

PSE *Advisor*

Issue: 3, Summer Edition

Transitioning from **FITTING IN**
to
STANDING OUT



Standing Out by Leading

By Scott Emerick, YouthBuild USA's Senior Director of Higher Education

Much of the work of the Postsecondary Education Initiative and the **VOICES** student advisory council has been about creating momentum toward college completion. However, our work is also about creating momentum for students to stand out as leaders, to stand out as speakers, to stand out as valued employees, to stand out as supportive family members, to stand out for social change, and to stand out as the best version of their authentic selves.

As current and future leaders, **VOICES** members are working closely with their colleges and their YouthBuild programs to not only stand out in transforming their own lives, but to also stand out in transforming and improving the way schools, colleges and education systems work for young people.



There are as many ways to stand out as there are personalities of YouthBuild graduates. And there are as many areas to stand out and lead as there are social problems facing society. In this newsletter alone, you can read about how **VOICES** members and other YouthBuild leaders are standing out by presenting and sharing information (during conferences, events and classroom activities); by connecting with classmates and professors in meaningful ways; by proactively advocating for themselves; by inspiring others to find a love of learning; by finding employers who need their skills and by taking responsibility to make things go right for themselves and for those they care about.

By stepping out in all of these ways and many others, the young leaders in this edition of the **VOICES** newsletter are role models for everyone who pays attention to their stories and their work. We hope the stories of how these young leaders are stepping out will inspire you to do the same.

VOICES Student Advisory Council (Views on Improving Credential & Education Success)

VOICES is an intelligent and talented group of YouthBuild students and graduates whose programs are involved in YouthBuild USA's Postsecondary Education Initiative. These students were nominated by their respective programs to give YouthBuild USA critical feedback about what supports students need to successfully transition from their YouthBuild program to postsecondary education. VOICES advisory council members give input on three main areas: **Academics, Financial Aid and Student Supports**. It is important to know what support systems are working, but also critically important to be aware of supports students need to successfully enroll in college and graduate with a degree or credential.



YouthBuild McLean County Students Take the PSE Pledge - Page 6

TABLE OF CONTENTS

How 2 Stand Out	2
Road to Life-Long Learning	4
PSE Pledge	6
Talker to a Doer	8
Enhance Credibility	9
Standing out in the Job Market	10
SHOUT OUTS	11
Self Advocacy	13
Paying for College	15
RESOURCES	18



HOW 2 STAND OUT!

By: Sakeenah Graham, MetroAtlanta YouthBuild Graduate



Atlanta Technical College Student
Vice President of VOICES

Hello All!

I'm here to teach you how to "**SHOW UP and SHOW OUT!**"

In college you may feel lost among the masses of students or feel alone. The instructors may not be personable or even relatable, but that shouldn't stop you from being the best at all times. So you may ask me, "How do I stand out in college?" "EASY," I say.

You stand out by being yourself, not being intimidated by others and letting yourself be known (in a GOOD way).

SAKEENAH'S STAND OUT TIPS:

1. **BE ON TIME!!** Being late for class will get you noticed, but only for being late;
2. **MAKE CONNECTIONS!!** Talk to your classmates and get to know them. You may need their help one day (offer to help them as well);
3. **TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR OR INSTRUCTOR AFTER CLASS!!** Introduce yourself, point out your concerns and ALWAYS follow up! Don't wait on them to come to you.
4. **EXCEL IN ALL YOU DO!!** Making good grades and turning your assignments in on time is always a great way to get noticed;
5. **GET INVOLVED ON CAMPUS!!** Join clubs, organizations, fraternities/sororities and volunteer;
6. Finally...**HANDLE YOUR BUSINESS.!!** Taking care of your Financial Aid, Registering for classes and getting your textbooks and supplies ON TIME will ultimately get and **keep** you ahead of the game.

What are some of your STAND OUT tips?

Share them with us by emailing

VOICES@youthbuild.org



CREDITS:

Theme: VOICES

Cover Art: Paladin Jordan, Jr. and Tiffany Murphy

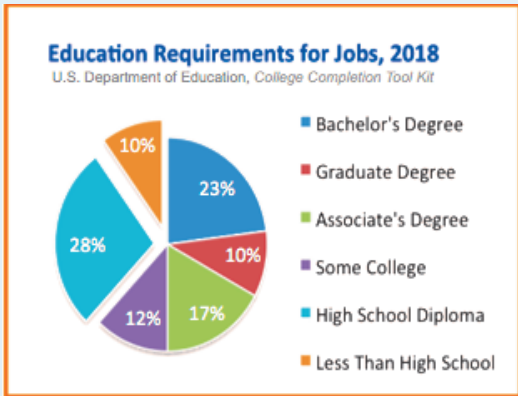
Newsletter Editor, Layout and Design: Tiffany Murphy

