

**POSITIVE OUTCOMES:
A FOLLOW-UP OF SINGLE PARENT
SCHOLARSHIP GRADUATES (2003-6)**

Research Report

Submitted by

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Introduction

The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation-supported report, *Positive Outcomes*, is the result of a statewide effort to report on the experiences of former awardees of the Single Parent Scholarship Fund. The purpose of this study is to assess whether obtaining a postsecondary education leads to sustained self-sufficiency and skilled employment for single-parent families in Arkansas. Findings from this report should assist organizations throughout Arkansas concerned with the critical conditions of poverty for Arkansas families.

This report would not have been possible without the help of the many former scholarship awardees who were willing to share their personal experiences with us. In addition, we thank the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund affiliates that provided names and contact information of former SPSF awardees. Finally, we thank the following graduate students from the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Arkansas for their research assistance: Crosby Hipes, Melodie Griffis, Ashley Stills, Joshua Rohrich, and Valerie Robertson.

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Study Background

This study was conducted in two phases. During Phase I, an open-ended telephone survey instrument was developed to collect information from graduate awardees of the Single Parent Scholarship Fund. The interview guide includes questions about educational experiences, preparation for employment, job satisfaction, self-sufficiency, family educational experience and both past and future orientation. A copy of the telephone interview is included in Appendix A of this report. During Phase I, graduate students from the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at the University of Arkansas contacted 66 participating county affiliates to obtain contact information of awardees who graduated or completed their education from 2003 through 2006. Twenty-three counties responded, providing a sample of eighty-eight potential contacts (N=88). Twelve respondents could not be contacted due to change of address/telephone or incorrect information (N=76).

During Phase II, telephone interviews were conducted by graduate students under the supervision of Dr. Lori Holyfield at the University of Arkansas. Fifty-two interviews were completed, providing a return rate of sixty eight percent (N=52). Interviews ranged in length from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. Fifty-one participants were female and ranged

from 26 to 50 years of age. Race and ethnicity were not solicited.¹ Verbal consent was given at the start of each interview and all interviews were audiotaped. For analysis purposes, all interviews were transcribed verbatim. Qualitative verbatim responses are drawn upon throughout this report and included in narrative format to further illustrate the experiences of scholarship awardees, post-graduation. The total completed interviews represent sampling from the following Arkansas counties:²

Benton	Fulton	Pope	White
Boone	Izard	Prairie	Woodruff
Carroll	Johnson	Pulaski	
Chicot	Lee	Randolph	
Conway	Lincoln	Scott	
Crawford	Lonoke	Union	
Drew	Newton	Washington	

¹ Single Parent Scholarships are available to both male and female applicants although 98 percent of applicants are female.

² Contacts were also attempted for Madison, Sebastian, and St. Francis Counties.

Executive Summary

According to the U.S. Census, the number of single-parent families in the United States has more than tripled since 1970. In Arkansas, there are an estimated 97,430 single-parent families. Seventy-nine percent (79%) are female-headed households. Children in single-parent families are more likely to live in poverty than children in households with two parents present. Postsecondary education that leads to skilled long-term employment continues to be the most important link to self-sufficiency for single parents, especially single-mothers.

The core finding of this study is that former awardees of the Single Parent Scholarship Fund (SPSF) who have completed a postsecondary certificate or degree now experience improved quality of life and self-sufficiency. Graduates report improvement on a variety of indicators of overall quality of life. These include job readiness, job satisfaction and opportunities for advancement, earnings above poverty level, home-ownership, confidence building, self-esteem and positive future orientation.

Key Findings:

- Median income for SPSF Graduates is \$33,500³
- 52 percent of SPSF Graduates are homeowners⁴
- 48 percent of SPSF Graduates have earned or are currently pursuing advanced degrees post-graduation⁵
- 88 percent of SPSF graduates are currently employed full-time and 98 percent of those earn above poverty wages
- 80 percent of SPSF Graduates expect advancement opportunities in current jobs⁶
- 98 percent of SPSF Graduates are very satisfied with their jobs
- 96 percent of SPSF Graduates believe their education increased their job readiness
- 94 percent of SPSF Graduates believe their education has had a positive influence on the educational goals of their children
- 85 percent of SPSF Graduates are first-generation to earn a postsecondary education

³ Based on full-time workers reporting incomes (N=43). Three respondents [full-time workers] did not provide incomes, two respondents are currently unemployed (N=5). Part-time employment is not included in this figure (N=4).

