

**Family Newsletter**

March 2016

**Spring Break Trip to Chicago**

**March 28th – April 1st**

GEAR UP will be offering a college tour trip to Chicago.

GEAR UP will cover all transportation costs on Checker Transportation, all hotels and three meals per day. The hotels will have pools available. Evening events will include workshops on college prep, finances, and leadership activities. Many snacks will be provided throughout the trip.

Applications can be picked up from North Star’s office secretary and on our website at <http://www.nmu.edu/multiculturaledandres/gear-applications>.



One of the schools GEAR UP will be visiting is North Park University, a Christian college. Located in Chicago (yes, really in the city), North Park University is the ideal college experience no matter your dream or goal: an affordable, challenging, and interdisciplinary liberal arts and sciences education in a world-class city and diverse faith community. Since 1891, we’ve equipped students to lead lives of significance and service. We’d be honored to count you among this group. Keep exploring to learn more about how you, like thousands before, can find your future at North Park. <http://www.northpark.edu/Admissions/Undergraduate-Admissions/Find-Your-Future-Here>

Another place the students will visit is the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. SAIC is distinct in the way that it provides graduate, post-baccalaureate, and undergraduate students an interdisciplinary curriculum and the necessary freedom to develop as artists, designers, and scholars. At the same time, we strive for a level of rigor, investigation, and cultural relevance that makes SAIC truly special. Our students translate the most complex ideas into tangible forms—paintings, sculptures, films, performances, books, installations, inventions, buildings, community projects, and, more often than not, a combination of the above. Few schools in the United States provide such a broad range of possibilities. <http://www.saic.edu/about/#saic>





One stop on the Chicago college tour will be Pazzo’s Cucina Italiano, a fine dining establishment owned by the family of one of our chaperones, TJ Aiyash. TJ has arranged with the family for a behind-the-scenes view of the kitchen area with time for questions and answers about the food service industry. Your students will be able to learn more about how the kitchen operates as well as about owning and operating a restaurant. The students will also enjoy one of their meals there.

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Pazzo’s Cucina Italiano

North Park University

**Does your family include a foster child? Here are some tips to help them get into college.**

If your family includes a foster child, there are several things you can help them with so that they can be prepared for college. One major concern reported by current foster kids who are in college is the fear of being homeless. Once they age out of the system, they often have no place to live. Another important concern is not having any medical insurance. Still another important factor in their success as a college student is finding people to become their new support system.

Once a student is accepted into college, they will have a place to stay, access to medical care and people who may become their new friends and support systems. Beginning in 2008 there was federal legislation giving states the option to extending federal aid programs for foster youth from 18-21. The *New York Times* reports that seven states have strong programs including Michigan’s Fostering Success in Michigan Program. The other states with great programs are California, Texas, Ohio, North Carolina, Washington, and Virginia.

There are a couple of important lessons for foster kids to keep in mind. First of all, they have to let the financial aid offices know that they are foster kids. This can be hard for some kids to admit. It isn’t easy admitting that being in foster care was a part of their life, because of the stigma attached. Being removed from a family is a traumatic experience, but students need to learn to advocate for themselves. There may be additional funding and/or options that are available at certain schools for students who were once in foster care.



A second thing to keep in mind comes into play when they are filing their FASFA (free application for federal student aid). The questions are hard enough to answer for most people, but foster kids may need additional help in filling out their forms. Students who were in foster care are generally able to file as “independent,” which makes them eligible for more federal funding. On Question #53 in section 2, if the answer is “yes,” to the question “at any time since your turned 13 were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?” then you will be considered independent. <http://fosteringsuccessmichigan.com/library/faqs-about-questions-53>

Some of the more frequently asked questions are printed, along with their answers. These should cover most situations.

Filing the FASFA can be daunting for anyone. Generally the school guidance counselors can assist with them. Communities and/or universities often sponsor events, such as College Goal Sunday, to help with filing the forms. Usually they are held in January or February. Anyone is able to get additional assistance at that time. You can also call 1-800-4FED-AID for help. It’s important to remember that there are plenty of financial resources and personal resources to help former foster kids to succeed at college. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/03/education/edlife/extra-support>

<http://www.fosteringperspectives.org/fp_vol16no1/financial_aid_foster>

<http://sparkaction.org/content/foster-care-college-life>

Below is the third installment of sample SAT questions that your student may encounter on their test.

Let’s start with math this time:

These questions are taken from Kaplan’s SAT Flashcards

In a weight loss competition, Fabian noticed that he is both the 14th lightest in his group and the 14th heaviest in his group. If everyone in the group has a different weight, how many people are in the group?

1. 25
2. 26
3. 27
4. 28
5. 29

The answer is C. There are 13 people above him and 13 people below him. He is in the middle, so there are 13 + 1 + 13 or 27 people.

What part of speech is each underlined word?

Michael pulled his canoe ashore at the mouth of the river.

Michael is a proper noun, the subject of the sentence.

