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Lela to award \$10,000 through Cash for College Video/Essay Scholarship Contest and drawings

Campaign promotes Financial Aid Awareness Month, importance of applying now for college aid

BATON ROUGE - High school seniors: Get those creative juices flowing. You just might win money for college.

The Louisiana Education Loan Authority (Lela) is once again sponsoring its \$10,000 "Cash for College Scholarship Contest" and drawings, with the grand-prize winners in the essay and video contest each winning a \$2,000 scholarship. Second- and third-place winners in each category will also receive scholarships. The theme is "Your College Game Plan!"

In addition, five seniors will win \$500 scholarships through random drawings. The deadline is March 31. Here are the scholarship award details:

Video/Essay Contest (\$7,500)

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| 1 st -place video -- \$2,000 | 1 st -place essay -- \$2,000 |
| 2 nd -place video -- \$1,000 | 2 nd -place essay -- \$1,000 |
| 3 rd -place video -- \$750 | 3 rd -place essay -- \$750 |

Drawings (\$2,500 total)



5 awards

\$500 each

Students can register for the contest and drawings online at www.GoFAAM.com and find 2013 video contest entries on Lela's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/askLela2013/videos>.

Lela's FAAM campaign is designed to focus college-bound high school seniors and their parents on the importance of completing the U.S. Department of Education's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) in time to meet financial aid deadlines this spring.

To commemorate Financial Aid Awareness Month (FAAM), Lela staff members are conducting FAFSA Completion Workshops, making presentations and providing college-planning information at high schools throughout Louisiana. Signaling his support of Lela's efforts to help more students complete the FAFSA, Governor Bobby Jindal formally designated the month of February as Financial Aid Awareness Month.

"The FAFSA is required for any student applying for college financial aid, including

TOPS, federal grants and loans. The application requires a lot of financial information, including the most recent tax documents. That's why it's so important for parents to start early and to seek assistance if they need it," said Joni Leggio of Lela.

"Most universities recommend completing the FAFSA by March 1 to be considered for financial aid. It's important for students and their parents to be familiar with the deadlines at their schools of choice," she said.

The FAFSA is free and can be completed online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. There and on the Lela website at www.GoFAAM.com, parents and students can find valuable information about paying for college.

As it did last year, Lela is offering free FAFSA Completion Workshops at high schools, upon request. It is also offering free one-on-one assistance in completing the FAFSA. Those needing assistance can contact Lela staff at info@lela.org or (800) 228-4755 (toll free) to schedule an appointment.

Lela maintains a statewide calendar of free workshops and events, free resources and valuable links online at www.GoFAAM.com. The nonprofit provides frequent updates on this website and through its Facebook and Twitter feeds at <http://www.facebook.com/AskLela> and <https://twitter.com/AskLela>.

Lela has sponsored its Cash for College Scholarship contest since 2004 and regularly offers college scholarships and drawings on its Facebook page and website. In December, the nonprofit awarded \$6,000 in college scholarships to high school seniors through its annual holiday art contest, in partnership with the George Rodrigue Foundation of the Arts. For more information, visit <http://www.asklela.org>.

About Louisiana Education Loan Authority (Lela)

The Louisiana Education Loan Authority (Lela), a division of the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority (LPFA), is Louisiana's non-profit resource for college planning. Lela's mission is to develop projects and programs to make higher education more accessible to the people of Louisiana. Lela has assisted more than 400,000 students since 1984. Find more information at <http://www.lela.org>.

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