

The Scholarsheet

A Newsletter for the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund

Volume 7, Issue 3 September 2001

CONFERENCE DEVELOPS LEADERSHIP FROM WITHIN

What brought together 105 wonderful volunteers on June 29th-30th at the Airport Holiday Inn in Little Rock? A family reunion of sorts, a gathering of highly motivated leaders, and a spirited celebration of heartfelt efforts to help single parents help themselves through education. It was the ASPSF's fifth annual Leadership Development Conference, sprinkled throughout with inspiring presentations by current scholarship recipients, a great outpouring of valuable "how-to" information, and lots of networking and friendship.

Convened at lunch on Friday, the 29th, the conference began with a welcome from longtime Board member **Peggy Beller** of Batesville who introduced other members of the Board. President **Dr. Susan Chappell** then gave warm opening remarks and set the stage for the keynote speaker, **Dr. Linda Beene**, Director of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Dr. Beene described the efforts of the "WIB" to streamline job training and referrals for Arkansas workers and to coordinate services with welfare reform. She invited all SPSF leaders to contact her One-Stop staff if they needed job counseling services for their students...and she presented a personal contribution to the ASPSF!

After lunch, **Cindy Webb** of Fayetteville moderated a plenary session panel tabbed "Fundraising From Both Sides of the Table", including veteran fund-raisers and philanthropists **Heather Eason** of the Arkansas Community Foundation, **Virgil Miller** of Metropolitan Bank, **Dr. Joe Nix** of the Ross Foundation, and **Dana Fisher** of Philander Smith College. All panelists gave very unique and reality-based perspectives on the do's and don'ts of asking for support. They were followed by concurrent workshops on fundraising in urban and rural areas.

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A 'Truly Awesome' Fundraiser

On August 18th 2001, the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County held its 17th Annual Benefit luncheon at the Clarion Inn in Bentonville. Over 300 guests, mentors, board and council members gathered to applaud the 108 students in their endeavors to become self-sufficient through education.

The program included three SPSF students who told their success stories, and a keynote speaker, retired Wal-Mart executive Don Soderquist. A representative from each university presented the SPSF scholarships to the students attending their campus. As part of the Benton Co. program, each recipient is assigned a mentor and at the banquet, each is seated with his or her mentor and with program donors. This gives the donors a unique chance to speak with the students they are supporting through SPSF.

During the previous months, Benton Co. individuals, churches, businesses, and civic groups donated over \$140,000 to the SPSF. The luncheon benefit was hosted/sponsored by the ARVEST Bank Group so there was no charge to the donors. Through

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CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS



Top: Ralph Nesson, Ex. Dir. ASPSF, Cindy Webb, facilitator. Panelists: Virgil Miller, Joe Nix, Dana Fisher, and



Shirley Miliken, Mississippi Co. and Gina Booth, New-



Diann Siegele, Pulaski Co., Yvonne Wyrick, Columbia Co. and Flora Simon, De-



News & Cues!

News:

► Oct. 19th & 20th. ASPSF Board of Directors Meeting and Annual Retreat, Park Hotel, Hot Springs.

► The distribution of *Moving Up and Out: Poverty, Education and the Single Parent Family*, a book by **Prof. Lori Holyfield** about the ASPSF has been delayed. It is now due to be released sometime early in 2002.

► New ASPSF Affiliates in 2001: Arkansas, Columbia, Cross, Lafayette, Phillips, Pike, Prairie, Woodruff.

► A total of \$53,050 has been contributed in match of the \$75,000 Winthrop Rockefeller Fdn. challenge grant provided for the Delta Scholarship Project. A concerted effort is underway to raise the balance of \$21,950 to meet the challenge by the end of 2001.

Cues:

► Scholarship Award reports for all of 2001 are now due! Matching Grant requests for the year 2001 must be submitted prior to December 21st to insure funds are available.

► ASPSF Affiliates! Remember to send your student success stories and also stories of successful fundraising events for inclusion in future issues of *The Scholarsheet*. Thanks! ■

The Scholarsheet is published quarterly by the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) organization. Comments and suggestions should be addressed to the editor, Lani S. Froelich, ph: (501) 927-1402; E-mail: lfroelic@jtlshop.jonesnet.org

Musings From The Director

By **Ralph H. Nesson**

Before the tragic events of September 11th altered our lives, I had planned to use this space to discuss a four letter word: *hope*. Now, I realize ever more profoundly that hope is much more than a word on paper. If it is to be in our minds and hearts, if it is to have meaning for us, it requires a lot of work. That work is a must for all of us, not just for a few. The work of helping people to help themselves. The work of being a part of a caring community. The work of studying hard, of maintaining an income, of taking good care of our children. And the work of being involved in decisions that affect our lives.

Recently, Governor Huckabee set aside \$400,000 for \$1,000 "Governor's Opportunities Scholarships", available to low income Arkansans for the Spring, 2002 semester. Lu Hardin, head of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, called for an infusion of *\$400 million more dollars* into scholarships for Arkansas students. With the revelation that the state graduation rate among public university students, after 6 years, is a lowly 39.5%, something had to be done to instill hope in those who fear we are falling farther and farther behind other states. I want to urge every reader of this column to encourage the Governor and Mr. Hardin and all of our legislators and private philanthropists to work hard toward the 400 million dollar goal. Let us remind ourselves: hope requires a lot of work. And not just on the part of others, but ours as well. We know what scholarship assistance, coupled with the involvement of the entire community, can accomplish: an *80%* retention and graduation rate among SPSF recipients!

