



E.F.F.O.R.T. Newsletter

Inside this issue:

<i>Appointment Schedules</i>	2
<i>Resource Dinners</i>	3
<i>New Student Orientations</i>	3
<i>E.F.F.O.R.T. Club</i>	3
<i>Chafee Grant</i>	3
<i>Our E.F.F.O.R.T. Team</i>	4-5
<i>UC Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan</i>	6

WELCOME

E.F.F.O.R.T. is a Grossmont College Foster Youth program that arose out of a state wide initiative designed to assist potential college students who were or are being emancipated out of the foster care system. E.F.F.O.R.T. stands for **E**OPS **F**inancial Aid **F**oster Youth **O**utreach & **R**etention **T**eam. Our mission is to provide this unique student population with the support services they need to not only attain a college education but be successful in the world beyond college. We hope to help students open up a world of opportunity for themselves. You can receive more details from our website at:

www.grossmont.edu/fa/EFFORT.asp

Or

Call the **EFFORT** program at
(619) 644-7454 ext. **3711**

Are you busing it?

San Diego County residents

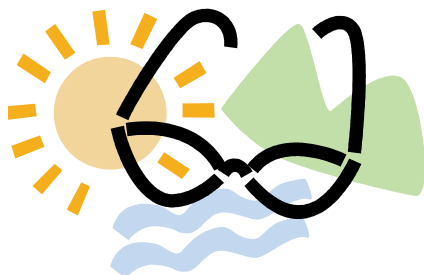
Go to

www.sdmts.com/tripplanner.asp

to plan your next trip to Grossmont College



Important Dates



Instructor Grade deadline for Summer '09 eight week classes and 2nd four week session: **August 10th**

EFFORT New Student orientation: **August 13th**
EFFORT Fall '09 Kickoff BBQ **August 17th**

Fall 2009 Semester begins: **August 24th**

E.F.F.O.R.T. Appointments

Michael Perez

EOPS Counselor & E.F.F.O.R.T. Co-Coordinator

Dedicated EFFORT Appointment Times

Begin Monday, August 31, 2009

Tuesdays: 10:00 am & 2:30 pm

Wednesdays: 10:00 am & 2:30 pm

Thursdays: 10:00 am & 3:30 pm

Fridays: 12:00 pm

Please call the EOPS office at (619) 644-7617 to schedule an appointment.

Nathaniel Martinez

EFFORT Student Liaison

Mondays: 11:00 am-2:00 pm

Tuesdays: 12:00 pm-3:00 pm

Wednesdays: 12:00 pm-3:00 pm

Thursdays: 12:00-3:00 pm

Fridays: 11:00am-2:00 pm

E-mail nathaniel_martinez@gcccd.edu for an appointment.

Aron Sanchez

ILS Case Coordinator

Thursdays

1:30 pm-4:30 pm

Contact Aron by phone at (619) 285-6877 ext. 224 or e-mail at Asanchez@sdyouthservices.org

Julio Soto

Financial Aid Advisor & Foster Youth Liaison

Walk-In Times

Mondays: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Wednesdays: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Thursdays: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Fridays: 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Please call the Financial Aid office at (619) 644-7129 to schedule an appointment.

Nadia Almaguer

Lead Financial Aid Ambassador

Mondays: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Tuesdays: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Wednesdays: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Thursdays: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Fridays: 8:30 am - 1:30 pm

Call the Financial Aid Office at (619) 644-7129 or e-mail Nadia at nadia.almaguer@gcccd.edu for an appointment.

Lilian Keriakous

Financial Aid Technician & Chafee Coordinator

Monday - Friday

9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Contact Lilian by phone at (619) 644-7125 or e-mail at lilian.keriakous@gcccd.edu.

E.F.F.O.R.T. Resource Dinners

During the Fall 2009 Semester, the E.F.F.O.R.T. program will be featuring a series of resource dinner events for our former foster youth students. The resource dinners will be a free event for all E.F.F.O.R.T. students to come and enjoy a nice meal, gain useful knowledge, attain a sense of community with fellow students and have fun.

These events will provide an opportunity for our team members to reconnect with our student population and for you to meet new students on campus.

Highlights for the resource dinners will include food, workshops, guest presentations, movies, games, activities and more depending on the individual event. We will be providing specific dates for future resource dinners in later editions of our newsletter.

E.F.F.O.R.T. New Student Orientation

The E.F.F.O.R.T. New Student Orientation is available for all new E.F.F.O.R.T. students coming to Grossmont in the Fall 2009 semester for the first time. Although current E.F.F.O.R.T. students who have already attended Grossmont in the past need not attend, it is important to get the word out to potential E.F.F.O.R.T. students who may be reluctant to go to college or who may not know where to begin. Feel free to tell any potential EFFORT students that you know about our upcoming orientation. We are asking all po-

tential E.F.F.O.R.T. students planning on attending the E.F.F.O.R.T. orientation to have already filed an admissions application with the college, completed their assessment tests and to have scheduled an appointment with the EOPS office prior to attending the orientation.

