

## Revved up for reading

By Dee George, director, Tri-State Literacy, Huntington, WV

This is undoubtedly the most unusual project in which I have ever participated. When first contacted, I was told over the phone that there would be an Orange County Chopper for a rally for literacy — so I put out the word that we were having a food chopper from California and food demonstrations. Over the next few days, I found out that the rally was a motorcycle poker run, the Ginny Marie Young Rally for Literacy, named in honor and memory of a 20-year-old University of Kentucky student from Proctorville, Ohio. She was killed in March 2005 in a plane crash with her father and her friend. I learned that the featured motorcycle was built in Orange County, New York and was being sponsored by Case Knives. Community businessmen and friends of the family of Ginny Marie Young had come together to honor the lost girl by putting together a run that would benefit literacy, because literacy was Ginny Marie's pride and passion. Ginny believed that reading is for everyone...that little children should be read to daily...that if you can read,

**Continued on page 3**



The rally was held in honor and in memory of Ginny Marie Young, a passionate supporter of literacy.



Literacy and motorcycle fans from near and far at the Ginny Marie Young Rally for Literacy.

### Inside this issue

<b>From the editor</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Student writing</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Governor's Council on Literacy</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Teamwork: A core value</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Teacher/tutor tips</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Literacy partnerships</b>	<b>10</b>

**NETWORKS** is a quarterly collaborative publication prepared by:

**Literacy West Virginia  
WV Adult Education Association, Inc.  
WV Department of Education**

**NETWORKS** is funded by the WVDOE. No endorsements of the newsletter contents made by the WVDOE or the USDOE should be inferred. Please address all correspondence to the appropriate contributing editor:

**Kathy Hollingsworth, Editor-in-Chief**  
RESA III • 501 22nd Street • Dunbar, WV 25064  
[kwinter@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:kwinter@access.k12.wv.us)

**Contributing Editors:**

**Pam Bryan, Literacy West Virginia**  
RESA III • 501 22nd Street • Dunbar, WV 25064  
[pbryan@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:pbryan@access.k12.wv.us)

**Marie Jones, ABE Instruction**  
RESA III • 501 22nd Street • Dunbar, WV 25064  
[mariehb@hotmai.com](mailto:mariehb@hotmai.com)

**Wanda Matt, Even Start and Family Literacy**  
WV DOE • Capitol Complex, Bldg. 6  
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E. • Charleston, WV 25305  
[wmatt@charter.net](mailto:wmatt@charter.net)

**Melissa Aguilar, Governor's Workforce Investment Division**  
Governor's Workforce Investment Division • Capitol Complex, Bldg. 6  
• 1900 Kanawha Blvd., E. • Charleston, WV 25305  
[maguilar@wvdo.org](mailto:maguilar@wvdo.org)

**Cathy Shank, Program/Policy**  
RESA III • 501 22nd Street • Dunbar, WV 25064  
[cshank@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:cshank@access.k12.wv.us)

**Connie Moore, Governor's Council on Literacy**  
WV DOE • 1900 Kanawha Blvd., E. • Charleston, WV 25305  
[cmoore@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:cmoore@access.k12.wv.us)

**Ellen Killion, Special Programs/ESL**  
RESA III • 501 22nd Street • Dunbar, WV 25064  
[ekillion@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:ekillion@access.k12.wv.us)

**Christina Harper, DHHR Services**  
RESA III • 501 22nd Street • Dunbar, WV 25064  
[cdharper@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:cdharper@access.k12.wv.us)

**Eddie Jett, WVAEA, Inc.**  
Monongalia County Career Center • 1000 Mississippi Street  
Morgantown, WV 26506  
[ejett@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:ejett@access.k12.wv.us)

**Ed Hicks, Public Service Training**  
WV DOE • 1900 Kanawha Blvd., E. • Charleston, WV 25305  
[ehicks@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:ehicks@access.k12.wv.us)

**1-800-642-2670**

Copy Editing, Design, Layout • Colleen Anderson Mother Wit  
Writing & Design

Printed by Color Craft Printing

## From the editor

Summer is almost over and I, for one, am glad! It's been way too hot, and so much has been going on, that there has not even been time to take a vacation. But many good things have been happening — as you will see when you sit down to read this fall issue of *Networks*.

The ABE Core Summer Institute was enjoyed by all who attended, and many graduations and student celebrations were held around the state. New GED accommodation forms were introduced, and the distance education program, *AdvantageGED*, has made more changes that could help boost ABE enrollment and contact hours. The Instructor Handbook for 2006 was completed and is now posted on the ABE website, [www.wvabe.org](http://www.wvabe.org), and the expanded *ConXtions* Directory will be ready for the fall conference.

