

## Lights, camera, action . . . . .

By Pam Bryan, ABE special projects coordinator; Literacy West Virginia regional technical assistant



Well, not exactly, but that is where we are heading with the new adult Student Speakers Bureau.

At the fall adult education and family literacy conference, Bos and Dotty Johnson presented two sessions to students who will speak for literacy and adult basic education (ABE) groups across the state. During Bos's session he pulled out a microphone and began by questioning me in the bulldog way that sometimes is associated with a news reporter: "The reason people didn't learn to read was because of bad teachers. Isn't that right, Ms. Bryan?"

Actually that is the sort of question I have been asked by reporters. It is one that needs to be handled by guiding the reporter to the real issue. The real issue is literacy and adults who have dropped out of school. We need to get those students into our programs. We need to talk about our successes and encourage adults to go back to improve their basic skills, obtain their GED, go on to college or vocational school, or obtain a better job.

The Student Speakers Bureau is a joint effort of the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA, Inc.), Literacy West Virginia, and the Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development. The Bureau will be a novel way to market our adult education and literacy programs.



Dotty Johnson gives advice to adult education students about talking to the media

Many teachers and literacy coordinators like myself are passionate about the problems faced by adults, but most of us have never been an adult student. We cannot speak from personal experience about how it feels to be a student. Student speakers are essential to getting the message out to those who need our services.

This training at Snowshoe was only the first phase of the plan. The Speakers Bureau plans on initiating some events that will slowly give the students the experience of speaking to a group.

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Students listen intently to Bos and Dotty Johnson's presentation

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We are in the midst of what is often described as the season of miracles. Now, I know many of you are thinking, “You’ve got that right! It’s a miracle I have survived, with all the changes that have taken place this past year!” True as that may be, I’m thinking more of the miraculous everyday events that take place within our lives—like witnessing the pride of a man when he reads to his grandson for the first time, sharing the ecstasy of the mother of three who passes her GED exam, and celebrating with the man who has just landed the perfect job! Although these moments are fixed in our minds forever, it is easy to take them for granted. After all, these are the things that are supposed to happen. It’s what we do! But think about this for a minute. Do these events not reflect a miracle—the miracle of life, hope, peace, and joy? As you read through this issue of *Networks* and continue into the new year, take time to recognize and appreciate all the miracles that surround you, both great and small. ■



**Kathy Hollingsworth**  
Editor

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## Letter to the editor



I edit and produce Nevada *Connections* (sent to about 1800 adult educators in Nevada and available at [http://](http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/newsletters.html)

[www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/newsletters.html](http://www.literacynet.org/nvadulted/newsletters.html). I have often been impressed with your *Networks* publication. I know what it takes to choose useful content and present it with such quality! ■

Sharyn Yanoshak  
Leadership Activities, ABE Nevada

## The conference at Snowshoe

By Dee George, director, Tri-State Literacy Council



When I arrived home on Friday evening after the close of the fall conference, I felt really sad that it was over. I can always tell if something is very worthwhile if I miss it after I leave.

I used two different routes driving up and back. The interstate portion of the ride was relaxing and beautiful. The ride through the mountains was truly glorious. But what mattered the most to me was the coming together of so many people—all willing to help each other.

I learned about the National Reporting Standards, promising practices, diversity (which I thought I already knew and was surprised to learn more), commonly used reductions in local speech, and phonics.

But the one single most valuable thing was the networking with others in literacy. I particularly appreciate the time Shalom Tazewell, Susan Hayden, and Pam Bryan spent in one-on-one conversations that added to my knowledge and perspective.

I developed a heightened sensitivity for our students by attending the student sessions. Bos and Dorothy Johnson did an outstanding job in preparing our students to speak in public.

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## Lights, camera, action . . .

*Continued from page 1*

In January, the Bureau coordinators will be collaborating with the Summers County LAMP (Literate Adults Mean Prosperity) project, *Digital Stories-Student Voices*, funded in part by Literacy West Virginia and the Governor's Council on Literacy.

Students who are part of the Bureau will be interviewed and videotaped about their feelings and experiences in their adult education or literacy program. This videotape will be used as a recruitment tool for other programs to use. In fact there has already been one request for the videotape!

The Bureau plans to ask local ABE or literacy programs to host orientation sessions for new students and invite student speakers to share their stories. This will provide them an audience of their peers.

In the next phase, teachers or tutors will interview the student speakers and submit articles to local newspapers.

The final phase will include press releases sent out publicizing the Student Speakers Bureau and encouraging reporters to call the Adult Education Hotline at 1-800-642-2670 to request an interview.

The Bureau coordinators will keep you informed of their progress. Stay tuned to your local news station; you may recognize some of your students. ■

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*Student speakers are essential to getting the message out to those who need our services.*

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## WVAEA student speakers' bureau in their own words

By Eugene Milam and Mary Adkins, LAMP (Literate Adults Mean Prosperity) adult learners

*Editor's Note: Student writing is the original work of students and has not been edited.*



On Sept. 22 and 23, we got to participate in the adult education and family literacy conference at Snowshoe. It was a learning experience that we will not forget. We listened to different speakers. We wish that the courses could have been longer, but we appreciate all the work the teachers put into the classes they gave us at the conference.

We learned about building a credit report and how to use credit wisely. We learned that if you start saving at a very young age, even at \$10.00 a month, it can add up to a lot as you get older. We also learned how to work and manage our family and home life. More importantly, we learned that you need to take risks in life in order to grow. There is so much you miss in life if you don't get out and get involved with people.

