

# TEEN TALK

## Treatment Centers

Spring 2007: Volume 1, Issue 10

Editors: Ali and Derick Stace-Naughton

### Finding the Right School

It doesn't matter whether you have a bleeding disorder or not. If you're in high school, you're probably thinking about college, technical school, or trade school. At least you should make sure you are ready for the next step in your life: a job. To find the right school, you'll need to start early, and invest the time to consider all of your options. There are hundreds of nationally accredited institutions of higher education in America. Your job is to choose one that will match your goals and needs.

Fortunately, you can eliminate most of these schools right away by making a few general decisions. First, list the characteristics of a school that are most important to you. These characteristics can include 1) Size: Would you like to attend a small school with 1,500 students, or a larger institution with 40,000 students like UW-Madison? 2) Distance from your home: Are you willing to move outside of your home state? 3) Type of school:

Would you prefer public or private?

Although you may decide later to reverse one of these decisions, making a few choices like this will drastically limit the pool of schools for you to consider, and make your college search much more reasonable and less overwhelming.

Next, you should ask yourself what you plan to do in school. 1) What do you want to study? 2) In what extracurricular activities do you plan to participate? 3) Does the school have a strong program in your field of choice? 4) Does the school match your style and needs outside of school, including in terms of extracurriculars?

Just thinking about these generalities should provide you with several good-fits. But remember, even if you have a good school that suits your needs, don't stop looking. Do some more research and find a dream school, an institution that tends to admit students with stronger records than yours. Not everybody can get into their dream school, but everybody should give it a shot. This way, wherever you end up

#### In This Issue:

**Finding the Right School**

**Sports Skinny**

**Getting the Most from  
Scholarship Opportunities**

**Website Analysis**

**Guest Corner**

# TEEN TALK

going to school, you'll know you maximized your potential. To find a dream school, you can look through books that provide detailed information on America's top colleges, universities, technical schools, and trade schools. For example, check your local library for a copy of the 2006 Choosing the Right College, published by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. There, you'll find lengthy analyses of over 130 high-level college institutions. Similar references are available for technical and trade schools.

Once you've narrowed your options through research, it's time to visit and tour the schools you are considering. Go to the school's website or call its admissions office to inquire about tour times and visitor programs. This is the best way to get a true feeling of what life at a given school might be like. Admissions officers encourage potential students to visit the campus, and there are usually informational sessions you can attend with other potential students. And don't forget to include your parents in these tours. They can offer additional perspectives and help you remember what you saw and heard, especially if you intend to visit several schools.

If one of your potential choices is far away, and you're unable to make a tour of the campus, don't worry. Many schools also send representatives to cities across the nation to conduct informational sessions for students who cannot visit. This is an opportunity for you to learn about academic and residential life, receive financial aid information, and ask any questions you have. Information about these recruitment tours can usually be found on a school's website as a virtual tour.

Hopefully, by asking yourself some general questions about your school preferences, thinking about a possible field of study, utilizing books and other resources that describe various schools, visiting campuses, and attending informational sessions, you'll be able to find a few different schools that you feel comfortable with. Of course, you may be overwhelmed by the price of some of your choices. Certainly, the cost of higher education is a major factor in your final decision. But don't let the expenses deter you from at least applying to a school, even if it seems too expensive at first. Read the following article "Getting the most from Scholarship Opportunities" with advice on finding scholarships. The important thing is to use the above guidelines to help you find a few schools that offer what you want from your college experience, and apply to all of these institutions. Include a dream school that stretches you, and then focus on those scholarship opportunities!

[Click here](#) to receive a copy of *A Long and Happy Life* video with additional advice on careers, insurance and post secondary schools.

---

## The College Application Process

The process of applying to college can be quite intimidating. Even after you have chosen a few schools that appeal to you, there is still a great deal of work associated with your college applications.

First, you must obtain the actual applications. Most colleges will post their applications on a website, which you can find by entering the institution's name into a search engine. Also, contacting a college

# TEEN TALK

or university's Office of Admissions is a sure way to get any application information that you need. Of course, many private institutions use a system of application known as the Common Application, in which case you're likely to be referred to the Common Application website. The Common Application is not much different from any other application, but is a general application that many colleges and universities agreed upon, allowing students to avoid repeating the entire application process for each institution.

