A Decade of Excellence
By Dr. Reginald A. Wilkinson, President & CEO

I trust the first quarter of 2009 has gone well for you despite the challenges of the state’s economy. At the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN), we are especially pleased the calendar has turned to 2009 as we celebrate our Tenth Anniversary!

OCAN’s 10-year history is characterized by growth, expansion, and a compression of expertise. Fittingly, I like to think of OCAN’s first decade as A Decade of Excellence. Thank you to those of you who have collectively contributed to our award winning organization.

In the beginning, 11 community-based college access organizations formed the Network. Today, OCAN continues to endorse a philosophy of collaboration and there are now more than 70 Traditional, Affiliate, Associate and Supporting members.

In order to continue expanding the Network, OCAN is true to its mission of reaching more Ohioans by sustaining a fruitful relationship with the State. OCAN remained a strategic organization throughout Governor Taft’s tenure during which $2 million was invested in OCAN for creation of college access programs. Today, OCAN plays a strategic role in helping accomplish Governor Strickland’s goal of increasing college enrollment by 230,000 by 2017.

OCAN is regularly called upon to share our expertise and continues to build upon its demonstrated capability through research. In OCAN’s early days, the Network convened member programs to discuss their most effective strategies. Today, these gatherings have evolved into monthly professional development workshops, Member Advisory Council meetings and an annual conference that draws well over 300 college access advisors and professionals from across Ohio and beyond.

Researchers at the University of Cincinnati have validated OCAN’s expertise and ability to achieve its goals by confirming that high schools with an OCAN program have a 3.8% increase in average college-going rate among its graduates as opposed to similar high schools without a program. This is an increase that is especially noteworthy since OCAN programs focus on high schools that are under academic duress with considerably larger minority (26.7% black) and economically disadvantaged student populations.

Continued on page 3 “Decade”
Ohio College Access Network Announces New Board Members

Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) is honored to announce two new members to its Board of Directors, Roy A. Church of Lorain County Community College and Thomas J. Lasley II of the University of Dayton. OCAN is pleased to have these key community figures engage in OCAN and bring new ideas and leadership to the board. Both Church and Lasley will bring important opinions on education advocacy and commitment to education programs to the board as they are each extremely dedicated to higher education in the State of Ohio in public and private schools.

Church, President of Lorain County Community College (LCCC), has led LCCC through a transformation by introducing comprehensive community high education centers for local communities to access education from the K-12 level through graduate studies and other like programs. Church will be joining the Board of Directors Advisory Committee.

Lasley will also create a crucial part of the board as he is currently the Dean and Joseph Panzer Professor of Education in the School of Education at the University of Dayton. His involvement in education many years of involvement will bring much knowledge to the Board as Lasley has served on the Commission for Teaching Success, which examines teacher quality statewide and serves on the teacher Support and Professional Development Committee of the Commission.

OCAN believes these persons will do their best to help uphold OCAN’s mission to provide advocacy and support to college access organizations by building partnerships to strengthen the network of innovative programs to increase access and completion of post-secondary education as well as stand by OCAN’s three goals to support advocacy, program development, and sustainability for college access programs.

“These two new members both have longstanding commitment to education and willingness to work with first generation college students and low-income families. They both represent geographic regions of Ohio that are high-targeted areas for college access programs, making them ideal additions to better the Board of Directors at OCAN,” said Dr. Reginald A. Wilkinson, OCAN President and CEO.
Governor Strickland recently declared April 1, 2009 as College Access Day in support of the upcoming Partners in College Access and Success Policy Breakfast. The Partners (listed below) will convene and educate attending policy makers, business and community leaders and higher education institutions on the existing statewide efforts of Ohio’s leading access organizations.

With increased focus on college access by both Governor Strickland and President Obama it is important to highlight successful college access initiatives taking place at the local level. This is a wonderful opportunity for college access programs to highlight student success and connect with elected officials. State Representative and Senators should be aware that your college access program is encouraging students through inspirational programming, caring adults and community support.

OCAN member programs are a proven testament to the positive impact that is made on the students served through these initiatives. In fact, high schools with an OCAN member program have an average 3.8% increase in college going rates among their graduates and an average 4.5% higher graduation rate!

OCAN would like to encourage its members to take advantage of College Access Day by scheduling visits with local legislators on or before April 1st to convey what your program is doing to enrich students’ lives throughout Ohio by encouraging higher education and explaining the right steps to get to college. It is essential that we share our story and the amazing accounts of student success you witness in your neighborhoods every day.

