



The Scholarsheet

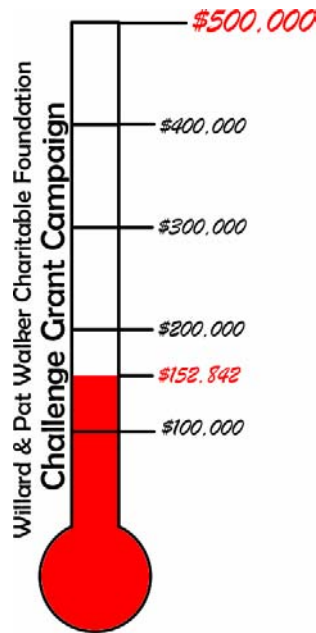
A Great Start Toward a Great Effort



Inside this issue:



ASPSF Is Catching On	2
News & Cues	2
Musings Ralph Nesson, Exec Dir	3
A New Kid On the Block	3
Boone County SPSF Remembered In Will	4



The Challenge Thermometer (left) will be a regular feature in future issues of The Scholarsheet until 100% of our goal is met. The campaign began in May of this year, and we are already one-third of the way to meeting the full challenge!

Each year, ASPSF strives to increase the level of scholarship support to single parents in Arkansas. We do this by matching funds, dollar for dollar, raised locally by our affiliate organizations. All matching funds we distribute are used specifically to fund Single Parent Scholarships.

The challenge grant offered by the Willard & Pat Walker Charitable Foundation will be used to provide additional matching funds to our affiliates, thereby increasing the number of scholarships offered to single parents.

Among the 33 donations received thus far, five foundations have contributed \$114,500, fifteen board members and three staff members have contributed \$1182, and the state government contributed \$5000. These, plus numerous donations from private individuals, total \$152,842.

Scholarship Recipient Coordinates Fundraiser

Talk about helping your own cause! Craighead County SPSF scholarship recipient Joy Acord took the need to raise money for scholarships into her own hands by organizing a motorcycle "poker run" in the Jonesboro area. Joy, 38 and the mother of 2 children, is a 3rd year student at ASU-Jonesboro. She will graduate in December 2005 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in international business and a minor in German.

Joy invited area bikers, including independent riders and Christian Motorcycle Association members, to participate in the poker run on August 28th with the agreement that all proceeds would be donated to the Craighead County SPSF. She literally spent hours on the phone contacting motorcycle clubs and asking area merchants to contribute food, door prizes

and even manicures for the event. Having worked for Lincoln Manufacturing in Jonesboro for several years before returning to school, Joy knew her way around the business community and found the task of making contacts for the event quite enjoyable. She even enlisted the aid of her teenage daughter in making calls to the more than one hundred invited participants.

As we go to press, reports from Jonesboro indicate that a total of \$315 was raised at the poker run. Another run is scheduled for Spring 2005. Hats off (or should we say helmets!) to folks like Joy Acord who are so willing to donate their own time and energy in raising much needed support for Single Parent Scholarships.

Tid Bits & Facts

- Craignhead Co SPSF began in 1991 and operated until 1994. It was revitalized in 1997.
- They have almost doubled their fundraising efforts since 2003.
- Since 1997, they have awarded 41 scholarships worth \$13,464.



News & Cues



Scholarship Award Reports are due at the close of each semester. ASPSF will be contacting any affiliates that have not previously submitted their award reports for 2004. Report forms can be found in your Resource Toolbox or downloaded from the ASPSF web site at www.aspsf.org.

The Arkansas Scholarship Connection has 2,000 units of information in its financial aid database. Find ASC on the web at www.arkansas scholarship connection.org.

The Communications Project CD is in final production and duplication. Stay tuned for an e-mail announcing the shipment date in mid-October.

The ASPSF Board Retreat meeting will be held Friday, October 15, and Saturday, October 16, at the Park Hotel in Hot Springs.

The Scholarsheet is published quarterly by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. Comments and suggestions should be addressed to Chris Womack, Editor:

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ASPSF Is Catching On

At a time in her life when things were crashing in and she was on the verge of quitting school, Kathryn Swope-Miller, a single mother, received a hand up from one of her professors. It was a bit of compassionate but firm emotional support. "She sat me down and told me in no uncertain terms that I would NOT be quitting school." This increased Kathryn's determination and influenced her to help others like herself. The day after receiving her associate's degree, she gave birth to her second child. And after a short time off with her family, she

went on to complete her baccalaureate degree.

How did Kathryn do it? "I had to take out many loans, apply for assistance with medical and food, and generally fight my way through 'the system,'" she said. In Ohio where Kathryn lives, "the system" is the Jobs and Family Services, similar to our Department of Human Services, and is a rather elusive entity. "You have to be someone that works in the system to have an idea of what is available." Kathryn was also fortunate to have very supportive parents and a wonderful

network of friends. She shared a duplex with her best friend who was also a single parent. "This allowed for social contact, help with meals, child care, car pooling, laundry, etc. I don't know if either one of us could have achieved our goals without the constant support [of one another]."

While still in school, Kathryn witnessed others like herself, caught in a financial struggle, whom eventually dropped out. She began to devise a plan for change. Finally, an acquaintance emailed her with information about Professor Lori

In the long-term, she hopes to develop affiliate organizations within all 88 counties of Ohio, modeled after ASPSF.

Holyfield's book, "Moving Up and Out." From there, she called Ralph Nesson. "He got right on the phone and we had a great conversation. I was then able to fill in the gaps on this end, and complete my plan," Kathryn said. Her plan resulted in the inception of Single Parent Resources in March 2003, a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that serves as a resource and referral network for single parents in Ohio.

