



Single Parent STAR

Late Summer 2011

SYLVIA MEANS BUSINESS

Sylvia began her journey with PS-S in 2006. She was employed by the food service company that handles the cafeteria at Woodward Governor. PS-S was represented there at an annual United Way fair, where employees get information on different UW organizations. She stopped by our table, picked up some brochures and read up on the organization. Realizing that she would be a good fit, she applied, attended an orientation, interviewed, and was matched with an advisor. She additionally took steps to procure housing through the Housing Authority of the City of Loveland for herself and her one year old daughter.

Sylvia wanted to become an addictions counselor, but after career exploration she decided she was better suited for a career in business. She began classes part-time at Aims Community College in

2008 while continuing full-time employment. Sylvia is now a full-time student year round while also working part time. She was recently accepted into the TRIO program at Aims. TRIO provides financial and academic support for students who are first from their family to attend college, come from low-income households, or those

“Sylvia has been fearless and fierce in her movement forward and will be a true asset to any company that is lucky enough to snag her for their team.”

with a disability. Sylvia will obtain her AA degree from Aims at the end of the fall semester, continue at CSU in the spring and plans to have her Bachelor’s Degree in Business management by the end of 2013.

Sylvia’s daughter Marisol will start first grade in Loveland this year. She attends cheer training through the help of the Boundless Children’s

Fund. Although Sylvia struggled through some rough times at a younger age, her family now plays a very big role in her life and she enjoys spending time with them very much. They have been a good support system for her. She especially looks up to her mother as a positive influence. Her mother worked multiple jobs while raising a family.

Sylvia has been working with her advisor Stephanie for the past four years and they have built

a mutual relationship of trust, respect and admiration. She says “Stephanie is awesome; understanding and caring. She gives good, honest advice and finds answers to questions when she doesn’t know them.” Stephanie says, “Sylvia

(See **Sylvia**, page 7)

DATE TO REMEMBER:

Tues, Sep 6, 11 am – 6pm

Odell Brewing Tap Room:

PS-S to receive a portion of sales

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SCHOLARSHIPS: POWERING THE CHANGE

Each year Project Self-Sufficiency initiates an internal, competitive scholarship process for our program participants. At the same time, PS-S works closely with service clubs and others to secure additional scholarship resources to supplement the dollars PS-S is able to provide.

The Women's Foundation of Colorado has used the tag line "Powering the Change". PS-S is borrowing this phrase for the purpose of highlighting the importance of scholarship support for single parents returning to school and preparing for living wage employment. Without this assistance it would be extremely difficult to meet academic and career goals. Here is a summary of PS-S and partner scholarship activities for 2011:

PS-S Scholarship Awards

This year 61 participants requested more than \$100,000 in assistance from the internal PS-S scholarship fund that is financed by our scholarship donors. In the past we have activated two committees, one from Loveland and one from Fort Collins, to make award decisions. This year we expanded to three committees to address the large volume of requests and the two communities were merged. Each committee member read about a third of the applications and then representatives of the three committees reconciled the results. \$47,550 was awarded to 60 participants with scholarships ranging from \$250 to \$1,800.

The careers chosen by applicants include radiology technology, nursing, dental hygiene, microbiology / lab work, dietician, human resource management, teaching, social work, criminal justice / probation, office management, business, paralegal, environmental health, graphic design, public relations / marketing, and others.

The following quote from a scholarship applicant demonstrates the importance of "Powering the Change" so parents can earn a living wage and support their children. This participant has faced many challenges and is eager for opportunities to move forward.

She says, *"This past year has been one of the hardest I have encountered in my adult life. Instead of mourning my losses, I have used this to fuel my drive for success and happiness. I am eager to have control of my life and be able to make choices that I feel are best for myself and my children."*

Scholarships from PS-S Partners

- The **Women's Independence Scholarship Program (WISP)** assists women who have been abused as they continue their education and seek independence. Over the past 12 months PS-S has received \$64,596 from WISP to assist specific program participants who have been approved by this initiative of the Sunshine Lady Foundation. Over \$200,000 has been received since 2003.

