INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

GEAR UP Spotligh: Arlee Jr. High  2
National Campaign Unveils New Educational Materials to Help Students  2
Survey Says…  2
Insert Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship Recipients  3
GEAR UP for Excellence Comes to Eastern MT  3
College Transition: Hi, My Name is…  3
GU West Call for Proposals  4
GEAR UP Reminders  4

Winding Down and Ramping Up

BY SANDY MERDINGER, DIRECTOR

It’s a bittersweet time...we’re winding down the sixth and final year of the 2005 GEAR UP grant. Many great things have happened over the life of this grant and we are planning a new grant to take Montana GEAR UP to the next level. It’s all very exciting but at the same time very sad as several current GEAR UP schools will not be written into the 2011 grant and they will be missed. Many of these schools have demonstrated a clear understanding and commitment of GEAR UP goals and have done a great job implementing them at their schools. We hope they will continue to benefit from the resources they have received over the years. Although they may not be able to sustain everything, much of the GEAR UP message has become imbedded in their schools and will be sustained.

As we are winding down this grant, I want to highlight just a few of the successes of the 2005 grant:

- Out of the 720 seniors this year, 90% have been on a college visit. The majority of those who haven’t been on a visit are seniors new to their school this year.
- 83% of all GEAR UP students reported they have been spoken to about college entrance requirements by someone at their school.
- 93% of students expect to obtain some college education or more.
- To date, Montana GEAR UP has awarded $1,500 Achievement Grants to 700 GEAR UP juniors for a total of $1,050,000. 7th through 10th graders in current GEAR UP schools will be able to apply for Achievement Grants in their junior year of high school.
- This year 48 seniors were awarded $22,200 Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarships for a total of $1,065,600. In addition, current 7th through 11th grade students who receive the Achievement Grant will be invited to apply for the Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship during their senior year.
- Middle school financial aid information was presented to 7,086 students during the 2005 grant (partial duplication of 7th and 8th graders).
- 3,173 GEAR UP 8th grade students have taken the ACT’s EXPLORE in the last five years while 1,712 GEAR UP 10th graders have taken ACT’s PLAN. Both tests are precursors to the ACT and the test results are a wonderful resource for students, parents, teachers, and schools to use to improve academic achievement at the individual, classroom, and school levels.

The final GEAR UP Liaisons meeting was held in early May which included a celebration of the successes in the 2005 grant. A highlight was the cake decorated by Jessie Salisbury, GEAR UP Program Coordinator.

This year we’ve spent time reviewing and reflecting on where we are now, and where we need to go as we write the 2011 grant application. To that end, we’ve held 14 focus groups around the state, involving 259 people. The insights, support, strategies, and energy people shared with us is both amazing and humbling at the same time! We look forward to taking the

Montana GEAR UP Awards Over $1,000,000 to Graduating Seniors

BY CORY CHENOWETH, FINANCIAL AID MANAGER

We are pleased to announce that 48 seniors from 15 Montana GEAR UP high schools have been awarded the Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship. Each of these scholarships is worth up to $22,200 over a five-year period.

In order to be eligible to apply for the scholarship, students are required to have received the Montana GEAR UP Achievement Grant as a junior, maintain a 2.5 GPA, be on track to complete the Montana College Prep Curriculum, write a one-page personal essay, submit a resume of all extra-curricular and leadership activities, and complete an extensive project of their choice.

This was a competitive application, and the recipients were chosen by an application committee of professionals from across the state of Montana.

Congratulations to all of the recipients and thank you to all of the scholarship committee members, as well as the school liaisons and counselors for the hard work in making this a successful scholarship program.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a list of the 2011 Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship recipients.
GEAR UP Spotlight: GEAR UP Leadership Class at Arlee Junior High

BY DEANNE SMITH, GEAR UP LIAISON

The GEAR UP Leadership Class at Arlee Junior High determines and leads the Tuesday morning CREW (Courageous, Respectful, Encouraging, Willing Workers) activities and two family events a year. New this year, the class empowers students to assume responsibility, work as a team, and create a supportive community for all students. Leadership class meets twice a week in the afternoon and is a mix of 7th and 8th grade students.

CREW is the first twenty minutes every Tuesday and Thursday and involves all junior high students and staff. On Thursdays we check planners for a CREW grade, work on our reading comprehension strategies, and the whole junior high has silent reading in their CREW book. This year we read Downriver and River Thunder and will be reading The Warrior this spring. Every Tuesday we do teambuilding initiatives developed and led by the leadership class. The leadership students provide examples and explain the activities before doing them. We also decorated our CREW doors with a college readiness theme.

