



Newsletter

Fall 2021

Helping low-income single parents fulfill their dreams of self-sufficiency through post secondary education.

**Oklahoma Single Parent Scholarship Program (OSPSP)** is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 2016 on the principle of providing scholarship funding and support services to high potential, low-income single parents. With a bit of financial support and encouragement, eligible single parents - many of them working full-time, raising children alone, struggling to make ends meet and on the brink of dropping out of college - can earn life-changing degrees and escape poverty. Scholarships are offered twice a year for the Fall and Spring semesters. Potential recipients must complete an application demonstrating their need for assistance, potential for success, and proof of full-time enrollment. After the student is awarded, they are matched with a mentor to set goals and receive support.



## President's Perspective

Nikki Edwards, Board President

Hello and happy fall! Welcome to the first edition of the OSPSP newsletter. Many thanks to new OSPSP board member, Marcy Price, for the creative determination to tell our OSPSP story as well as share empowering stories of student success.

This time of year is always exciting as it means new beginnings, a new fall semester, changing leaves, and OPPORTUNITIES. For OSPSP, it means continued success and growth. We awarded **18** scholarships this Fall semester, meaning we've awarded **100+** total scholarships in our short 5-year tenure. Already, we've helped **27** single parents graduate!

Our landmark annual fundraiser held in September at Dunlap Coddling's event space raised over \$75,000, which will allow us to provide financial and mentoring support to more deserving parents in 2022. Thank you to everyone who donated to our cause and to board member Lindsey Cummins who led our event planning!

Finally, I'd like to congratulate our newest board members, Molly McBride, Marcy Price, and graduate representative Katie Resneder.

And to our outgoing board members, Founder, Ellen Ingram, and Student Services Co-Chair, Barbara Batchelor, we owe a huge debt of service for their grit, wisdom, kindness, and dedication.. thank you....., xoxo

I close with a quote from one of my personal heroes.

*"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."*

-Maya Angelou

Stay tuned for more exciting opportunities with OSPSP!

Be well and be the change!

*Nikki Edwards*



"...I decided it was my time to show my kids we must finish, what we start!"

Keila Martinez  
Radiation Technology  
Graduates Spring 2022

# Fall 2021 Scholarships

Melanie Armstrong - OSUOKC  
Yaneida Carballo - UCO  
Mizarette Dobganda - OCCC  
Rachell Fletcher - OCCC  
Hope Gross - OSUOKC  
Arizona Haney - OCCC  
Cecilia Hill - Rose State  
Jennifer Kliever - OCCC  
Destiny Kueneman - OCCC

Brooklyn Learned - OU  
Sarah Little Tarlton - UCO  
Yolanda Martin - OSUOKC  
Kelia Martinez - OSUOKC  
Sherrene' Rhodes - Langston  
Heavenly Shirley - OCCC  
Deanna Taylor - OSUOKC  
Cheri Tointigh - SNU  
Tanika Turner - OCCC



2016 - 2021

**59** Students Served  
**121** Scholarships  
**27** Student Graduates

## Scholarship Awards Ceremony

Each semester, the scholarship committee interviews eligible applicants, and reviews faculty recommendations, documentations of financial need and academic records to select award recipients. Once recipients are selected, they are paired with a volunteer mentor who is available to offer encouragement and connections to community resources. Children living in single-parent homes are almost four times more likely to be impoverished than those living in a two-parent home. OSPSP offers the financial cushion and emotional support that empower low-income single parents to earn a college degree - increasing the likelihood that their children will escape poverty and go on to attend college in the future. OSPSP celebrates the student recipients each year with an Awards Ceremony held on the OSU-OKC campus. This provides a chance for children to see their parents rewarded for their academic studies and pursuing their dream of self-sufficiency by earning a college degree.