- The **Foothills Rotary Foundation** has approved seven scholarships for participants recommended by Project Self-Sufficiency. \$1,650 in scholarship assistance will be provided to each person for the 2011-12 academic year for a total of \$11,550.

- Local **PEO Chapters** in Fort Collins and Loveland have coordinated with their national office to provide scholarships for PS-S participants. Chapter CO in Fort Collins has also hosted holiday brunches for awardees and provided gift baskets. Members of Chapter DR in Loveland recently awarded four scholarships of \$3,000 each to PS-S participants and treated them to lunch. During 2011, at least seven PS-S participants are receiving PEO scholarships.

- Annually PS-S awards scholarships in honor of **Nancy Story Gunn**, a former board member and exceptional advocate for the organization who passed away eight years ago. Funds are provided through an endowment set up in Nancy's name at the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado. During 2011 the Gunn Family can recommend up to \$10,789 in scholarships for PS-S participants. So far this year the family has approved 12 scholarships totaling \$10,220 and ranging from \$350 to \$1,500.

- Each year the PS-S staff recommends participants for scholarships offered by the **Soroptimist Club of Fort Collins**. During 2011, three PS-S participants were awarded Soroptimist Scholarships.

(see **Scholarships**, page 3)

(Scholarships, continued from Page 2)

- The **Philo Club of Loveland** selected 10 PS-S participants to receive scholarships ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 for a total of \$10,100. The club co-hosted a brunch with the PS-S staff to honor the recipients.
- **PS-S and WomenGive** provide child care awards to assist parents in paying for care while they are in school. During 2011, PS-S approved close to \$115,000 in grants for participants and the WomenGive initiative of United Way assisted a number of others with significant assistance during the year.

- PS-S participants have also been successful in securing a variety of other scholarships, including the **Osher Scholarship** through CSU, the **McKee Medical Foundation scholarship**, and scholarships for residents through the **Housing Authority of the City of Loveland**.



Pat and Melanie

Pat Wilson sponsors annual Project Self-Sufficiency scholarships in honor of her son Scot and also serves on the scholarship selection committee. Pat has selected Melanie as one of two recipients of the 2011 Scot Wilson Scholarships. Melanie is taking pre-nursing classes at Front Range Community College with a goal of earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the University of Northern Colorado. Her current Grade Point Average is 3.59, and she has earned A's in Anatomy and Physiology. Melanie is also working as a Certified Nursing Assistant while she completes her pre-requisite classes.

PS-S "Cool Kids" Head Back to School in Style

We have just completed our 2011 "Cool Kids" program. Generous donors provided funds to purchase gifts cards for over 150 kids in grades kindergarten through twelfth to shop for brand new back-to-school clothes. Below is a recent response from one participant.

"I can not thank you enough for the great Cool Kids' program!! This is the FIRST TIME EVER that we have been able to go school shopping! The boys always have 'hand-me-downs', this might be the first time that they have jeans without holes and brand new shirts that they got to pick out!

We went to Old Navy and today they had a sale for jeans for \$12/pair

(\$20 reg/pair), plus I got an email that said 'save 15% online today only', and when I went in to try on sizes (to later order online) they let us have the 15% off in store. I also shared with them that this was something PS-S did for us, and two of the managers were delighted to see the boys shopping and learning how to spend their card wisely! They each got to carry the bag full of goodies and see how much \$100 each feels like to carry.

Cole got 7 pairs of jeans, 3 shirts, 1 packs of 10 socks and a \$2 swim trunks! Noah got 6 pairs of jeans, 4 shirts, hoodie and a \$2 pair of trunks! I saved \$151 and I only had to

pay \$2.41 out of my pocket!!

I cannot express my gratitude enough and hope that you can feel my THANKS in this email!! This was truly a blessing for me and the boys and would like to extend the thanks to the supporters also!" T.T.



