

GED graduates honored at SCC Logan Campus

By Wanda Kirk-Tomblin, ABE instructor

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (SCC) hosted its fifth annual GED graduation on May 20, 2003. The event was a collaborative effort between SCC's Four To Get Ready Literacy Program, P.R.I.D.E. Inc. of Logan County, the Ralph R. Willis Career and Technical Center, Logan County Board of Education, Mingo County Board of Education, and SCC's Out of School Youth Program. Twenty-two students took part in the commencement ceremony.

Adult education teachers Ed Adkins, Paul Meade, and Wanda Kirk-Tomblin led the student processional into the Savas-Kostas Theater. Afterwards, the graduates and guests joined in the invocation and pledge of allegiance.

During her welcome, Joanne Jaeger Tomblin, the college president, noted that the graduates had many reasons for earning their GED's and had faced many challenges along the way. "No matter where your life will lead you, you have earned this," Tomblin said. "No one said it would be easy. For many of you, it was not. It took hard work and dedication."

Tomblin said that many GED students had to overcome obstacles to succeed, obstacles that high school teenagers could not comprehend. "You had to work your school into busy lives, not work lives into busy schools," she added, saying that some grads would be going on to college at Southern while others would take time to decide their futures. "You will have a better life because you chose to improve your education."

After Tomblin's welcome, The Logan Middle School Choir, under the direction of Mary Rush, performed several musical selections. Afterwards, honor graduate Hollie Cox reminded her fellow students, "We made it." She continued, "When I was in high school, I made some mistakes, just like everyone else, only I ended up dropping out of high school instead of finishing high school."

Cox talked about how she found out about the Out of School Youth Program. She came in and talked to Deborah Van Dyke, director of the



program, who helped her enroll in the GED classes at SCC.

Cox also thanked her parents for urging her to get her GED and to attend classes. She also thanked her GED instructor, Wanda Kirk-Tomblin, for motivating her to finish. "She always told us, "If I can beat cancer, you can get your GED."

Ms. Cox plans to attend SCC in the fall and to major in Criminal Justice. Later, she hopes to transfer to Marshall and enter their pre-law program, eventually finishing as a corporate lawyer.

Campus manager Randy Skeens shared some interesting facts about the GED program during his introduction of platform guests. He said that more than 800,000 individuals will get take the GED test this year; those who pass will join people like comedian Bill Cosby, actor Christian Slater and U. S. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell.

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The fall season is upon us. If you are like me, you are wondering, "Where did the spring and summer go?" I tended to blame it on the weather — the rain, floods, the cool temperatures. Then, while editing this issue of *Networks*, I realized that we were probably just too busy to notice the changing seasons.

As you read this issue, you will be encouraged by the celebrations that were held throughout the state to recognize student successes, touched by the expertise and dedication of the adult educator of the year, excited about all that is happening in workplace education, inspired by two legacies left by those whom we lost this year, and anxious to get to know our new adult education regional coordinator.

You will see how the distance education

program has been changed in an effort to better serve students outside of the classroom. You will also get an up-to-the-minute report on the new programs beginning in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Resources and the West Virginia Workforce Investment Boards.

All this, and you will see that there is more to look forward to than following slow-moving school buses and grabbing a sweater before going outside. The WV Workplace Education Program and the WV Adult Education Association are planning two "can't miss" conferences for October and November. So take a few minutes, grab a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate, get away from the phones (including your cell phone), find a relaxing place to sit, and enjoy this issue.



Kathy Winter-Hollingsworth
Editor

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We will remember



As many of you know, Sandy Taylor, adult basic education aide at the Cabell County Career Technology Center, lost her battle with pancreatic cancer on August 26, 2003 (see "An open letter from WVAEA, Inc. contributing editor

Sandy Taylor," summer 2003 issue, page 13).

Sandy was very proud to serve on the board of directors of the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA). She was chair of the board development committee for 2003 and served on the conference planning committee for the past six years.

As the WVAEA contributing editor on the *Networks* editorial board, she submitted at least one article for every issue — many times expressing her own thoughts and feelings through her poetry.

Education was very important to Sandy. In addition to working full-time, being a wife, mother, and grandmother, she was attending Marshall University and maintaining a 4.0 GPA as a sophomore in the Counseling program.

Sandy leaves behind many broken spirits and hearts, but that is not what she wanted for any of us. So let's remember *her* spirit, which reflected true courage, an unflinching sense of humor, a comforting faith, strength beyond words, and a joy for life. Add that contagious smile of hers, and let these things lift up *our* spirits as we feel her presence.

Adult Educator of the Year named at conference



Kathy Hollingsworth (left) celebrates with Barrett, his daughter, grandchildren, and wife.

Each year at the Annual Technical and Adult Education Conference, the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. presents the Adult Educator of the Year award to an outstanding teacher or tutor in the field of adult education/literacy. This year's award was presented to Mike Barrett, ABE instructor/peer trainer.

Mike has served as a peer trainer for ABE for approximately four years. During this time, he has taught full time at the Southern Regional Jail and worked several evenings a week as an ABE instructor at the Fayette County Plateau Vocational Center.

Mike always goes the extra mile for his students. He has developed a system using parole officers to track his students after they leave the jail. He continually changes his program to meet the needs of his students. ■

RESA-6 welcomes new regional coordinator

Kim McConnaughy is the new regional coordinator for adult education at RESA-6 in Wheeling, WV. Kim earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, with a specialization in Management, from West Liberty State College in 1995 and a Master's degree in Education Leadership Studies from WVU in 1999. She recently received DACUM (Designing a Curriculum) training and certification through Ohio State University.

