

Areva Martin Teams with HBCU Heroes to Empower Neurodivergent Students With Free Virtual College Readiness Program

Free virtual workshop empowers neurodivergent students and parents with college readiness, financial literacy, and mental wellness tools for success.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Special Needs Network \(SNN\)](https://www.snnla.org/), California's leading disability rights organization, has partnered with national nonprofit [HBCU Heroes](https://www.hbcuheroes.org/) to launch the Fall 2025 PAM College Advocacy & Readiness Program—a free, virtual workshop series aimed at empowering neurodivergent students and their parents with tools for college and career success.

The two-part series, powered by HBCU Heroes, will be held on two tracks: October 18 & 25 and November 15 & 22, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. PT via Zoom. It is open to California-based high school juniors/seniors, college freshmen/sophomores, and their parents or guardians. Attendance with a parent is required for incentives.

Bridging the Gap for Neurodivergent Students

Although 1 in 36 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with autism, fewer than 40% of neurodivergent students pursue higher education—and only about 20% earn a degree. Many face steep challenges navigating college systems, from securing accommodations to managing finances and mental health.

The PAM (Parent Advocacy & Mentorship) Program aims to close these gaps by providing culturally responsive training in self-advocacy, financial literacy, executive functioning, and emotional wellness—empowering students and parents to thrive as a team.



A Special Needs Network Steps to Success Initiative

College Advocacy + Readiness Program
AN EXTENSION OF THE PARENT ADVOCACY MENTORSHIP (PAM) PROGRAM

POWERED BY
HBCU HEROES

FALL 2025

Unlock Your Future!
College. Career. Community.
Open to California High School & College Students

FREE Virtual Program on **zoom**
RSVP today to secure your spot and chance to **WIN \$250!**

FIRST SESSION
✓ Self-Advocacy in College/Disability Rights
✓ Campus Navigation

SECOND SESSION
✓ Financial Literacy for College Success
✓ Executive Functioning
✓ Mental Wellness Toolkit

FIRST SESSION
October 18, 2025 | 9AM -11AM PT

SECOND SESSION
October 25, 2025 | 9AM -11AM PT

www.snnla.org | www.hbcuheroes.org | traceypennywell@hbcuheroes.org

SNN x HBCU College Advocacy and Readiness Program

“Every student deserves the right support to thrive—not just academically, but emotionally and socially,” said Areva Martin, President and CEO of Special Needs Network. “This series is about empowerment through access.”

What Participants Will Learn

Across two interactive sessions, families will:

- Learn how to request college accommodations and services
- Gain financial literacy and budgeting skills
- Strengthen executive functioning (organization, time management)
- Explore strategies for emotional wellness and resilience



SNN Founder: Areva Martin

Each student who attends both sessions with a parent will receive a \$25 stipend and be entered into a drawing to win a \$250 cash prize. A certificate of completion will also be provided.

“We believe every student deserves a fair shot at success,” said Tracey Pennywell, CEO and Co-Founder of HBCU Heroes. “This program helps neurodivergent youth not just get to college, but thrive once they’re there.”

A Continued Commitment to Mental Wellness

This program builds on the success of the organizations’ previous collaboration, “Beat the Summer Blues,” which helped hundreds of California youth manage anxiety and depression during school breaks. Participants in that series reported significant improvements in mental wellness.

The new PAM College Advocacy & Readiness Program adds a stronger focus on financial empowerment and executive functioning, ensuring that neurodivergent students are equipped for the full college experience—from the classroom to campus life.

How to Register

Eligible students and their parents can register here: <https://forms.gle/vEHp27xXCBCNcP1J7>

Program Dates:

- Track 1: October 18 & 25, 2025
- Track 2: November 15 & 22, 2025
- Time: 9:00–11:00 AM PT (each session)

Eligibility:

- Neurodivergent high school juniors/seniors or college freshmen/sophomores
- California residents only
- Must attend both sessions with a parent/guardian

Participant Benefits:

- \$25 stipend for attending both sessions
- Entry into \$250 cash raffle
- Certificate of Completion

Seats are limited — early registration is encouraged.

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About Special Needs Network (SNN)

Founded by attorney and media personality Areva Martin, SNN is California's premier advocacy and direct-service organization for families impacted by autism and developmental disabilities. Learn more: www.snnla.org

About HBCU Heroes

Founded by Tracey Pennywell and former NBA player George Lynch, HBCU Heroes is a national nonprofit that connects underrepresented students with scholarships, mentorship, and career opportunities. Learn more: www.hbcuheroes.org

Tracey Pennywell

HBCU Heroes

+1 818-749-0198

[email us here](#)

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