



SCHOLAR SHEET

Opening a world of opportunity

Arkansas Department of Higher Ed Funding



Built into the 2009-2010 budget of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education is an item of interest to all SPSF affiliates: \$175,000 has been earmarked for Single Parent Scholarships! These funds, to be awarded to ASPSF in the form of a contract, will be sub-granted to Single Parent Scholarship Funds after July 1. Most of the funds will be awarded according to the percentage of single parent families with dependent children 18 and under in each county. A small amount of the contract will be sub-granted according to Fund "achievement": the percentage of the total amount of SPSF awards in 2008, by county.



Many thanks to Governor Mike Beebe and ADHE Director Jim Purcell for making these scholarship dollars available to our affiliate network of Single Parent Scholarship Funds. Thanks also to Stacy Sells, Ellen Ingram and all Pulaski County SPSF Board members and volunteers who worked so hard to make our March 18th, 2008 Governor's Mansion Gala a great success!

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Joining the Family

I am so happy to join this wonderful family of Single Parent Scholarship Funds. My name is Pat Schram, and I am the new executive assistant for ASPSF. From the formation of the first Single Parent Scholarship Fund in Washington County during the early 1980's, I have admired the growth of this organization, which now represents an incredible network of SPSFs throughout the State of Arkansas.

capacities, I have enjoyed working with individuals and families in the Northwest Arkansas community during a 25-year career in human services. I have worked at the Battered Women's Shelter, the Rape Crisis Center, Youth Bridge, a private



Pat Schram, new ASPSF Executive Assistant

As a social worker and educator, in both administrative and direct service

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News & CUES

☞ Each affiliate that earns the full 2009 ASPSF Matching Grant will receive an equal share of a \$50,000 bonus pool, payable in January 2010.

☞ 2008 Follow-up reports were due by May 15th. Forms are available online at www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html.

☞ Scholarship Award Reports must be submitted each semester immediately after scholarship award decisions have been finalized. Forms are available online at www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html.

☞ ASPSF Matching Grants are now based on the following formula: Delta Counties receive 160% of \$5,000 in local donations (up to \$8,000 match); All other counties receive 100% of \$7,000 in local donations (up to \$7,000 match). Request forms are available online at www.aspsf.org/affiliates.html.

☞ The 3rd Edition of the SPSF Fundraising Primer is now available! This booklet features more than two dozen examples of current successful fundraising events coordinated by affiliate SPSFs of all sizes.

MUSINGS BY RALPH NESSON

Attending a recent award ceremony in Rogers sponsored by Northwest Arkansas Community College, I was reminded that twenty-five years have now passed since the first Single Parent Scholarships were awarded. During a quarter century of effort, literally thousands of mothers and fathers have been encouraged to study hard, earn a college degree (or its equivalent) and go to work as skilled professionals.

The presence of uniformed NWACC nursing students at the ceremony also reminded me of Rachel Falconi, a Registered Nurse who was working on the ICU ward of Washington Regional Medical Center when my mother was a patient in 1997. I will always remember Rachel's kindness and concern for Mother, as well as her whispered mention of recognizing our family name and that she had been helped to become a nurse by the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Washington County.

In everyday life, single moms and dads work in every conceivable professional field. They are our nurses and engineers and biologists, our attorneys and teachers and computer technologists. We may know little of their earlier challenges and struggles, true, but we appreciate their skill in providing an endless array of services, helping us in countless ways. They are our neighbors, our friends and the parents of our children's friends. I think what makes them so unique is their courage to persevere, to face life's challenges with dignity and hope. This attitude and strength of character is a gift to their children and a gift to us all.

Leadership Development Conference: A Huge Success

The 2009 Leadership Development Conference and celebration of ASPSF's 20th year of service was held May 29-30th in Little Rock. More than one hundred attendees were treated to a variety of informative plenary sessions and workshops.

Student speakers gave truly inspiring testimonials. Guest keynote speakers, including Governor Mike Beebe and Dr. Sherece West of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, lauded affiliate board members for their great effort in helping students to succeed. In particular, both the Governor and Dr. West paid tribute to single parents who are trying so valiantly to earn a college diploma, take care of their children, hold down part- and full-time jobs, and prepare themselves for professional occupations.