Speaking of the fall conference, this year it is scheduled for September 21-23 at Snowshoe Mountain. It will offer a variety of sessions, ranging from ABE core to mental health and technology. There is even an opportunity to get your students involved in promoting your program and adult education/literacy by becoming part of the Student Speakers' Bureau, which is being formed this year. Information and registration is available on the WVAEA, Inc. website, [www.wvaea.org](http://www.wvaea.org). So enjoy the start of this new school year — and I hope to see you in September at Snowshoe! ■



Kathy Winter-Hollingsworth  
Editor

***How far you go in life depends on  
your being tender with the young,  
compassionate with the aged,  
sympathetic with the striving, and  
tolerant of the weak and the strong.  
Because someday in life you will have  
been all of these.***

**George Washington Carver**

# Kraus receives national award

The General Educational Development (GED) Testing Service of the American Council on Education and the West Virginia Department of Education GED Office have recognized Daniel Kraus of Albright as a national award winner for West Virginia. The award was based on his scores on the GED Tests in 2004.

Mr. Kraus was home-schooled from kindergarten through 12th grade and praises his mother for his educational achievements. His total score on the GED Tests was 3850 (4000 is a perfect score). Approximately 15 percent of a national sample of graduating U. S. high school seniors achieve total scores of 2900 or better; less than two percent earn a total score of 3350 or better. This high score places Daniel in the top one percent of the national class ranking of graduating high school seniors.

Developed in 1942 for persons who had not completed high school, the GED tests provide an opportunity for them to demonstrate the level of learning required of traditional high school graduates.

Since World War II, the GED Testing Program has enabled more than 15 million adults to obtain formal recognition of their educational development through attainment of a high school equivalence credential. *Who Passed the GED Tests? 2003 Statistical Report* states that



5,074 took the GED Tests in West Virginia, with 657,239 taking the tests nationwide.

The GED Tests demand achievement. To earn a GED credential, a candidate must complete a set of five tests covering math, science, reading, writing, and social studies. The tests, which last seven hours, also measure communication, information-processing, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills.

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

"When it was over and I got my results back, I was very proud," said Daniel Kraus. He plans to enroll at the Monongalia Technical Education Center this fall. ■

## Revved up for reading

*Continued from page 1*

you can go anywhere and do anything!

Ginny Marie was known for inspirational writings that apply to literacy today, since so many of our literacy students are scared or embarrassed to ask for help: "You are a good person." "Get up and keep going." "Have confidence in yourself. You can do anything you set your mind to."

The rally/run took place on July 23, 2005. It began and ended in downtown Huntington and raised over \$2,000 for the Tri-State Literacy Council. Steve Waggoner, owner of general Building and Supply and a friend of the Young family, decided that literacy would be the cause for this year's run. Steve is well-read and wanted to choose a charity that does not receive a lot of money.

"Adult literacy is in need of significant support in our state", said John Smith from Nationwide, another sponsor. The run, a two-hour ride through Cabell and Wayne counties, began at Gemstone Customs and ended at General Building and Supply, where an 18-wheeler had brought in the Orange County Chopper and a display of Case Custom Knives.

We hope this will be an annual project. I was very pleased to meet so many wonderful people, including the literacy tutors and students who came out to help us. We actually had one tutor ride in the rally.

The family of Ginny Marie Young donated T-shirts featuring Ginny Marie's picture and her favorite saying for literacy.

Shirts are still available at the Cabell County Public Library in the Literacy office for ten dollars. All proceeds go towards the literacy program. ■

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

## Education: The key to a good future

I want to congratulate all the GED graduates from 2000-2005. I am a 2005 graduate myself and proud to be here.

In this fast paced working society today, if you think you can make it without an education you had better think again. I used to think I could make it, but I was wrong. I am a machinist by trade with my other job choice being a carpenter. Back in the days when it was enough to have work experience and not so much education, I had a very good job working at General Electric, Aircraft Engines for 15 years. I thought I had a future there, until the massive layoffs of the 90's. 16,000 people lost their jobs during this time. There I was, starting all over again! I started into my second trade, carpentry. After several years working as a carpenter, I was injured on the job. I fell 26 feet. After a 2 week hospital stay, I had a cast on both legs for 6 months. After those came off, I had an additional 19 months of rehabilitation to learn to walk all over again. Needless to say, this was my second start. It seemed like every job for which I applied, I needed diplomas, degrees, or certifications that I did not have. I was actually accepted for a couple of jobs but after working a few days or weeks, I was told they needed a copy of my



diploma or GED which I couldn't provide. One of those jobs even told me to come back after I received my GED. The thought of going back to school after 32 years was frightening. I called Thelma Lang in March of 2005 and enrolled in GED classes. In May I received my GED. After that I decided to keep going with my education and enrolled in the SPOKES class at the Roane-Jackson Technical Center. These classes teach about values, filling out applications, making resumes,

doing well at job interviews as well as computer skills. Recently, I was interviewed for a position with a new company currently being built in Kenna and was hired. Things really seemed to fall into place after completing my GED class and I can honestly say that I have a much brighter future as a direct result.

