

2009 Bateman Competition
Kent State University
College: RockIt! Campaign



Executive Summary

The 2009 Kent State University (PRKent) Bateman team presents the launch plan for its "College: RockIt!" campaign. This pilot plan helped a flight crew of middle school students in Portage County, Ohio, rock through key steps of the college countdown:

- 3... **Choose your destination** (start thinking about your future now)
 - 2... **Pack your bags** (good grades now matter)
 - 1... **Prepare for takeoff** (talk to your parents about college)
- Blast off!**

The Consumer Bankers Association charged the Bateman team with creating a grassroots campaign to involve the local community in its College Bound Aid program, "Hit the Books Running." The program's key messages include encouraging young students to think about college now, reminding students good grades now can pay them back later and emphasizing the impact a college degree can have on their futures. The PRKent team chose to build on the HTBR messages and use them throughout the College: RockIt! campaign.

The PRKent Bateman team discovered many national and local college preparation programs geared toward high school students, but programs for middle school students are scarce. The team's research found most middle school students, commonly called "tweens," expect to go to college but don't have any idea how they will get there. Most tweens said they thought they could wait until their junior or senior years of high school to start thinking about college. These students said they were more interested in socializing and entertainment than thinking about the future.

The PRKent team learned the most effective way to engage its flight crew in the college mission was to an entertaining beat of face-to-face communication. So, the PRKent team narrowed its focus to the largest middle school in the Kent, Ohio and brought College: RockIt! to Stanton Middle School for a week of training camp in February.

Activities including a rap challenge, collage contest, college student testimonials and night at the ice arena guided the seventh grade crew through the college countdown. The PRKent team encouraged students to recognize the importance of good grades now and to think about what careers they might enjoy. The team showed students how a college degree can help them reach their dreams, no matter what they might be.

Parents of the flight crew also got involved in the mission at a financial aid information night and by visiting the College: RockIt! Web site and www.CollegeBoundAid.com with their respective crew members. Other opinion leaders, including teachers, guidance counselors and local media, also helped build excitement for the College: RockIt! campaign's first launch.

This launch plan outlines the PRKent Bateman team's research, campaign implementation and evaluation of the College: RockIt! program. Welcome aboard! Get ready to learn more about PRKent's effort to help local students blast off to college.

Situation Analysis

Although most seventh grade students say they are likely to attend college, our primary and secondary research shows many say they have little or no information about how to prepare. The majority of tweens are not yet thinking about education after high school. However, today's uncertain economic climate is making early college preparation more necessary than ever before.





Students

Our plan focuses on middle school students because research found this group was unlikely to be involved in planning for college and few college-planning programs target tweens. This audience is media-savvy and socially active; national studies report the majority of tweens visit social networking sites on the Internet each day, and our focus groups and interviews confirmed these findings. These students are constantly connected to their friends through text messaging, instant messaging and online networking sites.

“Middle school students are largely overlooked as a target audience for raising awareness about college.”
– Gwyn Walcoff, APR,
Washington Partners, LLC

This group indicated high-paying and “cool” careers were attractive, and the majority of tweens said they expect to go to college. However, middle school students are more concerned with social relationships and day-to-day activities than planning for college. Research indicated students knew good grades would affect their chances of attending college, but most said they believed they could wait until high school to begin preparing. Tweens demand constant stimulation and don’t spend much time on anything that isn’t funny or entertaining.

Parents

Students’ parents know the benefits of a college degree, but national surveys have found the majority of parents say the economic crisis has affected how they’re saving for their children’s educations. Even though parents are more involved in their children’s educational planning than ever, both primary and secondary research indicated many parents of middle school students haven’t saved for their children’s college funds.

This audience gets most of its information from traditional media sources including newspapers and television news programs. Parents also reported getting information from Internet news sites, and most of the parents we studied used e-mail frequently.

Portage County, Ohio

Portage County residents have been hit hard by the economic downturn, and in 2007, the county reported 10.8 percent of residents were living below the poverty level. Average household income in Portage County is \$45,795, and 35 percent of homes have children under age 18. Only 14 percent of Portage County residents hold bachelor’s degrees and about 4.8 percent have earned associate degrees.

The county’s largest middle school, Stanton Middle School, comprises 830 students in grades 6-8. Reflecting the county’s average income, 250 Stanton students are eligible for free or reduced lunches. Stanton’s seventh grade has shown difficulty in keeping up with state standards. Ohio Achievement Test scores showed the 272 students were below proficient in reading and math. Minority students are especially a concern, as just 58 percent of black seventh-graders read at a proficient level and only 39 percent are proficient in math.

“Some parents are telling their kids, ‘College just isn’t possible.’”
– Carly Frey, Stanton guidance counselor

A Stanton guidance counselor said many parents believe college is not financially within their reach. Many Stanton students come from families with lower-than-average incomes, and parents are unaware of financial aid opportunities. Without encouragement from their parents, students are much less likely to begin thinking about college early and may assume college isn’t possible.

The Problem

Getting middle school students to think about and plan for college early presents several obstacles. Breaking through the constant chatter to effectively deliver our message will be a challenge, as will finding a way to keep the students engaged. Motivating students to care about their grades now will create scholarship and financial aid options in the future, but some students have already ruled college out for financial reasons.





Though they would like their children to have the opportunity to attend college, some Portage County parents believe financing their children's educations just isn't possible. Stanton's guidance department has tried to encourage early college saving in the past but counselors said they have seen little response from lower-income families.

The state of the economy and the slipping rate of proficiency in our local school system have added a sense of urgency to the implementation of our plan. Our ability to gain awareness of early college planning and opportunities could impact the futures of countless local students.

Secondary Research (For additional details, please refer to page 44.)

Dr. Watson Swail recognizes four major barriers to young people attending college: College Knowledge, Academic Preparation, College Costs and Career Counseling. PRKent's secondary research confirmed these barriers and provided data about tween trends, demographics and economics to help plan the public relations campaign. Recent studies uncovered several trends in the tween demographic, including communication methods, social relationships, outlooks on college and significant role models.

Tween Research

Humor and social networks

- 75 percent of tweens consider themselves "experienced users" of the Internet and are attracted to brands using humor, involvement and honesty as cornerstones of their marketing practices.
 - "Live from Ad: Tech: According to kids online," Nov. 9, 2005, By Patricia Odell
- 72 percent of tweens have a profile on at least one social networking site.
- 64 percent of tweens visit social networking sites at least once per day.
 - "New data shows the tween scene is online," July 29, 2008, By Stuart Larkins

College Outlook

- 92 percent of seventh and eighth graders say they are likely to attend college.
- 68 percent say they have little or no information about how to prepare.
 - "A middle school parent's college prep guide," Oct. 2007, By Linda Strean

Key Influencers

- "The need to belong" is a key trait of the tween demographic.
 - "Tweens now occupy a top spot in minds of product marketers," April, 30, 2007, By Irene Chang
- Peer relationships have "overwhelming importance for middle school students."
 - "Middle school crisis," Jan. 2007, By Bruce Hammond
- Tweens look up to their parents and would most like to be like one of their parents.
 - 2005 Youth Intelligence Tween Report

Parent Research

Communication

- 40 percent watch cable news programs and read local newspapers each day.
- Americans reporting daily use of the Internet for news updates increased from 22 percent in 2006 to 31 percent in 2008, according to the 2008 Gallup Poll.

College Planning

- 43 percent of parents have not saved anything for college.
- 74 percent of parents feel the economy has affected their college saving.
 - "Hard times are forcing parents to cut back on college saving; 529 sales drop; further decline expected," Investment News, Oct. 13, 2008, By Charles Paikert





Primary Research *(For additional details, please refer to page 33.)*

The PRKent Bateman team wanted to identify barriers specific to our area to shape its campaign. We held three student focus groups, conducted more than 20 interviews with parents and educators and opinion leaders including a seventh grade school counselor, adolescent psychologist and client contact.

Student Focus Groups

- All student participants said they plan to attend college.
- Tweens said they could wait until junior or senior year to start thinking about college.
- Middle school students want to be entertained and engaged.
- Middle school students would listen to a message about college if a college athlete delivered it.
- Students want to hear about college life from someone who is experiencing it.
- Students need incentives to bring their parents information from school; otherwise, they will lose or forget about it.

Opinion Leader Interviews

Carly Frey, Seventh Grade Counselor at Stanton Middle School

- Middle school students are thinking about their futures and careers but are bombarded with information about preparation for high school.
- The parents of these students are in a “kick-back” phase—they had to be involved in their children’s schooling during the first few years and are taking a break before high school begins.
- Many families whose children attend Stanton do not have the money to start saving for college.
- Some parents are telling their kids, “College just isn’t possible.”
- Parents and school administrators don’t like MySpace and other social networking sites because they present problems such as cyber bullying and posting inappropriate material.

Kathryn Kerns, Adolescent Psychologist at Kent State University

- Middle-school-aged children are not thinking about college and will not start thinking about it until high school.
- This age group is more focused on the question, “What do I want to be when I grow up?”
- If students have any awareness of the financial costs of college, it doesn’t become a concern until high school. At this age, adolescents do not have a good grasp of the concept of money.
- Students are mainly concerned with their relationships with peers and how to “fit in.”

Gwyn Walcoff, Washington Partners, LLC (CBA contact)

- CBA wants students to start thinking about college before high school.
- Students from less affluent communities need to think about college early to increase their chances for scholarships.
- Awareness is the biggest barrier that needs to be addressed.
- Creativity is encouraged, but HTBR program should be basis for campaign.

Target Audiences

Primary

- 250 seventh grade students at Stanton Middle School in Kent, Ohio
- Parents and guardians of Stanton Middle School seventh grade students





Secondary

- Stanton Middle School teachers, counselors and administrators
- Kent State Chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America
- Kent State University students/ potential speakers
- Kent State Financial Aid staff
- Campus and local print media, news sites and bloggers

Key Messages

- It is never too early to start thinking about a future career.
- Getting good grades now will lead to scholarships and success in the future.
- Parents and middle-school-aged children should begin to discuss the cost and benefits of a college degree.

Key messages tailored to students:

3... Choose your destination! What do you want to do?

2... Pack your bags! Good grades now do matter!

1... Prepare for takeoff! Talk to your parents about college.

Objectives

Students

- To increase awareness among Stanton Middle School seventh grade students about how getting good grades now will affect their chances of going to college in the future by **15 percent** by Feb. 28, 2009.
- To increase awareness among Stanton Middle School seventh grade students about the "College: RockIt!" program by **75 percent** by Feb. 28, 2009.

Parents

- To increase awareness among Stanton Middle School seventh grade parents about the College Bound Aid program by **10 percent** by Feb. 28, 2009.
- To motivate **10 percent** of Stanton Middle School seventh grade parents to engage in early college financial planning by Feb. 28, 2009.

Strategies

Students

- Tailor campaign to middle school students in the community, specifically seventh grade students at Stanton Middle School, to build excitement about college and integrate the national HTBR program.
- Inform Stanton Middle School seventh graders of the importance of getting good grades and thinking about college using face-to-face communication, social media, CBA Web site and promotional materials.
- Use entertainment to educate students about the importance of getting good grades and a college degree.
- Familiarize Stanton Middle School seventh grade students with the College: RockIt! campaign through face-to-face communication and promotional materials.
- Identify Kent State students with various/cool majors who will act as ambassadors and deliver the campaign's key messages to middle school students.

Parents

- Educate Stanton Middle School parents about college financial aid options and College Bound Aid through face-to-face programming.
- Educate Stanton Middle School parents about financial aid options available in planning for college through directing them to the CBA Web site.
- Educate parents about financial aid options and CBA through print media.





Challenges/Opportunities

Challenge: Tweens communicate daily through social media outlets, making MySpace.com a tempting medium. However, focus groups and interviews with parents and school administrators showed the parent audience frowned upon use of MySpace and some parents do not allow their students to have profiles.

Opportunity: To create a fun atmosphere like MySpace and encourage two-way communication, the team created a campaign blog. We were able to communicate key messages to all audiences in a fun, conversational tone, and we incorporated multimedia to add life to the site.

Challenge: Based on primary and secondary research, our team found there could be obstacles to reaching the parents or guardians of students. Many Stanton families consist of working parents who are not very involved with school events, making it difficult to deliver parent messages.

Opportunity: Our team sent surveys and educational materials to Stanton seventh grade parents, distributed CBA brochures at school events and hosted a financial aid information night that focused on early college planning. The team used prizes as incentives for students to bring the promotional packets home, review the materials and visit the CBA site with their parents.

Tactics

College: RockIt! Theme

Develop a memorable logo and design for College: RockIt! materials that relates to the HTBR program, raising awareness and increasing recognition of our key messages.

Rationale: The HTBR program had a strong universal logo; a figure running on a book is the main HTBR logo, and other variations on the CBA Web site show the figure with a computer (Start Now), check (Student Aid) and loan application (Loans 101). The College: RockIt! theme is consistent with the HTBR materials, but allowed us to create a campaign specific to our audience. Research showed students were interested in music and entertainment, so we used a play on words with "rocket" and "rock it." Our logo features the HTBR figure on a rocket that is blasting off with music notes as exhaust. Our team also used the HTBR color scheme, bright green and blue, throughout the campaign.

Promotion: Our logo design was included on posters in the school that conveyed our key messages, parent invitations to the financial aid information night and on the College: RockIt! Web site. We created a giant rocket logo to hang in a high-traffic hallway at Stanton, and reinforced the campaign colors by wearing blue and green t-shirts and passing out campaign materials on blue and green paper.