⁴ Note: more than half of those reporting home ownership are remarried.

⁵ Of those reporting part-time incomes (N=4), two are currently enrolled in advanced degree programs.

⁶ Includes part-time workers (N=50)

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

The mission of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund (ASPSF) is straightforward and ambitious: to provide postsecondary educational opportunities to poor single parents in Arkansas that will lead to full employment and self-sufficiency. Located in Springdale, Arkansas, the ASPSF is a private, nonprofit corporation, governed by a board of 21 members, representing counties throughout Arkansas.

It began in 1983 as a shared dream between Ralph Nesson, Marjorie Marugg-Wolfe, and other community leaders in Northwest Arkansas. The goal was simple -- to help impoverished families obtain self-sufficiency by obtaining a postsecondary degree or certificate. By 1984, the first round of scholarships was distributed to single parents enrolled in postsecondary institutions in Northwest Arkansas by the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton and Washington County. News of the program's success spread throughout the state and in 1990, the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund was established. With the generous support of numerous businesses, charitable organizations and private foundations, including the Harvey and Bernice Jones Charitable Trust, a 2002 challenge grant program resulted in a permanent endowment for the Fund.

Today, the endowment is approaching two million dollars, allowing the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund to continue to provide matching funds to 68 county affiliates throughout the state (including the Delta Scholarship Project). As of December 2007, affiliates of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund have awarded 19,776 scholarships, totaling \$10,117,880 dollars. Clearly, the dream has been sustained as thousands of Arkansans continue to benefit from the financial assistance the scholarship affords. Perhaps this philanthropic ethic of providing a "hand-up" versus a "hand-out" is what helps to explain why it is that Arkansans are among the most generous benefactors in the nation.⁷

Arkansas Poverty and Single Parent Families

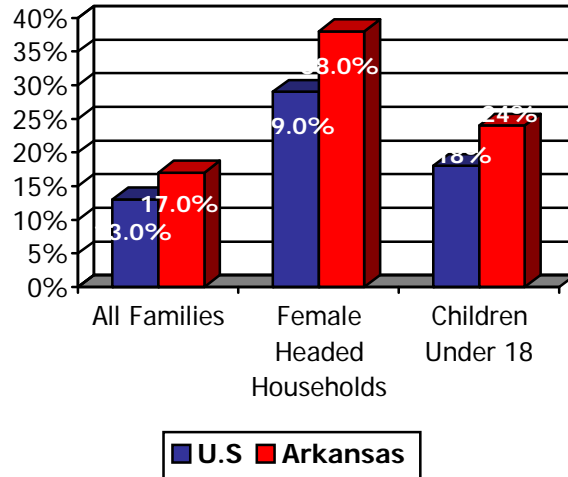
An important indicator of quality of life and well-being is the federal poverty rate. Thirteen percent (13%) of the U.S. population were below the federal poverty level in 2006, versus seventeen percent (17%) for Arkansans. More important, even though Arkansas has made progress in recent years, poverty rates for children under 18 years of age remain significantly higher in Arkansas, with twenty-four percent (24%) living below poverty versus eighteen percent (18%) in the United States. Arkansas currently ranks 44th in the nation in child poverty.⁸

⁷ Catalogue for Philanthropy's Generosity Index

⁸ "Improving the Well-Being of Arkansas's Children." Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. Available at www.aradvocates.org.

The majority of poor children live in single-parent families. Arkansas ranks 39th in the nation for single-parent families. Thirty-four percent (34%) of Arkansas’s children live in homes with only one parent present and seventy-nine percent (79%) of these families are female-headed with no husband or father in the home. While twenty-nine percent (29%) of U.S. female-headed households have incomes below the federal poverty line, in Arkansas, the number is significantly higher at thirty-eight percent (38%).

