

# On a Quest to help Collier kids succeed



SUSAN ZUMSTEIN

Getting into college nowadays takes years of hard work and smart decisions to build a competitive resume.

Begin college prep now with Quest for Success, a Naples-based nonprofit organization with one goal: help high school students prepare for their college or university career.

Since its inception in 1993, Quest has successfully shaped the lives of more than 1,000 promising students and helped them unlock more than \$40 million in scholarships, financial aid and grants from multiple colleges and community organizations.

Open enrollment for Quest applications is currently underway and closes at the start of the upcoming school year in August. Any rising freshman, sophomore or junior, currently attending high school in Collier County, is encouraged to apply online at [www.questforsuccess.com](http://www.questforsuccess.com).

For those without computer access, printed copies of the application are available at the Quest Center at 2706

Horseshoe Drive South, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Qualified applicants will be notified and requested to attend a student and parent interview at the Quest Center.

Quest is looking for academically stellar students who have demonstrated a level of scholastic achievement and are motivated to attend college and become involved in community service before they're accepted into the program. There are not strict requirements or cutoffs, but based upon successful Quest applicants from previous years, student characteristics rank in the top 10 percent of their class and receive mostly "A" grades in the most rigorous classes available, usually honors-, AP- and/or IB-level courses.

Standardized test scores on PSAT, SAT and ACT, and extracurricular achievements, such as leadership or community activities, are also considered. In addition, Quest looks for evidence of strong writing ability, intellectual spark and determination through essays and teacher/counselor recommendations.

Students who have the means pay tuition for the program; about 40 percent of the 381 currently in the pro-

gram receive scholarships.

The dedicated Quest team provides essential tools, information and life skills that prepare students for college. Quest also assists in choosing the school best fit for a student's personality and future career and helps pursue educational funding. The complexity of today's financial-aid process is scaring students away from college.

Key program modules include interactive and comprehensive SAT/ACT test preparation; development of college-competitive high school curriculum; essay-writing workshops; one-on-one financial aid and scholarship application assistance, and tutoring in math and test-taking skills. Quest students are also expected to develop positive character traits, define career pathways, learn time management and organization skills, and engage in community service.

The results are young people who have the confidence and preparation needed to thrive throughout their entire lives. This year, 76 percent of Quest students are eligible for Florida Bright Futures scholarships. Comparatively, 20 percent of all Florida applicants earn this award that recognizes a high

school senior's rigorous academic record and commitment to community service.

The combination of seeing what can be done and then having someone you respect telling you that you can do it — that's what most young people need. Quest lifts the ambitions of talented teenagers by introducing them to peers and to successful adults.

Quest will hold two information sessions for prospective students and their families on Wednesday at 6 p.m. and Saturday at 12:30 p.m. For questions on enrollment, contact Denise Giardina at 239-403-7174, ext. 104, or via email at [denise@questforsuccess.com](mailto:denise@questforsuccess.com) or go to [www.questforsuccess.com](http://www.questforsuccess.com).

*Zumstein is executive director of Quest for Success, a community-based organization providing personalized and effective methods for students to access and pay for most college. Quest's mission is to foster economic freedom through education by empowering high school students to reach their highest career potentials through lifelong learning. A tax-deductible gift to Quest for Success is an investment in Quest Scholars — empowering them to succeed in college and beyond.*