

ROOTS

NEWS FOR CAREGIVERS

VOLUME 3. NO 3. MID JAN - MID MAR



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ACCESSING COLLEGE FINANCIAL AID: FAFSA

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is due on February 1!

Completing the FAFSA is an essential first step in accessing college financial aid. If you have a student in your home who is looking to continue their education after high school graduation, this is a crucial part of the application process as the FAFSA is required for most scholarships, grants and loans.

The FAFSA can be applied to a variety of programs, including traditional college, community college, and vocational and technical programs. With tuition prices continually rising, most students need and receive financial aid.

Even if your youth is undecided about their post-high school plan, completing the FAFSA is a good idea, as it prepares them in case they change their mind but does not obligate them to do anything.

In January and February, College Goal Washington will be hosting events across Washington State to assist students and families in completing the FAFSA. Financial Aid experts and volunteers will be present at events and will offer students and families individual assistance when completing the FAFSA paperwork. To find an upcoming event in your area, visit <http://collegegoalsundaywa.org/about/>.

Seniors must complete their FAFSA by Feb. 1 in order to meet the priority funding date. To check other specific deadlines and other details, visit <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

If you need additional assistance or are looking for FAFSA event information in your area, talk to your Treehouse Education Specialist, Case Manager, or visit your school district's website.

STAYING ENGAGED: MID-WINTER BREAK

It may seem like holiday break for schools in Washington have just ended, but for many school districts in King County and the surrounding area, a weeklong mid-winter break is just around the corner. This year the Seattle mid-winter break is February 17th-21st, with most King County Public schools having a similar break.

For all of us, taking time-off to relax and rejuvenate is important, and can provide many benefits – so long as it remains structured! There are some easy win-win solutions to ensure that youth can continue to learn while having fun and enjoying their time-off.

Here are some ideas:

- Many community centers and the YMCA offer free or low-cost recreational and learning opportunities during school breaks. Your Treehouse Educational Specialist can also help your youth find an activity that supports their interests and future goals.
- Help your youth volunteer for an organization that sparks an interest. Most middle and high school students have service requirements. With a little planning, volunteer work can help youth explore career options, find belonging in their community, and gain work skills that will help them land that first job.
- For those youth who need to watch younger siblings, inspire them to get creative! They can organize scavenger hunts, help younger kids create puppets and a show, or build a fort!
- Attend a community or cultural event. Washington's ParentMap magazine has an easy to use calendar to search for activities for King County and surrounding areas. Check it out at www.parentmap.com/calendar/.
- Crack open a book. Reading for pleasure is not an oxymoron! If your youth are unsure of what to read, ask a local librarian to make recommendations based off of their interests. Once they've completed a book, ask your youth about what they read and spark a meaningful conversation.

If you would like to request funding for an activity or camp, contact our Little Wishes Program by calling 206.267.5125. Be sure to make your request early, as programs fill up quickly and funding through Treehouse must be approved before the activity is started.



STAFF BIO

AMY BROWNSON EDUCATION SPECIALIST

As part of the Treehouse Graduation Success Team, Amy works with middle and high school students in the Enumclaw, Tahoma, and Kent School Districts to provide educational support and advocacy to youth grades 6-12 with the goal of helping them earn a high school degree as well as develop a plan for their future.

For Amy, there really is no “typical” day on the job. Most days, she's working directly with students on campus to check in on their progress in school and talk about their struggles, stressors, and dreams. Based on each youth's individual experiences and desires, Amy helps students form meaningful long-term goals that help keep students motivated and engaged in school and weekly short-term goals to help make their dreams attainable.

For example, Amy is currently working with a high school junior who desires to attend the Seattle Art Institute after graduation. While college preparation can be daunting, Amy and her student have broken the application process into smaller tasks that make it seem manageable. So far, they've accomplished goals like researching the school for information, exploring the admissions requirements, and signing-up for an orientation. By separating out the shorter-term goals, Amy helps students understand all of the steps they must take in order to accomplish their larger goals.

When Amy isn't meeting with students, she's often communicating with caregivers, social workers, teachers, counselors, and other community resources to make sure everyone is informed and able to contribute in a unique way to a student's success. She also tracks student's behavior, course completion, and attendance to make sure nothing gets in the way of high school graduation and accomplishing their goals.























