

The Scholarsheet

Newsletter of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

Volume 8, Issue 3 September 2002

Kudos to Union County

Editor's Note: ASPSF county affiliates follow a variety of organizational patterns. This story, submitted by Susan Chappell, Board Secretary, Union Co., demonstrates a successful merger between campus and community.

After a period of dormancy, the ASPSF of Union County was reactivated in 1997 when two former Board members joined forces with a new group and began raising funds in support of single parents. Four scholarships valued at \$2,000 were awarded that first year. In the years since, gradual increases in funding have resulted in increases in both the value and number of scholarships awarded. During 2002 we awarded 32 scholarships with a total value of \$13,750! The majority of our recipients attend South Arkansas Community College, but several are enrolled at Southern Arkansas University. The total number of awards made by the Union County SPSF since reacti-

vation has now reached 269, and the total cumulative value of those scholarships is \$101,285. Funds raised for the SPSF of Union County are housed in the South Arkansas Community College Foundation, the 501 (c)3 organization that serves as the fiscal agent.

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From left: Susan Chappell, Board member & Exec. Vice President, SEARK; Debbie Watts, SHARE Foundation representative; Carol Modica Smith, scholarship recipient; Rodney Landes Jr., Board member & President, First Financial Bank.

Synopsis of Needs

In Union County:

- 25.6 percent of all children are living below poverty level (estimated figure).
- 2,740 households (15.2% of the total) are managed with a female head of household.
- 42 percent of all live births in 2001 were born to unmarried women.
- Current case list for Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) involves 265 families. Only 8 of these cases have two parents present in the home

This information was obtained at:
www.healthyarkansas.c

COURAGE FOR THE LONG JOURNEY

BY YVONNE KING

About 10 years ago my son and I celebrated his first birthday in a shelter for families in crisis. As survivors of domestic violence, it was our second such shelter in a year. I never thought I would be on welfare, but it was the only way we could get by. During that time I learned about the Benton Co. SPSF. With much encouragement, I finally decided to attend college. The scholarship was a wonderful gift. I used the funds to pay for gas, books, and daycare. It was great, because I could use the funds for expenses that other college financial aid did not cover.

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News & Cues!

News:

► **Entergy Corporation** has awarded \$30,000 to ASPSF for distribution to affiliates in their service area. Application information was mailed a few weeks ago to all affiliates who are in the Entergy service area. To check if your group is in the service area or to obtain additional applications, please check our website: aspsf.org or call us. Deadline for applications: October 8.

► Copies of the newly revised resource guide known as *The Toolbox* have been mailed to all ASPSF Affiliates. Feel free to reproduce the material for your local boards, or additional copies can be purchased from ASPSF for \$25/ea (without 3-ring notebook) or \$28/ea (notebook included). Cost includes postage.

Cues:

► The ASPSF Board of Directors will gather at the Jones Center for Families in Springdale October 11 & 12 for a board meeting and annual planning retreat.

► Matching Funds for 2002. Only 3 months remain to request your portion of matching funds for this year. If your affiliate has not requested the full amount (or any), please apply ASAP.

The Scholarsheet is published quarterly by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Comments & suggestions can be addressed to: Lani Froelich, Editor, 614 E. Emma, Ste. 119, Springdale, AR 72764.

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WORD TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

BY CINDY WEBB, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every day when I have the opportunity to tell someone about the work of the affiliate organizations across our state I am reminded that I am incredibly lucky. I am lucky to have so many dedicated and committed volunteers working with me to make a difference in the lives of our neighbors and communities.

Our mission to assist low income single parents attain self-sufficiency through post-secondary education is as important today as it was when the organization was founded. In many ways, the urgency of our mission has increased. With the changes in welfare, it becomes even more critical that the students who can benefit from our support receive that support. Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Funds touch the lives of individuals and families helping them to get closer to achieving their own dreams. We must not grow complacent. Now, more than ever, we must continue to grow to meet the needs of our neighbors, our friends, our community members.

The heart of our organization has always been the invaluable volunteers who work on SPSF boards, create and execute fundraising events, and promote and award the scholarships. Your work is paying off in huge returns. Take a moment to know how appreciated you are and how important the work you do is to so many people. Happy Fall!



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What I valued most was the friendship of the people in the scholarship program. When my car broke down, they helped me find a ride to the university over 30 miles away. One time I needed tires, and they told me where I could get some free of charge. Anytime I needed anything, they were there to walk me through whatever difficulty I faced.

