



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **University Center of Lake County Receives Innovative Initiative Award**

Grayslake, IL (February 14, 2017) The University Center of Lake County received the Innovative Initiative Award from the Illinois Council on Continuing Higher Education (ICCHE) at ICCHE's 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on Thursday, February 9, 2017. The award recognized the University Center's "First Generation College Outreach Program."

ICCHE is a statewide organization of two- and four-year colleges and universities, both public and private. It supports continuing higher education across the state and facilitates collaborative relationships among the different types of colleges and universities. Its Innovative Initiative award is given annually to a program that contributes to the purpose of ICCHE, meets a need in the community served by the nominee, is unique to continuing higher education, and is replicable.

The First Generation College Outreach Program seeks to strengthen the pipeline to college by collaborating with many stakeholders in Lake County. It has three components:

1. "Taste of College" addresses the earliest point in the pipeline by bringing eighth grade students to college and by providing their parents with initial information about why college is important and how to prepare for it.
2. "Familias en Educacion" is a half-day workshop conducted in Spanish for families with high school students who might become first-generation college students. It provides demographic information about Latinos in higher education and about the impact of higher education on employment rates, and introduces resources available to them to help plan for and pay for college. Participants see role models—both current college students and Latino professionals—and can visit a resource fair to learn about services provided by partner organizations.
3. "FAFSA Campaign" is a countywide effort, begun in 2008, to provide practical help in applying for financial aid. Held in computer labs across Lake County with volunteers trained by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) and at least one Spanish speaker at each site, these events enable families to complete and submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the first step in applying for financial aid. Two cycles in 2016 totaled 46 workshops at 17 locations and served 738 families.



The University Center of Lake County works with many partners on these components. The College of Lake County and Mundelein High School District 120 and its Universidad de Padres parent group are part of all three components. ISAC participates in components 2 and 3.

Additional partners in or sponsors of one or more components include: Associated Bank, Carl Sandburg Middle School (District 75), Cristo Rey St. Martin de Porres College Prep, Family Service of Lake County, Fremont Middle School (District 79), Highland Park High School, Lake County Regional Office of Education, Lake Forest College, Luis Fuentes of Remax Showcase, Mano a Mano Family Resource Center, National Louis University, North Chicago High School, North Shore Gas, Round Lake Area Public Library, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, State's Attorney's Office of Lake County, TRiO Educational Talent Search, Trinity International University, Waukegan High School, Waukegan Public Library, West Oak Middle School (District 76), Waukegan Township, YouthBuild Lake County, Zion-Benton Township High School, Zion-Benton Public Library.

For more information about the First Generation College Outreach program, contact Dr. Myra Gaytan-Morales at [mgaytan@ucenter.org](mailto:mgaytan@ucenter.org) or (847) 665-4108 or visit [www.ucenter.org](http://www.ucenter.org). For more information about the Illinois Council on Continuing Education, visit [www.icche.org](http://www.icche.org).

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