*"Let us remind ourselves:
hope requires a lot of work."*

The expression "think globally, act locally" has become somewhat of a cliché of late, but it nevertheless holds a lot of meaning for those of us who are working hard to maintain hope in our minds and hearts. Think about it: for every single mother or father we assist to succeed, there are more and more children who are learning the true value of education at their parent's knees. One person's success then becomes five, then ten, then twenty and on and on. For every educated human being, there is less likelihood of desperation, poverty, and wasted opportunity. And more likelihood of hope. We need more hope. Don't you agree? ■

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the support of ARVEST, 100% of the donations go toward scholarships for the students. Ladonna Penner, Director, states that the key element to a successful fundraiser is to involve your volunteers. Plan your event, organize your committees, and follow your plan. A benefit committee oversees the publicity, mail outs, sponsorships, facilities, menu, invitations and the program.

After the benefit, donations will continue to come in through the end of the year. Follow-up letters in December remind donors who haven't donated for the year. ■

One Mother's Vision Creates A Better Life

In the year 2000, at the age of 41, **Margarita Solorzano** became a citizen of the United States of America. Margarita's journey to new citizenship and a better life is an epic that cannot justly be told in these few lines, but a brief sketch follows.

In June of 1990, Margarita left her hometown of Jaral Del Progreso, Mexico and moved with her two young daughters to live with her three sisters in Riverside, Calif. Neither Margarita nor her daughters spoke English when they arrived.

During this time, Margarita worked in factories, studied ESL at night school and still managed to be active in her daughters' school as a volunteer—a fact she regards with pride. In 1996, Margarita moved her family to NW Arkansas where another sister was liv-

ing. In 1997, while employed at a plastics manufacturing factory, she began her studies at NW Arkansas Community College. By taking one or two courses per semester while continuing to work full-time, she has now completed 39 credit hours towards an associate degree in social work, earning a 3.5 GPA. Margarita has received support from the SPSF of Washington Co. each semester of college.

How has the effort to educate herself affected her two daughters? Margarita's older daughter, Edma, now 18, graduated last year with honors from Springdale HS, and was awarded scholarships to attend Hendrix College in Conway. Her younger daughter, Xochitl, now 17, is a senior honors student at SHS., and also plans to attend college. About her mom, Edma



Xochitl, Edma and Margarita Solorzano

says: *My mother began college when I was in elementary school...My mother's desire and determination to continue her education played a major role in my decision to attain a higher education.*

Margarita says that it was her desire to encourage her daughters to see all the possibilities for their future that motivated her to continue her own education. It is very difficult to be a single parent and have the added burdens of language barrier and insufficient income, but she has always set an excellent example as an optimistic person who wants her children to have a good and rich life. ■



Website of interest: **The Three Guineas Fund**, founded in 1994, promotes social justice by expanding access to opportunity for women and girls in education and the economy: www.3gf.org



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Facilitated by ASPSF Board members **Dr. Diann Gathright** and **Rose Adams**, these workshops offered lots of examples of successful and innovative fundraising approaches, from tours of Buffalo River area cottages in Newton County to a community golf tournament in Blytheville and annual benefits in Benton and Washington Counties. **Tom Mueller** of Bald Knob even described a "Chinese" auction held at his Rotary Club each month to raise dollars for scholars!

Dinner in the evening featured a humorous and inspiring address by **Tipi**

Word, Director of the Industry Partners Program of Stuttgart, along with presentations by IP staff members **Verna** and **Frank Millerd** and **Arnetta Clark**. All attested to the power of individuals whose motivation to succeed is greatly enhanced by people whose support for them is patient, constant, and unwavering. A social gathering after dinner was enjoyed by many of the conference participants who "let down their hair"!

The following morning, three workshops: *Effective Operation of ASPSF Affiliates*, facilitated by **Ted Williams** and **Ralph Nesson**;

Promoting Our Story Through the Media, moderated by **Dr. Peggy Sissel**; and *Scholarships and More*, moderated by **Dr. Marjorie Wolfe**. Several SPSF board members and volunteers served on the panels of these workshops, offering very helpful and useful advice and information.

A closing luncheon offered special recognitions, door prizes, and a grand finale to what was the best attended and most highly rated ASPSF Leadership Conference yet! ■





Prejudice Reduction Training Gets Results!

By Lani S. Froelich

Sometimes it feels like the work of the world is polarized by 'isms' -racism, nationalism, ageism, sexism, fanaticism, to name but a few. If your work for the single parents of Arkansas through your local board or committee is hampered by some 'ism' or another, you might consider what the National Coalition Building Institute has to offer.

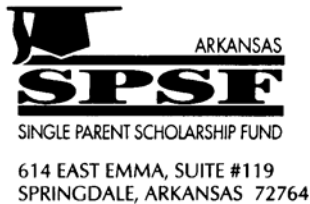
For five days in August, I, along with about 120 folks from around the world, explored some of humanity's divisive 'isms'. I was part of a group of adults and teens sponsored by the NWA Multicultural Center and was the 'token Anglo' of our group — all others were of either Latino or Pacific Island ethnicity. As we introduced ourselves during the first meeting, I noticed that many of the other participants worked in colleges, universities or for governmental agencies that have mandated 'diversity training' as essential to achieve institutional goals.

Cherie S. Brown, founder and director of NCBI, led the

5-day International Leadership Training Institute held in Silver Springs, MD. NCBI is designed to train leadership to identify, reframe and deal with issues head-on –and then develop pragmatic, effective solutions. One unique feature of this experience was the absence of a lecture format –we were always moving, finding someone we didn't know with whom to do an exercise or meeting in small group sessions to learn and practice techniques for healing and helping others to heal.

By some estimates, over 400 diversity training models/systems are currently in use throughout the world as we grapple with increased violence and continued discrimination in our society. NCBI is one of many, but if it sounds to you like something that might be useful, I personally urge you to contact them to find out about the various programs they offer. ■

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Place Stamp Here

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