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SAF/DPHHS to Host “A Step Ahead – Building a Path to Success” Summit for Youth in Foster Care at MSU June 15-19

(BOZEMAN) Students from throughout Montana will be gathering at Montana State University June 15-19 to participate in “A Step Ahead – Building a Path to Success” Summit for Youth in Foster Care.

Hosted by nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, the free summit provides an opportunity for youth in foster care to prepare for life after high school — whether that includes postsecondary education or employment.

“We have 40 youth from across Montana registered for this year’s summit,” said Rhonda Safford, one of the event coordinators. “We’re looking forward to meeting them and getting them connected with the resources they need for whatever their futures hold.”

Students attending the camp will stay in dorms, eat in the cafeteria, and experience college life firsthand.

In addition to finding out how to search and apply for scholarships, and apply for Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) that provide up to \$5,000 for education-related expenses, the participants will learn essential career and life skills. Those include how to find and maintain employment, build relationships, locate community resources, and manage money.

Finally, students receive a laptop as they embark on the path to higher education, or a package of applicable tools and resources to help them get a step ahead on life after high school.

Past summit participant Lora Murphy said she would recommend the experience to other youth in foster care.

“Camp is the reason I could go to college,” she said. “I didn’t know about the ETV or how to apply, or anything about scholarships. The camp showed me what to do and how to not get into too much debt.”

2015 marks the 10th year that youth in foster care have had the opportunity to attend the summit.

Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to finance and pursue 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.

The mission of the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) is: Keeping Children Safe and Families Strong. CFSD works three hundred and sixty five days a year, twenty-four hours a day, to fulfill its mission. CFSD is responsible for ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who have been victims of, or are at substantial risk of being victims of, child maltreatment.