



## News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2006

### **College Spark Washington awards over \$900,000 in grants throughout Washington state**

SEATTLE – College Spark Washington, formerly known as Education Assistance Foundation (EAF), announced 20 grant awards totaling over \$900,000 to organizations and educational institutions across Washington state. College Spark funds programs that prepare low-income students to be college-ready and earn their degrees. Since 2005, College Spark has awarded 39 grants to organizations within Washington state totaling over \$1.4 million.

In December 2004, College Spark sold its student loan operations, creating a \$120 million endowment. This endowment is now used to fund programs that support college access and success for Washington’s low-income and first-generation students. Funding for the 2006 grant awards was made possible by an agreement with Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA) and USA Funds.

“At College Spark, we have focused our grant-making and are committed to funding programs that concentrate on college-readiness and transitions from two-year to four-year colleges, two areas of specific benefit to low-income students,” said Ned Lange, Chairman of the College Spark Board. “We are excited to continue to learn from our grantees and other education stakeholders in the state,” added Christine McCabe, Executive Director. “It is our hope that Washington can become a leader in innovative strategies that substantially increase the number of low-income students graduating from college.”

### **2006 Grantee List**

College Spark’s 2006 grant recipients are listed below by program type.

#### **COLLEGE PREPARATION AND ACCESS PROGRAMS**

**Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) (Seattle)** <http://www.campseattle.org> - \$50,000 to develop and launch the *Academic Achievement Initiative* which will provide a comprehensive approach toward meeting the needs of predominately African American low-income, first-generation college-bound students attending middle and high schools in CAMP’s service area.

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**Girl Scouts-Totem Council (Kent)** <http://www.girlscoutstotem.org> - \$31,272 to research and develop a *College Preparation Program* (CPP) component to complement their already successful *Life Skills* program in three Kent housing projects.

**Higher Education Coordinating Board and GEAR UP (Statewide)** <http://www.hecb.wa.gov> - \$10,000 to develop curriculum to accompany workbooks currently used to support the *Washington State GEAR UP Scholars Project* and development of a parent handbook and accompanying curriculum.

**Northwest Community Action Center (Toppenish)** <http://www.yvfwc.com> - \$152,987 over three years to enhance the middle school and high school college preparation program, *ConneX*, which focuses on promoting health professions with underserved youth.

**Northwest Leadership Foundation (Tacoma) and Whitworth College (Spokane)** [www.actsix.org](http://www.actsix.org) - \$42,990 to expand and enhance the *ACT Six* college-readiness and leadership program, which provides students from the Tacoma area an opportunity to attend Whitworth College in Spokane.

**Refugee Women's Alliance (ReWA) (Seattle)** <http://www.rewa.org> - \$30,000 to expand ReWA's current youth program to emphasize academic success and college preparation.

**Treehouse (Seattle)** <http://www.treehouseforkids.org> - \$25,000 to bridge Treehouse's middle school tutoring program with their *Coaching-to-College* program in order to prepare a cohort of 50 King County middle-school-aged foster youth for academic success and the transition to postsecondary educational opportunities.

**The Evergreen State College (Olympia)** <http://www.evergreen.edu> - \$45,500 to expand the college preparation portion of the *Gateways for Incarcerated Youth* program which encourages incarcerated youth to complete high school and enroll in college.

**University of Puget Sound (Tacoma)** <http://www.ups.edu> - \$47,970 over two years to enhance the *Summer Academic Challenge* program by expanding the program to serve 7<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**Washington MESA (Statewide)** <http://www.washingtonmesa.org> - \$50,000 to develop an expansion plan for their college prep programs. *More MESA* will allow MESA to identify the classes and services that are most effective for students and deliver them to more students within Washington state.

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**Whitman College (Walla Walla)** <http://www.washingtonmesa.org> - \$62,150 over two years to initiate the *Whitman Institute for Scholastic Enrichment (WISE)*, a three-day residential program at Whitman for twenty-five 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> graders from local school districts.