So if you think you can't teach an old dog new tricks, I'm living proof that just isn't so. If you are in school, stay there, if you do not have a diploma, get one!

Carl Baker Jr.

## Instructors may be able to boost monthly contact hours

By Ellen Killion, ABE specialist, Office of Distance Education

With the start of the 2005-06 school year, some new and exciting changes come to the distance education program. This year, instructors who are using the PLATO Web Learning Network in their classrooms will be given the opportunity to count the additional hours that their students are working on PLATO Web outside of the classroom.

In order to be able to count these additional hours, the instructor must first apply to become a certified distance education instructor by completing a Certified Distance Education Instructor Home Study Module. Three hours of professional development in-service credit will be awarded once this module has been successfully completed, and the Distance Education Office will issue a certificate to the instructor. The instructor then will be given access in

AEMIS to begin recording those additional student hours.

A maximum of 12 hours per student per day may be entered. A copy of the PLATO attendance report showing students' time on task must be kept on file to verify the attendance reported in AEMIS. (See Section 13 of the *WV ABE Instructor Handbook* for more information.)

This is an excellent chance for instructors who have students who are interested in "homework" to finally get credit for the hours those students spend working on PLATO Web outside of the classroom. Note: This is the ONLY state approved method of gaining additional student contact hours for outside supplemental work.

If you are interested in taking advantage of this opportunity to boost classroom hours, please contact Ellen Killion at 1-800-642-2670 or [ekillion@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:ekillion@access.k12.wv.us).

## Salute to Lifelong Learning ceremony held in July

By **Connie Moore**, West Virginia Department of Education

First Lady Gayle Manchin, representing Governor Manchin, and W.I. Hairston, co-chair of the Governor's Council on Literacy, presented college scholarships and literacy grants to individuals from throughout the state on July 22, 2005. Both the scholarship and literacy grant programs are cooperative projects of the Governor's Council on Literacy and the West Virginia Literacy Foundation.

Fifteen \$1,000 college scholarships were awarded to adults who had completed the

General Educational Development (GED) test to earn a high school equivalency diploma. The scholarship winners included: Michelle Adams, Mary Becker, Jennifer Forrester, Sarah Foster, Bryan Henderson, Aaron Horner, Tammy Jo Hughes, Michael Lewis, Aaron Long, Beth Ann Lucky, Whitney Skaggs, Beverly Sparks, Linda Thomas, Dawn Wall, and Joshua Wilson. The average GED score of the recipients this year was 578, which places them in the top 15 percent

*Continued on page 11*

## Jackson County ABE graduates honored

By **Thelma Lang**, Jackson County ABE instructor/coordinator

The Jackson County Schools Adult Education Program held a graduation ceremony on June 25 to recognize individuals who obtained their GED between 2000 and 2005. It was a very nice ceremony for those who participated. The Guard of Post 6669 of Ravenswood presented the colors to begin the ceremony. Graduate Marissa Hatfield led the Pledge of Allegiance and Jason Carson, former ABE teacher and current missionary, delivered the invocation. Members of Rave Revue performed a song with piano accompaniment by Joyce Pitchford-Good. Everyone was touched by the personal speech of graduate Carl Baker, Jr. — and then motivated

by the keynote speaker, Reverend Chris Skeens.

Director Blaine Hess announced each graduate as he or she crossed the stage to be greeted by the Jackson County staff and honored guest. Superintendent Ronald Ray presented the graduates with certificates from Jackson County Schools and planners from the Jackson County Work Force One-Stop. A reception at Henry J. Kaiser Elementary followed the ceremony.

Cook Floral donated flower arrangements, Cedar Lakes provided cookies, Wood County Adult Basic Education lent the caps and gowns, and Ravenswood High and HJK volunteered their facilities for the event. Many thanks go to all who helped make this evening possible. ■

**The 23 graduates who participated in the ceremony are pictured here: Carl Baker Jr., Alexis Bigley, Ameer Bigley, Karen Brown, Tiffany Canales, Miranda Gibbs, Marissa Hatfield, Dean Hurst, Angela Morrison, Ashley Palmer, Angela Parker, Janet Peters, Jennifer Peters, Paul Pranski, Melissa Richards, Laura Rollyson, Elizabeth Stalnaker, Crystal Taylor, Linda Thomas, Melissa VanInwaen, Barry Wolfe, Rex Woodrum, and Tommy Workman.**



# Teamwork is the fourth core value for WV ABE

By Cathy Shank, WV ABE professional development coordinator



The key words chosen to represent the core values of the West Virginia Adult Basic Education (WV ABE) program spell out the word QUILTS:



- Quality
- Integrity
- Lifelong Learning
- Teamwork
- Service

*Teamwork* is the fourth WV ABE core value — the ‘T’ in *QUILTS*:

**We embrace Teamwork** ...through effective collaboration with all partners, using participatory planning, open communication, and decision-making in pursuing common goals.