Percent Below Poverty Level in Arkansas 2006



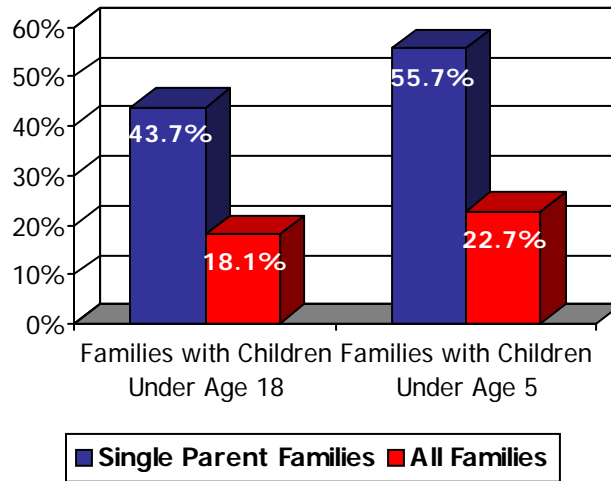
Source: www.census.gov [American Community Survey, 2006]

A key concern from these figures is the impact of poverty on Arkansas’s children. In female-headed households, poverty rates for children in Arkansas jump significantly to over forty-three percent (43.7%) in households with children under 18 years of age and fifty-five percent (55.7%) for those with children under the age of five.⁹ In Arkansas a child is born into poverty every 59 minutes.¹⁰

⁹ www.census.gov/census2000/Ranking

¹⁰ Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families / Good Faith Fund.

Percent Below Poverty in Female-Headed Households Arkansas 2006



Source: www.census.gov [American Community Survey, 2006]

Child poverty is most alarming because it prohibits children from achieving the start they need to compete later in life. Research reveals that living in poverty as a child results in a variety of negative conditions. These include higher infant mortality, access to good health, school readiness, behavioral and learning problems, access to good nutrition and lost future productivity.¹¹ In addition, thirty-six percent (36%) of Arkansas's children live in families without secure parental employment.¹² Changing these conditions will require long-term solutions. Postsecondary education continues to be the most successful pathway to breaking the cycle of poverty, especially for single-parent families in Arkansas.

¹¹ According to the Children's Defense Fund, each year spent in poverty as a child, results in \$11,800 loss productivity as an adult.

¹² "Kid Count 2007" www.aecf.org. Available at www.aradvocates.org.

SPSF Profiles

Scholarship graduates share a deep understanding of the consequences of poverty. When asked, “How have things changed for you since you finished your education?” graduates shared overwhelmingly positive responses.

Well, besides a great increase in my pay and a lot more independence, you know, and perseverance more on a personal level, just a lot of confidence. *Quinshunda-- School Nurse, RN, Chicot County Graduate*

Wow, there are so many things that are different. I have self-esteem, money in the bank and I’m doing what I absolutely love... I believe in myself. I trust my judgment. My kids show me more respect. Oh gosh, there are so many things. My whole life has changed. *Christine—MSW, Benton County Graduate*

Before I started school I was a waitress making two dollars an hour, plus tips. But if people didn’t want to tip, then I didn’t make much money. I was barely surviving... Now I don’t have to worry about whether I’m going to get my bills paid or not. I don’t have to worry about whether I have food in the refrigerator. *Rene-- RN, Boone County Graduate*

I would say that the biggest thing that is different, and I don’t know if this is exactly what you are looking for ... is that my kids know what it is like to live a life without a college education, without a career. They know what it is like to struggle, to do without and to have to live on the system, which is very embarrassing... My kids are grown. My son is grown, married, out of the house and has a child. Though he didn’t get to experience what it was like in the house after I graduated, my daughter did and she saw the difference in the life style. *Terri – LPN, Pope County Graduate*

Well, my income tripled [laughing]...I’m not struggling like I was. I don’t have to live paycheck to paycheck anymore. *Christy – RN, White County Graduate*

Employment, Education, and Job Readiness

In today’s global economy, credentials are an absolute necessity for workplace advancement. A high school diploma combined with work experience could produce livable wages for many Arkansans twenty years ago. However, postsecondary education is now essential for workplace mobility. Today, nearly one in four working families in America are low-income and for minority families, the percentage is almost twice that.

In Arkansas, the percentage of low-income working families with a parent without a high school diploma or equivalent, is 35.6 percent, placing Arkansas 43rd in the nation.¹³ More than half of low-income working families pay more than a third of their income for housing and one third of those families have a parent without health insurance. Approximately twelve percent (12%) of working families in Arkansas have incomes below the federal poverty level and thirty-eight percent (38%) have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty line.¹⁴ Being employed full-time in today's economy does not automatically result in self-sufficiency for many Arkansas families. Rather, Arkansas workers without a postsecondary education will continue to experience job uncertainty, low-wages, and poverty. Indeed, poverty rates for those without a high-school diploma or equivalency are approximately 25 percent versus 6.6 percent for those with some college. And for those who obtain a bachelor's degree or higher, the poverty rate falls to a low 3.3 percent.¹⁵

