



Staten Island Advance

Saturday, January 28, 2012

Future Staten Island college students can get help finding financial aid

By STEPHANIE SLEPIAN

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. — You got into college. Now, it's time to figure out how to pay for it.

Enter College Goal Sunday, a free statewide program that helps high school seniors and their parents complete financial aid forms.

It will take place Feb. 4 — the snow date is Feb. 11 — at 10 a.m. at Wagner College. And yes, even though it is called College Goal Sunday, the event will be held on a Saturday.

Assistance is provided by financial aid professionals — including those from Wagner and St. John's University — who volunteer to help students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

"The financial aid process can be overwhelming for a first-time applicant, but it is not insurmountable," said Theresa Weimer, director of financial aid at Wagner and the borough site coordinator for College Goal Sunday. "The key is to gather all necessary documents and read the application instructions carefully."

Ms. Weimer said there are "various forms of financial assistance available to families from private and public sources."

Those include scholarships from the school itself; federal grants and loans; state grants and loans; private loans, and private scholarships given by a parent's employer, local organizations and corporations.

"Because loans have to be repaid, grant and scholarship funding should always be exhausted and then federal loans should be utilized before private loans, as they are often less expensive and offer benefits that private lenders do not," Ms. Weimer said.

Those wishing to attend College Goal Sunday, should register at www.collegegoalsundayny.com. It is open to all Staten Island high school seniors.

A list of items students should bring can be found at <http://collegegoalsundayny.com/GetStarted.aspx?Content=WhatToBring>.