

GSA: Community provides resources

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LeBron planned last year's summit as part of her Oregon City High School senior project. Currently she is working on a transfer degree at CCC focused on business.

"I plan to transfer to PSU for non-profit management," LeBron said.

Already she helps coordinate the Wednesday youth drop-in activities for The Living Room in Oregon City.

Jefferson Morgan, program coordinator, has worked with teens for a long time in various organizations, but has only been the project coordinator for TLR since January 2014.

"Office stuff is alright, but I'd rather spend time hanging out

with the teens," Morgan said. "They are what makes my job awesome."

In fact, because The Living Room is a youth-centered organization, his first interview for the position was conducted by the teenagers involved in the program, he said.

Morgan says his main job is to provide a link between the teens and adults. The Living Room focuses on helping teens in Clackamas County, he said.

"[We] provide a service that wasn't being provided out here," Morgan said.

"The Living Room is just about to start their middle school outreach program," Blixhavn said.

Enrique Solama, co-chair of the youth advisory council, has been involved in The Living

Room since he himself showed up as a drop-in when he was 14. Now he helps facilitate the GSA summit.

But what of the teens that "age-out" of The Living Room by turning 21?

Kat Taylor, one such individual, came back to volunteer. She is also involved in creating YOTA (youth of transitioning age) for young adults 21 and over to continue having a safe environment after they leave The Living Room.

According to Blixhavn, Taylor is one of the first to have actually "aged-out" of the program, so this is new territory for them.

"Currently, the only options available are to volunteer or get elected to the board," Blixhavn said.



WHAT'S UP with that?

The college has been advertising a program called SALT on Facebook, MyClackamas and school email. Why should I care?

Patty Salazar
Editor-in-Chief

Clackamas Community College students may have already seen that the college

has just partnered with American Student Assistance, a private nonprofit, to bring a program called SALT to students. But what exactly is SALT?

SALT is a free online informational outlet that is designed to give students financial skills

for life. Students are able to learn how to borrow less, borrow smart and repay their loans efficiently. The nonprofit has created articles, videos, lessons, infographics and comics that help students digest information about student loans on its website.

SALT specializes in U.S. student loans. They offer student loan repayment counselors who work with students one-on-one. The counselors work over the phone seven days a week with students to help manage loan payments.

Although SALT is focused on loans which students take out for four-year college, the website also has resources for students at community colleges. They offer lessons on how to get ready for transferring to a four-year university and where to find scholarships and jobs through their free database.

According to Allesandra Lanza, a spokeswoman for ASA, SALT has partnered with 250 higher education institutions and

has over 500,000 current students and alumni who are members of SALT.

"I think it is very crucial to try and educate students early," said Lanza. "We want to teach students how to live like students now so they don't have to once they are out of school."

In the 18 years that Lanza has worked with ASA the saddest and most common thing she has seen with regards to students is not how much they are borrowing but the ways students are managing their loans without help, she said. Lanza also sees a lot of students not taking advantage of scholarships, grants and federal loans, which in many cases will have lower interest rates than private loans and a variety of payment options.

"We are teaching them how to budget," Lanza said. "It is very crucial to set them up for success once they are out of school."

Lanza hopes that by spreading

SALT through social media, smart device applications and online they will be able to reach out to students before they need help with their loans.

Dustin Bare, an advising specialist for CCC, explained that SALT is another avenue to get information out to students. Although Clackamas' financial aid office does reach out to many students, SALT will help get that same information out to a larger and more diverse audience, he said.

"We are working to be proactive," said Bare. "We want to help students understand financial literacy."

Navigating financial aid options may be daunting but it doesn't have to be difficult. SALT offers a roadmap to understanding the pitfalls, byways and best routes to paying for higher education, tailored to each student.

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