

# GEAR UP Makes College Real

## Success Stories – Student Services

#2005-006

**Who's going to college? GEAR UP students are** and they are willing to compete for a scholarship in the **Who Wants to Win a Scholarship?** competition. They've worked with academic coaches for most of the school year, but now it is up to each of them this April afternoon at CAN TV, where the competition is being taped.



**While competing for scholarships, students learn about college.**

"I'm proud of her," says Zakiya's mom who has come to cheer for her daughter. Her mom says that she's been studying every Saturday morning.

Students have been studying for 4 hours on Saturdays since October. They work with academic coaches who help them with 9 content areas. What motivated them to spend so many hours each week, studying and learning?

The scholarships, of course, but along the way, they found many other reasons. "All the extra materials that you get from this program, it's really worth it," says Eric, another contestant. "I will be the first generation to go to college," says one

student. **All students get help filling out their college applications and the FAFSA financial aid form.**

These high school seniors also benefit from working with their coaches who are college students. "The coaches were fun to work with," says Patricia. "Telling us what their experiences are like in college" is a real plus says Francisco. "The college students do so much more than tutor." says Mary Charles, the scholarship program coordinator from Loyola University "This is a mentoring job. Because in addition to helping them academically and building study skills, they're also building relationships."

Students also learn about the practical side of college. "Does anyone know how much a semester of books costs?" Mary Charles asks. Not every student wins a scholarship, but students who answer 5 questions correctly, get a semester of books paid for. Others will win a lap top computer, but everyone will walk away with something.

**"If I don't win a scholarship, I still come out on top because I learned more,"** says Zakiya.

Listen to their story online at: <http://www.gearupchicago.org/>

**Did you know?** A good way to find scholarships is through personalized searches online, such as FastWeb. After filling out a questionnaire, your background is matched to a database of scholarships. To try a search go to: <http://www.fastweb.com>