Great Expectations

Mission?to help Virginia?s foster youth complete high school, gain access to a community college education and transition successfully to living independently.

Vision?that all foster youth in Virginia obtain a postsecondary education and be successful in both education and employment pursuits.

Goal...has *Great Expectations* available and easily accessible for all of Virginia?s foster youth.

Background

The statewide *Great Expectation*s initiative was launched at 5 community colleges in 2008 as a pilot project. Funds were raised to start 3 additional *Great Expectations* programs in 2009, 4 in 2010, and 3 in 2011, bringing the total to 15 of the 23 community colleges. Now in its third year, *Great Expectations* is serving more than 450 students and continues to grow every year.

Each college hires a Campus Coach, who works with foster youth individually and in small groups. The components of the overall initiative include: (1) after-school programs at the community colleges for younger foster students ages 13-17 to help them complete high school and transition to higher education; (2) comprehensive programs targeting foster youth 18-24 to help them succeed in community college by setting up a highly-structured environment with wraparound student services to promote their success; (3) an internet-based resource center for foster youth, their parents, social services personnel, counselors and mentors; (4) peer and adult mentors for *Great Expectations* students; and (5)astudent emergency fund for urgent, unexpected student needs.

The Campus Coaches also focus on ways to help these at-risk youth overcome well-documented barriers to their life success, including housing, transportation and medical and child care issues.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS THE GREAT EXPECTATIONS PROGRAM?

A college transition program designed to help young adults (17-24 years old) who are or were recently affiliated with the foster care system. Goals of the program include:

- To help young adults transition into college
- To increase awareness about the value and availability of a college education
- To assist students and service providers with accessing and successfully navigating the community college system

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THIS PROGRAM?

- Assistance with choosing an academic plan of study and college enrollment
- Support throughout the financial aid process
- Monitoring of academic progress and assistance with accessing college support services
- Referrals to college and community resources for academic and personal issues
- Referrals for tutorial services
- A point person, at the college, to assist students in their academic journey until they are able to become self-sufficient in their navigation of the community college system

WHERE IS THE GREAT EXPECTATIONS PROGRAM LOCATED?

- Academic Resource Center, Wytheville Community College, 1000 E. Main St., Wytheville, VA

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE GREAT EXPECTATIONS PROGRAM?

- Individuals between the ages of 17 ? 24 who are or were affiliated with the Virginia foster care system who are interested in attending Wytheville Community College
- Youth adopted from Virginia?s foster care system after reaching age 13
- All special needs adoption from Virginia

HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GREAT EXPECTATIONS PROGRAM?

- Contact Student Services at (276)223-4758.