

Arkansas
SINGLE PARENT SCHOLARSHIP FUND

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Opening doors to a
brighter world.

More Than \$1 Million in Scholarships

The past year witnessed substantial growth in scholarship provision among sixty-two county affiliates of the ASPSF. According to reports, 1,935 scholarships worth \$1,131,963 were made available to eligible single mothers and fathers enrolled in post-secondary education study. This is the first year in our sixteen-year history that scholarship dollars rose over the million-dollar threshold.

Single Parent Scholarships are awarded to those who meet eligibility criteria including: awardees must be low or moderate income single parents with custodial care of

children under the age of eighteen. They must be high school graduates or have earned their GED and have enrolled in a post-secondary course of study leading to a degree, diploma, certificate or license. Awardees must prepare themselves through study for a skilled occupation leading directly to economic self-sufficiency.

Since the ASPSF was founded in 1990, 15,357 scholarships worth \$7.54 million have been awarded within the state of Arkansas. Affiliate support in the form of matching grants has totaled \$1.88 million.

Student Success Rate at 81.1%

Following up on the success of awardees of Single Parent Scholarships is critically important to all who want an answer to the question: do our scholarships really make a difference? Each year, SPSF's are asked to determine the status of awardees in order to determine an overall retention and graduation rate. In 2005, research on the previous year's recipients revealed that out of 1,115 awardees, 81.1% either remained in school or earned their degrees. Furthermore, 71% of all graduates were employed at an income above the poverty threshold and 22.4% of graduates were continuing their education.

Follow-up of awardees for the past six years has consistently produced a retention and graduation rate of above 80%. This remarkable indicator of success suggests that better than four out of five scholarship awardees will earn a post-secondary educational degree or diploma if sufficient financial aid and lots of encouragement and support are available to them.



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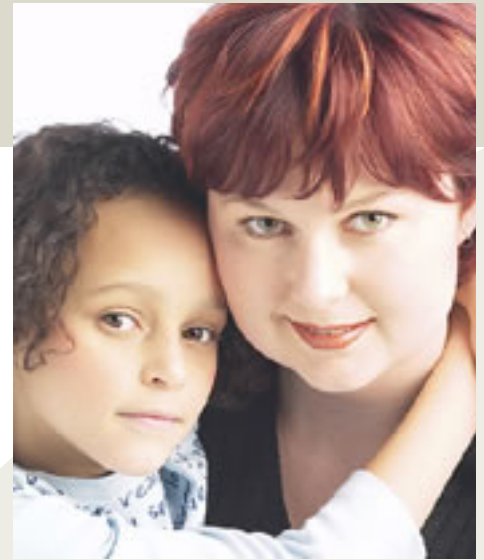


Our Programs

Services and Programs of ASPSF

Underlying every scholarship awarded through a Single Parent Scholarship Fund is a layer of hard work performed by volunteer board members who raise money, interview and select applicants, publicize the availability of their awards, mentor students, and constantly “tweak” the entire process. To make their work more effective, the ASPSF offers developmental assistance in several areas:

- **WEBSITE:** online affiliate applications, dedicated affiliate web page, online donations, Resource Toolbox and much more
- **ON-SITE STAFF:** field representatives available to train board members, help with strategic planning, assist with fundraising, publicity, and board recruitment
- **COMMUNICATIONS CD:** Collection of customizable templates for logo, stationery, brochure, poster, and public service announcements
- **AFFILIATE SEED AND MATCHING GRANTS:** up to \$7,500 annually in match of local contributions towards scholarships
- **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE:** free annual conference with workshops, panel discussions, networking opportunities and cash prizes for scholarships
- **QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER:** contains articles and information of interest to board members, students, contributors and the general public
- **EVERGREEN MARKETING FOLDERS:** beautifully designed folders donated by Wal-Mart Stores are available to affiliates for use in all marketing and public relations efforts.



Delta Scholarship Project

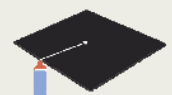
In a proactive response to the economic depression of the Arkansas Delta region of the Mississippi River, the ASPSF Board of Directors launched the Delta Scholarship Project in 2000 with the goal of increasing the availability of our awards. This has been accomplished through the strategic placement of two experienced field staff in the southern and northern areas of the region. Beverly Chapple and Kim Dollins work on a daily basis with affiliate boards in all twenty-seven counties, helping them to develop sound plans for publicity, fundraising, interviewing and selection of awardees, leadership development and mentoring.

Since the establishment of the Delta Scholarship Project, 1,889 awards worth \$753,385 have been provided to single parents pursuing their post-secondary education. In 2005 alone, 457 scholarships valued at \$182,210 were awarded.

