

# The Scholarsheet

Newsletter of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

Volume 9, Issue 1 Spring 2003

## GOOD NEWS FROM THE ARKANSAS DELTA

Since January 2001, two employees of the ASPSF, Keshia Valley and Kim Dollins, have worked as Field Organizers for the Delta Scholarship Project. Since we are now three years into the project, it is fitting to examine our progress .

Based both on objective data and the subjective views of our Delta employees themselves, the project has been a huge success to date.

Two primary measurements are available to study the activity of the 27 counties included in the Delta Project – scholarships awarded and matching grants requested. In 2000, the year immediately preceding this campaign, 17 Delta counties awarded 185 scholarships totaling

\$68,034. After two years of Delta project effort, 24 counties report awarding 342 scholarships totaling \$134,128, an almost 200% increase in both categories.

Matching Grants are yet another objective measure and again we see a dramatic increase. From 2000 to 2002, there was a 300% increase from \$34,487 to \$102,615 in grants awarded by ASPSF. Together, these statistics indicate a remarkable increase in scholarship awards and in the generation of local funds since the project began.



On the subjective side, Delta Project employees remain dedicated to their task. They have become familiar with their respective territories, and created

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### MORE AMAZING STUDENT STORIES.

## HAT'S OFF TO PATTI AND MICHELLE!

The stories of Patti Rolland (Cross Co. SPSF) and Michelle Cathy (Bradley Co. SPSF) are shining examples of what our program is all about. Patti is a single mother of three children who has worked full-time at the Colony Shop Central Office for 14 years. Despite all obstacles Patti graduated with honors from East Arkansas Community College and is now studying accounting at Arkansas State University with the goal of becoming a CPA. Her employer has been

extremely supportive adapting her work hours to her school schedule. Patti credits the SPSF with giving her the tools to succeed—money to keep her car maintained for the 90 mile round-trip to school everyday and encouragement through the tough times—

*“It is a wonderful feeling to know that there is a group of people out there who care about me and my family.”*

Her ability to work this tenaciously is upheld by her strong feelings about education.

*“Education is the only way out of poverty... not only will it increase your income potential, but your way of thinking about*

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## SALUTING A POINT OF LIGHT

*I was humbled, honored, amazed, challenged, excited...and more...*

responded **Dr. Marjorie Marugg-Wolfe** when asked how she felt when presented the President's Community Volunteer Award during a ceremony in December, 2002, at the White House. She is certain she will never forget the thrill of having the silver award medal placed around her neck by Robert K. Goodwin, President & CEO of the Points of Light Foundation. Nor the moment she walked across the stage to shake hands with President George W. Bush who spoke with her about the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund.

On that day, Marjorie and nineteen others were honored for outstanding volunteer service directed at solving critical social problems. The award also directs public attention on the contributions made by the nations' 93 million volunteers.

In 1983, Marjorie, along with Ralph H. Nesson and others established the Washington County SPSF program 'from scratch'. Marjorie then went on to develop and nurture a sister program in Benton County that has become the largest and most comprehensive affiliate of the ASPSF. Since then, the

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## News & Cues!

### News:

► **Congratulations!** to the new and reactivated county affiliates that presented their first scholarships in 2002. New Affiliates: **Prairie Co.** gave 12 scholarships worth \$5,500; **Pike Co.** gave nine awards worth \$2,250, and **Cross Co.** gave four awards worth \$2,000. **Phillips Co.** reactivated after (years) gave 12 awards worth \$3,000. Welcome and keep up the good work!

### Cues:

► **Focus Group Meetings.** Only two opportunities remain to participate in these regional discovery and planning meetings: Friday, April 25, 2-4 pm, St. Francis County Community Development Corporation, Forrest City and Friday, May 16, 2-4 pm, Southark Community College, El Dorado. If you wish to send a representative, please contact this office as soon as possible at 479/927-1402 or email Lani at [lfroelic@jtlshop.jonesnet.org](mailto:lfroelic@jtlshop.jonesnet.org).

► **Affiliates:** Please submit your Follow-up Reports for the year 2002 if you have not already done so. Matching funds for 2003 cannot be released until this report is received.

► Year-end reports indicate that a few ASPSF affiliates did not raise funds for scholarships in 2002 for various reasons. **We are here to help.** Just let us know and we will send a staff member to consult with your board about fundraising.

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## Time Flies When Work is Fun

BY CINDY WEBB, INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**I**t seems like just yesterday that Ralph said goodbye and I found myself in the director's chair of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund. Yet, in just a few short months Ralph will return and my daily contact with this great organization and its volunteers will come to an end.

This has been an incredible year. I have learned so much from the students, volunteers, board and staff that I know I am richer from being here just a short 12 months.

The recipients have taught me perseverance when the going gets tough. Never again will I look at life's challenges with the same eyes. The affiliate volunteers have shown me the true meaning of volunteering. They organize events, meet with recipients and award scholarships with very little direction and all on their own time. The affiliate volunteers are each points of light in our state. The board has shown courage and flexibility. They were courageous in allowing Ralph to take a sabbatical and flexible with me when I did some things in a different way. And the staff, well, I cannot say how grateful I am to all of them, Lani, Chris, Kelley, Keshia and Kim for their support and guidance as I journeyed with them this past year.

I believe this was a strong organization when I arrived and I believe it is stronger today because everyone involved has a strong personal commitment to making this organization one that can truly make a positive difference in the lives of single parents in Arkansas.

