

Hathaway Brown helps demystify college admission process

By SALLI MCSHERRY

There was more than one "aha" moment at the College Craze event for parents, sponsored by "Your Teen" magazine and Hathaway Brown, where it was held.

The event was designed to demystify the college admissions process and all that entails. Parents of high school teenagers, middle school students and even elementary school kids were looking for sound advice about the admissions process. The event featured the art of teaching financial independence, finding your teen's passions, college savings plans, college and athletics, and perhaps most importantly, a parent's role.

Start with a basic premise. It's not your life; it's your child's life. "The student is the center of the process and the leader," said Terry McCue, assistant head of school and director of college counseling at Hathaway Brown.

Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton — don't let your child fall in a love with a name. And, don't let yourself, either. Your college-bound child needs to decide what he/she wants in a college, Dr. McCue said. School rankings are overrated. What are the criteria used for judging and how does one quantify what is not quantifiable? she asked. Don't tie your happiness with your child's college success. It's not a report



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card on your parenting, Dr. McCue said.

Another interesting point from someone who knows, the dynamic Rick Bischoff, vice president, enrollment management at Case Western Reserve University, said college applications are always read by admission officers. "We're terrified of missing a student we should have offered entrance," he said. Another insider secret — no one actually knows what a specific school is looking for in a student. It can change. For instance, a school that recently built a multi-million performing arts hall donat-

ed by an alumnus might be looking for a surge of students who want to concentrate on music or acting.

Parents can help lay the foundation for future success, Dr. McCue said. Help your child enjoy high school and not worry so much about strategizing for college. That said, it's still important that students are enrolled in appropriately challenging courses, they take part in co-curricular activities, prepare for tests by reading, reading, reading, and make good summer choices, among other "to do" lists for each year of high school.

It's interesting to note, Dr. McCue noted, that the national average of students getting into their first college of choice is 75 percent, she said. Expose kids to a variety of interests and then let them take the lead, Dr. McCue advised. Instead of asking, "what are you going to be" (when you grow up), it's more about finding out what makes a meaningful life for the individual, said Kay Levandowski, academic program coordinator, College of Public Health, Kent State University.

Rodney Drake, vice president and plus program coordinator, Key Bank, gave an informative presentation about teaching financial independence. A college rewards MasterCard with no annual fee, if used responsibly, can get a teenager's credit history off to a great start.

Courtney Walls, 529 specialist, Black Rock, and Michael Frayman, senior vice president, investments, Raymond James, discussed the benefits of using 529 college savings plans that offer tax-deferred earnings growth, tax-free distributions when used for qualified education expenses, and significant annual contribution limits determined by the state administering the plan. Also, there are no income restrictions for contributors, no age limit for withdrawing funds and other benefits.

William Roth, director of athletics at Oberlin College, talked about the combination of college and athletics and it works.

Dr. McCue may have summed the college craze process up best when she said, "Things will work out. There are so many ways to be happy in college."

"Your Teen" magazine recommends these helpful websites:

collebound.net

collegeboard.com
ctcl.com

petersons.com

collegeprowler.com

findaid.org

unigo.com