPS Award processing cycle.

The second day of the conference included seminars on Title IV policies and procedures, updates to the federal aid programs and allowed for a discussion where attendees could ask questions or share concerns. Bonnie Lavergne and Erica Hughes, representing LOSFA's Special Programs section, gave a presentation on the Go Grant. The presentation included a program update and reviewed the eligibility criteria for students and the recommended packaging policy for the schools. Jerry Oubre, representing LOSFA's Audit section, also shared some of the common Go Grant audit issues.

LASFAA has more than 500 members that include educational institutions, lenders and organizations. LASFAA members work to provide students, parents and agencies with vital student financial aid information. LOSFA is proud to work with and support the efforts of LASFAA to try to assist as many students and parents as possible.



Deborah Paul (above), Jerry Oubre and Bonnie Lavergne (right) and Erica Hughes (left) give presentations at LASFAA boot camp.

LOSFA to Hold START Saving Program ‘Lunch and Learn’ Facebook Chat on 529 Day

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) will observe national ‘5-29 Day’ with its third annual “5-29 Day Facebook Chat” on Friday, May 29 (5-29). With May 29th falling on a Friday this year, the annual chat will be held as a “Lunch and Learn” event from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Save on Federal and State Tax Exemptions

The “5-29” in “5-29 Day” refers to section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code which authorizes states to offer college saving plans that include substantial federal and state tax exemptions and other beneficial incentives to save. Louisiana’s 529 plan is called the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust (START) saving program.

To participate and/or monitor the chat event, users must “like” the new “START SAVING 529 Program” Facebook page. After doing so, questions may be submitted on that page. LOSFA staff will be online to

answer all questions as they are posted. NOTE: The chat will NOT be viewable on the “LOSFA” Facebook page where it has been held in previous years.

START Getting Paid to SAVE

The START (Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust) Saving Program is an innovative college savings program that qualifies as a “529 Plan” under the Internal Revenue Code. START offers federal and state tax incentives to anyone who wishes to financially assist a student in acquiring a college education.

In addition to regular earnings on investments, accounts will receive a contribution from the state, called “Earnings Enhancements,” to match a percentage of their annual deposits, ranging from 14 percent to two percent and determined by the account owner’s prior year federal adjusted gross income as reported to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).



Mona Kraushaar, Public Information and Communications Representative talks to expectant moms about the START Saving Program at the Woman’s Hospital Baby Grand event on May 2.



Earl E. START, mascot for the Louisiana START Saving Program, made an appearance at the Woman’s Hospital baby Grand event on May 2.

Power of Story Award

Nine LA GEAR UP seniors were awarded \$100 Power of Story Awards in appreciation for their performance in the 2015 Poetry Slam. The poets shared their stories with their peers during the 2015 Spring Explorers' Club Leadership Conference. These recipients performed touching poems, which represented their own unique story and included subjects ranging from perseverance to common fears faced by high school seniors about going to college.

The awardees are as follows:

Poets:	School:
Alexis Guillot	Marksville High
D'Adrian Wilson	Landry-Walker High
Indonesia Wilborn	Glen Oaks High
Isaiah Green	Rayville High
Isis Harris	Rayville High
Jonathon Stewart	East St. John High
Kenneil Tassin	East St. John High
Otis Jacobs	Avoyelles High
Steven Ancar	ReNEW #1

(Right) Indonesia Wilborn performs her poem "Reaching for the Stars" at the 2015 Spring Explorers' Club Leadership Conference.

Excerpt from "Reaching for the Stars"

"U might get a peak or a leak of it
I may be on the news or my crew may brag on it

I was shooting for the sky
then I became a star
now I am shooting for the globe
and I'm not that far"

-Indonesia Wilborn

Power of Story Awardee
Glen Oaks High School



(Above) Poetry Slam contestants await the results at at the 2015 Spring Explorers' Club Leadership Conference. (Right) Isaiah Green performs his poem during the 2015 Spring Explorers' Club Leadership Conference.



LOSFA's Social Media Sites



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



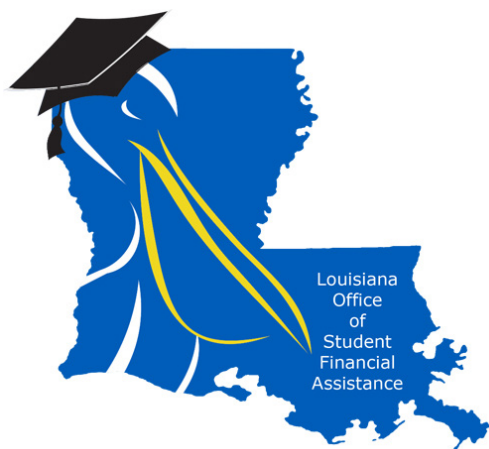
<http://www.twitter.com/LOSFA>



<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.