Contributing Writers: Scott Emerick, Sakeenah Graham (VOICES), Jodi Guinn, Delanoe Johnson (VOICES), Paladin Jordan, Jr., Shauna Lee-Ruglass, Tiffany Murphy, Krista Sabados

Contributing Editors: Scott Emerick, Paladin Jordan, Jr., Albert Kim, Krista Sabados

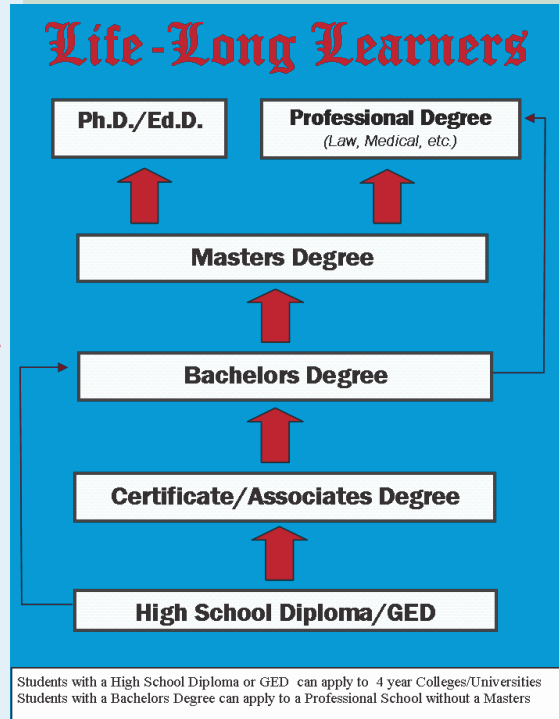
Postsecondary Challenge

President Obama has called on the United States to lead the **world** in postsecondary completion by the year 2020. Postsecondary education includes two and four year colleges and universities, technical schools and career apprenticeships that upon graduation award degrees, certifications and credentials. The United States was once ranked first in developed countries in college completion, but now ranks 10th! It is no longer sufficient to graduate with a high school diploma or GED and be competitive in today's job market.



According to the U.S. Department of Education, by the year 2018, 64% of all jobs will require some type of postsecondary credential.

We challenge you to invest in yourself and your future by researching the best postsecondary option and enrolling into and completing a postsecondary program.



Take the PSE pledge on **page 7** and join the President's postsecondary challenge!

Got Credentials?

Certificate and diploma: are non-degree credentials below the associate degree and are most often offered in technical and vocational fields of study. *Examples - Certificate in Automotive Technology*

Associate Degree: two types of associate degrees are offered. (1) Technological and vocational that are generally completed in 2 yrs. of college study for entrance into a career field, and (2) college or university parallel programs that are like the first 2 yrs. of a 4yr college curriculum often referred to as a *Transfer Degree*.

Bachelor's Degree: generally require 4 to 5 yrs. of study. The bachelor of arts (BA) and bachelor of science (BS) are the most common bachelor's degrees, and both include general education courses, a major and electives. The BS is more likely to be awarded in the sciences and for professional or technical fields of study. BA degrees are more often awarded in the humanities and arts. However, there are no absolute differences between the degrees.

Master's Degree: Master of arts (MA) and master of science (MS) programs lead to the first *graduate* degrees in the liberal arts and sciences and usually take one to two additional academic years of study beyond a bachelors degree to complete.

Doctorate Degree: may be the doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.), awarded in many of the humanities, arts, and sciences, or another doctoral degree such as the doctor of education (Ed.D.), or doctor of public health (DPH). Doctoral programs usually consist of course work and independent research ending with a formal presentation of the results of independent study. Student must have already received a bachelors degree and sometimes a masters degree.

Professional Degree: is defined as requiring at least two academic years of previous college work for entrance and a total of at least six years of college work for completion. The degrees awarded upon completion of these programs are:

- Chiropractor:** (DC)- Doctor of Chiropractic
- Dentist:** (DDS)- Doctor of Dental Surgery OR (DMD)-Doctor of Dental Medicine)
- Lawyer:** (JD)- Juris Doctorate
- Doctor:** (MD)- Doctor of Medicine



education...

