

SOS Announces



2010-2011 Women of Value

Since its beginning in 2001, **Scholarship Opportunities for Success** has awarded over \$110,000 in educational aid to women of low income. Our graduates say, "I couldn't have done it without SOS."

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

We congratulate the following women - the 2010-2011 Women of Value:

Jody Biggers is 50 years old with two children. She divorced after an abusive 20 year marriage and had to file for bankruptcy. Her house was sold at a sheriff's auction in January. She and her children moved in with her sister and brother-in-law rather than face homelessness. Jody realized that the key to a stable future was to return to school. She carries a 3.4 GPA at Columbus State Community College (CSCC) where she plans to obtain an Associate Degree in Supply Chain Management.

Jeanette Bradley, age 56, is the first person in her family to attend college. She has overcome incest, gang rape, human trafficking and, in 1994, drug and alcohol addiction. As she says: "I am a victor and an overcomer." She now wants to help others who feel hopeless and helpless. Jeanette is an ordained evangelist and operates 2nd Chance Ministries. She not only helps people spiritually, but helps people get housing, food, jobs, and counseling. She also

teaches and preaches at youth prisons and women's shelters and is a registered speaker on human trafficking. Her goal is to become a chemical dependency counselor. She attends CSCC, has a 3.5 GPA and will receive her Associate Degree in Mental Health/Chemical Dependency in 2011.

Michelle Burris, age 41, attends CSCC, works full time, and has two children who are on the high school honor roll. She is repaying on old student loans and struggling financially to make ends meet. She carries a 3.5 GPA and will receive an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Development in 2011, then enroll at Ashland University for her teaching degree.

Jaelyne Edmonds, age 26, lost her job, was abandoned by her children's father, suffered from health issues, and was homeless with her three

children. She turned to the YMCA and from there was connected to resources and agencies that helped Jaelyne and her children. She is attending The Ohio Academy to become a licensed cosmetologist. She plans to own and operate her own salon that will be open to all women regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status. She states, "My dream is that someday we can all have a shared beauty ideal where I can work to make a woman's inner beauty shine outwardly."

Patricia Hair, age 36, tried to attend college three previous times, but due to personal and family health issues had to put her education on hold. She now attends CSCC where she is on the Dean's List. Patricia and her husband continued to have struggles. Her husband was laid off, she has no job, they are losing their house and she may lose her financial aid. Nevertheless, this makes her even more determined. She will receive an Associate Degree in Mental Health/Chemical Dependency in 2011. She plans to continue on to Capital University for a Bachelors Degree in Social Work, then to pursue a Masters degree. She wants to work with teen moms. Having been one herself, she feels she has a lot to offer. Patricia says, "I know one thing, when I finish my education, I have a lot of life experiences to share with someone that is in the same situation I used to be in."

Shenequia Joiner, age 29, graduated this spring with an Associate Degree in Mental Health/Chemical Dependency from CSCC. She attended school full time while working full time. She also cares for her fiancé who is blind. She plans to obtain as many prerequisites as possible at CSCC before pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Nursing, and then continue on for her Masters degree and become a Nurse Practitioner. Her ultimate goal is to open a recovery house for women. By being a social worker and a nurse,

Shenequia states, "I will be able to help the ladies with their mental health and their physical health."

Aleta Maddox, age 25, is a single mom raising four children under six years of age without the help of friends or family. Three children have developmental delays and two have special needs. She was raised in the foster care system after her mother, who was a drug addict, abused her physically and then abandoned her. Neither of her parents graduated from high school. Aleta is currently attending Franklin University where she has a 4.0 GPA and is pursuing a Degree in Business Administration.

Monika Marcum, age 36, is a three-time scholarship recipient. She graduated in December, 2009 from CSCC with a GPA of 3.68, earning an Associate Degree in Mental Health/Chemical Dependency. She is open about her addiction to drugs and alcohol prior to 2005; she has been able, as she says, "to pull myself from this deadly way of life." Monika plans to attend The Ohio State University to obtain a degree in Social Work. Because of her GPA, she is a candidate for the Accelerated Masters Program.

Another recipient (name withheld) is a single mom of two children who works 25 hours per week and attends CSCC. She just completed a 120 hour internship at Maryhaven, where she was a resident four years ago. She has a 3.5 GPA and will receive an Associate Degree in Mental Health/Chemical Dependency in 2011. She plans on attending Capital University to obtain a Bachelors Degree in Social Work, then to OSU for her Masters. Her ultimate goal is to turn abandoned houses into residential treatment centers where women can bring their children and keep their families together.