We also learned tips for speaking in public. Get your audience's attention. Speak plainly. Stick to the subject. Don't ramble. Be yourself!

As you can see, it was a very busy conference, and we're thankful to be a part of this. We're glad that people are willing to share their skills and knowledge with us.

We hope that everyone can help the chain of learning to grow and help more students learn what they need to know. But we all have gifts that we can share with others, and we all have stories we can tell about where we hope to go with our education. We are glad to have the chance to share our stories. ■

# Wish you well, George

## A tribute to retired adult education coordinator

By Debrah Varner, assistant director, WVDE Department of Education



Dr. George Drain first worked in adult education as a Regional Coordinator in Beckley, WV.

He was employed at the West Virginia Department of Education on September 9, 1986 as a Coordinator I in Adult Basic Education. In January 2001, he became lead coordinator for the Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development. Dr. Drain retired June 30, 2005 and moved to North Carolina.

George is a very private person and doesn't like a lot of fanfare, but it doesn't seem right to let him go without a small tribute to him and an official notice to those of you who worked with him for so many years. Although I knew, or at least knew of George, for many years while I worked at the local level, it wasn't until I became assistant director two years ago that I really became acquainted with George.



Personally and professionally, I developed the utmost respect for Dr. Drain and really enjoyed working with him on a daily basis. Usually a very reserved and unassuming man, George's unexpected wit and sense of humor took me by surprise at times.

George is very conservative and an excellent planner. He was the "bean counter," the "number cruncher," and the person you would go to for additional funds when some unexpected expense occurred. He could usually find the money, but he made sure you used your money wisely. He was a great steward with the financial management of the ABE funds.

He was always looking ahead to make sure the budget would stretch into the next year.

George's main role was dealing with finances, but he was involved in all aspects of ABE. He served as a mentor for almost the entire staff he left behind in our office. He fielded questions from me on a daily basis as I learned my job as assistant director. His insight and background knowledge was invaluable to me. He trained Mendy Marshall to work with him on finances and also Edward Hicks to assume the responsibilities for conducting on-site evaluations. He tried to make sure everything was taken care of before he left, but still he is missed.

Thank you George, for your 19 years of service at the department and the contributions you made to this office. Most of all, thanks for being part of our lives. You have made a difference to us and the ABE program. Whatever you do in this next chapter of your life, we wish you well. ■

## The conference . . .

### *Continued from page 2*

I watched our students gain more confidence and verbalize their feelings, their fears, their perspectives, their experiences, and their joys with literacy.

What amazed me the most about our students was their pride in the entire experience of attending the conference.

For us, it is something we have done for years professionally. For them, it was a brand new experience.

When a conference leaves you with memories like these, you know it was something that became part of you and improved your professionalism and ability to do your job.

As a fairly new literacy director, I heartily recommend attendance at these conferences.

Thank you to all the folks who put this conference together and to those who helped it run so smoothly. ■

## Janet Hazelett receives award

By Mark Hedrick, WVAEA, Inc. awards committee chair

Who is the first person students usually see when they enter a classroom? Who do we call for information about a program?

Who answers the phone when we call a state or regional office?

You're right – it's usually a member of the support staff! And WVAEA, Inc. recognizes one of these individuals each year at the annual fall adult education and family literacy conference.

This year Janet Hazelett was presented with the 2005 Outstanding Service Award during the awards brunch at Snowshoe Mountain.

When asked to list one outstanding contribution, the application simply read "Loyalty."

Janet has been with the adult learning center at the Cabell County Library for 12 years and has worked without sick days, vacation days, and very few pay raises.

During this time, Janet has greeted an endless stream of visitors to the program. These visitors come with many questions about the program,



Janet Hazelett and Cabell County Adult Basic Education Director, Bob McClain

and she graciously responds to all their questions. When the phone rings countless times during the day, Janet is again answering questions concerning the programs within Cabell County.

Teachers, tutors, and administrators are grateful to all "the Janets" who provide the first smile, handshake, and encouraging words to those who enter our doors. ■

## Shania Lewis is the 2005 adult education student of the year

By Mark Hedrick, WVAEA, Inc. awards committee chair

On September 23, 2005 during the awards brunch at the fall conference, Shania Lewis from the Upshur County Adult

Learning Center was presented with the 2005 Adult Student of the Year award, sponsored by the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA, Inc.).

Shania was also recognized for her accomplishments by Upshur County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Charles Chandler, at a ceremony held in her honor at the board of education.

Shania enrolled at the center in the fall of 2004 to study for her GED, which she earned in May of 2005. She was then assigned to the SPOKES (Strategic Planning for Occupational Knowledge and Skills) class, also offered at the learning center. Upon completion of the SPOKES class, she worked as the teacher aide at the learning center until she began her classes at Fairmont State University in September.

Students in all adult basic education (ABE) programs across the state are eligible for the Student of the Year award.

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## Shania . . . student of the year

*Continued from page 5*



Upshur County Superintendent, Dr. Charles Chandler, congratulates Shania Lewis on her award

Selection is based upon the following criteria: overcame difficult situations in order to participate in the adult education program; improved life situation for themselves and/or others as a result of the learning experience; demonstrated leadership within the non-traditional learning environment; has been supportive of others involved in adult learning; has maintained family, civic, or employment (if applicable) responsibilities at a high level while concurrently pursuing educational goals; demonstrated creative means for meeting educational needs as an adult learner; demonstrated a sense of responsibility through regular attendance, punctuality, and effective study habits. ■

## English as a second language instructor receives top honors from WVAEA, Inc.

By Mark Hedrick, WVAEA, Inc. awards committee chair

At the fall adult education and family literacy conference, Cheryl Rowan, Kanawha County English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor, was pleasantly surprised when she realized she was the recipient of the Adult Educator of the Year Award for 2005.

