



MPAEA Newsletter

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Presidents Message



Donna Bakke
President 2010-2011

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It's Conference Time

This time of year feels like a waiting period; waiting for spring, waiting for funding decisions, waiting to see how our student outcomes will look, waiting for the COABE/ CCAE conference. But the conference is fast approaching. In a recent email Sharon Bonney from COABE told us there are 770 people registered as of February 11. That is outstanding! It should be an amazing conference with great workshops and many learning opportunities. I want to extend a personal invitation to all members to attend the MPAEA awards luncheon on Tuesday, April 19 from 11:45 to 1:00 p.m. For more information, click on this link: [2011 CCAE COABE Conference Link](#). I look forward to seeing you there.

This winter your board has been hard at work planning for the 2012 MPAEA conference. The Executive board met in Helena, Montana in January (and it was not cold when we were there). We discussed various partnerships for the 2012 conference and what type of conference would best meet the needs of our members and looked at what developments are occurring in the field nationally and regionally. We were fortunate to be able to meet with Montana State Director of Adult Education, Margaret Bowles, to discuss what type of conference and workshops would benefit adult educators. A topic that piqued the interest of Montana's director and our president-elect, Brad Deeds, is Career Pathways. According to the Workforce Strategy Center, Career pathways involve five stages that follow a rational design model. The process guides regions through data analysis,

planning, partnership development, goal setting and the implementation of strategies. Taken together, the career pathways steps represent a continuous improvement process that, if undertaken correctly, will have a systemic and sustainable impact on the performance of the partner organizations.

(<http://www.workforcestrategy.org/toolkit.html>).

Here are some additional websites that discuss Career Pathways:

<http://www.jff.org/publications/education/breaking-through-practice-guide/1059>

http://www.idpl.org/images/publicationsPDFs/Instituto2010_HowToBuildBridgePrograms%20final.pdf

<https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/>

The next step for the board is to determine the logistics of hosting a conference that will provide adult educators in our eight-state region with the skills necessary to implement Career Pathways. This promises to be an exciting adventure and I look forward to working with the Executive board and conference committee to plan a successful and pertinent professional development conference for the MPAEA members in 2012. As the year progresses you can follow the conference planning through our website, Facebook, and follow us on Twitter. If you would like to be involved in conference planning, please contact your state board members for more information.

Advocating Adult Education by Glenda Sinks

It's a tough economic climate, and many state governments have cut funding to adult education; if the state funded them at all. In the face of the shortfalls that plague our state budgets, adult educators should continue to let legislators know that investments in adult education translate into higher earnings for workers and impact the future workforce. Follow these three tips in order to keep our important work in the forefront of our legislator's minds.

Know your legislators.

Write your legislators.

Educate your legislators.

Now that elections are over, no matter the shift in political power, get to **know your legislators**. What are the legislator's hot buttons? Who is already on our side? Who do we need to win over? Who serves on the Education Committee and the Finance Committee? Build a background of knowledge about your legislator. As you get to know your legislators, let them get to know you and your program.

Write to your legislator and congratulate him/her on winning the election. Communicate strategically throughout the legislative session. Each adult education program should contact their legislators four times: Congratulations letters, end of year local reports, request for funding, and invitations to meet with staff and students.

Educate your legislators. Create an annual report to share with the legislators. Include your total enrollment, the number of students you served from other countries, average cost per student, the number receiving a GED, number of students served between ages 17-24, etc. Invite legislators to visit your program and special ceremonies to gain firsthand knowledge of adult education. Encourage your students to educate the legislators on what adult education means to them; their voices are the most powerful tool we have.

Art Ellison, the Policy Committee Chair of the National Council of State Directors of Adult Education, is the master of advocating for adult education and many of his thoughts are reflected in this article. He writes, "To influence public policy you need to get the right information to the right people at the right time with multiple messengers."