Cole and Noah

PS-S Recognizes Participant Accomplishments at Annual Event

On August 2, the staff and board of Project Self-Sufficiency hosted a special evening for program participants, their children, and other family members. Annually PS-S takes this opportunity to highlight success and honor participants who have completed academic programs, secured career related employment, earned a GED, or received a PS-S scholarship.

Each PS-S advisor offers words of inspiration about each of the participants they are honoring, and that person comes to the podium for applause. Following are some highlights from the event:

- **Nikki** is a graduate of the program who returned to celebrate her new job in marketing that pays a

living wage. She works for a company she loves and is thrilled with this opportunity.

- **Ginny** was honored for her sales position with a copier company that pays a living wage. She is a recent graduate of Colorado State University, and now PS-S.

- **Tanya** is graduating from PS-S and was honored for her employment as an EMT in the emergency room at Poudre Valley Health System.

- **Tammy** is a PS-S grad who returned to be recognized for her teaching position with the Poudre School District. Tammy is also a graduate of CSU.

- **Amy** completed her Associates Degree in Diesel Technology and has several job prospects.

- **Freyja** earned her Bachelor's degree in Social Work at CSU and has been accepted to graduate school out of state.

- **Heather** was recognized for completing the Radiology Technology program at Aims Community College. She is studying for her certification exams.

- **Jennifer** was honored for completing her RN at Front Range Community College. She is seeking employment as a nurse.

- **Cynthia** earned an Associate's degree at FRCC and will continue at CSU in the fall.

A special thanks to Redeemer Lutheran Church for sharing their facility with us for this amazing event!



Advisor Michele and Ginny



Advisor Beth Rosen and Rebekah



Advisor Fran and Donna



Neva



Tina



Advisor Stephanie and Heather



Advisor Nicole and Mandy

Self-Esteem and Parenting Classes Build Personal Capacity

Early in the 25 year history of Project Self-Sufficiency it became clear that low self-esteem and challenging parenting situations interfered with the ability of program participants to reach their career goals. These barriers also influenced the quality of life for program participants and their children. For several years participants have benefited from two classes that address their self-esteem and parenting needs.

Self-Esteem Building Class

Over 16 years ago staff members from PS-S joined forces with the Women's Resource Center (then the Women's Center), therapist Deb Westcott, and other committee members to design the Women's Self-Esteem Class. The basics of this original curriculum have provided a solid foundation for the Project Self-Sufficiency class over the years, and our facilitators have made adjustments to meet the needs of participants from time to time.

Typically 10 to 15 participants attend a total of 13 hours of training during two evening sessions and a Saturday. Facilitators create a supportive yet dynamic learning environment using customized materials that help participants understand the meaning of self-esteem and self-concept, how they develop over time, and how people can build stronger self-esteem and a more positive self-concept using specific techniques.

Elements of the class include exploring personal history and family influence, exposure to theories such as Transactional Analysis and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, use of techniques like journal writing and visualization, and the importance of self care. Participants are familiarized with the concept of a Personal Bill of Rights which is highly relevant in their communication and relationships with people in their lives. They also learn about their inner voice as well as communicating with their inner child.

One graduate of the PS-S Self Esteem Class had this to say, "*It helped me look back and realize where all of my negativity comes from, and why I thought about myself the way I did. It helped me change it and helped me realize I am perfect just the way I am.*"

PS-S staff member Michele Scheetz co-facilitated the class with therapist Deb Westcott for most of the 16 years the class has been offered. PS-S advisor Nicole Gawronski was the first PS-S facilitator and Stephanie Slayton the most recent. Stephanie offered the class along with therapist Ingrid Brummet in 2011.

Self-Concept is a collage of all the things we believe we are.

Self-Esteem is how much we like or do not like the collage.

Parenting with Love and Logic

Project Self-Sufficiency has experimented with various instructional theories and methods over the years and has landed on what the organization believes is the curriculum most productive and helpful to single parents enrolled in the program.

