

The rebirth of the Wetzel County ABE program

By Nancy Richmond, ABE Program Coordinator

Sometimes an adult basic education (ABE) program just has to pick itself up, dust itself off, and start all over again. That's what the Wetzel County Schools ABE Program did in the fall of 2002. With the help of adult education coordinator Ron Williams (now retired), some tough decisions were made. But the difficult choices have paid off, and the program is thriving.

First, a new coordinator, Nancy Richmond, joined the team. Then came two new teachers, Sonya Holiday and Wendy Slider. Next, a day class and night class were formed at the Wetzel County Center for Children and Families, a Starting Points Center. But recruitment and retention remained a problem. So the new team built strong partnerships with Even Start, DHHR, and WV Northern Community College. They knew they could not create the kind of program the students needed without help from the important players in literacy, family preservation, and higher education.

Today, classes are full and people call nearly every day to find out how to enroll. The teachers have a lot to do with this. They designed an enrollment program to help new students understand the importance of attending ABE regularly and using their skills outside the classroom. They worked tirelessly with case managers and the community college's learning center to connect students with resources that addressed transportation barriers, provided extra tutoring, and offered students a chance to network with college students.

Yet the barriers persisted. Many students had no incentive to work with teachers, family members, or case managers to get to class on time. So carpools were formed. Students were offered ABE Bucks to be spent in the ABE Store or to pay for a ride from an instructor or volunteer. Certificates were designed to honor students who made and fulfilled the commitment to improve basic skills, advance their literacy levels, or earn a General Educational Development (GED) diploma.

Today, Kim McConaughy has become a valuable member of the team as the adult

education coordinator at RESA 6, and Mrs. Barbara Stout now serves as Nancy Richmond's administrative supervisor in Wetzel County. Through their efforts, the Wetzel County ABE staff have been able to attend local trainings and meet regularly with other ABE team members in the Northern Panhandle. Mrs. Slider, through her commitment to advance the use of technology, will participate in the InStep training offered through RESA 6. And, during FY04, the ABE program received encouragement from an on-site evaluation team to continue the good work. All in all, sometimes change is good! ■

It's time to register!

Register now for the first Regional Institute co-sponsored by the Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) and the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA), **Institute in the Hills**.

Immediately following **Institute in the Hills**, the WVAEA offers the eighth annual adult education and family literacy conference, **Reaching the Summit**.

ABE Core professional development sessions will be offered, and up to two hours of graduate credit from Marshall University will be available to you if you attend. Log on to www.wvaea.org to get a description of the topics, the sessions, the presenters, and the activities that have been planned for you. Online registration is also available at the WVAEA website, www.wvaea.org.

Inside this issue

From the editor	2
Upcoming conferences	6, 10
Governor's Council news	5, 9
LAMP and BOLT news	8
Student writing	13, 14, 16

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From the editor

As we come to this time of year and think of all that has happened within the last year, I can't help but recall one of my favorite writings by Mary Englebreit. It is entitled "Don't Look Back." In case you are not familiar with it, or even if you are, I would like to share her insight with you. I hope it becomes as meaningful for you as it is for me.

As you travel through life there are always those times when decisions just have to be made. . . . When the choices are hard and the solutions seem scarce. . . .
. . . and the rain seems to soak your parade.
There are some situations where all you can do is to simply let go and move on. . . .
. . . gather courage together and choose a direction that carries you toward a new dawn.
So pack up your troubles and take a step forward — the process of change can be tough. . . .
. . . but think about all the excitement ahead if you can be stalwart enough!
There could be adventures you never imagined just waiting around the next bend. . . .
. . . and wishes and dreams just about to come true in ways you can't yet comprehend!
Perhaps you'll find friendships that spring from new interests as you challenge your status quo. . . .
. . . and learn there are so many options in life, and so many ways you can grow!
Perhaps you'll go places you never expected and see things that you've never seen. . . .
. . . or travel to fabulous, faraway worlds and wonderful spots in between!
Perhaps you'll find warmth and affection and caring — a "somebody special" who's there. . . .
. . . to help you stay centered and listen with interest to stories and feelings you share.
Perhaps you'll find comfort in knowing your friends are supportive in all that you do. . . .
. . . and believe that whatever decisions you make, they'll be the right choices for you!
So keep putting one foot in front of the other and taking your life day by day.
There's a brighter tomorrow that's just down the road.
Don't look back — you're not going that way! ■

Kathy Winter-Hollingsworth
Editor

MEET-U bus comes to students

By Kelly Bennett, ABE instructor, Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College and adult basic education (ABE) programs have collaborated to provide a unique classroom for adult learners in the southern coalfields. The MEET-U bus is a state-

of-the-art classroom that has introduced ABE classes to various communities in Southern West Virginia. MEET-U is the abbreviation for Mobile Education Evaluation and Training Unit. The MEET-U bus is filled with the latest technology and comforts of a modern classroom. It is fully carpeted with white dry erase walls, individual desks, and business chairs. The 36-foot-long bus is equipped with 13 Dell computers, laser printer, copier, three televisions, sound system and satellite Internet.

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College owns the MEET-U Bus, and ABE uses the bus three days a week to offer ABE courses in rural areas of West Virginia. The bus has offered ABE classes in Boone, Lincoln, and Mingo Counties. Its first location was the Van/Wharton area in Boone County, after which it moved to Harts in Lincoln County. The bus recently moved to Lenore in Mingo County. Since the MEET-U bus has begun operating, approximately 50 students have taken ABE classes in the mobile classroom unit.

Bringing classes to rural towns by means of the MEET-U bus gives adult learners who might not otherwise participate an opportunity to participate in ABE classes. In addition to the convenience, knowing that the classroom is close to their homes and in a familiar setting allows students to feel more secure and comfortable. The connection with Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College gives students the opportunity to become acquainted with their local community college and its offerings, which they can pursue when they pass the GED (General Educational Development) exam and earn their high school equivalency diploma. ■

ABE informational video

By Kim McConnaughy, regional coordinator for ABE, RESA VI

A new adult basic education (ABE) promotional project, the first of its kind, has been underway in the Northern Panhandle in recent months. The project spawned an ABE informational video that should be available after the first of September.

