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PRESS RELEASE

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www.muskegonopportunity.com (information on Muskegon County's Local College Access Network)
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High schools urge seniors to apply for college next week

While high school seniors will not be donning their caps and gowns for another seven months, the time to complete applications for college is now. That's the message ten local high schools and over 200 others are delivering November 3-7, 2014, during Michigan's third annual College Application Week.

The goal of the program, led by the local college access network known as Muskegon Opportunity, is to give every graduating senior the opportunity to apply to college. According to Megan Byard, College Access Specialist, most colleges have strict application deadlines. For early acceptance, this date is usually by November of a student's senior year. Other admissions deadlines vary by school, but Byard advised "the sooner the better."

According to projected job growth statistics, 70 percent of jobs by 2020 will require at least some college education. Currently, only 37.4 percent of Michigan residents over 25 have a college degree. In Muskegon County, the number of working-aged adults (age 25-64) with at least an associate degree or higher is well below the state average at 28.7%.

High schools such as Holton, Mona Shores, Muskegon Area Career Tech Center, Muskegon, Muskegon Heights PSA, Oakridge, Orchard View, Reeths-Puffer, Whitehall and White Lake Area Community Education will work with its seniors throughout this first week in November to complete and submit online or in paper form at least one college application. Students will be encouraged to apply to any of Michigan's community colleges, independent colleges and universities, and state universities in which they are interested.

The ten schools expect more than 1,500 seniors to participate with the help of many volunteers from each local district, higher education partners such as Muskegon Community College, Baker College and Grand Valley State University, as well as community members and residents.

College Application Week began in North Carolina as a pilot effort of a single high school in 2005. The national campaign expands each year to include more states and high schools committed to a common goal of increasing the percentage of first-generation and low-income students to pursue a post-secondary education. Last year, 208 high schools participated in Michigan, helping seniors complete more than 20,975 applications. Michigan College Application Week is sponsored by the Michigan College Access Network.

For more information about College Application Week within Muskegon area high schools, please contact Megan Byard, College Access Specialist with the Muskegon Area Intermediate School District or visit the Michigan College Access Network website at http://www.micollegeaccess.org/events/college-application-week.

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