



November 27, 2006

Dear GEAR UP Student,

I hope your year is successfully underway! My name is Emily Liebling and I'm working with the Maine Support Network this year on the GEAR UP project.

First, I want to make sure you're on track and know what is expected of you in order to maintain your status in the program and your eligibility for the scholarship award. As a reminder, you agreed to the following requirements when you signed your GEAR UP student compact:

I would like to be a GEAR UP student and I agree to:

- With the support of school staff, I will develop and carry out a GEAR UP learning and action plan that will identify steps that I will take and what I need to learn and do in order to meet my goals to go to college.
- Study hard in my classes and work towards at least a B average each year.
- Participate actively in a wide variety of school activities.
- Maintain excellent attendance.
- Participate in part time work, community service, volunteer activities, and service learning projects.
- Seek out help from my teachers, parent(s) or guidance counselor if I find I'm struggling in my classes.

Your school's GEAR UP liaison can help you clarify any specific questions you have about these expectations. In addition, to take full advantage of financial aid at the schools to which you are interested in applying, seniors should file their Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible. **This type of aid is often distributed as early as January, so filing early can make a substantial difference in your aid package.** To be eligible for the State of Maine Grant Award, your FAFSA must be filed by May 1st. After your form is processed, your eligibility for a Pell Grant will be determined. If you attend a Maine Title IV eligible institution and are eligible for a Pell Grant, you will be eligible for a scholarship. If you are not eligible for a Pell Grant, or attend an out-of-state institution, you will not be eligible for a GEAR UP Scholarship.

Our website is a very useful resource and can help answer many questions you may have about these requirements, or related matters. Please visit us at www.gearupme.org. I will be working on updating our site, and I would love your ideas. It should be a useful resource, as well as a fun and interesting place for you to visit and connect with other GEAR UP students across the state. Do you know what a Podcast is? Visit our website to find out! In our first Podcast issue you can listen to your peers speak out about their plans for college and beyond.

I wish you a productive and fun school year. Also, please feel free to email me if you have a GEAR UP story you would like to share on our website.

Sincerely,

Emily Liebling
GEAR UP Coordinator
Communities for Children & Youth
AmeriCorps*VISTA
emily@mainesupportnetwork.org