Prior to her appointment at RESA-6, Kim was the director of the Center for Adult Learners and Developmental Education at WV Northern

Community College. Her responsibilities included coordinating and directing academic support services, placement testing, new student orientation, and developmental education on all three regional campuses. Before that, Kim was the assistant dean of student affairs at and career services coordinator at West Liberty State College.

Aside from work, Kim is a member of the Christian education

committee and choir in her church and also directs the youth group program. Kim is married to Bo McConnaughy, baseball coach at West Liberty State College, and has two adult children, Justin (22) and Jeremy (18). Kim and her husband reside in Wheeling. ■



Kim with her elder son, Justin. (The photo was taken just after he had performed as Bob Cratchit in *Scrooge*.)

Pain and perseverance

Alicia Hall, age 19, the winner of the 2003 Perseverance Award, struggled with lupus for the past several years. Earning her GED required a hard-fought effort because of her illness, and she couldn't have been more proud of her accomplishment. She always had a smile despite her pain and discomfort, and the instructors were well aware of the determination she needed to stay focused.

Within two weeks of graduation, Alicia lost her battle with this debilitating disease. Her dedication to her goal will long be remembered and admired by the instructors and staff at the Morgantown Adult Learning Center.



GED students benefit from college experience

By Lucille Jordan, ABE instructor

It is rare, these days, to hear about the positive outcomes of education, but there are many that go unsung. Some of them occurred Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (SCC) on the Boone County campus.

Here at SCC's Boone campus, through the joint efforts of the Boone County RESA III Adult Education Program and SCC, a new and different approach to learning was tried and found to be successful.

The thought of educating GED students on a college campus was novel, especially since adult education in the past has been frowned upon by much of the educational community. Why?

Educators who are teaching in the GED field can tell many success stories, so they have always been advocates of the program. In the educational world, ABE has given many people a second chance in life. It might be compared to a blood transfusion in the medical world.

The ABE program here at the Boone campus was part of a major grant that encompassed Boone, Logan, and Williamson campuses of SCC. Many of the students in the Boone GED program came through the Out-of-School-Youth Program under the counseling supervision of Denise White.

The Out-of-School Youth Program was designed for students between the ages of 16 and 21 who were school dropouts. These were the same students who enrolled in the GED classes.

However, these students were not only in a different academic setting; many had various needs other than education.

Many of the enrollees were referred from the Boone County court system. In other words, they were "court-ordered" to attend. Some were resentful, since they felt forced to attend, but others were happy to have a second chance to get an education.

Consequently, some problems had to be worked through before actual teaching could take place. I spent many hours counseling, explaining, listening, even sending them out to take a walk until their tempers could cool down. Eventually they could see logical reasoning in certain situations. Much of this counseling was done jointly with the Out-of-School-Youth counselor, Denise White.

Initially, we did this work through trial and

error, with the understanding that the program had to be workable. We made changes daily, as the needs arose.

Thanks to the wonderful support from the SCC staff and personnel, the year was successful. It was good for the GED students to be in a college setting where higher education was taking place. Here they could see that they weren't different from the college students. It helped to convince them that college could be for them, too.

Lives were salvaged and new perspectives about education were gained. Once they knew success at the GED level, students saw that other opportunities were open to them in the educational world. They could see the potential to forge ahead academically.

Many of the GED students were high school dropouts with various reasons for not staying in school.

Some had lost credits at high school due to absences, since they were not able to have doctors' excuses and could have only a limited number of parent excuses (many lived 20 or 25 miles from the doctors office, and/or the family had only one car, which was used by the wage earner).

Some students could do school work and passed, but lost credits because they were frequently in the Adult Learning Center.

Some had problems with some teachers or other students. Others had problems on the bus, or were suspended from the bus.

Some hated school because, since the beginning of their education, they had known nothing but failure. Others needed help in class, but were told, "It's in the book (or on the board) — read it."

The ABE program at SCC's Boone campus started in January 2002, with several students in attendance. That year, there were new GED tests, and the publishing companies were slow in getting new practice GED test material out to the programs. We weren't sure what new materials we needed to introduce to prepare the students for taking the GED test.

Changes had been introduced in the math and essay areas of the test, with the most dramatic changes being in math, since 80 percent of the test would require the use of a scientific calculator.

Many students already knew how to use the

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GED graduates prove that success is possible

By Jennifer Scott

This article is reprinted with permission from The Dominion Post.

No beach balls. No silly string. Just 20 proud smiles and a cheering audience.

The 22nd annual Monongalia County adult basic education (ABE) graduation ceremony and reception was held Thursday, May 8, 2003 at South Middle School in Morgantown.

It was hard to tell if the light-hearted graduation was a beginning or an ending, but it was definitely a moment.

For External Diploma Program graduate and lifelong Morgantown resident Gilbert Murray, it was the moment.

"I've bettered myself," he said. "I accomplished something I didn't think I could do."

Murray said that if he can do it, anybody can, and he attended the graduation to celebrate his success.

"I just wanted to show people I did it," he said. "I didn't give up."

More than 100 students earned their General Educational Development (GED) diploma or External Diploma through the ABE program during the 2002-2003 school year, and two county veterans also earned their diplomas.