Teamwork and Collaboration are strong themes for WV ABE Program personnel. When the organization set goals and objectives two years ago, among them was the goal to “*establish and sustain collaborative relationships with other organizations.*”

Local WV ABE programs are required to have an advisory council composed of representatives of business, industry, human service agencies, job services, volunteer literacy programs, etc. that give input to the ABE program regarding targeted populations, choices of specialized programs and curricula, and scheduling and location of classes. Advisory councils often assist in recruitment and retention activities as well.

WV ABE services are offered in numerous settings throughout the state in order to reach target populations in the most convenient locations. Full-time and part-time WV ABE programs are usually located in adult learning centers, career and technical centers, community centers, community and technical colleges, correctional facilities, public libraries, public school buildings, and WorkForce WV one-stop centers. Other Settings for WV ABE programs include churches, community-based organizations, Department of Health and Human Resource (DHHR) facilities, homeless shelters, hospitals, Regional Education Service Area (RESA) facilities, school board offices, senior centers, and work sites.

The WV ABE statewide program has established important collaborative ties with many organizations and agencies through the Governor’s Council on Literacy and the Inter-

agency Collaborative Team.

WV ABE state staff members are active members of the Governor’s Council on Literacy. This council consists of 25 members representing ABE, business and industry, community-based organizations, DHHR, early childhood education, arts and humanities, family literacy, higher education, institutional education, labor, libraries, private sector, vocational education, volunteer literacy programs, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and the WV Development Office. The council assists in the coordination and promotion of statewide adult literacy efforts.

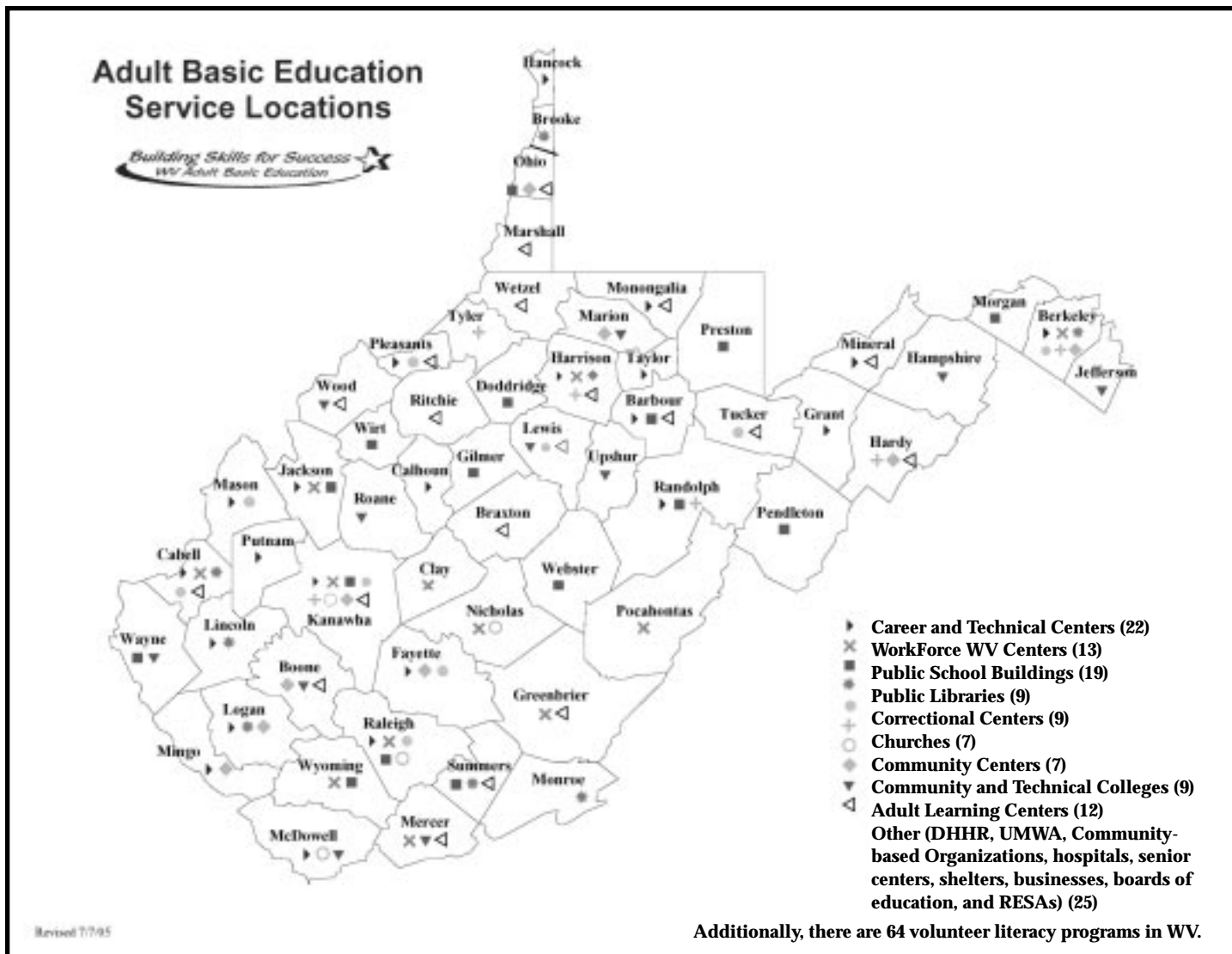
The Governor’s Council works collaboratively with the WV Literacy Foundation (a private funding source for literacy efforts) in distributing funds for adult literacy program grants, scholarships for GED graduates to attend college, and awards for adult literacy practitioners involved in promising practices.