Its purpose is to educate the general public, service agencies, educational agencies, and businesses on the services and programs that are available through adult basic education. It will also serve as outreach to potential students who are in need of basic skills enhancements, General Educational Development (GED) preparation, workplace essential skills, English as a Second language (ESL), and other benefits of the program. By educating partnering and referral agencies, the video will create a stronger referral base for those who work with ABE.

Components of the video include the background of ABE, state and national statistics, class sites throughout the Northern Panhandle region, an overview of a variety of instructional strategies, student testimonials, comments from a county/program administrator, and comments from one ABE instructor within institutional education.

ABE programs may use the video as a promotional/educational piece when conducting programs or forums with service agencies, educational agencies, or businesses with the goal of better serving the adult student population throughout the state.

In addition to developing the outline and providing testimonials, the ABE programs in the five Northern Panhandle counties contributed to this project monetarily. A special thank-you goes to Dr. Robin Asbury, who provided the workplace education component.

The informational video will be televised on the FYI channel through ComCast for seven weeks in the fall and again for six weeks after the first of the year. Look for a link to the ABE informational video on the WVABE website in the near future. For more information, contact Kim McConnaughy, regional coordinator for ABE, RESA-VI, at 304-231-3819 or e-mail kmconna@access.k12.wv.us.



The MEET-U bus brings ABE opportunities to students in rural areas.

REACHH-FRC receives Even Start grant

By Peggy Rossi, executive coordinator, Summers County REACHH-FRC

Peggy Rossi, executive coordinator and member of the board of directors of REACHH-FRC (Reaching Everyone to Assist in Creating Healthy Homes-Family Resource Center, Inc.), is pleased to announce the receipt of a federally funded, state administered Title I Even Start Grant. This grant became effective August 1, 2004 through the West Virginia Department of Education. Under the grant, REACHH-FRC, Inc.'s wide range of programs — including a day care center, Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) program, and Child Advocacy Center services — will be coordinated and expanded to enhance literacy, education, and employment-related services to Summers County children ages 0-8 and their families. Program collaborators include Summers County Schools, the Summers County Public Library, the Literate Adults Mean Prosperity (LAMP) program, the Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) WORKFORCE West Virginia program, West Virginia Works Program, DHHR Child Protective Services, and Head Start.

The goal of Summers County Even Start is to increase the literacy of both parent and child, as a learning team, through the four components of family literacy — parent and child together (PACT) time, parent time, adult education, and early childhood education.

During PACT time, parents and their children will participate in a range of age-appropriate, pre-literacy, and literacy activities including group meals, games, nature/science art and craft projects, homework completion, computer activities, storytelling, and writing. Monthly field

trips, both in and out of the county, will enhance these educational experiences and provide a greater appreciation of our rich Appalachian culture, as well as other cultures.

Parent time will provide parents with the support and knowledge to be more effective parents, to become their children's primary teachers, and to partner in their children's education — as well as tools and skills to accomplish their own personal goals and to participate more fully in their community. Parent time will be held weekly in conjunction with Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes. The Bowdoin Method curriculum will be used as a basis for parent education activities. Workshops for parents will also be made available on specific issues including: understanding Individual Education Programs (IEPs), conflict resolution and communication skills, work place expectations, job skills, resume preparation, and other topics based on parent interest.

The goal of the adult education component is to improve the reading literacy and mathematical skills of parent participants and to enhance their ability to solve problems and maintain gainful employment. Adult education will be available through two programs, giving parents the option of daily daytime classes with the Board of Education ABE instructor or a flexible combination of daytime and evening hours offered by the LAMP program at the Summers County Public Library. Mentors/life skills coaches will be available to provide support during these challenging years of their children's education and to assist parents in meeting their personal and educational goals. Staff can also provide multidisciplinary team (MDT) facilitation and advocacy to help families access educational services and resources they need to succeed.

The early childhood educational component will take place at the Dandy Lions and Ladybugs Day Care Center, at pre-school parent-child learning groups, through home visits for pre-school children, in conjunction with the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Workers (MIHOW) program, and with the public school system for children in elementary school. An early education instructor/trainer will be hired to work with children, parents and staff in the REACHH-FRC Day Care and MIHOW learning group settings.



Left to right: Sue Storms, van driver; Lisa Smith, MIHOW-Even Start liaison and home visitor; Kristal Straub, family support facilitator; Nancy O'Farrell, early education instructor; Peggy Rossi, project

director; Doris Cobb, administrative assistant; Olivia Peden, family support assistant.

Continued on page 5

Wetzel County holds first recognition ceremony

By Nancy Richmond, ABE program coordinator

The Wetzel County Schools General Educational Development (GED) Testing Program celebrated its first GED Recognition Ceremony on June 27 at the Wetzel County Center for Children and Families. Families, friends, and invited guests gathered to congratulate eight adults who completed the GED examination.

Rev. J. Stephen Vallelonga of St. Vincent Paul Church offered the invocation. Mr. Ron Williams, a West Virginia educator and administrator, delivered the keynote address and encouraged the honorees to continue their journey and fulfill their dreams. He reminded them that a GED is an important first step to a brighter future.

Teacher Wendy Slider and coordinator Nancy Richmond presented each recipient with a

certificate of achievement, and refreshments were enjoyed at the conclusion of the ceremony.

The honorees included Lisa M. Allman, Korena D. Blare, Tanita A. Estep, Amanda M. Harris, Natashia R. Holley, Violet R. Lewis, Michele L. Swartz, and Mary A. Tedrow. ■

REACHH-FRC

Continued from page 4

Project staff will monitor the progress of children and the parents. Staff will also be available to assist students and their families by attending and providing advocacy at meetings with school personnel regarding special education, academic performance services, attendance and disciplinary problems, facilitating and related issues, and by MDT meetings to help parents access services for their children.

