



Single Parent **STAR** Late Spring 2009

Volunteer Math Tutors Share Their Talents

Math homework is difficult for most of us. Imagine you're a single parent trying to get your kids to school or daycare, work at your part-time job, attend classes at Front Range Community College or CSU, and conquer polynomial equations!

Every career-related degree includes math coursework. No matter whether the career goal is to be a teacher, paramedic, nurse or pharmacist, math can often be a stumbling block toward meeting the educational requirements.

PS-S has found a way to assist single parents in our program with the help of volunteer math tutors. The tutors spend 1-2 hours per week during the semester working one-on-one with participants to help them learn math concepts ranging from GED level math to algebra, calculus and statistics. Our dedicated tutors include seven female engineers and one male engineer at Intel as well as a retired Agilent engineer and a couple of former math teachers.

Our participants are enormously grateful for the help.

PS-S Participant Tandi will be an awesome history teacher someday. But first she had to get through her pre-algebra class. Intel engineer Bonnie Bell and Tandi came up with a unique approach to working together. They met weekly at the Intel cafeteria where



Tutors Kathy Harris, Bonnie Bell, & Sarah Kay and Intel Involved Coordinator Kris Huff (second from left)

would work on her math homework while Bonnie did her work on her laptop. Tandi could ask Bonnie questions at any time.

"It's rewarding to show that math isn't hard but it takes time."

According to Bonnie, "It was very efficient for both her and me."

Tandi described her experience working with Bonnie by saying, "Never before in my entire

college experience have I felt as confident and prepared as I have this semester, after spending so much time studying with the aid of Bonnie. At first it was rough, just grasping the concepts, but eventually, we found a great way to communicate with each other.... I do not think I could've passed my math class as I did without the support I received from Bonnie. Not only did I learn the material, but I actually came to understand the concepts and applications so that in the future, I will not have to struggle with the basic factors which were so bothersome before this wonderful opportunity!"

Bonnie benefited from the experience as well. "It's rewarding to show that math isn't hard but it takes time. Tandi was willing to put in the time," commented Bonnie. "Another benefit is that she gets to see

me, a professional woman, in a professional environment."

Retired Agilent engineer Davis Glasgow tutored PS-S participant Carrie through algebra last semester and statistics this

semester. Davis was impressed with Carrie's drive and improvement during the time they worked together.

[\(Math Tutors...Continued on page 11\)](#)

DATES TO REMEMBER

- July 1st: Deadline for "Cool Kids" Donations for upcoming school year
- October 6th: **Mary's 20th Anniversary Bash** - Club Tico - watch for specifics in August newsletter

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NEWSLETTER DEDICATION	2
GRADUATES	2-6
GRADUATE UPDATE	7
BOSTON/ "COOL KIDS"	7
KATHY WOLFE THANKS	8
COMMUNITY BREAKFAST	9 & 10

SPRING GRADUATIONS ABOUND

Seventeen Graduations to Celebrate!

It is a sure sign of success when May approaches and our calendars are bursting with graduation ceremonies to attend! Such is the case in 2009. Not only are we attending ceremonies for current program participants, but also three program graduates. It is a pleasure to celebrate 17 graduations this year! All of these graduating students are single parents raising children, with the exception of two PS-S graduates, one who has been a single parent until her recent marriage and one who is engaged to be married after years of single parenting.



Ashley and children

Ashley and **Leslie** had previously earned their Bachelors degrees in Social Work at Colorado State University while active in Project Self-Sufficiency. Since their graduation from PS-S, both have gone on to complete Master's degrees and were honored in a recent ceremony. **Ashley** worked as a child protection worker for Larimer

County for a number of years before returning to school to get her MSW. **Leslie** specializes in counseling youth, using her drama background as a tool. She has also gained experience working at the CSU Counseling Center.

(Continued on page 3)

Leslie



This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to the memory of our dear friend Jinny Freshwaters.



Life is good.

It takes a number of good volunteers to bring this newsletter to you each quarter. With over 2,000 copies to stuff and label it requires about fifteen hours of volunteer time. Jinny, along with her husband Jack have been two of our most consistent and dedicated newsletter volunteers.

Along with that, Jinny helped with our holiday programs by sponsoring a family each year and helping with the family gift drop off/pick up. She was a supporter of our "Cool Kids" back-to-school clothing program each year, donating funds for Connie's Boston Marathon fundraisers each time.

Jinny passed away suddenly on March 26, 2009, five days after helping us with our most recent newsletter. Our condolences go out to her family and many friends. Jinny's motto was, "Life is good.", and this was how she lived, enjoying time with her family, especially her grandchildren. Her laughter was infectious, and it was hard not to have a good time when she was around. She will be missed by all of us at PS-S who knew her.