Funded through state and private tax-deductible donations, the Foundation also supports the Council’s public outreach and family literacy efforts, including such publications as the *ConXtions* (a resource directory connecting Adult Education and Literacy programs to community services) and *Literacy Counts* (a statistical resource guide for ABE and literacy program planning). Many of these activities and publications are produced by WV ABE staff members and are available upon request from the Adult Education and Literacy Information Network (1-800-642-2670) or online at [www.wvabe.org](http://www.wvabe.org).

WV ABE state staff members also participate in the Interagency Collaborative Team (ICT) that consists of representatives from state agencies that touch the WorkForce WV system. Among other initiatives, this group has sought to standardize the procedures and instruments used to assess Workforce Investment Act (WIA) applicants and participants in WIA one-stops and partner programs.

As part of another ICT initiative to identify and serve more WIA applicants with disabilities, a pilot project has been underway in WIB region 2 (7 southwestern counties). Last year, WV ABE staff assisted the WV Center for Excellence in Disabilities in training WIA caseworkers to administer the Learning Needs Screening and

**Continued on page 7**



**Continued from page 6**

make referrals for appropriate services. The pilot had two purposes: first, to increase WIA case-workers' awareness of disabilities and of appropriate services for applicants with disabilities; and second, to increase referrals to WIA partners that could meet these individuals' needs. Previously, many unprepared job training applicants took the WorkKeys assessment, failed to get a score that qualified them to attend training, and never returned to the one-stop center. With the new screening process, WIA applicants may be referred to agencies within the one-stop center. The Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) is a WIA partner that can identify disabilities and appropriate testing accommodations. Another partner, ABE, can provide classes to improve academic and test-taking skills as well as assist students in identi-

fying and using educational accommodations. Literacy WV can assist clients with reading problems.

The fall WV Adult Education Association, Inc. (WVAEA) conference is another prime example of collaborative efforts. WVAEA sponsors an annual Adult Education and Family Literacy conference with offerings to adult practitioners in the areas of adult education and literacy, disabilities, English as a Second Language, health and human services, family literacy, libraries, institutional education, workplace education, youth programs, and more. The conference planning committee, led by WV ABE staff, has included working members from many partner agencies that address these interest areas.

In short, WV ABE is doing a lot of collaborating and is one of the best team players in the field of service providers in our state. ■

# The reluctant writer

By Richard Cooper, Ph.D.

Many adults who have language-based learning problems are reluctant writers. They do not write much, if at all, because when they write, they expose weaknesses such as poor spelling or grammar, awkward sentence structure, and/or illegible handwriting. Many individuals who have a racing mind (attention problems) rarely communicate in writing because it takes too long — and when they do write, they often skip words and/or ideas. Moreover, when these individuals proofread, if they take the time to do so, they often will not find the missing words or ideas, inserting them orally as they read what they wrote.

When individuals who have poor writing skills try to write, they usually write using spoken language rather than written language. Spoken language differs from written language in one very fundamental way; it uses the environment to convey much of the meaning. When a speaker refers to *this room*, there is no need to describe the room the person is referring to because the listener sees the room as the speaker is referring to it. When one writes about *this room*, the writer needs to describe the room so that the reader can form a mental picture of the room. The reluctant writer who writes using speech usually communicates in vague generalities, resulting in ambiguous text.

