

# DUTCH BOCES SPOTLIGHT

## BOCES Adult Learning Institute A Recipe for Success

November 2016

### ALI Student Chosen as Student of the Year

Persistence, perseverance, and purpose helped Perus Uwingeneye earn her high school equivalency diploma. Now, after overcoming what most would see as insurmountable challenges, she has been named Student of the Year by the New York Association for Continuing/Community Education for the Hudson Valley.



Ms. Uwingeneye passed the five required tests in reading, writing, social studies, science and mathematics to earn her HSE diploma in 2016, but her journey began when she arrived in America in 1998. She had faced starvation and dehydration while being hunted by soldiers in her homeland of Rwanda during the early 1990s when the Hutu ethnic majority murdered as many as 800,000 people, mostly of the Tutsi minority. Her parents and six siblings were

among those lost in the genocide. She and a younger sister survived after hiding and walking throughout Rwanda trying to escape certain death. Rescuers provided medical care and assistance. Eventually, she arrived in the United States.

"My parents could not pay tuition and continue my education when I was growing up," said Ms. Uwingeneye. "So with a sixth grade Rwandan education, I came to Dutchess BOCES at the age of 26."

For the first eight months, she immersed herself into English language classes – mornings at the Howland Library in Beacon and evenings at Beacon High School. She also learned English by watching television and by interacting with people at her job doing laundry at a local nursing home.

"When my English was a bit better, I began working on the BOCES high school equivalency program," said Ms. Uwingeneye. "I always saw this as helping me with my long term goal of becoming a nurse."



Over the years, as she continued to work toward her equivalency diploma, she completed the certified nursing assistant program at BOCES which allowed her to move from the laundry room to patient care at the nursing home. She is also married and a mother of three. It was not easy to balance her family obligations, her job at the nursing home and her studies. "Basically, I worked multiple 16-hour shifts on set days in order to keep my schedule with my teacher," she said.

Ms. Uwingeneye has now enrolled in ALI's Licensed Practical Nursing program with an expectation that hard work will earn her the certification she needs to yet again advance in her career. She keeps memories of her homeland close and has a strong desire to give back. "One day, I hope to build a church in my hometown village back in Rwanda," said Ms. Uwingeneye. With her remarkable determination, it just may happen sooner rather than later.

### 2016 HSE Graduates

Fifteen adult students were celebrated October 20<sup>th</sup> after completing the requirements to earn a High School Equivalency Diploma at the Dutchess BOCES Adult Learning Institute (ALI).

ALI hosted the graduation ceremony to honor the hardworking students before family and friends at the Cuneen-Hackett Arts Center. Superintendent Dr. Richard Hooley, State Senator Sue Serino, and Assemblywoman Didi Barrett were among those on hand to congratulate the new graduates.

Donnett Daley  
Maria D'Amelia  
Rosa Galvao  
Eric Harrison

Joseph Marshall  
Kyshaune McFadden  
Suzette Neita-Turner  
Carolynne Odul  
Alicia Prendergast  
Rachaid Reid  
Kevin Reisman  
Jacqueline Roach  
Malaine Saunders

Serena Urena - student speaker  
Perus Uwingeneye - student speaker