(Continued from page 2)



Tara and her Advisor, Fran

Tara left PS-S a few months ago to get married. Since then she has earned an Associates degree at Front Range Community College. She worked very hard to get to this point while raising three children at the same time. Tara hopes to continue her education with a possible career in Health Care Management.



Margie is a current PS-S program participant. She is the first African American woman to complete a Bachelor's degree in Art Education at CSU. She is a wonderful artist and has all the characteristics of an excellent art teacher. We will follow her career with great interest!



Margie



Ja'ared and Advisor, Maggie

Ja'ared and **Laura** recently graduated from IBMC. **Ja'ared** completed the Allied Health Degree in Therapeutic Massage and was one of only four students who spoke at the graduation ceremony for the whole school. Ja'ared is specializing in sports massage and will be commuting to Boulder for this additional certification. **Laura** earned her diploma in Medical Assisting. Next she begins an externship, takes a certification exam, and then starts her job search.



Laura

(Continued on page 4)

Page 4

(Continued from page 3)

Current PS-S participants graduating from Front Range Community College were **Caddie**, **Brooke**, **Lilly** and **Nicole**. **Brooke** earned her Associates of Arts with a certificate in Holistic Health and is transferring to the CSU Social Work program. Brooke's career goal is to do clinical social work using holistic approaches to help people who have experienced trauma.



Photo courtesy of Fort Collins Coloradoan

Nicole and Devon

Nicole completed her Associate of Arts degree and is transferring to CSU to study Environmental Engineering. Nicole is passionate about protecting the environment and believes that this is a great time to pursue a career in the environmental sector.

Caddie earned her Associates of Arts degree and is transferring to the University of Northern Colorado where she will study Cell and Molecular Biology. Caddie is particularly interested in genetics and stem cell technology. She hopes to work in a hospital or private laboratory.

**Caddie****Lilly**

Lilly earned her Associate of Arts degree in December and has since completed her first semester in Criminal Justice at UNC. Lilly's focus is working with youth who have found themselves entangled in the criminal justice system. She would like to be a voice for them and make a positive difference.

Carrie earned her Associate of Arts degree and is transferring to CSU to study Social Work. She is particularly interested in working with at-risk youth in a specialized environment that serves that population. Carrie has been doing volunteer work to gain experience.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Terri and **Emily** completed Bachelor's degrees in Education at the University of Northern Colorado.

Terri was recognized with special honors. She has also gained much related experience through many hours spent in classrooms at various locations. Her emphasis is bilingual education.



Terri



Emily and Jordan

Emily earned her degree in Elementary Education. She has known since she was a little girl that she wanted to be a teacher. Emily did her student teaching in a second grade classroom and really enjoyed being able to introduce her own style to the class. This experience confirmed her desire to be a teacher.

Jessica, Shawnee, Hadley, and Margarita all completed programs at Colorado State University.

Margarita earned a Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies. She has been gaining experience in social work through her internship at Crossroads Safehouse and also through her work at the Early Childhood Center at CSU. She looks forward to a career working with youth and families.

Shawnee completed a Bachelor's degree in English Education and has already secured a high school teaching position in a mountain community where she can also utilize her talents in music.

Shawnee greatly enjoyed her student teaching experience at Weber Junior high last semester. She routinely took 16 or more credits a semester to get through school as fast as she could. She is thrilled that she has finally reached her dream of becoming a high school English teacher.



Shawnee

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Jessica completed her Bachelor of Arts in Nutrition and Food Science. She is completing the volunteer hours required to enter the Master's program at CSU in Nutrition and Food Science. Jessica's focus is in disease prevention through nutrition and life style management.



Hadley and Eleanor

Photo courtesy of Fort Collins Coloradoan

Hadley earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Equine Science and will utilize those science credits to immediately enter the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program. This is an accelerated nursing program that will prepare her well for living wage employment.

Thanks a Bunch!

To **Horsetooth Sertoma** for donating close to \$4,000 from the proceeds of their Singles Auction. These funds will benefit our scholarship program.



To Troy Tafoya and **Professional Document Solutions** for donating a full-color copier, printer, scanner to our Fort Collins office so that we can now make two-sided and color copies!



To **Love Bug** relationship center for donating \$450 in proceeds from their bowling party that was held in February.



Thanks to the **Community Foundation of Northern Colorado** and their Fort Collins Community Fund for the recent grant of \$17,000 to assist PS-S families with housing and utility expenses.