The Ohio Association of Non-Profit Organizations (OANO) offers services to help schedule these visits and can be found online at www.ohiononprofits.org. You may also contact OCAN at ocan@ohiocan.org or 614.947.3500 for assistance.

Partners in College Access and Success include:
- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP)
- Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC)
- Ohio TRiO
- Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA)
- Ohio College Access Network/KnowHow2GOOhio (OCAN)
- Tech Prep
- Ohio Department of Education
- Ohio Board of Regents

Dates to Remember

March 25
GEAR UP Statewide Meeting

March 27
Invest in Success Grant Applications Due.
Application available online at Ohiocan.org

March 30 – April 2
College Access Week

April 1
Partners in College Access and Success Policy Breakfast
Ohio Statehouse

May 6
Member Advisory Council (MAC) Meeting
Great Lakes Higher Education Offices

August 11-13
2009 Ohio College Access and Success Conference
Doubletree Hotel, Columbus-Worthington

Decade Continued from page 1

(35.6%) student populations.

OCAN’s success in increasing low-income and minority student participation in higher education would appear to be among the factors contributing to Ohio’s ranking fifth nationally in the rate of increase, according to a recent analysis published in Postsecondary Education Opportunity. This study shows that Ohio’s rank in overall low-income participation in higher education increased from FY2002 to FY2005 by six rankings nationally (from 21st to 15th).

Finally, the work of this dedicated network of programs has not gone unnoticed. In September of 2008, OCAN was recognized as the top organization of its kind when the National College Access Network awarded OCAN the College Access Organization Award of Excellence.

I predict a bright future for the Ohio College Access Network. On behalf of our Board Chair, Chad Wick, and our other Directors, I thank you for your service and for helping improve the college-going rate in Ohio.
OASFAA
Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

As a new addition to the OCAN Access Newsletter, a partner program will be featured in each issue. Through these articles, it is the hope that college access programs statewide will understand OCAN’s Partners in College Access and Success and show the relationship between members and Partners including the benefits Partners can offer to OCAN members in efforts to increase collaboration that will enrich society through education.

The goals of The Partners in College Access and Success are to motivate students to pursue and complete education beyond high school, counsel students and families on how to apply for financial aid, and support students with scholarships, internships and college retention programming. The Partners achieve these goals through sharing resources, coordinating like services to avoid duplication, aligning with Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Board of Regents and hosting high quality professional development so that its professionals become experts in every aspect of the college preparation process.

OCAN partner programs include: Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA), Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), Ohio Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC), Ohio TriO, and Tech Prep.

OASFAA is a non-profit professional organization for individuals involved in the administration of financial aid in Ohio through higher education organizations. The mission of OASFAA is to affect public policy initiatives, to promote ethical administration of student aid programs and to encourage an environment of cooperation among individuals, agencies, organizations and educational institutions to better serve all student populations.

To the benefit of students, families and high school advisors, OASFAA strives to offer resources in order to promote higher education and increase awareness of financial aid opportunities. In 2009, OASFAA served over 4,400 Ohioans at College Goal Sunday which is a financial aid workshop for students and families across Ohio. At the session, attendees received free, professional assistance with completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to secure funding for higher education. This is an annual event held in February across Ohio at various locations that has been a great success over the years and will continue to be because of OASFAA and financial aid administration volunteers.

As a professional development organization, OASFAA offers state-wide opportunities for training, through state conferences held twice a year and regional meetings and individual sessions conducted throughout the year. These opportunities cover current topics, research and many other areas ranging from counseling techniques to the fundamentals of student aid delivery.

OASFAA has much to offer to Access programs across Ohio; it is to every access program services and opportunities to better OCAN member program services and opportunities across Ohio. For more information about OASFAA visit www.oasfaa.org or contact Betsy Johnson, OASFAA President at betsy_johnson@owens.edu.

College Goal Sunday Update
Record Numbers attend College Goal Sunday 2009

A record number of students and families gathered statewide in 40 locations to participate in College Goal Sunday on February 8.

The 2009 College Goal Sunday set a record, providing services to more than 4,400 Ohioans, a 15 percent increase from 2008. This event was held by experts who provide free assistance for when filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Assistance was provided to families to help students receive money for college and continue to succeed in their education. All students are eligible to file for the FAFSA throughout their postsecondary education.

Through the help of College Goal Sunday volunteers, more students and families were able to file for financial aid because of the expertise provided. During these sessions volunteers provided free financial aid expertise to families overwhelmed with the rising cost of higher education. Guidance counselors and financial aid administrators were available to guide parents through the form, fill in the tax and income information and navigate tricky situations.

