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SAF Accepting Applications for Free Foster Youth College Prep Camp

Montana foster care youths are invited to apply to attend Student Assistance Foundation's seventh annual "A Step Ahead" College Prep Camp July 10-13.

Applications are available at smartaboutcollege.org/camp and **the deadline for applications is April 20**. Applicants must also provide a letter of recommendation.

Each year, up to 24 foster care youths gather at a Montana college campus to experience college life firsthand. Carroll College in Helena will host the event in 2012.

While at the free, four-day camp, the foster youths receive classroom instruction in areas including basic computer skills, debt management techniques, and how to research scholarships, colleges, careers and more.

In addition, they learn about the purpose of Foster Youth Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and how to properly complete the application forms. Foster care youths are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per year to pay for their college expenses through the ETV program.

Between "classes," campers participate in a variety of team-building exercises and leisure activities designed to bring them closer to their fellow camp participants, and to give them ideas of low-cost, safe, and fun recreational opportunities for college students.

Campers leave "A Step Ahead" with a free laptop computer to assist them as they work toward their goal of higher education.

To qualify to attend, youths must be in state or tribal foster care custody or recently "aged out" of the foster care system. In addition, applicants must have identified aspirations to attain postsecondary education as part of their Transitional Living Plan.

"In many cases, Montana foster care youths come from families without a college-going tradition or the means to help their children pay for postsecondary education," said Rhonda Safford, who coordinates the camp for SAF. "We want Montana foster youths to make completing college part of their plans, and through the camp, we believe we provide them with this vision and the tools to help make their dreams a reality."

For more information, visit smartaboutcollege.org/camp or call Safford at (406) 495-7750.

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 \$23.3 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org or www.SmartAboutCollege.org. Also, look for us on Facebook.