In May 2003, Single Parent Resources partnered with another local agency, a provider of free daycare for children of single parent students, to organize their first major fundraiser, March of Moms. The walk raised \$6000, which the partnering organizations split equally. For Single Parent Resources, the event enabled

them to award four Single Parent Scholarships at \$300 each.

They doubled the proceeds at the 2004 March of Moms, and the event will be held again in 2005. Fundraising success has enabled Single Parent Resources to award a total of 15 scholarships worth \$4500 since its inception.

Kathryn and the Single Parent Resources Board of Directors all work on a volunteer basis. She hopes in the near future that she may focus completely on the program, as well as receive a salary. Her time is already committed to administering the scholarship fund, working one-on-one with participants, attending community events, and networking with local community leaders, in addition to the duties of

earning a living to support her family. She is also working on a 2005 Resource Guidebook for her local community of Toledo, Ohio.

In the long-term, Kathryn plans to develop affiliate organizations within all 88 counties of Ohio, modeled after ASPSF. Also, she hopes to raise the value of each scholarship from \$300 to \$500, establish a dedicated phone number, and launch a web site. Says Kathryn about Single Parent Resources and all her volunteers, "Things are going well and moving forward in spite of our money challenges. We have a dedicated group that is working hard to take our program to the next level. The ASPSF has been really wonderful with all of the assistance and help that you have offered."

Musings

Ralph H. Nesson, Executive Director

I remember Mr. Wentworth so clearly. He was my sixth grade math teacher who went the extra mile in tutoring me after school, letting me know that he understood perfectly the terrible anxiety I experienced over keeping up with the rest of the class. Math baffled me and he could see it in my eyes. Rather than express impatience or disdain, he was the most gentle of instructors in guiding me through the intricacies of pre-algebra until I was reasonably certain I understood it. And when I still did not understand, despite his patient mentoring, he calmly went

back over the material once again without hesitation.

Haven't we all had a Mr. Wentworth in our lives, someone with a seemingly limitless depth of understanding and compassion for the struggling learner? My memory of him reminds me that single parent students so need the compassion and understanding of others, whether they be teachers, friends, family members, neighbors or colleagues at work. Their struggle to keep their lives in harmony, despite all the pressures of limited income, child nurturing, school work, and employment,



is one we can all help them to wage successfully. Sometimes, what it takes is just that friendly arm around a shoulder, or phone call to ask how things are going, or offer to watch the kids for a couple of hours while mom takes a nap or does something enjoyable for herself. Or maybe even a little extra tutoring in math!

We all appreciate and need a Mr. Wentworth at some point or points in our lives. Yet, we can all be a Mr. Wentworth to someone else. That is the mark of true understanding and friendship.

A New Kid On the Block

Bryan and Leticia Vowels have witnessed first hand the challenges that single parents face, when Leticia's parents divorced while she was an entering freshman in college. After the divorce, her mother returned to college and continued to raise Leticia's two younger sisters. This personal experience inspired Bryan and Leticia to support single parents in their community, which is how they became acquainted with Ralph Nesson and ASPSF. The couple was a financial supporter of the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Washington County in 2000 and 2001. "It's a great program," Bryan says.

In 2001, Bryan and Leticia moved to Joplin, Missouri, where Bryan began working for A.G. Edwards. Later he began serving on the board of United Way, all the while thinking there was something more he could be doing for single parents. He and Leticia formed the idea of developing the ASPSF model in their area and have worked toward that goal continually. They plan to serve the populations of Jasper and Newton counties in Missouri exclusively, with plans of persuading individuals in other counties

to adopt the model in their respective areas.

However, there is much work to be done and much money to be raised before the first scholarships are offered! They plan to first incorporate their non-profit organization and apply for 501(c)3 status. Bryan will be meeting with the United Way executive committee in mid-October to begin the application process. The United Way has agreed to provide volunteers to create a distribution channel for corporate sponsorships. A.G. Edwards, a local accounting firm, and a local bank have committed sponsorships already. They hope to raise at least \$40- to \$50 thousand dollars for seed money. In addition, they hope to gain multi-year support from at least three other corporate sponsors.

Bryan and Leticia are working as partners to make their efforts successful. Bryan plans to direct the program development while Leticia will provide administrative expertise. She worked as an office manager for several years before she switched careers to be a full-time mother for the couple's two children

(and they are expecting a new addition to the family soon!). They plan to hire a permanent staff person as the organization gains strength.

The new organization will offer its first scholarships in Fall 2005, and they plan to base the eligibility requirements on the ASPSF model. Already they use The Toolbox as a guide for program development.

We wish the best of luck to Bryan and Leticia Vowels!



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Boone County SPSF Remembered In Will




Jayne Oler, BC/SPSF Secretary (left), and Ed Warabow (right)

In August, the Boone County Single Parent Scholarship Fund received a \$4000 donation from the estate of the late Delores Warabow. Carolyn Bonsteel, SPSF committee member and a longtime friend said, "Delores Warabow...was a lovely lady who contributed both her time and talents to [her] community."

Mrs. Warabow learned of the scholarship fund through a friend, and chose it, along with several other local organizations, to remember in her last will and testament as a means of continuing her community involvement after her death. All donations were given as matching grants. The donation received by Boone County SPSF was matched by ASPSF, which enabled them to award an

additional 16 to 20 scholarships. Seven other nonprofit organizations in the area were beneficiaries of Ms. Warabow's estate, including Circle of Friends, a church youth program, a humane society, and CASA.



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