

SOS Announces



2011--2012 Women of Value

Since its beginning in 2001, **Scholarship Opportunities for Success** has raised over \$200,000 to assist women with low income in financial aid for education. 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 2011--2012 Women of Value:

Jody Biggers is fifty years old with two children. She divorced after an abusive twenty-year marriage and had to file for bankruptcy. When her house was sold at a sheriff's auction last year 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 a return to school. She carries a 3.35 GPA at Columbus State Community College (CSCC) and will receive an Associate Degree in Supply Chain Management when she graduates this summer.

One recipient (name withheld) age 55, faced financial hardship this year when she lost her job. In fact, not long ago, she was almost homeless. She has just seven classes to take at Franklin University before she graduates with dual Bachelor degrees in Business Administration and Human Resource Management.

Another recipient, age 42, is a three-time winner of our scholarship. She is a single mom with two children. Life has not been easy for her. She battled addiction and is in recovery today.

Because of her past, she has had to change her major at CSCC and has struggled to complete the necessary course work. No matter what has happened, she will not quit until she receives her degree in Computer Networking.

Nadja Daniels, age 40, is a single mom with three young boys under eighteen and a twenty-one year old son. She was sexually abused at a young age, has battled addiction and, in 2005, learned that she was HIV positive. She has worked hard to overcome her past. She attends CSCC where she maintains a 3.12 GPA and plans to graduate this September. She then wishes to obtain a Bachelor degree in Human Resource Management.

Samiah Deleon, age 30, spent ten years in the foster care system, moving to multiple homes and families. She became pregnant at age fifteen and is a single mom with a teenage son. She recently lost her job, was evicted, and spent time in a homeless shelter. She attends CSCC full time and will receive an Associate Arts Degree in 2013, then will transfer to Ohio Dominican University to continue her studies.

Kimberly Flynn, age 42, was addicted to drugs and alcohol, attempted suicide numerous times, tried counseling and addiction treatment, lost all contact with her family and was homeless. "I did not know how to live and I could not die." But in 2005 she asked for help and her life began to change. Now she is enrolled at Ohio Christian University where her goal is to be a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor. She works full time at Frisch's, volunteers at Rachel's House as the Recovery Coordinator and is a Recovery Volunteer for the Franklin Pre-Release twelve-step program. She is a single mom to a five-year-old and grandparent to a three-month old.

Chynell Graham, grew up in the foster care system because her mother was addicted to cocaine and abandoned her six children. She and her sister experienced sexual and physical abuse. She feels that if she can overcome her past, she can overcome anything. She currently attends CSCC where she maintains a 3.7 GPA. Her major is Digital Photography with a minor in Entrepreneurship. She is proud mom to a young son, Onyx. She plans on owning her own photography business named Onyx Lee Photography.

Another Recipient (name withheld) age 48, has overcome many challenges. She dropped out of high school, received her GED, and became a single mom to two young children. She began committing petty crimes to support her family and spent time in and out of jail. After becoming addicted to cocaine and heroin, her children were taken from her. As her health began to fail, she realized the need for help and, subsequently, returned to school. She will graduate this December from CSCC with an Associate Degree in Mental Health/Addiction Studies/Developmental Disabilities. She then plans transfer to Capital University where she will obtain a Bachelor Degree in Social Work. She wants to work for Franklin County Children Services.

Shanea Harrington, a past recipient, will graduate this summer with an Associates of Arts Degree from CSCC and will transfer to the University of Cincinnati this fall to obtain a Bachelor Degree in Social Work. She chose this field because her family had been helped by social services since she was a child. Growing up in poverty, and overcoming ADHD and obesity has given her the passion to help others overcome obstacles in life.

One Recipient, (name withheld) age 30, found herself homeless at age eighteen due to financial and emotional family struggles. She took four jobs just to make ends meet. Eventually she found a good job, only to be laid off after five years. She attended CSCC and is now a full-time student at OSU with a major in Social Work and a minor in Developmental Studies. She carries a 3.8 GPA and volunteers for an organization called Trade Justice Mission that works with women from Asia and Africa who have been subjected to human trafficking.