Partnership by Claudia Thorum

Partnership Yields Results for Refugees

Granite Peaks Lifelong Learning, a division of Granite School District in Salt Lake City, Utah has partnered with the Department of Workforce Services to provide a program for newly arriving refugees called WRESL or "Work Readiness English as a Second Language." The goal of this program is to support refugees in English language acquisition and preparation for the American workplace. This intensive seven month program satisfies many of the natural needs for those with this special classification including, computer skills for the workplace, a worksite and job training in Granite District secondary schools, certificate programs applicable for employment, appropriately leveled English acquisition and even child-care.

Another partner, the Utah Food Bank, has stepped in to fill gaps where school district food services may not easily be able to serve the students. Their pantry and snack program provides so much for these refugees and their families enabling them to focus on their studies and job skills.

With a daunting thirty hour week, students work at a pace that promotes success in every component of the program. Students spend 6 hours per day, Monday through Thursday in intensive English language acquisition and developing workplace readiness skills. Fridays are reserved for a supervised workplace experience.

The students are profoundly grateful. They recognize that participating in a comprehensive program and only having to report to *one facility* simplifies what can be a very confusing and stressful experience for similar individuals outside of the program. Well trained teachers and staff work daily to provide an environment where learning and professionalism is paramount. Students are demonstrating remarkable growth and achievement as indicated on standardized tests and success in the workplace. They are gaining the skills and confidence they need to feel a part of their new communities, and to be able to contribute. We are hopeful that this successful pilot program will become a model for additional programs.

For additional information, contact Dr. Claudia Thorum, Director, Granite Peaks Lifelong Learning - cthorum@graniteschools.org

Chautauqua By Karen Wilson Scott

The Idaho Lifelong Learning Association Fall Conference returned to the roots of adult education with a Chautauqua, September 16-18, 2010, at the University of Idaho Field Campus on lovely Payette Lake in McCall, Idaho. The theme, "Exploring Gems in Lifelong Learning," brought 82 participants from all over Idaho to learn together. Most lodged in rustic cabins with double bunks, just like the good ol' days of camp and early learning (and singing) around a campfire. We sang together this time, too!

The conference began with pre-conference workshops were held for Adult Basic Education / English as Second Language required training, as well as community education topics, such as Soaps and Salves. On Friday, the conference opened with early morning canoeing. The conference itself was opened by President Lori Stensland, Idaho Transportation. Our morning keynote Chautauqua speakers were Kathleen Tiff, University of Idaho Extension, in Lewiston, and Mary Schmidt, Spirit Center Administrator for the Monastery of St Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho. They shared "A National Model of Inclusive Community Building, Leadership Development, Training & Empowerment to End Poverty." Other conference Workshop topics included: "The Challenge of Teaching Adult Learners: A New Facilitation Strategy," "New Brain Connections: Gems for Classroom and Personal Applications," "A Model of Hope: How Teaching Esteem and Efficacy Create Transformational Learning Opportunities," "Can Poetry Matter?," "Just Eat Local," and "We Make the Road By Walking."

Mountain Plains Secretary, Lou Workman, talked with ILLA members about the advantages of Mountain Plains Adult Education Association membership. She also discussed the coming Spring Conference in San Francisco. It was such a pleasure to have Lou with us.

President Lori Stensland awarded ILLA's *Outstanding Service Award for 2010* to Kevin Laughlin, ILLA 2010 Conference Coordinator and Peace Corps Coordinator in Boise, Idaho; and Kathy Ludwig, ILLA Treasurer and Idaho State University College of Technology Accountant. Lori and Kevin were elected as Idaho's nominees for MPAEA Junior and Senior Representatives, respectively. Dianne Jolovich, Assistant Professor of Hospitality at the College of Southern Idaho, was elected ILLA's President for 2010-11. Kris Inskeep of the Idaho National Laboratory was elected President-Elect.

The Spirit of Chautauqua, the community of sharing was fully with ILLA at McCall. In this time of challenge it was and remains a welcome return to what Adult Education offers Idaho, our eight state coalition in MPAEA, and the adult world. As Dr. Rita McNeil taught of Miles Horton, "We make the road by walking." It is our "road" forward that we are making with each step we now take. We hold back at our peril. The sharing of wills and wishes of all of us together joins us in a community with a strong, clear, united voice for adult education.

