



PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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A FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROGRAM



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Groundbreaking New Homeless Student Waiver Rule Discussed at Community PPP Forum in Tallahassee

Representatives from 11 organizations that provide support to students using the Florida’s Homeless Student Tuition Exemption and the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) foster care tuition and fee exemption gathered recently in Tallahassee. The topic of discussion was an important rule developed by the Florida College System in collaboration with DCF and Positive Pathways staff.

Rule 6A-10.087 includes a newly developed and groundbreaking form that can be used to certify students eligible to use the homeless waiver at school district career centers, charter career centers, and Florida College System Institutions. The rule and form will become effective on April 25, 2023.

The new rule “provides a form to standardize the verification process” for students who fall under the McKinney-Vento Homeless

Assistance Act, “as well as adults who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence” and are eligible to obtain their postsecondary education at no cost, according to Kathy Hebda, Florida College System Chancellor at Florida Department of Education, who spoke before the Board of Education on March 23, 2023. Pathways Senior Director Dr. Steve J. Rios spoke on behalf of the new rule, which the Board approved unanimously.

Statewide in Florida, approximately 750 students use the waiver at public colleges and 350 use the waiver at public universities.

The community forum was held at the Florida Behavioral Health Association Conference Center and was hosted and organized by Jack Levine, founder of 4Generations Institute.

Click [HERE](#) to read the rule and form.



Jack Levine,
Foundation,
4Generations
Institute



Shaquayln
Shedrick,
Executive Director,
She Academy Inc.



Mike Williams,
CEO of DASH
Foundation

ATTENDEES OF THE TALLAHASSEE COMMUNITY FORUM ON HOMELESS TUITION WAIVER



1

Dr. Shawn Woodin,
CEO of the Southern Scholarship Foundation

2

Kayla Dover,
Student Services Case Manager
at Tallahassee Community College,

3

Dr. Steve J. Rios,
Senior Director of DCF Positive Pathways,
Educate Tomorrow

4

Deborah Moore,
Guardian ad Litem Circuit Director,
Second Judicial Circuit.

5

Justin Fitzpatrick,
Membership Coordinator,
United Partners for Human Services

6

MarLinda S. Monroe-Johnson, MPA CTE Program
Specialist, Florida Department of Education, Division of
Career, Technical, and Adult Education

7

Tranesia Walker,
Coordinated Entry Director,
Big Bend Continuum of Care

8

Lisa Jackson, Senior Program Director,
Academic Support & Engagement
Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement

Hillsborough Community College Ybor City Campus and Camelot Community Care Host Tour for Youth in Foster Care on Florida's West Coast

More than 50 high school students in foster care in Pinellas County attended a day-long campus tour of the Hillsborough Community College Ybor City Campus recently. The idea for the tour was initiated by Eric Wetzel, the Youth and Young Adult Specialist from the DCF Office of Continuing Care. During the lead agency transition in Circuit 13, Eric heard directly from ambitious young adults about their interest in furthering their education.

"These young people weren't quite sure the next steps to take," Eric said. "We are glad that so many young people had the opportunity to visit HCC and have their eyes opened to a new set of possibilities for their education."

Eric put together a coalition of young adult advocates who serve youth and young adults in the areas served by HCC. The group met several times to develop a hands on, expert led, college campus engagement for these youth. The students got hands on with the college's ATech Automotive Technology program.

Regina Watson, Director of Independent Living for Camelot Community Care organized the young adults access, arranged transportation and supported staff to attend.

Judith Gaspar, the Special Services Coordinator at Hillsborough Community College, gathered experts from the STEM fields to lead the tour and engage young adults including the creation of a hands on science expo room. Judith also secured donations from a local restaurant to provide lunch.

"The young adults and staff agreed it was an absolute success and there are plans to make these tours available on a quarterly basis as well as to expand around the state with the help of Positive Pathways," Eric said. Eric also said that Children's Network, the new lead agency in the area was to ensure these opportunities continue to grow, and is making efforts to "bring Career Source and local education leaders to the table."