Evaluation: To promote the College: RockIt! campaign, we used a consistent logo and color scheme. The design reflected our campaign strategies and tied the campaign to the HTBR program. Surveys showed students recognized the College: RockIt! campaign and knew it focused on thinking about college early.

Classroom Activities

Create a College: RockIt! classroom program with face-to-face interaction and hands-on activities.

- Kent State speakers from various fields of study, including music performance, fashion, chemistry, journalism and education, spoke to groups of 15-20 students about the importance of a college education and how they chose their majors. The speakers encouraged the students to start thinking about college early and reinforced our key messages.
- Our team organized activities that split students into groups to either create collages of "cool careers" or compose raps about going to college. We recruited PRSSA members to help facilitate the activities, talk to students about college and make sure they understood its importance.
- Collages were displayed on the rocket mural so the entire school could experience the campaign.





- Students were encouraged view their posters and listen to their raps on the College: RockIt! Blog.
- Groups that created the best rap and mural for each day won prizes and attended a pizza party. The winning overall collage and rap groups were given large green and blue treat bags.

Rationale: Primary research indicated face-to-face interaction and hands-on activities are the best ways for tweens to learn. Tweens want to be with their peers and do not want to be “talked at.”

Promotion: Prior to classroom activities, the College: RockIt! mural and HTBR and College: RockIt! posters conveyed key messages and built awareness about the campaign launch. Daily morning announcements reminded Stanton students of the College: RockIt! campaign, and team members wore green and blue shirts during classroom activities to reinforce the HTBR program colors.

Evaluation: Each day the Bateman team reviewed outcome of the activities and worked to refine the activities for the following day. Throughout the week, our team conducted surveys in every class to measure the success of our campaign. There was an increase in all areas:

- Students who were planning to go to college increased from 91 percent to 94.5 percent.
- Students who planned to talk to their parents about college rose from 73 percent to 85 percent.
- Students who felt getting good grades now mattered increased from 50 percent to 67 percent.
- Students who were familiar with College: RockIt! increased from 2 percent to 83.4 percent.
- 97 percent of students said the speakers were interesting, and 89 percent of students enjoyed creating collages and raps.

College: RockIt! Blog

Create a College: RockIt! blog: <http://collegerockit.wordpress.com>

- The blog featured college students with “cool” majors through text and multimedia.
- The blog linked to YouTube videos the team created, which enhanced search engine optimization.
- The team posted photos of collages and audio of the raps students created in the classroom.

“I have been thinking about college ever since you came in. I think I will reach out for my dreams. Thank you very much.”
– Stanton seventh grade student
blog comment

Rationale: The blog used social media without alienating parents and administrators. We wanted to create a welcoming atmosphere and allow parents and students to leave comments on the site, creating a two-way conversation, which a Web site would have hindered. The blog created a way to drive audiences to the CBA site.

Promotion: Team members promoted the blog by including the blog URL on all promotional materials, writing it on the blackboards in classrooms and telling students to visit the site. Team members encouraged students to visit the blog to view the posters and listen to the raps they created during the College: RockIt! week. During the financial aid information session, the team showed parents the blog and encouraged them to use the site as a resource. Each team member directed traffic to the blog through personal social media, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Evaluation: As of March 5, 2009, the blog had 1,095 views. The busiest day for blog traffic was Friday, Feb. 27 with 171 views, which was last day of the College: RockIt! activities. Twenty-five clicks went directly to CollegeBoundAid.com from the blog. The blog also provided our team with student feedback. We calculated more than 100 views of the College: RockIt! videos on YouTube.





Parent Financial Aid Outreach

We worked with Stanton administration and Kent State's Student Financial Aid staff to host a parent financial aid information night. We gave parents CBA brochures and showed the College: RockIt! blog and CBA Web sites on a projector. A KSU Financial Aid director gave a presentation on financial aid options, emphasizing the importance of early planning. Attendees enjoyed coffee, courtesy of a local café.

Rationale: Based on interviews with members of the Stanton Parent Teacher Organization, teachers and guidance counselors, it was determined a financial information night would be an effective way to educate parents about financial aid, CBA and the College: RockIt! campaign.

Promotion: We sent parents invitations to the financial information night two times the week before the event, as well as emphasizing the importance of early college planning. Promotional flyers were posted at Stanton Middle School and e-mailed to more than 600 parents using the school listserv. We also promoted the financial aid information night during a middle school sports banquet in the Stanton cafeteria. We set up an information table at the event entrance, and we distributed financial aid information flyers and HTBR brochures. Our team recruited two field hockey players from Kent State's athletic department to sit at our table to appeal to student-athletes.

Evaluation: About 25 parents attended the financial aid information night, which is double the attendance of typical evening events, according a Stanton guidance counselor. Parents shared positive feedback about the presentation on the surveys and face-to-face communication.

"You inspired me to go to college." – Stanton seventh grade student

College: RockIt! Ice Night

The team held a College: RockIt! Ice Night event at Kent State Ice Arena, which our focus groups revealed is the hot hangout for students on Friday nights. Our team collaborated with the Kent State Ice Arena to sponsor a night to promote the College: RockIt! campaign and its messages through fun activities and announcements.

- We talked to students and parents in the lobby about our campaign, college and getting good grades.
- Our team wrote scripts related to college planning, getting good grades, the College: RockIt! campaign and the HTBR program for the DJ to read while students were skating.
- During the class presentations at Stanton Middle School, each seventh grade student was given a blue and white wristband with the College: RockIt logo on it. If the students wore their wristbands to the Ice Arena, they were entered into a raffle.
- Students answered college trivia to participate in a "Chuck-a-Puck" game. To earn a puck, a student had to answer a trivia question at our table about college, HTBR or the College: RockIt! campaign.
- Team members wore a sandwich board with our College: RockIt! key messages on it, skated around the ice arena with students and talked to them about college and getting good grades.
- A Guitar Hero game attracted attention and engaged students. To play, students had to tell us what they wanted to be when they grew up and how college would help them get there.

Promotion:

- Sent Ice Night flyers with students to take home to parents.
- Told parents about the ice night at the financial aid information event.
- Encouraged students to attend the ice night during classroom presentations; wristbands were handed out as incentives to attend and win prizes at the event.





Rationale: Based on the focus group and secondary research findings, it was determined that the Ice Night would provide an opportunity to reach out to students in a fun, personal environment.

Evaluation:

- 33 Stanton seventh students (14 percent) wore their College: RockIt! wristbands to the ice arena.
- Nearly 40 students answered trivia questions about key messages to enter the Chuck-a-Puck contest and played Guitar Hero.
- More than 100 students rented ice skates and heard our key messages that evening.

Media and Blogger Relations

Our team targeted local media and bloggers to build awareness about the College: RockIt! campaign through campus and regional media and Web sources.

Rationale: Our primary research found many local parents were likely to receive information through the local newspaper and online. We targeted the Record-Courier, Akron Beacon Journal and Daily Kent Stater. These publications all also have online counterparts, which track readership by community residents.

Promotion: We sent news releases to local and campus print, broadcast and online news media about a week before our campaign's implementation. We also created and distributed public service announcements to local radio stations. We followed up with media alerts the week of the campaign activities.

We also pitched bloggers Bill Sledzik and Rob Jewell to promote our campaign. Sledzik's blog, "Toughsledding," focuses on current issues in public relations. Sledzik, a Kent State PR professor, is connected to several social media key influencers. Jewell, a professional with decades of PR experience, also blogs about public relations in "PR on the Run." These blog posts helped create awareness among our secondary audiences who served as advocates for the College: RockIt! campaign.

Evaluation: The College: RockIt! campaign was covered twice in the local newspaper, the Record-Courier, in February. The Daily Kent Stater also covered the campaign, and both newspapers posted campaign news on their Web sites. The Akron Beacon Journal's online counterpart, Ohio.com, announced the College: RockIt! campaign, and Sledzik and Jewell promoted the campaign on their blogs during College: RockIt! week. Through traditional media and blogs, our campaign messages reached about 238,000 local citizens. The blog posts attracted more than 200 views.

Campaign Evaluation (For additional details, please refer to page 51.)

The community supported the College: RockIt! campaign and local media covered the launch. The program was engaging and informative, and students showed they remembered the countdown steps at the launch celebration at the end of the week. Flight crew members (Stanton students), their parents and teachers thought College: RockIt! was fun and worthwhile, and the school indicated it would like to re-launch the program next year. Some specific feedback from the Seventh Grade Guidance Counselor Carly Frey: "For weeks, the lunchroom conversation was about college and the impact each speaker had on the students...Students learned that college is possible for them. I feel strongly they know what it takes to get there."

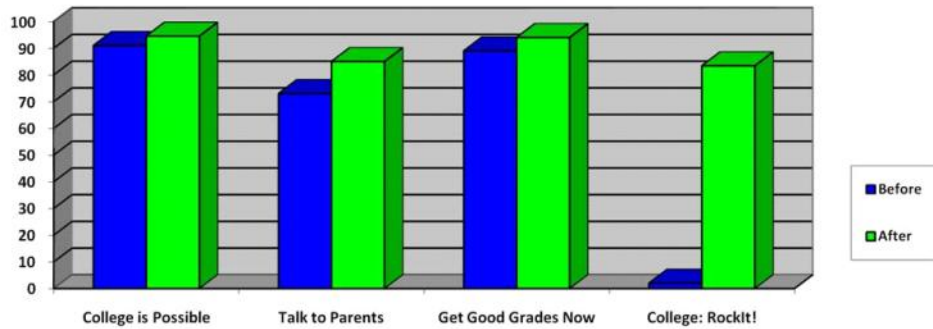
"You guys ROCK! Thanks a lot!" – Stanton seventh grade student

Several of the campaign tools, such as the College: RockIt! Blog and YouTube videos, continue to raise awareness of key message and the CBA site. Further, many of the strategies and tactics could be replicated for other middle schools. For example, college and career planning toolkits could be developed for middle school teachers and counselors. Crew members finished training excited to blast off to college, and the PRKent Bateman team feels College: RockIt! was a successful mission with measurable results.





	Objective	Before	After
Students	To increase awareness among Stanton Middle School seventh grade students about how getting good grades now will affect their chances of going to college in the future by 15 percent by Feb. 28, 2009.	50% of students strongly agreed that the grades they earn now matter	67% of students strongly agree that the grades they earn now matter Result: 17 percent increase!
	To increase awareness among Stanton Middle School seventh grade students about the "College: RockIt!" program by 75 percent by Feb. 28, 2009.	2% of students were familiar with the College: RockIt! campaign	83.4% of students were able to complete answer "Rock It" when given the question: "College: _____!" Result: 81 percent increase!
Parents	To increase the number of Stanton Middle School seventh grade parents who are familiar with the College Bound Aid program by 10 percent by Feb. 28, 2009.	250 color HTBR brochures directed parents to the CBA Web site 37 parents signed a form saying they visited the CBA Web site with their children	Result: >15 percent increase!
	To motivate 10 percent of Stanton Middle School seventh grade parents to engage in early college financial planning by Feb. 28, 2009.	25 parents attended our financial aid outreach program 37 parents signed a form saying they visited the CBA Web site with their children	Result: >10 percent increase!



Stanton Seventh Grade Survey Results





Campaign Theme

Primary and secondary research revealed tweens enjoy music as a form of entertainment. Music served as a common ground among male and female tweens, so the team chose to integrate it into the campaign theme to appeal to a larger audience. The College: RockIt! theme incorporated music with a futuristic perspective.

The team created a logo showcasing the Hit the Books Running figure riding on a rocket with music notes as exhaust. The campaign logo integrated a musical, futuristic look into the campaign while staying consistent with HTBR materials. This logo helped us create a campaign specific to our audience that could still be recognized as a HTBR component.



CBA Hit the Books Running Logos

College: RockIt! Logo





Student Communications

In-School Promotion

During College: RockIt! Week, the team hung posters around Stanton Middle School to generate excitement about the program. These posters emphasized our key messages (choose your destination, pack your bags and prepare for takeoff) and consistently used the College: RockIt! logo. We also directed students to the campaign Web site through the posters.

3

Choose your destination
What do you want to do?

College: RockIt!

collegerocket.wordpress.com



2

Pack your bags

Good grades now do matter!



collegerockit.wordpress.com





1

Prepare for takeoff

Talk to your parents about college.



collegerockit.wordpress.com





Blastoff!



College: RockIt!

collegerockit.wordpress.com



Giant Rocket Mural

A giant rocket mural was posted in a high-traffic area of Stanton Middle School. Our promotion, "Stanton is ready to College: Rockit!," featured large letters and our campaign's key messages. The mural provided students with a constant reminder of the campaign.



Stanton seventh grade students created collages throughout the week, and the art projects were posted on the rocket mural.



Ice Arena Event

To remind students about the final campaign event at the ice arena on Friday, our team visited each seventh grade classroom and passed out reminder fliers. The flyers promoted the campaign using the logo and design elements. We emphasized the prizes available at the event and continued promotion of the College: RockIt! Web site.

College: RockIt!

Ice Arena Friday Night

REMEMBER:

Wear your College: RockIt! wristbands to the KSU Ice arena Friday night to be entered to win prizes, including:



- iTunes giftcards
- Free skate passes
- Movie night gift basket

You can also play Guitar Hero, enter the "Chuck-a-Puck" contest and, of course, HAVE FUN!

