

The Scholarsheet

A Newsletter for the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

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DELTA PROJECT NOW LAUNCHED!

Two full-time employees have been hired to work on the Delta Scholarship Project, a 3-year program to develop and strengthen Single Parent Scholarship Funds in the Delta region of Arkansas. The ASPSF Field Organizers are: Keshia Valley, of West Helena and Kim Dollins, of Searcy.

Until joining the ASPSF, Keshia Valley worked for the DHS as first, a Family Support Specialist and most recently, as Coordinator of Volunteer Services. She has a degree (BA'97) in criminal justice from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and has accumulated 20 hours towards her Masters degree. About her new position, Keshia says, "I am excited about this project. I want to help make a difference in the Delta, especially in Phillips County, my home. I feel that people want to improve their lives, they just need to have the resources and opportunities to do so. I feel that the SPSF is this needed resource and I'm excited to be a part of the Delta Project."

Kim Dollins earned a degree in Social Work (BS'85) from Harding University. She has most recently been employed as Resource Coordinator for the White Co. TEA Coalition. Kim has over thirteen years work experience with social services and non-profit organizations. Kim says, "I am very excited to be a part of such a wonderful mission. I look forward to helping the Northeast counties develop new scholarships for single parents, as well as to provide assistance to existing affiliates to increase their scholarship funds. Being a single parent myself, I know how a program such as ASPSF could be the answer for so many who are wanting to achieve self-sufficiency and a future for their chil-

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Keshia Valley and Kim Dollins.

Mark Your Calendars!
The 5th annual Leadership Development Conference for Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund affiliates is planned for Friday, June 29th and Saturday, June 30th.

Background: Beginning in 1997, the Board of Directors and staff of the ASPSF have worked together to sponsor a leadership training event designed to educate and strengthen county affiliates. The educational component comprises a keynote speaker addressing a relevant topic, workshops, and break-out sessions on fundraising, publicity, board development and volunteer recruitment. Affiliate strengthening is nourished through socializing and networking time that allows for peer exchange of ideas and materials between county groups, the Board and Staff of the ASPSF.

Although last year's LDC was the most successful to date at attracting representatives from affiliates (29 were represented), the planning committee hopes to boost the overall attendance by extending the number who can attend to three from each local. **All fees for attendance at the conference, including rooms and meals, are paid for by the ASPSF.** So Ya'll Come!

Meet The Board!

Board retention is an extremely important dimension of the success of a non-profit organization such as the ASPSF. People who volunteer to serve on such boards tend to be busy people with big hearts who generously give of their time and talent in order to carry out a mission in which they strongly believe.

With that in mind, the ASPSF staff gratefully acknowledges our current board members who have served for more than one term:

Rose Adams (Little Rock) Exec. Dir., Assoc. of AR Community Action Agencies; **Peggy Beller** (Batesville) Family Business Mgr.; **Michael Britt** (Fayetteville) Portfolio Mgr., Greenwood & Assoc.; **Sonia Byrd** (Pine Bluff) Exec. Dir. of ACCESS; **Sandra Carlisle** (Benton) Owner, Thomas Ins. Agency; **Susan Chappell**, Ph.D. (El Dorado) Exec. VP Student Affairs, SARK; **Barbara Horn** (Foreman) State Senator; **J.C. McGoogan** (Crossett) Owner, Mac's Realty; **Jane Neely** (Pine Bluff) Teacher; **Andre Stephens** (Forrest City) Exec. Dir., St. Francis Workforce Alliance; and, **Marjorie Wolfe**, Ed. D. (Rogers) Retired. Marjorie has been with the ASPSF in one capacity or another, since its inception and her continued dedicated service cannot be estimated!

The following board members are currently in their first terms of service: **Alice Abson** (Little Rock) Dir., Cycle Breakers; **Mary Alexander** (Little Rock) Birthing Services Specialist, Birth Works; **Peggy Sissel**, Ph. D. (Little Rock) Expert, Adult & Continuing Ed.; **Rev. Stephen Copley**, (Gillett) Methodist Minister; **Chet Stuart**, Benton, Retired; **Margaret Wright**, Ph. D.(Arkadelphia) Accountancy Dept, Ouachita Baptist U.

Directors who are new in 2001: **Valerie Brown** (Little Rock) Counselor, UALR; **Diann Gathright**, Ed.D. (Mena) Dean of Planning, Dev'l & Communications, RMCC; **Boylee Hamilton** (Benton) Co. Admin., Saline Co. DHS; and **Edward L. Williams** (Morrilton) Dir., Conway Co. Community Fdtn.



Musings From The Director

By Ralph H. Nesson

The progress made by ASPSF affiliates over the last eleven years has been remarkable: we have gone from two scholarship funds in the far northwest to fifty-six throughout the state. It is not inconceivable that we will collectively award over 1,500 scholarships worth \$600,000 this year. If our retention and graduation rate holds steady from last year's, our students will graduate at almost twice the rate of students enrolled in public colleges and universities. Hundreds of former recipients now hold responsible positions in business and the professions, earning excellent salaries and giving back to their children and their communities in innumerable ways.

While the success of Single Parent Scholarship recipients is indeed worthy of notice, our attitude toward them and our philosophy of giving merits examination. We begin with an understanding that awarding a scholarship to an impoverished single parent is an honor bestowed, a recognition of her efforts to better herself. It is with great admiration and respect that our scholarship is given, a fitting reminder that the community believes in the recipient and is most willing to invest in her education. In making an award, we also realize we have a duty to donors to ensure that recipients are well-chosen and demonstrate excellent potential for success.