Arkansas Scholarship Connection

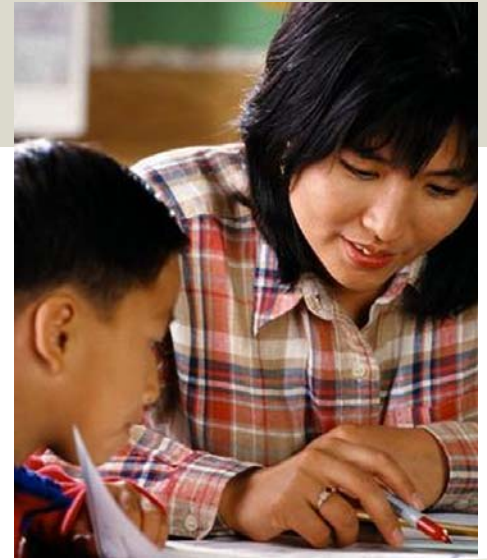
The Arkansas Scholarship Connection (ASC) was initiated in the early 1990's by the ASPSF in response to many inquiries about scholarships other than those offered by Single Parent Scholarship Funds. It is now an online database of over 1,600 sources of financial aid. In 2005, visitors to the ASC website numbered over 10,000 while those who completed a personal profile form and received a list of potential scholarships, loans and grants numbered over 3,000.

This project is funded by a grant from the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and the Walton Family Foundation and is completely free to the public. Director Merin Singleton regularly updates and augments information contained in the database. She also visits college and high school campuses throughout Arkansas to promote its use.



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Accomplishments



Walker Challenge is Completed

In early 2004, the Willard and Pat Walker Charitable Foundation provided a \$500,000 challenge grant to the ASPSF. Its purpose was to create a large pool of dollars for affiliate support, all with the aim of increasing the availability of scholarships throughout Arkansas. Although a three year deadline was generously offered, a fine effort of board, staff and state-wide volunteers secured over \$556,500 in matching contributions by the late fall of 2005. Once the campaign to complete the Walker Challenge ended in success, the ASPSF board of directors increased annual support of affiliates to the \$6,000 per county level outside the Delta, held steady at \$7,500 per county within the Delta and created a \$50,000 bonus pool to be shared by affiliates making their match.

Entergy and Harps Underwrite Scholars Programs

Two corporate supporters now encourage the attainment of excellence in academic performance by SPSF awardees. The Entergy Charitable Foundation donated \$30,000 in 2005 to underwrite scholarships awarded in twenty-nine counties in which the Entergy Corporation provides service. Harps Food Stores has donated an equal amount for similar awards in 2006 in fifteen counties served by the company. Award ceremonies honor the students recognized as Entergy and Harps Scholars, along with representatives of the two contributing corporations.

New Online Contribution System

In an effort to make fundraising easier for Single Parent Scholarship Funds, the ASPSF has developed a way for donors to make contributions using their credit cards. Donors can simply log on to the ASPSF website at www.aspsf.org, click on "Donate Now", and make a credit card contribution to their county SPSF. Although originally intended as an experiment to determine level of usefulness and need, this system may be incorporated into the ASPSF website on a permanent basis if the need for such is confirmed.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund Contribute Form". The form is for making a credit card contribution. It includes sections for "Personal Information" (First Name, Middle Name, Last Name), "Contact Information" (Street Address, City, State/Province, Country, Zip Code, Email Address, Phone Number), and "About Your Gift" (Gift Amount, County). There are also checkboxes for "One Time Donation" and "Recurring Donation". The form is set against a background with a graduation cap icon and the text "OPTIMIZING A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY" and "Building Parents to Single Parents to Self-Sufficiency through Post-Secondary Education".

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Beverly Chapple
Kim Dollins
Jessica Quihuis

Arkansas Scholarship Connection**Student Support Specialist**

Merin Singleton

Portrait of a successful recipient

Brenda Bergen is a nurse working in the cardiology unit at Washington Regional Hospital in Fayetteville. She is earning a good living, cares for her thirteen-year-old daughter and has recently purchased her first home. However, the Sequoyah, Oklahoma native worked for years in entry level, low paying jobs before deciding to enroll at North Arkansas Community College in Harrison. With help from the Boone County Single Parent Scholarship Fund over four semesters, she was able to earn her certificate as a licensed practical nurse and achieve a lifelong dream. The pursuit of a higher education and skill training has enabled Brenda, in her own words "...to have more than just a job. I can have a meaningful profession, offer a healing hand to others while giving my little girl the life she deserves."

Brenda Bergen's experience is emblematic of so many single mothers and fathers who have made the personal decision to turn their dreams into practical, attainable goals. Furthering her education literally opened the doors to a better, brighter future for Brenda, as it has for thousands of others. Single Parent Scholarships help keep those doors open wide.



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