To see your raps and collages, remember to visit:

www.collegerockit.wordpress.com





Parent Communication

To inform parents of the campaign and promote our financial aid literacy parent night night, we directed parents to the campaign and CBA Web sites and promoted the HTBR program in materials before and during the financial aid literacy parent night. Parents received HTBR materials in take-home packets and at the financial literacy night. More than 250 College Bound Aid brochures were printed and distributed to parents and College Bound Aid posters were printed and posted at entrance ways of school and prominent locations throughout the school.

E-mail blast

An e-mail blast was sent to more than 1,000 Stanton Middle School parents, faculty and staff to promote the financial literacy night. This outreach was to ensure that if students did not bring their parent packets home, there was another means of communication.

Financial Literacy Parent Night handout follows:



College: RockIt!

Financial Literacy Night

Thank you for attending the College: RockIt! financial aid night. We hope you gained helpful tips on how to afford your child's future education and how to help your student blast off to a brighter future!



The College: RockIt! campaign encourages students to

- start thinking about college early
- remember that good grades now matter
- begin talking with you about their dreams for the future.

For more information on financial aid for your student's education, visit www.collegeboundaid.com.

www.collegerockit.wordpress.com

Sponsored by:





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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

College: RockIt! Campaign Blasts Off

Kent State public relations students help area students, parents learn about early college and career planning

KENT, Ohio (Feb. 20, 2009) – Five Kent State University public relations students will launch College: RockIt!, a grassroots campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance early college preparation and the value of a degree among middle school students and parents, Feb. 23-27 in Kent and surrounding communities.

"In today's economy, a college education is more important than ever," said Bateman team member Rebecca Odell. "We want middle school students and their parents to realize the value of a college degree and early college preparation and the range of available financial resources."

The Kent State team will host activities for seventh grade students at Stanton Middle School, an event at the Kent State Ice Arena and a college financial education program for area parents.

On Monday, Feb. 23, Tuesday, Feb. 24 and Thursday, Feb. 26, Kent State athletes and students will discuss studying music education, biology, fashion and a variety of other fields. Stanton students will showcase their artistic abilities by creating posters and rap songs about getting good grades, going to college and pursuing cool careers.

"We want the students to understand that good study habits matter now and to get excited about potential career paths," Odell said.

The College: RockIt! team will host a financial aid information night for parents Wednesday, Feb. 25 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Stanton Middle School Library. Parents with school-aged children in the Kent area are encouraged to attend. Kent State Assistant Director of Student Financial Aid Yvonna Washington-Greer will inform parents on the FAFSA application, financial aid, scholarships, student loans and the importance of saving early.

"Many students and parents don't think they need to start thinking about college until high school," said Bateman team member Shantae Rollins. "However, it's never too early to start planning for your future and learn about possible career paths and college financial resources."

Area students can enjoy fun, educational events at the Kent State Ice Arena Friday, Feb. 27 from 8:30-10:30 p.m. The Kent State team will give students the opportunity to earn prizes while learning about college and cool careers.

College: Rockit! is part of the Bateman competition, a national contest encouraging groups of public relations students to research, plan and implement a PR campaign for a real-world client. Bateman is sponsored by the Public Relations Student Society of America, and the 2009 client is the Consumer Bankers Association. The project focuses on promoting the CBA's educational outreach program, College Bound Aid. Visit CollegeBoundAid.com and collegerockit.wordpress.com for more information on the campaign and college and career planning. ###





MEDIA ALERT



Community outreach program to motivate middle school students to begin college planning and think about cool careers.

WHEN: Thursday, February 26, 2009

Several classes will be held during the follow times:

7:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.

1 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

WHAT: A group of Kent State Public Relations students will be at Stanton Middle School in Kent to host a range of classroom activities.

- Speakers, including musicians, fashion design majors and college athletes, will talk to several groups of students throughout the day and explain how and why college has changed their lives.
- Stanton seventh grade students will create collages of career possibilities and write and perform raps about why early college planning and getting good grades now is important.

These activities, which were based on research indicating that entertainment and comedy engage middle school students, will provide interesting and entertaining video and photo opportunities.

WHERE: Stanton Middle School: 1175 Hudson Rd. Kent, Ohio 44240

WHY: The Kent State team is implementing a public relations campaign as part of the national Bateman competition sponsored by the Public Relations Student Society of American and the Consumer Bankers Association. The campaign, "College: RockIt!" supports CBA's Hit the Books Running Program, which promotes early academic and financial college preparation.

Kent's "College: RockIt!" campaign supports the message conveyed in President Obama's address Tuesday evening: "every American will need to get more than a high school diploma." Obama asked all Americans to get at least one year of higher education after high school in order to raise the country's educational standards. Achieving this goal will come with challenges, but this group of Kent State students is working to encourage area youth to follow their dreams.

INFORMATION ABOUT PROGRAM: Visit and collegerockit.wordpress.com and CollegeBoundAid.com

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News Release for Photos

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

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Michele Ewing, Kent State University public relations adviser
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Going to College is as easy as 3...2...1...Blastoff

Campaign hopes to have middle school students start thinking about college

KENT, Ohio (Feb. 20, 2009)- During the week of Feb. 23, five Kent State University public relations majors will launch College: RockIt!, a grassroots public relations campaign intended to raise awareness of the importance of a college and getting good grades among middle school students and parents.

College: Rockit! is part of the Bateman competition, a national contest encouraging groups of public relations students to research, plan and implement a PR campaign for a real-world client. The Bateman competition is sponsored by the Public Relations Student Society of America, and the 2009 client is the Consumer Bankers Association's Hit the Books Running program.

The Kent State University's Bateman team will host classroom presentations, speakers and activities for seventh grade students at Stanton Middle School in Kent, Ohio Monday, Feb. 23, Tuesday, Feb. 24 and Thursday, Feb. 26. Guest speakers will include Kent State athletes and students studying in a wide range of majors, including music education, chemistry and fashion. Students will have the chance to start thinking about their future by creating collages of what they aspire to be as an adult and write rap songs about college.

Visit www.CollegeBoundAid.com and collegerockit.wordpress.com for more information on the campaign.





Bateman Photo Captions

Photo Credit: Laura Torchia , Kent State photojournalism major



A rocket mural hangs in a hallway of Stanton Middle School. Throughout the week, seventh grade students created collages of what they want to be when they grow up to hang on the mural.



Musician and volunteer Maurice Martin helps Stanton Middle School seventh grade students write a rap tune about going to college. Coleman, who is also the lead singer for the R&B group Winslow, was one of several volunteer speakers who helped get students excited about college.



Bateman Team Members Jenn Yokley and Rebecca Odell keep students entertained during College: Rockit! rap song activities.



A group of Stanton seventh graders laugh while writing a rap about college. Classes were split into four different groups; two groups designed collages with what they want to be when they grew up and two groups wrote raps about going to college.



Blog pitch to Rob Jewell (e-mail)

Hi Rob,

The Bateman team has come a long way from the last time we met with you, and we are getting ready to wrap up our program implementation tomorrow! We were wondering if you might help us get the word out about early college planning through your blog.

We know you are working on some government projects, and after President Obama's address Tuesday night, we feel the subject of college planning is especially timely. We asked Bill Sledzik to include our campaign in a blog post as well, but we thought you might be able to focus more on Obama's hope that all Americans complete at least one year of higher education and how young people can achieve that goal.

I've attached a news release on our College: RockIt! campaign, and you can find more information at www.collegerockit.wordpress.com. There are also several photos and examples of the students' work on the page as well.

Thank you so much for your consideration, and please let me know if you have any questions!

Thanks again for your support of the Bateman team,

Amanda Hayes



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RADIO PSA ANNOUNCEMENT

Helping parents and students think about early college and career planning

Kill Date: March 1, 2009

:15

Talking to middle school students about college and career ideas can make a huge difference. Learn about the financial aid options available and help young students pursue their dreams. Check out collegerockit.wordpress.com. Get started today. The more you know, the less you'll owe.

Kill Date: March 1, 2009

:30

Did you know the average graduate leaves college with nearly twenty-thousand dollars in debt? A college degree is invaluable, and it's never too early to talk to your child about college and cool career choices. Learn about the financial aid options available and help your child find a path toward a dream career. Check out collegerockit.wordpress.com. That's C-O-L-L-E-G-E R-O-C-K-I-T-DOT-COM. Get started today. The more you know, the less you'll owe.



College: RockIt! Blog

The College: RockIt! blog contained an array of links, news stories, videos, audio clips and photos to appeal to all audiences. As of March 5, 2009, the blog had 1,095 views. The implementation period generated 982 hits. The busiest day for blog traffic was Friday, Feb. 27 with 171 views. Twenty-five clicks went directly to CollegeBoundAid.com from the blog.

The team promoted the blog by including the URL on all print materials for students and parents, talking to audiences about the blog at College: RockIt! events, adding the blog URL to each team members' blogroll, promoting the link on the PRSSA Kent Web site and blog and promoting the link on Twitter and Facebook profiles.

Home About CBA About College: RockIt! Our Sponsors Newsroom Rap Winners Posters Links

College: RockIt! presents Kyle Miller

February 28, 2009 Filed under: Uncategorized

Kyle Miller, a senior broadcast news major, knows the places a college degree can take you. The skills he learned at TV2, Kent State's student-run television station, landed him an internship at NBC in New York City last summer. Check out Kyle's story below:

YouTube

0:00 / 0:00

Pages

- About CBA
- About College: RockIt!
- Links
- Newsroom
- Our Sponsors
- Posters
- Rap Winners

Blogroll

- College Bound Aid

Recent Posts

- College: RockIt! presents Kyle Miller
- College: RockIt! presents Lindsey Ray
- College: RockIt! presents Kate Parsons
- We're Still Rockin' It!
- Monday madness at Stanton Middle



Josh Johnston: A look into sports journalism

February 24, 2011 Filed under: Uncategorized

A chosen few get paid to play sports for a living.

Others, like **Josh Johnston**, get paid to watch them.



Josh, a sophomore journalism major, came to Kent State with plans to major in journalism and minor or double major in music. Although he loved playing his bassoon, he decided to focus on journalism and working for the *Daily Kent Stater*. Josh's love for journalism started when he was the editor of his high school newspaper.

"I loved talking to people and learning about new things," Josh said. "With journalism, you're constantly at the front of breaking news."

Josh focuses on sports writing and has worked as a sports reporter for DKS for the last three semesters. He's covered stories on track and field, volleyball, basketball and golf. He's traveled with several of the teams throughout Ohio, Indiana and Michigan to get the latest news stories.

"Being a sports reporter gives me inside connections with the teams," he said.

Pages

- About CBA
- About College: RockIt!
- Links
- Newsroom
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- Rap Winners

Blogroll

- College Sound Aid

Recent Posts

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- College: RockIt! presents Kate Parsons
- We're Still Rockin' It!
- Monday madness at Stanton Middle



Facebook Promotion Examples:

Feb 22

Samantha <http://collegerockit.wordpress.com/>
8:10pm · Comment · Like

Feb 21

Feb 25

Jenn would LOVE for you to visit collegerockit.wordpress.com
:), 11:53pm · Comment · Like

PRSSA Kent Web Site Promotion Example:

Feb 19

College: RockIt! 6:26pm
Source: www.collegerockit.wo...



Starting Feb. 23, the College: RockIt! blog will bring you profiles on some really cool college students who've had some amazing opportunities to follow their passions while in college.

Comment · Like · Share

Shantae would like you to visit this site:
www.collegerockit.wordpress.com, 6:25pm · Comment · Like





PRSSA Public Relations Student Society of America

[About us](#) [Photo album](#) [Awards](#) [Join now](#)
[Student resources](#) [Become an officer](#) [Contact us](#)



Visit our blog

Social media tools are invaluable in the future of public relations. PRSSA Kent is stepping up its Web communications with a new blog. Visit the blog to learn about upcoming events, trends in public relations and other pertinent information. Feel free to leave a comment and discuss your opinions.

Become a PRSSA member

Do you want to become an official member of PRSSA? Dues are \$50, and checks can be made to PRSSA Kent. See VP of Membership Brittany Thoma for more information.

PRSSA Students create College: RockIt! campaign

Learn about the College: RockIt! campaign by visiting the blog.

College: RockIt! Monday Rap Winner

Looking for an internship?

Ad Club and PRSSA invite Kent State students in communications-related majors to attend **The Communications Connections** in the Franklin Hall first floor lobby **March 11 at 7 p.m.** The round-table event will host approximately 20 professionals from local advertising and public relations agencies who will give advice on ways to land an internship. If you're a junior or senior, bring your resume to network at 6 p.m. Dress is business casual, but business professional is encouraged.

Meetings & Events

General meetings are held every other Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in 213 Franklin Hall unless otherwise noted. Darrow meetings are mandatory for all officers, but members and visitors are always welcome.

PRSSA Kent on Flickr

Want to see what PRSSA meetings look like? Check out our Flickr page!

PRKent wins statewide competition



Seven PRKent students implemented a campaign to motivate Ohio residents to become registered organ and tissue donors. The students won the statewide Do It Now College Competition, and Kent State's PRSSA chapter received \$5,000. For the complete story, including links to digital YouTube clips used in the campaign, click here.

PRSSA Kent Web Site Promotion Example:



PRSSA Kent member Amanda Hayes talks to students at Stanton Middle School.

That's right. For the past three months, five PRSSA Kent members have been researching, planning, implementing and evaluating a real-world public relations campaign for the Consumer Bankers Association. The project is part of the 2009 PRSSA Bateman competition.

