

SOS Announces

2008-09 Women of Value



Since its beginning in 2001, **Scholarship Opportunities for Success** has awarded almost \$75,000 in scholarships and grants to women of low income. LaShawn Capito, who receives a bachelor's degree from Devry University next month, says, "I couldn't have done it without SOS."

...And SOS couldn't have done it without your help!

We congratulate the following women — the 2008-09 Women of Value:

Sana Barrett is a 34 year old mother of four children. SOS contacted her through a Dispatch article published last year. She works full-time while attending Franklin University. At one point she and her four children were homeless. She recently left a secure job with the City of Columbus to work in personnel with a small company to gain experience that will help her job chances after graduation.

Amber Boddie-Jackson is a 32 year old single mother with one child. Carrying a 3.3 cumulative point hour at Columbus State Community College (CSCC), she plans to graduate in 2009 with an associate degree in early childhood development. She then wants to earn a bachelor's degree in social work at The Ohio State University. Amber earns \$22,000 per year and just lost her daughters government health insurance. Along the way she has had to postpone her goals to care for ailing parents. While working full-time at Central Community House, she started a nonprofit organization, Urban Moms United, to assist underprivileged single moms who work or go to school. This is the third award she has received from SOS.

Michelle (Shellie) Burris, 39, received an SOS application from her daughter's GED class. This single mom has three children and works 35 hours per week. With an associate degree from Columbus State, she is working toward a bachelor's degree from Ashland College, expecting to graduate in 2010. Her career goal is to teach children with learning disabilities. Shellie started college classes 20 years ago but dropped out to support her family. They lived in a one-bedroom converted garage until recently when a home purchase was made possible through the Franklinton Development Corp. Shellie volunteers at the Gladden House and her references say she is a wonderful role model for her children..

LaShawn Capito is a married mother with one child. She works full-time at Central Community House where she developed the CC Angels Double Dutch Club which now performs at major

Columbus events. With educational debt of more than \$60,000, she will graduate in June from Devry University. Her ultimate goal is to study medicine at Ohio State and become a doctor serving the near east side. LaShawn was the New Directions Career Center Woman of Promise in 2007. This year's award, her third from SOS, was paid to Devry, enabling her to receive her diploma. She says she never could have finished school without help from SOS to which she will forever be indebted.

One SOS recipient (name withheld) grew up in extreme poverty. She had serious vision problems as a child that were not discovered until she dropped out of school after the eighth grade. She worked as a mechanic to support her family from which she suffered both physical and mental abuse. They convinced her she was stupid. You should hear her describe what it was like after a teacher discovered her vision problems and got her glasses — she hadn't known that she didn't see what others did. She still has vision problems and osteoarthritis in all of her joints. Her goal is to be a mechanical engineer and design prosthetics, wheelchairs, etc. The proudest day of her life was when she got her GED in 2004. She plans to graduate from CSCC in 2010. This is her third SOS award.

Monika Marcum, 35, is a single mother with two teenage children. She works part time and currently has a 3.3 average, planning to graduate in 2010 from CSCC with a major in mental health/chemical dependency. Monika's ultimate goal is to obtain a bachelor's degree and become a licensed independent social worker. As a child, she overcame serious illness and attended 17 different schools. She has glowing references from professors describing how she mentors other students.

Bethany Masters, 28, a single mother of one child works part time. She maintains a 3.8, will graduate in 2010 with an associate degree in nursing from CSCC and intends to go on for a bachelor's degree. She is recovering from physical and emotional abuse

marriage suffered in the marriage she recently ended. She also fought very hard to get her ex-husband's visitation with their child supervised.

Kristine Maynard who is 33 has received an SOS award the past three years. She is the mother of one child, works 21 hours per week and attends Ohio Dominican. She will graduate in 2009 or 2010 as an elementary school teacher with a debt of \$49,000. Kristine is a volunteer for the Girl Scouts. One of her reference letters described her determination to finish her degree, stating that she has even brought her child to class when she had no child care. She is highly motivated to move out of poverty.

Toska Pearson has received help from SOS for the past three years. She is a single mother with one child. She obtained her associate degree from CSCC in 2005, attended Gallaudet University (a university for hearing impaired individuals) for a summer course. Her dream is to become a public relations specialist to advocate for those who are deaf. She will take as many classes at CSCC as possible and then transfer to a four-year school.

Maria Ronny is a 32 year old single mother with four children and works part-time while attending Franklin University full-time. She has a GPA of 3.39 and plans to graduate winter of 2009 with a bachelor of science degree in Business Management and Human Resources and a minor in accounting. She chose these fields because she wants the knowledge that will eventually enable her to own her own business. She has been financing her education with a part-time job and loans (\$7500 at this point). She serves on the board of Women Just Like Me, Inc.

Tracie Smith, age 33 is a married mother of six (four school-age children, two toddlers) with an associate degree. She works 30 hours per week at St. Stephens Community House where she also accepts volunteer leadership roles. After trying to move to a better position and getting nowhere she realized that she had to get a bachelor's degree. She enrolled at Franklin University full-time after being out of school for eleven years. She carries a 3.5 GPA, with a double major in Business Administration and Forensic Management. To accomplish all of this she sometimes studies all night. When confronted with no child care on the day of a final exam she took her child to school with her and the professor allowed her to reschedule the final. She will graduate in the summer of 2009.

Amber Stevens is a 32 year old single mother with three children (honor role students) to support. Two of the children are her siblings. She was sexually abused as a child and then abused by a boyfriend. She had a daughter at 19 and dropped out of college. She fell so far into debt that she had to declare bankruptcy and lost the house she had worked so hard to get and keep. Amber has completed two years of a bachelors program in psychology and human relations. Her goal is to be a life-coach counselor.

Another award winner is a 19 year old single mother with two children. She is from a single parent household that lived in

poverty. She was sexually abused as a child, suffered post-traumatic-stress disorder and at 15 was suicidal because of drugs. She enrolled in a school designed for at-risk students, met teachers who understood and cared — and she excelled. She now works full time while attending CSCC. She wants to be a paramedic.

Veronica Wigfall is a 33 year old single mom with one child. She works 20 hours per week. She is going to graduate in 2009 with a degree in mental health/chemical dependency and mental retardation. She was the first grandchild to graduate from high school. Veronica is eager to get the degree so she can get off of public assistance. She is a very positive role model for her son and wants to get a job with health benefits and wants begin saving money for his college education.

Another recipient is a 24 year old single mom who survived an abusive relationship and has two preschool age children. She works twenty hours per week while carrying a 3.8 cumulative point hour at Devry University. She hopes to have a bachelors degree in Biomedical Engineering by the time her children begin elementary school. As a child she cared for her siblings while her parents worked. After her father left, her addicted mother brought another man into the house; then kicked her out when she did not get along with him. She still managed to stay in school, but was eventually taken to Childrens Services with her brother and sister. By the age of twenty she was a single mom with two children. When the children's father became physically abusive she left home with them and went to Choices. She realized that the only way to improve her children's lives was to get an education. To accomplish this she rose at 5 am and rode three buses to get her children to day care and herself to work and school. Her references show her to be extremely motivated and responsible.

As you can see, most of the women who win SOS assistance share some common characteristics. Many have been abused as children and have suffered from abusive marriages. They choose fields that serve humanity. They volunteer in the community, have high grade point hours, are heavily in debt for their education, and want to be role models for their children. They all live at or near poverty level. Some personal details and identities that could prove dangerous if published were left out of some stories.

SOS helps with tuition, books, child care, transportation, computers and other things that fall through the cracks of many scholarships.

Find out more about SOS at: SOSgrants.org



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