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Communication Project Is Here

After a year of planning, the first phase of the ASPSF's Business Plan 2004-2006 is underway. Our Communications Project in 2004 will bring to affiliates a wide range of tools and products to help promote your scholarships.

In the near future, communication kits will be sent to affiliates across the state. The kit will include disks with locally adaptable logo, stationery, brochure and poster. Along with adaptable items, disks will contain PowerPoint presentations created by Janet Cater ("Show Me The

Money") and Lori Holyfield ("Moving Up and Out"). A clear set of instructions on how to use the products will be included, along with telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of technology experts who are available to help you.

A second kit to be forwarded later in the summer will contain cassettes with adaptable public service announcements for radio and television, along with evergreen folders for mailings and events.



It is our hope that the use of these communications tools will enhance public awareness of Single Parent Scholarship Funds all across the state and that affiliates will find many good uses for the products we provide at no cost.

Leadership Conference Receives High Grades

Eighty-three people representing 64 Single Parent Scholarship Funds convened in North Little Rock on April 23rd & 24th for the annual ASPSF Leadership Conference. The conference theme, "Celebrating Past Success, Sparking Future Greatness," reflected the 20 year history of SPSFs in Arkansas and heralded many more years to come of helping recipients to achieve their highest potential.

The conference began with a family-style luncheon and featured two speakers: former scholarship recipients Patti Roland (Cross County) and Dr. Lori Holyfield

(Washington County). Both were inspiring in their messages of success and triumph over adversity. The conference then progressed through leadership skits, a kaleidoscope of mini-sessions on a variety of topics, and dinner with student speakers and entertainment by Betty Turner.

Saturday morning sessions included presentations on publicity & public relations, the ASPSF & ASC websites, and fundraising strategies of affiliates. The closing luncheon featured the presentation of the first Bernice Jones Memorial Award in Philanthropy to Sue Frueauff of the

Charles A. Frueauff Foundation. The grand prize of \$1000 in scholarship support was won by the Chicot County SPSF.

On a scale of one (poor) to five (excellent), participant evaluations of the conference gave it a 4.5 satisfaction rating and a 4.0 relevancy rating. We are pleased by these results and have already begun planning next year's event. **Please give us your ideas** on future topics, presentations and features by emailing us at kbradley@jtlshop.jonesnet.org.

News & Cues

Please be reminded that **Scholarship Award Reports** are due at the close of each semester. A copy of the report form can be found in your Resource Toolbox or downloaded from the ASPSF web site at www.aspsf.org.

Thus far in 2004, ASPSF affiliates have made **320** scholarship awards worth **\$140,770**. Matching grants awarded to affiliates total **\$96,057**.

ASPSF office staff in Springdale includes **Ralph Nesson**, Executive Director; **Chris Womack**, Executive Assistant; and **Kelley Bradley**, Arkansas Scholarship Connection Project Director. We are here to serve you!

Delta Scholarship Project field staff include **Beverly Chapple** in Brinkley at (870) 459-2299 and **Kim Dollins** in Searcy at (501)279-0013.

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 ASPSF has twenty remaining copies of the **Arkansas Funding Directory 2001-2002** published by the now defunct Nonprofit Resources. ASPSF affiliates wishing to obtain a copy of the Directory may contact **Ralph Nesson** by email at rnesson@jtlshop.jonesnet.org

Success Rate of Students is Remarkable

Work has been completed on the 2003 Follow-up Report, tracking 974 scholarship recipients statewide. Of all students in the study, 676 remained in school at the end of the year and 156 had earned their degrees, diplomas or certificates. One hundred forty-eight discontinued their studies. These figures reveal an 85.4% retention and graduation rate, the highest ever in fourteen years of following student progress. By contrast, the current average graduation rate among entering freshmen after six years in colleges and universities in Arkansas is 42.7%.

Sixty-two percent of those who earned their degree during 2003 were working. Among working graduates, 86% reported that they were earning salaries above the current poverty threshold.

The annual retention and graduation rate among SPSF recipients is an indication not only of the perseverance of students, but also of the effectiveness of their support network. Incentive scholarships, combined with encouragement and advocacy from our board members, have proven to be critically important to student performance. Without a supportive and nurturing community, many students would not remain in school. Our scholarships come with that extra ingredient of friendship so important to one's sense of self.

Spotlight on Cara Brewer Faulkner County SPSF Recipient

Cara Brewer is a 20-year-old mother of a two-year-old daughter named Kali. She is a senior at the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, majoring in music education and applied mathematics. She grew up in Conway and has deep roots in the community through her family, church and college.

although she once thought, "It can't get any worse," she now says, "It just can't get any better!"

