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College Goal Montana: 10,342 Families Served Since 2005!

Nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF), financial aid professionals and other volunteers helped 1,015 Montana students complete their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at College Goal Montana sites across the state recently.

“That brings the total number of students and families served through this event to more than 10,000!” said Rhonda Safford, state coordinator for the event. “That’s 10,000 people who have benefited from this free service that helps them maximize their opportunity to receive federal, state and institutional financial aid.”

This year, the event was held at 18 locations on Wednesday, Feb. 9 and Sunday, Feb. 13.

In addition to providing one-on-one FAFSA completion assistance to Montana students and families through the traditional College Goal Montana sites and activities, SAF coordinated 34 FAFSA completion Webinars in communities throughout the state.

Participants in the Webinar events listened to a 30-minute presentation about the FAFSA, logged on to fafsa.gov and completed the form with help from site hosts and subject matter experts.

“2010 marked the first year that SAF coordinated College Goal Montana using Webinars,” Safford said. “We’re extremely pleased that the idea was so well received last year and has expanded to so many of our Montana communities in 2011. By using Webinars, we were able to extend our reach to make sure that students and families in remote areas get the help they need without having to travel.”

Safford expressed her gratitude to the more than 300 volunteers who helped with the College Goal Montana events and Webinars, and the generous donors who contributed funds to support 24, \$500 scholarships awarded to students through drawings.

Safford reminds Montana students and families that, if they haven’t completed the FAFSA, they still have time and help is available. To receive free assistance, they can contact their high school counselor, or the financial aid officer at the college of their choice. In addition, SAF staff members are always available to help and can be reached by calling 877-COLG4ME (265-4463).

College Goal Sunday is a national program that was originally created by the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association with funding from Lilly Endowment, Inc. and with supplemental support from Lumina Foundation for Education.

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 \$20.1 million. For more information, visit www.SmartAboutCollege.org or www.safmt.org