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P.O. Box 6028 ♦ Indianapolis, IN 46206-6028

[www.usafunds.org](http://www.usafunds.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 25, 2011

**CONTACT:**

Robert P. Murray  
Vice President  
Corporate and Marketing  
Communications

(317) 806-1283

[bob.murray@usafunds.org](mailto:bob.murray@usafunds.org)

***Awards to expand programs that enhance student success in higher education***  
**USA Funds selects finalists for \$1 million awards for college success**

**INDIANAPOLIS** — USA Funds<sup>®</sup>, a nonprofit organization that helps American families benefit from postsecondary education, has selected the finalists for two grants of up to \$1 million each to bolster student success in postsecondary education.

USA Funds named the following five organizations as finalists for USA Funds Trustees' National Award for College Success, an award of up to \$1 million to a nonprofit organization outside the state of Indiana to promote student success in postsecondary education:

**Bottom Line.** Jamaica Plain, Mass. Bottom Line provides one-on-one counseling to low-income students from urban areas in Massachusetts from students' senior year in high school through college. The counseling addresses issues ranging from applying for admissions and financial aid to academic and career advising. The organization reports that its participants achieve a 73 percent college graduation rate over six years. For additional information, visit [www.bottomline.org](http://www.bottomline.org).

**Foundation for Students Rising Above.** San Francisco. This program seeks to increase access to and graduation from four-year colleges and universities for low-income, first-generation students residing in the Greater San Francisco Bay area. The program provides students with financial, emotional and academic support from their junior year of high school through college. The organization reports that 90 percent of its students graduate from four-year postsecondary programs. For further details, visit [www.studentsrisingabove.org](http://www.studentsrisingabove.org).

**Harlem Children's Zone.** New York. As part of its comprehensive services to children and families, this community-based organization supports a College Success program that provides Central Harlem youth with college preparation support, as well as support services and guidance throughout their college careers. For more information, visit [www.hcz.org](http://www.hcz.org).

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## College Success Finalists -2-

**“I Have a Dream” Foundation-Oregon.** Portland, Ore. In partnership with local school districts, this organization “adopts” entire third grade classes at selected schools in high-poverty areas. The students then receive a broad array of academic and developmental support through their first year in postsecondary education. The organization reports that two-thirds of its graduates continued to a second year of college. For more information, visit [www.ihaveadreamoregon.org](http://www.ihaveadreamoregon.org).

**The Posse Foundation.** New York. This organization works in seven major U.S. cities to identify public high school seniors with academic and leadership potential who may have been overlooked in the traditional college selection process. The foundation then works with partner universities to place the students in supportive “posses” of 10 students. The program reports a 90 percent student persistence rate. For additional information, visit [www.possefoundation.org](http://www.possefoundation.org).

USA Funds will award a second grant of up to \$1 million to one of the following four Indiana-based nonprofit organizations, to promote student success in postsecondary education in the state of Indiana:

**Ball State University Foundation.** Muncie, Ind. The Guardian Scholars program seeks to address the unique challenges that foster care youth face in transitioning to and succeeding in postsecondary education. The program provides these students with mentoring and guidance, emergency assistance with education-related and living expenses, special events including orientation, and educational outreach. The program serves students attending Ball State University and Ivy Tech Community College campuses in Muncie, Marion and Anderson, Ind. For further information, visit <http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/CentersandInstitutes/SSRC/GuardianScholars.aspx>.

**Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School.** Indianapolis. This charter school for grades 6 through 12 focuses on preparing graduates to apply to, gain admission to and excel at selective colleges and universities. The school promotes the success of its graduates in college through an Early College initiative, which includes a bridge program that prepares juniors and seniors for postsecondary studies and a college completion department that tracks and monitors Tindley graduates in college. For more information, visit [www.tindleyschool.org](http://www.tindleyschool.org).

**Simon Youth Foundation.** Indianapolis. This Indianapolis nonprofit organization supports a network of Education Resource Centers, alternatives schools that serve students at high risk of failing to complete high school, and postsecondary education scholarships for graduates of the Education Resource Centers and other economically challenged students. For additional information, visit [www.syf.org](http://www.syf.org).

**Starfish Initiative.** Indianapolis. This nonprofit organization works to cultivate promising, economically disadvantaged youth into college-educated leaders. The program provides low-income high school students with mentors who are college graduates and continues to follow the students after they enter college. The program also provides college access support, including career inventory testing, college planning, scholarship information and job shadowing. For more information, visit [www.starfishinitiative.org](http://www.starfishinitiative.org).

### **College Success Finalists -3-**

The second award, the USA Funds John Burkhart Indiana Award for College Success, is named in memory of an Indianapolis business and civic leader who was one of the founders of USA Funds.

“These programs have a strong track record of promoting student success in higher education, especially among low-income students, students of color and first-generation students,” said Robert C. Ballard, USA Funds senior vice president, Access and Outreach.

USA Funds announced the college success grants last summer to commemorate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to higher education, and to support the national goal of increasing the percentage of American adults with college degrees and re-establishing the United States as the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates in the world.

USA Funds will announce the recipients of the two college success awards in March.

*Headquartered in Indianapolis, USA Funds is a nonprofit corporation that works to enhance postsecondary education preparedness, access and success by providing and supporting financial and other valued services. For more information about USA Funds, visit [www.usafunds.org](http://www.usafunds.org).*

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