

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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CONTACT:

Carolynn Bright
Communications Director
(406) 495-7506

Montana Students: It's Time to Apply for SAF's Circle of Success Scholarships

Beginning on Jan. 1, Montana students are invited to apply for \$1,000 Circle of Success scholarships from nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF). To date, SAF has distributed \$612,000 through the program.

The scholarships are distributed to second, third and fourth-year postsecondary students. In addition, 25 of the scholarships are designated for Graduation Matters Montana (GMM) school seniors and members of Superintendent Denise Juneau's GMM Student Advisory Board.

"Affording postsecondary education continues to be a struggle for many Montana students, first year and continuing students alike," SAF Vice President of Foundation Activities Kelly Cresswell said. "Circle of Success scholarships are one of the many ways SAF supports Montana students in their pursuit of education beyond high school."

Applications for SAF's Circle of Success and the SAF/GMM Circle of Success scholarships will be available at SmartAboutCollege.org beginning on Jan. 1. Click on the "Apply Now" button to link to the application. The application deadline is Tuesday, March 1.

In order to qualify for a Circle of Success scholarship, applicants must be Montana residents who graduated from a Montana high school, and are attending a Montana college or university at least half time. They must be starting their second, third or fourth year of postsecondary education in Academic Year 2016-17 and maintaining at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA).

In addition, one of the Circle of Success scholarships will be awarded to a qualifying student who is serving, or has served, in the U.S. Armed Forces. This scholarship is delivered in memory of retired Staff Sgt. Carl Valvoda who passed away in 2015 following a courageous battle with brain cancer. Valvoda's mother, Glenda, works at SAF, and his wife, Jamie, worked at SAF for several years.

SAF/GMM Circle of Success scholarship applicants must be Montana residents who will be graduating from one of 52 GMM high schools, and attending a Montana college or university or college at least half time in Academic Year 2016-17. Members of Superintendent Juneau's 2015-2016 GMM Student Advisory Board may also apply. Applicants must have at least a 2.5 GPA.

SAF has been providing Circle of Success scholarships to students at Montana colleges since 2003. The program is near and dear to the hearts of SAF employees because it was originally funded solely through SAF employee donations. Today, SAF uses the proceeds from fundraising efforts including the annual golf scramble, Running Amuck for Scholarship Bucks, and private donations to supplement the effort.

For more information about the Circle of Success scholarship program, visit SmartAboutCollege.org or contact Darbie Hess at dhess@safmt.org or (406) 495-7393.

More information about Graduation Matters Montana and the list of participating schools can be found at: <http://graduationmatters.mt.gov>.

Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to pursue and fund their postsecondary education. Funds generated by SAF are returned to Montanans in the form of education grants and public benefit programs - to date more than \$30 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org or www.SmartAboutCollege.org.