



SCHOLARSHEET

Opening a World of Opportunity

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

Volume 17

Summer 2011

GOVERNOR'S DINNER A HUGE SUCCESS

On the beautiful evening of May 19th, 500 supporters of Single Parent Scholarships gathered at the Embassy Suites in Little Rock to raise money for scholarships and honor Governor Mike Beebe for his leadership in higher education in Arkansas. Ellen Ingram, executive director of the Pulaski County SPSF, along with her board of directors and volunteers, put in countless hours developing publicity for the event and organizing the dinner and program. Event committees in Pulaski County and Northwest Arkansas attracted sponsors who donated over \$200,000 in making the event financially successful. The committees, led by Mary Ann Greenwood of Fayetteville and Vicki Saviers of Little Rock, worked for the better part of a year to insure the dinner's positive outcome.

Dinner sponsors included Wal-Mart and Entergy Corporation, along with Schueck Steel Company, Arkansas Times, Arkansas Business, Keil and Goodson Attorneys, KATV, Tyson Foods, Arkansas Association of Two Year Colleges, The Pat and Willard Walker Foundation and Glazer's. Other sponsors included Penny and John Burkhalter, First Security Bank, Cindy and Chip Murphy, AT&T, Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Snell Prosthetics and Windstream. Several colleges

and universities bought tables, as well.

Pamela Smith from KATV Channel Seven was the emcee and kept the program flowing with verve and great enthusiasm. Along with remarks by the Governor and former awardee Jennifer Hefner (now an attorney in Yellville), the program included a film by University of Arkansas researchers who interviewed the adult children of scholarship awardees; a KATV-produced film about the life of the Governor whose mother Louise was a single mom; a children's choir singing the inspirational song "Go Light Up Your World"; and a final plea for additional contributions. Over \$11,000 was donated and pledged before the close of the dinner.

This was the greatest fundraiser yet in the history of Single Parent Scholarships and demonstrated the high level of acceptance and support to which we have risen. The success of our awardees has influenced how people see single parents and the value of giving someone a hand up through higher education. Nothing could have demonstrated this better than seeing the children of awardees singing to their parents, so proud of them and determined to pursue their own higher education.



(L-R) Vicki Saviers, Governor Mike Beebe, Mary Ann Greenwood. Photo by Cary Jenkins.



(L-R) Thomas Green, Ralph H. Nesson, Sherman Tate. Photo by Cary Jenkins.



(L-R) Sue Frueauff, Ellen Ingram. Photo by Cary Jenkins.

News & Cues

- ▶ **2011 ASPSF Leadership Conference** scheduled for October 28-29. More information to come.
- ▶ ASPSF staff participated in a training session for the Scholarship Management System. Be on the look-out for Affiliate training information coming soon.
- ▶ The 2010-2011 ADHE funds have been successfully distributed and all required reports have been submitted to ADHE. Thank you for your continued support and timely completion of required documentation.
- ▶ 2010 **matching grant requests** must be received or postmarked by Dec. 31st! Download a request form at www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html. Full policy and guideline information is included on the form. Questions? Call (479)927-1402.
- ▶ Scholarship Award Reports must be submitted each semester immediately after scholarship award decisions have been finalized. Report form is available at www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html.

MUSINGS by Ralph H. Nesson

WHAT IT IS ALL TRULY ABOUT: HOPE

Much has been written about breaking the cycle of poverty among low income people, but few "interventions" have proven to be permanent. This is perhaps because of the systemic nature of poverty: the social institutions which maintain the status quo do not encourage or inspire poor people to move up. Take employment, for example: how does a person with limited job skills and inadequate education move toward higher wages, job security, better fringe benefits, on the job training and internal promotion? Odds are that it is not going to happen, at least for the vast majority of low income workers. There is a whole lot of discouragement built into the "system", particularly when those with less education and skills are the last to be hired and the first to be let go when the economy is weak. Add in the complications of losing work hours when children are ill or child care is unavailable, and you can see that single parents with limited education and income are the most vulnerable to layoff and job loss, not to mention limited earning potential.

No wonder that there is a Single Parent Scholarship Fund! If one did not already exist, it would have to be invented because it is a community intervention, as opposed to a government program, that not only makes sense but works! We know that single mothers and fathers are at risk of being locked into poverty but we also know that there is a proven strategy that many use to move from poverty to prosperity. That strategy requires steady growth in the individual's belief in self, a great well-spring of community encouragement and support, the will of the individual to persevere and a belief in education as a means of achieving life goals. And did I mention hope? The very word scholarship implies optimism, learning, recognition and a means to an end! You have to have hope to embark on the journey! Perhaps that is what Single Parent Scholarships are truly all about.