Although not everyone attended the gradua-



tion ceremony, the 20 students who did helped fill the stage.

"I present to you the class of 2002-2003," said ABE instructor Edie Jett as the graduates flipped their tassels to a standing ovation.

"I just love these people; they're my people," ABE instructor Cyndy Hawley said. "These people know what it's worth."

"About 40 percent of high school graduates couldn't pass the GED," Jett told the crowd. "That says a whole lot for the individuals up here tonight."

Several students were also presented with special awards. Stephanie Johnson received an award for having the highest score in the class. Alicia Hall received the perseverance award, and Robin L. Hutchinson and Regina Strawderman received the teamwork award for helping each other succeed.

Murray was awarded the Leland "Digger"

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West Virginia to host Southern Region Workplace Peer Conference

By Dr. Robin Asbury, Workplace Education coordinator

West Virginia will host the seventh annual Southern Region Workplace Peer Conference. This conference, focused on workplace education, is scheduled for October 8-10, 2003 at the new Tamarack Conference Center in Beckley, WV. Program developers, workplace instructors, and program directors from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Kentucky will share products, projects, and programs that work with business and industry.

A special presentation of "Coal Camp Memories" by Karen Vuranch will highlight the first evening. On

Thursday, October 9, conference participants will be able to choose from a variety of sessions, including those focused on working with WIBs, using WorkKeys, and Equipped for the Future. A gourmet dinner tops off the second day. On Friday, participants may again choose from concurrent sessions. Afterwards, they will have an opportunity to hear from a panel of employers. The conference concludes with a luncheon.

Registration information can be found on the ABE website at <<http://wvabe.org>>. Registration fees are \$100. Lodging has been arranged at the Country Inn & Suites in Beckley. For more information, contact Dr. Robin Asbury at 1-800-427-3600, extension 243.

Workplace education is working

By Dr. Robin Asbury, Workplace Education coordinator

The West Virginia Workplace Education program has started the year in high gear with two projects that will have implications for adult education programs statewide. The first is a multi-county project to provide pre-hire basic skill training for adults interested in applying for jobs in corrections.

The Mountain Opportunities for Regional Economies (MORE) project includes Barbour, Taylor, Tucker, Randolph, and Preston Counties. Targeted classes will cover skills such as test-taking, observation, problem-solving, incident report writing, completing Civil Service applications, and others, all related to corrections officer positions and testing. The materials were developed to be all-inclusive, and have been piloted successfully in Randolph County.

The second major project of the West Virginia Workplace Education Program is a multi-site project in health facilities. The program began last year, in collaboration with Davis Health Systems in Randolph County. It offers classes to employees as part of the Davis Health Systems

Academy. The Academy was devised by the administration of Davis Health Systems as a way to pay incumbent workers for gaining new knowledge. Participants attend classes that are offered at multiple times (to include all work shifts), and accrue points based on successful completion of the classes. Upon earning a predetermined number of points, the employees receive cash bonuses. The West Virginia Workplace Education Program worked with Davis to develop and deliver some of the Academy classes.

The project has gained interest from other health care facilities, including St. Joseph's Hospital in Buckhannon, WV. Since this facility is part of a consortium that includes three other state hospitals, the project has the potential to expand dramatically. The West Virginia Workplace Education Program is working in collaboration with another agency to acquire funding for this program to take place at multiple sites.

For more information, contact Dr. Robin Asbury at 1/800/427-3600 extension 243 or log on to the RESA VII website at <<http://resa7.k12.wv.us>>. ■



Online
Working Together

WVAEA plans annual conference at Stonewall Resort

The West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA) and its partnering agencies — the Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, Regional Education Service Agencies, WV Even Start Association, WV Library Commission, Department of Health and Human Resources, the Governor's Workforce Development Office, and volunteer literacy — will host the seventh annual adult education and family literacy conference. November 5-7, 2003 at Stonewall Resort.

Some of the topics planned for these jam-packed three days include: SPOKES, Ticket-to-Work, Energy Express, Money Smart, Disabilities One-on-One, Learn-

a-Test. There will also be sessions on how to recognize and deal with adults with mental health issues, sexual harassment regulations, EL Civics, ABE and ESL online opportunities, and what's new with distance education.

A special appearance of Improv Moments, and awards brunch, entertainment, vendors, door prizes, and a special guest speaker will further enliven the conference.

Don't miss this opportunity to network with friends and relax in beautiful surroundings. For more information, call the Adult Education Hotline at 1-800-642-2670 or log on to <www.wvaea.org>.

AdvantageGED comes to the classroom

By Kathy Hollingsworth, adult distance education coordinator

More and more adults are choosing distance education to complete their educational goals. Consequently, the distance education component of our statewide adult education program has grown both in number and in scope. Each year, more than 800 adults participate, and as the online component grows, the need for more teacher involvement becomes critical.

We also believe that teacher support can have a positive impact on retention and on student achievement. To help us conduct research on this belief, WV has become a partner in Project IDEAL (Improving Distance Education for Adult Learners), a consortium of 13 states charged with coordinating best practices for teaching adult education students at-a-distance. As a partner in Project IDEAL, WV has been involved in creating teacher and trainer handbooks, developing a federally approved formula to monitor "seat time" for distance learners, and addressing other concepts unique to distance education.