Our next orientation will be:
Thursday, August 13, 2009
10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Room: 528

E.F.F.O.R.T. Club

The E.F.F.O.R.T. program is in the early stages of creating an E.F.F.O.R.T. Club. We need your help to make this a reality.

We are looking for current E.F.F.O.R.T. students that are willing to devote some of their time to take on the roles of club leader and regular members. Some advantages of participating in this club would be the chance to gain valuable leadership skills and an opportunity to further create a sense of community among their fellow students. No prior club experience is needed, only the desire to work hard. Students will have additional faculty support to help form the structure of this club. In addition to the benefits above, members will also be able to have regular meetings, create fun events for students to attend, and give back to the community with volunteer events. The members of this club will also have the opportunity to work with other clubs on campus through the Associated Students of Grossmont College (ASGC). For more information please contact Michael Perez at (619) 644-7746.

Chafee Grant

The California Chafee Grant is free money for current or former foster youth to help pay for college or career or technical training that you don't have to pay back. You may also be able to use your grant to pay for child care, transportation and rent while you're in school.

To qualify you must be a current or former foster youth, not have reached your 22nd birthday as of July 1st of the award year, and have financial need. You must also enroll at least half time in an eligible school, your program of study must be at least one academic year long, and you must attend class regularly and get good grades. In addition, you must have also submitted a FAFSA and Chafee application for the 09-10 award year to be eligible for the grant.

To submit the California Chafee Grant Program Application online or to get more information, please visit the Chafee website at: www.chafee.csac.ca.gov.

To receive assistance filing a Chafee application please contact Lilian Keriakous via e-mail at:

lilian.keriakous@gcccd.edu

Our EFFORT Team

Michael Perez

My name is Michael Perez and my role as the EFFORT Co-coordinator and your EOPS Counselor is to provide each EFFORT student with consistent academic, career, and personal counseling. As the co-founder of the EFFORT program my goal was to provide a consistent service for former foster youth where I would act as a link between all of the vital services on campus. Having worked with former foster youth throughout my nine years as a counselor, I was made aware of the struggle former foster youth students experienced with having to tell their story to every campus office entered; I could only imagine how many former foster youth we lost just in the admission process because of the parental information required. Through our E.F.F.O.R.T. program I have established wonderful relationships with offices such as: Disabled Student Services, Admissions and Records, Student Health Services, Transfer Center, Career Center, and the Assessment Office. EFFORT has also brought awareness to the Grossmont College campus community of the unique needs former foster youth students face. Another important aspect of my job as the E.F.F.O.R.T. Co-coordinator is to be connected to the large number of city and county foster youth services. As a result of such collaborations, the EFFORT program has wonderful partnerships with housing services through THP+, The Home Program, SDSU's Guardians Scholar Program and Just in Time. This past year, in collaboration with the San Diego County Office of Education "College Connection" committee, the EFFORT program received \$2,500 in funds to be provided as scholarships.

I am proud to be a part of the EFFORT program because of the unique partnership between EOPS and the Financial Aid office. Our two departments have come together to maximize services for former foster youth and the ultimate goal is to make your time at Grossmont College successful in every way.

Please note, on page 2, the specific times available for EFFORT walk-ins. My goal is that these time slots will be utilized when emergencies arise and if you can't wait for two weeks to see me. I encourage all my EFFORT students to see me regularly throughout the semester. I look forward to seeing you this Fall!

You can reach Michael Perez by phone at (619) 644-7746 or via email at michael.perez@gcccd.edu.

Julio Soto

Becoming Architects of Our Own Destiny

Many years ago, I was introduced to a poem written by Amado Nervo. Although I was very young at the time, life had already presented me with very difficult challenges that left me with deep wounds (both emotional and physical); wounds that I now know many of us can relate to. The name of the poem, *En Paz* (At Peace), drew my attention right away. I wondered if this poem was going to help me heal. I wondered if I was going to find words that could ease my suffering. As soon as I was done reading the second verse, I knew I had just come across the statement I wanted to make about my life: "*Porque veo al final de mi rudo camino que yo fui el arquitecto de mi propio destino*" (Because I see at the end of my rough journey that I was the architect of my own destiny). Was this possible? Could I have a say in my future? Although the journey has been challenging, I want to share with you that nothing has been more rewarding than owning the steps I take every day of my life. When I made the decision to give college a try (and after several failed attempts) I always reminded myself that I had a say in what I wanted for my future. You too have a say in yours; and I'm sure you will find the path to your own destiny. Welcome to Grossmont College and may our paths cross each other.....

