

# ABOUT GEAR UP MAINE RISE

**GEAR UP** (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a national initiative designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in after high school education or training.

GEAR UP Maine RISE serves the current class of 8th-grade students (class of 2029) and follows them through middle and high school to their first year of college. In addition, we provide ongoing support for students in 11th and 12th grades, as well as those in their first year of college, helping with career coaching, financial literacy, college preparation, and more.

## **We do this by increasing:**

- » Academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education;
- » Student and parent knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing;
- » Access to opportunities for career and college exploration and choices for students from rural regions of Maine.

By starting early and maintaining support through critical educational transitions, we foster a college-going culture and improve high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates among our students.

**If you'd like to support our work or get involved, please visit [gearupme.org](http://gearupme.org).**



# THE GEARUP GAZETTE

*A quarterly bulletin for GEAR UP Maine RISE students, parents, and community members.*

## **GREETINGS, GEAR UP STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS,**

I am pleased to introduce Jess Berry as the new Syntiro Executive Director and GEAR UP Maine RISE Project Director.

Jess brings a wealth of experience in college access support services, including leadership roles with TRiO programs at UMF and Bates College. Her expertise and dedication will be invaluable as she leads GEAR UP Maine RISE into the future.

I am retiring after 20 years with Syntiro and GEAR UP Maine. It has been my pleasure and honor to support efforts to raise aspirations and improve outcomes for all students.

I leave with confidence that our outstanding team will carry the torch forward, ensuring exceptional results for rural Maine students, families, and educators.

Best wishes and much success to you! Thank you for your efforts to level the playing field and commitment to equity and social justice!

Sincerely,  
Debbie Gilmer  
Syntiro President & GEAR UP Maine RISE Project Director



**GEAR UP Maine RISE**

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# STUDENT NEWS

**The second semester is here, and it's the perfect time to refocus and crush your goals!** Whether exploring career options, prepping for college, or figuring out how you learn best, GEAR UP Maine RISE has your back.

With your School Specialists cheering you on and so many resources at your fingertips, there's no limit to what you can achieve this year! Let's make it happen!

## TAKE 5 TO READ THIS...

### HAVE YOU CONNECTED WITH YOUR SCHOOL SPECIALIST YET?

Their job is to support your post-graduation dreams. You can set up a meeting with one simple email to them.

**WATCH YOUR SCHOOL'S GEAR UP BULLETIN BOARD!** Each GEAR UP Maine RISE School has a bulletin board that's filled with latest news, upcoming events, and valuable resources for students. Take some time each week to visit the bulletin board and stay up to date with all things GEAR UP Maine RISE

**OPEN SCHOLARSHIPS:** If you need help filling out your FASFA, the Financial Authority of Maine provides free support. Use your School Specialist and guidance counselor to apply to scholarships.

- » Maine Community Foundation's Scholarship | Opens December 3
- » Maine American Legion Scholarships | Closes May 1
- » Worthington Scholarship Program | Closes April 15

**GEAR UP ACADEME:** Scan the QR code to sign up for GEAR UP AcadeME, where students and their families can explore new careers, stay up-to-date on GEAR UP Maine RISE programs, learn about paying for college, and so much more!



\*Students must enroll first and then share their student code with their parent/guardian to access GEAR UP AcadeME.

# FAMILY NEWS

**As caretakers, you play a vital role in shaping your student's future.** Whether they're planning for college, exploring career options, or working to finish the school year strong, your support makes all the difference. This section is filled with tools, tips, and resources to help you guide them through key decisions and prepare them for success beyond high school.

**SEEDS TRAINING: THE PARENTING TOOL BELT.** Kids don't come with a manual! Our partnership with Seeds Training offers practical tools to help parents support their children's success, improve communication, and create a positive, growth-focused environment. **You can access this on our website at [gearupme.org](http://gearupme.org).**

**THE FAFSA IS OPEN!** Has your student completed their FAFSA? It's the key to unlocking financial aid like grants, scholarships, and low-interest loans, making college more affordable and accessible.

**MID-YEAR CHECK-IN:** Take time this semester to check in with your student and focus on the importance of attendance. Missing a day here or there may not seem like a problem. But school absences add up quickly. Missing two days a month—excused or unexcused—can add up to a child being considered chronically absent. Reach out to our Family Engagement Coordinator, Aubrie, at [ahoward@syntiro.org](mailto:ahoward@syntiro.org) for support.

**Did you know?** By 2031, an estimated 72% of jobs in the U.S. will require some form of postsecondary education or training.

**Want to receive this in the mail or get monthly email updates? Sign up on our families page at [gearupme.org](http://gearupme.org).**

**STUDY TIP:** Finding your learning style takes some trial and error, but thinking about how you learn can help you figure out what works best.