The Road to Lifelong Learning

By: Shauna-Lee Ruglass and Tiffany Murphy

For many students, graduating from YouthBuild with a High School Diploma or GED is a tremendous and fulfilling accomplishment. Yet for many more, graduating is a spark that ignites their passion and curiosity for learning. Increasingly, students across the country are making the decision to go on to postsecondary education and are determined enough to finish with a college degree or credential. Shauna-Lee Ruglass, Assistant to Dorothy Stoneman, the President and Founder of YouthBuild USA, interviewed YouthBuild graduates who have or are on the road to accomplishing their educational goals, one class at a time. Read on to see what inspires them to continue pursuing their education...



Photo: www.friends4ppl.org/stack_0_books.jpg

Associates



DERRICK AYSON

Derrick Ayson, 2009 Graduate of YouthBuild San Joaquin Received his Associates Degree from San Joaquin Delta College

Derrick decided to pursue his education further after YouthBuild, because his program staff

believed in him and pushed him during his pursuit of his degree. With a loving and supportive staff, he was constantly given the motivation he needed while chasing his dream, even during times he seemed like he wanted to give up.

Words of advice he'd give to current students would be to find a balance between your work, school and social life. Create a support system of folks you can turn to when you need to vent, ask for help and become a good listener. Folks aren't out to get you, they're there to help you achieve your degree – Learn how to take constructive criticism.

Don't be shy when you first enter college! It won't be like YouthBuild at first, but if you surround yourself with the right people, it'll become your own little YouthBuild and always remember that **YOU** control your own destiny!

Derrick's future goal is to become a Teacher or Counselor/Mentor in the next two – three years.

Bachelors



ASHANTI STAFFORD

Ashanti Stafford, 2010 Graduate of YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School is currently enrolled at Indiana University of Philadelphia

Ashanti decided to further pursue her education after YouthBuild because she wanted to do something

positive with her life besides what she saw in her environment. She knew she wanted to teach and felt she needed to go to college because, "how can you teach others if you don't increase your own knowledge?" She just didn't know the steps of how to get to college.

YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School provided her with the support and motivation to not only apply to one school, but to twelve and she got accepted to nine!!!

Her words of **advice** to YouthBuild students and graduates is "no matter how big or small your dreams are, to go after it because you never know the outcome! By pursuing your dreams, the worst thing that could happen is that someone could tell you 'No!' But, for every door that closes another opens; it just depends on which door you walk through.

Ashanti's goal is to continue pursuing her degrees and educating others in the process. She wants to teach on a NATIONAL level not just locally.



YouthBuild McLean County hosted YouthBuild USA's Spring PSE Conference in Bloomington, IL. VOICES members had an opportunity to facilitate a series of activities for the students who were preparing to graduate. The purpose of the activities were to find out what the students knew about postsecondary edu-

cation and also what they wanted to know. The YouthBuild McLean County students were well-informed about postsecondary education because of their Program Manager, Alicia Lenard (see her story below). The session concluded with the students taking the postsecondary pledge and receiving a YouthBuild USA Postsecondary Education Initiative T-shirt.



Masters

Alicia Lenard, 1998 Graduate of YouthBuild McLean County (IL)

Received her Master's Degree from Roosevelt University – Pursuing a Doctorate in the Fall!

ALICIA LENARD

Alicia decided to further her education after YouthBuild because the staff at her program kept encouraging her to go after a postsecondary degree once she completed her GED. They continuously supported her and helped her with any questions/concerns she had. Her YB staff felt like a family to her and that made her pursuit a lot easier. She eventually realized that college was something that was necessary if she wanted to be happy and comfortable in life.

The primary challenge she faced while pursuing these degrees was finding a balance because she has two kids – 13 years old and 3 years old. Other than that, there weren't too many challenges for her because she has a "Love for learning." If she could give current YouthBuild participants some advice it would be to never sell yourself short. Believe that it's doable and chase that Dream of yours to become better and smarter! Utilize those survival skills from your past and use them to hustle the education system, because there's money out there via grants to pay for school – tap into your power!

Alicia is currently the Program Manager at YouthBuild McLean County.

WRITE US!

Have you pursued or are you currently pursuing your education after YouthBuild and want to share your advice and experiences with other YouthBuild students and graduates?

Send us your stories and be featured in an upcoming edition of the **PSE Advisor** newsletter!

Email: VOICES@youthbuild.org



ENTER A CHANCE TO WIN A YOUTHBUILD USA PSE T-SHIRT!!!!
details on page 7!!!!

POSTSECONDARY PLEDGE

Even if I had not considered continuing my education before, when I return home, I PLEDGE to speak with my family, friends and YouthBuild support staff about how my AmeriCorps Education Award can best help me reach my present and future goals.