If you have difficulty hearing the subtle sounds in words, it is difficult to use those sounds as a spelling technique. For example: if the person hears and pronounces the word *immediately* as *emediatelly*, he or she will probably spell it as *emediatelly*. I call this auditory perception problem *blurred hearing* because my students can understand the latter more easily than the former.

Following are some techniques I have found helpful for motivating the reluctant writer and also helping the person to increase his or her skills in the use of written language. These writing exercises should be used every day. They are simple and manageable. The person should set concrete goals so that the writing is measurable.

1. The first exercise is writing sentence parts. The person writes sets of noun phrases and verb phrases. These sentence parts help the learner understand sentence structure by

focusing attention on the structure of language rather than on the trying to communicate ideas in what are often awkward sentences. These sentence parts can then be combined to form sentences concretely demonstrating complete thoughts.

2. The three five-word sentences exercise involves the daily writing of sets of three sentences that contain exactly five words. By restricting each sentence to five words, the learner must craft the sentence rather than just write, as one would speak.
3. These two exercises provide the basis for the next exercise, which I call expanding drafts. The person expands the sentence parts and/or the three-five word sentences by adding modifiers, adjectives, adverbs, propositional phrases and clauses. This exercise emphasizes the addition of detail to written language and provides the reluctant writer with specific tasks that develop skill. By practicing writing with these exercises daily, the adult learner will write more and eventually be better able to express his or her thoughts in writing.

Individuals who miss a lot of errors when they proofread can try these techniques.

1. Proofread for the same one item at a time through the whole document before checking the next item. Using this method, the writer would check that the first word of each sentence begins with a capital letter. Next the person would go back and check that each sentence ends with a period. The next step might be to check for agreement of subject and verb or for spelling. It is fine for the person to mark or correct a missing period while checking for capital letters.
2. Some people find it helpful to proofread starting at the end of the document and work back to the beginning.
3. Another technique for proofreading is to break the sentences into segments, checking each segment, such as groups of two or three words, then checking two segments together, and then larger segments — until the sen-

**Continued on page 9**

**Continued from page 8**

tence and then the paragraph is checked as a whole.

4. Students who add missing words as they proofread can sharpen their proofreading skills by proofreading the writing of others, since they do not have the words they are proofreading already in their thoughts.

An individual who has weak spelling skills needs to think of himself or herself as being an improving speller instead of being a poor speller. This change of attitude helps the person to focus on the spelling of the words rather than just writing letters to spell words. There are

many alternative spelling techniques that learners can use to help them remember how to spell words. Here are two:

1. The most direct way to improve spelling is to collect the correct spelling of the words that the person frequently misspells. The person can use a WordNet (any tool for collecting words) and collect these words, referring to this repository until he or she can spell the words correctly.
2. For those words that just don't stick, the person can learn memory tools. You can find samples of such spelling memory tools on my website, [www.learningdifferences.com](http://www.learningdifferences.com). Go to the section on mnemonic clues. ■

## New GED forms are now available

By Debbie Kimbler, WV GED administrator

■ The General Educational Development Testing service (GEDTS) is pleased to launch its new "Request for Testing Accommodations" forms.

These forms have been reviewed and edited by several different groups including GED administrators, GEDTS staff, and GED disability consultants working with us on reviewing accommodations requests. Further, throughout this entire process, we have worked with the US Department of Education, the Office of Civil Rights and the American Council on Education legal counsel.

We have taken our existing disability forms (Forms L-15 and SA-001) and redesigned the necessary information in four distinct review forms covering specific disabilities. They have been designed so that the correct form can be easily identified based on the candidate's specific disability. Further, extra care has been taken to ensure consistency of basic information and consistency of definitions for the documentation we seek across all forms. We have also redesigned the assessment testing sections of the forms so that information can be easily imputed.

The forms are:

- Request for Testing Accommodations-Learning and Other Cognitive Disabilities;
- Request for Testing Accommodations-Emotional/Mental Health Disability;
- Request for Testing Accommodations-Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; and

- Request for Testing Accommodations-Physical/Chronic Health Disability.

On all forms:

- Section 1 is for the candidate's information. As before, it is important that the candidate signs the application. If the candidate is under 18, the signature of a parent or guardian must be provided.
- Section 2 is for test center information. The chief examiner should complete this section and review the entire application for completeness before signing the form and sending onto the administrator for decision.
- Section 3 is for the professional diagnostician or advocate to complete. As long as the advocate has the documentation available, they can copy the information from the documentation onto the forms.
- Section 4 is completed by the GED Administrator, who should make a decision based on the application and the documentation submitted.

