



# NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
Post Office Box 120128 • San Diego, CA 92112-0128

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## Community Groups Unite to Encourage Foster Youth to Attend College

For many children in the foster care system, college is just a dream. The San Diego Superior Court, along with numerous groups and agencies, is sponsoring a free event to encourage foster youth to think about college as a realistic option.

The third annual "I Can Go To College!" program is scheduled for Saturday, October 29, 2011, and will be held at the Hahn University Center on the campus of the University of San Diego (5998 Alcalá Park) from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The program is open to foster youth in middle school and high school. It is also open to their caregivers.

During the program, foster youth and their caregivers will get questions answered about college, take a tour of USD's campus and listen to a panel of former foster youth who will share their college experiences. The keynote speaker for the event will be motivational speaker Demontray "Dee" Hankins, who will share his message about students reaching their goals despite being considered "at-risk" youth. Hankins, who spent 18 years in the foster care system, is a recent graduate of Cal State Long Beach.

This event is presented by Health and Human Services Agency, Child Welfare Services and the Commission on Children, Youth and Families; San Diego County Office of Education,

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Foster Youth and Homeless Education Services; Grossmont College – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship Care Education (FAKCE); Fostering Access to College Education (FACE); Dependency Legal Group; Voices for Children; San Diego Superior Court – Juvenile Division; and the University of San Diego – Institute of College Initiatives, Student Support Services.

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge Cynthia Bashant explains, “Navigating the college and financial aid application process can be daunting. We want our foster youth to be thinking now about that possibility and how they might make it a reality. Hopefully, exposure to other people who successfully went through this process, despite their placement in foster care, will motivate these young people to realize their full potential.”

“Our hope with this event is that students in foster care and their caregivers will have all of the information they need to pursue a college education. We believe in these students and want them to know that college is not just a possibility; it is waiting for them!" says Dr. Michelle Lustig, Director, Coordinator of Foster Youth and Homeless Education Services, County Office of Education (SDCOE)

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***MEDIA: Free parking in the Mission Parking structure. Please be aware the Juvenile Court has issued a media order for this event: any media present are ordered not to air or print publically any photo or film of a juvenile unless it has been blurred/tilized.***