The **major** changes to WV's distance education program are:



- All potential distance learners will be referred to local programs for orientation and pre-, interim-, and post-testing.
- Those who choose to study via television will be scheduled to report to the local program for periodic checks and assessments.
- Those who wish to study via the online component will be assigned to one of eight trained cyber-teachers for assistance throughout their course of study.
- Any teacher who has contact with a distance learner will get credit for that student on enrollment, and for all contact hours spent with that student.

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Degrees open the door to opportunity for many

Fifty-five-year-old Jerry Powell needed his diploma to continue his job as a custodian at Ranson Elementary. Doyle Collins, age 60, got his diploma because the Lord gave him a nudge. Nancy Swomley, age 45, went after her diploma because she wanted to make her son proud. Fifty-four-year-old Jane Santoro realized she needed her diploma in order to do some of the things she really wanted to do.

These are just a few of the many who received their high school equivalency diplomas during the annual GED/External Diploma Program recognition and graduation ceremony held by the Adult Basic Education program and James Rumsey Technical Institute at the end of the 2002-2003 school year.

Jill Weekley, learning center coordinator, said layoffs, better job opportunities and a sense of personal satisfaction led the graduates to complete their education.

Each graduate has a unique story to tell.

Some of them are quite remarkable.

Powell has worked as a maintenance employee at the Hilltop House in Harpers Ferry for the past 28 years. For the past four years, he has worked an additional job as custodian for Jefferson County Schools. While working two jobs, he was also working on trying to get his GED. He needed his diploma in order to maintain his job with the school.

His family and the school system were very supportive. "I wore the cap and gown, the whole thing," Powell said. "My family clapped and hollered. I was embarrassed." He says that his family, as well as Weekley, were a key part of his success. He gives his daughter a lot of the credit. She helped him a great deal with his studies.

Now his grandchildren are asking him for help with their homework. "One thing I tell them is since they're in school, they should stay there," he said.

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West Virginia wins high score awards from GEDTS

This year marks the 16th year of the General Educational Development (GED) National Awards for Outstanding Achievement Program. The GED Testing Service presented a national award plaque to the examinee in each state, province, and territory who received the highest score on the GED tests in 2002. West Virginia was one of the few states receiving multiple awards due to a tie in scores. The General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education and the WV GED Office recognized Nathan Jones and Rebecca Olson as National award winners for West Virginia based on their 2001 GED test scores.



**Award winners
Rebecca Olson and
Nathan Jones.**

Eighteen-year-old Nathan Daniel Jones earned a score of 3760. He has also received a Promise scholarship. Jones tested at the Academy of Career and Technology with GED examiners Rita Smith and Susan Rice. He currently works at Southern Communications as a DJ for a hit music radio station.

Rebecca Olson, 20, a resident of Charles Town, also received a total score of 3760. She tested at the Jefferson County Board of Educa-

tion with GED examiner Glenda Bonfili. Olson's educational experiences included private schools, public schools, and home-schooling.

To be eligible for the 2002 Outstanding Award, the two GED graduates did the following:

- Took the GED Tests between January 1 and December 31, 2002;
- Achieved a total GED standard score of 3000 or above;
- Earned their award-winning scores the first time they took the GED tests;
- Were at least age 18 or older at the time of the tests; and
- Were not enrolled in any for-credit postsecondary-level courses before or during the GED tests. (GED preparation courses, continuing education courses, and non-credit courses offered in a college setting are permitted, however.)

Approximately 15 percent of graduating U.S. high school seniors achieve total scores of 3000 or better; less than two percent earn a total score 3750 or better.

The GED tests were developed in 1942 for persons who had not completed high school. The tests provide an opportunity for individuals to demonstrate that they have acquired the level

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Tri-County ABE students visit Pittsburgh Zoo/PPG Aquarium

By Misty Dawson

At the end of May, Tri-County adult basic education (ABE) students visited the Pittsburgh Zoo /PPG Aquarium. Students from all three counties participated in the trip.

Students raised funds for the trip in a variety of ways. Students in the Harrisville Day Class held a class yard sale at the Ritchie County Board of Education. The Day Class students and staff contributed a variety of items to the yard sale. Other contributions were received by family members and the Board of Education staff. The sale was a success and covered everyone's admission into the zoo — along with some spending money for those students who worked the yard sale.

Students in the Pleasants County TANF class were sponsored by local businesses.



Tri-County ABE would like to thank all the individuals who contributed to our field trip and made it such a success. ■

How do you say “Thank you”?

By Rebecca McDaniel

Following the start of the war in Iraq, the combined ABE/GED classes located at the Martinsburg Public Library in Martinsburg, WV wondered if there might be something they could do to help our military personnel stationed in Iraq. Regardless of each person's feelings concerning the right or wrong of the war, it was decided that we would begin a letter-writing habit to men and/or women stationed by the military in Iraq.

What a great opportunity for our students — and teachers, as well — to improve their writing skills, including grammar, spelling, punctuation, and expression. These letters were to be written with only positive, uplifting information included — and no mention of the war. Newspaper and magazine articles were included, but only if they contained no negativity, even on the back of the article. We didn't expect any responses from our military personnel because we understood how very busy they would be with their duties. Goodies from WV were also tucked into those large brown manila envelopes.