Cheryl is an outstanding educator who has been a tremendous asset to adult education in West Virginia since she began teaching ESL at Garnet in February of 1979.

Due in part to her skills as a teacher, the ESL classes at Garnet Career Center in Charleston grew extensively during the latter 1980's and 1990's. Cheryl became lead teacher of the ESL department in 1991. This full-time position required teaching, supervising part-time ESL personnel, and doing most of the administrative duties of the ESL department. During this period of time, the ESL classes at Garnet were consistently either the largest or the second largest in the state, both in number of students and in contact hours.

Cheryl organized group classes for advanced, intermediate, and beginning students; and offered instruction for a wide variety of ESL needs



Cheryl displays her award surrounded by Mark Hedrick, John Rowan (husband), Johnnie Hamilton, Laura Wilcox, and Carole Totten

including basic life skills, TOEFL preparation, ACT preparation, citizenship instruction, and vocational and college preparation. For several years she supervised a thriving ESL student visa population from around the globe.

During this same period of time, Cheryl became a peer trainer for ESL teachers throughout the state.

Cheryl has always sought creative and innovative ways to bring more resources to the classroom. She has written a number of

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successful grant proposals and received additional funding for ESL not only from government sources, but from private foundations as well. Through these efforts, she brought televised instruction to Garnet's ESL classrooms at a time when the regular ABE budget could not have afforded to provide this type of instruction.

Cheryl has served as administrator for the English Literacy and Civics (EL/Civics) grants for the last three years, and has served as a major author of the West Virginia Adult Education English As A Second Language Instructional Goals and Objectives (WVESLIGOs) as well as IGOs for EL/Civics.

Cheryl came to adult education as a teacher certified in both English and social studies. She also holds a Master's Degree in counseling and

guidance, a background which she has used to help her students make the often difficult adjustment to life in a new culture. She has continued her graduate education, attaining her MA+45 in the field of ESL.

While working at Garnet, Cheryl has served as the school's multicultural liaison, providing training to the faculty senate in multicultural issues. She maintains professional connections with community groups who serve refugees and twice attended workshops on changing Naturalization and Immigration Law. ■

## Cabell County adult basic education director receives honor

By Mark Hedrick, WVAEA, Inc. awards committee chair



The 2005 Adult Education Administrator Award was presented to Robert McClain, Cabell County Vocational and Adult Education Director.

Robert has been working in adult basic education (ABE) for 32 years in Cabell County. West Virginia is fortunate to have such a strong advocate for adult education working to better design, plan, build, and implement programs that deliver excellent, well-paying career options. He has been an administrator in Cabell County for many years and, as such, also works with vocational and technical educational programs. However, ABE has always been his first priority when setting up programs for students.

Many years ago when adult education was much more scattered in its delivery than today, Robert McClain worked to make Cabell County's three full-time ABE and one part-time ESL (English as a Second Language) classes the best they could be by providing proper funding, housing, materials, and training of staff by



**Bob displays his award surrounded by Mark Hedrick, Herb Rothwell, Janne Rice, Sharon Simon, and Johnnie Hamilton**

keeping in constant communication via regular faculty meetings.

The programs developed by Mr. McClain have made the difference to hundreds, if not thousands, of people in West Virginia and neighboring states.

His energy and dedication to his work would be very difficult to match elsewhere.

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## Cabell County director receives honor . . .

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Robert actively searches for new opportunities that may offer career options to adults in the community.

He also collaborates with other educational programs that are housed in the vocational center. These programs were developed to help adults that need support in basic skills to successfully complete their vocational program while attending the adult basic education class as needed.

Over the past 32 years, Robert has devised ways of addressing the barriers faced by students - barriers of transportation, childcare, and finance. He has supported the adult students of the area by providing them with skills for a lifetime through a seamless learning environment.

He worked to get public transportation from Huntington, Barboursville, and Milton and also added an additional hourly route from the career


center to accommodate adult basic education students. He constantly works to locate ABE centers geographically to best serve and benefit the adult learners from neighboring counties and states. He created a dropout/re-entry program with ABE and vocational training components which allowed many at-risk youth to prepare for the GED while participating in vocational programs.

Robert seeks no recognition for his work, but continues working toward innovative ideas for the future.

Robert's energy and expertise will continue to touch and change adult lives for generations to come. He is an exemplary representative for the work of making West Virginia's ABE programs among the best in the nation. ■

## Message from COABE president

By Dom Gagliardi, California

 COABE (the Commission on Adult Basic Education) is happy to announce it has contracted with Lynn Selmsler to serve as its policy analyst through June 30, 2006. The agreement was made official in October 2005.

Ms. Selmsler has worked as a professional staff member with the Committee on Education and the Workforce for over 13 years. She also worked for 27 ½ years in various positions for the House of Representatives. She began her career on Capitol Hill with Bob McClory (R-III) in December of 1973 as a legislative secretary.