“The number of people who came out for College Goal Sunday was outstanding and really shows the need for assistance in getting money for college,” says MorraLee Holzapfel, Director, Outreach & Member Services. “The numbers prove that more people need help in the economic state that we are in and it is great that College Goal Sunday can help families across Ohio get the financial aid help they need to go to college.”

(Locations with the highest attendance were: Central Ohio Technical College/OSU Newark with 256, Bowling Green State University-Firelands with 224 and Cuyahoga Community College Western Campus with 199 in attendance.)

College Goal Sunday is sponsored by the Ohio Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA) through investments from the Lumina Foundation for Education, the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN), and Great Lakes Higher Education Guaranty Corp. For more information on College Goal Sunday visit www.ohiocollegegoalsunday.org.
OHIO CAN! Go to College Update

The OHIO CAN! Go to College campaign provided the Ohio Board of Regents and the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) with the opportunity to leverage an $8.5 million investment from the State of Ohio to expand college access opportunities and market the importance of higher education throughout the state. The Ohio Board of Regents and OCAN continue working to implement and provide fiscal oversight for the $8.5 million statewide effort to expand the number of low income, first generation students preparing for postsecondary education. Ultimately, the OHIO CAN! Go to College initiative will improve the workforce pipeline that underpins Ohio’s global competitiveness and greatly strengthen our economy.

OHIO CAN! Go to College provides an opportunity for any entity with a stake in college access and retention to utilize state funds to build organizational capacity. Funding was awarded to organizations based on their ability to secure new money for need-based scholarships and internships and/or cooperative programs. To ensure the State of Ohio a high rate of return on its investment, grantees are utilizing a number of different strategies and initiatives to leverage millions of dollars from the state funding dedicated to the campaign. Though the OHIO CAN! Go to College campaign will provide grant funding for two years, the structure of the program will allow for the entities involved in the effort the opportunity for stronger organizational capacity that will continue to garner resources in order to help more Ohioans access, pay for and complete a college degree for years to come.

The campaign launched in January 2008 and OCAN and the Ohio Board of Regents continue to work closely with the twenty-three entities that were ultimately selected to be funded with grant awards totaling nearly $6.2 million. The OHIO CAN! Go to College initiative is scheduled to run for two years and the campaign’s overall fundraising goal of $100 million is a joint effort involving colleges and universities, community foundations and community-based college access programs. Quarterly reports have showed considerable progress towards the overall fundraising goal. Thus far, OHIO CAN! grantees have reported raising over $50 million in need-based scholarships and internships for low-income and first generation students throughout Ohio.

The OHIO CAN! Go to College campaign is a unique opportunity for the college access statewide infrastructure to connect state funding with local communities, colleges, universities and nonprofit organizations in order to leverage funds to help an additional 20,000 Ohio college-going students. Strengthening organizational capacity will allow grantees to continue to focus efforts on preparing and attracting students of any age who might not otherwise have considered postsecondary pursuits due to the high cost of education. The one on one, hands on financial aid and college application guidance that is provided by the college access community makes the membership of OCAN a valuable partner in this venture to help more Ohioans achieve education beyond the high school level.

AmeriCorps Update

The Ohio College Advising Corps program planning is well underway, and becoming visible in the new year through targeted marketing and recruitment efforts. Advisor roles and school sites were a topic of discussion at the Advising Corps partners’ (OCAN, CSP, CYC, and OSU’s Economic Access Initiative) first meeting of 2009, as well as funding strategies for the brand new initiative. For the pilot year, 14 Advising Corps Members will be present in the Cleveland Municipal School System, as well as rural school sites in Lorain County.

Currently, recruitment and marketing is heavily concentrated on, but not limited to, Ohio State students who have demonstrated interest in education and service. Marketing materials to create awareness for both AmeriCorps and the Ohio College Advising Corps are noticeable in strategic buildings on the Ohio State campus, as well as its branch satellites and career and academic advisors have been also notified of the unique opportunity for graduating seniors. While graduating seniors from all over the state are envisioned to participate in the Advising Corps, it is primarily Ohio State’s diverse and large source of students being drawn upon for the bulk of recruiting during the pilot year.

The Advising Corps held its first information sessions at the end of January for graduating seniors and other undergraduates interested in the position. The sessions received a positive response from students with more than 20 students in attendance.

For more information and for the latest updates, please visit the AmeriCorps page of the OCAN web site at http://www.ohiocan.org/ameri corps.aspx
Promising Practices Emerge In Retention Evaluation

In 2007, OCAN received a grant from Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation’s Benefit Grant Program to implement the Bridging College Access to Degree Completion (BADC) program. The goal of BADC is to help create extensive collaborations among college access programs, higher education institutions, local/regional education stakeholders, and any other necessary partners.