We had one awards banquet for the community and parents and used the students’ GEAR UP posters for placemats. Parents participated in a CREW activity with students that was led by the Leadership class. To boost attendance for this event, we put an invitation in the school newsletter. We will be having another awards banquet in the spring.

National Campaign Unveils New Educational Materials to Help Students

BY THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE FOUNDATION

As the national KnowHow2GO campaign enters its third year, its new educational materials encourage students to pursue their goal of attending college through a combination of hard work, determination, and vision.

In March, Lumina Foundation, American Council on Education, and the Advertising Council launched a series of public service advertisements directed at encouraging low-income and first-generation students to take steps necessary to prepare for college. The ads were distributed to more than 33,000 media outlets nationwide.

“I’m extremely excited about the new public service advertisements and promotional items related to the national KnowHow2GO campaign,” said Kelly Cresswell, Vice President of Foundation Activities for Student Assistance Foundation (SAF). “I think the content is creative and will speak to the audiences we are trying to reach through this important initiative.”

Nonprofit SAF partners with the KnowHow2GO program through its participation in the Montana College Access Network (MCAN). MCAN is a coordinated network, that includes GEAR UP, the Montana School Counselors Association, ASPIRE and others who promote access to educational opportunities after high school for Montana students.

As a complement to the new television and radio advertisements which feature the inspirational stories of a skateboarder, a gamer, and a mural artist, KnowHow2GO offers t-shirts, decals, and key chains to reinforce the message that “You’ve got what it takes.”

The new KnowHow2GO media will be featured at MCAN’s conference, “Building a College Going Montana,” scheduled for September 19-20, 2011, at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center.

In addition, the materials can be viewed by visiting the national KnowHow2GO website at KnowHow2GO.org, and clicking on “PSAs.” To learn more, contact Kelly Cresswell at 406-495-7390.

Survey Says...

![Survey Results]

*This Summer Camp Helped Boost My Self-Confidence.*

9% Strongly Agree
44% Agree
1% Disagree
1% Strongly Disagree

Source: 2010 Montana GEAR UP Summer Camp Surveys N=302
Congratulations to the 2010-11 Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship Recipients!

In order to be eligible for the Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship, students were required to have received the $1,500 Montana GEAR UP Achievement Grant as a junior, qualify for a federal Pell Grant, maintain a 2.5 GPA while being on track to complete the Montana College Prep Curriculum, submit a one-page personal essay and a project of their choice. The recipients were selected based on academic achievement, extra-curricular and leadership activities, as well as the quality of their submitted project. This year there were a number strong applications and these students were selected to receive the award for up to $22,200 over a 5-year period.

### Arlee High School
- Desjarlais, Dakota: Graphic Design PowerPoint Presentation

### Browning High School
- Burns, Kayla: Historical Trauma of the Blackfeet (Amskapi Pikuni)
- Hall, Kailey: Quilting Project
- Patterson, Aaron: Music Composition and Recording
- Reevis, Sequoia: Quilting Project
- Show, Ty: Senior Writing Portfolio
- Weatherwax, Britney: Bead Work

### Charlo High School
- Bauer, Austin: Career Research Project: Aviation Management
- Edwards, Ashley: Digital Presentation of Photography Collection
- Foust, Jessica: Career Research Paper on Becoming a Teacher
- Mock, Shelby: Research Paper on Becoming an Artist and Art Portfolio

### Dutton/Brady High School
- Carter, Christa: Elementary School Lessons on Danger of Tobacco Use
- Rossmiller, Logan: Martin Luther King Jr. Day Speech

### Glacier High School
- Askvig, Draylen: Collection of Poems, Songs, & Music
- Bailor, Nicole: Photographic Quilt
- Compton, Jessie: Career Research Project: Athletic Training
- Frye, Michael: Music Performance Using Guitar
- Goyer, Ashley: Supervised Agricultural Experience with Sheep and Lambs
- McRae, Kaliee: Raising a Black Angus Steer
- Omsberg, Karlee: Project on Technology
- Waggener, Ashley: Portfolio of Athletic Accomplishments

### Hardin High School
- Pretty On Top, Arly: Original Painting “Trapped”
- Prouty, Ashley: AP English Literature Project: Monty Python
- Saunders, Stephanie: Future Goals
- Sloan, Alice Ann: Fundraiser for Community Member
Congratulations to the 2010-11 Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship Recipients!