For the last few years instructors Cheryl O'Shell and Cindy Kirk have been wowing participants with concepts and tools that have truly made a difference for parents who are struggling to either parent alone or in cooperation with an absent parent.

What is Love and Logic? Love and Logic is a philosophy founded in 1977 by Jim Fay and Foster W. Cline, M.D. It is the approach of choice among leading educators, parents, and other professionals worldwide. The Love and Logic method is a way of working with children that puts parents back in control, teaches children to be responsible, and prepares young people to live in the real world, with its many choices and consequences. The program especially helps parents enjoy working with their children through easy-to-use techniques.

Jim Fay teaches us that we should "lock in our empathy, love, and understanding" prior to telling children what the consequences of their actions will be. Becoming a Love and Logic Parent teaches parents how to hold their kids accountable in this special way. This method causes the child to see their parent as the "good guy" and the child's

(See **Parenting**, page 7)

Houska Automotive Donates Van to PS-S Participant during July 6th Lagoon Concert

At the CSU Lagoon Concert on July 6th, 2011, Houska Automotive graciously donated a wheelchair-accessible van to a single mother who is a participant of Project Self-Sufficiency (PS-S). Kaysey, 22, was the recipient of the Houska van. Kaysey accepted the keys to the vehicle on stage at the Lagoon Summer Concert Series with her two young children Payton, 4, and Braidyn, 19 months.

"I can't thank the Houska's enough for their donation of a wheelchair-accessible vehicle. I don't know what I would do without Project Self-Sufficiency. It has guided us to a better future," says Kaysey, whose son Payton was born with a disability.

Kaysey was selected by Project Self-Sufficiency's volunteer "PS-S Cars for Families Committee" based on her need for a van for her disabled son as well as her performance in the PS-S program. According to her PS-S Advisor Bethany Hicks, Kaysey is thoroughly engaged in the PS-S process. She has consistently met with her advisor, enrolled at Aims Community College, completed the application for student aid and is doing career exploration.

"When I give Kaysey a homework assignment, I can count on her to have completed it by our next meeting," says Hicks, who also adds, "I am always very impressed with Kaysey's parenting skills and her ability to stay so organized with doctors, therapists and other supporting agencies she is working with."

For the past two years Houska Automotive has handed car keys to a grateful single parent during the intermission of the concert, and they have urged many other automotive businesses to donate parts and services to PS-S.

Through the efforts of Houska Automotive and 18 other generous automotive businesses, many PS-S participants will have more reliable transportation for their families.

Houska Challenge Donors

Besides the van from Houska Automotive, we received parts and services for PS-S participants from the following businesses.

Fort Collins:

- Big O Tires
- Colorado Auto Brokers
- Dellenbach Motors
- Ed Carroll Motors
- Fort Collins Muffler & Automotive
- Grease Monkey
- Markley Motors
- Mr. Mechanic
- Nice Car
- Schrader's Country Store
- Summers Auto Repair

Loveland:

- Co's BMW
- E & B Automotive
- Ed's Auto Paint
- Metric Motors
- Peerless Tires
- Speedy Sparkle Car Wash



Kaysey and Kids

We invite you to join the Houska Challenge businesses in helping families in PS-S move along the road to success. Maximize your tax deduction! All donated cars are given directly to single-parent families in need—never sold at an auction. Receipts for fair market value are provided. For more information, visit www.ps-s.org, or contact:

Susan Dominica,
Cars for Families Coordinator
1000 Centre Avenue #150,
Fort Collins, 80526
970.407.0305 ext. 5
susan@ps-s.org



Kaysey, Braidyn, Advisor Bethany and Dennis Houska

(Sylvia, continued from page 1)

has been fearless and fierce in her movement forward and will be a true asset to any company that is lucky enough to snag her for their team.”

