



# National College Access Network

*Building Connections. Advancing Equity. Promoting Success.*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **NCAN Announces Annual Awards of Excellence at its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**Washington, DC** – The National College Access Network (NCAN) is pleased to announce the recipients of its fifth annual Awards of Excellence. The awards were presented at the NCAN Annual Conference's *Awards of Excellence* luncheon held September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011 in St. Louis, MO.

The NCAN Board of Directors created the NCAN Awards of Excellence to recognize excellence in college access organizations, staff, executive or board leadership, and a Champion of College Access. All nominators and nominees, with the exception of the Champion of College Access recipient, must be NCAN members or board members in good standing. The nominees were reviewed by a committee comprised of NCAN member organizations final decisions made by the NCAN Board of Directors. This year's awards are sponsored by USA Funds whom NCAN thanks for continuing to recognize college access and success leaders in the field. For more information on the Awards of Excellence, please visit <http://www.collegeaccess.org/Awards.aspx>.

### **Champion of College Access**

*Bob Craves and Ann Ramsay-Jenkins*

*College Success Foundation of Washington, DC and Washington State* [www.collegesuccessfoundation.org](http://www.collegesuccessfoundation.org)

As the visionary co-founder of the College Success Foundation, Ann and Bob have mobilized donors to give millions of scholarship dollars to thousands of students in Washington State and Washington, D.C., changing their lives forever. Additionally, CSF has provided the early awareness, mentoring, and guidance programs that students need to prepare for, apply to, and succeed in college. NCAN is especially pleased to recognize their lifetime commitment of service to higher education, state and federal government, and the nonprofit community.

The Champion of College Access Award recognizes an individual, organization, or corporation that has demonstrated a long-term commitment to college access and success through direct work with students, an access organization, or the greater community of college success and higher education.

### **College Access Organization Award of Excellence**

*College Forward of Austin, TX,* [www.collegeforward.org](http://www.collegeforward.org)

College Forward began in 2003 with a mission to help students "access" college. It quickly became clear that access was only half the problem and boldly stepped up to the plate and evolved into a college completion program that begins in high school. College Forward provides intensive and comprehensive services that prepare underrepresented students for college starting in 11<sup>th</sup> grade and supports them through college graduation. Since inception, has served over 2000 students with a 99 percent college acceptance rate and a 90 percent matriculation rate. College Forward partners with over 14 high schools in 9 districts across 4 counties and 10 major universities.

The College Access Organization Award of Excellence recognizes the work of a college access/success program that is committed to college access and success so that all students, especially those underrepresented in postsecondary education, can achieve their educational dreams. College Forward received \$5,000 toward general

operating support, scholarships, and/or professional development, generously sponsored by USA Funds. College Forward will also receive a feature in the USA Funds magazine.

In addition, this year, College Forward also received a \$5,000 donation to endow a program scholarship through the Shelley Saunders Memorial Fund. Shelley Saunders was a staunch supporter and advocate for college access and success. Shelley worked for a major scholarship fund and volunteered her personal time, energy, and resources to programs and staff above and beyond her time in the office. Shelley left us suddenly but the memory of her tireless work to ensure college access and success for underrepresented populations to lives on.

### **Executive Leadership Award of Excellence**

*Bonnie Sutton, Executive Director*

*Access College Foundation of Norfolk, VA, [www.accesscollege.org](http://www.accesscollege.org)*

Bonnie Sutton's efforts at the Access College Foundation resulted in a program sending tens of thousands of students onward to pursue postsecondary education with over \$300 million in financial aid and scholarships. Key to the program becoming what it is today is the vision, focus, and hard work exemplified on a daily basis by this year's executive leadership recipient.

A tireless crusader for postsecondary access and success of the students in not only her home city, but her five city region, Bonnie advocated for and expanded the college access program from 10 schools in one city to 29 schools in five cities. Continuously reflecting on the needs of underrepresented college bound students, she then went on to implement a college retention and success program along with an early college awareness program, thereby ensuring contact with students from underrepresented backgrounds in the largest part of the college access and success pipeline.

The Executive Leadership Award of Excellence recognizes the dedication and hard work of an individual serving as a college access program's Executive Director, President or as a member of its Board of Trustees or Directors. Access College Foundation of Norfolk, VA received a \$1,000 award in support of a new, one-time scholarship made in Bonnie's honor.

### **Dr. David B. Swedlow Memorial College Access Staff Award of Excellence**

*Samuel Rowser, Program Director*

*On Point for College of Syracuse, NY, [www.onpointforcollege.org](http://www.onpointforcollege.org)*

Sam Rowser has helped over 2,700 inner city youth enroll in over 200 colleges and universities over the past 10 years. During that time, Sam has utilized his skills as a gifted orator and advocate, dismantling racial barriers and other inequalities faced by students of color and bridging racial and economic divisions in the local community and beyond by increasing access and success at college for youth. Sam wears many hats by managing, supervising, and implementing community outreach activities; including the college access program, retention program, and early awareness program. Sam has made it his personal mission 24 hours a day 7 days a week, no matter the obstacle, to be an agent for their students' success.

The Dr. David B. Swedlow Memorial College Access Staff Member Award of Excellence recognizes the dedication, hard work and innovation of an individual working at a college access program. On Point for College received \$1,000 toward professional development in honor of Sam's award. The College Access Staff Award of Excellence is named for Dr. Swedlow, former NCAN Director of Programs, after his passing and in honor of his commitment to the cause of college access.

*Incorporated in 1995 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the mission of the National College Access Network (NCAN) is to build, strengthen, and empower communities committed to college access and success so that all students, especially those under-represented in postsecondary education, can achieve their educational dreams. NCAN achieves this mission by serving as a convener for the access and success community, an advocate for public policy in support of student access and success, and a provider of member services and strategic assistance to communities seeking to create college access and success programs and networks. For more information, please visit the NCAN website [www.collegeaccess.org](http://www.collegeaccess.org).*