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**Harlem High School**

Cochran, William  
CAD Design and Fabrication of a Guitar

Dumas, KiAnna  
Created Town Sign Using CAD and Plasma Cutter

Rider, Raelynn  
Design and Construction of Traditional Native Drum

**Hays/Lodge Pole High School**

Racine, Tyrell  
Peer Counseling Through Traditional Games

**Heart Butte High School**

Eagle Speaker, Kyler  
Poster Board Presentation on Crystal Growth

Kriskovich, Megan  
Poster Board Presentation on Electroforming

**Lincoln High School**

Erickson, Jesse  
Research Paper and Presentation on Call of Duty

Shaw, Katie  
Portfolio of Artwork: Painting & Photography

**Nashua High School**

Borgen, Darbi  
How Household Chemicals Affect the Growth of Plants

Boushey, Tabetha  
Observation of Organisms of the CMR Wildlife Refuge

Trang, Taylor  
Boosting School Spirit

**Simms High School**

Leonardson, Katherine  
Senior Portfolio: Essays & Activities

Rushton, Fredrick  
Robotics Project

Thompson, Cody  
Senior Activity Portfolio

**St. Ignatius High School**

Foster, Zane  
"Salish Street": Pilot for a Salish Immersion Children's Show

McCollum, Ashley  
Portfolio of Photography

Mitchell, LaGlen  
Five-Year Plan

Trudeau, MacKenzie  
Taekwondo Research Project

**St. Regis High School**

Baldwin, Leandra  
Model Home Construction

Dockter, Jocelyn  
Career Research Project About Detectives

Rhodes, Rolisha  
Chemistry Experiment: The Rainbow Reaction

**Winnett**

Iversen, Phillip “Gage”  
3-D Monocoupe Airplane Drafted with AutoCAD

Weingart, Whit  
Educational Workshops to Explore Agricultural Careers
GEAR UP for Excellence Comes to Eastern Montana

BY MICHELLE DUMONT, EASTERN SCHOOL GRANT MANAGER

Justin Boudreau, professional motivational speaker with GEAR UP for Excellence (GUFE) and facilitator of the Youth Leadership Summit at the National GUFE conference, visited four eastern Montana GEAR UP schools inspiring and motivating high school students in Hardin, Lame Deer, Lodge Grass and Pryor. Each high school received funding from Montana GEAR UP to bring this amazing opportunity to their school.

With a great deal of laughter, music, relevancy, and personal connections, Justin had students and staff captivated. Students at each GEAR UP high school received a one-hour keynote address. In addition, a select group of 30-40 students received a full afternoon of leadership workshops. Bringing together a heterogeneous mix of students, Justin combined hands-on activities with team building opportunities that had students learning about themselves and one another. Students learned many key concepts essential to learning including brain research on how learning occurs, how to live above the line, taking responsibility, seizing opportunities, believing in oneself and holding onto dreams. It was certainly a great experience for all.

In order to prepare students academically and in social settings, GUFE provides youth leadership training programs that incorporate real world skills in:
- Leadership
- Learning to Learn
- Communication
- Motivation
- Creativity
- Responsibility
- Goal Attainment
- Relationship Building

The primary focus of training is to provide students with experience and skills that they can apply every day. According to GUFE, as shown in the chart to the left students who have received leadership training demonstrate increased motivation, confidence, school-performance, improved attitude, and ability to apply skills learned in the real world. For more information about GUFE, visit their website at www.gearupforexcellence.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Participants Indicating Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve work/school-related performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop more confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to apply the skills learned during training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

College Transition: Hi, My Name is...

BY CORY CHENOWETH, FINANCIAL AID MANAGER

When it comes to making friends, college is much different than high school. For some new college freshmen, one of the most difficult areas of transition is finding a new core group of friends. Additionally, many students may have difficulty adapting to life without their number one support system and safety net – parents – in close proximity.

In high school, incoming freshman have already formed a number of friendships. It might be friendships with their middle school friends, siblings, cousins, or athletic teammates. In college, that’s likely not the case. In fact, it’s quite possible that a student may attend a college where they don’t know anyone at all.

In order to be successful in the area of friend-making, the first thing that students need to know is that making friends is difficult, and unlike high school it will require that the student take initiative and put some work into it. However, once a student determines what works best for them, making friends will become easier along the way.