To our utter amazement, our class received an American flag with a beautiful certificate stating that this particular American flag was flown over Iraq and into Baghdad during a C-130H3 Combat Mission on May 3, 2003. This wonderful



Left to right: Tatiana Dalton, Melissa Guthrie, Angela Robinson, Tara Sheffler, Jaime Foster, Stephanie Mercer, and Raymond Lewis proudly display the flag and certificate sent to them by SSgt. Kenny LaFollette of the US Air Force.

surprise came from Kenneth LaFollette, SSgt, WVANG, flight engineer for the U.S. Air Force and brother of Ramona Beddow at RESA VIII.

How very proud we are of our men and women serving in the military of the U.S. — wherever they may be located. We pray for their safety and wellbeing.

Isn't it time your class said, “Thank you”? ■

Air Force sergeant sends letter of thanks to ABE/GED class

I would like to thank you again for the letters and the newspaper clippings from you and your students. I greatly appreciate all of them. It's very wonderful to know that we have so many wonderful people back home behind us and supporting us.

I understand you have been getting a lot of rain over there, we could use some of that rain over here, the average rainfall here is 1/4" a year. It is easy to see why everything is sand over here.

The war is over, but we continue to be very busy, actually sometimes busier now than when the war was going on. I'm sorry that I don't have time to write all your students this time, however, I did enclose an American flag that I would like to present to you and all of your students. I personally carried this flag on one of our missions which we flew into

Iraq and Baghdad International Airport, previously it was known as Saddam International Airport, but it was renamed after the allies over took the airport.

I hope you will be able to find someplace in your classroom to hang it. It is just a little something to show my appreciation for everything you have sent to me. I hope everyone is doing well there, we are all doing very well over here, just a little homesick, but hopefully we will be coming home to our families soon. Thank you again for everything and may God bless you all.

SSgt. Kenny LaFollette
May 20, 2003

Introducing SPOKES

By David Hollingsworth, DHHR special projects coordinator

A new academic and job preparation skills program, Strategic Planning in Occupational Knowledge for Employment and Success (SPOKES) is being provided through a contract between the WV Department of Education, Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, and the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), in collaboration with the WV Workforce Investment Boards (WIB).

The concept came from a WV Works Revamp committee who felt their customers were in need of job readiness and personal management skills development. Specifically, the program provides intense daily activities that will address academic and “soft skills” necessary for adults to pursue and retain gainful employment. The program will allow DHHR, WV Works, and One-Stop customers to be referred to the program and receive services on “any given Monday.”

The SPOKES class is a six-week program consisting of assessment, job readiness, work process skills, computer skills, and WorkKeys academics. Classes will run throughout the year



in comprehensive centers and serve between 15-20 students at any given time. In stand-alone or roving SPOKES classes, the program will move to different sites within the region for varied lengths of time, based on participant enrollment.

Participants in this program must be referred from One-Stop Centers or WV DHHR. Classes will be offered in all four of West Virginia's DHHR regions and in a majority of the WIB regions. For more information about the SPOKES program, contact Debbie Varner, WV Department of Education, at 558-5616 or David Hollingsworth, RESA III, at 1-800-257-3723. ■

Ticket to Work arriving in West Virginia

By Jeff Seager, West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services

This article is reprinted in part from WORKABLE, Issue 2, Volume 5 (Spring 2003).

When the Social Security Administration's (SSA) new Ticket to Work program rolls into West Virginia in November, an estimated 113,700 of those tickets will be issued to working-age West Virginians with disabilities. That's more than six percent of the state's population.

Ticket to Work is designed to establish a voucher system for rehabilitation services that assist Social Security Insurance (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) beneficiaries in returning to work. Until now, the Social Security Administration automatically referred those beneficiaries to the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

“One goal of the Ticket to Work is to give consumers more choice,” explained Nancy Daugherty, the Ticket to Work program specialist for DRS.

In assisting the SSA, she said, DRS will continue to provide the full range of rehabilitation services to SSI/SSDI recipients who assign their “ticket” to DRS. Other providers will function as “Employment Networks,” or ENs, as defined by the 1999 Ticket to Work legislation. The difference is that consumers may now choose among public-sector and private-sector providers who are authorized to provide similar rehabilitation and employment services. Through its program manager, Maximus, Inc., SSA will provide potential rehabilitation clients with a list of approved providers, including DRS.

For more information, about the *Ticket to Work* program, contact Maximus at 1-866-968-7842 or

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Ghosts: Who ya gonna call?

By Rebecca McDaniel

“...and the couple picked up little Jenny in the middle of the road and returned her to the busy hospital,” Susan Crites explained. The odd thing about this occurrence was that Jenny did not exist. And, although it made a wonderful home to the hundreds of pigeons that resided there, the hospital was now a rundown building lacking a roof, electricity, windows, and the like.

The combined ABE/GED classes located at the Martinsburg Public Library in Martinsburg, WV recently discovered that, at the first sign of ghost activity, you contact the WV Society of Ghost Hunters (WVSGH), of which Susan Crites is the Director.

Crites presented everything you might ever want to know about ghost sightings in this area. The class was even able to handle some of the equipment used by the WVSGH in their ongoing quests for our friendly or, sometimes, not-so-friendly visitors.

Crites shared pictures showing ghosts, and explained how they reveal themselves. First they begin to materialize in the form of yellow, gray, and red pops of light. Next they take on the form of orbs that resemble soap bubbles. Then they assume the form of miasma or “the foggy stuff.” Finally, they are fully viewable. We were even privileged to listen to a CD of ghosts talking. Imagine the shock on our faces as we all heard a ghostly voice on the CD exclaim, “Get out of my house!”

