

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Montana Students: It's Time to Apply for SAF's Circle of Succe\$\$ Scholarships

Beginning on Jan. 1, Montana students are invited to apply for \$1,000 Circle of Succe\$\$ scholarships from nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF). Each year, SAF offers at least 56 of these scholarships in honor of each of Montana's counties.

New in 2015 are an additional 25, \$1,000 scholarships intended for Graduation Matters Montana (GMM) school seniors and members of Superintendent Denise Juneau's GMM Student Advisory Board. These will be distributed by SAF in cooperation with GMM.

"We are excited to continue to partner with SAF to increase the graduation rate and assist students as they make plans for their next steps in life," said Superintendent Juneau. "This new opportunity for students attending Graduation Matters schools is going to help open up doors for students who may think that college is financially out of reach."

Applications for SAF's Circle of Succe\$\$ and the SAF/GMM Circle of Succe\$\$ scholarships will be available at SmartAboutCollege.org beginning on Jan. 1. Click on the "Apply Now" button under the photos of the Circle of Succe\$\$ Class of 2014 to link to the application forms. The application deadline is Sunday, March 1.

"Cost continues to be a factor in students' decisions to go to college, and to continue working toward their degrees or credentials," said Kelly Cresswell, SAF's vice president of Foundation Activities. "Scholarships like Circle of Succe\$\$ are a great opportunity for students to pay for their education."

In order to qualify for a traditional Circle of Succe\$\$ 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 2015-16 and maintaining at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA).

SAF/GMM Circle of Succe\$\$ scholarship applicants must be Montana residents who graduated from, or will be graduating from, one of 48 GMM high schools, and will be attending a Montana college or university or college at least half time in Academic Year 2015-16. Members of Superintendent Juneau's 2014-2015 GMM Student Advisory Board may also apply. Applicants must have at least a 2.5 GPA.

SAF has been providing Circle of Succe\$\$ scholarships to students at Montana colleges since 2003 — \$542,000 in all. 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 Succe\$\$ 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 \$29.6 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org or www.SmartAboutCollege.org.