This week, the students (myself included) are hard at work implementing the **College: RockIt!** campaign to seventh graders at Stanton Middle School in Kent, Ohio.

You can learn more about the College: RockIt! campaign at the College: RockIt! blog.





YouTube Videos

The PR Kent Bateman team used YouTube videos as a visual medium to attract students and parents to the blog. The videos were embedded to the College: RockIt! blog. The videos featured three students pursuing various degrees that likely would be perceived as “cool” by middle school students. The videos attracted 122 hits.

Embedded Video Example:



YouTube Video Examples:





College Rock!!! Classroom Activities

Dates and Times	Speaker/s	PRSSA	Bateman
Monday, February 23 7:30-10 AM	Maurice Martin <i>Music Education</i> Laura Torchia <i>Photo Journalism</i> (Laura will shoot photo for Record-Courier)	Mary Jo Spletzer Julie McKinney	Amanda Jenn Rebecca
Monday, February 23 1-2:45 PM	Becky Alexander <i>Semester at Sea</i> Mike Roder <i>Kent State Football</i>	Katelyn Luysterborg Deborah Pritchard	Samantha
Tuesday, February 24 9:15-10 AM	Alex Ocana <i>Chemistry</i> Nicole Mauer <i>Fashion Merchandising/Design</i>	Katie Huntley	Jenn Amanda
Tuesday, February 24 1:45-2:45 PM	Anthony Magazu <i>Kent State Football</i> Mary Brodland <i>Fashion Design</i>	Christina Dziak	Shantae Jenn
Thursday, February 26 7:30- 10 AM	Alex Ocana <i>Chemistry</i> Maurice Martin <i>Music Education</i>	Julie McKinney	Jenn Amanda
Thursday, February 26 1-2:45 PM	Alan Vanderink <i>Kent State Football</i> Kyle Miller <i>Broadcast Journalism</i>	Fanny Hickisch Christina Dziak	Shantae Jenn



Schedule for Stanton Classroom Speakers/Activities

Our team created a schedule to ensure that students received the same key messages and same amount of time for activities. Each class period lasted 45 minutes, so it was vital that the students stay on task to accomplish all components. This schedule was e-mailed to all Bateman team members, speakers and PRSSA volunteers the week before implementation along with instructions about their roles in the activities.

:01-:02 Welcome and introduction of speaker by Bateman team member

:02-:17 Speaker/s presentations

- College is a great experience you don't want to miss out on!
- It's important to develop good study habits and skills now to prepare for college
- Start thinking about what interests you, your skills and how that can turn into a career
- Start talking to your parents about going to college. It's never too early!

:18-:43 Break group in 4 groups (Count students off to 4 to eliminate cliques)

2 groups will write a rap- These students will be asked to create a college rap using key words provided in a word bank. Volunteers are asked to facilitate the group (keep time on task) and record the finished rap during the last 5 minutes.

2 groups will work on collage- Students will be asked to create a "cool career" collage using magazines pages and their own art supplies. Volunteers are asked to facilitate the group (keep time on task) and hang the finished pieces outside of the guidance office in the hallway.

:43-:45 Recap key messages and distribute survey

Bateman member will go over the key messages of the campaign and thank the students for being a part of the College RockIt! Campaign.

Volunteers will be asked to distribute and collect surveys from their smaller groups. Once surveys have been collected, they can go into the appropriate day's folder.

Speakers

The team brought Kent State students into Stanton to speak to students about the importance of working hard in middle school. Each speaker was interactive, began their presentation with a quick icebreaker and then proceeded to share their story of success.

Activities

Our team developed activities to kick-start the students' thoughts of going to college and finding a dream career. Students were split into four smaller groups and were given the challenge of either creating a College: RockIt! rap or a collage of a "cool career." The students were told that they would be competing against the other groups to create the best rap or collage.



Directions: Use **3** terms from the word bank to create the best rap that Stanton has ever heard! Winners will be chosen by Miss Frey and will have a pizza party! You can also listen to your team rap at **collegerockit.wordpress.com**

Rap Word Bank:

College RockIt! **good grades** **pack your bags**
3...2...1...blastoff! **scholarships** **Stanton**
Hit the Books Running **prepare** **dream job**





Sports Banquet Promotion for Program and Financial Literacy Parent Night



Kent State women's field hockey players [Nicole Leach](#) and [Debbie Bell](#) and PRKent team member Samantha Donegan sit at a table at the entrance of Stanton Middle School's winter sports banquet with College: Rockit! and Hit the Books Running promotional information. Our goal was to drive parents to the financial aid information night the following evening.

Financial Literacy Parent Night



Stanton Middle School parents learn about funding their children's college education at the Financial Literacy Parent Night. Our speaker for the evening was Assistant Director of the Kent State University Financial Aid Office Yvonne Washinton-Greer.



Financial Aid Presentation

<p>KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE in Action</p> <h3>Student Financial Aid</h3>  <p>Kent State University 103 Michael Schwartz Center www.sfa.kent.edu 330-672-2972</p>	<p>KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE in Action</p> <h3>FAFSA</h3> <p>Free Application for Federal Student Aid</p>
<p>KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE in Action</p> <h4>Application Process www.fafsa.ed.gov</h4> <p>Apply online! Apply early! Apply each year!</p> 	<p>KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE in Action</p> <h4>Records You Will Need</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• US Income Tax Returns• W-2 Forms• Social Security Numbers• Untaxed Income Information• Bank Statements• Investment Information• Business Records• Farm Records 
<p>KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE in Action</p> 	<p>KENT STATE UNIVERSITY EXCELLENCE in Action</p> <h4>Determination of Financial Need</h4> <p>Expected Family Contribution (EFC)</p> <p>The number used to determine the eligibility for various types student financial aid.</p>



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Determination of Financial Need

Cost of Attendance Example:

	Kent Campus	Commuter Kent Campus	Out of State	Regional Campus
Tuition*	8,430	8,430	15,862	4,770
Room and Board*	7,500	3,690	7,500	3,690
Books	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Transportation	1,930	2,690	2,298	2,590
Miscellaneous & Personal	2,340	2,340	2,340	2,220
Total	\$21,400	\$18,350	\$29,200	\$14,470

*Direct costs are based on 2008-2009

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Determination of Financial Need

Cost of Attendance
- Expected Family Contribution
= Financial Need

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Determination of Financial Need

Example:

The Expected Family Contribution is \$2,208

\$ 21,400 (COA)
- \$ 2,208 (EFC)
\$ 19,192 Need

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EXCELLENCE in Action

General Types of Financial Aid

(Access to Education Publication)

- Gift Aid: Scholarships and Grants
- Self-Help Aid: Loans and Work Programs

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EXCELLENCE in Action

Gift Aid

- Federal Pell Grant \$400 - \$4,731 (2008-2009)
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) \$600 - \$1,200
- Academic Competitiveness Grant (ACG) \$750 first yr/ \$1,300 second year
- National Science and Mathematics Access to Retain Talent Grant (SMART) \$4,000 third and fourth year
- Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant (TEACH) \$4,000
- Ohio College Opportunity Grant (OCOG) \$300 - \$2,496 (2008-2009)



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action


Self-Help Aid: Work & Loans

Federal Work-Study

Federal Perkins Loan
\$1,000 - \$2,000

Federal Nursing Student Loan*
\$2,500 - \$3,000

Nurse Education Assistance Loan Program*



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Self-Help Aid: Loans

Federal Direct Student Loan Annual Limits

Class Year	Minimum KSU Hours	Base Amount	Additional Unsubsidized Amount	Total Available to Borrow
Freshman	0-29.99	\$3,500	\$2,000	\$5,500
Sophomore	30-59.99	\$4,500	\$2,000	\$6,500
Junior	60-89.99	\$5,500	\$2,000	\$7,500
Senior	90 +	\$5,500	\$2,000	\$7,500

\$31,500 lifetime maximum for dependent undergraduate student (no more than \$23,000 can be subsidized)

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Self-Help Aid: Loans

- Federal Direct Parent PLUS Loan
 - Must complete FAFSA
 - Must complete Pre-Application available at sfa.kent.edu/plus
 - Approval contingent upon credit worthiness
 - Promissory note required
 - Interest rate for loans disbursed after July 1, 2009 is 7.9% (fixed rate)
 - Deferment option available
- Alternative Loan Programs
 - Commonly used lenders are Chase, Citibank, PNC, and Sallie Mae

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Loans

Alternative Loan Programs

- Alternative loan programs are available to assist students in meeting their educational cost beyond the federal, state and institutional programs
- Commonly used lenders are Chase, Citibank, PNC, and Sallie Mae
- KSU will certify any private educational loan application

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Other Programs

- Veterans Educational Benefits
- U.S. Army/Air Force ROTC
- Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
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Scholarships

Resources

- High School Guidance Office
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Local Community Organizations and Businesses
- State Grant and Scholarship Agencies
- Parent place of employment





KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Scholarship Resources at the Student Financial Aid Office

Freshman Scholarships

- Apply for Admission
- No additional application required!

(admissions.kent.edu)

ADMISSIONS OFFICE

ADMISSIONS PROCESS

1. Apply for admission to Kent State University.

2. Complete the admission application and submit it to the Admissions Office.

3. Receive an offer of admission from the Admissions Office.

4. Complete the admission requirements and submit them to the Admissions Office.

5. Receive an offer of admission from the Admissions Office.

6. Complete the admission requirements and submit them to the Admissions Office.

7. Receive an offer of admission from the Admissions Office.

8. Complete the admission requirements and submit them to the Admissions Office.

9. Receive an offer of admission from the Admissions Office.

10. Complete the admission requirements and submit them to the Admissions Office.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Scholarship Resources at the Student Financial Aid Office

sfa.kent.edu/scholarships

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Web Sites for Scholarship Searches

Use Kent State University's Top "10" Scholarship Search Sites!

1. <http://www.scholarships.com>
2. <http://apps.collegeboard.com>
3. <http://www.collegeanswer.com>
4. <http://www.fastweb.com>
5. <http://petersons.com>

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Web Sites for Scholarship Searches

Kent's Top "10"

6. <http://www.nextstudent.com>
7. <http://www.collegetoolkit.com>
8. <http://www.brokescholar.com>
9. <http://www.collegedata.com>
10. <http://www.studentawards.com>

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Scholarships

- Start early!
- Make a search plan
- Answer every question
- Complete each application carefully
- Discuss with counselors, teachers, neighbors and relatives
- Research newspapers, bulletin boards, newsletters and internet resources
- Do the hard work to find "free money"
- Be aware of deadlines

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Scholarship Scams

- Don't fall prey to fraud

Telltale signs are:

"This scholarship is guaranteed or your money back."

"I just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship."

Visit
www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

College options

- Living on, off campus, or at home
- Different types of colleges
 - Vocational and technical
 - Community and junior
 - Four-year public and private
 - In State or out of state
 - Attending part-time



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

THINK ABOUT...

- ✓ What you want to become
- ✓ What type of college
- ✓ Reasons to attend college
- ✓ How to prepare for college
- ✓ Ways to save for college

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW TO SAVE FOR COLLEGE

- Jobs (babysitting, lawn mowing)
- Aluminum can recycling
- Not buying non-essentials
- Saving gift money
- Having family member contribute to a savings plan or buy savings bonds
- Garage sales
- Selling electronics no longer wanted



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action


529 College Savings Plans

www.collegeadvantage.com



KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action

Calculate the Value of Your Paper Savings Bond(s)



Insert Serial Number

Insert Issue Date

<http://www.treasurydirect.gov/BC/SBCPrice>

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
EXCELLENCE in Action



Questions?



College: RockIt! Ice Night



Team members Rebecca Odell and Shantae Rollins skate around the Kent State Ice Arena talking to students about the College: RockIt! campaign. Rollins is wearing a College: RockIt! sandwich board, which directs students to the table in the lobby. This was another effort to engage students in face-to-face communication. Throughout the night, the DJ announced the campaign's key messages and fun college facts.

"Chuck-a-Puck" College Trivia Contest



Left: After answering trivia questions, a student signs up to throw a puck in the chuck-a-puck contest.

Right: Kent State Ice Arena employee announces the winners of the Chuck-A-Puck contest after students throw their puck. . The premise of Chuck-a-Puck is to throw the puck to the center of the ice. The person who throws it the closest to the center wins. The three pucks that made it closest to the red dot won iTunes gift cards.



Do Script

Please alternate these messages every 15 minutes.

- ❖ 3. Choose your destination! (Choose a career path)
2. Pack your bags! (Good grades lead to success and scholarships)
1. Prepare for takeoff! (Talk to your parents about college)
For more information about your own takeoff, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.
- ❖ Choose your destination, pack your bags and prepare for takeoff. It is never too early to start thinking about college. Getting good grades now will help with the pressures of college later. For more information, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.
- ❖ Hey guys! Think college is too far away to think about? Well it is never too early to prepare. To learn more about preparing for your future, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.
- ❖ What do Adam Sandler, Oprah Winfrey and Shaquille O'Neal all have in common? They are all college graduates! You can be one too. To learn more, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.
- ❖ What do you want to be in the future? A veterinarian? A C-E-O? A news anchor? All these careers require a college degree, so start thinking about college now. To start discussing your future, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.
- ❖ College is not what you see in the movies. It's all that and more fun than you can imagine. To learn more about the excitement and fun of college, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.
- ❖ Think your grades now don't matter. Think again. The grades you make now will affect your path to college. To learn more about the importance of good grades, visit the Blastoff table in the lobby.