Crites concluded her presentation with a guided ghost walk around this area of



Student Olivia Creager looks on as Susan Crites, director of the WV Society of Ghost Hunters, holds up a picture of a ghost.

Martinsburg. Thanks to her, we now know when and where to look for sightings. But I do believe that none of the students — or teachers — have been brave enough to venture out at night on their own to search for ghosts.

If you decide you have a ghost in your habitat, don't call us. Contact the West Virginia Society of Ghost Hunters, P.O. Box 1411, Hedgenville, WV 25427 or log on to their website at <["http://www.wvsocietyofghosthunters.com"](http://www.wvsocietyofghosthunters.com) > for some great pictures and information. ■

Jake's Run computer camp



By Susie Huggins, director of Monongalia Literacy Volunteers

Jina Moore, AmeriCorps member, planned and executed an adult computer camp for parents at Jake's Run Early Head Start Center for Monongalia County Literacy Volunteers.

She collaborated this event with the New York-based 92-Y who provided youth to operate the camp. The 92-Y provided activities for 27 children, while 15 parents received instruction on how to use a computer.

At the end of the four-day camp, parents took the computers home. Mission WV provided the computers.

Learn to Earn Project receives grant award

By Michelle Markovich, Region VI WIB program director

The Region VI Workforce Investment Board (WIB), Inc. has received a grant from the Verizon Foundation to implement its Learn to Earn Project (LEP). The project aims to organize a wide-spread campaign — directed toward Region VI businesses and individuals, corporations, labor, and other organizations — to raise awareness and to expand the availability of and participation in literacy programs. The LEP will serve the Region's 13 counties — Barbour, Braxton, Doddridge, Gilmer, Harrison, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, Randolph, Taylor, Tucker and Upshur.

Primarily, the LEP's purpose is to change the perception that the need for literacy training is "a negative mark on the individual" and to replace it with the recognition that public and private sectors must unite in declaring their support and commitment to creating a highly skilled and literate workforce in the Region VI service area.

A number of activities have been planned to achieve these goals, including training and workshops for the region's one-stop partners in order to bridge the gap between individuals and services. The grant money will cover the cost of the training and other LEP expenses, including informational brochures and folders available at the Region's WORK4WV Career Centers and at the Region VI WIB.

The campaign is to promote literacy from within the one-stops to the general public. The vision of Workforce Literacy in Region VI is to enhance the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills. The campaign will reach out to both employed and unemployed, and will collaborate closely with

business and industry, boards, one-stop career centers, community and technical colleges, workforce development partners, adult basic education, and the full range of literacy programs.

The first training session was held at the Clarksburg WORK4WV Career Center on June 13, 2003. Denise McIntire of the Doddridge County Family Literacy Program provided training. Nearly 20 individuals received training on various aspects of literacy, including tips on how to determine if a person is in need of literacy and remediation services as well as the proper techniques for approaching someone in need of literacy services.

Three additional training sessions were also held, two on July 29, 2003. Susie Huggins of the Literacy Volunteers of Monongalia and Preston Counties provided training from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Morgantown WORK4WV Career Center, and Janie Woolfitt provided training at the Fairmont WORK4WV Career Center beginning at noon. The third training session took place August 1, 2003 at the Elkins WORK4WV Career Center, where Judy Seaman of the Literacy Volunteers of Randolph County provided training.

An ongoing partnership has been developed, and more training sessions will be held. To learn more about this grant, training sessions, or to request informational brochures, contact Michelle Markovich at the Region VI Workforce Investment Board: 304-368-9530.



Computers and Camp Dawson

By Susie Huggins, director of Monongalia Literacy Volunteers

AmeriCorp member Delisa Riley is operating a computer class at the Kingwood Public Library for the guardsmen at Camp Dawson. The class, which meets on Monday evenings, is free. Riley is also working with the Tunnelton Historical Society to bring a library to the community of Tunnelton.

Margaret Henderson retires after 31 years

By Debbie Kimbler, GED administrator

Margaret Henderson became a state employee March 16, 1972. After 31 years, three months, and ten days, she sadly decided to retire.

Margaret's time with the Department of Education encompassed many different positions. She was an associate staff with Library Services, Federal Programs, Title Nine "Elimination of Sex Discrimination," School Plant Planning, and Foster Grandparent Program. For the last seven years, her position was Secretary III with the General Educational Development (GED) Office.

"These were very happy years and [this] was when I met my dearest lifetime friend, Kathy Reed," said Henderson. "The Foster Grandparent Program was my most rewarding job. To see senior citizens grow is a wonderful experience. There were 147 or more foster grandparents, and I met each one personally. We had a great relationship. The years I worked with the GED tests were also wonderful years. The job is demanding but the rewards were great."

"I also had the privilege of helping to write the *Student Rights Handbook*, which is still of great use, and the *West Virginia Department of Education Employees' Handbook*. I was there for every revision.

"I saw many changes in the departments. One of the greatest was from the typewriters to the computers. I never really fell in love with the computer but I had to have some 'type' of relationship," Henderson quipped.

In honor of Henderson's years of service, a retirement reception was held in the state board room June 27, 2003. At the reception, she said, "Some of the best people in the world work in education. During my illnesses, they brought cooked dishes, sent flowers, and donated their leave when I would run out of sick leave. They really took care of me. I miss them all, but I am enjoying the rocking chair which they gave to me as a retirement gift.