Bethany Masters, age 30, is also a past award winner. She is a single mom with one son. She escaped an abusive relationship and battled the legal system to get full custody of her son. She is now in the nursing program at CSCC. She has a GPA of 3.6 and will graduate this December with an Associate Degree in Nursing. After graduation, Bethany plans to work in the Neonatal Intensive Care Nursery.

Hana Mattan, age 35, is a previous recipient of an SOS scholarship but took a break from school when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation and is now ready to continue her education. She works full time in the Columbus School District as an English as a second language assistant, volunteers at Choice Food Pantry, is a wife and mom to three children. Hana plans to finish her required classes at CSCC, and then transfer to Ohio Dominican to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Education.

FuGuana Middleton, age 26, is enrolled at CSCC in the Mental Health/Chemical Dependency program and carries a 3.5 GPA. Her passion is helping others. Because she had her children at a young age, she didn't get her high school diploma until age 21. FuGuana also had the courage to leave a man who had been abusing her for two years. She wants to make something of herself before her three children became adults. She is determined to be the person that they look up to.

Krista Nicholson, age 52, has been operating heavy equipment for 27 years. She knows that she is too young to retire but her body can't take another ten years on the job. This decision is what led her back to school. She was shattered financially by her ex-husband during their divorce, even losing her farm to pay his debts. Krista will

obtain a Construction Management/ Civil Engineering degree at CSCC, then transfer to a four- year university to get her Bachelors and Masters in both fields. She knows she can make a difference by putting her experience to work in her new role.

One SOS recipient (name withheld) is the first in her family to go to college. As a teen she was in an abusive relationship. She became a single parent of two children at age 20, during which time she was homeless. She works part time, attends school full time, volunteers for the PTO, her church, and the food pantry. She attends CSCC where she is in the Mental Health/Chemical Dependency program and has a 3.0 GPA.

Toska Pearson, age 39, is planning to attend Gallaudet University in Washington DC this fall where she will be pursue a B.A degree in American Sign Language and a minor in Linguistics. After learning American Sign Language and becoming part of the deaf community, she knew she wanted to be part of their unique culture. After obtaining her degree she hopes to become an advocate for the deaf and to educate the public about the importance for children to have their own language.

Another SOS **award winner** (name withheld) is currently attending CSCC. She works part time at a special need/typical need day care center. She is pursuing an Associate of Arts Degree, has a 3.6 GPA and will graduate next summer. She then intends to transfer to the University of Cincinnati to obtain a Bachelor Degree in Social Work, followed by a Doctorate in Social Work. She plans to focus on single parents, at-risk-youth and the impoverished, thus empowering others to reach their goals

Michelle Thum, age 31, is married with five children and is the first in her family to attend college. She works two part-time jobs because her husband had back surgery and hasn't been able to find a job. Michelle graduated from CSCC in 2009 with a 3.67 GPA and is currently enrolled at Capital University working towards a Bachelors Degree in Social Work. She plans to attend either the University of Dayton or OSU for her Masters. Her ultimate goal is to work in the field, gain experience, then return to CSCC to teach. She wishes to give back to students the way her professors gave to her.

A SOS Recipient (name withheld) is a single mom with three children, one with special needs. Having overcome the loss of a job and being homeless, she is now working at the Vineyard Church where she became enrolled in the Recession Response Initiative. She is attending CSCC and plans to become a social worker. The social worker who has been working with this recipient states, "I was so struck by her extreme organization, giving spirit, positive attitude and optimistic outlook for the future."

Another scholarship winner has battled financial difficulties since graduating from Amethyst's long term substance abuse treatment program five years ago. She is reconnecting with her two older children, struggles with custody issues with her son and continues to raise her youngest daughter. She is a full time student at CSCC enrolled in Computer Information Technology and will graduate in 2011.

As you can see, we have awarded 19 scholarships to remarkable women. Many have overcome homelessness, physical and mental abuse, drug and alcohol addiction and many financial hardships, yet most embark on careers that help others. They realize that an education is their way out of poverty and a way to set examples for their children.



SOS has a non-profit 501(c)(3) designation. Contributions are 100% tax deductible.

SOS is a grassroots organization with nine board members and numerous volunteer helpers. Administrative costs (such as printing and postage) are donated by the members.

The financial aid provided may be used for tuition at universities, colleges, and technology and trade schools. It can also be used for supplies, equipment, books, bus passes, special fees and for child-care to enable parents to attend classes. The amount awarded is based on need and generally does not exceed \$2500. It is paid directly to the institution or organization offering the needed services.

Applicants are screened carefully. The recipients must be adult citizens of the United States. They must show financial need and evidence of likelihood to succeed in achieving their goals.

The number of scholarships awarded each year depends on the amount of money raised that year as the treasury is almost depleted each year.

SOS holds an endowment fund at The Columbus Foundation.

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Find out more about SOS at: SOSgrants.org