REACHH-FRC staff participating in the Even Start project, in addition to Peggy Rossi, executive coordinator, include Doris Cobb, administrative assistant; Kristal Straub, MDT facilitator/case manager; Olivia Peden, family support assistant; Nancy O'Farrell, early childhood education instructor/trainer; and Lisa Smith, MIHOW home visitor. All of the staff are excited about the Even Start's potential to reach additional families with an expanded, enhanced, and coordinated range of services.

Other community collaborators directly involved with the Even Start project will be Julie Merriam, REACHH-FRC Day Care Center director; Felicia Hartwell, day care assistant director; Shalom Tazewell, LAMP coordinator; David Dent, ABE instructor; Work Force WV staff; and DHHR WV Works staff.

For more information about this program, contact staff at 304-466-2226. REACHH-FRC is located at 411 Temple Street, Hinton, WV 25951. ■

Salute to Lifelong Learning

By Connie Moore, West Virginia Department of Education

The Governor's Council on Literacy, in cooperation with the West Virginia Literacy Foundation, held their annual Salute to Lifelong Learning ceremony on July 30 at the governor's mansion. Secretary of Education and the Arts, Kay Goodwin, representing Governor Wise and John Golden, chair of the council, presented the awards.

This ceremony recognizes and awards scholarships to those who have obtained the WV High School Equivalency Diploma by passing the General Educational Development (GED) exam, and who are continuing their education. In addition, grant checks were given to organizations from across the state that are helping individuals improve their functional literacy skills through reading, writing, English-speaking, job-readiness and GED preparation programs. The grants are awarded based upon proposals submitted by organizations throughout the state.

Scholarship recipients included: Dustin Atkins, Lorena Byrd, Autumn Carter, Andrew Conner, Natasha Ferguson, Jacqueline Goswick, Kristy Hartman, Jeremy Lester, Violet Lewis, Steven Milauskas, Steven Parsons, Alisha Poff, Tonya Reed, Kristy Scott, Beverly Sparks, and Thurston Tabor.

Grant recipients included: ABE Learning Center, Anthony Correctional Center, Appalachian Community Care, Big Creek People in Action, Catholic Community Services, Community Connections, Discover WV, Hamlin-Lincoln County Public Library, LAMP-Summers County Public Library, LifeBridge AmeriCorps, Literacy for Life-Raleigh County, Literacy Volunteers of America-Harrison County, Literacy Volunteers of America-Upshur County, Literacy Volunteers of the Eastern Panhandle, Literacy Volunteers of Marion County, Literacy Volunteers of Monongalia County, Literacy West Virginia, Logan County Public Library, Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc., Pocahontas County Free Libraries, and Rosedale Community Center.

WVAEA hosts regional institute and annual conference October 24-27 in Charleston

By Cathy Shank, WV ABE professional development coordinator

Practitioners serving adult populations should make plans to attend the best professional development opportunity of the year on October 24-27 at the Charleston Embassy Suites. This year the WV Adult Education Association, WVAEA, Inc. will host **Institute in the Hills**, an

Appalachian regional training opportunity co-sponsored by the national Commission On Adult Basic Education (COABE) and its state affiliate, WVAEA. The two-day institute, which begins Sunday, October 24, will offer a choice among four training tracks: Disabilities and Accommodations, Using the Wilson Reading System to Assist Low-Level Readers, Serving Young Adult Populations, and The Impact of Health Concerns on Learning. Depending on the track, each track of workshops will provide eight to ten hours of training that includes research-based information and hands-on experience.

Other highlights of the institute include the option to participate in the WV Hills Scenic Bus Tour Sunday morning (pre-payment required) and a free bus excursion that evening to the Cultural Center for a sandwich buffet and live performance of the internationally syndicated radio show Mountain Stage (pre-registration required). In addition, a luncheon on Monday will include a WV Humanities History Alive! performance featuring an enactment of West Virginia author Pearl Buck.

Immediately following the two-day Institute in the Hills, the WVAEA 8th Annual Adult Education and Family Literacy Conference, **Reaching the Summit**, will begin. Participants arriving on Monday for the conference are welcome to attend the luncheon and History Alive! presentation and to explore downtown Charleston in the afternoon. Monday afternoon will also feature a student track that will provide leadership training to those ABE and literacy students chosen to attend.

Reaching the Summit will provide conference participants with practical information on a variety of topics. Core WV ABE in-service sessions and a variety of elective training opportunities will be offered during these two days.

Marshall University will offer one hour of graduate credit for attending the institute and another hour for attending the conference. Enrollment information will be available at the registration desk.

For a preview of the schedule, check out the offerings in "At-A-Glance" on page 7. To register online or to obtain complete information and daily schedules for the institute and conference, visit the website at www.wvaea.org. ■

ABE-to-College program helps with transition

By Kim McConaughy, regional coordinator for ABE, RESA VI

Cynthia Zafft, coordinator for the National College Transition Network (NCTN), reports that since March there have been over 65 responses from 25 states to the National College Transition Network basic membership sign-up form mentioned in the February 2004 issue of *Focus on Basics* (available by contacting the WV Adult Education Hotline 1-800-642-2670).

West Virginia provides adult basic education (ABE) classes in community and technical colleges throughout the state. In an effort to enhance the services and offerings to our ABE students in preparation for post-secondary education, an ABE-to-College Transitions Program is currently under development. The program will provide assistance to ABE students who want to pursue a college education. ABE students will be exposed to college personnel in the areas of admissions, financial aid, and other student services in an effort to acquaint them with facilities, services, and resources that will allow for a smooth transition to the first year of college.

The transitions program will be a collaborative effort between ABE and the college's developmental education program. ABE students will become more aware of the college setting and requirements for admission. Participating students at the college level will receive one-on-one assistance and tutoring.

A mentoring program for both ABE and developmental education students will be an additional benefit of the transitions program. The program should serve as an enhancement of the services available to adult students and adult learning centers through ABE, the community, and technical colleges.