In addition, a new APPEAL FORM has also been designed. The GED chief examiner or GED examiner should use it to notify the GED administrator that the candidate wishes to appeal the decision made on the original accommodations request.

A checklist for completing the new forms was developed as a tool to assist the candidate and the chief examiner in completing the forms appropriately. It is not necessary to submit the checklist with the request. ■

## Adult Basic Education and community and technical colleges

# All 'bout education ...changing the culture

By Debrah Varner, assistance director ABE, and Kathy D'Antoni, vice-chancellor, Community and Technical College System

A seamless education system is defined as an efficient and effective transition from one education level to another that closes gaps, eliminates duplication, and sets standards to mastery. Applying this concept as a rubric for educational frameworks has brought to the forefront various education components that are not seamless. One of these is the transition of adult students to postsecondary education.

Today's reality is that individuals must continue their education at least two years beyond high school to achieve quality employment. This creates a need for broader access to post-secondary education. This access is being achieved through West Virginia's Community and Technical College System, which is under the auspices of the WV Council for Community and Technical Education.

Access to post-secondary education is providing greater opportunities for individuals, but it has also created challenges. For post-secondary education, the community and technical colleges (CTCs) are generally the colleges that deliver developmental education. While post-secondary institutions are reporting higher enrollments, they also report an increase in the number of students placed in developmental courses. Moreover, an alarming percentage of them fail the first time and must retake the courses, sometimes more than once. ***One in four students who enter postsecondary education lacks the literacy skills to meet the designated national benchmark for adult literacy.***

In addition to CTCs, another entity charged with the delivery of basic literacy skills is Adult Basic Education (ABE). This educational service has been established through Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and is under the auspices of the West Virginia Department of

Education. The mission of WV ABE is to enable adult learners to be literate, productive, and successful in the workplace, home, and community by delivering responsive programs and services. ABE often provides a non-traditional route to a high school education through the General Education Development (GED) program. Individuals who pass the GED exam attain the WV High School Equivalency Diploma and can qualify for admission into post-secondary education.

Until recently, there was little to no collaboration in the curriculum design and/or delivery of the two programs, even though both entities, ABE and CTCs, deliver basic literacy skills instruction for adults. Now The WV Council for Community and Technical Education and the WV Adult Basic Education (WV ABE) program are working together to provide adult students a more efficient and effective transition from basic skills to post-secondary education.

According to the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL) "...adult education and community colleges are natural partners in providing educational opportunity. Adult education can and should be the first step in transitions through the community college gateway. Enrollment in adult education programs can and should serve as the first enrollment in postsecondary education for students with deficient basic skills..."

For the past few years the partnerships between ABE and CTCs have slowly been blossoming. Current efforts include the following:

Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College (SWVCTC) has partnerships with WV ABE programs in Boone, Mingo, and Logan Counties. ABE provides instructors to work at the Logan, Mingo, and Boone campuses to provide basic skills remediation and to assist students in preparing for college courses. A Meet-U (Mobile Education and Training Unit) bus — purchased by SWVCTC to offer ABE classes to remote parts of their service area where there are no available class sites — has rotated to three different locations.

Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College (EWVCTC) has a partnership with the Hardy County ABE program. ABE

## Partners in Adult Education and Literacy Series

*This is the first article in a series featuring partnerships that enhance services for adult education and literacy students. This article focuses on links between WV Adult Basic Education (ABE) and West Virginia Community and Technical Colleges (WVCTCS).*

**Continued on page 11**

**Continued from page 10**

provides a full-time instructor to work with Eastern in providing assessment and instructional services. Tutorial services are also provided for college students.

New River Community and Technical College, and Nicholas County ABE are working as partners. The ABE program and the college share classroom space at the WorkForce WV Center. WV ABE offers basic skills classes, and tutoring is available for adult literacy and college students. A reading specialist is also available for students with learning disabilities.

WV University Institute of Technology Community and Technical College (WVUIT-CTC) and the Fayette County ABE program have a unique partnership called the Middle College. ABE classes are offered on campus at WVUIT. Students are also able to utilize the computer lab. ABE and WVUIT CTC teachers provide staffing.

In May of this year, a collaborative meeting was held for ABE Teachers and Developmental Education Faculty. This session was basically information sharing about issues of assessment, curriculum, enrollment and barriers for adult students with a goal of attending college. A small working group was established and charged with studying these four critical issues:

- Establishment of a Cut Score for placement into developmental education or ABE;
- Statewide outcome standards for developmental courses;
- Changing the “branding” stigma of students working on basic skills; and
- Dual enrollment for ABE/CTC students.