*"...as a single mother I try to set the best example that I can for them."*



Student Recipients and children at the Fall 2021 Awards Ceremony



**Spring 2022 Scholarship Applications Open 12/13/21**

[www.okspsp.org/apply](http://www.okspsp.org/apply)



# Paying it Forward

Sarah Core  
Graduated OCCC 2020  
Nursing School

**Thank you for your dedication and your generosity, Sarah!**

***"...The funds helped me overcome the emotional and financial stress of being a single parent while attending nursing school".***

"Sarah explained...There were so many out-of-pocket expenses at the start. The funds covered uniforms, medical equipment like my stethoscope, and later provided a much-needed cushion for unexpected expenses that impacted my family". With the support of her mentor, Susan Wegrzynski, on staff at the OU Trauma Center, Sara began her career at OU as a critical care nurse in the ICU. Sarah is a single mom with two school-age children and a limited support system. Yet, as a past recipient of the financial awards, Sarah paid it forward by donating \$1,000 to OSPSP to fund another scholarship for a single parent like herself, who is pursuing a college degree!



## **A note from Sarah's Mentor, Susan Wegrzynski**

"I was working at OU Physicians Surgical Clinic at the time I was mentoring Sarah. Sarah is amazing! She is a single parent raising her family, pursuing a career in nursing, and still has the time and motivation to think of giving back to the community. Her donation of \$1000 to provide a financial award for another student like herself, demonstrates her caring and compassionate nature, which makes her entry into nursing the perfect career choice. She exemplifies the mission of the OK Single Parent Scholarship Program and we wish her continued success".



## **Fall 2021 Volunteer Mentors**

*We Appreciate You*

**Barbara Batchelor  
Jennifer Davis  
Adele Edmonds  
Nikki Edwards  
Rachel Holt  
Ellen Ingram**

**Annette Jacobi  
Gabrielle Jacobi  
LuAnne Kuelzer  
Candace Lagere  
Lisa McConnell  
Amber Martin**

**Kelly Mirabile  
Sheryl Powers  
Katie Resneder  
Maggie Schifferdecker  
Jill Trauscke  
Dorothy Weaver**

***Interested in being a mentor? Email [admin@okspsp.org](mailto:admin@okspsp.org)***

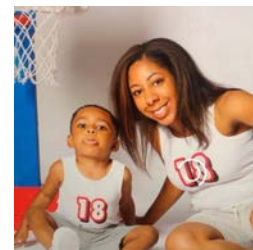
# Breaking the Cycle of Poverty and Supporting Academic Success

***Nadine Davis, Former President of the OSPSP Board***

I attended an event where a former scholarship recipient brought the room to tears as she shared her journey. She had recently graduated and recalled how much the Oklahoma Single Parent Scholarship Program meant to her as she overcame the challenges of working, struggling to pay bills, and raising her kids alone. We learned how her four children watched her persevere and were inspired as she went to college to pursue a better life for them. This program impacts not just the students, but future generations. The unfortunate reality is that earning a degree, with the multiple stressors of balancing work and being a single parent can be overwhelming...

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, single mothers are the least likely of college students to graduate. Studies show that nationwide, only 8% of single mothers obtain an

an associate or bachelor's degree within six years of enrolling in college, compared with about half of female undergraduates overall. Ensuring these single parents get a college degree is often a critical step to self-sufficiency for their families and a step toward breaking the cycle of poverty in our community. In Oklahoma, single mothers who graduate from college are 67% less likely to live in poverty than a high school graduate".



*Rachel Fletcher  
Nursing  
Graduates Fall  
2021*

# OSPSP Celebrates 5th Year Anniversary

This Fall, a dynamic group of OSPSP Board members, donors, and friends gathered at the Dunlap Coddling Film Row venue to hear firsthand the important ways that scholarships awards change lives for the good - not just for the single parent student themselves but for the entire family. As Margaret Mead so brilliantly stated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Board President Nikki Edwards welcomed everyone to celebrate the fifth anniversary of OSPSP and the awarding of **\$118,000** in total scholarships to single-parent college students completing **27-degree** programs since inception. This past semester, **\$18,000** was awarded to **18** students.