The NCTN survey reveals that the transition program is growing, with many interested in learning more about promising practices, professional development, teaching and assessment resources, funding, and other important aspects of helping adult learners make the transition to college. Please visit the transitions network website at www.collegetransition.org.



At-A-Glance



**First regional institute sponsored by
COABE and WVAEA, Inc.**

Sunday, October 24, 2004

- 8:00 – 11:45 WV Hills Scenic Bus Tour
(preregistration required)
- 10:00 – 5:00 Registration
- 1:30 – 4:30 Track One: Disabilities and
page 9 Accommodations
- noon – 4:30 Track Two : Working with the
page 9 Low-Level Reader
NOTE: early start time
- 1:30 – 4:30 Track Three: Serving Youth Populations
page 9
- 1:30 – 4:30 Track Four: Impact of Health
page 10 on Learning

Monday, October 25, 2004

- 7:00 – 4:00 Registration
- noon – 1:45 Joint Session Luncheon
(included in registration)
- 8:30 – 5:00 Track One: Disabilities and
page 9 Accommodations
- 8:00 – 4:00 Track Two: Working with the
page 9 Low-Level Reader
NOTE: early start time
- 8:30 – 4:00 Track Three: Serving Youth Populations
page 10
- 8:30 – 5:00 Track Four: Impact of Health
page 10 on Learning



**Building Opportunities for Learning Together
Student Track**

- Monday, October 25, 2004
- Noon – 1:45 Luncheon (included in registration)
- 2:00 – 6:00 Adult Students as Community Leaders:
A Leadership and Job-Readiness
Workshop

**Eighth annual adult education
and family literacy conference
sponsored by WVAEA, Inc.**

Monday, October 25, 2004

- 7:00 – 4:00 Registration
- 12:00 – 1:45 Joint Session Luncheon
(included in registration)
- afternoon/
evening Explore Charleston
(see info at Registration Table)

Tuesday, October 26, 2004

- 8:30 – 4:30 Literacy 100 (ABE Core)
- 8:30 – 10:00 Effective Advertising
Ensuring GED
Accommodations
Hard Facts about Soft Skills
- 10:15 – 11:45 An Overview of Rx in Class
Domestic Violence
Working with Employers
- 12:00 – 1:30 Lunch (on your own)
- 1:30 – 4:30 Assessment 100 (ABE Core)
- 1:30 – 3:00 2-1-1 Initiative
Working with M.A.C.C.
Tobacco Prevention
- 3:15 – 4:45 Assistive Technology in Class
ABE to College
Problem Gambling in WV

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

- 8:30 – 11:30 Curriculum 100 (ABE Core)
MH Issues for Caseworkers
Management 100 (ABE Core)
- 8:30 – 10:00 Utilizing Labor Market
Information for
Career Decision-Making
Books and Bread:
The Staff of Life
- 10:15 – 11:45 Are You Ready? Homeland
Security in Your Backyard
Guide for Working Families
- 12:00 – 1:30 Awards Luncheon
(included in registration)

LAMP sponsors fourth annual BOLT picnic

By Shalom Tazewell, LAMP coordinator

Despite gloomy weather and occasional downpours, 54 people attended the fourth annual Building Opportunities for Learning Together (BOLT) picnic in Summers County. Participants included 34 students and their families and Literate Adults Mean Prosperity (LAMP) volunteers.

In addition, candidates for the West Virginia House of Delegates from Raleigh and Summers Counties came to the picnic and enjoyed both the food and opportunity to speak with adult education students. They included several incumbents — Speaker of the House Robert Kiss and delegates Ron Thompson, Sally Sussman, Gerald Crozier, and Linda Sumner — as well as challengers Ron Hedrick, Philip Stevens, and Charles Carpenter. Hinton's mayor, Cleo Matthews, and City Council member Larry Meador also attended.

LAMP encourages adult learners to register to vote and participate in the political process. The group has sponsored voter registration drives, including one on Martin Luther King Day. Being able to speak with government representatives and candidates at the picnic prompted one learner to say, "I feel important, like what I say matters."

Picnickers feasted on fresh vegetables from home gardens, fried chicken, hot dogs, and the



WV House of Delegates members, LAMP students, and volunteers listen to award presentations at the fourth annual BOLT picnic.

traditional BOLT cake, supplied by LAMP students. During gaps in the rain, children took turns at breaking open a piñata while the adults tried their skills at a hammer throw. LAMP volunteers (Maria Torres, Taze Tazewell, Myra Ziegler, Nancy Martin, Pete Peterson, and Renee Smith) were recognized for their commitment to adult education, and Inette Smith, vice-chair of BOLT, received a special certificate for her work with BOLT. Door prizes donated by area businesses and Speaker of the House Robert Kiss were also awarded. ■

LAMP parades for BOLT

By Inette Smith, vice-chair, Building Opportunities for Learning Together

On August 7, Literate Adults Mean Prosperity (LAMP) learners participated in Hinton's annual Water Festival parade. Volunteers and students, led by Inette Smith, vice-chair of Building Opportunities for Learning Together (BOLT), the student affiliate of the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc., decorated a pickup truck with streamers, balloons, math symbols, and banners that urged Summers County residents to complete their education. Charles Ward, Gale Ward, Inette Smith, Mary Adkins, Leanna Hocum, Kathy Grimmett, Vickie Gill, and Maria Torres rode in the float, waving and tossing candy to the citizens who lined the streets.



Governor's Council on Literacy/WV Literacy Foundation welcomes new members

By **Connie Moore**, WV Department of Education

The Governor's Council on Literacy welcomed seven members who were newly appointed in April. Each new member received a certificate signed by Governor Bob Wise.

In collaboration with Jay Long of the Higher Education central office, the council also initiated a new effort to facilitate the processing of General Educational Development (GED) scholarship applications. The Higher Education office has established a link on their website for colleges and students to access information regarding the GED scholarship program of the council/foundation. John Golden, along with Mendy Marshall, WVDE council staff liaison, presented a certificate to Long.