After working with Congressman McClory, Ms. Selmsler went to work for Congressman Bill Gooding (R-PA), who represented her hometown of York, Pennsylvania, and remained on his personal office staff until he became the ranking Republican on the House Committee on

Education and Labor, when she moved over to the Committee. Ms. Selmsler handled a variety of issues for the Committee, including adult education, Even Start, the Reading Excellence Act, and other literacy programs; child nutrition programs, juvenile programs, and a variety of elementary and secondary education programs, including bilingual education, immigrant education, impact aid, Title 1 programs for migrant students and neglected and delinquent youth, plus Reading is Fundamental.

In addition to working for COABE, Ms. Selmsler is the policy analyst for the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education and the policy director for the National Coalition for Literacy. She has also worked for three years as a consultant with the National Even Start Association. ■

# Correctional Education Association teacher of the year award

By Jeanette Donohew, lead teacher Northern Regional Jail and Correctional Facility  
Office of Institutional Education Programs Accreditation Correctional Education Association process manager



Pictured left to right: Stephen Steurer, Norris Williams, Mike Shaffer, Gale Robinson, Carolyn Eggleston, and Morris Dews.

The Correctional Education Association (CEA) presented the 2005 Teacher of the Year award to Mike Shaffer, adult basic education (ABE) instructor at the Central Regional Jail in Sutton, West Virginia.

In an effort to recognize the unique talents, skills, and commitment that correctional educators possess, CEA recognizes nine teachers each year, one from each of the nine CEA regions. These instructors are chosen for their philosophy, innovative program development, and commitment, as well as the result of observation by three CEA members.

Mike was chosen as the Region II Teacher of the Year and will represent it at the CEA Leadership Forum in March and the International Conference in July.

He began his teaching career in 1994 with the public school system of Braxton County where he developed and taught the county's first alternative education program. This program took place during the evening, which allowed Mike the opportunity to begin teaching ABE classes during the day.

He quickly developed a love for working with adults, which led him to his current position with the West Virginia Department of Education as an ABE instructor in a regional jail correctional facility.


Mike has been an ABE instructor for six years during which he has developed a curriculum that utilizes Destinations software to match the West Virginia Department of Education's content standards; formed a relationship with the local WORKFORCE WV job training skills program allowing his students to participate in further education and training upon release; created a survey given to all inmates within the regional jail system to determine possible educational needs; and served on the State Department's handbook revision committee as well as website development committee.

He is a graduate of Glenville State College with a degree in Physical Education and is currently working on his master's degree in Adult Education through Marshall University. ■

*CEA is the only internationally recognized organization specializing in the field of correctional education. CEA is an affiliate of the American Correctional Association which offers resources and professional support developed by correctional educators, for correctional educators. CEA is the accrediting body for adult correctional educational programs in West Virginia.*

# From the president of the West Virginia Adult Education Association (WVAEA, Inc.)

By Johnnie Hamilton

 Winter Greetings: As I write this short note, the weather here in Morgantown is getting colder by the day and our fall was so dry that the leaves had no color. However, just a few months ago, what wonderful weather and what beautiful landscape the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA, Inc.) had for the annual adult education and family literacy conference held at Snowshoe. For me, as president, I found this to be an excellent conference and a wonderful experience for me to assist in its implementation. You can't imagine the number of hours spent by the conference committee and the membership in the planning of this conference. Like our theme for this year's conference, *It Takes A Village*, there is no way I can list everyone that helped with the conference, as I would leave someone out. However, I want to personally thank each individual that assisted in the conference and to each of you that attended the conference. What a great educational experience!

At the annual membership meeting in Snowshoe, a vote was taken as to when this conference should be held. It was decided the best time of the year for this conference is during the fall, preferably in October or early November. As for what days it should be held, the preference was Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The conference committee has started working on next year's conference to be held sometime between October 15 and November 15 and we will do our best to book it on a Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The 2006 conference is planned for Morgantown. However, the dates have not been decided due to waiting for the new West Virginia University football schedule to be announced.

Recently, I talked with our membership committee chair, David Hollingsworth, and he informed me that we have a current membership of 130 including several new members that joined at our fall conference. If you have not

joined yet and were wondering about the benefits of membership, let me give you a few reasons:

- The Association is your voice. We have become a vocal organization which lets the people in Charleston and in Washington know how important adult education is in West Virginia and why there should never be a cut in funding but an increase. Our association works closely with COABE (Commission on Adult Basic Education) on key federal funding issues.
- Your membership assists the conference committee in providing an annual quality conference at a reasonable price.
- This year our organization was able to give the Governor's Council on Literacy \$2,000.00 to use for higher education scholarships to GED graduates.
- Your Association will be able to assist members of the board of directors as well as individuals from the general membership with some type of stipend to attend conferences to represent the membership.
- The Association sponsors a yearly awards program to recognize adult education administrators, programs, teachers, students and support personnel.

There are many more reasons why it is important to become a member of the WVAEA but I believe the number one reason as stated above is because the Association is your voice.

If you would like to become a member of the West Virginia Adult Education Association contact, David Hollingsworth at [dbhollin@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:dbhollin@access.k12.wv.us).

Should you have any questions or concerns about WVAEA, Inc. please email me at [jhmailto@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:jhmailto@access.k12.wv.us).

