

EOC Newsletter

Fall 2017



“My goal is to make a difference in the lives of others.”

Success story by Phyllis Gabaree and Jennifer Walk

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I met Phyllis April, 2006 when she came in for an appointment at the EOC office. I seem to remember she had two of her little children with her and she was anxious and excited to begin her college path. We completed her admission application to Metropolitan Community College (MCC), the FAFSA application, and discussed the next enrollment steps. Phyllis graduated from MCC with an associate’s degree and transferred to the University of Central Missouri where she recently earned a bachelor’s degree in social work. Throughout the years of Phyllis’ college journey, as she returned to the EOC for assistance, I had the privilege of watching her grow along with her children. Phyllis is continuing the college tradition with her children. She brought her daughter to the EOC this year to begin her own college path at MCC. I am so very proud of Phyllis’ accomplishments and asked that she share her story below. -Jennifer

“Growing up I was very immature and I had no sense of direction. Due to uncertain family values, my peers had a big influence on me. I eventually dropped out of school and was not being productive with my life. During my adolescent years, I never really gave much thought about where I would like to be years down the road. As a high school dropout, I took each day as it came, never giving any real thought about my future. I had a boyfriend, no cares in the world, and life, to me was good.

Suddenly and unconsciously, I reached adulthood. Eventually my boyfriend and I would come to raise six children. He worked hard to support us and I fell into the role of being a stay at home mother. When my first child was born, the nurse at the hospital gave me a book, courtesy of Literacy KC. She stressed the importance of reading to a child each day. This small jester and amazing program brought about a turning point for me. Looking back on my own childhood I remember having the bible read to me often, but not so much children’s’ books. As an adult I had little interest in reading. From the time my first born was an infant I followed the nurse’s orders and read to my son every day.

As my son grew older and I had more children we spent lots of time at the library reading and taking books home to read. It was not unusual for us to spend two to three hours a day reading. I have come to understand the importance of reading and I enjoyed the time I spent with my children doing so. My children loved books and would also listen to audio books while I cooked dinner. Over time I began to develop a love for reading and ultimately I read my first chapter book, “Worth” by A. LaFaye. This life experience helped me to develop the fundamental skills I needed to grow. The cloudy fog that obstructed my mind began to lift and open up a new world for me. For the first time in my life, I began to have a sense of direction and I slowly approached it.

My new love for reading assisted me in moving to the next step. I soon obtained my high school diploma and went on to study social work in college. As I trudged along

FREE Services Include:

- Academic Advising
- Career Counseling
- College Admission
Application Completion
- FAFSA Completion
- Financial Literacy
Information
- Guidance on Scholarship
Searches
- Defaulted Student Loan
Counseling

EOC Staff:

Jennifer Walk, Director

Jaime Alabi, Advisor

Scott MacDougall, Advisor

Jan Rosenblum, Counselor

Janet Weaver, Counselor

Rufina Nelson, Financial
Aid Assistant

Diane Thornton, Clerk

on my journey through school, I was supported by my family and God. It took me ten years to earn my degree. I am proud to say I have graduated from the University of Central Missouri with my bachelor's degree in social work.

Children may be small, but they can have a big impact on our lives. Helping my children to read helped me to grow along with them. I hungered for more learning and wanted to invest in myself and attending classes fulfilled that yearning. My children became the inspiration that I needed to move forward in my life. They helped to instill a motivational drive for me to return to school. It became important to me to prove to myself that I can become educated.

Trudging along on my journey to success was important to me. I found myself not only doing it for me, but also for my children. I believed that if my children saw me working hard to achieve a college education, this would motivate them to do the same. I felt it would help them understand the importance of school. My personal experience has motivated me to help children be successful in life. My goal is to make a difference in the lives of others, especially disadvantaged children who may be uncertain about how to begin their individual journey to success." -Phyllis

EOC Project Outcomes for 2016-2017

- ◆ Served 2476 individuals, of those, 1770 (71%) were low-income potential first generation college students.
- ◆ 858 participants served were between ages (19-27) - 832 were 28 years and older
- ◆ Participants who received assistance completing college admission applications -1218
- ◆ Participants who received assistance completing financial aid applications—1502
- ◆ 1066 participants enrolled in a postsecondary program.
- ◆ 53 participants were provided defaulted student loan counseling with a combined loan debt of \$1,018,268.
- ◆ Average payment arranged was \$39.55, with a total yearly payback of \$19,933.
- ◆ EOC staff conducted approximately 132 presentations disseminating information on postsecondary and financial aid opportunities at approximately 48 schools, agencies, and organizations.



