



In KAACE

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Letter from the President

This year has been an exciting and very busy time as we partner with Kentucky Adult Education to plan the national COABE 2009 conference to be held here in Louisville, Kentucky. The COABE 09 board is diligently planning and working hard to ensure that the conference is the best yet. Thankfully, we have help from programs across the state as well as advice and suggestions from the St. Louis planning group and COABE President, Bob Weng. Be sure and check out the COABE 09 website at www.coabeconference.org, as we continue to update the site with new information.

KAACE continues to work. As you may have read in our last newsletter, the Grant Writing Workshops, presented by Charlene Brown and Jim Berger, were well attended and provided help and insight for the RFP. Following that workshop, KAACE also took the initiative to administer an online survey regarding the RFP process and review. I want to personally thank everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Equipped with your comments and suggestions, we were able to let KYAE know that most programs would greatly appreciate additional feedback in the way of written

comments from the reviewers. As a fellow program director, I know we are always looking for ways to strengthen our programs.

As always, KAACE will continue to advocate for the best interests of adult education across the state. If you have comments, questions, or suggestions, please feel free to share them with us. We also welcome articles on best practices, awards or recognition, and other success stories that we can share with other programs via this newsletter. Until the next edition, best wishes for the start of your new fiscal year. May 2008-09 be a year full of achievement for adult ed.

Best regards,

Julie Scoskie

KAACE President



Graduate participates in GED ceremony 35 years late

While not a recent graduate, Mary Medley walked into the Ahrens Learning Center in May of 2008 to inquire about participating in the GED Graduation Ceremony.

In 1962, Mary dropped out of high school to get married and start a family. Yet as circumstance would have it, nearly ten years later, she found herself struggling to raise four children as a single parent. Struggling to make ends meet, she knew that she needed her GED to get the kind of job she needed to sustain her family. It didn't matter that she dropped out ten years earlier because when she dropped back in to earn her GED, life took a turn for the better.



Earning her GED was both satisfying and rewarding and Mary knew that her accomplishment had a positive impact on her and her children. However, as a busy mother, she was not able to attend her GED graduation. The disappointment in not having experienced her own ceremony stayed with her until she came back to JCPS Adult Ed thirty five years later.

After sharing her inspiring story with more than 100 GED graduates and a packed auditorium, Mary proudly walked across the stage as a GED graduate amid the enthusiastic applause of family, friends, and fellow graduates.

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Woman, 88, takes a spin in a semi after earning GED

Bea Gibson Chester said she had four goals in life. The first was to get married. She did that. The second was to visit all 50 states, and she did that.

July 10, 2008, at West Kentucky Community and Technical College marked a continuation of completing her third goal: To get a General Education Development diploma.

Chester received a legislative citation from the House of Representatives in the form of an Esteemed Citizen Academic Achievement Award as one of the oldest to ever receive a GED in Kentucky, at 88 years old.

“Ms. Bea has touched us all,” Betty Myrick, WKCTC Adult Education Director, said at the GED graduation ceremony. “She always has been a big inspiration to the younger people in our classes. They all kind of adopted her. They would bring her treats and they would carry her books. They were really inspired by Bea being in the classes and going back at her age. If she could do it, they knew they could too.”



After speaking of Chester's rapport with younger students, Myrick surprised Chester, who was on stage at the time, with the information she would now get the chance to fulfill her fourth goal: to ride in an 18-wheeler truck.

After the 68 graduates received certificates, Chester was wheeled out to the semi waiting in the parking lot.

She waved to the onlookers before embarking on her journey.

Melissa Page, from the college's CDL Training Service in Mayfield, drove Chester around the block.

“The ride was super,” Chester said. “She blew the horn two times for me. It was really nice.”

Ms. Bea said those individuals who aren't sure they should go back and get their GED should just “absolutely try it, for nothing more the pride you get in yourself. That's what kept me going.”