Three community partnerships, including Washington and Morgan County College Success Partnership, the Persistence to Success Partnership at Belmont Technical College, and the Western Central Ohio College Success Partnership lead by Lima/Allen County Access Program, were selected from partnerships across the state to develop implementation models over the course of two years (March 2007-June 2009). The BADC program expects that the implementation models from these three community partnerships will provide information and identification of promising practices that could improve college access and success rates for students across the state and country.

Through this grant, Edvantia, Inc., was contracted to provide an external evaluation of these three programs. Edvantia researchers found each program to have unique and particular needs. The Washington and Morgan County Partnership is led by a dedicated coordinator who has successfully implemented a number of partnership’s initiatives and even though challenged by inadequate funding, the program is pressing forward to motivate student participation in retention efforts. Belmont Technical College’s partnership also has demonstrated great leadership and though also challenged by inadequate funding, they are working to develop needs of targeted programs. West Central Ohio College Success Partnership has developed strong collaborations with partnering agencies and upon receipt of grant had plans to develop an expansive target service area.

These three partnerships are demonstrating optimism about the successful completion of each program’s identified objectives and more importantly, the objectives outlined by the OCAN grant.

Full retention evaluation report can be viewed online at www.ohiocan.org.

Program News

Clermont 20/20, Inc.’s GRASP Initiative Partners with Second School District

After wrapping up a successful pilot in Williamsburg at the end of the 2007-2008 school year, the Clermont 20/20 GRASP (Garnering Resources for Access and Success Partnership) initiative has been invited to introduce the program’s resources into the school district and community of Clermont Northeastern.

“Educators and administrators are doing an incredible job of providing resources to Clermont Northeastern students and parents, and there is excitement in this rural community about education,” said Becky Ploucha, GRASP Program Coordinator for Clermont 20/20, Inc.

“Our goal is to compliment what the school district and the community is already doing in regards to post-secondary access by providing additional resources to students, parents and adult learners.”

Andy McCreanor, executive director of Clermont 20/20, Inc. commented, “The motivation behind the partnership of GRASP is to help identify current best practices of the partners, develop new ones through a collaborative process, and provide better access, retention, and graduation services to high school and college students as well as adults in need. Clermont 20/20 is pleased to have been the lead organization in forming this partnership, as well as applying what we’ve learned from the success of the program in the pilot school district, Williamsburg, in Clermont Northeastern.”

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Cincinnati Youth Collaborative (CYC) was recognized on Jan. 15 at the 24th annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration in Columbus for their efforts to advance social change.

Governor Ted Strickland said, “I congratulate the Ohioans recognized here today for their community service efforts, which embody Dr. King’s vision and commitment to humanity. This celebration of Martin Luther King Jr’s life reminds us that irrespective of age, or race, or gender, or economic class, we have a moral duty to serve our fellow man and in that service we will find our own greatest power.”

Strickland honored CYC with the Educational Excellence Award which required that the recipient selected in this category recognize the personal commitment and example that King provided for academic achievement. Therefore, the recipient has demonstrated a personal commitment to scholarship and/or attainment of educational goals despite significant barriers or obstacles. The recipient also demonstrated outstanding accomplishments in eradication systemic barriers that impede the attainment of academic excellence.

Cincinnati Youth Collaborative has helped raise the high school graduation and college attendance rates for students in Cincinnati Public Schools. Since its founding in 1987, Cincinnati Youth Collaborative has assisted more than 100,000 youths prepare to graduate high school and enter post-secondary educational institutions by collaborating with Cincinnati Public Schools, volunteers and other organizations. An evaluation of its College Access Program found that 97 percent of seniors in the program graduated from high school, and 90 percent applied to college.

Stark County
Adrienne O’Neill, Ed.D. Honored

Dr. Adrienne O’Neill, president of the Stark Education Partnership, has been named as one of the 2008 Purpose Prize Fellows by Civic Ventures (www.civicventures.com). The Purpose Prize is a $9 million program for people over 60 years old who are taking on society’s biggest challenges. The Prize, now in its third year, is the nation’s only large-scale investment in social innovators in the second half of life. Dr. O’Neill is the fourth Ohioan to be recognized with this prestigious honor.

O’Neill was named a fellow for her innovation in recognizing that the education gap could not be closed by one single institution or leader, but required collaborative leadership networks. In 2002, she led the process to institute Ohio’s first “P-16 Compact,” a seamless preschool-college education system. School districts, colleges, businesses, foundations and human service organizations have joined together to work toward graduating all high school students and for 80 percent of those graduates to enroll in post-secondary education.

