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NEWS RELEASE

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GEAR UP Iowa to Celebrate National GEAR UP Day September 30, 2010 *GEAR UP Iowa Program Raises College Aspiration, Preparation Levels in Iowa*

Des Moines, IA., September 20, 2010 – The GEAR UP Iowa Program today announced plans to celebrate National GEAR UP Day on September 30, 2010. This day commemorates the success of GEAR UP Iowa and all of the Gaining Early Awareness and Education for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) across the nation. GEAR UP Iowa, a federally-funded program administered by the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, is designed to better prepare Iowa students for postsecondary education. By providing academic preparation programs and scholarships for participants, professional development activities for educators, and postsecondary education access information for students and parents, the program hopes to encourage students to continue their education beyond high school.

The Cedar Rapids Public Schools and GEAR UP Iowa are hosting an event to celebrate National GEAR UP Day on Thursday, September 30, 2010 9:00 a.m. at Jefferson High School, 1243 20th St. SW in Cedar Rapids, for students and families, community members, legislators, as well as anyone interested in learning more about how GEAR UP Iowa helps low-income and minority students recognize the value of higher education. Miss Iowa 2009 Anne Langguth, GEAR UP Iowa Project Coordinator Michael Anderson, Jefferson High School Principal Chuck McDonnell, and 2010 Jefferson Graduate Josh Millam are scheduled to speak at the event.

“The goal of GEAR UP Iowa is to provide the resources and inspiration to instill a college-going culture among families and GEAR UP Iowa students as they make their way through high school,” said Karen Misjak, Executive Director of the Iowa College Student Aid Commission. GEAR UP Iowa currently serves approximately 6,000 Iowa students and their families at 27 Iowa high schools, including Jefferson High School in Cedar Rapids.

The success of GEAR UP Iowa is a combined effort of many individuals and organizations, including the Iowa College Student Aid Commission, the Iowa Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Education, GEAR UP Iowa school districts, local governments, colleges and universities, state and community-based organizations and businesses, as well as volunteers.

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Several Iowa colleges and universities have already partnered with GEAR UP Iowa, including AIB College of Business, Buena Vista University, Central College, Clarke University, Drake University, Graceland University, Grand View University, Hawkeye Community College, Iowa State University, Iowa Wesleyan College, Iowa Western Community College, ITT Technical Institute, Kirkwood Community College, La' James International College, Muscatine Community College, Simpson College, University of Iowa, University of Northern Iowa, and Western Iowa Tech Community College. Corporate sponsors, including 7 Flags Fitness, Bankers Trust, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines Public Schools GEAR UP, Institute for Character Development, Iowa Association of Community Colleges, Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Department of Human Services, Iowa Energy, Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates, Iowa State Treasurer's Office, Iowa Workforce Development, KCRG-TV Channel 9, MidAmerican Energy, Midwest Speaker's Bureau, Principal Financial, Scholastic Books, Trans Iowa Charters, Tyson Foods, Veridian Credit Union, WHO TV, YMCA of Marshalltown, and the Governor's Office also have partnered with GEAR UP Iowa to provide program resources.

"We are very excited to work with all of our partners and look forward to developing new partnerships with even more Iowa colleges, universities, organizations and businesses who believe that college should be a possibility for all of Iowa's youth," said Misjak.

More information on GEAR UP Iowa is available online at www.GEARUPIowa.gov or by calling the Iowa College Aid Information Service Center at 877-272-4456. To learn more about the national GEAR UP program, please contact the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships at 202-530-1135 or www.edpartnerships.org.

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About the Iowa College Student Aid Commission

Iowa College Aid provides college access, financial literacy, and outreach services to Iowa's students and families as they prepare, plan and pay for college. Iowa College Aid also administers state scholarship, grant, work study, and loan forgiveness programs totaling over \$68.5 million annually, administers the Federal Family Education Loan Program (FFELP) program, provides borrowers with assistance to avoid the serious consequences of default, conducts research and distributes higher education data, and offers Iowans assistance in obtaining student financial aid and college-related information. Through its role, Iowa College Aid also serves as the state-designated administrator of the U.S. Department of Education's College Access Challenge Grant, which is designed to increase the college-going culture in Iowa. Additionally, Iowa College Aid is the administrator of the Federal GEAR-UP Grant, a multi-year state-wide grant which is being utilized to provide early awareness programming and outreach initiatives to thousands of Iowa's students and families. More information is available at www.IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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