While I will not be sitting in the director's chair after the end of May, I will still be involved in our planning process. Through a generous grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, it will be possible for me to continue the planning process we began in January with the focus groups. If you have not attended a focus group or if a representative from your affiliate has not yet attended, please be sure to attend one of the two focus groups this spring.

These are exciting times and I look forward to continuing the discovery process with you. Thank you for your support this past year and I look forward to working with you this summer and beyond.

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SPSF of Benton County has awarded more than 2,168 scholarships worth \$1,218,655 to deserving single parent residents.

Marjorie was also acknowledged for her professional accomplishments reflective of humanitarian concerns. Some of her noteworthy career accomplishments include: a Career Development/Jobs Readiness Program; a program to train child care workers;

the Project for Self Determination and a TEA sick child care program as significant factors leading to her choice as recipient of this award.

Marjorie returned to the board of Arkansas SPSF this January and will once again be using her skills, knowledge, contacts, warm personality and good humor to help the organization help more single parents throughout Arkansas.

## COOPERATION WAS KEY

On a cold, rainy February night three SPSF affiliates—Boone, Newton and Marion joined forces to present Entergy Scholar Awards to twelve deserving single parents in their counties. The idea to work together, plan and implement an event was originated entirely from these affiliates themselves and provides a blueprint many others could follow in order to expand awareness of the SPSF program and its goals. Reporters and photographers gathering news of three counties were present and a substantial amount of free publicity was created.

Approximately 50 people including the students and their families and friends, members of each local board, two local Entergy representatives and two ASPSF staff members were in attendance. Each student was introduced by her board member and given a certificate and remarks were made by Mike Brown and Mike Ragland from Entergy. Afterwards everyone enjoyed a social time and refreshments.

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*yourself. If I can instill this in my children or anyone else, I count myself successful."*

Michelle Cathy, single mother of two will graduate magna cum laude in May from UA Monticello and has been accepted into the UAMS to study general pediatrics. Michelle has received several other academic scholarships while in school and is active in clubs and academic associations. About the Single Parent Scholarships, Michelle says:

*"They have helped in transportation cost to and from school, clothing and other miscellaneous things that other scholarships do not help with. They have been vital in assuring that I can afford the expense of commuting to school."*

After graduating from medical school Michelle hopes to open a "children friendly" clinic in Bradley County.

*"I want to bring medical knowledge and understanding to Southeast Arkansas because I want to give back to my community."*



**Patti Rolland with grandson Riley, and children, Brett, Cassie and Courtney.**



**Michelle Cathy with children Katilyn and Kade.**

## ASPSF WINS FAMILY FRIENDLY AWARD

We won the Silver! The Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund was given a GOVERNOR'S FAMILY FRIENDLY EMPLOYER AWARD during an awards ceremony at the Peabody Hotel on March 19th. Cindy Webb, Acting Executive Director and five Board of Directors were on hand to accept the award presented by Governor Mike Huckabee.

These first-time-ever awards grew out of a study of children and families in Arkansas done by a group of

business and civic leaders called the Arkansas Corporate Champions for Children.

More than 100 companies were nominated and 11 Arkansas employers, categorized as large, medium or small workforce (ASPSF won in the small category) were acknowledged as leaders and visionaries devoted to the well-being of their fellow Arkansans because of their employee policies. Chris Womack of the ASC program initiated the application for ASPSF. *Thanks, Chris!!*



**ASPSF Board members Alice Abson and Boylee Hamilton with Governor Mike Huckabee at Family Friendly Employer event.**

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bonds of mutual regard and respect in the communities served.

Keshia Valley has observed that in her assigned territory the boards display an increasing level of confidence. She believes this confidence stems from the added attention she is able to provide and from an increase in publicity of their efforts in The Scholarsheet which makes them truly feel part of a larger organization and

“The affiliates and volunteers I serve have enjoyed having someone they can meet with regularly who is not too far down the road from them,” noted Keshia. “They have come to rely on me for assistance with everything from fulfilling reporting requirements to brainstorming new fundraising ideas.”

She has also heard expressions of appreciation for having someone easily available to answer questions. Keshia further comments that the mission of SPSF is being shared throughout the Delta in unprecedented ways. She has personally seen the program help single parents when all other resources had been exhausted, and concludes “the Delta Project has helped affiliates help more parents help themselves.”

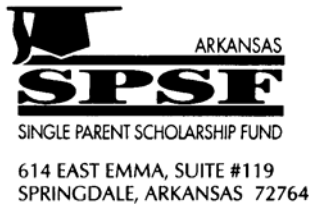
Kim has found it extremely rewarding and satisfying to work as a team with donors, employees, and volunteers to provide opportunities for individuals to receive higher education.

“The volunteers I meet with are phenomenal,” stated Kim. “They are committed, organized and dedicated to our mission. My role as a facilitator has helped them to grow and overcome

some obstacles that previously seemed insurmountable.”

Kim regards the student-scholars she has become acquainted with as dedicated to completing their education and appreciative of the community support SPSF provides. She believes that education is the most practical and effective way to break the chains of poverty. Furthermore, Kim says that each person involved in the Delta Scholarship Project has contributed to its success and that continuation of the project will forever change the Delta Region of Arkansas.

In summing up, Kim says, “because of each of you, lives are forever changed. That is true success.”



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