

PROPOSAL TO THE WILLARD AND PAT WALKER CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Submitted by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

INTRODUCTION

The Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund seeks grant support in the amount of \$145,000 from the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation in the year 2002. Our organization will utilize these funds in two ways:

- \$75,000 in match of a \$75,000 challenge grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation to provide direct scholarships to impoverished single parents throughout the Delta Region of Arkansas; and
- \$70,000 to complement an anticipated \$70,000 continuation grant from the CommunityCare Foundation to provide direct scholarship support to impoverished single parents in Washington County.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION

The Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund (ASPSF) is the outgrowth of two Single Parent Scholarship Funds initiated in Washington and Benton Counties in 1984. These two vanguard Northwest Arkansas funds came about as a response to the increasing and severe impoverishment of single mothers and their children. The concept of encouraging single mothers to pursue their higher education while preparing for a career was supported by many civic organizations, churches, businesses, foundations, and individuals willing to donate money for scholarships. In 1990, the ASPSF was formed to replicate and continue the success of our Northwest Arkansas scholarship efforts all across Arkansas. With the help of the Walton Family Foundation, the Tyson Foundation, and the Jones Charitable Trust, Ralph Nesson was hired to establish county-based Single Parent Scholarship Funds wherever local leadership expressed an interest. The resulting 55 county scholarship funds have to date awarded 6,640 scholarships worth \$2,814,400.

Research completed on past recipients of Single Parent Scholarships in Year 2000 reveals an 85% retention and graduation rate and a 72% employment rate at above poverty income.

The Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation awarded the ASPSF a \$75,000 challenge grant in May of 1999, the purpose of which was to add significantly to the number of direct scholarships awarded by ASPSF county affiliates. We were successful in matching the challenge with over \$100,000 in contributions across the state. As a result of our success in this effort, our scholarship output has risen by 30% from 1998 through Year 2000. Last year was our most productive year ever, with 1,097 scholarships worth \$546,052 awarded in 53 counties.

NEED FOR SERVICES

There is no identified group more impoverished today than single mothers and their children. They constitute 87% of the total number of person in the United States considered poor by every measure of poverty: income, adequacy of housing, health, and education. They are the group most apt to be dependent on government services such as welfare, public housing, and Medicaid and the group most vulnerable to underemployment and unemployment. Only 20% of former husbands and fathers pay child support on a regular basis. It is for all of these reasons that a positive, long-term approach to helping single mothers (and single fathers) is necessary and essential to their families' well being.

CURRENT REQUEST

The ASPSF is facing two wonderful opportunities to increase even further its assistance to single parent students. These are described separately below:

- The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation's Challenge Grant: In response to our expressed interest in offering more scholarships in the severely impoverished Delta region of Arkansas, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation has issued the ASPSF a challenge grant in the amount of \$75,000. These funds, once matched dollar for dollar, will be used for direct scholarships to be awarded in 27 counties in east and south Arkansas. It is our goal in the newly created Delta Scholarship Project to dramatically increase the number and value of scholarships offered within three years, from the current \$68,000 level to a minimum of \$100,000 per year.
- The Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Washington County an affiliate of the ASPSF and housed in its Springdale office, is applying for a second year of funding to the Community Care Foundation. In order to attract the Foundation's continuing support, matching dollars must be obtained for both direct scholarships and operational expenses. \$70,000 from the CommunityCare Foundation, complemented by an equal amount from the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation, will assure the Fund's ability to fulfill several goal commitments, including most importantly a continued increase in the amount of money distributed for scholarships in Washington County. It is estimated that \$125,000 in direct scholarship assistance will be offered by the Fund during Year 2001. This is a 40% increase over Year 2000. With matching funds from the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation, we will be able to increase scholarships to \$150,000 in Year 2002 as well as expand outreach and support services to insure each recipient's continued success in school.

GOALS

With the assistance of the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation, our goals for Year 2002 are:

- To award a minimum of scholarships worth at least \$602,000 throughout the state of Arkansas and to award a minimum of \$100,000 in scholarships in the twenty-seven counties of the Delta area;
- To award a minimum of 240 scholarships worth \$150,000 in Washington County; and
- To maintain an 85% retention and graduation rate among scholarship recipients and a 72% employment rate at above poverty income among graduates.

CONCLUSION

The creation of the Single Parent Scholarship Fund concept in Northwest Arkansas and expansion to the entire state, has received national attention for its originality, success, and practical approach to helping people in need to help themselves through education. Yet our success has been possible only because caring people in our communities have generously committed their money and volunteer time to the effort. Philanthropists such as the Willard and Pat Walker, Bernice Jones, and the Walton family have made our scholarships possible, along with all the contributing churches, civic clubs, businesses, and families in our area. Because of a community belief in education as the most effective and direct route toward self-sufficiency, the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund and its Washington County affiliate have been able help those willing to help themselves. We are pledged to continue this tradition and hope that the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation will continue to support our scholarships.