Thank you for all that you do for the adults in our programs. To you, your family, and loved ones, I wish you a wonderful 2006. ■

*Editor's Note: Student writing is the original work of students and has not been edited.*

## Mom, thanks to distance education I kept my promise!

By Tammy Sponaugle, Brooke County, WV

In 1989 just a few days before mother passed away, I made a promise to her that I would get a diploma. None of my seven brothers or sisters graduated from high school, so while she was on her deathbed my mother asked me (her fourteen-year old daughter) to keep this very important promise. She wanted to be sure that one of her eight children would graduate. So I am thrilled to say that sixteen years later thanks to Advantage GED, Ellen Killion, and my wonderful cyber teacher, Nicole Vint, I was able to get my GED!



I had a lot of problems to overcome along the way. I am so very thankful for all the help and support I got from Nicole, my husband, and my GED teacher, Jean Crago. Without them and the online program I would never have made it. Mrs. Crago was always very helpful in arranging times for my testing and helping me in anyway that she could. Also, I can't say enough thanks to Nicole. She really encouraged me through the hard times and we still stay in touch. She is fantastic! My husband, Mickie was such a big help. We have a three-year old son and even though Mickie is very ill he was always there to encourage me and help keep my son occupied. At our graduation Mickie stood up and told the whole roomful of people just how proud he is of me. That was really special!

I shouldn't have waited sixteen years to do this. With a three-year old, an ill husband, and my upcoming surgery, I really couldn't have

chosen a more difficult time to tackle this goal. But I wanted so badly to keep this promise to my mother before having major surgery that I called the 800 number to see what this online program was all about. After a few difficulties making all the right connections I finally got started. Each time I got online to do the work, I loved it and just started flying through the assignments. I liked it so much that I spent hours just working away until little Lee would beg me, "Mommy not the computer." Every chance I got I continued studying. I loved getting my certificates! I started in March and by May I had earned nine certificates. Nicole was really great at staying in touch and is a wonderful cyber teacher.

I have told my brother, niece, nephew and others that they should do their GED work online. The program was perfect for me. I was able to go at my own pace. I didn't have to leave my little boy with a babysitter, and I was able to stay at home with my sick husband. I would recommend this online course for anyone needing a GED. I'm so thankful because it gave me a way to keep a sixteen-year old promise. I was a nervous wreck the week of the test, but I did it! I had my pre-surgery prep on Monday and then took my test on Friday and Saturday. Two days later I went into surgery with one less worry on my mind. During the middle of my weeks of recovery, my diploma came. Thank the Lord; I did it! I graduated!! Now I can begin my next goal of starting at WV Northern Community College to become a paralegal. I know my mother is proud of me too. ■

*For information on AdvantageGED, call (800) 642-2670 or contact [ekillion@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:ekillion@access.k12.wv.us).*

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*“ . . . thanks to Advantage GED, Ellen Killion, my wonderful cyber teacher, Nicole Vint, and my GED teacher, Jean Crago, I was able to get my GED!”*

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## We made a difference

By Pam Neese, AmeriCorps member, Mercer County Academy of Adult Learning

The staff of the Mercer County Academy of Adult Learning conducted a “Make a Difference Project” by collecting food for the local Salvation Army. Students of the ABE/SPOKES programs challenged the employees in the WorkForce WV building, and the results were wonderful.

Thanks to everyone’s generosity, 944 food items were collected and donated to the Princeton Salvation Army.

This “Make a Difference Day” project was the result of an idea spearheaded by AmeriCorps member Pam Neese serving at the Academy of Adult Learning in Princeton. Pam met with a representative of WorkForce WV and shared ideas. Plans were then set in motion. The ABE/SPOKES students challenged the employees of the building to see who could provide the most food items. The food items were counted, and then recorded on a chart daily. The results were ABE/SPOKES with 451 food items and WorkForce WV with 493 food items. The food drive was held from October 11<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup>.



Eugene Calina, a Salvation Army representative, came on October 20<sup>th</sup> and spoke to everyone about what the Salvation Army does locally and nationally. Afterwards, students helped load the food items.

This project was a great opportunity for the employees to volunteer and to promote volunteerism in the classrooms. Thanks to everyone’s generosity, these food items will truly make a difference for those in need. ■

## Unique fundraiser

By Johnnie Hamilton, coordinator of adult education, Monongalia County

Johnnie Hamilton, coordinator of adult education for Monongalia County Schools has come up with a unique fundraiser for adult basic education (ABE).

The fundraiser, “Dessert of the Month,” raises money for the adult learning center and for GED scholarships.

Each month a member of the Monongalia County Technical Education Center staff bakes a favorite dessert and it is raffled off. On the last Friday of each month members of the ABE staff sell chances on the “Dessert of the Month” before school and during lunch. At 2:00, a lucky person’s name is drawn.

The September “Dessert of the Month” was a triple layer German Chocolate Cake baked by Johnnie and raised \$70.00 for the adult learning center. In October, Cyndy Hayley, ABE instructor, raised additional monies with her homemade pumpkin roll. In November, Debbie Williams tempted the staff with her pumpkin pie and pecan pie.

Staff members have already signed up to donate their favorite desserts for the entire school year. This seems to be a great fundraiser and everyone wants to participate.

“What a sweet deal!” ■

## Ritchie County ABE students raise money for the salvation army hurricane relief fund

By Misty Dawson, Ritchie County adult education coordinator

Students from Harrisville adult basic education class held a bake sale/craft sale on October 21<sup>st</sup> to help raise money for Hurricane Relief. The whole class participated either by painting gourds, making various crafts, donating food items, or preparing the food.



