

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Friday, April 27, 2007.

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SAF/DPHHS Accepting Applications for Foster Youth College Prep Camp

(HELENA) Montana foster care youth are invited to apply for available slots at the “A Step Ahead” college preparatory camp to be hosted July 10-12 at Carroll College in Helena.

The program — coordinated by Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) — offers foster care students the opportunity to experience learning in a college campus setting.

“The camp also reinforces the value and impact a postsecondary education can have on their lives,” said Rhonda Wodnik, foster care coordinator at SAF. “We want the foster care youth to understand that higher education is within their reach.”

Students from across the state will participate in activities geared toward teaching them basic computer skills, how to use the Montana Career Information System (MCIS) database, debt management techniques and more.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the camp is that each participant receives a new computer to take home — a tool that camp coordinators believe is critical for success in college.

To qualify, applicants must be in state or tribal foster care custody or recently “aged out” of the foster care system. In addition, applicants must have identified aspirations to attain postsecondary education as part of their Transitional Living Plan.

The 2007 camp marks the second of its kind to be held at Carroll College.

“We’re looking forward to another successful year,” said Wodnik. “We hope the campers leave knowing that they aren’t alone in this endeavor, even if they don’t have the traditional support systems behind them.”

Applications must be received by May 25. To request an application, call (406) 495-7750 or send an e-mail to rwodnik@safmt.org.

Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to finance and pursue their postsecondary education. Funds generated by SAF are returned to Montanans in the form of education grants and public benefit programs - to date more than \$7.1 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org.