

# It Pays To Understand Financial Aid

(NAPSA)—Next to buying a house, paying for a college education may be the biggest purchase a family will ever make. Just like most families seeking a good affordable mortgage, the majority of students and their parents will find it wise to learn as much as they can about financial aid so that they can figure out what college really costs, and what they can afford.

Think about it. When Americans make their biggest investment—purchasing a home—they

do their homework and learn about the home-buying process to ensure they are getting the most for their money. A college education is an

equally important investment. Three resources from the College Board can help parents and students become informed consumers of higher education:

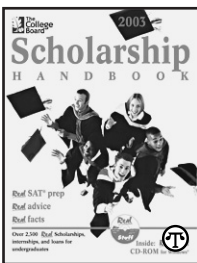
Start your research by clicking the “Paying for College” button on the [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) Web site, a great first step to understanding the ins and outs of college costs and financial aid. Besides informative articles about college costs, the site includes free interactive tools to help families take action. The College Savings Calculator enables parents to determine how their savings will amass over time. For example, a family that saves \$50 per month from the time their daughter is born will amass more than \$16,000 in savings by the time of her high school graduation, including almost \$6,000 in interest earnings. The Scholarship Search and Financial Aid Calculator are equally helpful to families.

Families that want more information about 529 Plans, prepaid tuition plans, tax credits, and federal loans, should check out *The College Board College Cost & Financial Aid Handbook 2003*. It



includes complete up-to-date information about costs and financial aid at more than 2,700 two- and four-year colleges, an easy-to-understand explanation of the financial aid process, and an itemized chart of student expenses. A listing of individual colleges and the merit scholarships offered by each, as well as special tables and worksheets, can help families figure out how much they can expect to pay.

More than 350,000 people are cheated each year by scholarship



scams, according to the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. There's no need to pay someone to find scholarships. The search for scholarships can be simple with *The College Board Scholarship Handbook 2003*. With details about more than 2,300 real scholarships, internships, and loan programs, it is a small investment with the potential for a great payoff in scholarship dollars.

*The College Board College Cost & Financial Aid Handbook 2003* (\$22.95) and *The College Board Scholarship Handbook 2003* (\$25.95) are available at bookstores and at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).