

Planning for college?

Area families discover the COLLEGE BOUND advantage

By the end of their junior year in high school, most students will have received hundreds of brochures from institutions of higher learning — all wanting to make a “perfect match” with their son or daughter. It can be confusing and, at times, overwhelming.

That’s where College Bound Admissions Academy comes in, says owner Bridget Hotrum, a Washington resident whose college admissions planning practice is based locally in McMurray.

Admissions and financial aid guidance

Because College Bound is the only practice of its kind in Pennsylvania to offer both admissions and financial aid advising, there is added value for clients who tap into College Bound’s considerable wealth of knowledge to help them maximize their financial aid options. A bonus for busy or math-challenged parents: College Bound staffers fill out and file all of their financial aid forms.

Personal attention — along with expert advice — is a hallmark of the College Bound program, where former high school and college advisors work one-on-one with families in a supportive, nurturing environment. “We are all parents, too,” says Hotrum of her professional staff, “so we relate to the challenges of choosing a college that is a good fit for both your child and your finances.”

Support for students and parents

“At this time of year,” Hotrum notes, “families of high school seniors are often totally stressed out. The students are filling out applications, writing essays and getting teacher recommendations. Many of them are still out there visiting colleges.”

“Even though there is a lot of information published for do-it-yourselfers,” she says, “parents tell us they often feel frustrated and unsupported throughout this complex, and often highly competitive, process.”

“We had no idea where to begin,” agrees Debbie Casaday of McMurray.

She and her husband Rande are the parents of Ryan, a senior at Peters Township High School, and Tori, a tenth grader, who are both enrolled in the College Bound program. “College Bound made a bewildering task of choosing colleges into a manageable process.”

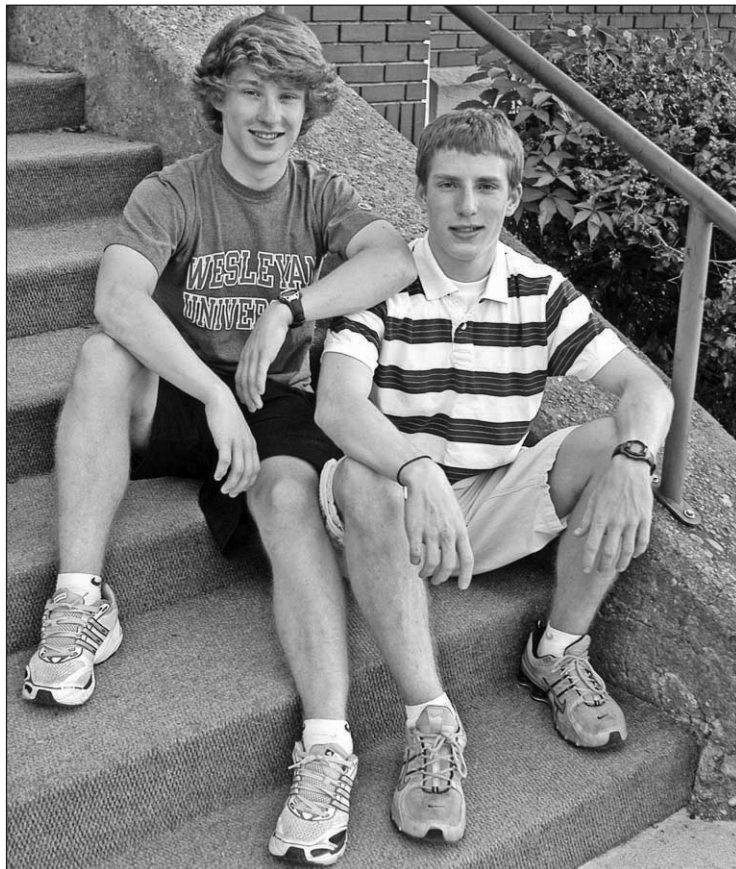
A focused, comprehensive plan

The average length of time a family spends with College Bound is 18 months. Optimally, students enter the program as early as ninth or tenth grade, engaging in career exploration discussions and attending in-house workshops (such as “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens”) that, Hotrum explains, “gives teens positive strategies to live gear, College Bound steps up to the plate. Their in-depth approach includes:

- Developing a strategic college search plan
- Helping students prepare for college visits
- Creating an application timeline and monitoring deadlines
- Editing essays and resumes
- Comparing college offers
- Negotiating for more aid

A meaningful and balanced approach

Like the Casadays and many other clients, Gayle and Patrick Manning of Venetia are “repeat customers” whose daughter Bridget graduated from Peters this year and is now a freshman at Northeastern University. Their eleventh grader, Meghan, is currently enrolled in the program: “We feel that Bridget Hotrum and her staff see their role at College Bound as not just a job, but as a personal commitment



Twin brothers Andrew, left, and Michael McCormick, seniors at Washington High School, are both clients of College Bound Admissions Academy. “College Bound keeps me motivated to meet all of the application deadlines,” says Andrew. Michael agrees: “They keep me on track and organized. It’s a lot less stressful than doing it on my own.”

The College Bound Mission

Our mission is to provide strategic, highly personalized college admissions and financial aid guidance for families throughout their higher education planning.

We do this by:

- Customizing a college admissions & financial aid plan for each student based on his or her strengths, interests and family resources.
- Motivating, challenging and inspiring our students to become the “best candidates” for their top college choices.
- Maximizing financial aid, creating options and helping families make informed decisions.

to their students and families.”

Hotrum adds, “We help our families look beyond marketing slogans on the fronts of brochures. We focus on the unique qualities of each person and strive to match students with colleges that will be a best fit for them.”

College Bound Admissions Academy invites you to attend either a free strategic planning seminar at a location near you or a free personal consultation at the College Bound office in McMurray. More information is available on their web site at www.collegeboundacademy.com or by calling 724-942-7680.