Through the collaborative leadership network of the P-16 O’Neill’s work affects the 5,000 high school students who graduate from Stark County high schools each year and the 42,000 adults in Stark County who haven’t completed college. Since the compact began, 15 of the county’s 17 school districts have exceeded the statewide standard of 90 percent graduation, and dual high school-college credit has expanded to virtually all the districts, with a total enrollment of 62,000. A state-wide P-16 model has been created to bring the project to scale.

The Purpose Prize supports Fellows by helping develop their capacity, linking them with funders and venture philanthropists and connecting them to other social innovators over 60. 2008 Purpose Prize Fellows participated in an Encore Careers Summit at Stanford University’s Graduate School of Business’ Center on Social Innovation, one of the world’s leading academic centers focused on social entrepreneurship.
Both West Holmes ninth graders and Hiland eighth graders made visits to nearby colleges and college branches to learn more about life beyond high school and other ways they can prepare for post-secondary education.

On November 21, five buses carrying 200 West Holmes students and 12 parent chaperones traveled to OSU Mansfield and North Central State College. At OSU Mansfield they were introduced to Hank Thomas and Ketwana Wilson-McCormick of OSU Admissions and learned the importance of getting good grades while in high school, as well as undergraduate majors available at the branch. Bobby Gossom of North Central State Admissions guided students through classrooms and buildings at North Central and answered questions from students. Everyone gathered for lunch and made it back to school in time for the last bell to ring. West Holmes 9th-10th grade guidance counselor Dawne O’Donnell said, “We were thrilled to have our students have the opportunity to visit a college campus and start thinking about post-secondary education.”

On December 12, 60 Hiland Middle School eighth graders received a similar tour and informational sessions at the University of Akron | Wayne College by representatives John Lorson and Carol Pleuss, and a geology demo from Dr. Adil Wadia. They also visited the Agricultural Technical Institute branch of OSU, looking at a typical classroom and dorm room setting.

On both field trips, students received an orange backpack advertising the national KnowHow2GO campaign displaying the Ohio website, KnowHow2GoOhio.org. The field trips themselves were made possible by a grant the Holmes County College Access Program received from the Ohio College Access Network (OCAN). “Study after study shows that students need early access to college campuses and college information so that they can make good decisions during all four years of high school,” Holmes County College Access Advisor Ann Gastier states. “We hope that this visit is the first step for these students from Hiland and West Holmes Schools. Given their survey comments below, I think we can say we have had early success!”

Both Tracy Carmony of Wayne College Admissions and Shari Petersen from OSU–Mansfield Admissions are also to be thanked for arranging these special field trips.

Student Reviews...

“My favorite part of this trip was getting to experience an actual college class and see how college kids live. I liked talking to the college students and learning about their lives.”

“I was surprised to see how many majors and minors there are.”

“The best part was going to the geology lab and getting to do experiments.”
Program News

U-CAN Coordinates ACT Explore/Plan Initiative in Richland County

In cooperation with the North Central Ohio Tech Prep Consortium and SPARC (Succeed & Prosper Ashland/Richland/Crawford), the newly formed North Central Ohio P-16 Council, the University & College Access Network of Richland County (U-CAN) submitted two grant applications in March of 2008 to support the mutual goal of increasing aspiration and postsecondary/workforce readiness in Richland County. In May 2008, U-CAN was awarded a $10,000 grant to provide the ACT Explore assessment to all 8th grade students, public and private, in Richland County. In June 2008, U-CAN was awarded a $16,560 grant to provide the ACT Plan assessment to all 10th grade students, public and privately schooled, in Richland County. These assessments provide early indicators of postsecondary and workforce readiness as well as career planning modules.

Between Sept. 8 and Nov. 21, 2008, 1,490 students took the ACT Explore assessment, and 1,205 students took the ACT Plan assessment. The assessments were mailed to ACT for processing in December 2008, and the results were shipped to the schools in mid-January 2009. U-CAN college access advisors, school guidance counselors, and volunteers received training from ACT on presenting the results to students and parents.

Each school in Richland County was asked to submit a plan for follow-up counseling to students and parents. Every school developed a plan that worked best for its guidance counselors, students, and parents. Some schools are providing all of the follow-up counseling using their own staff, some schools are requesting help from “familiar faces” such as their tutors and their substitute teachers, and others will use volunteers from U-CAN. The follow-up counseling took place this past January.

