

504 24th Street
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www.OpportunityPlan.com

FALL 2010

VOLUME 26

ISSUE 1



By the Numbers

\$4,879,181 available for students in OPI loan funds.

\$3,952,850 currently on loan to 275 students.

\$435,370 awarded for Fall 2010 scholarships.

\$26,800 raised for Sustainers Society in 2009-2010.

\$20,920 average expense of one year of higher education as determined by OPI staff and used in financial aid education programs.

9,566 number of unique visitors to www.OpportunityPlan.com since it debuted last year.

\$5,000 per semester largest scholarship provided to OPI scholarship recipients.

\$1,200 per semester average amount of scholarship provided to OPI scholarship recipients.

364 recipients of scholarships for Fall 2010 semester.

28 new students borrowed funds from OPI for Fall 2010 semester.

\$20 per month saved in a simple savings account from the time a child is born until they graduate from high school will result in more than \$5000 available for college expenses.

14 students represents the largest number of students on any one loan fund. Two funds, Forrest English Loan Fund and William "Hal" Harter Loan Fund, each have 14 students currently borrowing.

3,875 full-time employees support OPI activities.

*Average calculated with costs provided by all levels of institutions (community college to private university) in Texas.

Financial Aid Education Added Emphasis for OPI Sustainers Society provides funding



Financial aid is a confusing subject; if you've ever tried to navigate the maze, you will likely concur. There's the FAFSA which determines the EFC which results in the SAR. Grants and scholarships don't have to be repaid; loans do. Loans are subsidized and unsubsidized and then there's the Parent PLUS loan all with different interest rates and qualifications. Confused yet?

Imagine being an 18-year-old and trying to determine what you want to do with your future. Or being the parent of one of those students trying to figure out how you and your child will finance that education. The terms are confusing, the process overwhelming and sometimes, you just want to give up. Unfortunately, sometimes students (and parents) do just give up.

It's that dilemma Opportunity Plan, Inc. is hoping to combat by educating students and

parents more effectively about the financial aid process.

"I've talked to many students and parents since I came to OPI that just don't understand the process or even where to begin," M. Keith Brown, OPI executive director, said. "If we can educate them better and find resources for them beyond OPI's resources, then we are able to assist additional students with OPI's scholarship and loan funds."

The first educational tool OPI developed is the newly formatted and restyled www.OpportunityPlan.com which debuted in May. The focus of the redesign was not only to make the site more visually appealing but to also make it a one-stop shop for resources needed to make it through the financial aid process.

(cont. on pg. 8)

Memorial and Honorary Contributions | Aug. 1, 2009 - July 31, 2010

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(cont. from cover)

"Our next step in this process will be to get in front of as many students and parents as possible to explain the financial aid process, and more importantly, to give them the message that when they get confused or overwhelmed, the website can answer many of their questions and the OPI staff is just a phone call away," Brown said. "Of course developing these additional resources takes money and that's why we have really begun concentrating on raising unrestricted funds."

OPI's Sustainers Society began last year and recognizes those individuals and organizations who provide at least \$1000 total unrestricted contributions on an annual basis. The gifts supplement OPI's operating budget and allows OPI to provide further education regarding financial aid.

"We've had a great response to the Sustainers Society which just reinforces that OPI's supporters are committed to educating students in a variety of ways," Brown said. "Of course, we'll always be in the business of awarding scholarships and making student loans accessible but support from the Sustainers Society will expand OPI's services even further."

For more information about the Sustainers Society, contact Brown at 806-655-2528 or visit www.OpportunityPlan.com/sustainer-society.



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