

SENIOR NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER FOR PTHS SENIORS

January 25, 2008

NEED HELP?

Some of our seniors and parents are already working on their FAFSA financial aid forms. Some families are still gathering the financial data needed to complete their FAFSA. Other P-T families are saying “*Help!*” If the FAFSA looks a bit scary to you and your parents, we have good news. Help is on the way. Let’s repeat some information we gave you about one month ago. We now have more specific details.

The financial aid agency, PHEAA, is sponsoring a series of “FAFSA Completion Days” around the state. In our area, state senator Sean Logan (Monroeville) is adding support by increasing the availability of these “help” seminars. Here’s the schedule for FAFSA Completion Days in our area:

- SATURDAY, FEB 2-- at Penn State New Kensington, reserve by Jan 28. (412-380-2242)
- SATURDAY, FEB 9-- at CCAC, Boyce Campus, Monroeville, reserve by Feb 4. (412-380-2242)

FINANCIAL AID SEMINARS—AGENDA

10:30 am to 12:00 noon-- Financial Aid Overview
12:00 to 12:45 pm-- Break
12:45 pm to 2:00 pm-- FAFSA Completion Workshop

****Note:** in previous “how-to” seminars, parents have been asked to bring financial information from the previous tax year (for you, 2007), including W-2 forms, 1099 forms, and other financial information. You may want to find a copy of your old 2006 Fed Inc Tax form; bring it as a guide to follow.

NEED HOPE?

While we’re on the subject of FAFSAs and tax forms, we also note that many Americans overlook the “Hope Scholarship” when completing their tax forms. The “Hope Scholarship” is not a scholarship, but a \$1,500 tax credit. To qualify, your parents must first file a tax return, and second, owe taxes. Get more information about the “Hope Scholarship” by using Google or a similar search tool. If your parents plan to use the “Hope” option, they must file IRS tax form 8863. Go for it...it’s \$1,500 more in your pocket.

COMING SOON

Our community scholarship program is up and running. Applications will soon be printed. You will receive a list of all community scholarships on February 14. On the same date, all applications will be available for student pick-up in the Guidance Office. Seniors will have until 7:35 AM on March 19 to complete and return their scholarship applications. Here are a few reminders about our local community scholarship program:

- More than 60 individual scholarships will be awarded by local organizations and individuals.
- Seniors may apply for more than one award; in fact, they are encouraged to do so.

- It is wrong to assume that *“the straight-A students will win all the scholarships”*. Yes, some of the local scholarships will be awarded to high-achieving students. On the other hand, a *“straight-B”* or a *“straight-C”* student has an opportunity to be chosen for many awards, based on other requirements. There’s something for everyone in our community scholarship program.
- You do not have to rush to the Guidance Office on Feb 14 to pick up applications. They will be available, every day, until the deadline date.
- “The deadline is the deadline”. Our community scholarship program **will not** accept applications submitted after the 7:35 AM deadline on March 19. Plan ahead....turn in your completed scholarship apps **before** March 19.

OTHER SCHOLARSHIPS, AVAILABLE NOW

FIRE CHIEFS ASSN OF WESTMORELAND COUNTY– The Caldwell Inspirational Scholarship....two \$250 awards....must be a current firefighter, or relative of a current firefighter....500 word essay....PTHS deadline is Monday, March 17.

AUDUBON SOCIETY OF WESTERN PA– The Beulah Frey Environmental Scholarship....2-yr or 4-yr college, major in an environmentally-related field....no applications at PTHS, on-line at www.aswp.orgif info is needed from guidance office, submit request by Monday, March 17....completed apps due same day.

SAMMY “GOT MILK?” SCHOLARSHIPS– Many national awards, up to several thousand dollars....two key requirements are academic excellence and athletic excellence....apply on-line only at bodybymilk.com National deadline is Friday, March 7....if info is needed from guidance office, submit request by Thursday, Feb 28.

THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION– Anna N. Dosen Serbian Educational Fund Scholarship....must be of Serbian background....2-yr or 4-yr school....major in science (including health sciences or engineering).... one-page essay....one letter of reference....PTHS deadline is Thursday, Feb 21.

THE PITTSBURGH FOUNDATION– Melville Alexander Eberhardt Memorial Fund Scholarship....2-yr or 4-yr school....demonstrate financial need (file FAFSA)....minimum 3.0 GPA....500-word essay....submit copy of parents 2007 Fed Inc Tax....two letters of reference....PTHS deadline is Friday, Feb 29.

PBFAA SCHOLARSHIP– Penna Burglar and Fire Alarm Assn....\$24,000 awarded statewide and nationallyone parent must be a full-time law enforcement officer, or a volunteer member of a fire dept....500-700 word essayPTHS deadline is Monday, March 3.

DON'T SLIP / DON'T QUIT

Some national periodicals are now mentioning an alarming nationwide trend among some high school seniors. Some seniors, after receiving notification they’ve just been accepted into their top-choice college, decide to “take some time off” in the classroom. They feel their hard work has paid dividends, and now it’s time to cruise into May on automatic pilot. In academic courses, the ‘A’ grade is turning into a ‘C’ grade. And, worse, in elective courses, the ‘A’ grade is dropping to a ‘D’ or ‘F’.

Top-rate selective colleges are responding to this trend with firm statements of their own..... *“Keep your grades up, or you’re out”*. Some high school seniors have been shocked to see their acceptance letters have been revoked because they have not maintained a satisfactory level of performance in the classroom. In other instances, some colleges still allow the students to enroll, but revoke the campus academic scholarship that was offered to them.... *“In December, we offered you a \$3,000 campus grant; it’s now May and we’re taking it away. You did not maintain a satisfactory grade level at your high school”*.

DON'T SLIP! DON'T QUIT!