YOUR NAME

The YouthBuild logo features a stylized figure climbing a ladder that is shaped like the letter "Y".
YouthBuild[®] u.s.a.
Postsecondary Education Initiative

YOUTHBUILD'S GOT TALENT AND THE WINNER IS...

Congratulations to VOICES' own Trevor Easley for receiving the Honorable Mention in the "YouthBuild's Got Talent" video contest.

To learn more about this project and to see the winning videos, please copy this link into your web browser: <http://youthbuild.dreamhost.com/YouthBuildTalent/>

1000 LEADERS network

Interested in receiving news and updates from YouthBuild USA's Graduate Leadership Department about job, scholarship and leadership opportunities?

Join the 1,000 Leaders Network!

Sign up now by going to www.youthbuild.org/1000leaders

Be in the know about the Alumni Xchange, Regional Gatherings, and Speakers Bureau opportunities.

WIN A YOUTHBUILD USA "I TOOK THE PLEDGE" T-SHIRT!!

Send a picture of yourself holding your signed PSE Pledge (on page 6) and email with your name, YouthBuild program name and why you want to pursue postsecondary education to tmurphy@youthbuild.org by Friday, July 29, 2011!!

Transforming yourself from a Talker to a Doer

By: Paladin Jordan, YouthBuild USA Graduate Education & Policy Coordinator

Has there ever been a time when you felt motivated to complete a goal that has been on your mind for months, maybe even years? What was this goal of yours? How was it accomplished? Wait...the better question is, **was it accomplished?**

Stop letting fear of the unknown get in the way of your own success...

If you are anything like me, then there have been many times when you have shared a great idea with friends, family members, or maybe even coworkers. Yet for one reason or another that great idea was thrown into a pile with all your other great ideas that you didn't have time to see through. If this sounds familiar then you may just be a *Talker* like I used to be.

Talkers are great at voicing what they want to do, but we fall short when it comes to actually executing an idea. **Fear-not my friends!** Below are some very useful tips that will help you shift from talking about your ideas to actually executing them. Think about how much could be accomplished if we followed through and saw our ideas through to completion! This is what *Doers* do.

The tips below will not only help transform you from a talker to a doer, but they will also help to change what people around you think about you and your work ethic. The number one key to being a successful doer is to **stop letting fear of the unknown get in the way of your own success**. Think about times in your life where you truly learned something new. Generally, learning is associated with finding our way through and out of situations we have never been in before.

RESOURCES



Web Resources:

The 99 Percent Website:
<http://the99percent.com>

Action Not Words Article:
<http://tinyurl.com/2fs5tfo>



Book Resources:

“Juggling Elephants” by Jones Loflin & Todd Musig



Phone Applications:

1. Instapaper
2. DropBox

Set a goal for yourself:

- Clearly write out/define exactly what you want to accomplish.

Be honest with yourself:

- Figure out what you can do alone & what you will need support with.

Create a plan:

- Write out all of the steps you will have to complete to make this project a success

Set a personal deadline:

- Determine how long it will take you to do everything in your plan. Try to push yourself to have everything done long before the actual deadline just in case something out of your control happens.

Tell your supporters:

- Do this while you're motivated! That way if anything happens you already have people in your corner to help you.

Don't over-commit yourself:

- Spreading yourself thin will only cause you to get frustrated. Be sure to leave space and time for yourself to be effective and focused on the task at hand.

Build your puzzle:

- You can build a huge puzzle by adding one piece a day. Completing a lot of small steps toward your goal will still get you to completion eventually

Don't get in your own way:

- Look out for self-sabotage and self-doubt.

Leave reminders for yourself:

- Even doers lose focus/forget about steps toward their goals. Leave reminders for yourself in your email, car, cellphone, room, and/or workplace.

Be flexible:

- Be open to change. Whether its positive feedback about your project, a change in deadlines, or even a change in your own goal.

Helpful
Tips

Enhance your CREDIBILITY as a Speaker

BY: DELANOE JOHNSON, METRO ATLANTA YOUTHBUILD

Hey guys what's going on? I hope all is well. I just wanted to share an experience with you from my trip to the *Voices In Action: National Youth Summit* held by the U.S. Department of Education in Washington D.C. The event was held to gather information from student leaders about how we can support President Obama's mission to lead the world in college completion by the year 2020. This was a very cool event to attend and was very informative, but one of the biggest things I took from the experience was how some of the youth and speakers grabbed the audience's attention while speaking. I thought to myself, "hmm that's kind of interesting." I wondered how they did it. Was it on purpose or was it just a natural reaction? Well, I came home and did a little research and wanted to share Stephen D. Boyd, Ph.D., CSP, *Ethics in Speaking: A Practical Point of View* article with you. I think it will help you in your transition from "fitting in to standing out" while delivering a presentation."



