

## TheCollegePlace celebrates first anniversary

*by Bend\_Weekly\_News\_Sources*

TheCollegePlace-Bend has completed its first year of free college access services. In the past year, 2,397 persons have received free college and financial aid service or information through this resource.

Director Richard Thompson noted that more than 300 people have successfully navigated college access processes and are enrolled or expect to enroll in the college of their choice.

“I knew there was a need for free college access services for low-income persons in Central Oregon, but I had no idea the response would be this overwhelming,” said Thompson. “It is very gratifying to help so many Central Oregon families access a richer future through this free service.”

TheCollegePlace-Bend, a resource of ECMC Group, is located on the Central Oregon Community College campus. The center offers free workshops, community events, and one-on-one personal assistance with admissions, financial aid applications and other college access processes, free onsite Internet access for online financial aid and admission application processing, interest assessment and scholarship searches, and a career resource library.

Natalie Juarez, a 2006 graduate of Madras High School, now attends COCC. “TheCollegePlace helped me turn my dream of attending college into reality this year. With this help, I am able to afford classes at COCC that will prepare me to enter into a nursing program,” she said.

TheCollegePlace focuses on low-income families or students who will be the first to go to college, but extends service to any family in need of college access information. It serves middle and high school students as well as adults at the COCC location, schools, and will travel to other community locations when requested.

TheCollegePlace-Bend center hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 8:30 am to noon on Fridays. Saturday and other times are available by appointment.

For information, e-mail [bendinfo@thecollegeplace.com](mailto:bendinfo@thecollegeplace.com), visit [www.TheCollegePlace.com](http://www.TheCollegePlace.com), or call toll free at 866-326-2827. The office is located in Room 200 of the Grandview Student Center on the COCC Bend campus.

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