

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PBCC Launches New Community-Based Outreach Program to Steer Low Income Adults Into College

U.S. Representative Mark Foley helps PBCC secure the \$950,000 Department of Education funding

PBCC officially launched a new program today, sending professional advisors into low-income communities to provide needy adults with information and encouragement to pursue a higher education.

With a \$950,000 federal grant, the College has established Educational Opportunity Centers at PBCC in Lake Worth and at five community organizations that already serve the low-income adult population that PBCC wants to reach.

U.S. Rep. Mark Foley, PBCC President Dennis Gallon, Ken Montgomery, head of the county's Workforce Development Board, Claud Francois from the Haitian Family Services Center and Estelle Jones from the Department of Children and Family Services joined other community leaders to "piece the puzzle" at the kick-off event. It was held at one of the EOC sites -- the Riviera Beach Service Center -- which also houses the Department of Children and Families, Workforce Development and a One Stop Center.

EOC counselors provide adults 19 and older who meet federal low-income guidelines and/or whose parents did not earn at least a bachelor's degree with academic advice, personal counseling, career workshops, tutoring, GED preparation, college visits, mentoring and critical help with completing college admissions and financial aid applications.

The objective of each EOC is to increase college access for adults who -- because of economic or language barriers, lack of information about the opportunities available or other reasons-- have not pursued their educational dreams. The goal is to help them enroll in a degree or training program at a college of their choice.

"This initiative will be the only service center in South Florida that will be providing access to the entire Palm Beach County area," said Vernon Haley, vice president of student services at PBCC. "We anticipate that the services will lead to increased access in post secondary education, which will have a significant impact in the workforce and associate and baccalaureate programs."

EOC will be housed at the Haitian Center for Family Services in Belle Glade, Lake Park and West Palm Beach, the Workforce Development building in Riviera Beach and at the One Stop Center on Okeechobee Boulevard in West Palm Beach.

The five-year EOC grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education last summer will be distributed in \$190,000 annual increments. It is one of four Title IV TRIO grants the College has received over the last three years. The others are Upward Bound, Student Support Services and most recently, Talent Search.

Upward Bound, Student Support Services and Talent Search were the original three educational opportunity programs established as a result of the Higher Education Act of 1965. By the late 1960s the term "TRIO" was used to describe three federal programs. Over the years, TRIO programs were expanded to include Educational Opportunity Centers, Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program and Upward Bound Math/Science.

Contacts:

Richard Marshall
Director, Educational Opportunity Centers
(561) 868-3681

Dr. Grace Truman
Director, College Relations and Marketing
(561) 868-3122