A prime example of the powerful full-circle change generated by this non-profit is the journey of one single parent recipient from college to graduate school, to secure employment as a caseworker to a current OSPSP Board member and now a mentor. Scholarship recipient and Keynote Speaker, Katie Crane Resneder told her remarkable and courageous success story and brought the audience to tears as she shared both her struggles and her determination to earn her college degree while raising her young son. Katie overcame difficult challenges as a single parent during her early college years, but she met adversity with persistence at every turn. After earning an associate's degree, she transferred to OU where she obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work. She is now employed as a case manager with the Homeless Alliance. Katie worked so hard to earn her degrees and credits OSPSP for being there to support her financially and emotionally. (cont.)

## Thank You to Our Event Sponsors

### Doctorate Level

Chip & Lisa Taylor  
Dale & Ellen Ingram

### Masters Level

David & Jean McLaughlin

### Bachelors Level

Lisa & Bentley Edmonds  
Jill & Sean Trauschke



# Thank You to Our Event Sponsors



## Associates Level

Barbara Bonner

Sarah Core

Jane & David Edmonds

Nikki & Marc Edwards

Andrea & Corey Horsch

Aleisha Karjala

Ray & Pat Potts

Dan & Jamie Reincke

Nissa Willis



CENTER FOR ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT LAW



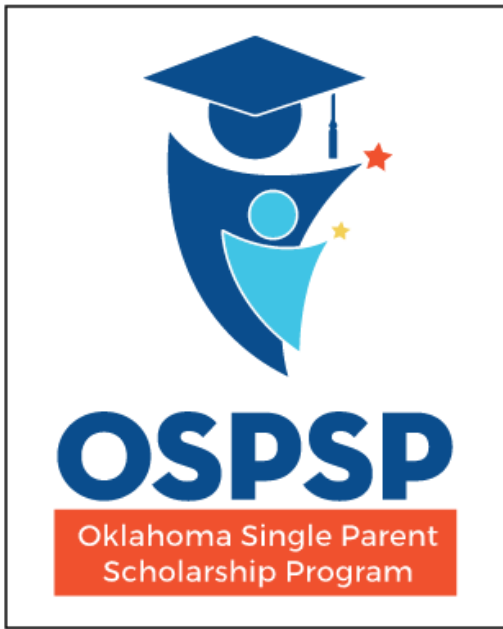
Reach for the Stars is all about dreaming big and bold, and that is exactly what founding member Ellen Ingram did when she helped establish the Oklahoma Single Parent Scholarship Program in OKC five years ago, following her involvement in a similar organization in Arkansas. In her honor, Ellen's husband Dale surprised her and the crowd with a \$10,000 donation to be "seed" money for the organization's growth in perpetuity. As Ellen displayed the poster-sized check, Dale stated, "I can think of no better way to celebrate the first five years of Oklahoma Single Parent Scholarship Program - and the many students we've assisted and helped to graduate - than to offer this gift to be used to help even more students in the future."

The 2021 event raised net proceeds of over **\$75,000** and helped double the total fundraising efforts. A huge thank you first and foremost to Event Chair, Lindsey Cummins, who carried much of the weight of hosting a fund-raising event during another COVID season. Thank you also to all of the sponsors, patrons, donors, and mentors who supported OSPSP and helped our single parent recipients to complete their degrees. The additional funds will help us change the lives of many more dedicated students in the future.

In the words of one appreciative student,...

*"You have been a supporting wing to lift us up as I complete my dream of a college education..."*





**2021 Board of Directors**

<b>Nikki Edwards</b> <i>President</i>	<b>Regina Banks</b> <b>Barbara Batchelor</b> <b>Steven Charles</b>
<b>Jill Trauschke</b> <i>President Elect</i>	<b>Lindsey Cummins</b> <b>Nadine Rayan Davis</b> <b>Anthony Foster Jr.</b>
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	<b>Halley Reeves</b> <b>Katie Resneder</b>

**Help us offer more scholarships to deserving, low-income single parents**

**Donate Now!**

Scan the QR Code or [www.okspsp.org/donate](http://www.okspsp.org/donate)



Learn More at [www.okspsp.org](http://www.okspsp.org)



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