Along with wonderful door prizes, five random drawings were made at the close of the conference for attending SPSF's to win \$1,000 scholarship awards.

The Board and staff of ASPSF wish to thank everyone who participated in the conference. What a fantastic way to celebrate the 20th birthday of ASPSF and all the effort made by volunteers throughout Arkansas!



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REACHING FOR THE STARS



Rachel and eldest daughter, Cindy, both whom graduated in 2008.

Rachel Short is a proud, single mother of five, who believes the reward of every parent lies within the accomplishments of his or her children. Last year while Rachel's eldest daughter Cindy was graduating from North Arkansas College with an LPN, another daughter was beginning her business degree at the same school. Her eldest son who is a senior in high school is successful, both in the classroom and on the basketball court. Another son, a high school sophomore is aspiring to a career in computer technology, while the youngest child is doing well in his first year of high school. Rachel describes all her children as hard working and very studious. Her two eldest children have financed their college education school through part-time work, scholarships, and financial aid.

These children have obviously learned to succeed by example, for with the support of the SPSF of Newton County, Rachel has already completed one degree and is continuing to further her education. About the value of education, Rachel feels, "it has enabled me to be what I want to be and to set a good example for my family." It's working!

She says her greatest joy thus far was graduating along with her daughter Cindy. "We were so excited. We walked in the ceremony with one another. After the ceremony, she looked over at me and said, 'Happy Mother's Day, Mom.'" Rachel appreciates the support of the SPSF of Newton County, which involves the students and board members in activities to help raise money for scholarships. She believes the community helps make the Scholarship Fund a successful program.



Kim Atchison (far left) is a single mother of three children and Amanda Norton (left) is single mother of two children. Both women are graduates of the ASU Newport

LPN program and past awardees of the SPSF of Woodruff County. They both consistently maintained 3.0 GPA's and plan to pursue RN degrees in the future.



"Words can not express how grateful I am that you have given me the help I needed to achieve my dreams. I really appreciate the opportunity you have provided

by taking a chance on me." - Grace Evans, graduate and former awardee of the SPSF of Union County.



AFFILIATES CORNER

Union County Lecture Series

The South Arkansas Community College in El Dorado held its 3rd Annual Lecture Series last fall, featuring actress/author Janine Turner. She is probably best known for her roles in the CBS series "Northern Exposure" and in the film "Cliffhanger" with co-star Sylvester Stallone.

Ms. Turner recently published "Holding Her Head High", a book chronicling her research on single mothers in history (bottom-right). A single mother herself, Ms Turner says: "The book is about twelve women who championed their children and changed history. Single parenthood is not just a product of our modern culture; throughout history they have raised, not only their children, but also nations with a higher vision for life."

Women like **Rachel Lavein Fawcett**, abandoned single mother of Alexander Hamilton; **Harriet Jacobs**, an unwed mother of slavery whose autobiography was published the year the Civil War began; and widowed **Belva Lockwood**, the first woman to officially run for President. These uniquely powerful, brave women, within the scope of their own world and times, are like the majority of single mothers today who never intended to carry that distinction. They are abandoned, widowed, or divorced, all carrying wounds, yet they also all find ways to exhibit courage, kindness, dignity, and faith to heal themselves by healing others.

Being so passionate about single parents, Ms. Turner took time before the lecture to speak with several board members and awardees of the Union County Single Parent Scholarship Fund (below).

R-L Bobbie Smith
(SPSF Awardee),
Janine Turner
(Actress/Author),
Chazney Smith
(SPSF Awardee)



Pat Schram—Cont'd from page 1

mental health practice, the Fayetteville Public Library, and for the past 10 years, in an alternative learning program for at-risk students at Fayetteville High School. It is wonderful to be back in the non-profit arena.

Both professionally and as a single mom with the youngest of 6 kids finishing high school, I recognize and fully appreciate the value of education and life-long learning as a way to sustain the economic viability of a family. I look forward to adding my experience, skills and enthusiasm to the network of phenomenal people working together to support single parents in attaining an education and improving the economic stability of their families.



Holding Her Head High
by Actress Janine Turner is available
in print or digital format at any book
store. Turner's book retails for
\$22.99.