Wristbands

Every Stanton Middle School seventh grade student who was present for the classroom activities received a white and blue tie-dye wristband. If students wore a wristband to the Ice Arena Friday evening, they were entered into a drawing to win iTunes gift cards, High School Musical 3 DVDs or a movie gift basket with free movie passes and candy. Thirty-three students wore their wristbands.



Trivia Questions to enter Chuck-a-Puck contest
(some examples)

Tell me three ways you can pay for college.

Answer:

- 1) Loans
- 2) Grants
- 3) Scholarships

What is the average cost per year at a 4-year public college?

- A) \$20,000
- B) \$6,500
- C) \$13,600

Answer: C

When should you start thinking about college?

- A) Your senior year of high school
- B) Now
- C) After your high school graduation

Answer: B; it is never too early to start thinking about college

Which one of these careers requires a college degree?

- A) Doctor
- B) Teacher
- C) Lawyer
- D) All require a college degree

Answer: D

What does the (1....) stand for in the College: RockIt! campaign?

- A) Choose your destination (choose a career path)
- B) Prepare for takeoff (Talk to your parents about college)
- C) Pack your bags (Good grades lead to success and scholarships)

Answer: B

Who attends college more: Men or Women?

Answer: Women, women make up 56% of the college population

What does the (3....) stand for in the College: RockIt! campaign?

- A) Choose your destination (choose a career path)
- B) Prepare for takeoff (Talk to your parents about college)
- C) Pack your bags (Good grades lead to success and scholarships)

Answer: A

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, how many CEOs have college degrees?

- A) 60%
- B) 90%
- C) 100%

Answer: C



College:Rockit! Activity Table



Left: PRKent Team member Amanda Hayes talks to a Stanton Middle School student about college and our College: Rockit! campaign. The table showcased a prize display, activities such as Guitar Hero, trivia questions to play “Chuck-a-Puck” and a laptop computer with our blog.

Right: PRKent team member Amanda Hayes and volunteer Chris Sledzik talk to a group of local tweens about how they plan on working their way to college.

Guitar Hero



Before the tweens could play a song on the game, they had to tell us what they wanted to be and how college would help them. This motive helped them to start the thinking process of college being a possibility. The tween with the highest score won a \$15 iTunes card.



Research Report

Primary Research Findings

Executive Summary

PRKent completed extensive primary research with key audiences and influencers to determine attitudes and perceptions about college. We conducted three focus groups with middle school and high school students and more than 20 interviews with parents, a guidance counselor, educators, an adolescent psychologist and a client representative to develop our campaign.

First, we found that many middle school students are influenced most by their parents when it comes to thinking about college. In addition to parental influence, tweens are inclined to make decisions based on the influence of their peers and the media.

Next, we found that many middle school students are less concerned with college planning, as they are more concerned with planning for high school. Tweens do not see the full value of college preparation at this stage. Our research also showed that tweens want to be entertained and engaged.

Finally, parents are aware of the importance of a college education, but most are financially unprepared to shoulder the expense of postsecondary education. A majority of parents are finding saving a difficult task because of the poor economy.

All focus groups were approved by the Kent State Institutional Review Board.

Focus Groups

We conducted a focus group with seven high school students on Dec.19, 2008. The students, aged 14 - 17, attended Theodore Roosevelt High School in Kent, Ohio. We also conducted a second focus group on January 4, 2009. This focus group included nine participants ranging from ages 12 – 14 from middle schools in Mahoning County. We conducted a third focus group with 10 Stanton seventh-grade students Feb. 5, 2009. The participants in each group voluntarily agreed to discuss their views about college.

Objectives

- To discuss general thoughts about college, including preparation and cost, to determine student opinions on college education
- To discuss who and what influences students' decisions to determine opinion leaders who may influence a student's decision to attend college
- To introduce and discuss promotional materials provided by the Consumer Bankers Association to determine effectiveness

Screening

All participants and legal guardians signed consent forms to partake in the discussion and agreed to be audio recorded for research purposes.

Methodology

Our team used open-ended questions to engage middle school and high school students in conversation about general thoughts on college education and to determine opinion leaders who act as influencers in students' college decisions.



High School Focus Group Participants:

Students at Theodore Roosevelt High School in Kent, Ohio

Amelia, 14, 9th Grade
Blane, 16, 10th Grade
Brooke, 17, 12th Grade
Mallory, 16, 10th Grade
Meghan, 15, 10th Grade
Sarah, 16, 10th Grade
Victoria, 15, 10th Grade

Key Findings

All participants said they plan to attend college and are preparing by taking ACT and SAT preparation courses. All the students agreed good grades and standardized test scores are critical for college admission. Participants said parents, relatives and friends are the most influential people in their lives.

Younger participants were thinking less about college than the older students were and felt they had more time before they had to take college seriously. Students said junior and senior years of high school were when they should start thinking about college.

Implications:

High school students see good grades and strong ACT/SAT test scores as important factors in college admission. The junior and senior students are very concerned with college admission and the freshman and sophomore do not think planning is important yet.

Middle School Focus Group Participants:

Abby, 13, 8th Grade
Clint, 14, 8th Grade
Colton, 14, 8th Grade
Gabby, 13, 7th Grade
Haley, 14, 8th Grade
Jon, 12, 7th Grade
Katie, 12, 7th Grade
Paige, 12, 7th grade
Nick, 13, 7th Grade

Key Findings

All participants said they plan to attend college and believe good grades in middle and high school are essential to college admission. Participants did not think they had to seriously consider college until sophomore or junior year of high school.

Participants said they are influenced by friends, family members and a wide range of celebrities. All agreed that moms have the largest influence on day-to-day decisions. The majority of the participants come from families where only one parent attended college.



Both male and female participants wanted to listen to college athletes and students with appealing majors give presentations about college. Participants especially stressed the importance of being entertained.

Implications

Although each participant expressed interest in attending college, all agreed that it was not necessary to start thinking about college until sophomore or junior year of high school. This attitude may make it difficult to influence students at an earlier age to think about college. Our team will focus on the importance of good grades now and use college role models to educate and entertain students. We will also reach out to parents to implement a successful campaign.

Stanton Middle School Focus Group Participants:

Key Findings

The students said they were interested in music, sports, news, YouTube videos, MySpace and Facebook. Although the participants use social networking Web sites, they admitted their parents do not know they use them.

The careers they were interested in were fashion design, musician, graphic design, athletics and law. All participants plan to attend college and said their parents talk to them about college and how important good grades are. They believed 90 percent of their classmates would attend college and work hard to obtain their dream job.

All participants said they own a computer, but they knew someone who did not. They like doing hands-on activities in small groups, because tension builds in larger groups. The students enjoy movies, music and hanging out with friends at the ice arena, located on Kent State's main campus, each Friday night.

Implications

The students seemed determined to attend college and understood how important good grades are. They had ideas about what they wanted to do once they got older and seemed to communicate this with their parents. Prior to this focus group, we could not define a central hangout for tweens in the area. The ice arena is a popular place for Stanton students and could be a way to target them with our campaign messaging.



Middle School and High School Student Focus Group Discussion Guide

Objectives

- Discuss general thoughts about college, including preparation and cost, to determine student opinions on college education.
- Discuss who and what influences students' decisions to determine opinion leaders who may influence a student's decision to attend college
- Introduce and discuss promotional materials provided by the Consumer Bankers Association to determine effectiveness.

Greeting and Housekeeping items (5 MIN)

- Introduction of moderator, purpose of focus group
Hi everyone! My name is Rebecca Odell, and I'm a junior student at Kent State University. My classmates and I are here today to gain some insight on what you guys think about college. There are no right or wrong answers. We want everyone to speak openly and honestly, so feel free to say what's on your mind. If you're not comfortable answering a question, you don't have to.
- Explanation of audio release and purpose of recording the group
- Explanation of rules
 - Be respectful and courteous to everyone in the group
 - One person speaks at a time
 - No vulgarity
 - All feedback is welcome
 - Please speak loudly and clearly
 - The moderator may have to end a discussion at any time to make sure the group stays on schedule.
 - Student can leave the discussion at any time if he/she is not comfortable or needs to use the restroom, but ask a teacher to accompany the student if he/she must leave the room

Explanation of Icebreaker and Icebreaker (5 MIN)

Let's go around the room and introduce one another. Please tell me your name, your age and your favorite celebrity.

Objective ONE (10 MIN)

(General thoughts on college)

- Explain current topic
I'd like to spend the next 10 minutes or so talking about your thoughts and opinions on college.
 - Are you planning to go to college?
 - What are your general thoughts on college?
 - What have you done or what will you do to prepare for college?
 - What are the biggest factors that will determine whether or not you go to college?
 - What does your high school offer you to prepare for college?
 - What effect do your grades play in your chances of going to college?



Objective TWO (10 MIN)

(Opinion Leaders, Influencers)

-Explain current topic

I'd like to spend the next 10 minutes or so talking about what influences you on a daily basis.

- What do you like to do in your spare time?
- Where are the "cool" places to hang out at around here?
- Who are the "cool" celebrities these days?
- Who do you look up to?
- Who influences your decisions the most?
- How much time do you spend online? What kind of Web sites do you visit?

Objective THREE (10 MIN)

(Overview of Materials)

-Explain current topic

I'd like to spend the next 10 minutes talking about the materials we brought. I'm passing out a few brochures and other materials provided by CBA.

- What do you think about the design of the brochures?
- What are your thoughts on the material in the brochures?
- Would you use these materials to get information about college?

WRAP-UP (5 MIN)

-Thank everyone for his or her time

-Ask if anyone has additional comments/concerns (if time permits)

-Adjourn



Focus Group Consent Form

**Student Focus Group
Preparing for College in Middle, High School
December 2008**

I am a junior public relations major at Kent State University enrolled in the Bateman Competition Seminar course, which is part of a national public relations campaign among college students.

Our client is the Consumer Bankers Association. We are researching middle and high school students' outlooks about college preparation and planning. The information will be used to create a communication plan for CBA's education program.

We would greatly appreciate your feedback about questions relating to your preparation for college. Also, we are interested in hearing about what influences the college and career-related decisions of middle and high school students.

Your name will not be used in any way associated to your answers. You will be referred to as a middle or high school student from Portage County.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our adviser, Michele Ewing, assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, at 330-672-4288 or at meewing@kent.edu.

Information about Kent State's rules for research can be obtained by Dr. John L. West, Vice President and Dean, Division of Research and Graduate Studies at 330-672-2851.

We appreciate your time. The focus group should last about 30 minutes. You can stop your participation at any time during the discussion.

If you would like further information about this research project, feel free to contact me.

CONSENT STATEMENT(S)

If your child takes part in this project, he or she will gain experience in participating in a focus group and learn about issues regarding college preparation. Taking part in this project is entirely up to you, and no one will hold it against you or your child if you decide not to do it. If your child does participate, he or she can stop at any time.

I agree to let my child take part in this project. I know what he or she will have to do and that he or she can stop at any time.

Student Signature **Date**

Parent/Guardian Signature **Date**

Sincerely,
Rebecca Odell, Kent State Public Relations Student
330-646-3572 Rodell1@kent.edu



Opinion Leader Interviews

Carly Frey, Seventh Grade Counselor at Stanton Middle School

Frey stressed the importance of parent buy-in; however, reaching them is going to be difficult. She suggested sending a survey home with the kids, even though it's likely they won't bring it back.

Frey discouraged using MySpace as a communication tactic because parents and teachers are concerned about cyber bullying and inappropriate photos. Students are not permitted to use cell phones during school, so using a mass text message would be an inappropriate communication method.

Students at this age like to be engaged and entertained. Students respond to anything hands-on and creative. Frey said bringing athletes, musicians and students with visual majors to share their success stories, would captivate students' attention. Frey suggested giving the students something tangible, such as bookmarks, pens, or wristbands to reinforce the campaign message.

Many parents of Stanton students do not have the monetary flexibility to save for college and are telling their children college is not possible. A possible way to raise awareness and increase interest with parents is to discuss scholarships and financial aid opportunities. She said we have to find a way to make students own the message we are providing them.

Kathryn Kerns, Adolescent Psychologist at Kent State University

Kerns said adolescents are not thinking about college at this age and will not start thinking about it until high school. At this age, Kerns said kids at this age are more focused on the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

Adolescents do not have a sense of what things cost and do not grasp the concept of money. Kerns said peers influence a lot of things such as clothing, school motivation and things they do. Generally, if an adolescent has friends who do well in their studies, they tend to do well also. Kerns said parents also affect their children's values and greatly influence their future.

Gwyn Walcoff, Washington Partners, LLC (CBA contact)

Walcoff said CBA does not want students to wait until their junior and senior years of high school to seriously consider college and become overwhelmed by the thought of loans. Middle school students should be our target audience, and CBA would like students from less affluent communities to begin thinking about college early to be more marketable and to increase their chances of receiving scholarships and other forms of aid.

Walcoff said that of the four barriers CBA wants our campaign to address, awareness is number one. The second most vital barrier is academic achievement. Although difficult to measure, awareness objectives are key in this challenge. She emphasized media coverage, Web site hits, attendance at events and awareness before and after events. She stressed the importance of making the campaign work for our local audience. Walcoff encouraged creativity but stressed the importance of the HTBR logo recognition.



Stanton Middle School Parent Teacher Organization Members

The board members are active parents at the school. The parents were supportive of the campaign, but cautioned against using social networking sites like MySpace and Facebook to engage the students. Members were receptive to an event specifically for parents highlighting available financial aid resources. They said reaching Stanton parents and getting them involved is difficult, even for them.