After you have obtained all of the applications you need, the real work begins. You will find that most applications share a few of the same central components. First you will need to complete a couple of pages of general information about your education and your family. These types of questions are very straightforward. Additionally, most applications ask for a summary of your extracurricular and community service activities. This can be very simple to provide, so long as you begin keeping a record of your activities at the beginning of your high school career, along with the amount of hours you participated in each activity. If you haven't done this, sit down and create a list starting with your freshman year. Put down any activity whether it was school related or not!

A third major section of most applications involves a set of essays. This is probably the most difficult section of any application. Every essay is different, and there's no set formula that works for everyone. All you can do is make sure that you use your essay to communicate as much of yourself as possible to the admissions committee reviewing your application. Imagine a

stranger who does not know you. Will your essays communicate the essence of who you are? If not, revise the essays until they do. Have others evaluate your essay for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. If you can communicate effectively through these essays and truly represent yourself, you have the best chance at being accepted to a school that really fits you.

Another major component of most college and university applications consists of teacher recommendations. These are very similar to the teacher recommendations discussed in the next article "Getting the Most from Scholarship Opportunities". In fact, if a teacher's already writing you a scholarship recommendation, that person is a good candidate to write you a letter of recommendation for your college applications.

This information should help familiarize you with most of the application material you will face, but remember that each application for each school is different. Use the resources provided by each individual institution to prepare the best possible application and use this article as a guideline to give you an idea of what to expect. If you do these things, you're already giving yourself a much greater chance at reaching that dream school.

---

## Getting the Most from Scholarship Opportunities

Higher education is getting more expensive. Private colleges can cost over \$40,000 per year, on the high end. Even public universities are quickly approaching almost \$20,000 per year for room, board, tuition, and other expenses. But there are ways to alleviate the costs.

# TEEN TALK

If you know where to look, on the local, state and national levels, there are hundreds of scholarships available, for all types of student. Scholarships exist exclusively for males as well as females, or for students wishing to pursue certain career options, like engineering. There are a variety of scholarships designated specifically for students with bleeding disorders. The key to reducing your college costs is to find the scholarships that are most relevant to your situation, and focus on those (see the 'Links' article in this issue regarding scholarship web searches). It also seems that there are a few pieces of information required by all scholarship committees. Therefore, it's important that you develop a strong basic package that you can draw from for all scholarship applications.

Your basic package is derived from your college applications. Your personal statement or other required essays that are part of your college application can provide a starting point. This is particularly true if you have applied to schools using the Common Application. If you're applying to schools that use the Common Application, revising this material can simplify and shorten the scholarship application process.

As previously stated, no matter what scholarships you find, the first step towards a successful application is creating a strong personal statement that truly reflects you and your goals. Whether you have created a strong personal statement as part of the college application process or are starting this process now, the personal statement needs to be well written. The more time and energy you invest in this personal statement, the easier it will be to use this essay as the general starting point

for basic information required by scholarship committees.

You may even consider using the essay as a forum to explain to scholarship committees how your bleeding disorder has changed your life, and how you've dealt with this issue.

Another recurring component of scholarship applications is the teacher recommendation. There's little to be done during your senior year of high school to improve your teacher recommendations, so it's important to start developing relationships as a freshman. Develop dialogues with your teachers and let them see that you're invested in your studies. Try to find a teacher who is willing to spend the time to write a two page personal letter that really explains something unique about you and displays a detailed knowledge of your work as a student. Teachers get swamped by requests for recommendations and it helps if they know that you're a committed student and you've developed a strong relationship with them previously.

Of course, none of your work will be rewarded if you can't find appropriate scholarships to apply for. There are three types of scholarships to look at.

The first tier of scholarships consists of the opportunities found within your local community. Many local Businesses and other organizations, such as the Kiwanis and the American Legion, offer scholarships to students within their community. This limits the applicant pool to those in your area. Most local scholarship committees would notify area schools of the scholarships they're offering, so you can ask your guidance counselor about these opportunities. But don't rely on them alone. Call large local business that may

# TEEN TALK

be offering scholarships and ask your parents if their employers are offering scholarships. You can find many scholarships that may have a small applicant pool, and this way increase your chances of success.

Statewide scholarships make up the second tier of scholarships. Two examples in Wisconsin are the Herb Kohl Scholarship, offered by one of the state's senators, and the Byrd Scholarship. Many of these are applied for through the high school's administrative system. Check with your guidance counselor.

You may also want to investigate national scholarship opportunities. Many national businesses, like Coca-Cola and Best Buy, offer large numbers of scholarships to all types of kids across the nation. Because they're offered generally by larger organizations, these scholarships can be for larger amounts. Some, like the U.S. Bank Scholarship are very easy to apply for, and involve nothing more than a lottery. Others, such as the Coca-Cola Scholarship, involve a far more involved applications process, including additional requirements for Semi-Finalists.