Council/foundation officers for the 2004-05 are: John Golden, chair; Bill Hairston, vice-chair; Anne Selinger, secretary; and Dwight Sherman, treasurer. ■

Top, left to right: John Golden, John Davidson, Jr., Susan Hayden, Dwight Sherman, and Joe Brouse. Unavailable for pictures were David Mullins, Gary Pommerenck, and Joanna Tabit.



Bottom, left to right: Jay Long, John Golden, and Mendy Marshall.



Wheeling WORKFORCE WV Career Center relocates

By **Jill Beall**, interim director, WorkForce WV Career Center, Region V

The Wheeling WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Center relocated from National Road in the Wooddale section of Wheeling to 1275 Warwood Avenue, in Warwood Plaza. The new location offers plenty of free parking, large conference and classroom spaces, and an open computer lab for customers to access the Internet, develop cover letters and resumes, and participate in other job-seeking activities.

With additional centers located in Weirton and New Martinsville, the WORKFORCE WV Career Centers offer a variety of services to job-seekers and employers. Employers may utilize services such as job postings and referral of candidates for available positions. Employers may also contact recent training graduates, obtain information on training vendors and programs, and get help in finding information on employment tax credits, small business loans, and related programs.

Access to financial support for training programs is available to employers as well. Employers may choose to contract with On-the-Job Training, a wage reimbursement program, to supplement the cost of training

new employees who are eligible through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Customized training is also available to employers for new employees or incumbent workers who meet WIA eligibility.

The job-seeker may benefit through various workshops and programs offered at the WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Center. Basic skills testing, career interest testing, and eligibility services are available on-site at all WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Centers. Workshops on goal setting, job readiness, resume/cover letter development, interview skills, and proper workplace dress are offered on a scheduled basis.

WIA-eligible job-seekers who register at the WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Centers may obtain training and funding for education programs. For those who qualify, funding for On-the-Job Training or short-term training programs is available, as well as funding for up to two years of higher education in a high demand occupation.

For more information visit our website at www.npworkforcewv.org or call 1-866-956-2669 (toll free). ■

Up close and personal – the 167th

By Rebecca McDaniel, ABE instructor

Earlier this year, while the Martinsburg Public Library was being remodeled, the adult basic education (ABE) classes of Paula Hutzler and Becke McDaniel have been meeting at Pikeside Learning Center in Martinsburg.

Located a mere two miles from Pikeside Learning Center is the base for the 167th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard. From our classroom windows, we can watch and hear the large C-130's taking off and landing. We must admit that sometimes teachers and students scurry to the windows to watch the action. It was only a matter of time until we decided that we would like to tour the base and see those "big

birds" up close and personal.

After making arrangements through the secretary to the base commander and obtaining personal clearances for each student and teacher, we were granted a tour of the facility.

Nine excited people arrived at the base, only to be stopped at the gate by military security personnel carrying large, loaded weapons. Once our clearances were checked, we were issued special badges. Those who toured the base were ABE county coordinator Phil Miller and instructor Becke McDaniel, along with Kristin Kidwiler, Michael Lewis, Jacob Pixler, Marlon Powell, Amber Priest, Nathan Weigle, and Sheila White.

Master Sergeant Charles Longley, Jr. was our personal guide to the 167th AW Fire Department. Here we saw the massive equipment used to extinguish all types of fires. We met "the twins," large trucks that carry water, foam, and dry chemicals, and "little brother," a smaller version of "the twins."

Technical Sergeant Dan Dropp became our next guide as we toured the rest of the base. This included walking between the white lines to the ramp space so that base security wouldn't be upset. (You really don't want to upset people with loaded weapons!) On the ramp space sat six C-130's. We were able to board one, and even had the opportunity to sit in the seats of the pilot, co-pilot, navigator, and engineer. We listened in awe as military personnel explained the uses, benefits, and equipment of the C-130 airplane.

We also had the opportunity to tour the base museum, where we could view the history of the 167th Airlift Wing of the West Virginia Air National Guard. The history of this awesome unit came alive in pictures, paintings, and uniforms.

Finally, we stopped for a quick presentation by one of the recruiters. We sat in the base conference room under the watchful eyes of pictures of the chain of command for the National Guard, starting with President Bush.

One of the students left a textbook on his teacher's car parked on the base. At the end of our tour, a security guard approached and told us that the textbook had been confiscated. Seems anything out of the ordinary is treated as a security risk. Happily or unhappily, depending on how you look at it, the textbook was returned to the student at the security gate as we left the base.

The trip to the base was educational, informative, and amazing. Kudos to our military people! ■

Celebrating PATHS to Real Choice Conference announced

By West Virginia Assistive Technology System (WVATS)

The **Celebrating PATHS to Real Choice Conference**, with a special Artist's Showcase, is set for February 22-23, 2005 at the Charleston Civic Center in Charleston, WV. The conference will provide adults, their families, and/or members of their support networks with pragmatic information, resources, and contacts they can use immediately to meet their needs in many areas.

This year's conference will be divided into four interactive tracks: Employment, Community Access, Participating in the Community, and Advocacy/Due Process. Morning and afternoon sessions for each track will start with an introductory presentation; panel discussions will follow. Panel members will act as discussion leaders for members of the audience who want more information about the panel member's presentation. Conference attendees may move among tracks. For instance, one could attend a session on Employment in the morning and Advocacy/Due Process in the afternoon.

The second day of the conference will feature three day-long workshops. Topics are: The "Fun"amentals of Assistive Technology, Transitioning from School into Life, and Accessible Computer Labs – the Role of Assistive Technology.

Celebrating PATHS to Real Choice will feature an Artist's Showcase to promote the work of artists and artisans with disabilities and long-term healthcare needs. Conference attendees will be able to enjoy art exhibits ranging from photography to pottery and attend a reception in honor of the artists.

The conference will be useful to anyone interested in learning about services and supports for adults with disabilities and long-term healthcare needs. For more information, or if you wish to display artwork at the showcase, please call 1-800-841-8436.

