



Because College Doesn't Happen by Chance.®

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**Contra Costa College Receives \$50,000 from Wal-Mart Foundation
to Implement Scholarship America's® Dreamkeepers Emergency
Financial Assistance Program**

National initiative addresses high dropout rates among community college students

SAN PABLO, Calif. (July 23, 2008) – Scholarship America® today announced that Contra Costa College will receive \$50,000 to execute its Dreamkeepers Emergency Financial Assistance program. The program addresses the high dropout rates of community college students when faced with an unexpected crisis, such as medical expenses, job loss and other emergencies.

The financial contribution from this program will help increase the graduation rate at Contra Costa College by providing emergency assistance to students who otherwise may be forced to drop out of school.

“Many students at Contra Costa have the ambition to succeed, but may be lacking the means to continue their education,” said McKinley Williams, President of Contra Costa College. “Most of our students are lower-income and living on the financial aid edge. Often times a relatively small amount of money could keep them in school, whether it is to pay for rent, transportation or childcare. I am ecstatic about implementing the Dreamkeepers program and I know students will benefit immensely.”

A team of Scholarship America representatives will provide on-site support and training to help the college determine applicant guidelines, how to create awareness and develop best practices to raise additional funds for the program.

Contra Costa, along with six other schools, was recently selected to take part in the program. The colleges were chosen because they enroll large numbers of low-income students and students of color – groups with high rates of attrition that have traditionally been underserved by the education system.

“We are pleased to announce that the Dreamkeepers program will be introduced at seven additional community colleges across the country, including Contra Costa,” said Dr. Clifford L. Stanley, president and CEO of Scholarship America. “Our program has delivered drastic results that have provided positive life-changing outcomes nationwide.”

Developed in 2005 with support from Lumina Foundation for Education, the Dreamkeepers program provides students with emergency funding to allow them to remain in school and obtain a post-secondary education. Earlier this year, the Wal-Mart Foundation provided \$500,000 to expand the program to additional community colleges across the country.

Scholarship America currently administers the program at 11 community colleges throughout the country. In its first two years, the program provided nearly \$595,393 to 1,566 students – easing student worries about housing, food, utilities, tuition, books, transportation, child care and medical needs. The result was a significant impact on attrition rates. In 2005, 64 percent of students re-enrolled or graduated after receiving assistance; in 2006, retention rates went up to 85 percent at participating schools, with three colleges reporting retention of 90 percent or higher.

About Scholarship America®

Scholarship America is one of the nation's largest nonprofit, private-sector scholarship and educational support organizations. Its three primary programs — Dollars for Scholars®, Scholarship Management Services® and ScholarShop® — are united in the mission to expand access to education. Scholarship America (www.scholarshipamerica.org) has awarded nearly \$2 billion to more than 1.5 million students since its founding in 1958, and is rated a 5-star charity by Charity Navigator.

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