



**IowaCollegeAid.gov**  
Your Financial Aid Connection

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Iowa College Aid Partners with the Oakridge Summer Youth Summer Employment Program**

*Program prepares area youth for transition through school and into adulthood*

**Des Moines, IA, June 12, 2012** –The Iowa College Student Aid Commission (Iowa College Aid) has partnered with the Oakridge Neighborhood’s Summer Youth Summer Employment Program to prepare area teens, ages 14 to 21, for future careers and help them understand the training and education needed to achieve their goals. The program, which runs from June 10 through August 16, provides students from economically disadvantaged and academically at-risk backgrounds with skills and resources to help them overcome obstacles as they move toward sustained self-sufficiency and self-reliance. Iowa College Aid is holding workshops and activities throughout the summer related to money management, financial literacy, goal setting, memorization strategies, finding the right career fit, preparing for college and financing higher education.

“The Summer Youth Summer Employment Program is a major component for preparing teens in our programs for life as adults,” stated Troy Green, job readiness and placement coordinator for Oakridge Neighborhood Services. “Many of the youth face challenges as a result of risk factors such as poverty, violence, limited parental involvement, gang activity and substance abuse,” explained Green. “The Summer Youth Summer Employment Program provides these youth with special attention so they can acquire the attitudes, competencies, values and social connections that will help carry them forward through school and into successful adulthood.”

“A college degree is the key to economic opportunity,” stated Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. “As educational attainment increases, income also increases and the percent of the population living in poverty decreases,” explained Misjak. “For Iowans with only a high school degree, the poverty rate is three times higher than for those with a bachelor’s degree or higher. For Iowans with less than a high school education, the poverty rate is more than six times higher,” Misjak said. “Through our involvement with the Summer Youth Summer Employment Program, we hope students will see their potential and learn how they can break the cycle of poverty through education and career goals.”

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For more information about the Summer Youth Summer Employment Program as well as other services available through the Oakridge Neighborhood Services, contact youth director, Vernon Johnson at 515-244-7702 ext. 139. Visit [www.IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov) for more information about planning, preparing and paying or contact Iowa College Aid at 877-272-4456.

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***About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission***

*Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling nearly \$60.0 million annually, administers the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) program, provides borrowers with assistance to avoid the serious consequences of default, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR-UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being utilized to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. More information is available at [www.IowaCollegeAid.gov](http://www.IowaCollegeAid.gov).*