Since her enrollment in PS-S, Sylvia has secured housing at Willow Place, received a car and car repairs through the PS-S Cars for Families Program, has been awarded multiple PS-S and partner scholarships, has been matched with holiday sponsors, benefited from the Cool Kids Back-to-School clothing and the Bound-

less Children’s Fund programs, and worked with PS-S computer repair volunteers and academic tutors. Sylvia believes that without PS-S she would not have returned to school and probably would not have earned her GED. She says PS-S has given her “confidence and guidance”.

Sylvia’s dream is to open a clothing store someday. She has some very positive mentors, including Carol Brungardt, Group Director of Human Resources at Woodward Governor,

who she says inspires her.

Sylvia is truly grateful for all of her opportunities, takes nothing for granted, and is always conscientious about expressing her gratitude to those around her. She has volunteered over 20 hours helping another participant build her Habitat home. Sylvia is humble, yet strong and independent. She is a shining example of what PS-S is all about. Her fans know she’ll go far...very far!

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poor decision as the “bad guy.” When done on a regular basis, children develop an internal voice that says, “I wonder how much pain I’m going to cause for myself with my next decision?” Kids who develop this internal voice become more capable of standing up to peer pressure.

“The Love & Logic classes offer PS-S participants an opportunity to not only learn the Love & Logic tools and techniques but also connect with other single parents who are struggling with similar parenting issues. Participants are able to share their own experiences, offer helpful suggestions to others, and know that they’re not alone.”

~Maggie Murray, PS-S advisor

PS-S Love and Logic Parenting is offered through a six week series of evening class that run 90 minutes each session. PS-S staff members coordinate the classes and work closely with the instructors. Advisors Maggie Murray, Fran Richburg, and Bethany Hicks have provided leadership in the implementation of this class.



On **Tuesday, September 6th**, a portion of ALL sales (including T-shirts, mugs, etc.) will be donated to PS-S. Stop by the tap room anytime between 11 am and 6 pm.

Live band from 4 – 6 pm!

During the entire month of September, PS-S will receive a portion of taster tray proceeds at Odell Brewing.

Thanks, Odell Brewing!

Thanks SO Much!!

- **FC Nursery** for hosting Ladies’ Night Out on June 10th and donating flowers for our Recognition Event.
- **Odell Brewing Company** for donating beer for several recent events.
- **Wilbur’s** for providing wine for a Meet and Greet.
- **Bill & Diane Warren** and **Greg & Beth Churchman** for hosting a Meet and Greet.
- **Mark & Annie Bower** and **David & Steffani Besch** for hosting a Meet and Greet.
- **Style Magazine** for the feature on the PS-S 25th Anniversary.
- **National Charity League** for providing childcare for our Parenting Workshops and the Recognition Event.
- **Old Chicago** and **Tortilla Marissa’s** for providing dinner for Parenting Workshops.
- **Redeemer Lutheran Church** for providing space for Parenting Workshops and the Recognition Event.



This year the “Friends of PS-S” took over coordinating and administering the annual “Mini Masters” golf outing at Fort Fun for the participants and their children. Not only did they provide a morning of family fun, but also enlisted sponsors and raised over \$2,500 for our “Cool Kids” back-to-school clothing program.



Aspen, Keegan, and friend

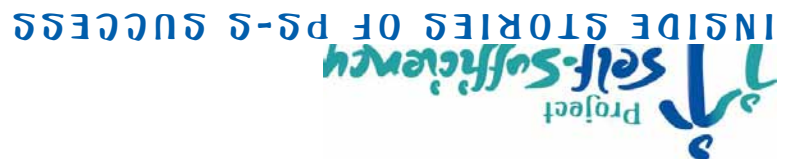


Sue Ferguson and Carmen Ruyle-Hardy

The “Friends” also hold an annual plant sale in the fall to raise funds for the PS-S scholarship program. Mums(\$13), kalanchoes(\$13), holiday cactus(\$16) and poinsettias(\$16) will be available. If you’re interested, the deadline to place orders is October 31st and pickup dates are November 11th-23rd. For more information visit our website at www.ps-s.org in September.

Watch for our upcoming feature on the “Friends of PS-S” in our next newsletter!

Indicias



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