Thanks to **Mike Portella** for organizing a Poker Run to benefit Project Self-Sufficiency.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



One of the joys of involvement with Project Self-Sufficiency is sharing good news as program graduates thrive and grow. Vickie is a graduate of Project Self-Sufficiency, and she is enjoying a successful career as a Technology Consultant for the Accenture Company. Vickie serves in their Systems Integration and Technology Division. She lives in Loveland, and her corporate office is based in Denver. Vickie is currently on assignment in Sacramento, California, where she is working on a large project.

While enrolled in PS-S, Vickie was raising three sons, attending community college classes, and working hard to build a career. She came to PS-S from an abusive relationship, determined to make it on her own. During her years in the PS-S program Vickie built strong parenting skills and completed her Associates Degree. After

leaving PS-S, she gained work experience in a high tech position and then went on to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Business Marketing at Colorado State University. Vickie also served on the Board of Project Self-Sufficiency for many years.

Vickie's oldest son is married, and she is pleased to report that she loves her "wonderful daughter-in-law and the smartest and most beautiful granddaughter in the whole wide world" ... and her sons of course! Vickie enjoys her church involvement, bible study, dancing, hiking, biking, healthy living, and reading. She just wishes she had time to do them all. We are proud of Vickie and her many accomplishments!

Good Times in Boston

The weather cooperated for our Special Project Coordinator Connie DeMercurio's running of the 113th Boston Marathon on April 20th. Not only did she have a fantastic time "high-fiving" the crowds of spectators for twenty-six plus miles and experiencing the run exactly as she had hoped, but she also raised a significant amount of money in the process. To date, proceeds from the race benefitting the "Cool Kids" back-to-school clothing program have reached over \$3,200. This amount more than exceeded her expectations. She is so grateful to everyone who supported her, both with monetary donations and with good wishes for a successful run.

Her efforts are a good start to raising the over \$14,000 needed each year to sustain this worthwhile program. It's not too late for you to help out if you haven't yet. All donations received by **July 1st** will be used for this year's program. Maybe your office or church group is looking for a project? To get more information on "Cool Kids", Connie's pet project, or to find out how you can help, please contact her at **635-5902** or by e-mail at **connie@ps-s.org**. What may simply seem like just "new clothes" to some, is actually helping to develop a positive enthusiastic attitude for our kids to start back to school!



Thanks, Kathy!



It is with sadness that our Board says good bye to long-time member **Kathy Wolfe**. Kathy

began her tenure in 1991 after being introduced to PS-S by serving on a committee to develop a new PS-S brochure through the Junior League of Fort Collins. She was then a facilitator at a HACOL (Housing Authority of the City of Loveland) retreat where Sam Betters, Executive Director, thought she would be a good match for our organization. And that she was!

Kathy is currently the 4H Youth Development Extension Agent for Colorado State University, a position she has held for the past 13 years.

In her sixteen years of service to PS-S, Kathy has held the positions of Vice-President, President, and most recently Past-President. She says she has seen

much change and growth in the organization. She believes there has been a shift in the board responsibilities away from program related issues and towards economic sustainability. Kathy believes the strength of PS-S lies in its mission "to assist low-income, single parents in their efforts to build and maintain strong, healthy families; achieve economic independence; and become free from community and government assistance."

Kathy feels the hardest workers at PS-S are the participants themselves. "They are to be admired for overcoming their many struggles and issues. They inspire you." When asked for a defining moment at PS-S, she related hearing a participant's story at a Board meeting. This participant's former husband held a good position at HP and then was diagnosed with cancer. They depleted all of their savings for treatment. Subsequently he had a motorcycle accident and head injury that

transformed his personality, and they later divorced. Kathy could identify with the story as it truly "hit home" for her, realizing it could happen to anyone at any time.

During her term, Kathy was pleased to be able to bring direction to the organization as well as her knowledge of strategic planning. She says she has learned so much over the years and believes she has "gained as much as she has given."

Her hope for the future of PS-S is to grow the endowment enough to the point that the organization is self-sufficient.

Although Kathy will no longer serve on our Board,

she will continue to be a good friend to all of us at PS-S. Happy trails, Kathy!



Easter Bunny Helpers Were Hard at Work!



The parents and children of PS-S were provided with Easter donations from two local organizations.

First Presbyterian Church in Fort Collins provided thirty-three food boxes so that our families could enjoy a nice meal together at Easter.

And the **Loveland-Berthoud Association of Realtors** provided our kiddos with ninety-nine Easter baskets filled with all sorts of goodies. Pictured at far right is the crew of assemblers and all of the gifts that filled the baskets and near right is the finished product!