Fortunately, the share of the Arkansas workforce without a high school degree has declined by fifty percent (50%) in the past 20 years, while the percent with some college has increased from seventeen (17%) to approximately thirty percent (30%).¹⁶ Arkansas has made progress in education with the percentage of high-school dropouts decreasing from twelve percent (12%) in 2000 to eight percent (8%) in 2005.¹⁷ However, the state continues to rank among the lowest in investment in postsecondary education with estimates between eighty-two and eighty-four percent (82-84%) the national average.¹⁸ According to the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative, Arkansas invests \$820 in postsecondary education compared to \$997 in the United States. Investment in education is necessary at *all levels* for Arkansas to experience job readiness and long-term progress.

The pool of those with postsecondary education is growing but it has not kept up with demand, impacting the state's competitiveness and productivity. Employers in Arkansas are increasingly being confronted with a shortage of skilled workers. In their 2004 report, *Working Hard, Falling Short*, the Working Poor Families Project warns of "an alarming disconnect" between Arkansas' demand for well-skilled workers and the educational attainment of its workforce.¹⁹

An especially optimistic finding in this study is that the vast majority of SPSF graduates report their education prepared them well for their current occupations. Only two respondents reported not working in fields related to their education. Ninety-six percent (N=50) described postsecondary education as very useful in preparation for their current

¹³ <http://www.aecf.org/initiatives/jobsinitiative/workingpoor.htm> [p. 13]

¹⁴ See "Continuing the Investment in a Competitive Workforce and A Brighter Future Economic Future for Arkansas." A report by the Public Policy Program of the Good Faith Fund, August 2003.

¹⁵ U.S.Census, 2000

¹⁶ "2005 State of Working Arkansas." Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families. www.aradvocates.org.

¹⁷ "National Report on Children's Well-Being." Available at: www.aradvocates.org

¹⁸ "Miles to Go: Arkansas" Report of Southern Education Foundation, 2002.

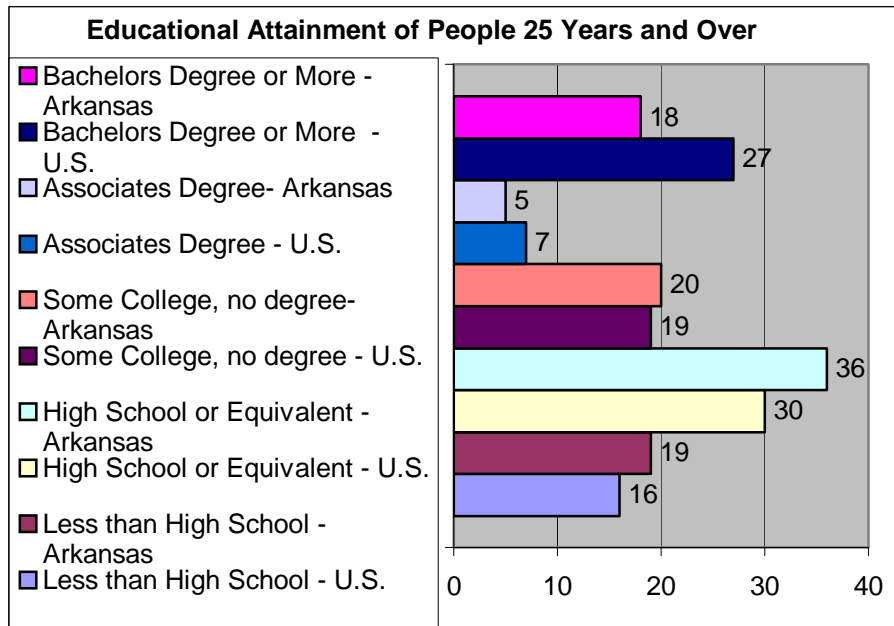
¹⁹ www.census.gov/hhes/www/income/earnings/call1arboth.html

jobs. As one graduate explained, “I can go anywhere now” [*Dana – Accountant, Boone County Graduate*].