1. Act in ways consistent with the message of the presentation. This can be as simple as **showing concern in tone of voice** and **facial expression** when talking about an issue at hand. Acting disinterested or unconcerned when presenting bad news can offend your listeners. Showing enthusiasm in delivery by quicker movements, greater variety, and a faster rate of speech when reading an exciting climax of a positive presentation can produce the same enthusiasm in your audience.

2. Good preparation is key. Your audience has given you time and an opportunity, and deserve to hear your best effort. That only comes through careful preparation. The speaker should **start preparing** several days or weeks before an important presentation is delivered.

3. Show respect for your audience. **Don't insult** your audience in any way. Racial slurs and profanity are obviously unethical, but in addition, don't show disrespect for people's gender, backgrounds, positions, appearances, or nationalities. Don't put people down because of their lack of knowledge of a topic; sometimes their lack of information is the very reason you have been asked to speak.

4. Base your presentation on clear evidence. Support your presentation with **relevant facts, statistics, and testimonies**. Keep track of your sources and be ready to produce them if an audience member has a question.

5. Respect the time of your audience. Know what time you are expected to finish--and **finish at that time**. It is an insult to your audience members and an abuse of your opportunity to speak to keep them ten, fifteen, or thirty minutes more than what is expected of you.

PUBLIC SPEAKING TIPS & RESOURCES:

- 1. Start Small**— practice in front of a few friends or family.
- 2. Prepare**— knowing your material will help you in case you stumble.
- 3. Body Language**— Make sure your facial expressions and body language match what you are saying!
- 4. Know That Anxiety is Normal**— before you speak do some deep breathing to relieve stress.

<http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.asp>
<http://www.aresearchguide.com/3tips.html>
http://totalcommunicator.com/body_article.html



CAREERS...

STANDING OUT IN THE JOB MARKET: MAXIMIZING YOUR PSE CREDENTIALS

By: Jodi Guinn, YouthBuild USA Education and Career VISTA

Choosing PSE credentials and degree programs to match your career interests and goals can help you **stand out** and **get ahead** in the job market. With a combination of the right experience and education you can be a star candidate for the jobs you want.

First, you have to know what kind of career you want, and what kind of credentials or degree you'll need. As you apply for and enter postsecondary education, it's **never too early** to start thinking about your career. For those of you who have already chosen a career path, earning a postsecondary credential is a way to advance to the next level. For others who are not sure what they want to do yet, college is the best way to find and **prepare for a promising career**.

Here are some tips for choosing and exploring career options.

1. Explore Your Interests, Passions and Values—What are you good at? What do you like doing? What's important to you in a career?

What's a Career?

A **Career** refers to a series of jobs that are part of a journey towards your long term goals. These jobs have the possibility for advancement, linked to postsecondary degree/credentials.

Vocational Assessments are fun easy ways to start thinking about what kinds of careers might be good for you. Follow the links below to two fun easy quizzes. Based on your answers, these websites will suggest some career paths for you to explore.

The Occupational and Skills Computer Assisted Researcher (OSCAR): <http://www.ioscar.org/tx/>

This tool offers specific job information for Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, but the results can still help guide you in determining what you might want to do—then you can search for job opportunities in your local area. You can choose between a shortened version of the quiz “a quick trip” or a longer version “a full flight.” We recommend the longer version.

O*NET Interest Profiler: <http://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>

Follow the prompts through a series of questions about what you like to do, and this tool will suggest some careers you might like.

2. Do Your Research—What career paths are hot in your area? Which ones are the best fits for you? What does it take to advance along those career paths? **What PSE credentials are needed?**

MyNextMove.org: Is a useful website to get started looking for a career. You can search for a career based on what kind of job you want, what industry you want to work in, or what you like to do. Look for jobs marked as “**Bright Outlook**”—that means that you'll have a good chance of finding a job along that career path in the future. Pay attention to the **skills, education** and **requirements** listed for each position.

Explore

*Your Interests,
Passions and
Values*

Standing Out in the Job
Market cont'd on Pg. 11

SHOUTOUTS



The PSE Department at YouthBuild USA would like to give special Shout Outs to the following VOICES members for graduating this summer:

Zurrell Toney—
Thaddeus Stevens College (PA)

Tayla Young—
YouthBuild Columbus (OH)

Lashon Amado—
Massasoit Community College (MA)


Yajaira Cortes—
YouthBuild Providence (RI)

DaiToya Littleton—
CCEO YouthBuild (CA)

CareerOneStop.org: This is the best website to find information about careers and to start planning for achieving your goals. You can find career and industry profiles, information on training and education, and tips for finding jobs and getting hired.

