




POSITIVE PATHWAYS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

EDUCATE TOMORROW

OCTOBER 2023



POSITIVE PATHWAYS PROGRAM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

 Santa Fe College, 3000 NW 83 St, Gainesville, FL 32606.

Registration Fee:

\$165

Join us for an engaging time of networking, vital information and effective practices.

Mark your calendars for April 25th and 26th of 2024 for the annual Positive Pathways Program Conference. The theme for this year's conference is "Pathways After Graduation: What's Next?"

Jasmine Moore, associate director of Positive Pathways, will chair the event. Dr. Steve J. Rios, senior director, will co-chair. Planning committee members include youth leaders and advocates as well as representatives from Florida's public colleges and universities, in consultation with DCF.

We expect more than 150 participants for two days of learning, networking, and growth. The conference connects Positive Pathways students, campus staff, and community partners. Dr. Bea Awoniye, assistant vice president at Santa Fe College, will host the conference.

A highlight is the new Youth Track, curated by young adults who have benefited from Florida's tuition fee waivers. The youth track promises to provide fresh perspectives and ideas.

To get conference updates, join our monthly calls and watch for emails. Registration will open next month. Submit travel requests to be a part of a panel or make a presentation.

The cost of \$165 for the conference will include three meals. We are looking for sponsorships.

For more information, contact Jasmine Moore, associate director of Positive Pathways, at Jasmine@EducateTomorrow.org.

Pathways After Graduation What's Next?



- Best Practices
- Youth Track
- Networking
- Professional Development
- Great Food



2024 Positive Pathways Conference
April 25 & 26, 2024

Positive Pathways Plans Regional Community Forums for 2023-24 Academic Year

Positive Pathways has begun offering a series of community forums for the 2023-24 academic year, one in each Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) administrative regions (see map). The goal of these meetings is to foster communication and effective interactions among social workers and educators who work with young people using the DCF and homeless tuition waivers in Florida. Pathways members will meet face-to-face with other professionals and students in their own communities to get to know each other and discuss important topics. This year, the forums will focus on the various and sometimes confusing types of financial aid and state benefits available to them. The forums also will cover issues related to the Florida's homeless tuition exemption, which underwent changes in 2022.

The first one of these gatherings took place at Palm Beach State College (PBSC) last month. Robin Russo, director of student well-being, brought together social work interns from Florida Atlantic University and the University of Central Florida, and other key college staff and leaders, including Latisha Myrick, Interim associate registrar for college-wide student services, for the meeting. Guests from the community included: From Vita Nova, Jeff DeMario, chief executive officer, and Mike Yackulics, director of independent living services. From ChildNet Samantha Ramsaran, director of permanency and youth services (Palm Beach), and Stephen Cooke (Broward). Dr. Steve Rios and Jasmine Moore presented information about Positive Pathways.

The next one is scheduled for October 26, at Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ). The Jacksonville are forum will be hosted by Denise Giarrusso, associate director of Student Support Services at FSCJ.

To suggest agenda items for the regional forum in your area, email us at Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org. Stay tuned for invitations and Save the Dates for upcoming regional trainings.



PALM BEACH STATE COLLEGE



Robin Russo



Denise Giarrusso



Six DCF Regions



Longtime College Coach Promoted to Asst. Dean

Wendy Joseph, who has served at college coach at Miami Dade College in Miami, has been promoted. She is now assistant dean of students on the North Campus of MDC. Asst. Dean Joseph was the MDC's first full-time college coach / liaison serving students using the homeless and DCF waivers. She served in that position from 2015 until her recent promotion. Ms. Joseph is one of the most active Pathways members, having taken on the role of facilitator of the College Connection, a series of Zoom meetings during which state college level coaches and liaisons met to share best practices and obtain advice from their colleagues. In her new role, Ms. Joseph oversees a variety of initiatives. However, she still helps students using the waiver while her expertise and dedication benefits the entire MDC North Campus student body.

Congratulations Asst Dean Joseph, for your well-deserved promotion! Miami Dade is working with Educate Tomorrow to seek additional funding for campus coaches to serve the college's more than 500 students using either the homeless waiver or the Department of Children and Families waiver.