\$170.00 was raised from the sale and presented to the Salvation Army on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The class wishes to thank all those who helped make the sale such a success. ■

## Lincoln County Literacy Action receives Library of Congress grant

Cathy Adkins, literacy coordinator, Lincoln County Literacy Action

Lincoln County Literacy Action, an adult literacy program based at the Hamlin-Lincoln County Public Library, received a “Reading Powers the Mind” Grant through the United States Center of the Book (Library of Congress). Grants were awarded to 12 literacy programs throughout the United States, and our program was fortunate to be selected. The grant will be used to add a family literacy component to our program, and our plan is to work with the three Head Start Centers in our county.

Literacy/parenting classes and children’s story hour activities will be conducted once a month at each Head Start Center for six months. Parents’ lessons will be taught in part from the curriculum of P.A.R.E.N.T.S., by Jane Curtis, M.A. Children’s literature will be used to teach adults reading skills

as well as parenting skills.

Some topics will include: parents as role models, sibling rivalry, child development, discipline, etc. Local businesses were solicited, and their contributions were used to purchase children’s books for distribution at the Head Start Centers.

Cathy Adkins, literacy coordinator, and April Pridemore, children’s librarian, attended a workshop at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, on August 3-5, 2005. The workshop addressed issues concerning the grant and allowed literacy programs from throughout the United States to network and share ideas. It was a wonderful opportunity to learn and explore other ideas while experiencing the atmosphere of our nation’s capital city. ■

# The state ABE fall conference through the eyes of a Literacy Volunteer

By Susie Huggins, Monongalia County Literacy Volunteers

Roughly 300 educators in some fashion of adult literacy attended the well-planned fall conference at Snowshoe. The conference activities ran from daylight to dark with a variety of professional presenters discussing a variety of challenges that we face with our adult learners everyday.

I represent Monongalia County Literacy Volunteers, Inc. and have served as their director for 12 years. There is a huge need for those of us who provide adult literacy services to meet and mingle and learn from each other's programs. I cannot thank the West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA) enough for awarding me a scholarship that enabled our program to take advantage of this professional development opportunity.

I think the conference committee did a great job of recognizing the M-A-N-Y problems that face all of our adult learners throughout West Virginia. Reading is obviously not the only problem.

One conference session focused on financial management. It turns out that the state treasurer's office has all kinds of **FREE** materials on financial literacy. It was immediately suggested to the Literacy West Virginia board of directors that this be offered at their next training.

Addressing suicide and depression are real issues facing not only our adult learners but some of us who are getting burned out in the field as the need for adult literacy services is so great – and endless.

Again, I just wanted to THANK YOU and let you each know how much I sincerely appreciated the scholarship and the opportunity to attend the conference. I have lots of new ideas. Now I just have to figure out how to implement them. ■

## WVAEA funds open house

By Shalom Tazewell, LAMP coordinator

On October 14, LAMP (Literate Adults Mean Prosperity), the adult education/literacy program at the Summers County Public Library, sponsored an open house at the satellite office of WorkForce WV in Hinton as part of its public outreach initiative. Adult learners and volunteer tutors working in the LAMP program were invited to attend. They spoke with potential students and volunteers who attended the Open House about the opportunities LAMP offers for continuing education or serving the community.

Materials from LAMP, Even Start Family Literacy, and WorkForce WV were distributed to guests, and refreshments from a local Chinese restaurant were served. Two new volunteer tutors and three new students were recruited as a result of the Open House.

The West Virginia Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA, Inc.) through a special grant available to all adult education and/or literacy programs provided funds for the Open House. To apply, contact Kathy Hollingsworth, [kwinter@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:kwinter@access.k12.wv.us), or go to the WVAEA web site, <http://www.wvaea.org> ■

## Program helps students find jobs

By Jill Nettles, Times West Virginian

*This article appeared in the November 12, 2005 issue of Times West Virginian in Fairmont, WV and is printed with permission.*



Recently, Diamond Brown, 23, has been to three job interviews and has gotten callbacks for all of them.

She credits her achievement to the Marion County Strategic Planning in Occupational Knowledge for Employment and Success (SPOKES) program.

Brown and other SPOKES students recently participated in a fashion show produced by the class at the Marion County Adult and Community Education Center in Fairmont.

“It has boosted my confidence,” Brown said. “I learned work ethic, time management and organizational skills. The class and the show—featuring the job interview suits and casual work attire—gave me the potential to look forward to the future.”

The purpose of the event was for the students to obtain the experience of organizing, listening, understanding, stress management and problem solving.

Attendee Zelda Herbster of Fairmont said she learned a lot from the show. “I thoroughly enjoyed it,” she said. “The women looked beautiful. I learned you have different styles of clothes for

different jobs, and I learned how to color coordinate.”

Dressing professionally does not mean wearing only black and gray, instructor DeEtta Hayes said as the women walked the runway wearing various outfits, including a red sweater dress and a beige suit.

Brown’s father, the Rev. John Brown, said there is a need for the program because it helps the students become productive citizens.

“A hidden treasure” is how Sonetta Brown, Diamond’s mother, described the program that helps students find jobs.

SPOKES provides participants with skills to pursue and retain employment. It is under contract with several agencies, including the State Department of Health and Human Resources.

The six-week program includes goal setting, job application skills, resume writing, job interview skills, and computer skills.

Classes, limited to 20 students, begin on Mondays at the Marion County Adult and Community Education Center in Fairmont.

For more information, contact Hayes at 363-7323. ■

## Students earn free gas vouchers

By Jill Weekley, learning center coordinator, James Rumsey Technical Institute



As a result of participating in the Consumerism in the Classroom unit, students in the learning center at James Rumsey can earn

“free” gas vouchers.