3. Make a Plan— Incorporating your career goals into your postsecondary education plans can help you stay on track in college. Here's a list of questions to consider when creating your plan:

- Which career paths interest you most? Why?
- What opportunities are available in your area for jobs along those career tracks?
- What are entry-level jobs along those career tracks? What positions require more education and/or experience?
- What additional skills or credentials will you need to advance?
- What opportunities and programs does your college, or colleges that you're considering attending, offer that relate to your potential career tracks?



What's a Career Ladder?

It is a term used to describe the path that people take throughout their careers. It describes the positions along a given career track that require additional education and experience, and come with additional responsibilities and higher pay.

****Remember that your career plans can and will change. If you take classes and pursue opportunities that excite you, you'll find a career!***



A. What comes once in a minute, twice in a moment and never in a thousand years?

B. What belongs to you but others use it more than you?

(Answers located at the bottom of this page)

PSE Advisor SHOUT OUTS
YouthBuild Mahoning County, Youngstown, OH

Fanchon Ceasar- a full-time Medical Assistant student at National College will be graduating in September 2011

Angeliq Shannon and Esmeralda Vargas- full-time Criminal Justice students at Youngstown State University.

Kiasha Robinson- a full-time Nursing student at Youngstown State University.

Equilla Roberson- enrolled at Youngstown State University majoring in Dental Hygiene.



CONGRATULATIONS congratulations
Congratulations congratulations **Congratulations**
CONGRATULATIONS congrats

Class of 2011

The Postsecondary Education Initiative staff wishes you good luck and success with your future plans!

We want to hear from you!

If you have questions about postsecondary education (*How to apply?, How to pay for school?, What's college like? etc.*) or if you want to share your successes, challenges or advice about pursuing postsecondary education with other YouthBuild students, **WE WANT TO HEAR IT!!!**

Send us your stories, ideas, questions, shout outs, art-submissions, etc. for future newsletters by contacting VOICES@youthbuild.org.

We would LOVE to hear your feedback!

If you have questions, but don't want to be featured in the newsletter, please email tmurphy@youthbuild.org



A SUCCESSFUL POSTSECONDARY STUDENT IS A SUCCESSFUL SELF-ADVOCATE

By: Krista Sabados, YouthBuild USA Education Resource Manager

Greetings YouthBuild students and graduates! I am Krista Sabados, the Education Resource Manager at YouthBuild USA. About 10 years ago, I was a low-income community college student who not only earned my A.A. degree; I also transferred to a four-year university and eventually attended graduate school at Harvard University. Now I am doing what I love: *working in education and helping young people succeed!*

Here are common **RESOURCES** you might find at your postsecondary institution and how they can help you:

Financial aid office: Can help you with your financial aid applications as well as help you identify scholarships, work-study opportunities, and loans to support your education. Some financial aid offices also offer free tax support to help you and your parents complete the FAFSA.

Career advising offices: Provide tons of information to help you explore and pursue exciting, well-paying careers. In addition, you may be able to meet with expert career advisors who can offer great career advice. This is also the place to go when you want to find an internship, beef up your interviewing skills, or learn to write a great resume.

Academic advising offices: These folks can help you plan for your major, organize your course schedule, pick your classes, as well as help you identify resources to help you overcome personal challenges that may impede your academic success.

Student support services and Educational Opportunity Programs: Student support services – offered through the federally funded TRIO programs – are designed to help low-income first generation college students succeed. Use this online directory to find out if your postsecondary institution has a TRIO program: <http://tinyurl.com/TRIOres>. These services may be able to help you obtain childcare, book grants, tutoring, and other types of support.

Health office: Let's say you have gotten sick or you need family planning support but you do not have health insurance. The health office at your college may be able to connect you with resources that can help you.

Your course instructors: Many instructors offer office hours to provide you with one-on-one academic support.

Transfer centers: Are you a community college student thinking about transferring to a four-year university? Visit your transfer center right away! Folks here can help you pick the right four-year college and make sure that you transfer successfully!

Fellow students: Other students may have great advice to help you overcome challenges. For example, a student in your class may be aware of an affordable childcare opportunity.

Tutoring Center: Many colleges provide tutoring support, particularly in math and writing. Need help with a difficult math assignment or writing a research paper? This is the place to visit!