Project Self-Sufficiency Hosts Third Community Breakfast

On March 31st Project Self-Sufficiency greeted approximately 200 guests who joined us for breakfast and had an opportunity to learn more about PS-S. Those in attendance were given an update on program expansion and heard from three wonderful speakers who all received standing ovations. First, Executive Director Mary Carraher reported that program capacity is now in place for 150 single parent families and added that orientations and interviews are being held every month in both Fort Collins and Loveland until all openings are filled. In Fort Collins 70 families have applied and another 60 in Loveland.

Businessman Nick Christensen of Chrisland, Inc. spoke of growing up in a single parent household and shared his personal experiences. Current program participant Sally Easter moved the audience with her description of the situation that brought her to Project Self-Sufficiency and how her life has changed since her involvement in the program. Sally is preparing for a career in pharmacy.

Program graduate Theresa Bain completed her Bachelor's degree in Social Work at Colorado State University while enrolled in PS-S. She is now employed as the Family Services Coordinator for Habitat for Humanity in Fort Collins. Theresa joined us for the breakfast and shared her experiences.

The following is a portion of Theresa's speech. To read the speech in its entirety see the link on the home page of the PS-S website. www.ps-s.org. The longer version includes additional comments about Theresa's children and her career path.

"I am so honored to be here today talking to you about an organization that I just love whose, mission is so close to my heart. There is so much that I could say about PS-S and the people who are a part of it. Both Fran and Mary suggested I talk some about my accomplishments while in PS-S but I really want to focus on them, not me, so I asked God what He wanted me to share with you this morning. I truly want to help you understand what makes this organization so special and so successful. And what I heard God say to me is that this is about relationships. My relationship with PS-S will be 10 years old in April. I was a participant for 9 of those years and relationships characterized my entire experience in PS-S, most especially my relationship with Fran.

You can imagine that over nine years, Fran and I walked through many, many circumstances together. She helped me navigate things such as welfare, food stamps, housing, and transportation. She supported me through my divorce, my two daughter's entire adolescence, and the death of their father, my former husband. Fran helped me realize I could actually go to college and then helped me succeed through 6 ½ years of classes, scholarships, financial aid and finally attended my graduation two years ago where I received my bachelor's degree in social work. She has been my mentor, advisor, encourager, cheerleader, accountability partner. She was always honest but never harsh. She cried, laughed and rejoiced with me and she always, always let me be me. She honored and respected my Christian faith and understood when I needed to process things in ways that maintained consistency with my beliefs.



(Theresa...Continued on page 10)

(Theresa...continued from page 9)

When I was stubborn and strong willed, rather than push me, she suggested things and allowed me to choose my course. I'm sure she didn't always agree with my methods but she gave me the freedom to mess up and live with the consequences. She helped me believe the impossible was actually possible and together we celebrated many, many victories.

Throughout my time in PS-S, I successfully reached my goals because the people here invested in my life and the lives of my children. They cared that we did well and they offered us resources that met our needs. This in turn allowed me to concentrate on those steps that would lead to self-sufficiency. My family was blessed abundantly through programs like the Cool Kids, being adopted at Christmas, and the Boundless Children's Fund which made it possible for years worth of music lessons. This was priceless and both girls continue to play their instruments and have a love of music. Participants are allowed a modest emergency fund each year and I can't tell you how many car repairs this paid for. Each of these blessed us so much. It was always just what we needed at the time but I venture to say, for me at least, they would not have been nearly as appreciated or powerful without the relationships to the people behind them. I am where I am and who I am today, in great part, because of my involvement with PS-S and my family is a true success story.

Let me assure you that Project Self-Sufficiency is worth your time and investment. They are a group in the trenches, picking up pieces of families and helping to put them back together again. This organization has a proven track record and has only improved their service through the years. They are doing the hard work with those who are willing to work hard for the good of their families. I found resources here and I found support but most of all, I found love and acceptance through my relationships. I pray that you will see what I see and support Project Self-Sufficiency."

Thanks to Sponsors of the 2009 Project Self-Sufficiency Community Breakfast

Total new dollars raised for 2009 were \$41,485 in pledges and donations. Over the three year period during which the breakfasts have been held, a total of \$425,446 in pledges and donations have been made. Many donors committed to five year pledges which are included in this amount. These contributions support our ongoing efforts to assist more single parents who are working toward their own financial independence.

