

New GOAL program aims to boost post-secondary education

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By 2015, the Hillsdale Community Foundation aims to have an application rate of 60 percent of students applying to any form of post-secondary education.

Hillsdale Community Career Access Planning works with area schools to help students in the application process and in applying for the FAFSA. HCCAP is now on campus as a GOAL program, looking for current college students to help potential students in the college application process.

The new GOAL program's coordinator, senior Sarah Schumacher, said there's already been some level of success in the program.

"There's very low numbers of students in the community of kids who pursue any form of post-secondary education," she said. "The need for that and the need for mentors and tutors, they were really encouraged to talk to us."

HCCAP Coordinator Lynn Burkett said Hillsdale College Director of External Relations for Athletics Jeff Lantis encouraged them to contact the college's GOAL program about the need for volunteers.

"HCCAP had a unique beginning," GOAL Program Director Jackie Frenkel said. "The community came to us and said, 'We have this need, can you meet it?' And we said sure, and then we found Sarah. Her work in building the program so far is impressive, to say the least. She's setting it up for tremendous growth and impact in the future."

Burkett said the post-secondary education they're encouraging includes any form of trade school, college, or certificate program.

"It's a relatively new thing. I've only been on the job two years in November," Burkett said. "When I started, that's basically when it came to be. It was in the development stages when I came on board. We've seen college enrollment grow

since we started the program."

On Monday, HCCAP worked at a booth at the local college fair, and will be working in the community high schools during college application week in November.

"In the spring, last year, we helped with decision day, which was a pretty big event," Schumacher said. "Students announced what they're doing, where they're going to college. It created awareness in the whole school as well, so that younger students could get excited about going to college, when it's their chance to do that."

College application week is Nov. 3-7, and HCCAP volunteers will be working in nine schools to help students in the application process.

"What we're trying to do is reach out to the certain percentage who don't think they could go to college or don't think they could afford it," Burkett said. "And once that door opens, we hope they think, 'Well, maybe I can do it,' or 'Maybe I can afford it.'"