

News > Latest News

## Georgia Apply to College Month motivates high school students to seek their dreams

BY MARK RICE

mrice@ledger-enquirer.com November 21, 2013



Her parents and two older siblings didn't go to college, so Jessica Bunting sensed the meaning of the moment as she applied Thursday to Columbus State University.

"It's pretty special," said the Shaw High School senior, who plans to major in art and become a photographer. "Everybody has really doubted me, so this is kind of like, 'I'm doing it.'"

Jessica is one of 115 Shaw students – about one-third of the senior class – who took advantage of the opportunity in the school's media center. That's where Shaw senior class counselor Lisa Cypert and volunteers from TSYS, the school's Partner In Education, and Georgia Military College helped the students fill out their online applications through the GAcollege411.org website, capping a series of activities that celebrated Georgia Apply to College Month.

Told about Jessica's milestone, Cypert smiled and said, "That's the whole idea behind the program, to make it easier to apply to college because they know they have somebody to ask questions and navigate through the process."

The Georgia Apply to

College program started in 2008 with eight high schools and nearly 900 students applying to college, according to its website. Last year, 188 high schools participated and more than 19,000 students applied to college. Organizers expect to increase that number again this year because more than 200 high schools are participating, including Jordan, Spencer and Chattoohoochee County.

"We try to get them to apply earlier in their senior year," Cypert said. "So many of them procrastinate. I think they get caught up in the things they're doing their senior year. Time gets away from them."

Jessica agreed.

"I have really poor time-management skills, so I figured this would be a really good way to get it done," she said. "I find myself getting really distracted at home."

The activities at Shaw this month included:

- Teachers wore "Ask me about college" buttons, as well as shirts and hats from their college, and decorated their classrooms with college memorabilia.
- Students had a week to complete a scavenger hunt, matching faculty members' names with "fun facts" about their college experience. The winning class was awarded breakfast.
- Juniors and seniors wore clothes appropriate for a college interview on "Dress for Success Day."
- A college fair brought representatives from more than 30 campuses to share information with students. Some schools even offered scholarships.



Mike Haskey mhaskey@ledger-enquirer.com Jessica Bunting, a senior at Shaw High School, applies to Columbus State University through the website GAcollege411.org Thursday morning in the Shaw High School media center. 1/21/13 MIKE HASKEY — mhaskey@ledger-enquirer.com | Buy Photo

