



# SCHOLAR SHEET

Opening a world of opportunity

## USA Today Feature Includes SPSF Awardee

A 22-year-old marketing major from the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith was featured in a November 28th article in "USA Today" after her success in taking online courses through UA Fort Smith.

Hannah Cross of Greenwood, who expects to graduate in May, was interviewed for the article after her name was given to the [newspaper] by Christy Williams, executive director of the SPSF of Crawford and Sebastian Counties.

Cross credits the availability of



Hannah Cross & daughter Haleigh

online classes for her being able to continue her education.

"The program allowed me to have my daughter during the school year and not miss any classes," she said. "It also allowed me to stay on schedule with my degree plan when I had to take another semester for my back surgery."

Cross was able to access her classes at her convenience.

"Personally, I learn more this way," said Cross, who is the mother of Haleigh Cross, 2. "I will graduate after four years because of the distance learning options

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## Farewell to Seven Board Members


The waning of each year is a bittersweet time for ASPSF staff and board members, for we must say goodbye to board members whose terms of service have ended. This year we extend our deepest gratitude to seven exemplary individuals who epitomize the ASPSF philosophy, which is to empower our single parents through supportive, moral, grassroots leadership: Herman Davenport, Cathy Foraker (AT&T), Tyler Fowlkes (1<sup>st</sup> Security Bank), Mary Ann Rollans (ATU), Rodney Shepard (Arvest), Tom Mueller (1<sup>st</sup> Community Bank) and Geron Vail (FAN Sales & Leasing). We appreciate all of your dedication, support, expertise and thoughtful counsel.


People who are a part of Single Parent Scholarship Fund share a little bit of themselves and this collective essence binds us together to create the successful network of support we have become. Without the members of this team, present and past, we could not have assisted more than 9,000 single parents in almost twenty years to pursue their dreams.





## News & CUES


 ASPSF affiliates have awarded 19,749 scholarships worth more than \$10 million since 1990!


 Please submit publicity honoring Entergy Scholars as soon as possible.


 2007 matching grant requests must be received or postmarked by Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>! Download a request form at [www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html](http://www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html). Full policy and guideline information is included on the form. Questions? Call (479)927-1402.

 Make a donation by credit card to the SPSF serving your county or to the statewide organization! Go to [www.aspsf.org](http://www.aspsf.org) and click the "Donate Now" link in the yellow bar.

 2008 meetings of the ASPSF board of directors are scheduled for Jan. 25, Apr. 26, Jul. 18, and Oct. 17-18.

 Fall 2007 Scholarship Award Reports are now due. Forms may be downloaded at [www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html](http://www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html).

 Copies of Dr. Lori Holyfield's book *Moving Up and Out: Poverty, Education and the Single Parent Family* are available for \$20 each. Call 479-927-1402 to order.

 Need more evergreen folders, an SPSF Fundraising Primer or a Communications CD? Call 479-927-1402 to order.

## MUSINGS BY RALPH NESSON

There is always something very special about volunteers: you, collectively, are choosing to put your hearts and souls into an organization only because you care and care *deeply* about those served by your Single Parent Scholarship Fund. Toward the end of each year, when it becomes evident how very many single parents have been assisted throughout the state, I am always in awe of how this gets done. COMMITMENT, plain and simple! Thousands of volunteer hours are devoted to doing the work of the Fund: meetings attended, public service announcements sent, brochures designed, interviews conducted, contributions secured, awardees mentored...the list goes on of what is undertaken and accomplished in order to make our scholarships available and meaningful to those who receive them. If you are reading this and are contributing your valuable time, skills and resources to Single Parent Scholarships, thank you for all you are doing.

Commitment is also a most apt word to attach to the efforts of scholarship awardees. Mothers and fathers who study, work and care for their children are making a deep commitment to improving their lives and those of their children. It is moving to hear the testimonials of students who describe what Single Parent Scholarships mean to them, yet it is also so awe-inspiring to learn what a typical day is like for a parent who studies before her children awaken in the morning and after they are tucked into bed...and who works during the day *and* attends classes *and* somehow manages to prepare meals, clean house and attend PTA meetings. Truly, we are awarding scholarships to folks who are most deserving of our help and encouragement to keep going.

To all of our SPSF Board volunteers, awardees and donors: thank you for all that you do!



### Regional Training to be held in 2008

ASPSF will conduct training throughout 2008 as an alternative to its annual Leadership Development Conference. The goal is to strengthen affiliates by bringing them together in their own locales and encourage the "cross-fertilization" of good ideas through discussion, presentations and problem-solving. Experts in such fields as fundraising, communication, mentoring, and organizational development will engage affiliate board members to broaden their knowledge and awareness of successful strategies.