In a lot of ways it did. I would not have had the confidence to do it, to have even gone in and attempted it had I not had that education. I would never have gotten the computer experience necessary, so really it led up to what it is now. *Brenda, Insurance Coding Specialist, Conway County Graduate*

Definitely... I have a better job that’s not in a convenient store or a laundry store. Ah, an eight-to-five job Monday through Friday. That’s definitely better! *Erika—Office Manager, Prairie County Graduate*

Increased participation in higher education creates an economic ripple effect that has positive effects for Arkansas’s economy. However, Arkansas currently ranks 50th in the nation for education. Only eighteen percent (18.2 %) of Arkansans [over 25 years of age] have completed a Bachelor’s degree.²⁰



Source: www.census.gov [American Community Survey, 2006]

Nationally, more than two-thirds of new jobs in the U.S. will require at least some postsecondary education²¹. Since 1990, manufacturing jobs, once considered the source for higher paying jobs, has declined by seven percent. Meanwhile, professional and business services have increased by 88 percent; education and health service by fifty-six

²⁰ U.S. Census 2006 American Community Survey. Available at <http://factfinder.census.gov>

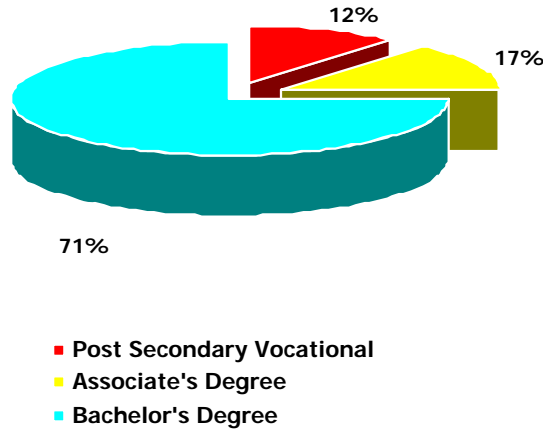
²¹ Educational Testing Service 2004.

percent (56%) and leisure and hospitality services have increased by forty percent (40%).²² Other areas such as transportation and utilities and financial (banking and insurance) have increased as well. In these professions, postsecondary education will be a necessity for job readiness with twelve percent (12%) requiring some type of vocational training, seventeen percent (17%) requiring an Associate's Degree and seventy-one percent (71%) requiring a Bachelor's degree or more.²³

²² "2005 State of Working Arkansas." Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families.
www.aradvocates.org

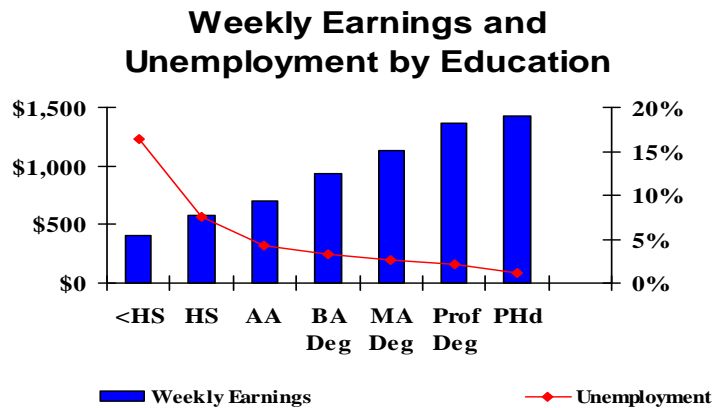
²³ Department of Labor Statistics:

Postsecondary Job Requirements



Source: Department of Labor Statistics-2005

These findings create significant opportunities for improving the educational attainment of Arkansas’s single parents. Overall, workers without a high school diploma or equivalent experienced a decline in real wages of over eighteen percent (18.5%), whereas those with a college degree saw their real wages increase by almost sixteen percent (15.9%). For example, median weekly earnings for a worker with a college degree in 2006 were \$962 compared to \$595 for workers with a high school diploma or GED, and \$419 for workers without a high school degree. Unemployment rates for those without a high school degree were almost seven percent (6.8%) compared to those with a college degree at 2.3 percent.²⁴

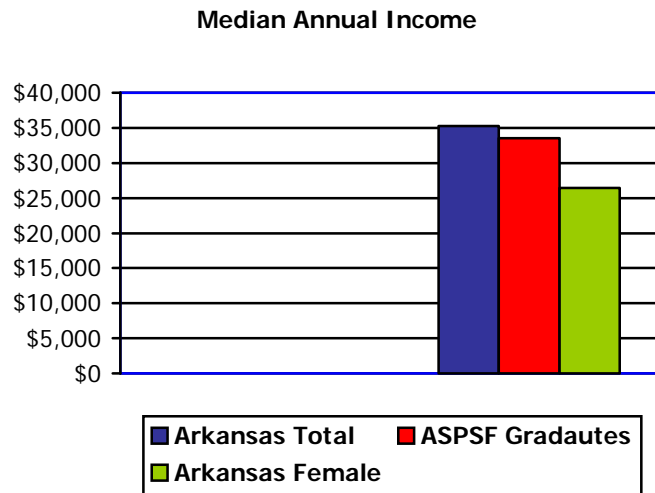


Source: U.S. Labor Statistics -2006

²⁴ Department of Labor Statistics: Data for U.S. annual averages for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.

