



aspire.  
assisting single parents in  
realizing education

\*stepup

News from aspire: assisting single parents in realizing education

## Update on ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri

"Were you affected?" That is a question heard quite regularly in Joplin, Missouri since an EF-5 tornado ripped through town on May 22, 2011. Not everyone was physically affected by the loss of health, home, cars, or possessions. But, everyone in the city of Joplin was affected mentally and emotionally. Getting lost in a town you've lived in for 25 years because there are no street signs and no visible landmarks affects you. Spending three hours being rerouted on the phone to track down the pediatrician to schedule a routine physical for your child to attend summer camp takes its toll on you.

**Thankfully, our ASPIRE organization in Joplin was spared. No current recipients or board members were harmed in the path of the tornado. Of course, everyone knew family or friends who were physically and emotionally affected.**

**The organization was also spared. Files, paperwork, and office equipment were still intact. But, it was impacted. Our largest (and only) fundraiser and publicity event, the Celebration of Success, was scheduled to take place on June 16<sup>th</sup> at St. Paul's United Methodist Church. Since the church was severely damaged and everyone in the city needed to focus on tornado recovery, the board felt it best to cancel the event. The publicity and increased community awareness of our program from the event was gone. Almost \$20,000 in funds we had budgeted to raise at the event were lost.**

There is a bright side to being affected by the tornado. One of our current recipients, in her last year of college, majoring in Social Work, volunteered for a position with Catholic Charities in disaster case management after the tornado. She said, "After volunteering for a month, [they] hired me on as a permanent employee. They have agreed to work around my schedule during my last semester of classes. I will also be able to do my practicum semester with them. I am so blessed, and the ASPIRE scholarship plays a part in my success. Soon I

will be able to buy a house and continue my professional career with Catholic Charities!"

"Were you affected?" Yes. We, at ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri, have been affected by the May 22<sup>nd</sup> tornado. The positive result of which is a renewed inspiration to continue our mission of helping single parents build a better life for themselves and their families.



*Wendy Wright, Secretary, Board of Directors  
ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri*

### Highlights

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*When we can no longer change a situation, we are challenged to change our self.*

*-Viktor Frankel*

## 2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**Pete Metzger**  
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**ASPIRE of Southwest Missouri**

**ASPIRE of Northeast  
Oklahoma**

**ASPIRE of Green Country  
Oklahoma**

**ASPIRE of North Shore  
Louisiana**

## A message from our Board.

*We wholeheartedly support ASPIRE - Dr. Lee & Alice Balzer*

We support ASPIRE enthusiastically because we both have more than 40 years of experience working with young adults who are setting the direction of their lives. We both also have 15 years of experience in helping support and encourage single parents trying to re-direct their lives to get a college degree, hold meaningful employment and lead their children responsibly.

We've witnessed the tremendous success of such efforts in Arkansas and are excited about the ASPIRE vision to help organize and facilitate such life changing results nationwide. We wholeheartedly support the efforts now being made to establish affiliates to assist single parents through the ASPIRE program in a number of locations around the country.

Lee and Alice



*John Brown University recently completed an engineering and construction management facility that was named in honor of former JBU President Dr. Lee Balzer and First Lady Alice Balzer.*

## ASPIRE has crossed into Louisiana!

ASPIRE is proud to announce our first affiliate in Louisiana! We are thrilled to officially welcome Wallace Sibley and Stephanie Schulte to the ASPIRE family. ASPIRE of North Shore Louisiana is located in Hammond, LA.

Wallace is currently the Executive Director for the Quad Area Community Action Agency in Hammond, LA. His background in serving individuals and families through nonprofit partnerships goes back more than 20 years. At present, the Quad Area CAA serves thousands of families in seven parishes in Louisiana with a focus on helping meet the needs of homeless veterans. After Wallace was introduced to ASPIRE he made the statement, "This is the piece we have been missing. I want to sign up and join".

Stephanie Schulte, has also joined the ASPIRE of North Shore Louisiana family. Stephanie is the former Executive Director of the Hammond Chamber of Commerce, along with having served as the Program Director of The Catholic Charities of Baton Rouge, LA and as the Executive Director of the Greater New Orleans United Way. She has been tasked with completing the administrative requirements in order to award ASPIRE scholarships.

We welcome Wallace Sibley, Stephanie Schulte and the upcoming Board of Directors to ASPIRE of North Shore Louisiana. We are confident single parents will benefit from the dedication of our first Louisiana affiliate.

## Windgate Family Charitable Foundation

ASPIRE was recently awarded a two year \$102,000 grant to be used to establish affiliates in Georgia and Kansas. Work has already begun in Atlanta, Georgia and Iola, Kansas. We look forward to introducing new affiliates in both states soon.

### BAE Systems, Inc.

***The Surviving Spouse Scholarship Program has recently celebrated it's first successful school year. This would not have been possible without the continued support of BAE Systems, Inc. We had our first graduate in December, will add one new recipient this fall and will continue to support our five returning military widows. Join us in congratulating BAE, Systems, Inc. for receiving our 2011 Outstanding Sponsor Award!***

### Tips for Affiliates

*Sponsor an open house at your organization and invite students, donors and prospects.*

## Did you know?

Two out of every three fourth graders overall are not proficient in reading, according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The failure to help children from low-income families reach this milestone cements educational failure and poverty into the next generation.

ASPIRE wants to change that reality, and fulfill every parent's dream for their children to succeed in school, work and life through their own educational success.

### New 2011 Board Members



*Denise Henderson*



*Jim Russell*



*Nathalie Brunell*

## TAPS (tragedy assistance program for survivors)

*"We grieve because we love and we are blessed to know such powerful, incredible love."*  
Darcie Sims, PhD

ASPIRE representatives Christine Zini, Executive Director, and Denise Henderson, ASPIRE Board, attended the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) National Military Survivor Seminar and Good Grief Camp for Young Survivors in Washington, DC, Memorial Day Weekend 2011. TAPS is an assistance resource for ANYONE who has suffered the loss of a military loved one, providing ongoing emotional help, hope and healing.

The purpose of ASPIRE's presence at the seminar was to:

- Create awareness of the ASPIRE Military Surviving Spouse Scholarship Program.
- Promote BAE Systems as the primary surviving spouse scholarship grant maker.
- Attract potential new scholars into the program.
- Build relationships and identify new funding opportunities.



*Surviving Spouse Scholarship Recipient Sheena with her two sons Aidan and Landyn*



By investing in ASPIRE, you will be providing hope to real people who will be empowered through education. Thus bringing significant change to the under-served 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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\_\_\_\_\_ Please contact me to arrange for a donation of stock.

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\_\_\_\_\_ To donate online, please visit our website: [www.aspireus.org](http://www.aspireus.org)

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

[www.aspireus.org](http://www.aspireus.org)

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