The decision to substitute regional trainings for the annual conference derived from a review of 2007 conference evaluations, budget constraints and the desire to vary the type of leadership development assistance offered by ASPSF. It is hoped that the variety of experiences offered by alternating year conferences and regional trainings will greatly benefit SPSF affiliates.

A schedule of the trainings, including presenters, location and date, will be made available to affiliates in mid-January of 2008.



# REACHING FOR THE STARS



Libby Smith moved back to Mountain Home as a single mother of two to be near her parents. She enrolled at Arkansas State University in 1996 after realizing she could not support two children on minimum wage. Two years later, she graduated with an associate degree in criminal justice and was named valedictorian of her class. She continued her education, earning another associate degree, a baccalaureate degree and a master's degree. Today, she is an instructor at Arkansas State University at Mountain Home.

Libby states, "Having received my education as a non-traditional student and a single mother, I know how [financially] difficult it can be to attend college on a full-time basis. I was lucky enough to receive the Baxter County Single Parent Scholarship numerous times while attending ASU between 1996 and 2001. I am one of many single parents who received the scholarship in the past, and I have become one of its many success stories. The scholarship helped me with the extra expenses associated with going to college. Without the Baxter County Single Parent Scholarship's assistance, it would have been much more difficult for me to achieve my goals. I will always be grateful for the support I was given over the years."



*Libby Smith (r) and daughter Danielle (l), both ASU graduates*

Libby's daughter, Danielle McVicker, is following in her mother's footsteps. While she was offered a full academic scholarship at a large university elsewhere, she decided to stay close to home and attend ASU Mountain Home. Like her mother, Danielle earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Most recently, Danielle scored in the top 91% in the nation on the Law School Aptitude Test and was awarded the largest scholarship the University of Arkansas School of Law in Fayetteville offers. Keep your eye on this family! Libby's son, Jake McVicker, has also begun taking classes at Arkansas State University-Mountain Home.



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offered. I am grateful to the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith for providing the online program for students who otherwise would be unable to finish a degree program in a timely manner." Cross said she will have taken 14 online courses by the time she graduates.

*Article written by Sondra LaMar, Director of Public Relations, UA Fort Smith. Reprinted with permission. The article printed in USA Today can be found at [www.usatoday.com/news/education/2007-11-27-distance-learning\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2007-11-27-distance-learning_N.htm)*



## AFFILIATES CORNER

### Cash in on Supporters' To-do Lists

Mobil Oil introduced the first gift card in 1995 and since then the market for the one-size-fits-all solution for holiday shopping has boomed to an estimated \$80 billion in sales for all of 2007. Nonprofit organizations and schools stand to cash in on some of this revenue through an old-school fundraising strategy called "scrip." The retail gift card is muscling out baked goods and raffle ticket sales, because as many of us know, it's not the physical effort that makes fundraising burdensome. It's the mental exercise and the time that we must devote to keep our programs afloat. The payoff from an established scrip program can make a bake sale look like mere crumbs, if enough people buy in.

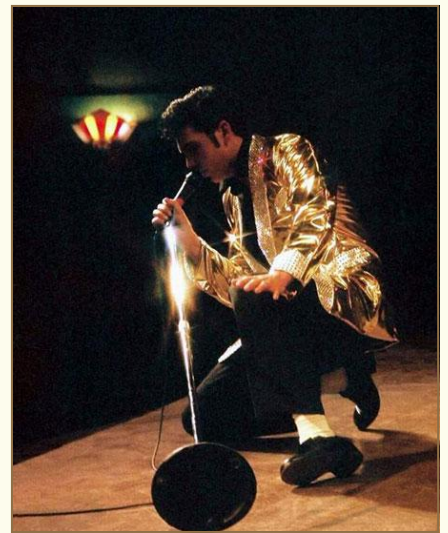
**What is Scrip?** Simply, it's anything that may be exchanged like money. Think gift cards, tokens, pre-paid telephone cards. Scrip programs often use the same exact gift cards that you might purchase from grocery stores, restaurants, department stores, or other retailers for family or friends.

**How does it work?** Simple. Companies which we'll call "scrip centers" purchase large quantities of "scrip" from popular merchants and retailers. They sell them to participating organizations at a discount. The organization then sells the scrip to consumers at face value. They use the scrip for ordinary purchases without spending an extra cent. The organization retains a percentage of the sales as revenue. And it's a win-win situation for retailers because it brings them business.

