

## TCPalm: Kids in St. Lucie County get informed on financial aid options

By Larry Bailey, Correspondent

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Higher education has to be affordable, U.S. Rep. Tim Mahoney said Tuesday during a symposium he presented on how to pay for college.

"It's very important that with competition in the global economy we invest in our children's education and make it affordable," said the Palm Beach Gardens Democrat.

He also said students must be able to go as far as their abilities will take them and not be hindered by their capacity to pay for college.

"The talk of education has to be the walk of education," he added.

The symposium at St. Lucie West Centennial High School was designed as an information source on financial aid options available through state and federal governments.

During the event, Mahoney showed strong support for the College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, which over the next five years will increase loan and Pell Grants by \$1.5 billion and reduce the debt of typical need-based loans for four year public schools by more than \$13,000.

The act also reduces the interest rate over the life of a four-year loan and increases the number of Florida students receiving Pell Grants to well over 300,000.

The symposium also included presentations by the Florida Department of Education and Florida Association of Financial Aid Administrators on the Bright Futures Scholarship Program, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid Program, state need-based aid and the College Reach Out Program.

Some parents at the symposium praised Mahoney's interest in affordable education.

"I'm blown away that the congressman would take the time to come to the local area to listen to parents express their concerns regarding the cost of higher education," said single parent Roy Solomon Jr., of Port St. Lucie, who has four high school children soon to begin college.

#### FINANCIAL AID WEB SITES

• Bright Futures Program: [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org/SSFAD/bf/](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org/SSFAD/bf/)

• Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

• Initial Student Florida Financial Aid Application: [www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org](http://www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org)

• [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

• [www.finaid.org/military](http://www.finaid.org/military)

• [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

• [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org)

• [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

• Scholarship Resource Network: [www.srnexpress.com](http://www.srnexpress.com)

