



# Moving Up and Out: Poverty, Education, and the Single Parent Family

*Lori Holyfield*

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## **Moving Up and Out: Poverty, Education, and the Single Parent Family** Lori Holyfield

Single parent families in the United States have almost tripled in the past few decades. A huge majority of these families are female headed. In American culture, it is not so important that we all be equal so much as it is that we all have equal opportunities. Yet, sometimes we turn a blind eye to those who need us most. In fact, when it comes to single parent families, it is as if the barriers are too great, the issues too complex. We wind up reducing the debate to its lowest common denominator. Ironically, it is the families who are most affected that get tangled in the political barbed wire and hidden behind numbing statistics. Moreover, community responses, those small grassroots organizations who care deeply and give whole-heartedly are seldom celebrated, seldom recognized for their empowering efforts. "Moving Up and Out" focuses on just such a program, the Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund, which has since 1984 provided scholarships for single parents interested in obtaining their post-secondary education.

In this story of a highly successful nonprofit, Lori Holyfield (herself a recipient of a scholarship) draws upon the voices of single parents to consider the barriers and struggles faced as they attempt to obtain secondary education and change the lives of both themselves and their children. The help this program has brought to Arkansas residents is needed throughout the country. Lori Holyfield is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville.

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