The ACT Explore/Plan Initiative in Richland County is a multi-year project. The success of Richland County’s students is tied to the county’s economic development and quality of life. For students to succeed, preparation for postsecondary education or the workforce must start in middle school and be tracked through high school.

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With tremendous pride and gratification, A CALL TO COLLEGE staff announced receipt of an Invest In Success grant for the ACT Now! initiative in September. The Ohio College Access Network (OCAN) awarded $20,000 to Newark High School’s A CALL TO COLLEGE as part of the competitive Invest in Success process. Since this announcement Newark High School juniors have been actively engaged in ACT preparation. Students are learning that good scores on the American College Test (ACT) may mean more choices and more money to go to college.

Several components of the ACT Now! initiative are leading to success. A CALL TO COLLEGE identified the use of the ACT test preparation site as an aid to better educating college-qualified students about the test. Additionally, four ACT Now! Help Sessions were developed to assist students in preparing to do their best on the ACT. Finally, an emphasis of one-on-one advising sessions and continued classroom visits is aimed at explaining and demonstrating the importance of college entrance exams for both admission and scholarship purposes. Thanks to OCAN, all interested juniors at Newark High School will be offered one FREE ACT test and a FREE ACT online test preparation account for a total value of $66.

The ACT Now! initiative was created to motivate students to effectively and deliberately prepare for the ACT, to direct them to take the ACT in the spring of junior year and to assist them in overcoming the financial and logistical barriers inherent in the test registration, preparation, and completion process.
OACHE Partners to Launch Regional STEM, P–16 Initiatives

In September OACHE partnered with several other regional and state organizations to hold STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) engagement meetings in each of Appalachian Ohio’s three State Economic Development Regions (7, 10, and 11). More than 100 representatives from K-12, higher education and business, met to discuss how to move Appalachian Ohio forward in STEM education and economic development. Following those meetings, OACHE assisted each region in developing a proposal for a K–8 STEM Program of Excellence Grant from Ohio’s Partnership for Continued Learning. These proposals included plans for intensive professional development, stronger K-12/college alignment, and activities to heighten students’ interest in STEM careers. The Region 7 and 10 proposals received funding (announced December 22) and will be implemented between now and September 30, 2009.

With funding support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the OACHE assisted in the creation of emerging P–16 Councils in Athens, Meigs, and Lawrence/Scioto counties. These groups, including representatives from K–12 and college, business, public agencies and community organizations, will be working to identify and remedy gaps in the educational “pipeline” to help more youth and adults progress successfully through the educational system and prepare them for good-paying careers. Support for these emerging P–16 Councils will continue in 2009. To support the work of these new councils, the OACHE has partnered with the national Rural School & Community Trust to develop a rural P–16 model that addresses the unique challenges and opportunities of rural communities.

OACHE Access Projects Showcased for Multi-State Group

One current and one past OACHE Access Project grantee school were featured on a bus tour of representatives from college-access programs now replicating the OACHE model in eight other states. Staff of current grantee South Webster High School (Scioto County) and past grantee Carrollton High School (Carroll County) shared their most effective strategies with the multi-state Appalachian Higher Education Network (AHEN) and discussed their experiences in fostering a college-going culture in their schools. Copies of both schools’ Top Ten strategies are posted on the OACHE website www.oache.org. The bus tour was funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission.

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That’s the Difference!
On October 13, NOCHE’s Fall 2008 College Caravan hit the ground running with aggressive plans to visit 27 high schools in six school districts throughout Northeast Ohio region in 10 days. Now it’s the 15th year, NOCHE College Caravans reach out to underserved students in grades 9 through 12 in urban and first-ring suburban school districts. Coordinating with school district administrators, high school counselors, and college admission counselors, NOCHE program manager Brenda Davis Smith prepares the high school visit schedule and college travel itinerary.

Targeting juniors and seniors at three schools per day throughout the two-week period, NOCHE staff and admissions counselors organize the event in a college-fair format. Participants speak to students about preparing for college and the college application process. They also distribute related handouts, including material from the ‘Know How 2 GO’ program and publications provided by the U.S Department of Education. Successfully visiting the planned 27 high schools, this Fall College Caravan was able to reach 4,766 students! Preparation and further expansion plans are currently underway for Spring and Fall 2009 College Caravan.

Lima/Allen County College Access Program

The Lima/Allen County College Access Program collaborates with the Lima Family YMCA, YWCA of Lima, and the Bradfield Center to offer Resource Centers to the community. The Resource Centers are open during the school year to assist individuals of all ages with ACT registration/preparation, college applications, career searches, scholarships, and financial aid.