These weekly earnings translate into median annual earnings in Arkansas well above poverty, with college graduates (both male and female) earning \$35,394 per year compared to high school graduates at \$20,014.²⁵

As seen earlier, only eighteen percent of Arkansans have four or more years of college but for women the percent drops to just below sixteen percent (15.9%). An especially optimistic finding in this sample of scholarship recipients is that nearly fifty percent (48%) have earned a bachelor's degree or more (percentage includes Registered Nurses). In addition, while this group of recent graduates have only been in their respective occupations for a maximum of four years, median earnings are already well above those of other Arkansas female college graduates (\$33,500 versus \$29,561). Finally, although incomes were not solicited for spouses, it can be assumed that if spouses are also working, then median household incomes for those now re-married are substantially higher than the current Arkansas median household income of \$35,295.²⁶



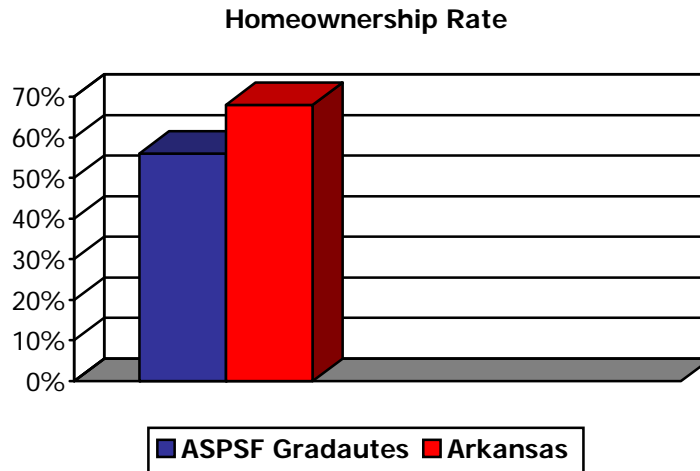
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

²⁵ For all full-time respondents reporting income.

²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau

Home Ownership

Home ownership continues to represent the American dream for many Arkansans. While Arkansas continues to have more affordable homes than most states, only 69 percent of Arkansans own their homes and the odds of owning a home are 2 to 1 in favor of higher-income earners. A further optimistic finding in this study is that fifty-two percent (N=27) of this sample of recent SPSF graduates already own or are purchasing homes.



Source: U.S. Census 2000

Quality of Life

Economic self-sufficiency through higher wages, lower unemployment, home ownership, job readiness and job satisfaction are only partial indicators of improved quality of life through postsecondary education. Other positive changes include better health, longevity, civic involvement, future orientation, more job choices and more opportunities for advancement in the workplace and a sense of empowerment. Telephone interviews included questions about future orientation, perceptions of change in circumstances, and expectations for continued education and education of children. Comments from SPSF graduates provide a rich context for understanding those less tangible effects of postsecondary education. When asked if there was anything she would like to add at the end of an interview, one graduate responded,

Oh my God. My experiences with it have been phenomenal! The differences in my children and the way they carry themselves -- they are more proud. The financial status that we are in, the house we are in, all carries with it a sense of moving up the social ladder... They walk prouder! They stand prouder! There is a huge difference and that is only achievable when a parent can go forward, get a

good education and get a good job and provide! *Cora – Certified Respiratory Therapist, Randolph County Graduate*

I'm not out there working three jobs to make ends meet. Now I can actually work one job and still spend time with my family. We can actually go places and do things that we normally couldn't have because everything was on such a tight budget. I was finally able to get a car that doesn't need work all the time...It's just been an across-the-board improvement. *Robin – Accountant, Crawford County Graduate*

Civic Involvement and Mentoring

An unexpected finding in this study was the reported level of civic involvement. The telephone interview did not include questions about civic involvement. Nonetheless, a strong sense of obligation to community was a prevalent theme in our interviews as was the perception that the Single Parent Scholarship helped instill this sense of commitment. For example, Marla from Izard County, a family support specialist who now works for the State of Arkansas in Batesville, with families on Medicaid, explains, “At one time, you know, I was on one side of the desk needing to get this help, and now I can sit on the side where I can be able to help make a difference.”