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If there is any gray or nebulous area between awarding a scholarship as an honor and ensuring that the donor's interests are protected, I would argue that respect for the recipient will help ensure her success. We can ensure responsible use of scholarship money by asking the applicant which expenses will be met by her scholarship and determining need from the answer. We can also review renewed applications, considering how money has been spent as one of the variables in determining continued eligibility. What we want to avoid is giving the recipient the feeling that we distrust her judgment or view her as an irresponsible "child," one who must have her resources "governed" by other more responsible adults.

I would be very interested to hear your views on this issue! Please feel free to contact me at the office or by e-mail at: rnesson@jtlshop.jonesnet.org

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dren."

Kim and Keshia have each set up offices in their homes and are creating a collaborative "team" approach as they develop and implement strategic plans. Of the 27 counties identified as comprising the Delta area of Arkansas, Keshia is charged with primarily focusing on the 13 southern counties, while Kim has the 14 northern counties as her focus. The Delta Scholarship Project is funded by grants from the Walton Family Foundation, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, The Arkansas Office of

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Stories of Successful Fundraisers

Here are a few accounts of recent fundraising activities reported by county affiliates:

Last April, the Clarksville Rotaract Club invited local residents to a Roast Beef Luncheon to benefit the **Johnson Co. SPSF**. Lunch was catered by Helen's Restaurant and served at the First Presbyterian Church. \$408 was raised for scholarships.

A group of faculty and staff at Black River Technical College sold hand-made

items and raised \$750 for the **Randolph Co. SPSF**.

The Bald Knob Rotary Club raised \$2,500 from a "Radio Days" event for the **White Co. SPSF**. A local radio station donated free air time on Sunday afternoons, allowing Club members to read one-minute promotional spots which they had previously sold for \$25 each.

A "Hoops & High Hopes" gala country-club event, raised \$14,000 for Pulaski Co.'s SPSF. The basketball theme drew

Razorback fans to meet former player, Darrell Walker, who hosted the evening. Highlights included a popular dance band, and auction of two (donated) round-trip tickets to an NBA game.

An opportunity to "Honor Your Favorite Teacher" raised funds for the **Lincoln Co. SPSF**. A local newspaper allowed the group to publish blank forms that requested a donation to SPSF be made in a favorite teacher's honor. Acknowledgment letters were the only expense.

Former Recipient Praises the SPSF of Benton Co.

Kimberly Dzwonkiewicz obtained a Graphic Design degree at Northwest Arkansas Community College and is now employed in a management position at Wal-Mart in Bentonville. What follows is an excerpt from a longer article written by Kimberly:

What is the SPFS program? It's a check in the mail when I was wondering how I would pay my car insurance... It's a group of people who asked me to be ac-

countable for myself and to set goals for the future when I wasn't sure I had one... It's an association that refused to give up on those of us who had nearly given up on ourselves... A network of single parents, just like myself, that I could relate to and trust... It's my children's eyes on Christmas morning as they tear open the presents that I could not have provided alone... It's the heat that kept them warm in their bed's as at night as I sat up late doing homework... It's a well-lit path through endless

"It's the hand of God working through ordinary people to build something miraculous."

obstacles when you've reached a detour in the middle of the night, during the worst storm of your life. It's the hand of God working through ordinary people to build something miraculous.

Derrick Newby Knows

At the time of his application to the Jefferson Co. SPSF, Derrick Newby was a divorced single father of two children, ages 3 and 4 yrs. He held a low paying cook's position at the AR Dept. of Corrections but found it difficult to support his family.

In 1996, Derrick began to pursue a degree in psychology at the UA at Pine Bluff while continuing to work full time.

With the help of his single parent scholarship, Derrick succeeded in earning his degree in criminal justice in 1999 and was placed on the Chancellor's List as an honors graduate.

Derrick's current position is Delta Aids Trainer, with Jefferson Comprehensive Care. He is now earning a good salary and buying his own home in Pine Bluff. 1



Education is a Treasure beyond Measure



Arkansas Scholarship Information Service (ASIS)

By Christine Womack

Hello! For those of you who aren't aware of ASIS, we provide a wonderful resource for Arkansas students, parents counselors, and anyone else who needs scholarship information for higher education.

In 1996, the staff of the ASPSF realized that many Arkansas students could not find up-to-date, accurate financial aid information for college. Research and development over the next two years resulted in the launching of the Arkansas Scholarship Information Service (ASIS) on line.

Arkansas is the first state to have a totally free, nonprofit service such as ASIS. Previously, on-line financial aid information was available only through national databases. These national services rarely have adequate scholarship information specific to Arkansas.

I was hired as Project Director in June, 2000 and since that time I have worked diligently to improve the web site environment. During the next 12 months, the ASIS Project will increase its outreach to students and services provided to the community.

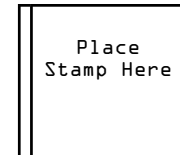
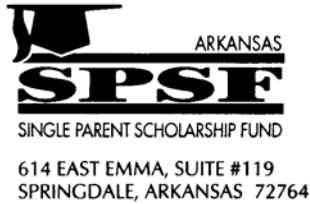
As the database and website is updated and expanded, I keep 3 main goals in mind:

- To make information easier to find for our students,
- To provide a free, non-commercial service, and
- To give all students in Arkansas a fair chance to succeed in ensuring them higher education.

Since 1998, over 37,000 visitors have found financial aid information on the ASIS website at:

<http://scholarships-ar-us.org>

VISIT US TODAY!



Mission Statement: The mission of the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund is to enable single parents to attain self-sufficiency through post-secondary education.