Julio Soto is a Financial Aid Advisor and Foster Youth Liaison for the Financial Aid Department. He is available on a walk-in basis to all EFFORT students Monday through Friday 9am to 1pm. Appointments can be arranged at (619) 644-7129 or at julio.soto@gcccd.edu.

Nathaniel Martinez

My name is Nathaniel Sol Martinez and I am an EFFORT Student Liaison working in the EOPS and Financial Aid offices. I was in the foster care system from age seven till age eighteen. As a Liaison, I am trained to be understanding of your situation, sensitive to your needs and challenges and will help equip you to succeed in college and beyond. I am available to assist EFFORT students with forms, applications, class registration and any questions that you may have while attending Grossmont College.

You may contact Nathaniel via e-mail at nathaniel_martinez@gcccd.edu

Nadia Almaguer

My name is Nadia Almaguer and I am the Lead Financial Aid Ambassador here at Grossmont College. I have made myself available to any Foster Youth students that require additional help completing their financial aid file or who may have any questions about college in general. Please feel free to stop by the Financial Aid Office if you need any assistance. I am at the office Monday-Thursday 9:00am to 3:00pm & Friday 8:30am to 1:30pm.

You may reach Nadia by calling the Financial Aid Office at (619) 644-7129 or via e-mail at nadia.almaguer@gcccd.edu

Lilian Keriakous

Having moved to the United States without sufficient knowledge of the English language, I was faced with the struggle of learning English while also searching for a job to help pay for my education. The Grossmont College Financial Aid Office was of great help to me many years ago as I learned about the numerous grants available along with a program called Work Study. Work Study gave me the opportunity to work on campus and earn some money while also attending school. This made things easier for me and I was lucky enough to get a job in the Financial Aid Office. Ever since, I've been an employee at this department. Without overstating things, life has presented me with many challenges; however, it's because of such challenges that I feel I am better able to assist students with their own challenges. My main roles are to help students apply for the Chafee Grant and make sure that eligible students receive their aid. Moreover, I am also available to answer any questions students may have regarding Cal Grant or the Child Development Grant. Welcome to Grossmont College!

You may contact Lilian by phone at (619) 644-7125 or via e-mail at lilian.keriakous@gcccd.edu.

Aron Sanchez

My name is Aron Sanchez and I work with the Independent Living Skills (ILS) program with San Diego Youth Services. In the ILS program, I work with current and former foster youth ages 17 to 21 years old. The ILS program has three main focuses. Those are housing, education and employment. I can also assist youth with documentation, Medi-Cal and other types of services. Many of the programs offered to current and former foster youth, like the Transition Housing Programs (TLP, THP+, HOME), require youth to participate in the Independent Living Skills program.

If you are interested and would like to learn more about the Independent Living Skills program, you can find me in the EOPS office every Thursday from 1:30-4:30 p.m. Also, you can reach me at (619) 285-6877 ext. 224 or via e-mail at Asanchez@sdyouthservices.org

UC Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan

The University of California Board of Regents have recently approved a new financial aid plan that makes it easier for lower-income students to attend a UC school by covering their system wide UC fees. To be eligible for the Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, you must::

- Be a California Resident
- Submit a FAFSA by March 2nd and provide any additional documentation campuses may request by the specified deadline.
- Apply for a Cal Grant (if you haven't already)
- Demonstrate income below \$60,000 with financial need (as determined for federal need-based aid programs)
- Be in your first four years as a UC undergraduate (first two years for transfer students)
- Meet other campus basic requirements for UC grant aid (for example, be enrolled at least half-time during the academic year, meet campus academic progress standards, not be in default on student loans, etc.)

The Blue and Gold plan can reduce your cost in multiple ways. Under the plan, your system wide fees will be fully covered by scholarship or grant money. The plan combines all sources of scholarship and grant awards you receive (federal, state, UC and private) to count toward covering your fees. Students with greater financial need can qualify for even more grant support to help defray other educational expenses (like books, housing, transportation, etc.).

For more information please log on to www.universityofcalifornia.edu/blueandgold/

Our program is committed to offering our EFFORT students a special kind of service and dedication. We pride ourselves on being able to offer our students the kind of support that they desperately need but, unfortunately, this may not always extend everywhere else they go. Although our team members work very hard to bring you the best services we can, our program wouldn't be what it is today without you, the student. That is why we value your opinion when it comes to how we can better assist you. If you have any questions, comments or concerns about what we do please feel free to contact us with your opinion. Maybe you have a suggestion about something you would like to see us offer, a story that you would like to see included in our newsletter or even just to show appreciation or to encourage your fellow classmates; we always look forward to hearing from you.

You may contact us by e-mailing your questions, comments or concerns to
EFFORT Student Liaison Nathaniel Martinez at:

nathaniel_martinez@gcccd.edu