Wendy Joseph
Assistant Dean of Students
MDC North Campus

Steve Rios, Jasmine Moore To Lead Positive Pathways in New Roles Going Forward

The Positive Pathways Program, which has been led by Dr. Steve J. Rios, senior director, since it began in 2016, underwent a shift in leadership on October 1. Dr. Rios will assume a supervisory role and Jasmine Moore, who has been an Educate Tomorrow associate working with Dr. Rios, will assume the role of associate director formally, and will be funded by the DCF grant, as opposed to being funded directly by Educate Tomorrow.

Dr. Rios' work with Positive Pathways will shift to a more supervisory role, and Brett McNaught, the current supervisor of the program, will continue and oversee the work but in his capacity as CEO of Educate Tomorrow. Dr. Rios will expand his work related to homeless students in the South Florida area, funded by a new grant from the United State Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

"We are excited about the opportunity for growth and advancement that our new HUD funding is providing for both Dr. Rios and Ms. Moore," McNaught said. "I am grateful to both of these professionals for their years of dedicated service to the Pathways network and I'm glad they will both continue to lead this vital program."

"I can't think of a better person to take on the new role of associate director of Positive Pathways than Jasmine," Dr. Rios said. "I am grateful for Educate Tomorrow has funded her work with this program up to now and glad that she can expand her work for the Program in her new position."



Jasmine Moore



Dr. Steve J. Rios

Pathways Members Present on National Stage



Jasmine Moore



Kasandrea Sereno



Amy Sosanko

Jasmine Moore, the new Associate Director of Positive Pathways, co-presented with Amy Sosanko, Lead Advisor at the Community College of Allegheny County and Dr. Kasandrea Sereno, Dean of Retention & Engagement at Tulsa Community College, at the 2023 National Academic Advising Association Conference (NACADA), from October 4-7. NACADA is an association of more than 14,000 professional advisors, counselors, faculty, administrators, and students working to enhance the educational development of students. During the presentation, titled "Listen Up: A Voice for Students with Experience in Foster Care," Ms. Moore and her colleagues discussed how college, community partners and global organizations can help students with experience in foster care overcome barriers to their higher education. This group also serves as members of the advising communities for students with experience in foster care.

Recap of Recent Pathways Monthly Meetings



Pedro Hernandez

Positive Pathways delivers quality professional development and networking opportunities each month during its statewide conference calls. We also offer a monthly platform during which members can share information about upcoming events and other important announcements. Here is a recap of the August and September meetings.



During the August meeting, Pedro Hernandez, Director of Outreach Services with the Florida Department of Education, provided an overview of the financial aid resources available for students pursuing post secondary education in the Sunshine State. You can reach Mr. Hernandez at pedro.Hernandez@fldoe.org



Dr. Shawn Wooden

Also in August, Shawn Wooden, the president of the Southern Scholarship Foundation (SSF), shared that his organization plans to open their second house for female students at Florida Gulf Coast University in Ft. Myers. SSF runs 25 scholarship houses, including eight in Gainesville and 16 in Tallahassee. For more information, visit the SSF website at SouthernScholarship.org or email Dr. Wooden, at Swoodin@southern scholarship.org.



Joseph Murray

During the September meeting, Joe Murray, associate dean of student advising at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), spoke about Champions Empowering Champions, the non-profit that was founded by Dr. Kimberly Dunn, an accounting professor and president of the faculty senate at FAU. Since 2018, CEC has provided supportive networks, professional and life skill development, meaningful civic engagement, and financial assistance for living and academic necessities to students using the homeless and DCF waivers at FAU. For more information, visit [WHO WE ARE – Champions Empowering Champions](#)



Join Positive Pathways, YOUR Network for Success!

The Florida Department of Children and Families Positive Pathways, part of the DCF Office of Continuing Care (OCC), is funded by DCF and Educate Tomorrow, which has administered the program since 2016. The Program is comprised of more than 300 members located at Florida's public colleges, universities, technical colleges and community-based care agencies. These individuals are knowledgeable, accessible and compassionate professionals who provide consistent support to young adults from foster care and homeless backgrounds as they pursue their postsecondary educational goals.

The Positive Pathways team, which includes Brett McNaught, CEO of Educate Tomorrow, Jasmine Moore, and Dr. Steve J. Rios, all of whom are nationally recognized professionals at the intersection of higher education and child welfare. Positive Pathways is overseen by staff in the DCF Office of Continuing Care, by Director Taylor Peck, Deputy Director Cal Walton, III, and Eric Wetzel, the Youth and Young Adult Transitions Specialist. For more information about our program, contact us at Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org, or visit our website, www.PositivePathways.org.