

# Changing Lives

A publication of Southern Good Faith Fund

## Celebrating Success

We've been hard at work helping improve people's lives in the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta since 1988, but we still hear, "you're the best kept secret in Arkansas." So this year we're making the effort to tell our story to those who may be unfamiliar with our work and reacquaint ourselves with old friends.

We are honored by your interest in our mission to help rural, low-income families help themselves achieve the American dream of buying their first home, starting a business, or earning a rewarding career. We hope that you enjoy this, our first newsletter to focus on our entire organization, and we're proud to introduce you to each of our programs, our staff, our board, and, most importantly, those we serve. We

wish you a very warm welcome to Southern Good Faith Fund.

### We'd love to hear from you.

And we do not want this to be a one-sided introduction; we're very interested to learn more about you. If you'd like to share an idea or a referral, partner or participate in one of our programs, update us on how you're doing after you've received our services, or donate or volunteer to help us continue our work, please call 870.535.6233 or e-mail us at [info@southerngoodfaithfund.org](mailto:info@southerngoodfaithfund.org). An electronic version of this newsletter is also available on our Web site, along with full schedules and program information, at [www.southerngoodfaithfund.org](http://www.southerngoodfaithfund.org).

## Our Mission

**Southern Good Faith Fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and an affiliate of Southern Bancorp, is committed to increasing incomes and assets of low-income and low-skilled residents in rural communities.**

## What We Do

True, the Delta is one of the most economically depressed areas in the United States; but its culture is as rich as its fertile soil, even recently being called "our New Orleans" for the region's incalculable influence on the national character through its music heritage. At Southern Good Faith Fund, we draw inspiration from the families we serve in this region as we work to increase their income, assets, and professional skills through three direct service programs—**Asset Builders, Business Development Center, and Career Pathways**—and our **Public Policy** program, which combines research and our programs' proven results to advocate for positive change for all Arkansans.

## Building Assets

Increasing income greatly helps people meet immediate needs; but to secure their future, they must also build assets. Southern Good Faith Fund was among a small group of organizations who



With a dedicated and hard-working staff of 20 women and men, Southern Good Faith Fund helps change the lives of thousands of rural families each year. Front row, from (l) to (r): Angela Heard, Lyric Seymore, Angela Duran, Ramona McKinney, Matt Price. Second row, from (l) to (r): Doris Douglas, Miriam Karanja, John Yarbrough, Tara Irby, Mindy Maupin, Michael Leach, Vida Fielder. Third row, from (l) to (r): Zelda Simes, Pat Scott, Marcella Burns, Lisa Ponder, Melissa Young, Michael Rowett, Dianne Luebker, Angela Austin.

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## Our Board

Phil Baldwin  
Herman Davenport  
John Edwards  
Elizabeth Glasbrenner  
Brian Miller  
Dorothy Stuck  
Freddie Webb-Petett

## Annual Fund

In the months ahead, you will receive our donation materials. We would greatly appreciate your support to help us continue our work. Every gift that we receive is significant to us, no matter how large or small. If you cannot give money, please consider offering us your referrals or feedback, or donating your time; there is so much that we can accomplish if we work together.

We would like to take this opportunity to give special recognition and sincere thanks to those who have given at Leadership levels, including each of our board members—thank you all for your inspiring commitment to our mission.

### \$2,500

Entergy Corporation  
Munro Foundation  
Pine Bluff National Bank  
Simmons First National Bank

### \$500 - \$1,000

Phil Baldwin  
Sharon Blackwood  
Brenda Brown  
Herman Davenport  
Angela Duran  
John Edwards  
Elizabeth Glasbrenner  
Elizabeth John  
Sandy Linn  
Brian Miller  
Dorothy Stuck  
Freddie Webb-Petett  
Levi Strauss Foundation  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
Wal Mart—Helena-West Helena

## What We Do, continued from page 1

started the state's first Individual Development Account (IDA) programs in 1999. Our participants complete free

**"The IDA program taught me how to manage my money and not get in over my head," says our participant Yvette Hubbard. In less than a year, she saved enough money for a down payment on a home for her family in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.**

financial education courses and save at least \$20 each month to receive a \$3 match for every \$1 that they save, up to a maximum of \$2,000 per individual or \$4,000 per household. Then, they can use their money to buy or repair a home, start or expand a business, or continue their education.

Does it work? Yes. Since we started the program, our participants have saved over \$1 million in matched savings and we've helped over 300 purchase life-changing assets.

### Toddlers to Scholars

What if children could start saving for college in preschool with matched savings accounts? Southern Good Faith Fund was one of only 12 organizations chosen nationally by the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) to test such an initiative, called Saving for Education, Entrepreneurship, and Down Payment, or SEED. We currently have 75 Phillips County children participating, and each child's account at First Bank of the Delta in Helena-West Helena, Arkansas was "seeded" with a \$500 deposit and a \$500 match; contributions of friends and

family are also matched dollar for dollar up to \$1,000. So far, the children have saved nearly \$100,000 toward their college educations.

### Growing Businesses

Every day our Business Development Center (BDC) helps aspiring entrepreneurs realize the dream of owning a business. We help new businesses write their business plan, perform market research, and arrange loans; and we help existing business owners improve their management skills and expand their operations through training classes, business counseling, and technical assistance. And our Business Information Centers provide a library of resources, Internet access, computers, printers, fax machines, and copiers. (For more on the BDC, see Brenda Brown's success story.)