WORKFORCE West Virginia announces 2004 awards

By Melissa Aguilar, Workforce Development Office

WORKFORCE West Virginia announced its 2004 awards for outstanding partner, outstanding employer, outstanding training provider, and outstanding literature in the state of West Virginia.

The outstanding partner award is presented to the partner that assisted, through innovative practices, the highest number of Workforce Investment Act-registered (WIA) participants with the completion of training, receipt of credentials, and with placement and wages earned in unsubsidized employment. **UMWA Career Centers, Inc.**, in Beckley won the 2004 award. South-West Resources of Parkersburg received an honorable mention.

The outstanding employer award is presented to the employer that assisted the highest number of WIA-registered participants with placement and retention in unsubsidized employment. The 2004 award went to **Charleston Area Medical Center (CAMC)**. TeleTech of Moundsville received an honorable mention.

The outstanding training provider award goes to the provider that assisted the highest number of WIA-registered students with the completion of training, receipt of a credential, and with placement and wages earned in unsubsidized employment. **The Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics** at the United Technical Center in Clarksburg won the 2004 award. West Virginia State Community & Technical College at West Virginia State University in Institute received an honorable mention.

The outstanding literature award is presented to the organization whose entry most effectively represents the efforts of the Workforce Investment Board, one-stop, service provider, partner, or employer. Judging criteria includes quality, clarity, success rate, and effectiveness of media. This year, the **Region 1 Workforce Investment Board** in Beckley won the award. Two other organizations, the Region 2 Workforce Investment Board in Huntington and the Fairmont WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Center in Fairmont, received honorable mentions.

WORKFORCE West Virginia is a comprehensive, integrated workforce development system that quickly and effectively links employers, job seekers, training providers, and resources. Seven Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), in partnership with their regions' chief elected officials, oversee the WORKFORCE West Virginia network and help determine the training needs of employers, employees, and job seekers. The WIBs also manage funds allocated through the federal Workforce Investment Act, a program of the U.S. Department of Labor, and coordinate the activities of all the partners participating in the WORKFORCE West Virginia network.

The WORKFORCE West Virginia network of career centers works with 19 mandated partners and other relevant programs to provide its online and on-site services. For more information on WORKFORCE West Virginia, visit either www.wvdo.org or www.workforcewv.org. ■

WORKFORCE West Virginia Conference

By Jill Beall, interim director, WORKFORCE WV Career Center, Region V

The second annual WORKFORCE West Virginia Conference was held July 13-16 at Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort in Chester, WV.

More than 350 workforce professionals from throughout the state of West Virginia participated in various activities during the conference.

Participants chose from more than 80 diverse training sessions by speakers from throughout the U.S., on topics including customer service, management, education and training, community and economic development, employer services, and services to those with disabilities. The informative training sessions offered insight



and advice from experts on best practices to streamline and improve services offered through the WORKFORCE West Virginia System.

The planning committee organized receptions, luncheons, and a hospitality dance to encourage networking and collaboration among all who attended. Additionally, a golf tournament and slot tournament offered some fun and exciting competition.

A mix of learning, working, and

Continued on page 13

Corrections Learning Network

By Jeanette Donohew, lead teacher, and Jay Vickers, computer literacy instructor at Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility

The Corrections Learning Network (CLN) is a distance learning initiative administered by Educational Service District (ESD)101, operator of the STEP Star Network. It is funded through the U.S. Department of Education to provide distance learning and interactive instructional programming for the nation's correctional facilities.

Since 1986, ESD 101 has been producing live, interactive, satellite broadcast classes for K-12. In January 1997, ESD 101 began to disseminate alternative education courses. In 1999, the district received a grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop and distribute instruction to correctional facilities.

Correctional clients form one of the fastest growing but most under-served education audiences in the country. Research indicates that workforce training and education are significant factors in reducing recidivism among incarcerated individuals.

CLN programs and services include broadcast instruction for incarcerated populations and professional development for corrections educators, administrators, officers, and medical staff.

At the Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility, as well as at the Ohio County Correctional Center, CLN programming has been tape-recorded and collected into a video library from which incarcerated students may view tapes and complete exercises for certificates in Transition Skills, Employment Skills, Everyday Math, Anger Management, Business Basics, Owning Your Own Business, and others.

Targeted activities from the August 2004 CLN calendar included "mini-blocks" of instructional programs aired as consecutive episodes, and added to the video library. These were Victim Awareness, Technology 101, and GED Language Arts.

Also in August, in addition to the regular Thursday broadcast of staff development programming, CLN aired the three-hour, 24-credit National Institute of Corrections Videoconference, "Building Agency Success: Developing Effective FTO/OJT Programs."

The CLN is a supplemental curriculum of academic, employment, and life skills programming that uses technology to deliver

distance learning opportunities to both incarcerated students and staff development corrections-related employees at both the Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility and the Ohio County Correctional Center. To learn more about CLN, visit the website at <http://cln.esd101.net>. ■

Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility achieves national accreditation

By Jeanette Donohew, lead teacher, NRJCF

For the third time since May 1998, the West Virginia Department of Education program at Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility (NRJCF) has undergone an accreditation audit. On June 29, 2004 the International Correctional Education Association conducted a three-year review audit. Once again, the school was found to be in 100 percent compliance with the 78 standards.

The standards are divided into four categories: administration, staff, students, and programming. The standards establish minimum criteria that correctional education organizations, such as the WV Department of Education/Office of Institutional Education Programs, may use to plan and provide programs of high quality. Such programs address the needs of both the students and society. Students can realize potential, both academically and vocationally. Society reaps the benefit of a significant reduction in recidivism that education programming has proven to yield.

The most recent audit at NRJCF was particularly interesting. The auditor was Ray Dormer, a retired correctional education administrator from Australia. Mr. Dormer thoroughly enjoyed the experience. He stated that he views audits as an opportunity for a personal learning experience, and said, "There is quite a lot to be learned from West Virginia and the Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility when it comes to providing an exemplary correctional education program."