Amy is currently wrapping up her first semester as an Education Specialist in January and is looking forward to continuing to build relationships with her students and celebrating their successes. When asked what Amy loves most about her work as an Education Specialist, Amy responded “My students are very funny and interesting which makes our meetings very enjoyable even when we have to face difficult decisions together. I love the feeling at the end of the day, that my work has hopefully made a kid's next day easier and given them the assurance that someone thinks they're very special, powerful, engaging, and fun!”



Foster youth in King County will graduate high school at the same rate as their peers with a plan for their future by 2017.

We hope you had a happy holiday!

CALENDAR

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
JAN	12	13	14  Wearhouse 2-7pm	15	16  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	17	18  Wearhouse 10am-2pm
	19	20 Treehouse Closed	21  Wearhouse 2-7pm	22	23  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	24	25
	26	27	28  Wearhouse 2-7pm	29	30  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	31	1  FAFSA Due
FEB	2	3	4  Wearhouse 2-7pm	5	6  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	7	8
	9	10	11  Wearhouse 2-7pm	12	13  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	14	15  Wearhouse 10am-2pm
	16	17	18  Wearhouse 2-7pm	19	20  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	21	22
MAR	23	24	25  Wearhouse 2-7pm	26	27  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	28	1
	2	3	4  Wearhouse 2-7pm	5	6  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	7	8
	9	10	11  Wearhouse 2-7pm	12	13  Wearhouse 10am-4pm	14	15  Wearhouse 10am-2pm

The Wearhouse: TUES 2-7 PM, THUR 10-4 PM, 3RD SAT 10 AM-2 PM

You can shop for each youth up to 5 times per school year (with one “freebie” extra holiday-themed visit in December). We ask that you wait at least 30 days between visits, and arrive at least one hour before closing time to allow for enough time to shop. Please bring a photo ID (for caregiver or child) to show at check-in.

FASFA Due Date

See page 1 for more information.

Girl's and Boy's Groups

Treehouse Girl's and Boy's group meet once a month to help provide social and emotional support for foster youth 6th grade and up. Groups are designed to build relationships with community mentors and have fun with peers in a supportive environment.

Girls Group

Girl's Group is facilitated by Education Specialist, Stephanie Neil and volunteer mentors from the Junior League of Seattle. To join, call Stephanie at 206.713.5598.

Boy's Group

Boy's Group is facilitated by Treehouse Wearhouse Assistant Sam Martin. For more information, call Sam at 206.267.5148.

ACTIVITY OF THE MONTH: ART

Did you know that Treehouse’s Little Wishes program can help pay for the cost of an extracurricular activity youth enrolled with Treehouse?

This month the Little Wishes program is highlighting art as the January Activity of the Month. Art can play an important role in a youth’s development and education. Studies have shown that participating in artistic activities can improve self-esteem, provide a creative outlet for youth to express themselves, enable youth to celebrate their uniqueness, relieve stress and improve memory.

Art classes provide a safe space for youth to create something entirely their own and to have ownership and investment in a project that reflects their world. A youth shared with Treehouse that after taking multiple art classes at Coyote Central she has made it her goal to attend college to study fashion design.

Do you think that the youth in your home would benefit from a creative art class or another kind of extracurricular activity? Call Little Wishes to find out how to get them started at 206.267.5125.



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CAREGIVER RESOURCE

Educational Advocacy Online Training for Caregivers

Understanding your youth’s educational rights can often be complicated. Learn more about how you can better advocate for the educational needs of the youth in your home and earn caregiver training credits at the same time!

Treehouse is excited to offer two online trainings for Educational Advocacy, lead by Treehouse Advocate Mark Richards. These free trainings qualify for state approved credit hours and can be completed conveniently in your own home or at the library:

- The Family Guide to Working with Schools (3 credit hours)
- The Family Guide to Special Education Services (2 credit hours)

Both trainings are available at <http://www.treehouseforkids.org/online-training-caregivers/>

Questions about the training? Please contact us at 206.267.5140.