THE TICKET FOR ADULT STUDENTS: ONLINE EDUCATION



Paula Alvarez with son Anthonie. Paula is a 2011 SPSF NWA graduate who earned her B.S. In Business/Accounting online.

"Online education offered me a chance to succeed, not only as a student, but also as a parent. Time away from my son is unrecoverable and I wanted to make sure that while I was setting a good example, I was also being the mom he needed during an important and shaping time in his life." -Paula Alvarez

Educating adult students is a significant and growing part of the modern college campus. In 2008 almost half of all undergraduates in the U.S. were non-traditional students and more than 13% were single parents (Source: National Center for Educational Statistics). In Arkansas, about 70% of adults do not have a bachelor's degree and are not actively enrolled in any kind of higher education. To stay competitive in today's knowledge-based economy, Arkansas must educate more of its workforce and provide diverse opportunities to improve access to education.

Adult students who must balance family, career, and school may find a program offered by Arkansas Tech University (ATU) in Russellville to fit their needs. ATU now offers an accelerated baccalaureate degree in Professional Studies. This program allows students to choose one of five majors. It is regionally accredited and accelerated, so students can often finish within 18 months.

The program is designed for those who have already earned some college credits. It also gives some credits for related work, life, and volunteer experience. As stated on its website, ATU has a "liberal transfer policy". Academic Advisor Julie Pope says, "We've had a few students who earned credits from many different programs apply those credits to our program, and they only needed to take one or two classes to earn our degree." She says that even some credits earned through schools like University of Phoenix are transferrable.

To learn more about the Bachelors of Professional Students program, visit <http://www.atu.edu/accelerateddegree>. To learn about other online programs in Arkansas, visit <http://www.adhe.edu> and search for "4 and 2 Year Distance Programs".



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MEET AN SPSF BOARD VOLUNTEER: LISA COHOON COCHRAN



Lisa Cohoon Cochran
Pope/Yell County SPSF
Board Treasurer

“...it felt great to have a scholarship program with enough faith in me to be willing to take a chance on my education.”

In 1999 I was a single-mom with two children who made the decision to return to college and complete my Bachelor's degree. A 30 year old college junior doesn't have many scholarship opportunities. However, one opportunity was suggested to me by the financial aid office at Arkansas Tech. I made my application to the Pope/Yell County Single Parent Scholarship Fund and was thrilled when I was awarded the scholarship! Not only did the \$600 REALLY help me out but, it felt great to have a scholarship program with enough faith in me to be willing to take a chance on my education. I received the scholarship during my two years in college and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2001. I remember thinking at the time: "If I ever have a chance to help the scholarship fund out in some way, I will". Not only did the scholarship help me financially, it helped me emotionally by rebuilding my self-confidence. I am currently a candidate for December 2011 graduation with a Master of Science Degree from Arkansas Tech University.

In 2007, I accepted a position at Arkansas Tech University as the Director of Continuing Education. By coincidence my boss, Dr. Mary Ann Rollans, was a board member on the Pope-Yell Counties' Single Parent Scholarship Fund. She had been on the Board for many years and was ready to resign. I mentioned to her that I had been a one-time recipient and told her how much I appreciated the Board and all their hard work. She nominated me to serve on the Board and I gladly accepted. I have been serving since 2008. It has been a great pleasure helping out students just like I was. I have come across some extraordinary people as a member of the Board. I never cease to be amazed at the tenacity of these students. Many struggle with situations beyond what many people can comprehend. They have challenges to their education that cause a lesser person to give up. Yet these students are motivated and driven to make a better life for themselves and their children.

I plan to continue to serve as a Board member for the SPSF for as long as possible. It is a pleasure to work with an organization that promotes such a worthwhile cause, with no ulterior motive whatsoever.

NEWTON COUNTY AWARDEE HELPS RAISE \$1,600

Two years ago, Rhonda Watkins envisioned a pie competition at the Buffalo River Elk Festival. It wasn't until the spring of 2011, when becoming an awardee of Newton County SPSF, that Rhonda was encouraged by Board member Della Hand to share ideas of potential fundraisers. Rhonda was once again excited by the thought of the pie competition. After sharing her idea, Rhonda received full support from the Newton County SPSF Board and set out to accomplish her goal to raise money.

Members of the community donated pies to auction off. In addition, Bubba Lloyd, owner of Lloyd Sales Company, donated a new Samsung 32" LCD Flat Screen TV and raffle ticket to auction off at the festival. The American Legion Hut of Jasper donated the facilities to have the competition. Rhonda states, "I feel the community was very helpful and supportive."