The Consumerism in the Classroom project was selected as one of the Promising Practices winners in the contest offered by the WV Literacy Council. With the \$100.00 that was received for our program, we have chosen to reward our students.

The Consumerism in the Classroom project runs approximately four weeks and is an integrated curriculum that is offered flexibly to any student

attending the learning center. There are a variety of class projects, small and large group presentations, and individual projects for students to do. Those who do attend the classes on a regular basis put their names in for a drawing each month to receive gas vouchers from a local grocery/gas store. So far, the program has been a successful one. It is both a lesson on savings and a reward for good attendance. ■

# A Roving SPOKES experience

By Barbara Miller, Roving SPOKES (Strategic Planning in Occupational Knowledge for Employment and Success) instructor

“Roving SPOKES Instructor” is a title that brings with it an element of mystery and anticipation; every two months a new place and experience awaits. For me, it also means unpacking and trying frantically to locate essential tools and papers. For my boss, David Coccari, it means innumerable trips delivering much-needed equipment, or arriving to pack and relocate a classroom once again.

My first roving assignment took me to Webster Springs. This town is at least an hour’s drive from the nearest interstate and is nestled in a bowl of hills. I immediately fell in love with the charm of its sloping streets and historic buildings. There’s even an ancient drinking fountain in front of the old courthouse where one can taste the salty water that made Webster Springs a popular health resort in the 19th Century.

My class was in the Workforce WV building and attendance expectations were not high from a town so small and remote. But after the inevitable no-shows, we settled into a tightly knit class of four students who impressed me with their steady attendance of over 90 percent each. They seemed grateful for the effort that was put into bringing the class to their doorstep, and they enthusiastically got involved with the lessons on vocational skills.




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*“ . . . the woman called and I got the Mountain Cap job. I start the third of next month. Thanks for helping me get it. . . it’s people like you that change people’s lives for the good.”*

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One student in particular seemed to blossom under the program. His name was Tim, and he entered the class on his first day with a cup of coffee in his hand and a skeptical look on his face. Although polite from the first, I could tell he had his doubts about the class and whether he could stay the course.

Over time, however, he warmed up to the subjects. He showed particular skill on the KeyTrain program on the computer and, as the students opened up to each other, we learned that Tim had a surprising list of skills. He had built his own computer and even downloaded instructions for constructing a hydro-generator. He built that, too.

But Tim had neglected English classes in high school as he focused all his attention on electronics. His writing was weak, and he had never learned the art of putting together a resume’ or cover letter.

It was a joy, therefore, to see the pleasure it gave Tim to type out his education and work experience in a coherent and professional fashion. The resume’ gave him a boost of confidence, showing how much he had accomplished throughout his life, and encouraging him to set his goals higher.

One day, Tim entered the classroom with an ad in his hand for a full-time job as maintenance man for Mountain Cap. It provided a truck and required plumbing, carpentry and electronic repairs for three apartment buildings. We set to work on the application, cover letter and resume’, and Tim soon had an interview. The only thing left to do was wait.

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The SPOKES class ended and we were still waiting. I dropped by the Department of Health and Human Resource (DHHR) office to say good-bye and give them the students' portfolios. The case workers were impressed with the writing, certificates, and skills the students had acquired over the course of six weeks. And all had passed, while two excelled, on the WorkKeys test. I also thanked them for their vigilance in stressing the importance of the program and for their regular contact with me. Without that, the class would not have succeeded.

Recently, Lorene Boon from the Webster Springs DHHR office called to tell me that Tim had stopped by to let them know he got the job. He told them what a difference the SPOKES

class had made and what a valuable program it was. Of course I was glowing.

Soon after the call, I got an e-mail from Tim. He wrote (I've added punctuation), "Hi, the woman called and I got the Mt. Cap job. I start the third of next month. Thanks for helping me get it...it's people like you that change people's lives for the good."

The e-mail sits on my desk, circled in bright red magic marker, and under it I've written, "THIS IS WHAT MAKES THE JOB WORTHWHILE!" ■

## Former student is hired as childcare worker at Friends-R-Fun

By Renee Blankenship, Even Start coordinator, Family Learning Center, Summersville, WV



Brenda Allen came to the family learning center in January of 2005. She needed her GED.

Brenda's husband, Buddy, had become disabled on the job and was not able to work. Brenda's children Courtney and Jeff were 6 and 7 years old and in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade when Brenda first started taking GED classes.

In conjunction with her classes Brenda was also put into the Even Start program and began participating in the literacy-based components. Brenda worked hard during her class time and increased her test scores quickly. She was always an active participant during parenting class. She and her children worked together in Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) to complete fun family learning activities. Her children worked hard in school.

Brenda always had a smile and a kind word for her classmates. She was willing to offer advice or a ride home and even a shoulder to cry on. All the while, she was preparing herself to achieve her goal. By April, Brenda was ready to take her GED exam. She passed all areas on her first attempt.

Brenda got the opportunity to attend the 2005 GED graduation that was held at the family learning center on June 16.

After achieving a personal goal of a diploma, Brenda was better prepared for the workforce. She began working through the Community Work Experience Program (CWEP) which is sponsored the WV Department of Health and Human Resources, as an office and classroom aide at the family learning center and Friends-R-Fun, the adjacent childcare center. Her duties included general office work and paperwork, cleaning, and of course working closely with the children.



