

ASPIRE enters Louisiana - Adds Second Affiliate in Mississippi

National ASPIRE is pleased to announce that new Affiliates have been established in Monroe, Louisiana, Opelousas, Louisiana and Jackson, Mississippi. ASPIRE Field Representative, Barbara Pitts Riley, has been meeting with community members in these cities for over a year and is very pleased with the results of her travels.

Be watching for more information as boards come together in these locations to meet the needs of low income single parents and their children. We cannot wait to share their future successes!

ASPIRE of North Delta Mississippi Celebrates First Community Event



ASPIRE of NDMS board of directors and scholarship recipients.

ASPIRE of North Delta Mississippi (NDMS) held its first community event on Tuesday, April 23, 2013 at the Cutrer Mansion in Clarksdale, Mississippi. Members from the community enjoyed the festivities. Those attending heard about ASPIRE and the benefits of the program from Board Chairman Charles Butler, Co-Chairman Orlando Paden and the scholarship recipients.

The NDMS Affiliate receives funding through a grant given by the Delta Bridge Project (DBP) for students who live in Coahoma County, Mississippi only—additional funds raised by the board and the community-at-large support scholarships for non-Coahoma County residents. Students supported by the DBP grant get \$1,000 scholarships per semester, while non-DBP funded students receive \$500 scholarships per semester.

"I want to be the first to graduate in my family. I want the change to start with me so my children see that even if you have kids when you're young, you don't have to give up on your goals."

~ Netta Davis- Education major

ASPIRE of North Delta Mississippi has awarded 12 scholarships to-date. Board members are hopeful that with dedicated fundraising, the board will be able to increase the amount of non-DBP scholarships they are able to award per semester.

ASPIRE of NDMS Receives First Major Gift!



**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**
of Northwest Mississippi

On June 6th, ASPIRE of North Delta Mississippi was awarded their first major gift in the amount of \$2,000 from representatives Josephine Rhymes and Pete Johnson of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi.

Jean Duff, Secretary for ASPIRE of NDMS, applied for the grant with the sole purpose of using the award to fund four additional scholarships for the Fall 2013 semester. The grant was written as a matching grant, so ASPIRE of NDMS will be fundraising for the additional \$2,000 this year.



ASPIRE Reflects on a "life well spent"



Marjorie Marugg-Wolfe

Marjorie Marugg-Wolfe, past board president of ASPIRE and founder of the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County (Arkansas), passed away on Sunday, March 3, 2013 in Rogers, AR. She was beloved by many and revered as a champion for single parents in Arkansas and nationwide. Marjorie believed that with a little help and encouragement, single parents could achieve their dreams and provide a better life and greater opportunities for their children.

**"The money is essential,
but the relationship is what
makes the program
a success."
~ Marjorie Marugg-Wolfe**

As the *Benton County Daily Record* wrote on March 8, 2013, "Although she received award after award for her devotion, the real prize for her work lives on in the improved circumstances of thousands of single parents who have been, and continue to be, affected, and future generations whose lives have been forever improved."



Marjorie and John Wolfe

Marjorie had a huge vision and has left the world a much better place. She left an amazing legacy. Marjorie, we will miss you, your words of advice and inspirational talks. Thank you for a life well spent!

Pitts' Stops

Barbara Pitts Riley, ASPIRE's Field Representative, has been busy lately! Between developing new relationships with prospective Affiliate board members, getting the word out about ASPIRE, and training current Affiliates, Barbara has made over 25 "Pitts Stops" to community colleges and university campuses since January 2013! Here's what's been going on with Barbara:

January 2013: Barbara,

- * Visited the TCTX Affiliate in Fort Worth, TX with ASPIRE's Executive Director, Christine Zini, to train board members on STAR.
- * Went to Houston, TX to set up appointments with education professionals, and Cypress, TX to talk to employees of Computer Explorers about supporting ASPIRE in the future.
- * Treked to Monroe and Rayville, LA to visit with community members about establishing an Affiliate.

February 2013: Barbara,

- * Met with an attorney in Texarkana, TX about the possibility of establishing an ASPIRE Affiliate.
- * Joined Christine Zini for NDMS Affiliate board meeting in Clarksdale, MS.
- * Traveled to TCTX Affiliate in Fort Worth, TX for February board meeting.
- * Visited Jackson, MS/Ruston, LA/Grambling, LA for Affiliate development.