The event raised a total of \$1608! Rhonda plans on this to be an annual event and gratefully comments, "The Board members have praised me and shown gratitude for my hard work. I am happy to have accomplished my goal and I feel it has opened a door for me to do more."

Rhonda is a single mother of three children, Whitney (age 15), Tres (age 14), and Zane (age 7) and is currently enrolled at North Arkansas Community College majoring in Accounting.



Rhonda Watkins (l) and daughter Whitney (r) help raffle participant at Elk Riverfest booth.



Warren Campbell (front), County Judge and Shane Kilgore (back), Mayor of Jasper, Judge the pie competition. Competition judges not pictured Sheriff Keith Slape and Wayne Angel.



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Warren Long

Crawford/Sebastian SPSF
Graduate

Currently Pursuing:

Master's
Mechanical Engineer
University of Arkansas–Fayetteville

“That is my daddy!!” The proud voice of Xander pierced through the audience as his father, Warren Long, walked on stage to receive his degree in Mechanical Engineer from the University of Arkansas, Fort Smith. For Warren, that was the proudest moment of a 5 year journey that began with the decision to enroll in college. Read more of that journey through the Q & A session with Warren.

What influenced you to enroll in college?

The biggest factor influencing me to go back to school was having a good dose of what it takes to be financially comfortable without a college degree. Working 80 + hours a week, I was unable to spend much time at all with my family.

What did you find most difficult of being a single parent/student and how did this help you grow as a person?

By far: balancing family and the hard work of school. Many, many times while studying and/or doing homework, my son would come to me with a question or conversation; it hurt my heart when I had to turn him away after minimal conversation. Being a single parent has enabled me to grown as a person because I am the mom and the dad. But now, I wouldn't have it any other way. I do have wonderful support from my parents who live nearby.

How did the SPSF scholarship aid you in achieving your academic goals?

The SPSF scholarship aided me more than I can express. It's not that it's an extreme amount of money, but the timing of the checks was wonderful. The second check came at a time when I was very short on money, bills were due and Xander needed winter or summer clothes.

What advice would give other single parents on their education path?

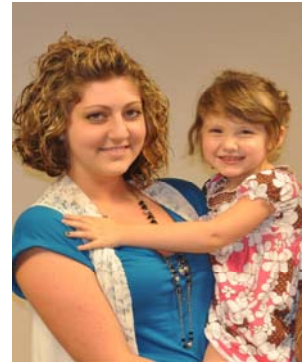
The advice I would offer is give everything you possibly can to the first semester in school. Do whatever it takes to get straight A's the first semester. It is so important to do very well right out of the gate because this gets a person noticed; that means good scholarships which makes getting the degree much more possible.

Paulina Curbelo

Ouachita County SPSF
Recipient/Aerojet Scholar

Currently Pursuing:

Bachelor's of Arts
Health Education and Promotion
University of Arkansas-Little Rock



Paulina with daughter Reese.

At the age of 5, Paulina Curbelo understood what it meant to live in a single parent household. Paulina states, “I was happy, but now that I look back on it, I realize I didn't live the same lifestyle that my friends did.” After the divorce of her parents, Paulina's mother made the decision to move Paulina and her three sisters from Florida to Arkansas to be closer to family. Her mother graduated from college and is employed as the Director of Communications & Public Relations at SAU Tech. Paulina states, “It's crazy to realize that education is so important while you're so young, but I think it's because I saw the daily struggle my mom went through to finish school.” It's apparent that Paulina's mother played a vital role in the success of her daughter.

By age 17, Paulina found out she was expecting. The accidental deaths of her best friend and her one year old son made it harder to cope with the news. She “didn't have much in common with anyone in her high school,” as she was making the transition into motherhood. She spent the majority of her senior year focusing on completing high school, working at Sonic, and taking college courses with the goal of graduating early. Paulina's daughter, Reese Monroe Evans, was born on January 18, 2008 in the spring semester of her senior year. A year and a half later, Paulina and Reese's father parted ways.

Paulina hasn't let being a single mother stand in her way of success! After graduating Cum Laude with an Associate of Arts degree in 2010, Paulina transferred to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) to pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree in Health Education and Promotion. She is also taking additional undergraduate courses at SAU Tech. Upon graduation, she plans to work at the Hannah Medical Administration, teaching classes and making other presentations targeting pregnancy, abortions, STD's, and various health issues. Paulina states, “With my experience of teen pregnancy, I will be able to find common ground with other young women and can be a source of support.”