Meeting with Carly Frey, Stanton Middle School Guidance Counselor

Fri. Jan. 30, 2009

- Next week (Feb 2-6), the students have some testing, but we have approval to conduct a focus group with approximately 10 – 12 seventh graders. It is tentatively scheduled for next Thurs. Feb.5, 2009, from 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
- Carly agreed it's important to have parent buy-in; however, reaching them is going to be difficult. She suggested we send a survey home with the kids, even though it's likely they won't bring it back, despite an incentive.
- Stanton has a morning broadcast on all classroom televisions called *Snews*. We may be able to piggy-back onto this even though it would broadcast to eighth graders, as well.
- Carly cautioned us about using MySpace as a communication tactic because students tend to abuse it and parents frown upon it. She also questioned the YouTube tactic but encouraged us to present the idea to parents at the PTO meeting to obtain feedback and then adjust the idea.
- She said students at this age like to be engaged and entertained, as indicated by our research. She seemed to think our collage idea would work because the kids respond to anything hand-on and creative.
- She suggested giving the students something tangible, such as bookmarks, pen, etc. (something to reinforce our message that will last past Feb.).
- **Important:** Carly expressed some real concern about parents having limited access to computers. **This is a challenge since CBA wants us to drive parents to the Web site.** She also **noted the socio-economic status of some Stanton families. "Parents are telling their kids that college just isn't possible." 41 percent of students in the district are on a free or reduced lunch program, 12 percent are minority students. This is definitely an obstacle and challenge we have to overcome.**
- She said we have to find a way to make them own the message we are conveying.

What Is Unique About Us?

- 41 percent of our students are on free or reduced lunches
- 76 percent Caucasian students ; 12 percent African American students; 9 percent Multi-cultural students; 3 percent Asian students
- 94 percent graduation rate; 80 percent of our graduates go on to higher education
- K-5 average class size is 21 students; 6-8 average class size is 2-23 students per class
- We service 485 K-12 Special Education students
- 43 students are on 504 plans
- 20 percent of our seniors graduate with an honors diploma



Telephone Conference with Gwyn Walcoff, APR, Washington Partners, LLC

Dec. 8, 2008

- Ms. Walcoff is the architect of the CBA case study we received via the PRSSA Bateman Web site. She's worked with CBA for three years, and she worked with the Bateman competition two years ago.
- CBA took on this challenge because it feels middle school students are largely overlooked in regards to college awareness. CBA doesn't want students to wait until eleventh and twelfth grade to seriously consider college and become overwhelmed by the thought of loans.
- Ms. Walcoff would also like students from less affluent communities to begin to think about college early to be more marketable and to increase their chances of receiving scholarships and other aid. In Portage County, the Kent community has the lowest reported median income of \$29,582.
- The "HTBR" campaign is a non-loan program to get parents and students thinking about college earlier.
- The HTBR campaign hasn't been previously implemented. CollegeBoundAid.com was created in spring 2007 as an entry-level information source.
- Middle school students should be our target audience.
- Ms. Walcoff cited an example of a school district that's targeting middle schoolers: Schools in D.C. are giving students monetary incentives for good grades to prepare them for higher education. She said we should be able to find a story that ran in *The Washington Post* three months ago.
- We asked Ms. Walcoff about CBA's four barriers to higher education. She said we don't have to focus on all four in our campaign due to time restraints, but we can encompass more than one in our campaign if we choose to do so.
- Of the four barriers, Ms. Walcoff said awareness is the number one barrier that needs to be addressed. The second most vital barrier is academic achievement.
- Ms. Walcoff emphasized reaching out to community resources for our campaign.
- Although difficult to measure, awareness objectives are vital in this challenge.
- Ms. Walcoff emphasized media coverage, Web site hits, attendance at events and awareness before and after events.
- When needed, Ms. Walcoff will give us access to CBA executives for interviews.
- Localize, localize, localize. This is a grassroots campaign, and Ms. Walcoff stressed the importance of making the campaign work for our local audience. What's successful in Portage County will be different than a campaign in a large metropolis.



PTO Survey
Feb. 9, 2009

Instructions: For each of the following questions, please mark the box next to the best answer for you. Remember, all of your responses will be kept confidential, so please be honest.

1. Have you heard of the "Hit the Books Running" campaign?

- YES
 NO

2. How often do you discuss college with your son(s) or daughter(s)?

- AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH
 ABOUT ONCE EVERY 2-5 MONTHS
 ABOUT ONCE EVERY 6-11 MONTHS
 ABOUT ONCE A YEAR
 I RARELY TALK TO MY CHILDREN ABOUT COLLEGE
 NEVER

3. How strongly do you agree with the following statement?

I've begun financial planning for college for my child and/or children.

- STRONGLY AGREE
 SOMEWHAT AGREE
 SOMEWHAT DISAGREE
 STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. Do you have Internet access at home?

- YES
 NO, BUT I CAN ACCESS IT FROM WORK
 NO, BUT I CAN ACCESS IT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE
 I HAVE NO INTERNET ACCESS

5. How do you prefer to receive news? (You may choose more than one answer.)

- INTERNET
 RADIO
 LOCAL NEWSPAPERS
 NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS
 WORD OF MOUTH
 OTHER



PTO Survey Results

1. Have you heard of the “Hit the Books Running” campaign?
Nine out of 10 parents surveyed had not heard of the HTBR campaign.
2. How often do you discuss college with your son(s) or daughter(s)?
Eight out of 10 parents surveyed discussed college with their son(s) or daughters at least once a month.
3. How strongly do you agree with the following statement?
I've begun financial planning for college for my child and/or children.
Five parents strongly agreed they'd begun financial planning for college, and three parents agreed somewhat.
4. Do you have Internet access at home?
All parents surveyed said they had Internet access at home.
5. How do you prefer to receive news? (You may choose more than one answer.)
Parents preferred all mediums for receiving information, including additional sources such as letters or flyers.

The team also conducted interviews with the parents at the PTO meeting. They shared positive feedback about a financial aid literacy workshop, and indicated that they would help promote the College: RockIT! Campaign activities.



Secondary Research

Executive Summary

PRKent's secondary research findings provided specific data about tween trends, demographics and economics to help plan the public relations campaign. PRKent was able to use information about tween and adult perceptions of college to develop strategies and tactics. Recent studies have uncovered several trends in the youth demographic. Such trends include communication methods, social relationships, outlooks on college and significant role models.

Tween Research

Use of humor, involvement and Internet play critical role in communicating with Tweens.

- 75 percent consider themselves "experienced users" of the Internet and are attracted to brands using humor and honesty as cornerstones of their marketing practices.
- 72 percent of tweens have a profile on at least one social networking site.
- 64 percent of tweens visit social networking sites at least once per day.

College Outlook

- 92 percent of seventh- and eighth- graders say they are likely to attend college
- 68 percent say they have little or no information about how to prepare for college

Key Influencers

- An article in *PR Week* by Irene Chang cites "the need to belong" as a key trait of the tween demographic.
- Bruce Hammond's article, *Middle School Crisis*, reports peer relationships have "overwhelming importance for middle school students."
- The Youth Intelligence Tween Report found that tweens look up to their parents as role models and would most like to be like one of their parents.

Parent Research

Communication Methods

- A study by Jakob Nielsen indicates middle-aged users' ability to navigate the Internet decreases each year.
- 51 percent of Americans watch local television news programs daily.
- 40 percent watch cable news programs and read local newspapers each day.
- Americans reporting daily use of the Internet for news updates increased from 22 percent in 2006 to 31 percent.
 - 2008 Gallup Poll

College Planning

- 43 percent of parents have not saved anything for college.
- 74 percent of parents feel the economy has affected their college saving.
 - College Saving Foundation's "The State of College Savings" survey

Internet Use

- 17 percent of Generation X (29 – 42) and 11 percent of Baby Boomers (43 – 63) visit online blogs, communities and social networking.
- Baby Boomer visitors are most likely to read posts and comments about products and services
- Women are more likely than men to visit online blogs, communities and social networks on a daily basis
- 51 percent of people visit online blogs, communities and social networks "to have fun"
- 42 percent read or post about current event



- 38 percent want to educate themselves
- The most popular types of Web sites visited that didn't include interaction, networking or communities were: company Web sites (56 percent), news (56 percent), search (50 percent), weather (50 percent) and entertainment (45 percent).

Portage County

Demographics

- Portage County records show 45.6 percent of households consist of a married couple with a husband and wife both in the labor force.
- 35.4 percent of Portage County households are made up of married couple families with children under 18 years of age.
- 16.3 percent of the county's population are students aged 6- to 17-years-old.
- The average household income was \$45,795 in 2004.
- 9.7 percent of Portage County is below poverty level.
 - *United States Census Bureau*

Education

- Portage County houses 12 middle schools with 5470 students in 2008.
- Stanton Middle School in Kent, Ohio is the largest with 828 students.
- According to a 2006 study, an average of 44 percent of Portage County students went on to college after graduating from one of the county's 11 high schools.
- Portage County's latest recorded high school graduation rate is 93 percent
- Nearly 4.8 percent of the county's adults over age 25 hold associate degrees.
- 14 percent earned bachelor's degrees.
 - *United States Census Bureau*

Local Media

- Akron Beacon Journal- newspaper (Summit, Medina, Portage, Stark & Wayne counties)
 - Our Space- teen-produced section
 - Ohio.com- Web site (Ohio's leading news Web page)
- Record-Courier- newspaper (Ravenna)
 - RecordCourier.com
- Streetsboro Gateway News- newspaper (Streetsboro)
- Daily Kent Stater- newspaper (Kent State University)
 - Kentnewsnet.com
- WKSU 89.7 FM- radio
- WNIR 100.1 FM- radio
- PBS 49 WEAO- television

Stanton Middle School

Demographics

Stanton Middle School Review

- Open-enrollment public school currently serves 823 students in grades 6 – 8.
- Reflecting the county's average household income, 250 Stanton students are eligible for free or reduced lunch.
- The school is predominantly Caucasian (80 percent).
- Stanton is nearly 12 percent African American.
- The Stanton guidance department is made up of three counselors and a secretary.



- Stanton Middle School received a six out of ten rating by GreatSchools.net, based on the school's 2007-2008 Ohio Achievement Test (OAT) and Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) results. These results are average in comparison with other district middle schools.
- On the site, students' parents gave the school four out of five stars. One parent testified:
 - *Our guidance counselor really listened to who my son is and worked with me to set up a schedule for him, she is wonderful (Ms. Frey).*

Stanton Communication

- The Stanton newsletter, "Building Connections," is a bi-monthly publication that is available online and through the school. The newsletter contains the school calendar, sporting event schedules, student projects and tips for parents on relevant issues, such as preventing underage drinking.
- Stanton also posts the morning video announcements called *Snews* on its Web site each day. The videos are archived and searchable on the site.
- As part of Kent City Schools, Stanton is connected to the Kent Community Education program

Our Focus: Seventh Grade

- The school received an "Above Expected Growth" rating overall; however, the breakdown of tests showed Stanton's 272 seventh graders scored "Below Expected Growth" in both Reading and Math.
- Minority students are struggling; only 58 percent of African American seventh grade students read at a proficient level and only 39 percent are proficient in math.
- Seventh grade would be a good focus for our campaign, as eighth-graders are preparing to enter high school and sixth-graders are new to the school.

The Client

Consumer Bankers Association CBA represents almost 80 member banks and more than 300 associate financial institutions that offer retail lending and products and services. Founded in 1919 and headquartered in Arlington, VA, CBA institutions own two-thirds of the banking industry's total assets. CBA holds annual conferences, provides educational courses, conducts industry research and represents legislation regarding privacy, fair lending and consumer protection legislation.

In April 2007, CBA created www.CollegeBoundAid.com, a Web site to inform college-bound students and their families about funding their future college education. "Hit the Books Running... the more you know, the less you'll owe" is a public awareness program to help tweens start thinking about college. Both the program and the Web site emphasize the benefits of early planning educationally and financially for college.

The program hopes to address four challenges: raising awareness of the importance of a college degree today, getting good grades now can pay off later in college accessibility, financial literacy beginning early and at home and raising awareness of resources to guide academic choices. CBA's overall goals are to:

- Pave the way for the likelihood that students will aspire to and access higher learning institutions following their postsecondary education, and as such...
- Contribute to the quality of life and economic standards proven to result in communities, which enjoy a more educated citizenry.
- Contribute to lifestyle and career opportunities for young adults enabled by a college degree.
- Work to keep our country competitive in the global marketplace through the education of America's most precious resource—its youth.



Best Practices

USA Funds

USA Funds, a national education loan guarantor, has established a program similar to the Consumer Bankers Association's HTBR campaign, promoting early college awareness among students and parents. Established as a nonprofit organization in 1960, USA Funds strives to provide students and parents with the tools to guide and prepare them for college success as early as possible. Families are informed about the significance of education following the completion of high school and the available financial funding to pay for the rising costs of tuition.

USA Funds early awareness program, *USA Funds Unlock the Future: Turning Dreamers into Planners*, uses various tactics to convey its messages to key publics. The following best practices can be applied to the CBA's program as a way to successfully promote early college awareness.

USA Funds created a 45-minute Student Track presentation specifically targeting middle school students. Students watch a 20-minute video hosted by middle school students documenting real students and their stories. During the presentation, facilitators are given a how-to guide, fliers to promote the presentation to others and informational materials to take home.