Workforce Training Programs



Positive Pathways Members at 12 Locations Give Students Taste of College Life

For the first time since before COVID-19, more than 40 students from Miami Dade and Broward counties had the opportunity to attend the highly-anticipated Positive Pathways - Educate Tomorrow 2023 College Tour. This year, the tour was sponsored by Voices for Children in Miami, as well Miami Dade County Public Schools' Project UPSTART, First Star Academy, and Citrus Family Care Network.

The tour was organized and directed by Educate Tomorrow Senior Program Director Varzi Jean-Baptiste and Janessa Collins, both of Education Tomorrow. Chaperones with the sponsoring organizations as well as Genesis Hopeful Haven provided guidance and support along the way. At each campus, Positive Pathways' members greeted the students and in many cases introduced them to students using either the DCF foster care or homeless tuition waiver. The college tour students, mostly juniors and seniors, visited the following institutions: FIU South, MDC North, BC North, FAU Boca, FSU, FAMU, Sante Fe, UF, UCF.

At the State Capitol, students were guided by Jack Levine, founder of 4Generations Institute, who introduced them to State Rep. Marie Woodson. Students were inspired to find out that Rep. Woodson is not only from South Florida but that she was born in Haiti. Rep. Woodson, a longtime education advocate and community leader, sponsored the legislation that requires Florida's public colleges and universities to appoint homeless liaisons.



State Representative Marie Woodson (D, Hollywood) inspired students with her motivational words and personal story.

Student Success Story Enoch Jean-Mary From Miami to Tallahassee on His Way to Medical School



Enoch Jean-Mary with Varzi Jean-Baptiste during the 2023 Positive Pathways / Educate Tomorrow College Tour visit to a Southern Scholarship Foundation house in Tallahassee.

"I didn't think college was possible. It was just a dream. Then I came on the college tour and saw it was possible." - Enoch

My name is Enoch Jean-Mary. I am a graduating senior from The Florida State University. Honestly, now that I am so close to graduating from FSU I never thought I would have made it this far. When starting college I first attended FIU in Miami, Florida. Being the fourth of 11 children, my parents wanted me to follow in my older siblings footsteps by attending a college in Miami.

But I always wanted to go to school away from Miami, but to not start conflict with my parents, I choose to stay in Miami for my first two semesters. After those two semesters I realized I wanted more for myself and for my college experience so I made the decision to leave home and go to Tallahassee to finish my studies.

Because of my decision I was not able to obtain support from my parent, which made it very difficult for me to move. Thankfully I was involved with the Educate Tomorrow program in Miami where Senior Program Director. Varzi Jean-Baptiste worked tirelessly with me to get me into school and into housing. She even went so far as to bring me all the way to Tallahassee along with my best friend Gerbenn Seraphin.

I would like to thank Ms. Varzi and Educate Tomorrow for supporting me. After graduating in May, with a degree in clinical practices, I plan to attend medical school and study to become a gastroenterologist. None of this would have been possible without the countless sacrifices of so many people who supported me when I needed it the most. I hope to continue to inform Educate Tomorrow on my future endeavors and thankful to be a part of such a wonderful organization.

The following organizations, all members of Positive Pathways, have all supported Enoch during his college years



2023 Quarter 1 Professional Development Covered Coaching, FAFSA, and Waivers



Jasmine Moore
Success Coach
Educate Tomorrow

During the April monthly call, attended by more than 50 members statewide, Educate Tomorrow Success Coach Jasmine Moore provided an overview of the new FAFSA changes for the upcoming 2023-2024 academic year. She also led a discussion on how the changes may impact post-secondary students from foster care and those experiencing housing insecurity.

Patrick Simon, president of the Citrus County Coalition for College and Careers, joined Jasmine to provide insight into how his volunteer team provides support to hundreds of students completing the FAFSA each year in Citrus County.