March 2013: Barbara,

- * Participated in National ASPIRE's annual board retreat in Fayetteville, AR. Also traveled to Joplin, MO with Executive Assistant Abbey Stone to provide technical assistance to SWMO Affiliate.
- * Visited Baton Rouge/Hammond/Shreveport/New Orleans, LA for Affiliate development.
- * Traveled to TCTX Affiliate in Fort Worth, TX for March board meeting.

April 2013: Barbara,

- * Traveled to San Diego, CA with Christine Zini and Abbey Stone for AFP's International Conference on Fundraising.
- * Attended the NDMS Affiliate's first community event—an Introduction to ASPIRE—in Clarksdale, MS.
- * Provided training on Presenting Awards to the TCTX Affiliate in Fort Worth, TX.
- * Treked to Atlanta, GA to assist the MAGA Affiliate in finding more applicants, as well as donors/partners.



Barbara Pitts Riley

ASPIRE of SWMO Celebrates its Successes in Style



ASPIRE of SWMO board of directors

ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri held its 3rd annual Celebration of Success on Thursday, June 13, 2013 in Joplin, Missouri.

Those attending heard moving testimonials from two current students and a graduate of the SWMO program. The recipients spoke of the support and encouragement they received. It was touching to witness



ASPIRE of SWMO scholarship recipients

the faces of the children as they watched their parents being honored for their success. ASPIRE of SWMO anticipates raising close to \$40,000 for scholarships!

One major highlight from the evening was the announcement that scholarships are increasing from \$750 to \$1,000 per semester! That's certainly what we call a reason to celebrate!!!

2013 ASPIRE Board Retreat

ASPIRE board members and guests gathered on March 16, at the Bentonville Public Library, for the annual board retreat.

Attendees were treated to catered snacks and lunch as they listened to Blair Johanson describe effective board leadership, Executive Director Christine Zini and National ASPIRE board president Carla Wasson speak about issues such as discrimination and ethics, moderator Kelley Bradley held a round table during lunch for open discussion among everyone and Kim Hodus, CEO of Kitchen Table, ended the day with a segment on motivation and inspiration.



National ASPIRE board member Tania Knudsen

Thank you to all of our attendees and guest speakers for joining us!



National ASPIRE staff, board members, Affiliate board members and guests

2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carla Wasson
PRESIDENT

Alice Balzer
VICE PRESIDENT

Cynthia Burns
TREASURER

Lee Balzer
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Beth Graves
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Tania Knudsen
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

John Suttle
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

Debbie Walker
MEMBER-AT-LARGE

STAFF

Christine Zini
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Abbey Stone
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Barbara Pitts Riley
FIELD REPRESENTATIVE

*Gratitude is the
memory of the heart.*

-French Proverb



*ASPIRE of
GCOK's
Board
President,
Susan Lipe,
with ASPIRE
of MAGA's
Janeine
Borden*



ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri Highlights Recent Graduate

"Bright Future"

Dark haze, with fear in my heart,
 What will I do, how will I start?
 Holding on to something not there,
 Feeling the world just doesn't care.
 Tears will be shed, with pain in your chest,
 Time will heal, and put you through the test.
 Bright lights from above,
 Starting to wonder the truth of love.
 Questioning, what was true,
 But, moving on with something new.
 Never looking back, with a smile on my face,
 Feels like I ran a marathon race.
 What is this? New people to meet,
 "Come on in, and take a seat."
 "Nice to meet you, we'll let you know."
 Leticia smiling with the utmost glow.
 Nervously waiting for something good,
 Things finally worked out the way they should.
 For once in my life, I'm truly happy,
 No more tears shed, no more sappy.
 ASPIRE, ASPIRE, what can I say?
 For believing and making me the person I am today.
 No words can explain how to say "thank you,"
 But, I have to say you're one of the few.
 Happiness and success was something I lacked,
 Thanks to ASPIRE, I accomplished, with no looking back.



Krista Smith, ASPIRE of SWMO graduate

- Krista Smith, 2012 ASPIRE of SWMO Scholarship Recipient and MSSU Education graduate

Krista just completed her first year of teaching Kindergarten in the Webb City, MO school district and moved into a new home last year!

National ASPIRE and ASPIRE of SWMO would like to congratulate Krista on her success!