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## Former student is hired . . .

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Before long, Brenda's positive attitude, hard work, and kind nature earned her the opportunity to be offered a full-time position with Friends-R-Fun. She became officially employed as a childcare worker on September 2nd. Brenda is currently taking Apprenticeship Childhood Development Specialist classes to earn her certificate. She attends those classes on a weekly basis. Brenda was deservingly voted Employee of the Month at Friends-R-Fun for the month of October. Her accomplishments in just these few short months are a true inspiration to all of those who know her and work with her. She is a role model for all GED hopefuls and Even Start families across the nation. ■


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## The new and expanded ConXtions directory is now available

By Kathy Hollingsworth, adult basic education public outreach coordinator



The new and expanded *ConXtions* resource directory is now available online. This directory is a joint project of the Governor's Council on Literacy, the Office of Adult Education and Workforce Development, and Regional Education Service Agency III (RESA III).

Although it does not include *all* resources available, it was designed to be used as a guide for instructors and tutors to find resources for students who encounter barriers in their lives that could prevent them from reaching their goals.

This new directory includes the following sections:

### **Adult Education/Literacy**

The location and contact information for adult basic education (ABE) and Literacy West Virginia programs, plus GED Testing Center locations are included within this section.

Contact information on public libraries throughout WV and information on financial assistance for continuing education is also included.

### **Child-Care**

This section contains Child-Care Resource and Referrals (CCR&R) locations. CCR&R's provide child-care referrals, technical assistance on child development and training to child-care providers. They also manage the child-care subsidy program in the counties where they operate.

### **Domestic Violence**

This section contains telephone numbers for local domestic violence programs within specific areas of WV, the WV Coalition for Domestic Violence contact information, and national domestic violence hotlines and agencies.

### **Employment Needs**

A list of WorkforceWV Centers is contained within this section.

### **Family Issues**

The first 58 pages in this section contain locations of free clinics and primary care centers, websites and local resources for free or reduced-cost prescriptions, where to find information regarding Medicaid, and WVCHIP

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(WV Children's Health Insurance Program) services, contact number, website, and application information.

Pages 59-66 contain mental health/substance abuse counseling and treatment center locations.

**Legal Issues**

The first page of this section includes contact information for WV Legal Aid offices and counties served by each one.

The second page provides the website that contains guidelines and instructions for filing claims, explains individual rights and responsibilities, and includes copies of forms and online forms for legal issues in the following areas: consumer, disability, family, health, housing, immigration, public benefits, senior citizens, and work-related issues.

**Physical Disability Assistance**

This section includes resources that can assist people with mobility and sensory impairments, such as wheelchair users; those with work-related injuries; those who are blind, deaf, or those with other types of acquired and congenital disabilities. Contact information is provided for resources on assistive technology, advocacy and

support groups, and physical therapy and treatment centers.

**Special Learning Needs**

This section provides websites and contact telephone numbers for providers of services for special learning needs adults and children. It also includes contact information regarding the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act).

**Transportation Assistance**

This section lists providers of transportation for the general public, seniors, and disabled individuals. Many of these businesses and/or agencies may offer a discount to those in need if a request is made from a teacher, tutor, and/or counselor.

To download the directory, go to <http://www.wvabe.org> and click on *ConXtions* under "What's New and Announcements." Then print all or any parts you feel will be helpful to you and to your program.

Screen-printed binders and color-coded tabs are available by contacting Kathy Hollingsworth, [kwinter@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:kwinter@access.k12.wv.us). ■

## Author speaks at Kingwood Public Library for International Literacy Day celebration

By Delisa Riley, AmeriCorps VISTA



Preston County Literacy Volunteers celebrated International Literacy Day recently at the Kingwood Public Library.

In honor of the event, Dolores Howell, the author of *Stand Straight Grow Tall* talked about her personal battle with illiteracy.

She was born in Terra Alta, WV and attended school in Maryland. She failed grades. Later studies indicated that a lack of food during her mom's pregnancy may have caused her dyslexia and reading difficulties.

Howell, during her presentation, said that it is hard to concentrate when you are hungry. She



Ken Smith, Dolores Howell, Hank Sookne

**Continued on page 20**

## Author speaks . . .

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further went on to say that we can all make a difference. Howell reports that she was born in 1936 during the depression when there was a food shortage. Her mother was probably hungry all the time.

“My classmates told me I was probably too dumb to spell ‘cat’—they were right.” “I would say the word I thought I heard but it was usually wrong,” Howell said.

Howell went on to say, “I graduated and my IQ was 68. I was told that I was retarded. I could not get a driver’s license. All four of my sons are dyslexic. I was so relieved to learn (much later in life) that not being able to read didn’t mean that I was retarded according to my literacy tutor Jean. Jean helped me learn to read. I later became a tutor and helped George, a 3rd grade student, learn to read. George is now a psychologist. I no longer hide my reading problem. At 32, I told everyone I was illiterate. I am now 69.”

Along with Dolores Howell, the International Literacy Day celebration included a performance by Ken Smith who sang songs that he wrote. Hank Sookne from *Feed the Children* gave a presentation on the program and how it was started in a kitchen in Oklahoma City 27 years ago. *Feed the Children* is now the ninth largest non-profit organization in the world. ■

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### Networks

501 22nd Street  
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**Deadline for spring newsletter:  
February 17, 2006**

<p>Nonprofit Org. U.S. Postage <b>PAID</b> Permit #2925 Charleston, WV 25301</p>
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