A serious student, Cara is maintaining a 3.7 grade point average and looking forward to all the possibilities the future holds, including options of teaching music or math, or perhaps working in private industry. She would like to continue her education by pursuing a Master's and Ph.D. in applied mathematics. She participated this past spring in the UCA wind ensemble (clarinet) and will be in the marching band in the fall. She also served as vice-president for membership in Sigma Alpha Iota international music fraternity for women. At her church, Cara leads the Seeds of Faith children's choir and is a youth math tutor.



Cara Brewer (left) and daughter, Kali (right). Cara is a recipient of the Faulkner Co. SPSF, attending UCA, Conway.

Cara credits the Faulkner County SPSF for enabling her to devote herself to school and to her child. She says that she loves her life and although she once thought, "It can't get any worse," she now says, "It just can't get any better!"

Musings

Ralph H. Nesson, Executive Director

Since March 16th of this year, the ASPSF board and staff have been engaged in the effort to raise \$500,000 in match of the Walker Charitable Foundation's challenge grant. Never easy, fundraising is nonetheless a challenge that **must** be undertaken in order to reach the important ASPSF goal of awarding one million dollars in scholarship aid each year. Such a goal is definitely possible to achieve because we have so many

generous people in our state willing to give to many worthy causes. Therefore, it becomes a question not **if** we can do it, but how and when.

That we are undertaking the attainment of the goal is quite amazing, given the modest origins of our organization. In 1990, we began our statewide scholarship disbursements with 106 awards worth \$43,878 in eight counties. Yet, by 2003, those

numbers had risen to 1,572 scholarships worth \$879,596.84 awarded in 56 counties annually! Once the Walker Challenge is met, we expect to make at least 2,000 scholarship awards each year at a value of one million dollars or more.

Does the need for our scholarship increase every year? Yes! Will we be in a better position to provide increased scholarship assistance?

A resounding **yes**, particularly if we meet the Walker Challenge as quickly as possible.

If you are reading this newsletter and are in a position to help, please know that your involvement in matching the Walker Foundation's challenge will be greatly appreciated by every single parent family we assist.



A Message from Kelley Bradley Arkansas Scholarship Connection Project Director

I am extremely excited to be in the position of Project Director. In addition to the merged responsibilities of outreach and project oversight within the ASC, I will be coordinating the 2005 Leadership Development Conference. I strongly believe in the missions of the ASPSF and ASC and am looking forward to helping them grow and achieve greater success.

ning, ways

to obtain good letters of recommendation, and strategies to boost career potential.

The ASC website address has changed to **arkansas scholarshipconnection.org**. Affiliates of the ASPSF can look forward to receiving ASC materials containing our new address in August.

Check out the new ASC website at:

**www.
arkansas
scholarship
connection
.org**

We'll Miss You, Lani!

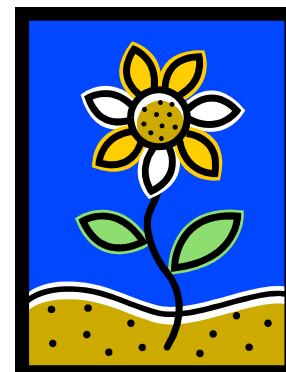
Lani Froelich, former Executive Assistant for ASPSF in Springdale, recently left the organization after almost six years of employment. She recently accepted a position at the North Arkansas Girl Scouts Council as a Membership Specialist.

Affiliate Leadership Conferences and editing and producing the colorful quarterly issues of *The Scholarsheet* newsletter.

We wish you all the best in your new career, Lani!

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Perry County Revives Its SPSF

A remarkable transformation has occurred in Perry County, due to the involvement of a group of eight deeply committed board members. Jenni Martsolf, president of the board and an adult educator in the public schools, says that the spirit of working together to break the cycle of poverty has inspired her board to raise money for scholarships. "Many of our drop-outs leave school because of family problems," says Jenni. "We see Single Parent Scholarships as a means of strengthening families and reducing the problems that cause kids to lose hope."

The Perry County SPSF first formed in 1998 but had become inactive by 2001. Through contacts made by the nearby Conway County SPSF, a new board formed in the fall of 2003. Immediately, board members arranged with a Perryville senior citizen project called On the Square to participate in a second-hand sales effort. This resulted in \$450 earmarked for scholarships, later complemented by \$1200 reaped from a basketball tournament featuring rivals from Bigelow and Perryville High Schools. With match from the ASPSF, Perry County's first scholarships in over three years will be given this summer and fall.

We applaud the Board of Directors of the Perry County SPSF for their strong effort to make Single Parent Scholarships available once again in their county.



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