ASPIRE of Green Country Oklahoma sees green with First Ask Letter



*ASPIRE of GCOK's Board
 President Susan Lipe*

ASPIRE of Green Country Oklahoma (GCOK) in Tulsa, OK has taken the initiative to step up their fundraising efforts. The board recently decided to write 2 templates for ask letters to send out to their friends and business acquaintances. Board president, Susan Lipe, had tremendous success with her first letter—receiving a \$10,000 donation!

"We wanted to put enough information in the letter to introduce the organization and its purpose without having too much statistical information," Susan declared. "I ran in to someone I hadn't seen in years that owns a very successful business in the area. I told him a bit about ASPIRE and he asked me to send him some information. I sent him a letter and a brochure, the next thing I knew he sent a donation of \$10,000! Wow!!!"

Carey Haynie, Treasurer for ASPIRE of GCOK, said "We are encouraged that others in our community see the need to support single parents in their quest for higher education as we recently received a \$10,000 donation from someone who merely heard about the organization from one of our board members and mailed us a check. Education is a cornerstone for not only financial support but for all facets of life and we at ASPIRE of Green Country are ecstatic when we see our recipients accomplish their dreams."

ASPIRE of GCOK saw one student graduate in March from a nursing program, and another student complete her basic courses at the community college and is now enrolled at ORU.

ASPIRE Improves STAR Database

National ASPIRE has been working diligently over the past few months updating the STAR (Student Tracking and Records) Database so that it is more user-friendly for students and Affiliates. Some of the more notable improvements for students have been: an initial screening process so that applicants know immediately if they qualify; a multi-screen application that allows students to save their information and return at a later time; and the ability for applicants to upload supporting documents, eliminating the problem of losing information in the mail. These updates will make it easier for our Affiliates to have the required student information readily accessible to them.

National ASPIRE is committed to making updates to STAR to ensure that it continues to be a tool that works effectively and efficiently for everyone. We welcome suggestions or comments.

Congratulations to our Surviving Spouse Recent Graduates!



Landyn, Sheena and Aidan McCloud

ASPIRE's Surviving Spouse Scholarship Program had two graduates this past Spring semester, Kristen Santos-Silva and Sheena McCloud!

Kristen graduated from the University of Phoenix with her Bachelor's degree in Human Services Management. She plans on taking a break this summer to spend time with her son, Cameron, before beginning her Master's degree courses through the University of Southern California's Virtual Academic Center Master of Social Work program with an emphasis in Military Social Work.



Kristen and Cameron Santos-Silva

Sheena graduated from Central Texas College with her Associate's degree in Nursing. She has recently obtained employment at Scott & White Medical Center in Temple, TX, where she will work while continuing to earn her Bachelor's degree in Nursing at the University of Texas at Arlington.

Congratulations, Ladies!! We couldn't be prouder of you both!!!

ASPIRE AFFILIATES

ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri

ASPIRE of Green Country
Oklahoma

ASPIRE of North Delta
Mississippi

ASPIRE of Metro Atlanta
Georgia

ASPIRE of San Francisco
California

ASPIRE of Tarrant County Texas

Upcoming Deadlines

July 31, 2013

- * All applicant interviews must be completed by this date

August 1, 2013

- * All applicant acceptance & denial letters, along with acceptance packets must be sent out by this date
- * Request for funds (including supporting documents) has to be sent into National ASPIRE
- * Scholarship Award Reports have to be sent into National ASPIRE

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aspireus08.wordpress.com

follow us on
twitter
[@aspireus_org](https://twitter.com/aspireus_org)

By investing in ASPIRE, you will be providing hope to real people who will be empowered through education, thus bringing significant change to the underserved and oppressed single parents in our nation. Your gift will live on in transformed and grateful individuals. As we have witnessed over and over, when single parents become financially stable, they wholeheartedly give back to the communities that made their dream of education a reality.

Yes! I want to help ASPIRE provide single parents the opportunity of an education.
 Enclosed is my gift of \$ _____.

Name on Account (Please Print) : _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Payment Options: ☐ Check Enclosed ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date: _____

Security V-Code (3 digit number on BACK of card): _____

Authorized Signature: _____

_____ Please contact me to arrange for a donation of stock.

_____ Please contact me to arrange for a regular bank draft donation.

_____ I prefer my donation remain anonymous.

_____ To donate online, please visit our website: www.aspireus.org

Your contribution can be mailed to:
ASPIRE - 20 E. Center Street - Fayetteville, AR 72701

www.aspireus.org

479.973.0800 (p)
 866.973.0805 (t)