His is a possessive pronoun referring to Michael.

Ashore is an adverb that modifies pulled.

Of is a preposition.

What is a synonym for *denounce?*

1. Condemn
2. Accept
3. Promote

The answer is A. Denounce means to proclaim as evil.

What does *trite* mean?

1. Little
2. Agitated
3. Unoriginal

The correct answer is C. Synonyms include stale, commonplace, and tired.

**Best information for first generation students**

Northern Michigan University and other universities across America have special programs for students who are first generation. First generation students are those whose parents have not graduated from college with a four year degree. Perhaps your student is a first generation student (known as first gen).

At NMU we have a specific office and a program coordinator for the program, Ms. Lina Blair. I checked in with her for her best advice for incoming freshmen. Here’s what she said:

When I asked first gen students what they think the top five pieces of advice are they gave me this list:

* Ask lots of questions. Don’t be afraid to put yourself out there.
* Never assume you’re alone or that you can’t get help.
* It’s okay to get frustrated. Don’t let your frustrations get in the way of being successful.
* Find people and resources that you connect with.
* Get comfortable with advocating for yourself and expressing your needs and concerns.

I have a page on the first gen website about how families can support their first gen student: <http://www.nmu.edu/dso/first-gen-support-system-resources>

In terms of advice for families and friends… it’s a learning experience for the student as well as family/friends – be patient with each other and try to learn together/teach each other the ins and outs of college. As always, don’t hesitate to ask questions! There are lots of people who are interested in helping.

GEAR UP  
Multicultural Education & Resource Center  
3001 Hedgcock  
1401 Presque Isle  
Marquette, MI 49855  
1-906-227-1554  
This newsletter and past editions are available at:  
http://www.nmu.edu/multiculturaledandres/node/30  
GEAR UP Director Shirley Brozzo  
GEAR UP Student Coordinator Sara Spragg

Looking for a quick and easy meal for a busy night. Try this:



**Ingredients:**

* ½ to 1 lb ground beef  
  36 oz (about a jar and a half) spaghetti sauce  
  16oz. cottage cheese  
  ¼ c. grated parmesan cheese  
  1 egg  
  1 teaspoon Italian Seasoning  
  9 Lasagna noodles, uncooked  
  8oz. shredded mozzarella cheese

**Instructions:**

Brown ground beef. Mix in spaghetti sauce. In a bowl, mix together cottage cheese, parmesan cheese, egg and Italian seasoning. Spray crockpot insert with nonstick spray. Pour about 1/3 of meat sauce in bottom of crockpot and spread evenly. Break 3 lasagna noodles to fit and lay on top of meat sauce. Spread half of cottage cheese mix over noodles and top with half of mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers 1/3 of the meat sauce, 3 noodles, remaining cottage cheese and mozzarella cheese. Top with remaining 3 noodles, then pour on remaining sauce. Cover and turn crockpot on to low. Cook for 5-6 hours until noodles are tender.

**A few little known facts about e-cigarettes.**

If you yourself are trying to quit smoking or if your students are trying to quit, you might turn to e-cigarettes as an alternative. They are very trendy and are reported by some to be better for your health than actual smoking is. In some places they may even be more socially acceptable than smoking. But, they are not without their own risk factors. Trimarchi and Cassisy report that “e-cigarettes were first developed in China and where introduced to the US market in 2007.” E-cigs do not contain actual nicotine, but instead are like little burners that heat up a liquid. In turn, this liquid turns into vapors that are inhaled. The FDA and other regulatory agencies are not convinced that e-cigs are better than actual smoking. Here are some important things to consider:

* While e-cigs are both tobacco free and smoke free, they still contain nicotine. The liquids in e-cigs contain nicotine, flavorings, and many other additives.
* E-cigs could still be toxic because of all the chemicals contained in them. Liquid nicotine could cause harm to your body, including death, especially if it is ingested or absorbed through your skin. As little as a teaspoon could kill a child, according to Trimarchi and Cassidy.
* While many manufacturers say that e-cigarettes are recreational and should not be subject to FDA approval, the FDA is concerned. Among their concerns is the lack of disclosure of ingredients. Another concern is that the amount of nicotine contained in the cartridge may not actually match the amount that is listed. Some e-cigs also contain diethylene glycol, a toxic chemical found in antifreeze.
* Just like second-hand smoke, there is also second-hand vapor released from the e-cigs. Some work places and even restaurants may allow “vaping,” but most do not. If you suffer from asthma or other breathing ailments, you may encounter problems in public.

Please take the time to research your alternatives to smoking. There is much more information available today about both smoking and using e-cigarettes.

Information for this article was taken from:

Trimarchi, Maria and Cassidy, Susan*. 10 Little Known Facts about E-Cigarettes—How Stuff Works* at [http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/smoking-cessation/10-facts Retrieved November 19](http://health.howstuffworks.com/wellness/smoking-cessation/10-facts%20%20%20Retrieved%20November%2019)**,** 2015.