It's best not to exclude any one type of scholarship, but to search for all. By planning ahead, researching, scholarships, and preparing a strong personal statement in your college application that can be used as the basis for your applications, you can take advantage of hundreds of opportunities to make the cost of college a little more bearable. You are only limited by the time and energy you want to put into this!

[Click here](#) to learn about Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation scholarship opportunities.

---

## Links

In this issue of Teen Talk, we reviewed FastWeb, a leading scholarship search service, which helps students make the decisions such as choosing a college, paying for college, and finding jobs and internships. You can find FastWeb at [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com). This website allows you to set-up a secure, personal account for free. Once registered, you are able to complete a scholarship profile. This means that you fill out several pages online that ask you about your hobbies, interests, grades, club affiliations, and any physical conditions that you have, such as a bleeding disorder. I used this free scholarship search to help find great scholarships. In fact, many of the bleeding disorder scholarships posted on the National Hemophilia Foundation's website appeared on my FastWeb scholarship profile. Because FastWeb's database contains over 1.3 million scholarships worth over \$3 billion, there has to be several scholarships that you could apply for that extend beyond the one's you already know about.

In addition to helping you find scholarships, you are able to fill out a college profile that will match you with several "perfect fit" colleges. This profile asks you about types of schools you would like, such as big versus small, rural versus city, location, academics, nightlife, safety, and even food. Based on your responses, a list of colleges will appear which meet most, if not all of your criteria. Personally, I used this college search engine after I had done the research described in the accompanying article "Finding the Right School". It was good to see my number one school from my research was the same number one choice that FastWeb listed.

# TEEN TALK

Not only can you set-up a college profile and a scholarship profile, but you can see what other college students who used FastWeb are doing in college. In fact, there is a Winner's Circle page where future college students can view the top scholarship winners from previous years and see where they are now and how they are doing. The Winner's Circle tells the viewer where the student is going to college, what their major is, how much money in scholarships they won, and a statement from the Winner about their college process. This page is helpful if you are unsure of where to begin and need to be inspired by others who started in the same spot as you.

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor
Amount of Info	*			
Info for Teens	*			
Easy to Use	*			
Searchable	*			

Overall, FastWeb is a wonderful scholarship and college website. It has lots of scholarships, information about college, and fabulous search engines. It has helped both of us and it can help you. So go register for free and plan your college future.

Overall Rating: Excellent

---

## Sports Skinny

If you have a bleeding disorder, chances are you may not have participated in all units of your high school gym classes or extracurricular

sports. I, at least, felt more limited by my bleeding disorder in physical education courses than anywhere else and had to pursue some better physical fitness options outside of school.

Still, as you prepare for college, remember that most universities have a much greater range of activities than high schools. You're likely to find athletic opportunities never before available to you, many of which will help you stay active while avoiding complications with your bleeding disorder. The larger the school, the more athletic opportunities you're likely to find. For instance, the University of Wisconsin at Madison offers courses in archery, badminton, bowling, canoeing, golf, aerobic dance, bicycling, general fitness, modern and ballroom dance, yoga, scuba diving, and pilates.

Although you may not be interested in pursuing competitive athletics at the college level, it's still important to stay active. You will probably not have a regular gym class that forces you to exercise. **Instead, you must take the initiative to find a low-risk activity to keep you healthy.** In college you will have the responsibility to maintain your health. By taking advantage of less traditional physical education courses or offerings not available in most high schools, you can pursue new options. In particular, pilates and yoga are very low-impact exercise programs that will allow you to build strength while avoiding risk. Of course, the best thing you can do for yourself is to search the physical education course catalog at whatever schools you plan to attend as well as the gym facilities available as part of the package when you enroll as a student.

---

# TEEN TALK

---

## Guest Corner

Teen Talk is still looking for a guest columnist for the next issue! If you write and send us a publishable article concerning the topic of your choice, you could earn ten dollars! The article can be a story, idea, opinion, or tip! Be creative, it's up to you! The article needs to be well written and polished so we can easily put it in our newsletter. Also, please limit your article to 500 words,. So get those pens out and start writing! You can send those publishable articles to Ali and Derick Stace-Naughton at [pjstacen@wisc.edu](mailto:pjstacen@wisc.edu) with the subject line "Teen Talk"!