The Family Track presentation complements the student presentation and discusses the important role adults play in planning for their child's education. Families watch a 30-minute talk-show style video promoting financial aid options and are given take-home materials and fliers.

USA Funds also provides a variety of college planning and early awareness podcasts developed with the University of Northwestern Ohio, targeting students in different grade levels. *College Daze*, an animated podcast, targets children in grades kindergarten through four and introduces the importance of higher education. *The Adventures of Tad*, targets children in grades five through eight with entertaining messages promoting the need for preparation for a postsecondary education. *Let's Talk about College* provides music-based messages that encourages high school students to challenge themselves academically and discusses the college application process and financial aid.

The program also features informational brochures, a weekly online newsletter and financial planning guides for parents and students. USA Funds is also offering a new college awareness video, *16 Summers*, which features actor and entertainer Nick Cannon, in a story about a 15-year-old girl who learns the importance of planning for college by dealing with many issues commonly faced by teens. The video launched in February 2009.

OCCC

Another early college awareness program was created by Oklahoma City Community College. OKC-GO, a tuition waiver program, was developed by the institution to help initiate an increase in college enrollment of students from district high schools. Eligible participants were recent graduates of local schools. The college also created a community outreach program and was able to raise \$250,000 to provide students with scholarships.



Environmental Description/PEST Analysis

Political Analysis

According to a study released by the Ohio Public-Private Collaborative Commission in 2007, jobs requiring postsecondary education are expected to grow twice as fast as jobs requiring only on-the-job training by 2014. The study also showed Ohio's students are unprepared for college, as nearly 40 percent of first-year Ohio college students needed some form of academic remediation.

To keep Ohio's current and future workers competitive in a lagging economy, legislators created several initiatives within the past few years to strengthen the state's education system.

Gov. Ted Strickland and state legislators created the Public-Private Collaborative to "make policy and program recommendations that promote high levels of student achievement." The collaborative focuses on four priorities:

- Engaged communities
- Accelerated and connected learning
- Prevention, intervention
- Recovery and school leadership.

The new initiatives call for a "birth-to-career" education system for children receiving education in Ohio.

A change in national political power will contribute to changes in education in the near future. President Barack Obama pledged to provide funding to school districts to invest in middle school strategies such as personal academic plans, teaching teams, parent involvement, mentoring and extended learning time. President Obama plans to provide \$4,000 toward a college education for any person willing to complete 100 hours of community service.

Economic Analysis

A Congressional Research Service report showed that in the 2007-2008 academic year, government-backed student loans supplied nearly \$74 billion of the \$258 billion spent on college. "The impact of merit-based financial aid on college enrollment: a field experiment" by J. Monks said need-based financial aid has increased by 47 percent from 1995-1996 to 2003-2004, while merit-based aid increased 212 percent.

More financial aid is available to students than ever before, but according to collegeboard.com, the number of private loans shrunk significantly in the recent credit crisis.

In "Fewer loan options for college students," *The Business Journal of Milwaukee's* Kathy Bergstrom said students looking for private loans will find tightened credit standards and financial aid in coming years, and the economy may make it harder for students to consolidate loan debt. More than 120 lenders have stopped lending federal education loans.

To ease the private loan crisis, Congress passed the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 in May, which increased Stafford Loan limits to aid students who cannot find private loans. The law gave the government the ability to act as a secondary buyer of loans through July 1, 2009. With the assistance of the Education Department, Congress also created a rescue plan in response to the market collapse and lender withdrawal. The plan gives lenders more money to issue loans by purchasing loan assets. This ensures students can easily find federal loans to fund their postsecondary education.



Social Analysis

A 2007 study released by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education said parents see higher education as a necessity, but rising costs are a concern. Although 87 percent of parents surveyed believed a college education increases job prospects, 76 percent expressed fear of finding a way to pay for their child's education. Sixty-seven percent believe college is worth the expense, and the majority of parents agreed that high grades in middle and high school can lead to higher education.

The study also found that minority parents are disproportionately concerned about a lack of college opportunity for their children. Sixty-two percent of all respondents reported minority students have less opportunity to receive higher education.

Technological Analysis

Technology is quickly changing the way people and publics receive information about a college education. Several organizations, including CBA, created educational Web sites to help parents and students learn ways to prepare for a college education. Social media tools, such as blogs or social Web sites, are becoming influential forms of communication for parents and students alike.

Research Report Sources

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CBA SAYS "HIT THE BOOKS RUNNING...The More You Know, the Less You'll Owe!"

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"Hard times are forcing parents to cut back on college saving; 529 sales drop; further decline expected" by Charles Paikert, *Investment News* (Oct. 2008)

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Listing of Portage County Media Outlets (2009)

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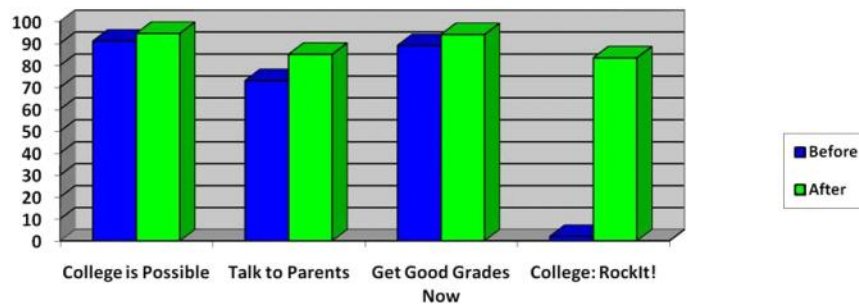




Synopsis of Classroom Results

The results we received from seventh grade students were outstanding and reassured us that not only did students begin thinking about college after College: RockIt! Week, they were really excited about starting getting good grades now and talking to their parents.

- An outstanding 94.5 percent of students said in our post survey that they want to go to college.
- 85 percent of students were going to talk to their parents about going to college.
- 94 percent of students feel that the grades they earn now matter.
- 97 percent of students feel that the Kent State speakers were interesting.
- 89 percent of students felt that the hands-on activities were fun.
- There was an 81.4 percent increase of students who were very familiar with the College: RockIt! campaign.



Thank You Card from Stanton Middle School Seventh Graders





Stanton 7th Grade Student Survey Results

Before

91% of students plan to go to college
8% of students are considering going to college
1% of students do not plan to go to college

73% of students talk to their parents several times about college
6% of students talked to their parents over the weekend after receiving the Hit the Books Running brochure
21% of students have not talked to their parents about college

50% of students strongly agree that the grades they get now matter
39% of students somewhat agree that the grades they get now matter
4% of students somewhat disagree that the grades they get now matter
7% of students strongly disagree that the grades they get now matter

2% of students are very familiar with the College: RockIt! Campaign
9% of students are somewhat familiar with the College: RockIt! Campaign
31% of students are not very familiar with the College: RockIt! Campaign
58% of students have never heard of the College: RockIt! Campaign

After

94.5% of students plan to go to college
5% are considering going to college
.5% are not planning on going to college

85% of students plan on talking to their parents about college
13.5% of students do not plan on talking to their parents about college
1.5% are considering talking to their parents about college

67% of students strongly agree that the grades they earn now matter
27% somewhat agree that the grades they earn now matter
2% somewhat disagree that the grades they earn now matter
4% strongly disagree that the grades they earn now matter

59% of students felt that the Kent State speakers were very interesting
38% of students felt that the Kent State speakers were interesting
3% of students felt that the Kent State speakers were kind of boring

40% of students felt that the rap and art activities were lots of fun
49% of students felt that the rap and art activities were fun
11.5% of students felt that the rap and art activities were kind of boring
.5% of students felt otherwise about the rap and art activities

83.4% of students were able to complete answer "Rock It" when given the question:
"College: _____!"



Student Classroom Survey

Instructions: For each of the following questions, please mark the box next to the best answer for you. Remember, all of your responses will be kept confidential, please be honest.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. Do you plan to go to college?

YES MAYBE NO

2. Have you talked to your parents about college, careers or jobs in your future?

YES, several times

YES, this past weekend when we looked at a brochure and Web site

NO

3. How strongly did you agree with the following statement:

The grades I earn now will affect my chances of getting into college.

STRONGLY AGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE SOMEWHAT DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. How familiar are you with the "College: Rockit!" program today?

VERY FAMILIAR SOMEWHAT FAMILIAR UNFAMILIAR NEVER HEARD ABOUT IT

AFTER CLASS:

1. Do you plan to go to college?

YES MAYBE NO

2. Do you plan to talk to your parents about college, careers or jobs this week?

YES NO

3. How strongly did you agree with the following statement:

The grades I earn now will affect my chances of getting into college.

STRONGLY AGREE SOMEWHAT AGREE SOMEWHAT DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. The Kent State University speakers were

VERY INTERESTING INTERESTING KIND OF BORING

5. The *College: Rockit! rap and art activities* were

LOTS OF FUN FUN KIND OF BORING

6. FILL IN THE BLANK: "College: _____!"



Parent Packet Survey Results

1. *What is the name of the Consumer Bakers Association's financial aid program?*

College Now	8%
Hit the Books Running	73%
Financial 101	16%
No Answer	3%

2. *True or False: Loans should come first when planning to finance college.*

True	3%
False	94%
No Answer	3%

3. *Parents: How often do you talk to your middle-schoolers about college and career plans?*

Rarely	3%
Sometimes	40%
Frequently	57%

4. *Have you begun to financially plan for your son(s)/daughter(s) to attend college?*

Yes	70%
No	30%

5. *Do you have internet access at home?*

Yes	95%
No	5%



Financial Aid Information Night Survey Results

25 parents in attendance
16 completed surveys

Do you think the College: RockIt! Campaign and College Bound Aid program will be helpful to you and your child?

Yes- 15 No- 0 No reply- 1

Have you visited collegerockit.wordpress.com?

Yes- 3 **No- 13**

If not, do you plan to visit in the future?

Yes- 11 Probably- 1 No reply- 1

Have you visited CollegeBoundAid.com?

Yes- 2 **No- 14**

Ratings: (1 is Unsatisfactory, 5 is Excellent)

FAFSA Preparation

87.5 percent rated the FAFSA segment of the presentation excellent.

Types of Financial Aid

87.5 percent rated the types of financial aid segment of the presentation excellent.

Scholarships

87.5 percent rated the scholarship segment of the presentation excellent.

Savings Plans and Tips

81.25 percent rated the savings plans and tips segment of the presentation excellent.

Comments:

- "Very good speaker"
- "Very clear and structured information. I was able to follow it and understand it. Thank you!"
- "Very informative"
- "It's helpful to know about this information, especially since tuition continues to go up!"
- "Speaker was great. Very thorough and informative."
- "Information was very insightful and definitely helpful."
- "Good job!"
- "Great info as not only do I have a 7th grader, but an 8th and 11th grader as well!"
- "More useful than I was afraid it might be"



Financial Literacy Parent Night Survey

Thank you for participating today. To help us with future efforts, please take a few moments to evaluate this workshop by answering the questions below.

1. Do you think the College: RockIt! campaign and College Bound Aid program will be helpful to you and your child?

Yes or No

2. Have you visited the www.collegerockit.wordpress.com?

Yes or No

If not, do you plan to visit in the future?

Yes or No

3. Have you visited the www.collegeboundaid.com?

Yes or No

If not, do you plan to visit in the future?

Yes or No

4. Do your children attend Stanton _____ and/or Kent Roosevelt _____? Yes or No

If No, please indicate which school system _____.

5. Rate the following presentation elements on a scale from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (excellent):

FAFSA Preparation 1 2 3 4 5

Types of Financial Aid 1 2 3 4 5

Scholarships 1 2 3 4 5

Savings Plans and Tips 1 2 3 4 5

Comments:



Media Coverage

The campus and local media and PR social media blogs recognized the College: RockIt! campaign in several channels, reaching nearly 200,000 people. The media coverage helped build awareness among parents in Portage County, as well as potential in-kind donors and partners for the campaign.

Media source	Article	Circulation	Coverage
Record-Courier	KSU students heading to Stanton; 'College: RockIt!' Events engage Stanton students	18,527 X 2 for 30,054 readers	Two articles: Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009 Friday, Feb. 27, 2009
Ohio.com (Akron Beacon Journal)	College: RockIt! Campaign Blasts Off	>122,388	Press releases posted Feb. 26, 2009
Daily Kent Stater Kentnews.net	PR students show seventh graders why college rocks: Blog helps young students identify passions early on	12,000	Article: Feb. 24, 2009
TV2 segment	College: RockIt!	KSU: 7,000 Portage County: 25,000	30:second segment Broadcast March 6, 2009
ToughSledding	Kent State Bateman team posting measurable results as campaign wraps up today	282	Blog posted Feb. 27, 2009
PR on the run	PRKent and Obama's Education Goals	100	Blog posted Feb. 27, 2009



KSU students are heading to Stanton

Public relations students at Kent State University are gearing up for a campaign to motivate middle school students and parents to begin preparing for college in middle school.

This program is part of the national campaign, "Hit the Books Running ... the more you know, the less you'll owe," by the Consumer Bankers Association.

A key message of the pro-

gram is to inspire young students to develop good study habits, helping to create opportunities for college funding.

The KSU students will host classroom activities for 250 Stanton students Tuesday through Thursday, including a presentation by a KSU student talking about a "cool career" in the eyes of seventh-grade students. Kent State athletes also will give some presentations.

A Parent Financial Workshop will be held Wednesday evening.

