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Vote Now, Vote Often! Help SAF Be a Winner in the State Farm Neighborhood Assist Program

Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) needs your votes — today, tomorrow, and every day for the next three weeks!

As a finalist in the State Farm Neighborhood Assist grant program, Montana-based SAF is one of 200 causes from across the nation competing to receive a \$25,000 grant for its “A Step Ahead” College Prep Camp for Montana youths in foster care. The 40 programs that garner the most votes will receive \$25,000 each to support their cause.

Vote for “A Step Ahead” at <https://www.state-assist.com/cause/5109/a-step-ahead-camp> today through April 22. Supporters can vote up to 10 times per day.

“Did you know that about 70 percent of foster youths across the nation want to attend college, but less than 13 percent of them enroll?” said Rhonda Safford, camp coordinator. “At SAF’s ‘A Step Ahead’ camp, we are committed to changing that statistic by giving these youths the tools and resources they need to succeed. Receiving State Farm Neighborhood Assist funds would go a long way to helping us do that.”

For the past seven years, youths in foster care from across Montana have gathered at a college campus to experience college firsthand. While at the camp, youths stay in the dorms and receive classroom instruction in areas including money management, relationship-building, finding and maintaining housing, and scholarship searches and applications. Plus, camp participants learn the purpose of Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) for youth in foster care and how to properly complete the application forms.

Finally, campers leave “A Step Ahead” with a free laptop computer to use as they work toward their education goals — a tool that camp organizers view as being essential to success in postsecondary education.

“Getting a college education is very important,” said past camp participant Aurelia Tait, who attends Cottey College in Missouri. “You can’t go anywhere in life if you don’t go to college. College opens up so many doors you didn’t know existed. ‘A Step Ahead’ camp helped me realize that.”

Safford encourages everyone to vote now and vote often.

“We need every vote we can get, and your support will make a big difference in the lives of our campers,” she said.

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 \$27 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org or www.SmartAboutCollege.org.

State Farm Neighborhood Assist is a crowd-sourced philanthropic initiative that lets communities determine where funding is awarded, exclusively through Facebook. The initiative utilizes the State Farm Youth Advisory Board to vet submissions for causes and allows Facebook users who download the free State Farm Neighborhood Assist application to vote for the final 40 grant winners. The program has been inspired by the incredible number of neighborhoods that are coming together to solve a problem or improve their community.