Today, after my long journey, with SPSF and United Way as my partners, I have degrees in journalism and business. I have a great job with a company I have long admired and I'm looking forward to buying a house in the spring with my husband and 3 boys.

Editor's Note: This story was sent to us from the SPSF of Benton Co. and appears on the website of the United Way, Benton Co

WE JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH!OF SPSF SUCCESS STORIES

Darlene Thompson, a single mom attending college, applied for a scholarship from the **Independence Co. SPSF** in Spring '99 while working towards a degree in Accounting at University of Arkansas Community College Batesville. She earned a 3.8 GPA while attending school full time, working part time and caring for her young daughter.

After transferring to Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, Darlene graduated in Spring '02 with a B.A. degree in Corporate Finance.

She is now employed with Aflac Insurance.

A **Washington Co. SPSF** recipient, Beth Wilkins, mother of twin 10-yr old boys decided to further her education 19 years after graduating from Fayetteville High School. Beth chose to attend Northwest Technical Institute and is currently employed as an intern with Non-Profit Tech Support in Springdale. In December after completion of her internship, Beth will receive two diplomas – Network & Computer Tech and

Web Design Specialist. She hopes to be employed as a Web Designer and Animator upon completion of her internship.

When she looks back on her decision to return to school Beth says that more than money, she needed “encouragement and faith”. She found everything she needed and more when she interviewed for a scholarship. She discovered that “someone who didn't even know me believed in me— for no reason...I wasn't used to people treating me with that kind of respect.”

“Someone who didn't even know me believed in me—for no reason.”

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Secret of Success Without a doubt, the key to our success lies with the dedicated volunteers comprising our Board of Directors. By actively seeking Board members from a variety of occupations, (public service, local/area business and industry, electric utilities, financial institutions, a non-profit health service, and higher education) our Board is able to convey the dilemmas of single parenthood to a variety of groups, thus creating community awareness and support. Board members are committed not only to raising funds in support of single parents, but also

committed to getting to know each recipient personally. They review the academic and financial aid credentials and also interview each scholarship candidate every term. Board members, and particularly those with other potential direct contact with students, serve as mentors to further support recipients and their efforts.

The enthusiasm for SPSF that exists among Union Co. Board members is evidenced by the fact that they generally express interest in continuing their service on this board when their terms expire. In light of expanding interest in service, and also to enable us to

directly involve a greater number of citizens in SPSF activities we increased the size of our board this year.

Record of Support In addition to being the recipient of considerable contributions by numerous businesses and individuals, some with generous matching fund programs, the Union County SPSF has been enthusiastically supported with grants from the SHARE Foundation, the Union County Community Foundation, and Entergy.



ANNUAL 'PULSE' TAKEN *THE 'PATIENT' IS ALIVE & WELL!*



In April 2002, annual Follow-up Report request forms were sent to the 54 ASPSF affiliates known to have awarded scholarships during the year 2001. The following information is based on reports from 52 affiliates.

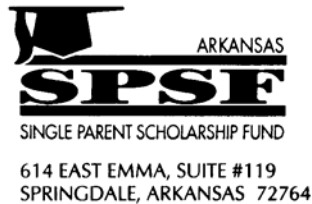
A total of 1,381 scholarships, valued at \$679,165 was awarded by these affiliates to 984 deserving single parents throughout Arkansas. At the time follow-up reporting was done, (65%) scholarship recipients were still attending school.

We are pleased to report that 152 recipients completed their programs in 2001 and of these, (80%) are employed. 78% of the 2001 employed graduates report earning wages above Federal poverty rates. Thirty-one of the students who

completed their programs were "status unknown" at the time the reports were gathered.

By tracking the statistics, we are able to show objectively the impact of our organization on the lives of students and their families. Affiliate volunteers do not need the statistics. They see firsthand the impact each time they have scholarship interviews. Funding sources do not have this same opportunity, so it is critical that they see the collected data. Affiliates deserve a big thank you for continuing to work on behalf of low-income single parents and for making a difference in the lives of so many families.

Full report results will be available on the ASPSF website in a few weeks.



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www.aspsf.org We're on the Web

MISSION STATEMENT: The mission of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund is to enable single parents to attain self sufficiency through post secondary education.