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Daily Kent Stater

Tuesday, February 24, 2009

PR students show seventh graders why college rock

Blog helps young students identify passions early on

Darren D'Alelio
Daily Kent Stater

Tom Larkin, principal of Stanton Middle School in Kent, has a simple educational philosophy: It takes a village to raise a child. So when five public relations students from Kent State approached the school's administration about an initiative to educate seventh graders about the importance of planning for college, Larkin welcomed the idea wholeheartedly.

"This will be a very positive experience," he said. "It will really help them think about their futures and creating opportunities."

This collaborative opportunity between Kent State and Stanton arose when the Public Relations Student Society of America unveiled its annual Bateman case study competition for 2008-2009. The Bateman competition is a national effort that encourages groups of five students to research, plan and implement a public relations campaign for a real-world client, said Rebecca Odell, junior public relations student at Kent State and member of the Bateman project team.

This year's client is the Consumer Bankers Association, a leading retail bank trade association whose headquarters is located in Arlington, Va. Operating under the Consumer Bankers Association's public awareness program "Hit the Books Running...the more you know, the less you'll owe," Odell and four other team members

called a campaign entitled "College Rock!" The campaign focuses on allowing middle school students to think about their passions and use them as a launch pad for successful futures in college and beyond.

"We're trying to reach kids on a grassroots level and get them to start thinking about college," Odell said. "The middle school population is not being focused on."

After extensive research and multiple focus groups with seventh graders, Odell said the team learned seventh-grade students have a definite desire to attend college and the question "What do I want to be when I grow up?" is on their minds. Moreover, the focus groups discovered nuances in the mindset of a seventh-grade student.

"The kids are very visual," Odell said. "They love humor, YouTube video and Kanye West."

Based on these findings, the team developed a campaign to engage the students in a variety of ways, combining technology and interpersonal communication.

The campaign revolves around an ongoing blog featuring videos, stories and information from Kent State students about identifying passions at a young age, focusing on good grades and communicating with parents.

In addition to the blog, Odell said, students will craft a rap song about going to college and enter it in a competition to have it recorded.

Tuesday and Thursday, students from Kent State will speak at Stanton about their college experiences. Wednesday

night, Stanton will host a financial planning seminar for parents, which is open to anyone in the community who wishes to attend. Friday, Stanton students are invited to the Ice Arena to skate, play games and win prizes like iTunes gift cards.

The guest speakers from Kent State, who range from music education majors to athletes, are pivotal to the message.

Carly Frey, guidance at Stanton, said Martin

excited and animated students will have an

about it, said Larkin on

helping a "dreamer" his

But he assured students okay to be a dreamer

you do something you set goals for the future

Under the airtight "College Rock!" campaign

community involvement

"The five of us could

done this on our own,"

"The entire Kent State o

helped."

Conhart College of Com and Informa

Durre at Dalton

React to this story

at KentNewsNet.co





KENT

'College: RockIt!' events engage Stanton students

This week, five Kent State University public relations students launched "College: RockIt!" — a grassroots campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance early college preparation and the value of a degree among middle school students and parents.

The team hosted activities for seventh grade students at Stanton Middle School, an event at the KSU Ice Arena and a college financial education program for area parents.

"In today's economy, a college education is more important than ever," said team member Rebecca Odell. "We want middle school students

and their parents to realize the value of a college degree and early college preparation and the range of available financial resources."

"College: Rockit!" is part of the Bateman competition, a national contest encouraging groups of public relations students to research, plan and implement a PR campaign for a real-world client.

KSU athletes and students discussed studying music education, biology, fashion and a variety of other fields. Stanton showcased their artistic abilities by creating posters and rap songs about getting good grades, going to college and pursuing careers.

The hosted a financial aid information night for parents Wednesday in the Stanton Middle School Library.

"Many students and parents don't think they need to start thinking about college until high school," said team member Shantae Rollins. "However, it's never too early to start planning for your future and learn about possible career paths and college financial resources."

Area students can enjoy fun, educational events at the KSU Ice Arena from 8:30 to 10:30 tonight. The KSU team will give students the opportunity to earn prizes while learning about college and careers.

Akron Beacon Journal allows readers to post news to the Upublish section of its Web site.

The screenshot shows the Ohio.com website interface. The main article is titled "College: Rockit! Campaign Blasts Off" by L'Phush, dated Feb 27, 2009. The article text is identical to the one in the main document. The website layout includes a navigation bar, a search box, and various sidebar sections like "Events Calendar", "Most Read Stories", and "Blogs".



Kent State's student-run television station TV-2 covered the College: Rockit! Ice Night and the College: Rockit! campaign. Pictured here is PRKent team member Shantae Rollins being interviewed and filmed by TV-2 reporters Ken Brown and Elizabeth D'Aurora.



Pictured here is a screen grab of the Broadcast Beat Reporting Web site where the story is posted. The story aired Friday, March 6, 2009, on TV-2 which airs to all of Portage County through Time Warner on channel 16.



TV-2 Web story

College, rock it.

That was the theme for Stanton Middle School's college information night at the ice arena. Kent State public relations students were challenged with raising pre-teen students' awareness about college. Seventh graders skated, answered trivia questions and played guitar hero at the final night of the college rock it program.

PR major Shantae Rollins said guitar hero engaged the students and related to the college rock it theme.

"The guitar hero really tied in the music with the rock it theme," she said.

The five students and their advisor are working hard because this is part of a national competition. Group advisor Michele Ewing says the competition challenges students outside of the classroom.

"Chapters throughout the country compete in it," she said. "It requires five students only, and that's a challenge because it's a big project and a huge undertaking."

Ewing said the Bateman team researched middle school students to see what grabs their attention.

"We found out these students want to be entertained," she said. "They want to be engaged. I can hear the kids saying it now 'don't bore us.'"

Ewing thinks the most important thing (middle school) students took out of the week-long activities is that it's never too early to start thinking about college.

"Think about college now," Ewing said. "Think about your dreams and go for it."



Social Media Coverage

The campaign grabbed the attention of several PR bloggers. Associate professor of Journalism and Mass Communication Bill Sledzik and former PRKent professor Rob Jewell featured College: RockIt! posts on their blogs, <http://toughsledding.wordpress.com> and <http://prontherun.wordpress.com>. Sledzik focused on the campaign's return on investment for CBA and received approximately 280 hits on the post within the first two days. Jewell's post focused on how the campaign lined up with President Obama's education goals, and he received 100 views on his post.

Sledzik Blog Example:

Kent State Bateman team posting measurable results as campaign wraps up today

Kent State PR majors returned to the PRSSA Bateman Competition for the first time in 15 years this semester. And boy did they rock it! Their week-long campaign titled "College: Rock It!" concludes a jammed-packed week of activities designed to make college a priority with — You ready for this? — 12 and 13-year-old kids.



The College: RockIt! website and blog

To clarify: Research provided by the client underscores the need to target younger kids vs. high school students, who are simply too far along in the decision-making process.

For you non-PRSSA folks, Bateman is a nationwide competition in which 5-person student teams research, plan and implement PR campaigns on behalf of a real-world client looking for real world results. In Kent, Ohio, that's exactly what the Consumer Bankers Association got — a real return on their investment. And yes, I do see the irony in that!

The students' project focused on CBA's educational outreach program, College Bound Aid, with a series of activities designed to educate and motivate 7th and 8th graders. Goal was to gain understanding and acceptance of the importance of a college education — no easy task when talking to a 12-year-old.

Said team member Rebecca Odell: "We want middle school students and their parents to realize the value of a college degree and early college preparation and the range of available financial resources."

The message: It's never too early to be thinking about preparing for college. For the kids it means working hard in class and school activities. For parents it means supporting their kids' development and shopping now for best ways to finance higher education — thus the banker connection.

CONTACT
Email me!

facebook

Name:
Bill Sledzik

ON TWITTER

- o Billsledzik: @bmorrissey Smart marketing no? Cheap Tide ads adorn bodies across U.S. and we celebrate P&G for saving the world. I'm impressed. #pddigital March 11, 2009
- o Billsledzik: @RichBecker Excellent post, Rich. Puts measurement in perspective. Lots to think about. <http://bit.ly/z43k> March 11, 2009
- o Billsledzik: @khuntley See you there, K. Do I have to shave and wear a tie? Arrgh! March 11, 2009
- o Billsledzik: @csledzik Just tell them your mom is "one of them" and that half your family hails from Ljubljana. My half if from Coal Run. March 11, 2009
- o Billsledzik: @csledzik I'm up for a cage match. Limbaugh against Carville, no holds barred. I think Fox would cover that -- since Idol is over with. March 11, 2009

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Jewell Blog Example:

PR on the run

FRONT PAGE ABOUT PR ON THE RUN — BY ROB JEWELL



← [Diets and Fat Tuesday](#) [Suze Orman and the Million Dollar Question](#) →

PRKent and Obama's Education Goals

February 27, 2009 · 1 Comment

Chased the treadmill again this morning. And not because of the temperature. It's mild in NE Ohio: around 50 at 5 a.m. But the wind is gusting at around 40 mph — and don't we always run into the wind? Oh, well. It gave me the chance to catch up on the news. And one of the big stories is Obama's budget — and his plans for education.

And there is a relationship between Obama's goals for education and a public relations campaign currently under way here at Kent State. Give me a

OK. Here is where PRKent comes in. Middle school and high school students need to be engaged — they need role models — they need mentors — they need advice — they need some assurance that a commitment to education will eventually help them succeed — and with costs of a college education escalating, they need some realistic plan and idea about paying for it. And importantly, they need this insight, information and perspective as soon as possible.

The Kent public relations students have designed and are implementing a program aimed at this type of engagement. Admittedly, it's limited in scope — but like many activities under way throughout our country now, it could serve as a model if successful. And small model programs replicated throughout the country — such as [Year-Up](#) and STRIVE — get big results.

Five Kent State public relations students have planned and are currently implementing College: RockIt! — a grassroots campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance of early college preparation and the value of a degree among middle school students and parents.

Rebecca Odell, one of the students involved in the campaign, says: "In today's economy, a college education is more important than ever. We want middle school students and their parents to realize the value of a college degree and early college preparation and the range of available financial resources."

And here's from a news release, College: Rockit! Campaign Blasts Off:

College: Rockit! is part of the [Bateman competition](#), a national contest encouraging groups of public relations students to research,

I'm Rob Jewell. And I've been a public relations practitioner and educator for more than 35 years. I've been a runner for more than 25 years. On this blog I'm going to share my thoughts on public relations — and other things that I think about on the run.

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CCI Kent Promotion

Kent State University's College of Communication and Information promoted the College: RockIt! campaign and blog through its Web site and Facebook page.

CCI Kent Web Site Example:

EXCELLENCE in Action

College of Communication and Information

College: RockIt! Campaign Blasts Off



Five CCI Kent public relations students launched College: RockIt!, a grassroots campaign designed to raise awareness of the importance early college preparation and the value of a degree among middle school students and parents, Feb. 23-27 in Kent and surrounding communities.

"In today's economy, a college education is more important than ever," said Bateman team member Rebecca Odell. "We want middle school students and their parents to realize the value of a college degree and early college preparation and the range of available financial resources."

The Kent State team hosted activities for seventh grade students at Stanton Middle School, an event at the Kent State Ice Arena and a college financial education program for area parents.

During the launch week, Kent State athletes and students discussed studying music education, biology, fashion and a variety of other fields. Stanton students will showcase their artistic abilities by creating posters and rap songs about getting good grades, going to college and pursuing cool careers.

"We want the students to understand that good study habits matter now and to get excited about potential career paths," Odell said.

The College: RockIt! team hosted a financial aid information night for parents on Feb. 25 in the Stanton Middle School Library. Kent State Assistant Director of Student Financial Aid Yvonna Washington-Greer informed parents on the FAFSA application, financial aid, scholarships, student loans and the importance of saving early.

"Many students and parents don't think they need to start thinking about college until high school," said Bateman team member Shantae Rollins. "However, it's never too early to start planning for your future and learn about possible career paths and college financial resources."

Area students enjoyed fun, educational events at the Kent State Ice Arena on Feb. 27. The Kent State team gave students the opportunity to earn prizes while learning about college and cool careers.

CCI Kent Facebook Page Example:

facebook Home Profile Friends Inbox Rebecca Odell Settings Logout

CCIKent's Notes

CCIKent's Notes

College: RockIt! Thursday, February 26, 2009 at 8:45am Share

In this note
No one.

Five CCI Kent PR students launched a grassroots campaign from Feb. 23-27 in Kent and surrounding communities. College: RockIt! is designed to raise awareness of the importance early college preparation and the value of a degree among middle school students and parents.

From Monday through Thursday, Kent State athletes and students will discuss studying music education, fashion, biology and a variety of other fields.

As stated in a new release: "College: RockIt! is part of the Bateman competition, a national contest encouraging groups of public relations students to research, plan and implement a PR campaign for a real-world client. Bateman is sponsored by the Public Relations Student Society of America, and the 2009 client is the Consumer Bankers Association. The project focuses on promoting the CBA's educational outreach program, College Bound Aid."

To learn more about the campaign, visit <http://collegerockit.wordpress.com/>.

Written about 2 weeks ago · Comment · Like · Report Note

Write a comment...

Comment



Thank You!

A special thanks to the following organizations:

- Kent State University College of Communication and Information Public Relations and Marketing staff
- Kent State University School of Journalism and Mass Communication administration, faculty and students
- PRKent faculty and students
- PRSSA Kent executive board and members
- TV2 Staff
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