Lisa, a Scott County recipient and member of the Scott County Single Parent Scholarship board, now works in Student Support Services at Rich Mountain Community College where she helps others like herself, continue their education. “I was this person when I went back to school,” she explains. Positive experience with various county affiliates seems to have provided important mentoring and modeling for a number of graduates who now serve on their local boards.

Tena, from Lincoln County, now serves on her local board and tries to model for others what she believes board members in Lincoln County gave her. The scholarship “gives you confidence because people that don't know you, or know your situation, believe in you!” Former recipients report being involved in a variety of non-profits, all aimed at helping those [now] less fortunate.

Another finding that was not anticipated was perceived support of the scholarship board members. Sherri, a computer information systems analyst, from Pulaski County still remains in contact with her mentor. “One of the best things about the scholarship program is the mentoring aspect to it... I still have a relationship with the person that mentored me. I still see her from time to time. And she was so very supportive. I mean they were just very involved. It was somebody you could talk to. It wasn't like someone handing you money and saying good luck.”

Many former recipients told how they enjoyed meeting with their scholarship committees to report on their grades because they consistently cheered them on. Robin speaks of the

scholarship committee in Crawford County as a “godsend”. “They were people you could reach out to, even just to talk,” she explains. Like Sherri, Robin remains in contact with one of the board members still today and considers her a friend.

Future Orientation and Children

Only eight of the respondents’ parents received education beyond high school. Eight-five percent (N=44) report being first in their family’s generation to obtain a postsecondary education. When asked whether obtaining an education impacts one’s children, SPSF graduates provided overwhelmingly positive feedback. This finding is especially relevant as it relates to the education of future generations, demonstrating the real potential postsecondary education holds for breaking the cycle of poverty.

SPSF PROFILES

Ellen's parents never talked about college growing up so it never seemed plausible to her that she would continue. However, Ellen recalls taking both children to campus with her regularly when she attended the University of Arkansas, attempting to make the campus "second nature so it wouldn't be intimidating." Now ages 15 and 17, Ellen's children are looking toward attending college themselves. "I've made the university campus like home to them" she explains. *Ellen – Washington County Graduate, Masters, Middle School Education.*

Melanie, a mother of three, is adamant that her children will not have to experience the cycle of poverty precisely because of education. "I've shown my children that no matter how long it takes, you know you stick with something." After having completed her Bachelors degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock twenty years post-high school, she is "very confident" that she has taught her children a life lesson – that it is never too late to learn. Her son Zach won't have to wait that long. He begins his studies at UALR in the Fall of 2008. *Melanie – Pulaski County Graduate – BA Psychology and Criminal Justice*

Lisa is now remarried with three children and works as an outreach officer at a community college. Both her own experiences and those of students she works with have taught her that postsecondary education is essential to self-sufficiency. She insists that her children attend college after high school. "They're definitely going to college as soon as they get out of school," she explains, adding "that's huge in our household." *Lisa – Scott County Graduate – BS Early Childhood Education*

Rene, an obstetrical nurse who "loves" her job always wanted more for herself and her daughter, now six years old. Before her education, Rene described her life as a day-to-day struggle. Today, she earns enough to provide for her daughter and break the cycle of poverty early. As she explains, it is "what I hoped for her and it is part of the reason why I went to school in the first place." *Rene -- Boone County Graduate -- RN*

Rebecca has recently earned her MSW and explains how school has impacted both her and her children. "Oh, 100%! Most definitely! I think the biggest thing is that neither one of my parents graduated high school! Both were disabled. So it wasn't that my parents didn't have an interest in education, just not the interest I have. No one ever asked me, and I am not meaning that bad on my parents, no one, not a school person, not a counselor, no one ever asked me if I wanted to go to college. Ever! And with my kids, it is not even a question, it is an assumption that they will go to college. We already started, with what little money I have, since I graduated, we started a savings. When they get their money for their birthday, they save themselves. *Rebecca – MSW – Durham County*

Angela, a corporate trainer remembers starting school at the beginning of a difficult divorce. She now feels her education has provided stability and security that allow her to pass on to her children. “I have a lot of things to offer to my children too. Most of my children are grown. And the fact that they're having to deal with just regular life issues now, the fact that I finished school with not one but two degrees has really changed their view of what they need to do in life. I think it affected them at least. So there's a lot of personal stability and I really do credit going to school. *Angela –Washington County Graduate --Corporate Trainer*