"Of all these things, I am most thankful and proud to be the mother of George L. Henderson III and the grandmother of three — Patrick, George IV, and the ruler of us all, Cerina."

Henderson is also active with the Alumni of Simmons High School, the first all-black school in Fayette County. She became chairperson of the organization in July, at the last reunion. "I am always happy to plan the school reunions.



Margaret Henderson with Stan Hopkins, Assistant State Superintendent.

This year there were 366 in attendance. It was a wonderful gathering."

With the extra time that comes with retirement, Margaret is planning to get involved with the youth at the Grace Bible Church, where she attends.

"I am happy to be home, but sad because I miss my friends at the GED and Vocational Education Department. Later I plan to do some traveling.

"Where to? I don't know."

Ticket to Work

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1-866-833-2967 TDD. Information also is available on the internet at <<http://www.yourtickettowork.com>> and at <<http://www.ssa.gov/work/panel/>>.

The SSA's Ticket to Work and Work Incentives advisory panel reports that public testimony and "word on the street" indicate a good overall response to Ticket to Work, but that beneficiaries "have often been unable to find an EN that would accept their ticket."

Of about 700 authorized employment networks nationwide, fewer than 200 are accepting tickets. "As a result," the panel told SSA administrators in March, "beneficiaries give up, and employment service providers are concerned about whether becoming an EN will be profitable."

"In terms of the quality of care and the range of services we offer, I think the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services has a huge advantage," Daugherty said.

More information is available at the website: <<http://www.ssa.gov/work/panel/>>. ■

As part of the ABE class at the Martinsburg Public Library in Martinsburg, WV, the class read and fell in love with an awesome book titled A History of West Virginia, written by Anna Egan Smucker. Chapter 16, "Coming Home," contains a writing exercise that asks students to write a story about West Virginia today, including their own personal ideas. We would like to share the story written by one of our students, Nathaniel Weigle. Hope you enjoy it as much as we did!

Student writing is the original work of students and has not been edited.

Nate's Tale

By Nathaniel Weigle

This story is about WV today. I'll talk about the parks, rivers, and the old-time music festivals. I'll also be talking about how WV is peaceful today, WV is growing fast, and why I'm proud to be a West Virginian.

In WV there is always something to do. Some things to do would be walking around or just sitting on a bench enjoying the view. You can go camping on the river banks, fishing, or just boating down the rivers. The music festivals are a good way for a relaxing day. These are some peaceful and relaxing things to do.

The reasons why I'm proud to be a West Virginian are: I'm a native West Virginian, born in Martinsburg, raised in Hedgesville, and my parents are native West Virginians, too. So I'll never move out of WV because I'll miss the rivers, parks, and the festivals.

After reading my story about WV, what do you think? If you want a peaceful and relaxing vacation, come to WV, or just come see the sites of WV. You will love it! ■

Logan County grads

Continued from page 1

SCC Foundation Director Ron Lemon presented Hollie Cox, Derick Hammond, and Brandi Kennedy — all honor graduates — with scholarships to attend SCC.

Debbie Kimbler, a former Logan County teacher and GED examiner who is now the state GED administrator, was the guest speaker for the event. "As a teacher of younger students, you wonder about whether or not you are making a difference," Kimbler said, "but that is what is wonderful about GED. With adults you can see the difference. Education is a lifelong process."

Bea Orr, director of student services for Logan County Schools, presented the graduating class, which was accepted by Logan County Schools superintendent David Godby. With Logan County GED examiner Brenda Lusk serving as master of the roll, Godby, Mingo County Board of Education member Despina "Dee" Kapourales and Lincoln County Board of Education member Eddie Wickle awarded diplomas to the graduates.

After the ceremony, the Logan Middle School choir and pianist Jaime Ferrell entertained graduates and their guests with lighthearted music while the group enjoyed a buffet dinner. ■

College experience

Continued from page 4

calculator, but some knew very little about its use. Had it not been for the *Calculator Math Program Workbook*, published by Steck-Vaughn Publishing Company, we would have been at a loss.

We relied on a combination of the old, manually taught approach and the new, scientific calculator approach, and all worked out well. The students achieved what many thought impossible — they passed the GED test.

The new GED test placed more emphasis on world affairs, so we introduced this material with newspapers, cartoons, graphs, and television. This area, too, was taught successfully.

Although the program started in January 2002, the first new GED testing was scheduled for March 13 and 14 at the Boone County Vocational School. At that time, only one student was ready to take the test. He passed with flying colors, scoring 2580 points (2500 points makes the student eligible for a GED scholarship). It takes 2250 points to pass the GED test, so the student exceeded the cut-off score.

This student not only earned a scholarship; he received the scholarship awarded by SCC at the GED graduation, which washeld at the college's Logan campus. He will be attending college classes at the Boone campus in the fall.

Since March 2002, six students from the Boone campus have taken the GED test, and five of them have met or exceeded a score of 2500 points. This makes them eligible for a GED scholarship. All six are enrolled for fall classes, five at SCC's Boone campus and one at Marshall University, also with full scholarship rights.

Those who weren't ready to take the GED class this past term will attend during the 2002-2003 school year. ■

Monongalia graduates

Continued from page 5

Digman award for “exemplifying the spirit and determination needed to succeed.”