Despite my successes, my journey toward getting my college degree was often difficult. For example, there were times when I could not afford books or my truck broke down on the way to school. However, I was very lucky to have staff, faculty, and fellow students at my community college help me overcome these challenges. However, they would not have been able to help me if I had not been able to ask for help and **advocate for myself**. I want to share some tips with you on how to be a good self-advocate. This may be the key to your postsecondary success!

USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES: Many of you may come across difficult hurdles while on your postsecondary journey. However, there may be resources in your postsecondary school and your communities that can help you overcome these challenges. You will never benefit from these resources unless you actively seek out and **USE** them.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP: Teachers, counselors, career counselors, financial aid officers are there to help YOU. If you are having trouble buying books, finding childcare, or deciding on a major – you should try to set up appointments with postsecondary staff or faculty to discuss how you may overcome these challenges. You may be pleasantly surprised when you learn about the number of resources available to you.



Read more on page 14

BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE

For example, if you are having problems paying for books, there may be resources at your college or in your community that a counselor or fellow student might know about that can help you. You will never know until you ask. One semester I did not have book money for a certain class. I went to the professor's office hours, told him my dilemma, and asked for his advice. And guess what? He loaned me the course books for the semester!

ARRIVE PREPARED: Coming to appointments or office hours with postsecondary staff or instructors **PREPARED** will increase your confidence and ensure that you are able to cover all the issues and topics that you need to cover. Being prepared means writing down your questions or concerns and doing background research before meeting with a staff person or teacher. For example, before visiting a counselor to pick your classes, you may want to read your major's course requirements in your school's handbook and write down questions and concerns that come up for you while reading. Or before meeting with your instructor to discuss how you can be more successful in his/or her class, write down specific things about the course or an assignment that you are struggling with. Never rely on postsecondary staff to automatically tell you everything you need to know. The more questions you ask, the more productive your meeting will be!

Also, taking notes during your meeting can be helpful. It helps you retain helpful information to refer to later while also letting the person you are meeting with know that you are taking their input (and your education) seriously.

BUILD YOUR COMMUNITY: I personally found it helpful to create a community with other students who are committed to their education. It is amazing how your peer group can help lift you up and give you the motivation and support that you need. Some ways to do this is form or join a study group, participate in student clubs or activities, and participate in student events.



Sometimes getting involved can be difficult, especially if you have work and/or family obligations. However, the more campus resources you use (like child care and work-study opportunities), the more you can spend time on the campus and obtain the benefits of student life.

BE PROUD OF WHO YOU ARE: Remember that you have unique strengths and bring a lot to the campus environment. Although the postsecondary campus may be unfamiliar to you, you earned the right to be there!

VOICES

PSE Student Advisory Council



Turn to page 16 to see a full list of **VOICES** members and where they're from!!!

Welcome to Atlanta...

The **VOICES** Student Advisory Council voted to have their second annual **VOICES** Summer meeting in Atlanta, Georgia in July 2011. They will receive professional development (*Workshop and Meeting Facilitator Training by the National Alumni Council's Bea Sweet*), leadership development, education policy discussions and also plan it's work for the next twelve months.

Paying for College!!



WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

Financial aid is money you receive to pay for college and career schools. The types of financial aid you can receive are:

- **Grants**– They do not have to be repaid. They are free money for students
- **Loans**– have to be repaid with interest (see *Is LOAN a 4 letter dirty word?* below)
- **Work-study**– is money a student earns by working at a job (usually on campus).
- **Scholarships**– are awarded based on a student's merit (excellence in academics, community service etc.) or can be awarded based on a student's interest in a hobby or sport, their ethnicity, financial need etc. Scholarships also do not need to be repaid

HOW MUCH FINANCIAL AID CAN I GET?

A student receives financial aid based on need, the school they are planning to attend and more importantly WHEN he/she applies for financial aid. You can get an estimate of how much financial aid you may qualify for by using the [FAFSA4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov) tool.

How DO I APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID?

It's **FREE** and **EASY**! You need to fill out the Free Application For Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov. If you are planning to enroll in school in the Fall, complete your FAFSA as soon after *January 1, 2012* as possible to receive the best financial aid package! If you have any questions about the FAFSA, ask your YouthBuild staff member or email voices@youthbuild.org and we can help you with the process!

Retrieved from <http://www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov/clcf/PlanningAFinancialAidNight.html>

Are You Eligible For Financial Aid?

Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov and check out the eligibility requirements.



TIP:

APPLY for financial aid even if you aren't sure if you will enroll in school or not. It will not count against you if you don't enroll!!

Is LOAN a 4 letter dirty word?!!??

