

All students should start training in fall after high school graduation

During a recent graduate program class, I mentioned to three other students that I have a passion for helping first-generation college students access and succeed in higher education.

One classmate asked me, "What does 'first-generation' mean?"

I quickly explained it usually refers to students who are the first in their families to go to college or, more specifically, whose parents did not go to college.

All three classmates, one in her 30s, one in his 40s, and one in his 50s, shared that they were the first in their families to go to college. They then shared bits of their stories including the fact that none was a traditional student in accessing and graduating college within four years of high school.

What do you believe about the importance of education after high school?

The Wayne County College Success Coalition (WCCSC) believes it is critical for all students to enter a training or education program in the fall following high school graduation. The WCCSC also desires to see

those students earn a certification or college diploma within four years of entering a program. Though this is an ideal, it is a goal nonetheless.

The WCCSC is a network of local organizations interested in increasing college access and success for young people in Wayne County, Ind.

Coalition activities are based on the core conviction that every student deserves: a chance to be successful, hopes and dreams, support from the community, and to be informed of all possibilities.

As a member of the Countywide Partnership for Youth (CPY), the WCCSC shares the CPY understanding of the connection between education and the quality of life and desires to "dedicate the resources of the county to providing every child a solid foundation for life-long learning."

A current project in process is the "Wayne County FAFSA Days." Each public high

Advertisement

ORIGINAL HP INKS. GET MORE.



LEARN MORE AT **HP.COM**



school hosts one of these days and invites anyone in the county to come during event hours for assistance in filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Last year, more than 100 families took advantage of this service provided in partnership with Communities in Schools, Earlham College, Indiana University East, Ivy Tech Community College, Twenty-first Century Scholars and the **Wayne County Foundation**.

The FAFSA is the U.S. Department of Education tool used to determine a student's eligibility for federal aid, state aid, or a federal guaranteed loan. Every Indiana student must file a FAFSA by the March 10 state filing deadline to qualify for state grant aid.

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education reported in the 2010 publication "Reaching Higher" that Indiana ranks 42nd in the nation in the proportion of adults with a postsecondary credential.

This statistic has a far-reaching economic and cultural impact on the state's communities.

Addressing this challenge and making a difference will require many people in business, community and educational support systems. It will take all of us.

As James Baldwin once stated, "These are all our children, and we will profit by or pay for whatever they become."



Liz Ferris

FAFSA HELP

Volunteers in February are visiting Wayne County high schools to help college-bound students and their families fill out financial aid information.

The annual FAFSA Days (FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student AID) provides free help in advance of Indiana's March 10 deadline.

Help is available 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday at Richmond High School.

For more information, visit www.cashforcollegeindiana.org.

Learn More

For more information, visit www.learnmoreindiana.org

Advertisement

ORIGINAL HP INKS. GET MORE.



LEARN MORE AT **HP.COM**