New EOC Academic Advisor



Jaime Alabi is the new Academic Advisor with the EOC, available to assist students as they prepare for college and work towards their desired career. Jaime was a first generation student, who is passionate about helping individuals realize their potential and achieve their academic goals. She believes our past does not dictate our future and sometimes we just need a little encouragement and guidance to have the confidence to reach for our dreams. Coming from a background with little to no knowledge of how higher education worked, she prides herself on being a bridge for helping others find the necessary resources in order to be successful.

Jaime has worked as a Financial Aid Counselor for 12+ years, assisting students and families in finding the most efficient ways to pay for college and minimize debt. After recently completing her Master of Arts degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Concordia University Chicago, she feels she has an additional skillset that enables her to meet students where they are mentally and emotionally, providing the support needed as they embark on their college journey.

She is excited to be a part of the team and have the opportunity to learn and grow with the students she encounters.

EOC Advisory Board Scholarships

The Educational Opportunity Center Advisory Board consists of individuals from various schools, agencies, and organizations. Each Board officer and member is dedicated to the purpose of EOC; increasing the number of adults in the target area who enter and complete a postsecondary program. The Board members realize that many of the EOC participants face multiple obstacles in achieving their educational goals. To that end, the Board would like to raise funds to assist EOC participants in their postsecondary journey. The funds will be used to establish two separate scholarship opportunities:

- 1) EOC Participant Scholarship: One to two non-renewable \$250-\$500 scholarship to cover cost of tuition, books, and/or fees associated with attending a postsecondary institution.
- 2) EOC Special Circumstance Fund: Limited funds given on a first come first serve basis for participants who have extenuating or special circumstances that prevent them from covering costs associated with attending school. Books, tuition, fees, tools, uniforms, testing fees, and transportation are examples of costs that will be covered by this fund.

If you would like to assist EOC participants tax deductible donations to the funds can be made at <https://www.razoo.com/story/Eocfund>



3100 Main Street, Suite 100
Kansas City, Missouri 64111
816-604-4400



Educational Opportunity Center/Kansas City, MO

The Kansas City Educational Opportunity Center is a 100% federally-funded TRIO program (\$452,546) administered by the Metropolitan Community College. EOC has been serving target area residents since 1979 and is one of only three EOC programs in Missouri. Annually, over 2400 individuals receive services provided by the EOC; at least two-thirds of whom are low-income and potential first generation college students. The primary purpose of Educational Opportunity Centers is to increase the number of adults entering into a postsecondary education program by disseminating information on the educational and financial aid opportunities available. EOC counselors and academic advisors provide one-on-one services to EOC participants to assist them in achieving their educational and career goals. In addition, EOC staff conduct presentations on educational and financial aid opportunities available and on the services offered by the program to community agencies, organization, school, churches, etc. If you would like to schedule an individual appointment or setup a presentation please call us.

816-604-4400.

<http://mcckc.edu/eoc>

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/trioec>



Scholarship Websites and Search Tips

General

collegescholarships.org
carsonscholars.org/scholarships
epsilonsigmaalpha.org/scholarships-and-grants
fastweb.com
fastaid.com
free4u.com
growyourgiving.org/scholarships
scholarshipamerica.org/open_scholarships.php
scholarships.com
scholarshiphunter.com
supercollege.com
unigo.com
weeklyscharshipalert.com
wiredscholar.com
blog.saltmoney.org/tag/scholarships/
schoolsoup.com

Disabilities

afb.org
disabled-world.com/disability/education/scholarships/
disabilityscholarships.us/
disaboom.com/scholarships

Military/Veterans

aid.military.com/scholarship/search-for-scholarships.do
mymilitaryeducation.org
militaryscholar.org/sfmc/index.html

- Start Early!
Most scholarship deadlines are in March or April.
- BEWARE of scholarship scams! Watch out for phrases like: "This scholarship is guaranteed", "You can't get this information anywhere else", "We For more information or to report a scam: Federal Trade Commission www.ftc.gov.
- Note if the scholarship is renewable.
- Keep applying for scholarships. You will be in school more than one year.