

DUTCH BOCES EDUCATION SERVICES SPOTLIGHT

November 2015

Creating opportunities to Soar!

The Adult Learning Institute (ALI) is proud to serve the community by providing diverse learning opportunities designed to help people help themselves. By providing the skills and educational experiences to help people unlock their potential, ALI helps to improve the quality of life and increases students' earning power.

Recently, administrators and staff members were honored to share in proud moments with adult students who earned equivalency diplomas and the participants who received cars as part of the Community Solutions Wheels to Work program.

Adults Overcome Challenges and Earn Equivalency Diplomas

Seventeen adults, including one who persevered through ten attempts, were acknowledged for receiving New York State High School Equivalency Diplomas at the 2015 Dutchess BOCES Adult Education Graduation on October 15, 2015. The ceremony, filled with tears, smiles, and words of encouragement, was held at the Cunneen-Hackett Arts Center honoring those who had recently passed the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC™).



Joseph Morrison told his fellow graduates that he was proud to succeed on the tenth try so that his mother knew about it before she passed away. "She is no doubt looking down on all of us today with pride at our accomplishments," he said.

"Anything is possible for you," said New York State Senator Sue Serino when she addressed the graduates. "I didn't know I was going to be a senator, but I got here. You can do anything you choose."

Dr. Richard Hooley, who became the Dutchess BOCES Superintendent in September, congratulated the graduates on their hard work and achievement. "I had no idea I would be hosting this first graduation only weeks into the school year," he said. "I'm excited to be here to celebrate this important milestone and wish you all continued success."

Several students shed proud tears as they put on their caps and gowns, as did proud family members. Graduate Adrienne Micheli asked her sister to bring their parents to the ceremony without telling them

why they were attending. To their surprise, she processed down the aisle and received her diploma right before their tear-filled eyes.

"Take it all in, be present in this moment," said Dr. Sherre Wesley, Assistant Superintendent for Business Services. "Feel the cap on your head and know that you have accomplished something special."

Another speaker, Erceli Ramirez Dylewski who graduated in a prior year, told the audience that she was motivated to earn her equivalency diploma as she watched her daughter prepare for her high school graduation. And the hard work has paid off. Since receiving her diploma, Ramirez Dylewski has become



a supervisor for a construction company and a part time bookkeeper. Before earning her diploma, she would not have been qualified to even apply for either position.

The graduates also received certificates

from New York State Senator Sue Serino, New York State Assembly member Didi Barrett, and Dutchess County Executive Marcus Molinaro.

To end the evening, graduates were given two roses compliments of the Dutchess BOCES Education Foundation. The intent was to have one to keep and to have one to give to someone who helped along the way. Many graduates gave away both roses, honoring the friends, family and teachers that made the celebration possible.

For more information about earning a high school equivalency program, or other continuing education programs, contact Elizabeth Hayter, ALI Administrator, at 845-483-3640, ext. 6102.



Car Donations Key to Future Success

Six local residents were given free used cars October 6th, so that they can more easily travel to and from work and school while supporting their families. Before the keys were presented, the recipients' transportation struggles such as unreliable taxis, the lack of public transportation late at night, and the need to walk for hours to arrive at work on time, were highlighted.



"I'm so thankful and my children are so excited we are getting a car today," said Deshawn Pryce, who spoke about walking her children to daycare and then walking to the train station to commute to her job in Manhattan. She said she was desperate for a car so she could keep her job.



"My daughter told me 'I'm so happy we don't have to walk anymore,'" she said with tears in her eyes. "We need this because it is letting us moms be moms and take care of our children."



BOCES, Dutchess County government, and local businesses. Recipients must meet the criteria of the program, which includes attending budgeting and car maintenance classes to prepare for the responsibility of vehicle ownership.

If history repeats itself, the cars will be key to future success. Since the program began in 2001, 750 families have benefitted, said

Dr. Sherre Wesley, Dutchess BOCES Assistant Superintendent for Business Services.



"In almost 15 years now, all of the recipients are off public assistance, have new jobs and continue to contribute to our community," said Dr. Wesley. "It's a program that has made a phenomenal difference."



Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro handed the keys to each recipient and encouraged them to be ambassadors for the program by spreading the word in the community. "We recognize the immense challenge it is to make ends meet," he said. "Remember, your partners are here to support you."

Trista Moseley, Laquita Bridges-Smith, Ishianna Johnson, Kakeya Rayford, and Sheree Pinder also received donated cars.



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