GRANT PROPOSAL: THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund (ASPSF) requests funding of \$200,000 over a two year period in partial support of its *From Poverty to Prosperity Project*. This project will significantly increase the number of college graduates among impoverished single mothers and fathers in our state. The project's twin goals are to a) annually provide over 3,000 scholarships worth a minimum of \$2 million to eligible students by 2012; and b) maintain an 86% retention and graduation rate among awardees.

From Poverty to Prosperity Project is aimed at alleviating poverty among the most vulnerable of people: single mothers and their children. Relevant to the Hearst Foundations' social service emphasis of fostering effective solutions to social and economic problems, we empower low income single parents to achieve their highest potential as skilled, trained professionals. Such an effort also fits well with the Foundations' education priority of preparing students to succeed in a global society. Many of our awardees enter high technology professions, including computer programming, medicine, engineering, architecture and biological research.

A. ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY AND PURPOSE

ASPSF has its roots in two community-based incentive scholarships funds established in 1984 in northwest Arkansas. These came about as a response to the dramatic increase in the impoverishment of women and children in the region. They offered both financial assistance and a great deal of encouragement and support to single parent students from community members serving as mentors. The model was expanded to include all Arkansas counties in 1990 through philanthropic investment by area foundations. Since that time, the resulting state umbrella organization has organized 68 county-based Single Parent Scholarship Funds which have awarded over 23,500 scholarships worth more than \$12.5 million. ASPSF has disbursed more than \$3.1 million in affiliate grant awards.

The mission of ASPSF is to enable single parents to achieve self-sufficiency through higher education. The organization is governed by a 21 member Board of Directors representing the racial, cultural and geographic diversity of our state. Our staff of six permanent and one temporary employee(s) consist of four home-officed field representatives and a main office staff including executive director, executive assistant and information technology director.

The principal activities of ASPSF include: 1) the provision of financial support to students through county-based affiliates; 2) the provision of leadership training and development services to affiliates. Our field representatives take an active role in assisting affiliate boards of directors in areas such as planning, fundraising, publicity, board recruitment and orientation, and delegation of tasks. We help affiliates to design informational materials and to collect and preserve awardee records. Bi-annual leadership conferences offer a wealth of information on best-practices among affiliates and offer local Board

members an opportunity to network and share unique services. ASPSF also offers temporary financial management services to affiliates without fiscal managers.

Single Parent Scholarship Funds exist throughout Arkansas on campuses of colleges and universities but do not have parallels within nonprofit organizations at the community level.

B. STATEMENT OF NEED

ASPSF exists because of the extremely high number of impoverished single parent families in Arkansas led by women. The count of single parent households led by women reached 83,544 in 2005 or 32% of all families with children in our state. Of the 88,748 families in Arkansas with incomes below 100% of poverty in the last census, almost half (42,523) consisted of single mothers and their children. Arkansas ranks 44th in the nation in the rate of child poverty, with the majority of poor children living in single parent families (2000 US Census). Single mothers are more than five times as likely to be poor as married couple families (Institute for Research on Poverty/Univ. of Wisconsin 2009).

Without adequate education and training, low income single mothers are vulnerable to the worst effects of poverty: lack of access to health care, unsafe housing conditions, lack of transportation, labor intensive jobs at low pay and minimal benefits, and very poor self-image. Combined with the high cost of child care, these factors weigh heavily on a person's hope for her future and that of her children.

Arkansas ranks 50th in the US in the percentage of citizens over the age of 25 who lack an undergraduate college degree. Undereducated single mothers are much more likely to live in poverty, as the median income for an adult in Arkansas without a college degree is 56% less (\$20,014) than an adult with a college degree (\$35,295). From every perspective, female single parents and their children are at the bottom of the economic ladder and will remain there without further education and training.

C. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

From Poverty to Prosperity is a three year effort begun in 2009 to dramatically increase the number of single parents who enroll in higher education, while building the capacity and sustainability of affiliates.

The goals of the project are:

- Award a minimum of 5,750 scholarships worth at least \$3.75 million from 2010 through 2011
- Maintain an annual retention and graduation rate of 86% among awardees
- Maintain an annual employment rate at above poverty wages of 95% among graduate awardees

The objectives of the project are:

- Increase affiliate grant support by 25% in 2010 and 2011
- Obtain scholarship disbursement contract with Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) at \$300,000 per year
- Assist a minimum of four affiliates to ensure sustainability through acquisition of permanent administrative positions and development of endowments
- Provide on site staff leadership training and support by three permanent Field Representatives and two VISTA Volunteers
- Create state-of-the art information technology system for affiliate information input, retrieval and storage

The activities of the project, with timeline, are as follows:

- ✚ Increase annual affiliate grant support from \$8,000 to \$9,000 per county by December 31, 2010 and to \$10,000 per county by December 31, 2011; assist affiliates to award 2,775 scholarships worth \$1.75 million in scholarships in 2010 and 3,000 scholarships worth \$2 million in 2011.
- ✚ Submit 2009-2010 ADHE Final Report by 6/30/10; Contact Office of the Governor and Director of the ADHE to negotiate \$300,00 contract level by 7/15/10;
- ✚ Provide affiliate staff support grants of \$15,000 per year to two affiliates in 2010 and 2011; initiate training for new staff by 4/1/10 and continue in quarterly sequences through 2011.
- ✚ Provide affiliate endowment stimulus grants of \$12,500 per year to two affiliates by 6/1/11 and provide quarterly training sequences through 2011.
- ✚ Field Representatives and VISTA Volunteers will provide Board leadership, development and operational support to affiliates throughout 2010-2011, including training of Board chairman and officers, assistance in fundraising, publicity, awardee interviewing/selection, mentoring and other non-financial services to students. Eight regional affiliate seminars will be conducted in 2010, followed by a state leadership conference in June, 2011.
- ✚ Implement Information Technology plan in stages beginning 4/1/10 by building an electronic reporting and scholarship management system; create a dynamic/interactive website by 10/1/10; create online communication tools by 2/1/11 to create greater awareness of issues facing single parents; develop secure

intranet website for improvement of student services and more affiliate collaboration by 6/1/11; design on-line conferencing and training tools to improve affiliate student services by 9/1/11.

The staffing plan of Poverty to Prosperity will consist of three home office employees (executive director, executive assistant and information technology director) plus three permanent field staff (field representatives) who work out of their homes. We will also employ two Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA's) as temporary field representatives, working out of a community college and a community action agency.

The potential impact of the project is to significantly increase the number of low income single parents who achieve prosperity through pursuit of higher education and training. We intend to help at least 5,000 single mothers and fathers during the grant period to engage in college study. Our goal is to maintain an 86% retention and graduation rate during the two year period *and* to maintain a 95% employment rate above poverty income among graduates. This remarkable success rate will permanently interrupt the cycle of poverty among 5,000 single parent families in Arkansas.

D. EVALUATION

Organizational consultant Dr. Daniel Ferritor, Emeritus Professor of Sociology and former Chancellor of the University of Arkansas, has agreed to conduct a full evaluation of From Poverty to Prosperity. Dr. Ferritor provided consultant services to the Walton Family Foundation in 2002 in his evaluation of ASPSF and the original Single Parent Scholarship Funds in Northwest Arkansas.

His study of the project will focus on both qualitative and quantitative factors:

Qualitative:

- ❖ Survey of affiliates semi-annually to determine level of satisfaction with services provided by ASPSF: matching grants, Field Representative contacts, training opportunities, information provision, responsiveness to requests for assistance and information
- ❖ Contact with scholarship awardees to evaluate satisfaction with assistance provided by affiliate Boards of Directors: usefulness of scholarships, relationship with Board members and mentors, usefulness of non-financial services and resource provision

Quantitative:

- ❖ Reach goal of awarding 5,750 scholarships worth \$3.75 million by 12/31/11
- ❖ Maintain 86% retention and graduation rate
- ❖ Increasing affiliate matching grant support by 25% over that of 2009 by 12/31/11
- ❖ Enable two affiliates to employ part-time administrators by 12/31/11

- ❖ Develop two affiliates to develop permanent endowments of at least \$17,500 by 12/31/11
- ❖ Reach 100% of Information Technology system development by 12/31/11, including web-based data input and retrieval and standardized application forms with customized options.

Dr. Ferritor will submit quarterly evaluation reports to ASPSF Executive Director and Board of Directors. Areas in need of correction and modification will be addressed by Board Planning Committee on quarterly basis following receipt of reports. Executive Director and staff will implement corrective measures.

Proposed Project Budget

Organization:

Project Name:

Budget Period:

	<i>WRF Proposed Budget YR 1</i>	<i>WRF Proposed Budget YR 2</i>	<i>WRF Proposed Budget YR 3</i>	<i>TOTAL 3YR WRF Budget</i>	<i>Funding from Other Sources</i>	<i>TOTAL</i>
Direct Costs:						
Personnel:						
Salaries	\$25,000	\$27,000	\$29,000	81,000	100,000	181,000
Fringe Benefits				-		-
Total Personnel	25,000	27,000	29,000	81,000	100,000	181,000
Non-Personnel:						
Telephone				-		-
Supplies	8,000	6,000	4,000	18,000	20,000	38,000
Postage				-		-
Printing & Publications	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000	6,000	12,000
Travel	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000	50,000	80,000
Program Evaluation				-		-
Other-specify	45,000	45,000	45,000	135,000	1,200,000	
Other-specify				-		-
Total Non-Personnel	65,000	63,000	61,000	189,000	1,276,000	1,465,000
Indirect Costs:						
Personnel:						
Salaries	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000	30,000	60,000
Fringe Benefits				-		-
Other-specify				-		-
Total Personnel	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000	30,000	60,000
Non-Personnel:						
Other-specify				-		-
Other-specify				-		-
Total Non-Personnel	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Project Budget	100,000	100,000	100,000	300,000	1,406,000	1,706,000