Patrick Simon

FAFSA

EDUCATE
TOMORROW



PPP Quarterly Webinar Informs McKinney-Vento School District Liaisons Throughout Florida



Lisa Jackson
Senior Program Director
Florida State University
Care Program

The Positive Pathways team collaborated with staff at the McKinney-Vento Program, within the Florida Department of Homeless Education, and Lisa Jackson, senior program director at the CARE Program at Florida State University for our quarterly webinar. More than 50 school district McKinney-Vento liaisons throughout Florida attended the professional development opportunity, led by Pathways Senior Director Dr. Steve J. Rios. Attendees learned about Florida legislation related to the homeless student waiver, and the best ways to connect with campus-based student service liaisons. They also learned about statewide resources and support available through the Positive Pathways network.



Dr. Steve J. Rios
Senior Director
Positive Pathways

Pathways Members Learn Why it May Be Difficult for Students to Ask for Help, , Even from Mentors They Trust

Humanistic Coaching as a Collaborative Practice: Perspectives on Help Seeking from Coaches and Undergraduate Students with Foster Care Experience

Jamie L. Bennett, Sy-Woel, and Tony Xing Tan



Dr. Jamie Bennett, Executive Director and Founder of Cetera, provided an overview of her most recent publication, Humanistic Coaching as a Collaborative Practice: Perspectives on Help Seeking From Coaches and Undergraduate Students with Foster Care Experience. She provided new perspectives to understanding engagement and help-seeking among students from foster care, and best practices to build transformational relationships with students. Click [HERE](#) to access this publication, which appeared in the February issue of the Journal of College and Character.

New Trainings and Programs Focus on High-potential, Highly-intelligent Youth in Foster Care

On April 12th, a number of Positive Pathways members led and participated in a series of training at the offices of Brevard Family Partnership headquarters in Rockledge. The training focused on the attributes of, and services to, high-potential, highly-intelligent, and gifted foster youth. Attendees included several levels of management such as CEOs and case managers.

At the trainings, participants learned to identify the special needs of these youths and how to access resources that can help them realize and increase their talents and skills to achieve a higher level of success in life. They also learned about a new program called Xavier House Unlimited, a non-profit organization developed to serve gifted students in care.

"These innovative trainings and programs speak to the needs of the underserved population of high potential foster youth," said Yvette Robinson, CEO of Callisto. Callisto is the professional development startup that has developed the training based on research and in collaboration with experts in gifted education and social services.

Using statistics on the number of gifted students in the general population, Robinson introduced the training by saying that Florida may have more than 2,000, and the country more than 40,000, high-potential, high-intelligent, and gifted youth in foster care. She based her figures on research conducted the National Association for Gifted Children.

"The nation's foster care system needs a program specifically designed for these remarkable children." said Robinson, who also is founder and CEO of Xavier House, which aims to provide an in house school program, independent living skills, extra-curricular activities, and support for family visitations for its residents.



Yvette Robinson,
CEO, Xavier House



Paras Traganos,
Director of Sales, Callisto's



XAVIER HOUSE



Callisto PDS

For more information about Xavier House or the training being offered by Callisto PDS, contact Paras Traganos at

 Paras.Callisto@Gmail.com

Join Positive Pathways, YOUR Network for Success!

The Florida Department of Children and Families Positive Pathways, part of the DCF Office of Continuing Care (OCC), is funded by DCF and Educate Tomorrow, which has administered the program since 2016. The Program is comprised of more than 300 members located at Florida's public colleges, universities, technical colleges and community-based care agencies. These individuals are knowledgeable, accessible and compassionate professionals who provide consistent support to young adults from foster care and homeless backgrounds as they pursue their postsecondary educational goals.

The Positive Pathways team, which includes Brett McNaught, CEO of Educate Tomorrow, Jasmine Moore, and Dr. Steve J. Rios, all of whom are nationally recognized professionals at the intersection of higher education and child welfare. Positive Pathways is overseen by staff in the DCF Office of Continuing Care, by Director Taylor Peck, Deputy Director Cal Walton, III, and Eric Wetzel, the Youth and Young Adult Transitions Specialist. For more information about our program, contact us at Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org, or visit our website, www.PositivePathways.org.