**Since 1999, our BDC has helped over 4 thousand clients, helped start or expand almost 400 business, created nearly 700 jobs, and helped entrepreneurs access over \$3.6 million in financing.**

### Plotting Career Paths

Our Career Pathways program helps people develop the confidence and skills that they need to achieve more reward-

ing careers to support their families. We developed career tracks with local industry and our valued partners at Southeast Arkansas College (SEARK) and Phillips Community College of the University of Arkansas that promise good wages and the potential for



U.S. Senator Mark Pryor (back left) visited with children, talked about the importance of saving for an education, and gave each child a piggy bank to get started.

# Business Success

## Client Leadership Donor Brenda Brown

advancement in high-demand fields, including business, education, emergency medical services, manufacturing, nursing-allied health, and welding.

**The results? As we approached our tenth year of service in this program, Career Pathways had graduated 653 students, and of our most recent graduates, 88% were either placed in jobs or were still advancing in their pathway.**

Our program takes care to understand the interests, skills, and education levels of each participant, tailors the program specifically to them, and lets them enter or reenter the program where they are best positioned to succeed. Most importantly, participants' lessons are contextualized to their chosen field, so they see exactly how their studies will apply to their everyday work.

### Influencing State Policy

Our Public Policy program takes the work that we do locally in small business and workforce development, higher education, and asset building, to promote positive change for working families across the state. For example, we see dramatically positive transformations first hand in our Career Pathways and Asset Builders programs, such as Tawanna Dunlap of Pine Bluff, a working mother who became a Certified Nursing Assistant in our program in 1999. Using money that she saved for education in her IDA account, she continued faithfully on her pathway, earning her Licensed Practical Nurse degree at SEARK, then a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Pine Bluff, and she's now completed her pathway and fulfilled her lifelong dream of becoming a Registered Nurse.

Our policy program led the effort in the state with the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, the Governor's Office, and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education and helped Arkansas

Our first Annual Fund drive is an exciting time for us, and it's one that we've been very happy to share with our current and former participants. When Brenda Brown learned of our fundraising effort, she became our first client to offer a Leadership Donation by quickly giving us a check for \$1,000.

"I would not be where I am today without the help that I received from Southern Good Faith Fund's Business Development Center," Brenda told us. "The least that I can do is give back so that they can assist other business owners like myself."

### Brenda's Story

Brenda's generous spirit is an inspiration, as is the story of her business. Brenda had a lifetime of experience raising children—actually, nine lifetimes. After raising her nine children, she decided to start a home-based business that would make the most of her experience and interests: a child care center. She began with a capacity of 16 children and ran the business so successfully that after a few years she had a long waiting list and was ready to expand. As many business owners are aware, good business can be as challenging to manage as bad. Brenda was aware and came to our Business Development Center for help.

become one of only eight states, and the only southern state, to participate in the National Governors Association Policy Academy and made successful recommendations for helping more low-income, working adults access and complete post-secondary education. In February of 2005, the Arkansas Transitional Employment Board approved a \$16 million grant to implement career pathways programs based on our model at 10 more two-year



### Grandma's House

Brenda started our Women's Business Mentoring Program in June of 2000 to improve her management skills and received technical assistance and counseling from our partner, alt.Consulting, to develop a business plan for expanding her home-based center into a larger, commercial facility. The following July, Brenda received a Small Business Administration (SBA) guaranteed loan of \$75,000 from Metropolitan Bank and bought a facility that allowed her to more than double her capacity, housing 35 children. But wait, there's more.

Brenda kept managing her business' growth and the demand of her services, and today Grandma's House Child Care Center in Little Rock cares for 117 children and has 11 employees. Congratulations, Brenda, and thank you.

colleges in Arkansas. Most recently, our program released an extensive report, titled 'Helping Arkansas' Katrina Evacuees Rebuild Their Lives,' to help Arkansas understand and effectively manage a compassionate and effective response to the people who are making their homes in our state after being uprooted by the storm. (To see this and other reports, go to our Public Policy page on our Web site at [www.southern-goodfaithfund.org](http://www.southern-goodfaithfund.org).) ■

## About Us – Our History

Southern Good Faith Fund started in 1988 as a microloan program modeled after the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. We've refined our mission and expanded our services greatly since then, and in 2004 we added "Southern" to our name to identify ourselves better with our parent company, Southern Bancorp, the largest rural development bank holding companies in the nation, and their comprehensive development and revitalization strategy for the rural communities of the Arkansas-Mississippi Delta. Learn more about Southern Bancorp's important activities and successes at [www.southernbancorpinc.com](http://www.southernbancorpinc.com).

If you would like to be added to our mailing list or receive an electronic version of this newsletter, please call us at 870.535.6233 or e-mail [info@southerngoodfaithfund.org](mailto:info@southerngoodfaithfund.org).

## From Our President

We would like to thank our funders, partners, and other supporters for helping us to do the good work that we do. But most importantly, we honor the families with whom we work every day. We help them to fulfill their dreams, but it is their hope, hard work, and dedication that are the successes we celebrate.

—Angela Duran

## Awards and Recognition

**Southern Good Faith Fund was named the Nonprofit of the Year by Arkansas Business newspaper in 2004. And this year, both our President Angela Duran and Southern Financial Partners President Ben Steinberg were Nonprofit Executive of the Year finalists.**

## Offices

### Pine Bluff

2304 West 29th Avenue  
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71603  
870.535.6233 or 888.323.6233

### Southeast Arkansas College

1900 Hazel Street  
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71603  
870.543.5900

### Helena-West Helena

502 Cherry Street  
Helena-West Helena, Arkansas 72342  
870.816.1120

### Phillips Community College

T & I Building  
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870.338.3279

### Little Rock


1400 West Markham Street, Suite 302  
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