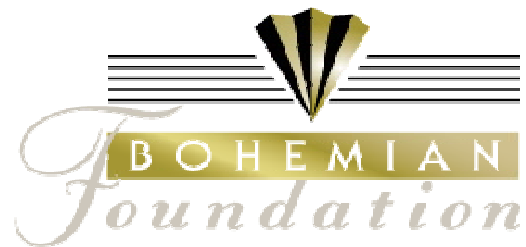
A Special Thanks goes to our Event Sponsors for 2009

TYNAN'S
WWW.TYNANS.COM

ID Dellenbach
CHEVROLET



FIRST WESTERN TRUST BANK



In-Kind Sponsors :

A-Train Marketing Communications, Inc

All Occasions Catering

Fort Collins Nursery

Making the Most of Your Gifts to PS-S: Tips for Charitable Giving

By Ray Caraway, Executive Director of the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado

Planning ahead for your charitable giving can result in larger gifts to charity and greater tax benefits while making the whole process more enjoyable and meaningful to you. Here is one idea to consider:



Making Project Self-Sufficiency the beneficiary of a retirement account

The most heavily taxed asset in your estate will be your retirement accounts. Consult with your tax planner, and you will begin to see that donating all or a portion of your retirement account is more attractive than you might have imagined. Attempting to pass on a \$300,000 IRA to a child or other relative could result in a \$120,000 tax! Passing on stock or real estate to your children

is much better from a tax standpoint. It is very simple to name PS-S as the beneficiary of a retirement plan. Naming a charity as a partial beneficiary can also be done very easily in most cases, but may require some extra steps in the planning process. Either way, a retirement fund should be at the top of your list of assets that can be passed on to charity at your death with the greatest tax benefits. "Generally, an IRA is not the best asset to use for a gift to charity during your lifetime. However, if you are 70 and 1/2 years of age or older, the law allows you to make a direct transfer of all or a portion of your IRA to charity with no tax consequences. The transfer counts toward your annual minimum withdrawal."

Gift Annuities and Charitable Remainder Trusts

If you are over 65, paying more in taxes that you would like, and could use some additional income, a gift annuity or charitable remainder trust could transform your retirement years in a very positive way. For example, a 70 year-old person would receive a percentage

annual payout for a gift annuity. If the annuity is funded with appreciated stock, the capital gains can be avoided, and some of the percentage payout will be tax-free income. And, not only will you avoid capital gains taxes, you will receive an income tax deduction for a large percentage of the amount that goes into the annuity. For the person with a great deal of appreciated stock that is paying a low dividend, the extra income and the tax benefits will be very substantial. After your lifetime, PS-S will become the beneficiary of the gift annuity. A charitable remainder trust works in a similar manner and is typically used for amounts of \$100,000 or more.

PS-S works with the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado to build its endowment fund. The Community Foundation staff is available to assist our donors who are interested in establishing giving plans that include PS-S. Contact Mary at PS-S (970.635-5901) or Ray Caraway at the Community Foundation office (970.224.3462) for more information.

Math Tutors (continued from page 1)

Davis was also pleased by his tutoring experience. "Watching her succeed was exciting and rewarding," exclaimed Davis. "It is inspiring to see someone working so hard to make a better life for herself and her child. Tutoring lets me feel like I was a small part of that effort."

Carrie expressed her gratitude by saying, "Davis has been a wonderful help for me. He has put aside time to help me not only understand math but do well. He is very patient and understanding. Even when I was having trouble, he worked with me to get through it. Without Davis' help I truly believe that I would not have passed

statistics and would not be able to graduate."

As fall semester gets underway, we'll no doubt need additional tutors for our hard-working participants. If you're interested in being a math tutor, contact the coordinator of our math tutoring program, Mariah Kelley, at 970-635-5912.

*Our condolences to the family of Roy and Donna Kilkenny,
who both passed away recently.*





Flower and Plant Sales Benefit Project Self-Sufficiency

On Friday, June 12th, Fort Collins Nursery will host a Ladies Night with 15% of sales benefiting Project Self-Sufficiency. Men are welcome also! Join us for refreshments, live music, and a chance to shop for wonderful plants for your yard or patio. See flyer at left.

Thanks to the Kappa Kappa Gamma Alumnae who held their annual flower sale to benefit the Project Self-Sufficiency scholarship program. Everyone at PS-S greatly appreciates the significant work that goes into this event each year. The funds raised make a real difference to single parents continuing their education.



indicias

INSIDE STORIES OF PS-S SUCCESS



Return Service Requested

E-mail: ps-s@fritl.com

Fax: 970-635-5910

Phone: 970-635-5912

Loveland, CO 80538

375 W. 37th Street # 150

www.ps-s.org

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Loveland, CO
Permit No. 88