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New Event Promotes Education for Local Foster Kids

University program aims to help students apply to, complete college

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The University of Cincinnati hosted an informational presentation for foster children in high school in an attempt to give them information on the process of getting into college.

The University of Cincinnati hosted dozens of students on its first Higher Education Day Saturday, May 30, an event aimed to help foster care children continue to the college level.

UC representatives presented the information to high school students in University Pavilion.

The partnership, Higher Education Mentor Initiative, created a program to reduce the high school dropout rate of foster children.

High school seniors who are foster children are paired with mentors to direct them toward a successful path for their futures.

Rayma Waters, project director for Partners for Achieving School Success (PASS), welcomed the students. She said the program was a collaborative effort involving a wide spectrum of agencies including the-

Hamilton County commissions office, Cincinnati State community college and Great Oaks.

“It is a great example of a small group of people, we found a way to make it easier for our kids to go to college after high school,” Walters said.

The smoother the transition, the better chance the student has for success.

“All of us want great opportunities for you,” said Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann. “If the will is there to pursue higher education, the resources are there.”

Hartmann encouraged the young students to take advantage of the support and network.

Stephanie Cappel, executive director for PASS, asked the students who have completed one year of high school to get up and say out loud “I have an amazing brain.”

The purpose of the activity was to show students that they should not underestimate themselves. By repeating the sentence out loud, each person is supposed to find it easier to remember.

“All of us have high expectations for each one of you, which will transfer into a very bright successful future,” said Mitchel Livingston, chief diversity officer and vice president of UC Student Affairs, in his opening remarks.

Livingston said that the university’s fund for scholarships is \$50 million. He also said students have the opportunity to obtain at least one of these scholarships if they meet the admission criteria and attend UC.

Aside from fund availability, diversity is key to the university – a concept at the heart of education, Livingston said.

Livingston also said he grew up in housing projects. This fact did not stop him from graduating with a doctorate in higher education, he said.

The presentation also focused on essential points that students should know. Zakiya Collins, admissions officer, told students that once they are enrolled in college, it would be to their benefit to attend and be on time for every class, as well as turn in their homework on time, find time to study and not be afraid to ask for help when it is needed.

Collins also said UC admissions looks at a student’s GPA, SAT and ACT scores, class rank, personal statement and letters of recommendation when they are applying to college.

“UC looks like a good college to come to,” said Charles Napier, a second-year student at Colerain High school who is looking to major in computer technology.