“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps learning stays young.”
— Henry Ford

GED to Healthcare program is just what the doctor ordered

Jewish Hospital & St. Mary's HealthCare (JH&SMH), along with the Louisville Metro Housing Authority, is sponsoring a program to help GED students in Jefferson County find entry-level employment within the healthcare system while they earn a GED. The program is called GED to Healthcare.

Students must attend 32 hours of contextualized classes, and those who complete the course are recommended for employment and receive invitations for interviews. Those who meet the requirements for employment find entry-level positions in housekeeping or environmental services. Upon being hired, students have up to one year to earn the GED, and after the completion of the ninety days probationary period, the new employees are eligible to participate in the “Scholars Program” and receive college tuition aid.

This very new program, held at Ahrens Learning Center in Louisville, was developed in collaboration with JCPS Workforce Services Coordinator John Greenwell and Cindy

Price from JH&SMH. Classes will be held monthly.

The first student to complete the GED to Healthcare program and gain employment with Jewish Hospital was Vincredus Titus. Her testimonial speaks of the impact the course has already had on her life.

Titus says, “The GED to Healthcare program has helped me set my goals and use my knowledge to be able to schedule and perform my daily tasks. The class required me to have perfect attendance which was very difficult at times. It also taught me that I needed to have a Plan A, Plan B, Plan C, or however many plans I needed in order to attend class every day. I know that I will need to have dependable attendance in the workplace, and this program afforded me practice in this area. The class also taught me that I need to plan a mission, focus on a vision, and set my values in order to succeed in life and in the workplace. GED to Healthcare can lead to a great future.”

COABE 2008 generates ideas, excitement

COABE 2008, held in St. Louis, Missouri, was a great success on several fronts. While it's always a pleasure to interact with our counterparts across the country, the COABE national conference also gives us fresh ideas, ways to reinvent our teaching styles and classroom tools, and often a healthy attitude adjustment for moving forward to begin the new fiscal year. We are able to see what is working best in programs throughout the country and talk to the individuals who are coordinating the various efforts. St. Louis also provided us an ideal venue to promote the 2009 conference, to be held here in the Bluegrass State.

Dr. Adolph Brown, the opening speaker, kicked off the conference with a dynamic and fun lesson on presenting a welcoming environment. Dressed in clothing resembling what many would consider gang member attire, Dr. Brown walked through the exhibit area prior to his presentation. When introduced, there was collective confusion and surprise from both those who ignored him as well as those that struck up conversations with him in the exhibit area. It was a gentle cue that the old cliché not to judge a book by its cover still holds great importance in our profession, reminding us that our demeanor toward our students should be welcoming and open-minded.

Looking through the 2008 program, it was difficult to narrow the best choices for concurrent sessions. It was a great opportunity to get first-hand knowledge of new programs and techniques as well as general information from others in the field. One very interesting presentation covered new media advertising – a subject on which most of us could use a few lessons; after all . . . how many of us actually keep up with the technology that our students are using? The presentation was given by Debbie Hinton, Administrator of Adult Continuing Education for Chesterfield County (VA) Public Schools, and Dave Saunders, President of

madison+main Advertising. They shared with the audience an advertising campaign that has been tremendously successful for them. The campaign was targeted toward young adults, 18-25, and was so successful that it increased their number of GED registrations by 420% in February 2007. The campaign was run again in October 2007, yielding an increase of 365%, and again in February 2008 with an increase of 358%. For those of you who would like a copy of their presentation, please contact Cammie Kramer at camilla.kramer@jefferson.kyschools.us.

St. Louis also provided the backdrop for a serious marketing pitch for COABE 2009. The KAACE booth was something of a carnival, attracting a large crowd during exhibit hours. Visitors to the booth could register to win a free COABE 2009 registration as well as get some instant gratification by spinning the wheel of Kentucky-themed prizes. While we had some basics, like pens and t-shirts, the most popular winnings were the Louisville Slugger bats and various brands of Kentucky bourbon. The Louisville 2009 Reception provided more of the same, with prizes, a bluegrass band, derby pie, and bourbon balls.