Below is a list of ways to help with the friend-making process:

1. Say ‘Hi’: Simple enough, right? Sometimes a simple smile and “hello” is all it takes to spark up a conversation with a potential new friend. This could be before class starts, the library, or in the elevator. The friendlier the student is to others, the more likely they are to start building their group of friends early.

2. Hit the Club Scene: Most colleges have a club for everything. Whether it is the Future Engineers Club, the Native American Club, Marketing Club, Recycling Club, or the American Idol Lovers club, it’s a great way for students to meet new fun people who have similar interests.

3. Get a Job: Not only does a job help a student better afford college, but also many times students will make lifelong friends with their coworkers. There are lots of employers, both on campus and off, who are looking to hire college students. Students should be encouraged to apply for these jobs early.

4. Dorm Events: If a student is staying in a residence hall, there are generally a number of social events they can take advantage of. Also, many times these events offer free food, which is another great bonus.

5. Leave the Dorm Room and Comfort Zone: Whether it be going to the library to study or a common area to watch television, this is another opportunity to meet new fun people. Overcoming shyness can certainly be a difficult task for many students, but the more they are able to step outside of and expand their comfort zone, the more successful the transition process will be.

While these suggestions may or may not work for all students, it’s certainly a good start to overcoming a difficult obstacle in a successful transition to college life.
Montana GEAR UP Reminders & Upcoming Events

June 1: Deadline to submit Call for Presentations for the Montana College Access Network (MCAN) Conference. For more information visit: KnowHow2GOMontana.ning.com.

June 5-8: GEAR UP + SuperCamp middle school summer camp, MSU - Northern in Havre.

June 9-12: GEAR UP + SuperCamp high school summer camp, MSU - Northern in Havre.

June 10: 2010-11 Final Program Reports due to School Grant Managers.

June 11: ACT test date.

June 15: Remaining student performance & activity data due in GEARS.

June 19-25: DCC + ME = Discovery middle school summer camp, Dawson Community College in Glendive.

June 20-24: Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI), Bozeman.

July 17-23: CSI: Birch Creek middle school summer camp, UM - Western in Dillon.

July 17-23: Preserving the Planet middle school summer camp, Carroll College in Helena.


Winding Down and Ramping Up (continued)

information received and the partnerships made to continue to improve the college and career readiness of all students, but especially those at GEAR UP schools.

Although we won’t know until late August or early September whether our grant application will be funded, we do know that all 7th through 11th grade students currently in Montana GEAR UP schools will continue to participate in the Achievement Grant and Montana GEAR UP Pathways Scholarship programs. The funds are already set aside for those awards so be sure to encourage your students to enroll in courses to fulfill the college prep curriculum and keep engaged in their education.

Thank you to everyone who has helped support and move GEAR UP goals forward! There isn’t space to thank individuals but I do want to acknowledge the work and support of Montana GEAR UP schools, including but not limited to GEAR UP liaisons, school administrators, counselors, and teachers. In addition, without the support of parents, school boards, our wonderful GEAR UP partners, and state GEAR UP staff and others at OCHE, Montana GEAR UP would not have been able to serve the students – the reason we are all here. May we keep that reason in our minds and hearts as we continue this important work.

5th Annual GEAR UP West Regional Conference Call for Proposals

GEAR UP West is a collaborative regional conference for college access practitioners from the western states of the United States. The theme of the 5th annual event is “Innovation for Academic Excellence.”

The conference will be held at the Doubletree Hotel Portland in Portland, Oregon, October 16-18, 2011.

Historically, the event has drawn around 350 participants from seven western states: Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, & Wyoming.

Attendees include GEAR UP and other college access program staff, evaluators, higher education professionals, and middle and high school teachers, counselors, and administrators. All those working to help low-income and underrepresented students prepare for and succeed in college are welcome to attend.

The Call for Proposals is now available! Any sessions related to college access and college readiness are welcome, but conference organizers are specifically looking for sessions that illustrate or examine best practices related to:

- Improving instruction.
- Building strong advisory programs.
- Student mentoring.
- Parent engagement.
- 8th - 9th grade transition programs.
- Program evaluation strategies and models.
- Developing partnerships with the business and nonprofit sectors.

Proposals are due June 6, 2011.

For more information, download the Call for Proposal form from www.gearup.wa.gov/what-we-do/gear-up-west.

Our mission: Montana GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for all Montana students, regardless of economic background, and strives to empower them to realize that ambition. Montana GEAR UP brings this message to middle and high schools, students, their parents, and the community through early college and career awareness activities, scholarships, financial aid information, and improved academic support to raise the expectations and achievement of all.