

Highland Park News – November 19, 2009

Encouraged by their slogan, "Dare to Dream, Dare to Achieve," 21 District 113 CBO (College Bound Opportunities) students attended the third annual Chicago Scholars Onsite Admission Forum held at the University of Illinois at Chicago in late October. Forty-eight colleges were represented and actively partnered with Chicago Scholars. Several District 113 students were accepted into a variety of top-rated colleges.

Although individuals and businesses from District 113 and surrounding areas have been generous in their contributions, CBO is continually seeking new sources for donations and volunteers to meet its financial and mentoring goals.

The Scholar/Coach relationship is the backbone of CBO. Scholars report that coaching is the most valuable aspect of the CBO program, ranking above scholarship dollars. Coaches work with the 54 students in the program, students who will graduate this spring through juniors in college. Applications are now available for the collegiate class of 2015. Applications are due Jan. 10, 2010 and are available on the CBO website: cbo4edu.org/

Community volunteers, employed as well as retired adults, are screened by CBO and trained to address the particular needs of the young people in the CBO program. Over the course of a relationship, a coach will provide some or all of the following support: visits to colleges, assistance with college applications and financial aid applications, exposure to cultural experiences, meetings with family members, help in finding career-related summer jobs, and referrals to tutoring and job counseling services.

To qualify for the CBO program, a student must attend high school in District 113, must carry a 2.75 grade point average and must come from a family whose total income does not exceed \$60,000. The student must also submit a written application and participate in an interview with CBO volunteers and personnel. Scholars are selected on the basis of need and on CBO's assessment of their desire to succeed in college.

CBO leaves little to chance in the college application process. With the support and endorsement of George Fornero, District 113 Superintendent, CBO has developed partnerships with colleges and universities in the Chicago region. While CBO scholars will not be limited to these institutions, the agreements ensure that quality schools will be available and affordable to the young people in the program.

CBO's goal is to provide every student in District 113 meeting its criteria with the opportunity to enter and graduate from college. Still in its infancy, CBO has already secured major commitments of financial and professional resources; created an organizational infrastructure; and, most importantly, has succeeded in identifying, placing, and mentoring a large number of scholars. The coaching model utilizing volunteers to motivate and support promising young people has proved to be effective and durable.