REACHING
for the stars

ASPSF HOSTS GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP



ASPSF hosted a grant writing workshop on March 31 - April 1, 2011, presented by Cheryl L. Kester of The Kester Group Grants Consultants. In attendance were ASPSF staff, affiliate board volunteers and SPSF staff members. The two day hands on training was focused on SPSF needs and provided attendees tools to improve their grant writing skills through successful research and grant application procedures. Kim Rowland-Dollins, ASPSF Field Representative comments, "Cheryl Kester's grant writing workshop helped me step it up a notch. Having limited grant writing experience, I was ready to take it to the next level. Learning more about logic models helped me secure a recent substantial regional grant."

What attendees had to say about the workshop:

"Prior to the SPSF grant writing workshop presented by Cheryl Kester, my experience with grant writing was limited. The training provided me with additional knowledge of the grant writing process..." ~ Elma Brown (Board Volunteer Woodruff County SPSF)

"Before this training, I was a novice in the world of grant proposals. The workshop provided me with an excellent knowledge base of the grant writing process. I would recommend this training to anyone associated with non-profits." ~ Jamie Harberson Spillers (ASPSF Field Representative)

Cheryl Kester (top-left) . Laveda Joseph and Linda Kaufenberg (top-right). Beverly Chapple and Dan Newsom (bottom-left). Kim Dollins and Justin Keller (bottom-right).

Successful Fundraisers, Grants and Donations

Drew County SPSF recently received a \$1500 donation from the Holmes Chapel Presbyterian Church. The funds were provided through a Healthy Lifestyles Grant. Members of the Health Education ministry team were issued a challenge to assist members as well as people in the community to "get healthy": committing to walk or run at least 10 miles within a 30 day period. The challenge resulted in over 200 participants and 2,500 miles logged. All activities were in support of the Drew County Single Parent Scholarship Fund.

White County SPSF recently received a \$16,800 grant from the Women Helping Others (WHO) Foundation in Dallas. "We asked for \$5600, enough to fund 8 scholarships in 2011. When WHO found out how we impact the lives of single-parent families in White County, they awarded enough to fund 24 scholarships!"- Dan Newsom With the help of the WHO Foundation, WCSPSF will award 52 scholarships this year.



Dan Newsom, Executive Director for White County SPSF.



Pictured above are (front row L-R) Gwen Hawkins, Merry Williams, Pastor Alford Branch, (back row L-R) Harriet Branch, Brenda Jacobs, board chair and Charles Peoples.

Lonoke County Single Parent Scholarship Funds
Smoked Chicken Fundraisers
ORDER NOW



COST \$8

Great for freezing

Smoked by Grandpa's BBQ In Cabot

All proceed go to Scholarships for Single Parents in Lonoke County

Available for Pickup the 1st week of June

To order: Call Emily Krablin @ 501.920.5144
 Email your order to lcspsf@yahoo.com

SINGLE PARENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Lonoke County SPSF held their annual smoked chicken fundraiser. Members of the board sold almost 600 smoked chickens earning nearly \$5,000 in fundraising revenue!



Go Green! Receive *Scholarsheet* by email. Sign up at www.aspsf.org.

Leaving the Legacy of Education

Bequest and Memorial Scholarships ensure that the legacy of education continues for generations to come. Your gift instills hope and encouragement to single parents and their children in Arkansas whom are on the road to obtaining post secondary education. For more information please contact Ralph H. Nesson at (479) 927-1402 or rnesson@aspsf.org.

Memorial Scholarship Spotlight



Willie Scott Jr. Memorial Scholarship

The late Willie Scott was the father of ASPSF Field Representative Beverly Chapple. The Willie Scott Jr. Memorial Scholarship was established by the Jefferson County SPSF Board as a tribute to Beverly by honoring her father. The Memorial Scholarship is given to the awardee with the highest GPA each semester. Willie instilled in his family the belief that the key to success in life is education. Although his passing on February 5, 2010, left an emptiness in those he loved, his belief in education lives through his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and those who were touched by him.



Myrna Riggs Wright

Myrna was secretary with the Homemaker in Transition/Single Parent Homemaker program, Northwest Technical School, in 1984 when the Single Parent Scholarship Program began. Myrna gave countless hours of volunteer services to the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County. She was a single parent for many years, and she had a special interest in and empathy for the struggles of single parent families. With an eye for detail and a sharp memory, she provided invaluable assistance. She was a member of Wesley United Methodist Church in Springdale, the Northwest Medical Center Auxiliary and the Moose Lodge. She is survived by two children, Rebecca Jordan of Springdale and John Duane Riggs of Knightsen, CA, and two grandchildren.

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