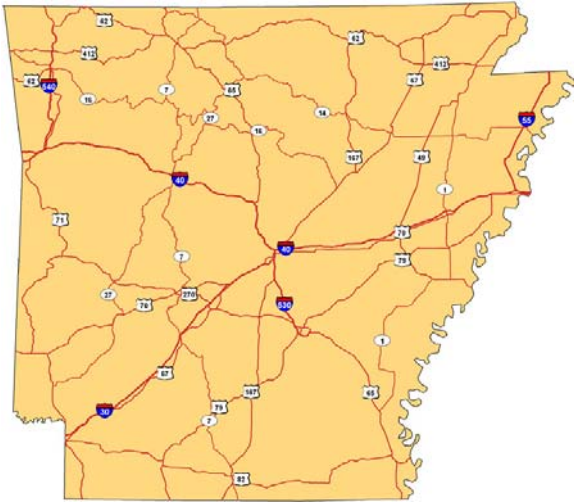
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AFFILIATES CORNER

A New Direction in Tracking Single Parent Scholarships



Hi All! Chris Womack, here. Beginning this year I am very excited to be serving affiliates in a new role as ASPSF's Director of Information Technology! My first order of business is to study ways that ASPSF can better serve our hard-working volunteers and staff, while also improving the quality of our follow-up studies and communication across our vast, revolving affiliate network.

Everything SPSF boards do involves collecting information and planning strategies to relay it—from soliciting donations to awarding scholarships. These are not just arbitrary bits of information that we toss out in the wind, hoping someone will take notice. We devise strategies that tie these bits together to create a compelling and real story. Collectively, we have served tens of thousands of single parents

since 1990; yet, tens of thousands still need help. So we continue telling their stories, and demonstrating the ongoing need for and progress of Single Parent Scholarships.

Thus far, our affiliates have been faced with devising their own tracking systems to measure their progress and manage their Scholarship Funds. This wheel has been reinvented countless times and varies widely in terms of design and capability: everything from handwritten records to professionally designed, custom databases. Most affiliates agree that reporting to ASPSF and donors is a time-consuming, arduous task; we believe it can be alleviated with an efficient centralized data collection system.

There are lots of things to consider when proposing improvements to our current information systems. First and foremost, we must understand what information affiliate boards and ASPSF staff need now and in the future. Ultimately we need to design a system that creates greater synergy between affiliates and ASPSF. In much the same way commissions plan new roads for the economic growth and support of our state, it is our goal to build an infrastructure of technical services that support the growth of Single Parent Scholarships. Each element must be simple to use regardless of a person's computer skills. They must also be secure, dependable, and efficient in tracking scholarships and students.

In May a committee of ASPSF staff and state and affiliate board members will begin a major planning effort to design the first hub of the SPSF Information Highway. The foundation of this system will be an all-inclusive database used to safeguard historical affiliate data, track student retention and graduation, and help measure the progress toward achieving the SPSF mission. Major components will include reporting, contact management, and communication management tools. Possible features may also include online forms and events management.

To build a system that anyone can use and everyone *wants* to use, we need an advisory committee with diverse skills, those with either technical or non-technical background. If you would like to join, or are simply interested in learning more about this project, please contact me, Chris Womack, at 479.927.1402 xt. 10 or cwomack@jtlshop.jonesnet.org.

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SPSF Graduation Rate is Remarkable

A recent article in the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette (4/25/09) revealed that the current graduation rate from Arkansas two- and four-year public colleges and universities is 40.2%. This means that only four out of ten entering freshman will earn a degree after three or six years. Our annual follow-up of Single Parent Scholarship awardees has revealed a retention and graduation rate of between 77% and 83% over the last ten years, with 2007's rate at 78%.

Why such a difference in success rates? Single mothers and fathers are thinking of their children's lives when they endeavor to earn a college degree. They so want a better life for themselves and their children that they are committed to hard work and sacrifice to make that dream a reality. The community, in the form of volunteer SPSF board members, scholarship donors, mentors and all others who make our scholarships possible, makes a huge commitment to students. The resolve of single parent students and the dedication of the community is truly the formula for success!!

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