

2003 ANNUAL REPORT

A GOOD YEAR FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Affiliates of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund maintained an admirable record of scholarship awards in 2003, despite the downturn in the economy and the end of funding from Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA). According to submitted reports, 1,570 scholarships worth **\$879,197** were awarded in fifty-seven Arkansas counties. The ASPSF distributed **\$199,846** in matching grant awards to its affiliates, sustaining a **3 to 1** leveraging ratio between locally contributed dollars and funds from the ASPSF.

The value of a Single Parent Schol-

arship cannot be measured in terms of dollars alone. The support and encouragement of the community is at the heart of a loud and clear message we are sending to single parent students: we are here for you, we care about you, and we will be with you every step of the way toward your degree. The sense of community support felt by single parents, as offered by our affiliates, is a very significant factor in their success.

The ASPSF has now been in existence for almost 15 years and has held to a simple philosophy: we can help single parents take the educational route out of poverty

with scholarships, encouragement, and broad shoulders of support. Given the wonderful success stories of awardees throughout the past fourteen plus years, it is clear to us that our philosophy is working.

Since the founding of the ASPSF in May of 1990, 11,608 scholarships worth \$5,418,415 have been awarded. Matching grants have totaled \$1,411,225. The most recent follow-up research on awardees (2003) revealed an 86% retention and graduation rate. Of all employed graduate recipients, 84% earned income at or higher than poverty-level. **λ**

DELTA SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT

For the second consecutive year, the Delta Scholarship Project (DSP) proved successful in reaching beyond its goals. In 2003, the DSP resulted in the awarding of 361 scholarships worth \$136,864. The efforts of Kim Dollins and Beverly Chapple have been instrumental in fulfilling the mission of activating affiliates in twenty-seven counties of the Delta region, offering technical assistance, support, and board training in all aspects of affiliate development.

The Delta Scholarship Project was initiated in 2001 with the aim of increasing the number and value of Single Parent Scholarships available to students in the severely impoverished Mississippi River Delta region of eastern Arkansas. The goal of the Project has been to annually offer at least 290 scholarships worth \$113,333. Equally as important has been the development of strong, consistent leadership skills among volunteers who serve on Delta affiliates' board of directors. With such skills, board members are able to achieve success in fundraising, publicity, interviewing and selection of awardees, and mentoring. Furthermore, leadership skills are often transferable to other volunteer boards and committees on which SPSF leaders serve. **λ**



STRATEGIC PLANNING COMPLETED

The ASPSF and its affiliates joined in a yearlong planning process in 2003, supported by grants from three Arkansas-based foundations. Selected by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation for participation in its Business Planning Initiative, the ASPSF sought opinions from a wide variety of individuals on how it could best fulfill its mission in the coming years. Through focus groups, surveys and a board planning retreat, we identified four major goals to accomplish:

- 1) To raise the level of public awareness of ASPSF affiliates through improvement of internal and external communications.
- 2) To increase the dollar value of scholarships through building strong relationships with current and future funding sources.
- 3) To build the capacity of affiliates to award scholarships and mentor students through provision of professional support staff, as modeled on the Delta Scholarship Project.
- 4) To insure the sustainability of the ASPSF and its affiliates through ASPSF endowment expansion and affiliate endowment creation.

A three-year grant to partially underwrite implementation of the ASPSF Business Plan has been offered by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in 2004. A \$500,000 challenge grant has also been offered by the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation. Once matched, all resulting funds will bring the Business Plan to fruition. **λ**

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NEW AFFILIATES DEVELOPED

Two new affiliates were developed in the latter half of 2003. **Nevada County** (Prescott) and **Sevier County** (De Queen) now have volunteer boards of directors with the responsibility of awarding scholarships to local single parent students. Many thanks are due to Edie Greenwood and Zahir Kamrudin for their offer of leadership, time and effort in chairing their boards during the formative phase of development. **λ**

REDEVELOPMENT OF AFFILIATES AROUND ARKANSAS

Much effort in 2003 was put into the redevelopment of ASPSF affiliates which had either ceased operations altogether or become temporarily inactive. In all of these counties, it was necessary for ASPSF staff to recruit new board members and offer intensive training and technical assistance to insure success. Although never easy, redevelopment is a natural occurrence among all volunteer boards, which lose membership for any number of reasons (burnout, emergencies, health, frustration, etc.) Those counties engaged in the redevelopment process in 2003 included: Arkansas, Clay, Drew, Monroe, St. Francis, Phillips, Craighead, Prairie, Carroll, Faulkner, Madison and Perry. **λ**