By Tiffany Murphy and Krista Sabados

Not if you have the **RIGHT** student loan! Grants, work study and scholarships will always be your best options because you don't have to pay them back, but sometimes you may need to take out a student loan to cover your remaining tuition and living expenses. In 2008, the average total loan amount for graduating seniors was almost \$30,000 (plus interest). This may seem like a large sum of money! However, keep in mind that the average college graduate earns \$1 million more than high school graduates in their lifetime. And loans can typically be paid off over a long period of time.

Federal Student Loans

According to the Federal Student Aid website, "Federal student loans offer **low fixed interest rates; income-based repayment plans; loan forgiveness; and deferment options**". Generally, repayment of a federal loan does not begin until six months after a student graduates. A student receiving a federal loan does not need a credit history or a co-signer. Private bank loans often do not offer the same benefits and the interest rate could be higher. So if you need to borrow money to pay for college or trade school, start with completing the FAFSA and using the federal student loans.

Subsidized vs. Unsubsidized Loans

Stafford Subsidized Loans– are federally backed loans based on student financial need. Interest does

not get added on to the loan while the student is enrolled at least half-time in school or if the student decides to defer payments in the future. There are however, limits to the amount of subsidized loans a student can receive per school year ranging from **\$3500-\$5500 a yr**:

Deferment: Delaying payment (when a student returns to school or has a financial hardship)

FAFSA: Free Application For Student Aid

Interest: Money charged by a lender for giving a loan

Income-based repayment: How much you repay your loan based on your income

Loan Forgiveness: The government may pay for some or all of your loan if you volunteer, enroll in the military, teach or become a doctor in certain communities

Subsidized: The government pays interest on the loan

Stafford Unsubsidized Loans- are not based on financial need, but are federally backed. Interest gets added to the loan as soon as the school receives the money. The loan limits* for an unsubsidized loan are:

Freshman - Senior/5th year: \$2000 a year

*The amounts increase for independent students

Visit staffordloan.com, federalstudentaid.ed.gov, and fafsa.ed.gov for more information.



Resource List

Stay in the know about postsecondary education:

- ◆ <http://www.collegeboard.org>
- ◆ <http://www.getschool.com>
- ◆ <http://www.knowhow2go.org/campustour/> (*tour a virtual campus*)
- ◆ <http://www.makingitcount.com>
- ◆ <http://www.mobilize.org>
- ◆ <http://www.collegeforadults.org/>
- ◆ <http://www.petersons.com/>

Financial aid, scholarship and grant information:

- ◆ <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
- ◆ <http://www.collegescholarships.org>
- ◆ <http://www.fastweb.com>
- ◆ <https://www.gmsp.org/>
- ◆ <http://my.americorps.gov/mp/login.do>
- ◆ <http://tinyurl.com/37dsfqz>
- ◆ <http://www.scholarship.com>
- ◆ http://dir.yahoo.com/Education/Financial_Aid/Grants/

Financial Aid Literacy:

- ◆ <http://federalstudentaid.ed.gov/federalaidfirst/>
- ◆ <http://www.finaid.org/loans/>

DID YOU KNOW?

On average, college students spend a **\$1000 a year** on textbooks! Thankfully, with the passage of the Textbook Affordability Law on July 1, 2010, colleges are to provide students with a list of assigned textbooks for each course during registration (including the ISBN number and price) so that students can plan ahead and shop around for the best deal. But did you also know that some textbooks and college courses may be available online for FREE? Yes, free, if your college uses open source textbooks. Open source textbooks is an evolving concept where authors post their content online and students or professors can access it and most times download it to their computers for free. Try searching for your textbooks at collegeopentextbook.org at <http://oerconsortium.org/discipline-specific/> or bookboon.com first and you may find a book or two.

The mission of YouthBuild USA is to unleash the intelligence and positive energy of low-income youth to rebuild their communities and their lives.

YouthBuild USA seeks to join with others to help build a movement toward a more just society in which respect, love, responsibility, and cooperation are the dominant unifying values, and sufficient opportunities are available for all people in all communities to fulfill their own potential and contribute to the well-being of others.

PSE Newsletter Wordsearch YouthBuild USA

How many words can you find?



Activity
Bachelors
Change
Degree
Education
Graduation
Leadership
Pledge
Support
VOICES

AmeriCorps
Campus
Class
Determination
Excel
Individual
LifeLong Learning
Professor
Talker
Volunteer

Apprenticeship
Career
Connections
Development
Fitting In
Intelligence
Masters
Standout
Transitioning
YouthBuild

Associates
Certificate
Decision
Doctorate
Goals
Interview
Peer Pressure
Success
Unique