The Resource Centers at the YMCA are open every Tuesday evening and provide materials on the college process, computers to search on-line, and a College Access advisor to help with the process. During the fall, the program offered ACT prep sessions from October 14 through December 9 at the YMCA Resource Center. Each week focused on a different section of the ACT test with representatives from the local high schools and/or colleges providing tips and resources on those sections. During this time, there were 43 first-time and 49 repeat attendees at the YMCA. From mid-January until mid-March, financial aid representatives from the local colleges will volunteer to help individuals with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

The program offers workshops at the YWCA Resource Center the first Wednesday of the month. Topics for these free workshops include ACT preparation, an admissions panel, saving for college, financial aid overview, financial aid follow-up for high school seniors, and college/career search. There have been several volunteers from the local colleges and businesses to assist with the workshops at the YWCA. To date, there have been six individuals attending the YWCA workshops.

The Lima/Allen County College Access Program offers specific assistance to the youth group at the Bradfield Center. Sessions with the students include the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS), ACT preparation, Reality Day with OSU extension, campus visits, and completing applications. There are approximately 20 students who participate in the youth group.
If Amy Wade had her way, there would be no such thing as college dreams. Instead, there would only be college plans — concrete, clear, realistic plans for getting into college and paying for it.

She is doing her part to make college access a reality for Central Ohio students and parents, spearheading last year’s Blueprint: College planning program aimed mostly at lower-income families with kids in fourth and fifth grades, and starting February 24, she’ll be offering a version of that program on Ohio State’s campus, tailored for employees of Facilities Operations and Development.

Wade works with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and First-Year Experience, where she has partnered with Tally Hart, senior adviser for the university’s Economic Access Initiative, to provide curriculum and training opportunities around college access. The success of the Blueprint: College program, which graduated almost 50 families, led both Wade and Hart to dream their own college dreams.

“We thought it was really important, as we do things within the community, to remember and do things within our own internal community,” Hart said. “We recognize that just because we sit within an educational institution, we can’t assume that everyone who’s here has equal knowledge.”

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It was as Wade was out recruiting families for the second, expanded iteration of Blueprint — due to launch this spring with almost 300 participants — that she realized there was a huge interest in college planning information among Ohio State’s own employees.

“For Hart, it’s about more than the children’s future. Another benefit of the Blueprint pilots is the interest she sees kindled in the parents themselves. “Once you start helping parents understand education for their children, one of the natural outgrowths is people start wanting to know more about their own education.”

Destination College Mentor Receives Prestigious Bert A. Polsky Award

On Oct. 21, 2008, Destination College mentor, Bud Rogers, and his wife Susie, received the 39th Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award. A committee of past Polsky Award recipients selected the couple to receive the award, which honors selfless dedication to local humanitarian causes.

Bud is the former president and chief executive officer of the B.W. Rogers Co. and has a 30 year history of service to the Akron community. Destination College is fortunate to have servant leaders like Bud helping to develop and encourage youth.

The Polsky Humanitarian Award was founded in 1969 to honor the late Bert A. Polsky, president of the former Polsky’s Department Stores. He was a founding trustee of Akron Community Foundation and civic leader. Akron Community Foundation presents the Bert A. Polsky Humanitarian Award each year to the individual or couple who best exemplify Bert Polsky’s selfless dedication to humanitarian causes in Akron.

Destination College Coordinator Inducted into Golden Key International Honour Society

Nov. 9, 2008 Diettra Engram, Program Manager at Summit Education Initiative and coordinator of OCAN Program Destination College, was inducted into the Golden Key International Honour Society at The University of Akron. Engram began a graduate program in Educational Foundations and Leadership at The University of Akron last spring.

Destination College Alumni Return for Holiday Luncheon

On Dec. 18, 2008, 23 Destination College alumni returned for the annual Holiday Luncheon. Destination College began in the 2005-06 academic year. Since then, 80 high school graduates have completed the full program. The alumni in attendance represented the Classes of 2006, 2007 and 2008 and all, except two, are currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution.

Destination College staff and mentors had a great time catching up and hearing their stories about college, majors, volunteer work, and aspirations for the future. We can hardly wait until 2010/2011 when our inaugural Destination College class members will reach college graduation!
GEAR UP Director’s Corner  By Lisa Earley

GEAR UP Ohio’s focus for year four will be on two state-wide initiatives: parent-based initiative and the faith-based initiative. We are excited about the potential impact these two initiatives will have on GEAR UP services to students and their families.