Summary of Key Findings

Cautious optimism should be applied to the findings in this study, given the relatively small sample size (N=52). Further research is needed to provide a more representative sample of the larger population of SPSF graduates. Only twenty-three counties are represented in this sample, and most are in metropolitan areas. A stronger sampling of Arkansas's Delta region may provide a more accurate and overall representation for the state. Regardless, for this sample of graduates, preliminary findings are significantly positive. Median incomes for this group of SPSF graduates are well above those for female college graduates in Arkansas (\$33,500 versus \$29,561). Fifty-two percent of SPSF graduates in this study are homeowners. Almost half of all SPSF graduates in this study have since earned (N=21) or are currently pursuing (N=4) an advanced degree. Graduates are overwhelmingly satisfied with their jobs and report that educational experiences were helpful in preparation for current jobs. Graduates report positive future orientations and expectations for children.

Combined, these findings provide an overall indication that postsecondary education has resulted in significant positive outcomes for this sample of graduates. Indeed, for this group of graduates, postsecondary education appears to mirror the intended outcomes and goals set by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund. Providing assistance to single parents engaged in postsecondary education directly contributes to long-term changes that result in a "hand up" leading to permanent self-sufficiency for graduates and future generations.

Appendix A

Telephone Interview Script

Hello _____ (graduate's name). This is _____ and I'm calling on behalf of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund. We are conducting a survey to compile success stories of 2003/2006 graduates. Your name was provided as someone who has completed her studies and earned a degree or diploma. Our survey will take about 15 minutes and while your participation is voluntary, we would greatly appreciate your help.

1. Before we start I would like to make sure that I have the correct information.
 - A. When did you receive the single parent scholarship? (probe for how many semesters)
 - B. What County did you receive the scholarship from?
 - C. And what institution or school did you attend?
 - D. What area did you study and did you complete your program? (probe for degree or certification) – e.g., cosmetologist, nurses assistant, nurse, MA teaching K through 1
2. Can you tell me a little bit about your job as a _____.
 - A. How long have you worked at your current job? (if less than a year, probe for other jobs)
 - B Do you feel like your education helped prepare you for _____.
3. Now, let's talk a little about **your life** today as a graduate.
 - A. How have things changed for you since you finished your studies?
 - B. How about your job -- What do you like best about _____?
 - B. What do you like least about it?
 - C. What is the most important skill in your job?
 - D. If you were the boss, is there anything you would change about _____?
 - E. What about advancement? Do you feel like you will be at _____ in five years? If so, where do you see yourself in terms of your job?
 - F. What is different today from, say, five years ago?
 - G. If you had to guess, what do you think your life will be like five years from now?
4. Okay, now I am going to ask you some questions about people who have influenced you over time.
 - A. Tell me about your **children**. (Ask about their names and ages)
 - B. How old were you when your first child was born?
 - C. If you had to guess, how would your children describe you?

- D. Do you think getting an education has affected them? (Probe – how, etc.)
 - E. How have your expectations for them changed since you completed your education?
 - F. Can you think of anything else that might be important to know about your life as a single parent? Any barriers or opportunities unique to your situation?
5. Now, I'd like to ask you about your **parents**.
- A. What level of education did your mother obtain? Your father?
6. Okay, we are just about done. I just want to ask you now a few questions about being a single parent.
- A. There are a lot of single parents out there today – not everyone returns to school. Why did YOU make the choice you did?
 - B. If you could change just one thing for single parents today, what would that be?
 - A. What would you tell someone else who is considering going back to school? Probe: What can he or she look forward to?
 - D. Is there anything that I did not cover, that you would like others to know about your experience with the scholarship program or your experiences as a single parent?
7. Okay, I also want to make sure we have current information.
- B. Can you please tell me your age, and your current occupation?
 - C. And are you still a single parent?
 - D. Can you provide your approximate annual income?
 - E. Do you own your home
8. Okay, this concludes our interview. I want to thank you for your time and let you know that we are going to choose a smaller sample of our success stories to for a multi media presentation sponsored by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. This will be presented in March of 2008 at the Governors Mansion as part of a celebration of the scholarship program. Would you be interested in participating in a videotaped interview to be used in that report? *(If respondent says yes, then ask if this is a good contact number for scheduling the interview)*