S.P.O.K.E.S. is making a difference

Compiled by Janet Barrett, Wood County ABE instructor

The Wood County S.P.O.K.E.S. class is working hard to make a difference in their student's lives. The students don't really know what to expect when they first arrive in class. We often have students tell us that they really didn't want to come to the class in the beginning and that they thought it would be "dumb or boring." Within six weeks, there is a definite change in attitude. The writings below are the original work of students and have not been edited.

"What did I learn from S.P.O.K.E.S.? For starters, I never realized how many skills I had until I was told to write down everything I had done in my past jobs. After doing this, I had 2 pages of different skills that could be applied to jobs that I never thought I would have ever thought of applying for. When it was time to start my resume, I was shown how to apply the right words from my skill list to fill in my resume." — Karen S.

"The reason I am writing this is to thank you for all the help you have given me. You have helped me do stuff that I had no idea of how to do and also have helped me with learning more in areas, such as math, that I was having trouble with. I appreciate the effort you put into it and the positive attitude you have had towards me during this class. You have shown me not to let other people drag me down and to believe in myself and that I can achieve anything I set my mind to." — Rose R.

"The greatest things I have learned in the S.P.O.K.E.S. class – I have learned how to write a proper resume, which is something I didn't know how to do before this class. I feel that this will be a great help for me in the future. I wish that I had been taught this skill in school, because I would not apply for certain jobs because the wanted a resume." — Vicki P.

"I have found this class to be very helpful, informational, and a great learning experience. Janet and Tracy are terrific teachers. They make you feel good about yourself, as well as believe in yourself. They have shown me that I have more skills than I'd realized. The way they teach makes you think about where you are going in your life, where you want to be, and that there is a way to get there. These are things that I will continue to use in my everyday life as well as in the workplace. Janet and Tracy have moved my thoughts to a more positive mode. These two teachers are into their students. They are a team that is helpful, but not so much that you don't have to work on things yourself. This is the way you learn you are capable of working things out. The students who have dropped out of the class have really lost a lot." — Beverly H.

"Since the beginning of this class, many things in my life have changed. After being out of work for almost 3 years, I felt I would never come out of that rut and want for anything more than a necessity. I want to go and get an education and make money. Not hope and pray I will get enough gas money to take the kids to the babysitter's house or ask people if they mind loaning me a couple of bucks for a while. Having the government hand me a check to take care of me and mine was not what I planned on doing ever. Now that I am here, I have to find a way to pull out of the rut. This class has brought confidence, knowledge, and determination back into my head. I have realized that I am not the only person in this world struggling and wanting for a better life, and it is going to be tough but I have the courage to go and do it now. After taking this course, I know how to hold myself. When it comes to getting a job and dealing with interviews, resumes, and applications, I don't feel ignorant. I now have the knowledge I need to have the confidence to present myself as a good candidate for any position and the attitude to keep it. I am thankful that this program is here to guide me and help me when I needed it most, before it was too late." — Ashley S. ■

WORKFORCE conference

Continued from page 11

leisure activities made the conference informative and enjoyable. It provided the opportunity for collaboration and staff development and addressed the building and maintenance of a skilled, employable workforce in West Virginia, a critical goal of all workforce professionals.

Melissa Aguilar of the Governor's Workforce Investment Division stated, "It was an event that was bigger and better than we anticipated. We owe many organizations a big 'thank you.' Everyone put in a lot of effort and time in planning, not to mention the many sponsors we had that truly helped us to put on a great conference."

Next year's conference planning is already underway. "We've already begun working on ensuring that 2005 will be even more informative, meaningful, and fun," Aguilar stated. ■

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

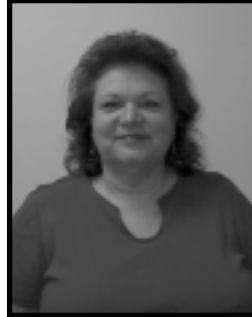
Don't be afraid to walk down that hall . . .

By Debbie Lewis, ABE student, Cabell County

The reason I would like to get my GED goes back to my childhood where education wasn't that important. My parents only had about an eighth grade education. My mother thought her home and children were all she needed. My dad was a factory worker, but for him to be an uneducated man he was one of the smartest self-taught men I have ever known. My older sisters never finished school. They quit and got married, which a lot of girls did when I was growing up.

I was sick a lot my first year of junior high so I missed a lot and failed the ninth grade. When I turned sixteen I went to my mother and said I couldn't go back after summer because I didn't know how to catch up on all that I had missed. My mother let me quit, and at sixteen I thought it was great. At the time I didn't realize that it would be a decision I would regret my whole life. It was hard on my daughter through her school years. I pushed her to learn and stay in school. I think I was trying to go to school through her. She is twenty-one now and going to college.

I am fifty-three and have lost my job due to the company shutting all their stores. It is a terrible time in my life right now with no job or income and no education. The company where I worked told us that since they were closing, we could go back to school and it would be paid for, but first I had to get my



GED. I was always embarrassed by not having an education, but the older I got, the harder it was to do anything about it. So when this opportunity came along, I thought if I didn't take advantage of this now I would never do it.

I went to the unemployment office the first week the company closed for a meeting about unemployment and about furthering my education. The speaker said that the adult education class was right down the hall in the same building. As soon as I left the meeting I made myself go find that classroom. It was one of the longest halls I have ever walked down.

In conclusion, no matter how you are raised or how stupid you feel, just do down that hall and walk in that door. Next month I will take my GED test. If you've had a teacher like mine, the test will be a breeze. I never knew getting an education could make me feel so good about myself. Everyone should experience this feeling.

Teacher's note: Debbie passed her GED with flying colors. ■

What Hit the Ground Running did for dislocated M&G Polymer workers

We were laid off on April 5, 2004 after working for the same company for 11 years or more. We did not receive any kind of answers from anyone until we attended Hit the Ground Running.