**How much can be raised?** Different scrip centers have varying program benefits, but the fundraising potential is great! The more scrip an organization sells, the higher the revenue. Think of this: the average family spends about 26% of its income on gasoline, groceries, clothing, fast food, toys, entertainment, home improvement, and gifts. Scrip programs can help your organization raise up to 15% from these purchases when consumers use scrip they purchased from you.

**How can a scrip program be started?** You can begin your own scrip program by negotiating and coordinating with local retailers, or you can enroll with a scrip center that does all the work for you and makes setting up a scrip program simple. You register your organization with one or more of the scrip centers, then you receive all the information necessary for running your program. Each center has its own ordering, payment, shipping and distribution process. In most cases, the whole process can be setup online with little to no expense for shipping costs.

### Newton County "All Shook Up" Over Fundraiser



*Cody Slaughter, Elvis impersonator*

Elvis came to town on December 1<sup>st</sup> when SPSF of Newton County partnered with the Newton County Senior Center for a fundraiser benefiting the two organizations. Harrison native and professional Elvis impersonator Cody Slaughter, performed with the KingTut Blues Band and the Jordanettes to a sold-out audience at the Jasper School Auditorium. During intermission, Bev DeMuth of the Scholarship Fund and Linda Foshee of Entergy presented Kathy Spears and Lalani Pomatto with Entergy Scholarship Awards. The partnering organizations raised well over \$2,500 at the event from ticket sales and a quilt raffle.



## AFFILIATES CORNER

### *Presenting Svetla Dimitrova, our new staff member*

First of all, please let me say I am thrilled to be part of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund as Field Representative for Central/West Central Arkansas!

As my name suggests I am new to Arkansas, but I am a seasoned veteran of the nonprofit world. Two of my greatest experiences were with the Bulgarian Red Cross youth in leadership development; and with the American Peace Corps, in which I trained volunteers for community development and environmental program service.

My interest in human society led me to a bachelors degree in Sociology and a masters degree in Economy and Society. After completing my postgraduate studies in Poland, I joined the board of directors of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Laramie County, Wyoming. While with CASA, I assessed the community and facilitated the strategic development of the program.

I truly believe that all of the organizations with which I have been affiliated have shaped my understanding that the best way to help disadvantaged people is to assist them to become self-sufficient while always trying to preserve their human dignity and offering the assistance in a culturally sensitive manner. Yet I know that this can be achieved only with the support of people who understand and believe in the purpose of the organization and have a passion for their work as board members, staff and volunteers.

It is my hope that by working with the affiliates in Central and West Central Arkansas, we will not only make a difference in the lives of the families we serve but we will also share a passion to make Arkansas a better place to live for all. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this great endeavor!



### *Financial Aid Tips For Adult Students*

1. Research and apply for scholarships 6-12 months prior to the beginning of the semester.
2. Use available community resources that assist with childcare, rent, utilities, food, and other living expenses, preserving other financial resources for educational expenses.
3. Ask the school admissions office about waiving fees for applications, exams and other fees.
4. Take CLEP exams to receive credit in lieu of taking classes.
5. Ask the college dean's office about receiving credit for life or work experience.
6. If you are working toward a bachelors degree, take your general education courses at a community college where tuition costs less.
7. Take distance learning courses to reduce indirect education costs, such as gas, childcare and food.
8. After graduating from college, apply for loan forgiveness programs if you have student loans to repay.

## Gala Dinner to be held at Governor's Mansion



A dinner for 220 guests will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Governor's Mansion to highlight a week of intensive publicity for Single Parent Scholarships March 2-8, 2008.

Prior to the dinner, Gov.

Mike Beebe will proclaim **Single Parent Scholarship Fund Week** in Arkansas, honoring all students, SPSF board members, donors and volunteers. By that time, we will have reached a fantastic high water mark: over \$10 million dollars in scholarship provision since 1990!

The dinner is planned as a fundraiser in ASPSF's quest to

complete its \$1.5 million *Sustaining the Dream* capital campaign. Proceeds will be shared with Pulaski County SPSF, which is helping plan and organize the dinner. It is anticipated that First Lady Ginger Beebe will welcome guests, followed by emcee Dick Trammel who will introduce student speakers, ASPSF Exec. Dir. Ralph Nesson and Gov. Beebe. The Governor is expected to remark upon his own experience as the child of a single mother and to describe the importance of our efforts. ASPSF, Pulaski County SPSF Board members, and volunteers from other SPSF's will also be recognized, along with representatives of dinner sponsors.

Tickets for the dinner will be available at \$100 each beginning February 15. For more information, please call (479) 927-1402 or (501)301-7773.



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to yours.*

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