**Washington State University (Tri Cities)** <http://gearupserv.tricity.wsu.edu>- \$670,777 over three years to identify, inventory, disseminate, and provide training regarding resources for early outreach programs for Latino families. This request is a partnership involving the GEAR UP programs at WSU, UW, Skagit Valley Community College, Columbia Basin Community College, Big Bend Community College, and Walla Walla Community College.

**YMCA of Greater Seattle (Seattle)** <http://www.seattleyymca.org> - \$50,000 to support planning activities related to launching a new college prep program, *YMCA Prep*, for students attending five Seattle middle schools where the YMCA is operating *Community Learning Centers*.

### **TRANSFER AND DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAMS**

**Big Bend Community College (Moses Lake)** <http://www.bigbend.edu> - \$28,600 to inventory, analyze, and coordinate grant services in order to better support low-income students.

**Clark College (Vancouver)** <http://www.clark.edu> - \$70,050 to plan and pilot a new student seminar targeting students who wish to transfer to a four-year colleges or universities.

**Grays Harbor Community College (Aberdeen)** <http://ghc.ctc.edu> - \$39,000 to increase the number of low-income, first-generation, reservation-based Native American students completing two-year degrees and successfully transferring to four-year colleges and completing a bachelor's degree.

**Pacific Lutheran University (Tacoma)** <http://www.plu.edu> - \$99,000 over three years to enhance PLU's current *Pipeline for Learners - Understood Program* to meet the needs of up to 250 transfer students transitioning from community colleges to a four-year degree program at PLU.

**State Board of Community and Technical Colleges (Statewide)** [www.sbctc.ctc.edu](http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu) - \$54,400 to conduct a research study to identify community college students experiencing the greatest challenges to completing their educational goals and to develop potential solutions to assist these students.

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**Wenatchee Valley Community College (Wenatchee)** <http://www.wvc.edu> - \$26,500 to initiate a new mentoring program for first-year Latino students, *Sobresalir con Exito* (Success to be Outstanding), as a way of increasing persistence rates and degree completion.

## WASHINGTON SCHOLARSHIP COALITION

**Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA) (Statewide)** – In partnership with HECB, The Seattle Foundation and statewide scholarship administrators and donors, NELA will manage a \$25,000 grant to assess the feasibility of a statewide scholarship website intended to eliminate the barriers that prevent students from applying for scholarships and improve access to private scholarships for low-income and first-generation students.

*College Spark Washington, formerly known as Education Assistance Foundation (EAF), is a Washington nonprofit foundation supporting access to postsecondary education for underserved students in Washington state and encouraging students to complete their undergraduate degree or certification programs. College Spark is managing an endowment of approximately \$120 million and, through grant-making with partner organizations, is addressing issues that keep low-income, first-generation, and non-traditional students from obtaining their postsecondary educational goals. For more information about College Spark, please visit [www.collegespark.org](http://www.collegespark.org)*

*Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA), a nonprofit company, assists students and parents in planning for college and understanding financial aid by providing information, training and outreach activities. For 25 years, NELA has successfully administered the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) and guaranteed student loans against default. Since 1978, NELA has helped nearly 800,000 students reach their dreams of higher education. The company headquarters are in Seattle, Washington. More information is available at [www.nela.net](http://www.nela.net). In October 2003, NELA opened the Center for Student Success in Seattle and on the Web ([www.centerforstudentsuccess.org](http://www.centerforstudentsuccess.org)). This college access center provides free information, tools, counseling and expertise to build better futures through higher education.*

*USA Funds is a nonprofit corporation that works to enhance postsecondary education preparedness, access and success by providing and supporting financial and other valued services. USA Funds links colleges, universities, proprietary schools, private lenders, students and parents to promote financial access to higher learning. Established in Indianapolis in 1960 to help families finance rising college costs, USA Funds has grown to become the nation's largest guarantor of loans made under the Family Federal Education Loan Program (FFELP), the largest federal source of financial aid for higher education. During the past 44 years, the USA Funds guarantee has supported a total of nearly \$115.5 billion in financial aid for higher education, served more than 13.6 million students and parents and thousands of educational and financial institutions. More information is available at [www.usafunds.org](http://www.usafunds.org).*

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