Digman, a former program graduate, left high school to work in the mines, but later decided to get his External Diploma. He later died of a heart attack.

Digman’s determination and effort has been memorialized every year since 1999 with the Leland Digman award and plaque, presented to an outstanding student. Digman’s mother, Hazel Messenger, and brothers, John Lynch and George Digman, presented this year’s award to Murray.

The awards came after a few heartening speeches.

Johnson stood first at the microphone and encouraged her fellow students to continue their education.

“No matter how far you’ve come to get here, you can’t let this be your last step,” she said.

Sharon Harsh, a Mon Board of Education assistant superintendent and the evening’s keynote speaker, talked to the graduates about happiness. “Each person should enjoy the ordinary things, and form their own opinion and perception of life and happiness,” she said. “This is an accomplishment that will have a significant impact on your life.” ■

AdvantageGED

Continued from page 7

Briefly, the program will now work as follows:

- Marketing and recruiting activities will be done by the Distance Education Office (O).
- Students will call the Adult Education hotline to enroll — the process will be explained.
- The DEO will e-mail student info to nearest ABE program.
- The ABE program will send a postage-paid appointment card to student(s) that indicates the date, time, and location for orientation.
- The ABE program will conduct orientation as usual, which includes:
 - academic assessment
 - goal-setting
 - earning style(s) determination
 - screening for special learning needs
 - explaining the DE student contract agreement
 - conducting the Internet Essential Skills

Inventory to students who wish to study online

- giving telecourse schedule to student (if applicable)
- The ABE program will enter student data into AEMIS.
- The ABE program will e-mail completed orientation check-off to DEO.
- The DEO will assign student to a cyber-teacher (if applicable).
- Students will return to the ABE program for inter- and post-testing, occasional one-on-one assistance, or to use computers.
- Students will be referred to nearest GED testing center, ABE program, or re-enrolled in DE.

Referrals from the DEO to the ABE classroom will begin by late September, 2003. If you have questions, please contact me or Ellen Killion at 1-800-642-2670. ■

GEDTS awards

Continued from page 8

of learning required of traditional high school graduates. The five tests in the GED battery are designed to measure the major concepts and skills associated with a traditional high school education.

Since World War II, the GED testing Program has enabled more than 24 million adults to obtain formal recognition of their educational development through attainment of a high school equivalency credential. In 2001, 7,244 adults were tested in West Virginia and 4,848 credentials were issued. West Virginia’s GED passing rate was 74 percent, while the national average was 64 percent. Each year, more than 850,000 people take the GED tests.

The American Council on Education, a nonprofit association based in Washington, DC, is the major coordinating agency for American higher education. The Council, through its Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, serves as an advocate for adult learners in a variety of ways, from administering the GED high school diploma program to providing college credit recommendations for courses taught outside the traditional campus classroom.

“I am now poised to begin my college education in a few months. It seems at this point, I can truly do and be anything I wish, just as long as I continually strive for excellence,” says award winner Nathan Jones. ■

Degrees open the door

Continued from page 7

Collins said he was led by the Lord to pursue his education. He said his life “could’ve been, should’ve been easier,” but ill-advised, wrong choices caused him to abandon his education early in life. “I should have been here 43 years ago,” he said.

This time around, getting his diploma did not take very long — about seven or eight weeks — once he started his study program. “I feel like it will be used for ministry purposes,” he said. He runs a children’s international ministry, Children’s Christian Workshop, which provides food and clothing to needy children.

“Don’t waste 40 years of your life like I did,” Collins told the audience. “Determine tonight that you want to continue your education.” He is not certain, but feels that he may continue his education in some way. “Wherever the Lord leads me, I’ll go,” he said. “I have a feeling there will be more.”

Swomley, who works as a cook at Bob Evans Restaurant, got her diploma after being officially enrolled in the program for only two weeks and three days. Prior to enrollment, she got a GED book and studied a lot on her own. But she gives a lot of the credit to her 24-year-old son and daughter-in-law, as well as her teachers, Jill Weekley and Susan Gray.

Swomley praised everyone who worked with the program. “[Weekley and Gray] are just extraordinary. We need more teachers like them in the world.” She went on to say, “They never made me feel stupid. They will not give up on you.” Speaking to her son from the stage, she

said, “Now you can be proud of your mom.”

Swomley would like to continue her education in the medical field. She said she wants to help people. She has already given her GED study materials to someone else from her church. “It’s a gift to graduate, but it’s hard work. If you [refuse to] give up, then you can do it,” Swomley said. “[Dropping out] was the most horrible mistake I made.”

Santoro said that after years of resisting going back to school to get her diploma, she ultimately realized that everything she wanted to do required a GED or high school diploma. Finally, she said, “OK, enough is enough. Let’s go for it.”

She now works for Head Start as a temporary employee. She urged the audience to encourage their children to stay in school.

Weekley said that stories like those of Powell, Collins, Swomley, and Santoro are not unusual. But she referred to them as a particularly motivated group. “It’s been a joy to work with them,” she said.

Of the adult learning program, Weekley said the hardest step for those returning to school is the first one through the door. Those who do get through the door — or are even thinking about it — should listen closely to what Powell, Collins, Swomley, and Santoro have to say. So should those who are considering dropping out of school. ■

My early and invincible love of reading, . . . I would not exchange for the treasures of India.

Edward Gibbon

Deadline for fall newsletter: November 12, 2003