



December 15th, 2007
www.AspireOregon.org



Welcome to the Orbit, the occasional e-newsletter for the ASPIRE program. The Orbit is distributed via the ASPIRE listserv and is free to all listserv members. In each issue, you'll find useful updates, news, and notices of upcoming events. New in this issue we've added a special feature: the ASPIRE Spotlight! In each issue, we'll be showcasing an exceptional ASPIRE mentor, coordinator, or AmeriCorps volunteer. If you would like to nominate someone for the spotlight, please email Jessica Criser at jessica.l.criser@state.or.us.

OSAC Update

MEET OUR NEW STAFF: *OSAC welcomes many new faces to the ASPIRE Program!*

With the growth in the ASPIRE Program, our staff has expanded to meet the changing needs of our ASPIRE sites as well as welcome new staff to fill existing roles.

- ★ Karen Edmonds, Access and Outreach Program Manager
Karen came to OSAC from Lane Community College where she worked as the High School and Community Relations Coordinator. Karen can be reached at karen.s.edmonds@state.or.us.
- ★ Steve Coxon, Willamette Region Supervisor
Steve has extensive experience working with youth as a program manager at Northwest Youth Corps and their AmeriCorps members making him a great fit for the ASPIRE program. Steve can be reached at steven.j.coxon@state.or.us.
- ★ Becky Wilson, Mazama Region Supervisor
A former ASPIRE AmeriCorps member and GEAR UP Coordinator at Chiloquin High School. Becky also served as the interim ASPIRE Southern Region Supervisor in 2007. Becky can be reached at rebecca.r.wilson@state.or.us.
- ★ Jessica Criser, Program Assistant
Jessica recently moved from Kansas where she worked in the Office of the Governor and looks forward to the new challenges at OSAC. Jessica can be reached at jessica.l.criser@state.or.us.

News

Oregon Opportunity Grant: *Estimator now online to assist students in planning for college*

The Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG), has grown allowing thousands of additional qualified students to receive state grant support to continue their education. To help students understand the changes, OSAC recently unveiled a user-friendly OOG Estimator. With just a little information, families can get a good idea about their qualifications by visiting: www.GetCollegeFunds.org.

Help spread the word! Promotional brochures and posters have been sent to all Oregon high schools; if your site would benefit from more advertising materials, please let us know.

KnowHow2GO Campaign: *Ad Council program promotes post-secondary education*

KnowHow2GO is a national educational campaign to let high school students know what steps to take to get to college. Their website, www.KnowHow2Go.org, has a catchy commercial and video ads that may be perfect for your school's morning announcements. They also provide college planning timelines and checklists for middle school students through 12th grade that may be useful when working with students.

ASPIRE Logo Gear: *Promote ASPIRE or thank volunteers with ASPIRE products*

Many popular ASPIRE promotional items are for sale through the ASPIRE website! Items offered include lanyards, pencils and mugs and are often used to recruit and thank volunteers, celebrate student achievements, or promote the program throughout your community. To check out these great items, visit the ASPIRE website at www.AspireOregon.org/OrderForm.aspx. If you have other ideas for ASPIRE promotional gear, please send a message with your suggestions to jessica.l.criser@state.or.us.

Upcoming Events

College Goal Oregon: *Save the date for this FREE financial aid event*

College Goal Oregon will take place Saturday, January 26, 2008 from 9:00am-2:00pm at 20 sites state-wide. Encourage your students to get help from friendly financial aid professionals in filling out a FAFSA. Promotional materials have been sent to all Oregon high schools. If your site would like additional materials, please let us know. Find out more at www.CollegeGoalOregon.org.



The ASPIRE Spotlight



Alyssa Makes the Puzzle Pieces Fit

Alyssa Shepherd, Crow High School AmeriCorps Member

Knowing that getting to college can be a bit of a puzzle, ASPIRE AmeriCorps member Alyssa Shepherd knows how to help students put all of the pieces together. She helped new AmeriCorps members better understand their role with a creative puzzle activity she used at the annual AmeriCorps orientation. The activity helped her peers “rise above the details and deadlines and really see how it works and how it fits together.” ASPIRE is fortunate to have Alyssa and her creative talents on board.



Principal Ron Osibov credits Alyssa Shepherd and ASPIRE with creating dramatic changes at Crow. Crow High School is located in rural Lane County and has not had funding for a counseling program for many years. Alyssa developed the ASPIRE program in 2006 and is mid-way through her second year as an ASPIRE AmeriCorps member. She has seen positive results: the number of students taking the SAT tripled this year, the current senior class is more aware of what they need to do to get to college, and community volunteers are engaged with the high school as mentors. She delights in seeing students get interested in new career areas they may not have considered before. “[ASPIRE] is such a successful model,” Alyssa says and she looks forward to seeing its impact at Crow through the rest of the year.

~ Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great. ~ **Mark Twain**

ASPIRE is administered by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) whose mission is to assist Oregon students and their families in attaining a postsecondary education and to enhance the value, integrity, and diversity of Oregon's college programs.

If you would like to subscribe to or unsubscribe from this listserv, email Jessica Criser at jessica.l.criser@state.or.us. Please include the name of your high school with your request.