

# It takes a village

By Josie Johnson

It takes a village to prepare for college because it is quite a process. There is research to be done, phone calls to be made, applications to be filled out, essays to be written and so much more.

There is no hiding the fact that the “to-do” list while preparing for college is about as long as a family of five’s grocery list near the end of the month. There are two things, however, that I have learned from experiences that can help students work their way through this list.

The first is make a college preparation list. Sit down with an academic advisor or school counselor and make this list to help organize and visualize the requirements needed to start college and to ensure that no important tasks or documentations are forgotten.

This list will include things like researching different colleges; filling out college and scholarship applications as well as the infamous Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); writing a college essay that can be edited and used for multiple applications; getting needed information such as tax and parental infor-

mation and high school transcripts; visit campuses if possible; research available housing alternatives; and document all necessary deadlines for different schools and applications.

The second is to start the process early. Getting good grades in high school, as repetitive as it may sound, is a tremendous factor in applying for grants and scholarships. The higher a student’s cumulative GPA, the more free money he/she will qualify for. Hence, this is a responsibility students and families should take seriously when thinking about paying for college.

A low GPA is not the end of the conversation by any means, but it certainly does eliminate some opportunities.

For example, when I applied to the University of Oregon, I received a scholarship called Pathway Oregon, a program that covers the balance of tuition if grants and scholarships don’t cover all of it. At the time, the GPA requirement was 3.4 and I had a 3.43.

I feel that it is important to add that I was not at all prepared for college nor did I have the mindset of going to college early on in my high school career.

It was the total opposite. This was because none of my parents went to college and it was never a conversation at home. I am a first generation college student and the idea of higher education growing up was foreign to me. I really had no interest in pursuing college until about halfway through my senior year of high school.

I had very little knowledge on the subject and an even smaller amount of time to figure it out. As a result, the last half of my senior year was a lot more stressful and chaotic than it would have been had I been more prepared from the start of high school.

My hope is that families and community members work together on creating a plan for our students’ higher education because it does take a village and what happens in high school does matter.

*Josie Johnson is a descendent of the Umatilla, Cayuse, Walla Walla and Nez Perce Tribes. She was born and raised in the Pendleton and Pilot Rock area and graduated from Pilot Rock High School in 2013. She currently is a junior at the University of Oregon majoring in family and*



Josie Johnson  
*Courtesy photo*

*human services. Upon admission to UO, she received a Pathway Oregon scholarship that covers her tuition with federal, state and university grants.*

## Scholarships

### Steven R. Nelson Native Educator Scholarship

**Deadline: Dec. 31, 2015**

The Steven R. Nelson Native Educator Scholarship Program seeks to increase the number of Alaska Native, American Indian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students who pursue graduate degrees that will qualify them for careers in education policy, leadership, technical assistance or research in the Northwest region.

The Education Northwest board created the Steven R. Nelson Native Educator Scholarship Program in honor of a retired leader at the organization whose 40-year career was dedicated to working with Tribes, communities, schools and districts to improve Native and rural students’ academic and life success.

Applications can be submitted via [educationnorthwest.recruiterbox.com/jobs/661c28a6838e475cb807a743bb72d613](http://educationnorthwest.recruiterbox.com/jobs/661c28a6838e475cb807a743bb72d613).

### Gates Millennium Scholars

**Deadline: Jan. 13, 2016**

The Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) Program, funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, was established in 1999 to provide outstanding American Indian/Alaska Native, African American, Asian Pacific Islander American and Hispanic American students with an opportunity to complete an undergraduate college education in any discipline area of interest.

Gates Millennium Scholars are provided with personal and professional development through leadership programs, along with academic support throughout their college career.

Applications can be found at [gmsp.org](http://gmsp.org).

### DAR American Indian Scholarship

**Deadline: Feb. 15, 2016**

This scholarship is awarded to help American Indian students of any age, any Tribe and in any state striving to get an education at the undergraduate or graduate levels. All awards are based on financial need and academic achievement.

This is a one-time \$4,000 award.

### Frances Crawford Marvin American Indian Scholarship

**Deadline: Feb. 15, 2015**

This scholarship is awarded once a year to one student. The amount of scholarship is based on total return of the endowment and can vary year to year.

### American Indian Education Foundation: Paul Francis Memorial Scholarship

**Deadline: March 1, 2016**

Applicants must be American Indian or Alaska Native descent (student or one parent must be enrolled and have documentation) and attending an accredited two- or four-year college/university or technical/vocational school as a full-time student.

Scholarships are available for undergraduate studies only – online colleges are not applicable. Scholarship can only be used for tuition and books

### International Order of the King’s Daughters and Sons North Indian Scholarship Program

**Deadline: March 1, 2016**

Scholarships are given for technical, vocational or college studies but not granted for studies beyond a bachelor’s degree. Scholarships are \$650.

### Morris K. Udall Foundation Scholarship

**Deadline: March 4, 2016**

The Udall Foundation awards scholarships up to \$5,000 to American Indian and Alaska Native college sophomores and juniors for leadership, public service and commitment to issues related to American Indian nations or to the environment.

### Catching the Dream Scholarship

**Deadline: April 30, 2016**

Throughout the United States, Native communities suffer from a lack of qualified professionals – teachers, engineers, doctors, communication specialists, business managers, social workers and technicians. Well-paying jobs exist in Indian communities, but few Indians are prepared to fill them.

Catching the Dream seeks to address this deficiency. Our high-priority areas of study are math, engineering, science, business, education and computers.

These fields of study are critical to the future of Indian people and the nation, and American Indians are underrepresented in these fields.

### American Indian College Fund Scholarships

**Deadline: May 31, 2016**

The American Indian College Fund provides scholarship support to each Tribal college and university and administers several scholarship programs for American Indian and Alaska Native undergraduate and graduates students attending Tribal colleges and state and private universities.

### American Indian Services Scholarships

**Deadline: Ongoing**

Applicants must be enrolled in a university, college, junior college or technical school either full-time or part-time. The amount of the scholarship varies.

### Legal Assistant/Paralegal Scholarship

The Association for Legal Professionals (NALS) of Oregon Scholarship Fund, Inc. offers scholarships to students who will be or are attending a college with a legal assistant/paralegal program.

Student must be taking classes to achieve a legal assistant or paralegal degree.

Scholarships will be awarded at the NALS of Oregon Annual Meeting in April 2016. Visit [nalsor.org/](http://nalsor.org/) for more information.

#### Remember!

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) applications will be due by Jan. 31, 2016.**

**Visit [fafsa.ed.gov](http://fafsa.ed.gov) for more information.**