If the excitement shown toward our efforts during COABE 08 is any indicator for 09, the turnout will be a large one in Louisville next April!

As you move forward, taking the ideas and information learned in St. Louis, keep your peers here in Kentucky apprised of the efforts and results. If you have success stories to share or simply want to spread the word about a great presentation or initiative that may work for other programs here in the state, send your thoughts to Missy Brownson at missy.brownson@kctcs.edu for inclusion in the next KAACE newsletter. In the meantime, mark your calendars for a trip to Louisville in April and help make COABE 2009 a great success!

"The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as long as we live." - Mortimer Adler

Young man overcomes obstacles and odds to earn GED

On March 27, 2008, Herbert Shepherd received his GED. As the instructors and staff cried and cheered when they received news he had passed, Herbert, stunned, sat quietly staring into space. He quietly called his mom and said, "Hey Mom, I have something to tell you. I passed the GED. Where's Dad? Let me tell him."

Herbert's success seven years in the making, with obstacles that would have stopped most.

In August 2001, at the age of 17, Herbert enrolled in the Harlan County Adult Education classes after dropping out of high school. Herbert and his dad made quite the pair as they walked into the adult education room; both were dressed in overalls and work shirts, and the staff soon came to love the father-son team who laughed and enjoyed each other's company.

In December 2001, Herbert felt ready to take the GED exam; unfortunately he did not pass. After Christmas break, Herbert came back to study and in May 2002, felt ready to retake the GED exam. Again, he did not pass, as his writing score was holding him back. Herbert was easily distracted and loved to watch other people and daydream. The staff worked with him on timed task assignments and lengthened his tasks accordingly. In July, he retested again and brought his writing score up by 20 points. The staff continued to work with Herbert on strategies to focus his attention, and in September 2002, Herbert was ready to tackle the GED exam again.

The night before the exam, Herbert was in a horrific car accident and was flown to a Tennessee hospital, where it was discovered that he suffered from severe head trauma injuries. He remained in the hospital for three months and had to endure long hours of physical therapy for two years. While in therapy, Herbert had to relearn simple, day-to-day functions such as speaking, thinking, and walking. As Herbert was recovering, he and his dad still dreamed of Herbert getting his GED.

Herbert's dad played an important role in helping him

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recover. He assisted with Herbert's painful physical therapy; when Herbert was ready to resume his studies for his GED, his dad would drive him 20 miles, twice weekly, for him to study and socialize. However, Herbert grew tired and soon quit. He returned after five months and again went to take the GED exam in May 2005. Herbert failed the test again; this time he had the passing scores but not the passing average. Herbert was heavily medicated and could not concentrate nor complete the test in a timely manner. He became discouraged, but did not give up on getting his GED.

During the time he was trying for his GED, Herbert got a job at a local grocery store, stocking shelves and bagging groceries. He worked there for two years before he changed jobs to work for the local water department. Herbert would attend class sporadically but worked on PLATO online classes. In February 2008, he returned to class and told the staff he had taken himself off of some of the medications, because he wanted to concentrate and focus better on the GED exam. He studied hard and was given the OPT.

Herbert, more alert, tested again in March 2008, and passed the GED exam. His excitement was short-lived, however. His dad passed away suddenly on June 1, 2008. Herbert has said that he was happy that his dad was able to see him reach their shared goal of him earning his GED.

On June 17, 2008, Herbert participated in the GED graduation and received the Perseverance Award. His paternal grandmother was in the audience beaming proudly as his name was called out to receive his diploma.

Herbert will enroll with Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College for the fall 2008 semester where he will pursue a technical degree to help support his mother. The staff eagerly awaits his return to help him with his college classes.

"To determine how successful your actions might be, consider how your efforts will serve to improve the lives of others." - P. Cannon Rasmussen

Many thanks and well wishes to Janet Hoover and Sandra Kestner, retiring KYAE staff members!