Our instructor, Nancy Long, brought in different people to talk to our class to help us get started in deciding what we wanted to be when we grew up.

Our class of eight ranged in age from 23 to 59 years of age and most were over 40. We had all done the same jobs for so long that our knowledge and ways of life had extremely changed. Hit the Ground Running has brought us back to reality. It has given us confidence, computer skills, math, reading, and locating information skills, along with résumé and cover letter writing. For anyone re-entering the workforce, this class is highly recommended.

Thanks to our instructor, Nancy Long and the attitude of the class, we were ALL able to graduate with a Ready-to-Work Certificate. ■

My birthplace West Virginia

By Vanessa McDaniel, Berkeley County ABE student

My birthplace in West Virginia was in a little town called Ranson.

I'm proud to be a West Virginian. I see people moving from the cities to live here. They come for our beautiful land.

We have whitewater rafting, state parks, and they come to ski. They come here for the peace and quiet.

The population is growing strong. New people and new businesses are moving here. New kinds of jobs are replacing jobs in manufacturing.

Education is important for our children. Students are being taught to use computers. Computers are being used everyday in our homes. Most of all they are being used in our jobs.

West Virginia is one the most beautiful states in the country. Throughout the history of the state, West Virginians have struggled to make a good life for themselves. We have good reasons to be proud.

New class in Harrison County has first graduate

By Karol Wilson, ABE County instructor/coordinator

The first person to pass the General Educational Development (GED) test from the new class at Jewel City Church got warm praise from the

congregation on Sunday, June 13 during a graduation in the church sanctuary. Joe Phares, wearing a choir robe and mortarboard with a tassel, was met with clapping and cheers as he walked across the front of the church. The pastor congratulated him and presented him with a framed certificate. He again received cheers when he moved his tassel from one side of the hat to the other.



Because he was the first in the class to graduate, he was declared valedictorian. As he walked down the aisle to sit with his wife, he had a grin from ear to ear.

The brand-new adult basic education (ABE) class at Jewel City Church in Shinnston, which began in March, was prompted by the pastor's request to create a learning site at the church. Several church members have received special training and volunteer to help with the class.

This summer, two computers were donated to the church for use in the class by the employer of one of the tutors. She also has three laptops that she can bring to class.

The atmosphere in the classroom is warm and caring, with a lot of positive feedback when new things are learned. As in most ABE classes, people's abilities differ, but every one is made to feel that whatever he is working on is the most important thing in the room. The class will continue and, with such encouragement, we are sure to have many success stories. ■

Monongalia County student earns external diploma with Even Start support

By Angie Swisher, Even Start family educator, Monongalia County Even Start

On May 20, 2004, at the Monongalia County Adult Basic Education 23rd Annual Graduation and Recognition Ceremony, April Ann Dalton received her high school diploma. April completed the External Diploma Program in record time due to

great diligence and excellent attendance at the Morgantown Adult Learning Center. April's success was mirrored in the theme of this year's graduation — Winning Teams.

April left high school before graduation, but always longed to complete that phase of her education. Transportation and childcare were huge barriers to achieving this goal. When her son, Kalen, was eligible to attend Head

Start, her dream began to come true. Head Start provided an educational setting for Kalen, while April attended the adult learning center. April became a volunteer bus aide on her child's bus so they could travel to and from school together. She also attended monthly parent meetings for Head Start and acted as a classroom volunteer as time permitted.

April and Kalen then enrolled in the Even Start family literacy program. Even Start provided a case management approach to help April and Kalen both achieve their literacy goals. Even Start provided school supplies, a home library, weekly lending library, and extra support for completion of EDP tasks.

April's team also included her family. They believed in her and supported her during difficult phases. April was asked to be the student speaker for her graduation. She recognized each program and each member of her "winning team" and exclaimed, "I couldn't have done it without each one of you." ■



Monongalia County EDP lead assessor Debra Williams and EDP graduate April Dalton.

Goodbye

By Vickie Gill, Summers County ABE student

Note: When Vickie Gill expressed interest in becoming a veterinarian assistant, LAMP (Literate Adults Mean Prosperity) arranged for her to work with a local vet for a day. Although she enjoyed the experience very much, she was saddened when abused or ill dogs had to be put to sleep. As a result, she wrote the following poem.

No more lonely cold nights
or hearing that I'm bad.
No more growling belly
from the meals I never had.

No more scorching sunshine
with a water bowl that's dry.
No more complaining
neighbors about the noise
when I cry.

No more hearing shut-up, get
down or get out of here.
No more feeling disliked, only
peace in the air.

Euthanasia is a blessing
though some still can't see
why I was ever born if I
wasn't meant to be.

My last day of living was the
best I ever had.
Someone held me very close,
I could see she was very sad.

I kissed the lady's face, and
she hugged me as she cried.
I wagged my tail to thank her,
then I closed my eyes and died.

The thing I am most aware of is my limits. And this is natural; for I never, or almost never, occupy the middle of my cage; my whole being surges toward the bars.

André Gide

Student writing

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

West Virginia. . . my adopted home

By an anonymous student

Okay . . .so I wasn't born and raised in West Virginia. But West Virginia has been my adopted home since 1977. My children are born and raised West

Virginians. And, they are very proud of that fact!

West Virginia is truly "almost Heaven" with its beauty, peacefulness, and resources. God continues to smile on this part of His world as we step into the next millennium.

For West Virginians life has been good and life has been hard. Tempered with the blessings are always the hardships. Our beautiful state can be unforgiving at times as we weather tragedies and disasters. Yet, after enduring these hard times, we appreciate the beauty we have been given to enjoy.

The world has not fully discovered the beauty of the West Virginia parks, playgrounds, campgrounds, rivers, mountains, and back roads that we take for granted. Sometimes these treasures are considered the secrets of West Virginians only. Although travel agents would love to invite the entire world to share our state beauty, it is wonderful to be able to still selfishly enjoy the pristine areas of West Virginia. ■

Networks

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