In June, the working group reconvened and established recommendations for comment by the entire collaborative group. They grouped their recommendations into the categories of: Image, Placement, Curriculum, Format, Student Advisors, and Staff Development. The collaborative group met again in August to discuss and refine these recommendations.

The group plans to present the recommendations to the WV Council for Community and Technical Colleges and the WV State Board of Education for approval. If both of these boards approve the recommendations, a request for funding will be presented to the WV Legislature. This funding would implement the collaborative effort between adult education and the community and technical colleges.

The effort will result in a *Transitional Program* that will serve as a “funnel” for students to transition between adult basic education and developmental studies. Students needing work

in only one or two subject areas can participate in the *Transitional Program* to receive help in those areas and also take degree coursework in other areas. Students taking developmental courses may also participate in the *Transitional Program* for extra help with those classes.

Implementation of the *Transitional Program* will result in a reduction of duplication and costs for both education systems and the participants, an efficient transition for ABE students and adults in postsecondary, higher retention rate for community college students by reducing academic frustrations, and a unified initiative that focuses on the literacy problems in West Virginia.

**“...leadership colleges have demonstrated that students can often progress faster, at lower costs, and with less attrition if adult education is regarded as the lower level of college developmental education and if the curricular linkages between these two services (adult basic education and community colleges) are strengthened....” (CAAL) ■**

**Lifelong learning****Continued from page 5**

of graduating high school seniors according to the estimated national class rank.

Following the scholarship presentations, Mrs. Manchin and Mr. Hairston awarded checks totaling more than \$17, 000 to 12 adult literacy programs. Grant recipients included: Family Learning Center, Hamlin-Lincoln Public Library, LAMP-Summers County Public Library, Literacy Volunteers of Harrison County, Literacy Volunteers of Putnam County, Literacy Volunteers of Randolph County, Literacy Volunteers of Upshur County, Mason County Literacy Council, Monongalia County Literacy Volunteers, Inc., Northern Panhandle Head Start, Inc., Rural Appalachian Improvement League (RAIL), and Tri-State Literacy Council. These individual projects will touch the lives of many individuals throughout the state who are in need of improving their literacy skills — including reading, writing, English speaking levels, job-readiness skills, and preparation for GED testing.

The next awards presented were promising practices/strategies competition winners. This competition, developed by a subcommittee of the Council, assists existing programs in the state who share innovative practices with other literacy providers. The top strategies were submitted by: Janet Barrett, RESA V; Carolyn Miihlbach, Roane-Jackson Technical Center; Deborah Gilliss, Berkeley County Schools; Jill Weekley, James Rumsey Technical Institute; and Shalom Tazwell, Literacy West Virginia. ■

## **Student Speakers Bureau**

# **How student speakers motivate others**

By Pam Bryan, special projects coordinator

Over the years, many kinds of marketing plans have been developed to get students into literacy programs. One of the most effective ways, student testimonials, is often the most difficult to manage. Student speakers provide a voice — a first person testimony — that can motivate and inspire adults to go back to school.

While getting a GED carries no stigma, being an adult who has reading problems remains an embarrassing situation for many. These adults have hidden their reading problems from most people — sometimes even from their spouse. Asking a literacy student to become a spokesperson requires a lot of encouragement and support.

Many adult education students have learning disabilities. These students face a variety of problems when returning to the classroom. Often they feel that this will be another “school” situation that will result in another failure. But when students begin to succeed in the program, something happens within them that makes them want to help others. They want to encourage other adults to go back and complete their educational goals.

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the D. Ray & Sybyl Hall Charitable Foundation, we are offering a student track at the WVAEA Confer-

ence, scheduled for September 21-23 at Snowshoe Resort. The student organization called BOLT (Building Opportunities for Learning Together) has a plan for training students to serve as speakers either for ABE or Literacy West Virginia. Literacy and adult education students have been invited to participate in a series of sessions geared to prepare them for public speaking.

Some of those students have already begun this process. Indeed, BOLT chairman Richard Jenkins is a pro at speaking to various groups — including United Way Board members, bank officials, and the like. He started by speaking to new volunteers who attended tutor training at Tri-State Literacy Council in Huntington, West Virginia. Mr. Jenkins has put a “face” on literacy. He is a successful businessman. He taught motorcycle repair at the Cabell County Career Technology Center for nearly 17 years. Many people still do not understand that there is a literacy problem in our communities, but when they hear Richard speak they realize that adults with literacy problems are often highly motivated and talented individuals.

This is an exciting opportunity to showcase our students who have accomplished so much — and reach out to those adults throughout West Virginia who still need our help. ■

### **Networks**

501 22nd Street  
Dunbar, WV 25064

**Deadline for winter newsletter:  
November 6, 2005**

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit #2925  
Charleston, WV  
25301