Briana Hervet, Assistant Director, College Access Programs with the Ohio Board of Regents, will spearhead the parent-based initiative. She will work with staff at the eight lighthouse sites to identify a core group of parents who will serve as champions for college access at the local level. These parent leaders will be provided with necessary tools and training, and will drive the parent involvement at their respective sites.

Jeff Handley, who serves as a technical assistance consultant for six of the eight sites, will work with Michael Bullock, who serves as a GEAR UP Ohio consultant in Zanesville, to establish a state-wide faith-based initiative. Jeff will meet with various members of faith-based organizations around the state to determine how they can assist in their respective communities. Mike is a senior pastor in his community and has a foundation from which to build this notion of engaging fellow faith-based leaders. His first-hand experiences as a pastor will certainly lend the expertise needed to develop this project.

Both of these initiatives are focused on establishing a “college going” culture, and tapping into existing resources to build community interest in the education and welfare of our children. We’d like to create a win-win situation for all parties involved. If our children win by receiving a quality education and the necessary tools to be successful/productive citizens within our communities, then we win as well. As a community we benefit from having these educated citizens as viable members of our local workforce. Investing in our youth is an investment in our future.

If you would like more information on GEAR UP Ohio, please visit our website at:http://regents.ohio.gov/gearup or contact Lisa Earley at 614-947-3505.

Technology Students Enjoy Day With The Cleveland Cavaliers

On Friday December 5th, 38 Grover Cleveland students from Mr. France’s technology class were invited to attend “Technology day with the Cavaliers” hosted by Ohio TSA (Technology Student Association). The students were invited based on their grades and behaviors in Mr. France’s class. GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) teamed up with Mr. France to provide funding and support for the trip.

“Technology day with the Cavaliers” is put on during the season to show all of the jobs within a professional sports franchise that use technology. Ted Douce, President of the Ohio Chapter of TSA, welcomed everyone to the Quicken Loans arena. TSA is an organization that provides classes for, and promotes the use of technology in the schools. They have several competitions both in Ohio and across the United States throughout the school year focusing on technology.

After the introductions, the head of the Cavaliers IT department discussed the NBA’s instant statistics program. They input over 500 statistics per game into the database and fans are able to access that information. The next speaker was the head of the Cavaliers Website. She spoke of how the site is designed, how they put content on the page, and why the website is important to keep in touch with the fans. The last and most dynamic speaker of the night was the play-by-play announcer of the Lake Erie Monsters (Cleveland’s Minor League Hockey Team). He spoke of his love for sports and how it led him to leaving practicing law to pursue his dreams. His message to the students was to find something that you love to do and do that.

Lastly, they were able to stay and watch the Cleveland Cavaliers take on the Indiana Pacers. The game was exciting and the students loved it! Todd Riley, GEAR UP coordinator for Grover Cleveland, was excited to help Mr. France put this program together. “It gave us a chance to show these students all of the jobs available with a professional sports franchise that have to do with technology and not the athletics portion of the franchise. You don’t have to be an athlete to have a great job.”
Students at Conneaut Middle School Study “Gobs of Green Jobs”

Conneaut Middle School ACCESS/GEAR UP Advisor Sara Gleason has been doing Early Awareness classroom lessons in grades six through eight on various topics. Using an article from Career World magazine titled “Gobs of Green Jobs,” seventh grade students learned about different jobs that are available that focus on "green" energy and protecting our environment. When posed with the slogan “My white t-shirt is green,” students discussed what it means to be “green,” possible “green” jobs and the education required for those jobs, alternative energy and sustainable resources.

A location in the city of Conneaut has recently been considered for a wind farm; so, as a follow-up to the lesson, Tim Ryan, director of BQ Energy of Patterson, NY, visited the classroom to provide more information and to stress the importance of finding alternative forms of energy in order to protect the environment.

GEAR UP
Franklin County

Sixth grade GEAR UP students at Beery Middle School have been busy this nine weeks studying The Underground Railroad. Some of the novels the students have had an opportunity to read are Night John, The House of Dies Drear & Harriet Tubman and The Freedom Train. Through reading comprehension, class discussion and first person journaling, the students have been able to empathize with enslaved persons and more fully understand the risks associated with The Underground Railroad. Upon completion of their curriculum, the GEAR UP students had an opportunity to visit The Underground Railroad Freedom Center, in Cincinnati Ohio, on January 22, 2009. Other upcoming GEAR UP sponsored activities include: Outdoor Education at Camp Willson, Science Day at COSI, a tour of Washington D.C., and college visits to The University of Cincinnati, Wright State and The University of Toledo.

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