Deborah Headin, age 54, has returned to school after 35 years to finish her degree. She attends CSCC part time and works at Taco Bell full time where she is training to be a shift manager. She plans on obtaining a degree in Business Administration. She also volunteers at Maryhaven Women's Program where she was treated for addiction and she helps care for her bed-ridden mother.

Stephanie Huertas, age 34, is a senior in Bio Medical Engineering Technology at Devry University and carries a 3.0 GPA. This has been a difficult year for her family--her husband lost his job and she has undergone four surgeries. But this busy mom of four children realizes that in order to provide a stable future for her family, she must finish her college degree.

Nicole Jennings, age 39, is a single mother with two special needs children who has struggled with homelessness, educational difficulties pertaining to her older son, developmental problems with her

toddler and mental health issues. She has moved into an apartment and started college at CSCC where she plans on a career in Nursing. Her family is thriving.

Aleta Maddox, age 26, a winner last year, 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. She will graduate this summer.

This Recipient (name withheld) was a stay-at-home mom until her adoptive twins became teenagers. Her life long battle with weight control has helped her find her purpose and passion. She has attended CSCC and plans to transfer this fall to OSU to study Dietetics and Nutrition. She wants help others by instilling in them that eating and exercise are not a diet, but a life style.

Tiya Mitchell, age 36, is a single mom to two young girls. She lost her job in 2009, but instead of feeling sorry for herself, chose to go in another direction and attend college. She is attending CSCC full time and plans on obtaining an Associate Degree in Health Information Management/Medical Billing and Coding and then plans to attend OSU to earn her Bachelor Degree.

Kasandra Mitchell, works part time and is a full time student at Columbus College of Art and Design. She currently has a 3.65 GPA. She plans on building three portfolios: advertising and graphic design, illustrative, and fine arts. She plans on working for an advertising agency before returning to school to obtain her Masters of Fine Arts from OSU.

Krista Nicholson, age 52 and a previous winner, 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 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.

Another recipient is a single mom with a ten-year-old son. Because of issues in her past, she has twice changed her major. But instead of quitting or falling back on drugs, she has turned her life around. She is presently enrolled in CSCC in the Mental Health/Addiction Studies/Developmental Disabilities program where she carries a 3.72 GPA. She will graduate in the spring of 2012 and plans to enter Capitol University to earn a Bachelor Degree in Social Work and then a Master's Degree.

Toska Pearson, age 39, is attending Gallaudet University in Washington DC where she is pursuing a BA degree in American Sign Language with a minor in Linguistics. Upon learning American Sign Language and becoming part of the deaf community, she knew she wanted to be part of their unique culture. Toska hopes to become an advocate for the deaf and help educate the public about the importance of this communication skill.

Christa Phillips, a past recipient, 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 twenty, during which time she was homeless. She 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 will graduate this summer. She will start at Capitol University this fall to obtain a Bachelor Degree in Social Work.

This Recipient, (name withheld) is a full-time student at OSU working on a BA in Communication Technology with a minor in Neurology. She currently maintains a 3.78 GPA. She is a single mom to a three-year-old and has spent the last four years on and off public assistance. She realizes that her degree is “the passport to a better and brighter future.” After graduation in 2012, she plans on working and entering a Masters or PhD program as she wants to teach at the University level.

Michelle Thum, age 32, is married with five children and is the first in her family to attend college. She attends college fulltime and works part-time because her husband had back surgery and hasn't been able to find a job. Michelle graduated from CSCC in 2009 and from Capitol University with a Degree in Social Work this past May (with a 3.63 GPA). She will start at OSU this summer seeking a Masters Degree. Ultimately, she wants to return to Columbus State and teach.

Megan Trott, became pregnant in 2008, was waiting on tables, had an abusive boyfriend and was addicted to prescription drugs. “Today my life has a new purpose and meaning.” She has maintained sobriety for over fifteen months, remains in a five-year treatment program called Amethyst, volunteers at the Columbus Public Library and attends CSCC. She plans to transfer to OSU to obtain a Bachelor Degree in Social Work. She would like to work as a school counselor where she can help youth and their families.



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. Virtually all funds raised are expended each year.

SOS holds an endowment fund at The Columbus Foundation.

PO Box 340622

Columbus, OH 43234

Find out more about SOS at: SOSgrants.org