ARKANSAS SCHOLARSHIP CONNECTION (ASC)

Students who seek information on financial aid in Arkansas have immediate access to the most comprehensive source through the Arkansas Scholarship Connection. This project, begun in 1998 as the Arkansas Scholarship Information Service, is known in financial aid advising circles as the most user friendly and complete inventory of in-state scholarships, loans and grants available to

undergraduates. In 2003, the ASC stored and updated 1,503 units of financial aid information. Over 4,300 persons found their way to the ASC Internet website and completed a personal profile form in order to receive listings of scholarship opportunities for which they might qualify.

ASC outreach staff visited many high school and college campuses in

Arkansas to train staff to assist students in navigating their way through the website and to the information they need. Such outreach has dramatically increased traffic to the ASC website and the use of its valuable resources. ⌘

THANK YOU TO CINDY WEBB OF PROMETHEAN PARTNERS

The ASPSF was honored to have the services of Cindy Webb, a consultant to nonprofits, as acting director from June 2002 through May 2003 while founding executive director Ralph Nesson took a much-deserved leave of absence. Cindy maintained a high level of activity during her term of service and attracted several important foundation grants to our organization, including the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation Business Plan Initiative. The ASPSF is most grateful to Cindy for all of her fine work on behalf of single parent students in Arkansas. ⌘

WE REMEMBER BERNICE JONES

On September 11, 2003, the ASPSF lost a great friend upon the death of Bernice Young Jones of Springdale. Bernice began her long association with Single Parent Scholarships by sending unsolicited contributions to the Washington County SPSF in the mid-1980's. Later, we could always count on Bernice to cover shortfalls in any semester when we received more applications than we had money to provide. In 1990, she provided a grant to spread statewide the concept of county-based incentive scholarships. This was soon followed by a \$500,000

challenge grant to offer endowment stability to the fledgling organization known as the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund. We were able to match Bernice's challenge in 1997, creating a firm foundation from which to provide affiliate matching grants each year to a growing number of Single Parent Scholarship Funds throughout the state.

The ASPSF main office is located in the Jones Family Resource Center, another legacy of Bernice's, which offers office space to over forty non-profit agencies and organizations in

the Springdale area. Next-door is the Jones Center for Families, a free community center with athletic, recreational, meeting, and learning facilities. Truly, Bernice Jones' generous heart and spirit live on in the many philanthropic gifts she gave to her community and state. ⌘



ASPSF RESOURCES

The Scholarsheet, Resource Toolbox, and Website

Three forms of communication have proven most valuable in sharing information and “cross-fertilizing” ideas among affiliates.


The Scholarsheet, a newsletter edited by executive assistant, Lani Froelich, was published and distributed on a quarterly basis during 2003. It includes information on leadership among affiliates, fundraising strategies, student success stories, follow-up techniques and many other matters of interest to scholarship fund practitioners. The newsletter has received many accolades for its useful content, layout and easy-to-read style.

The **ASPSF Resource “Toolbox”** was updated and placed on-line in 2003. The Toolbox is a compendium of instructive materials which assist affiliates in every area of scholarship fund development. It is truly a complete manual of “Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Operating a Single Parent Scholarship Fund”, with ten chapters drawn from the twenty-year history of SPSF’s in Arkansas.

The **ASPSF website**, developed, operated, and updated by Christina Womack, is a multi-purpose resource for affiliates, students, and the general public. Application forms of af-

filicates can be downloaded, along with information on eligibility criteria, contact persons and application deadlines. The mission and history of the ASPSF can be reviewed and [The Scholarsheet](#) can be read online. The Resource Toolbox, as noted above, appears in its entirety. Also available are links to the Arkansas Scholarship Connection and other services helpful to single parents students. The website is regularly modified to reflect the most recent activities, events, and services of the ASPSF and its affiliates. ⌘

“The only statewide program of its kind, the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, is an excellent first step in making post-secondary education possible for single parents journeying up and out of poverty.” Prof. Lori Holyfield, [Moving Up And Out](#).



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