Wyoming news by Kelly Willmarth

Miles LaRowe, EdD was named interim president of Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne. He replaces Dr. Darrel H. Hammon who resigned in December. LaRowe was the president of Northwest College in Powell from 2003 to 2008, and he also was the president of Eastern Idaho Technical College in Idaho Falls from 1996 to 2003. He was a faculty member and counselor at LCCC from 1973 to 1993. He will take the position in mid-March.

Mickey Douglas has resigned her position as one of the Wyoming MPAEA representatives. If you are interested in serving or have a name of someone you would like to nominate, please submit name (s) to Kelly Willmarth at kwillmar@lccc.wy.edu. Mickey has served on the MPAEA board for three years and will be greatly missed. She works at Central Wyoming College in Lander and also serves on the Wyoming Lifelong Learning Association (WLLA) board.

Honor our students Submitted by Tracy Moore

By Blair Liddicoat

I know that all of you have different ways of recognizing your students and the hard work they do in your programs; however, I believe that none of us does this enough. If you agree with me, I have an idea for you. It's another tool for your "Recognition Tool Kit". Those of you who have been around for a while are familiar with it, but you may not have implemented it yet. If you are new to ABE, I hope you get excited as you read about this for the first time.

I'm talking about the National Adult Education Honor Society (NAEHS). It serves the same purpose as the National Honor Society in high school, only this is for the adult students we have in our ABE Programs. It is an opportunity to recognize the efforts of some of our extraordinary students. And, unlike GED Graduations, you can induct both GED and ESOL/ELAA students into the

Honor our Students (cont'd)

NAEHS.

For specifics on NAEHS I refer you to their web site at www.naehs.org. It has all the information you need to start an NAEHS Chapter. Once you've done that, your program is eligible to participate in what I call the MPAEA NAEHS Project.

The MPAEA NAEHS Project was conceived in the summer of 2001 and first put into motion at the 2002 MPAEA Conference in Phoenix. Basically, MPAEA acknowledges NAEHS inductees from any of the eight states at the MPAEA Conference Awards Ceremony. Here are the important timelines for your program if you want your NAEHS inductees to be recognized at the San Francisco COABE/MPAEA Conference.

1. State associations must receive nominations of NAEHS inductees from local programs by March 3, 2011 in order for them to be eligible for possible recognition at the San Francisco COABE/MPAEA Conference next spring. Each local program may submit up to two inductees to their state association. Remember that nominees must be from the current program year and they must have already been inducted into the NAEHS by their local program by this deadline.

2. State associations must select their state's three NAEHS inductees and give their names and a 150-word biography to the MPAEA Awards Committee Chair by March 21, 2011. E-mail them as Word attachments to Brad Deeds at bdeeds@doe.nv.gov. Include the nominee's mailing address.

This will be the tenth year of the MPAEA NAEHS Project. We need everyone's participation to help this project grow so that we can achieve our ultimate goal of having all eight MPAEA states involved every year.

Come on everyone, jump on board. It is not hard to do and it is a wonderful way to celebrate the achievements of some of those wonderful adult students that all of you have. If you have questions, please contact me at blair.liddicoat@riosalado.edu, or call me at 480-517-8108. I'd be happy to guide you through the process.



Literacy to Work, Adult Education for a Global Economy
COABE CCAE MPAEA National Conference
April 17-21, 2011 in San Francisco, CA.

The MPAEA Board of Directors cordially invites you to the
MPAEA Awards Luncheon on April 19, 12:00pm-1:15pm

Join your MPAEA colleagues for the annual recognition ceremony
where
the prestigious Award of Excellence and the Award of Merit will be
given.

Only \$15 per individual. Space is limited, so [register today!](#)

[Click here for more details.](#)

Already registered, but want to add on the MPAEA award luncheon?
Contact info@coabe.org for assistance or call 888-442-6223.

Journal Section By Gary Conti

Joining ERIC

In July, MPAEA signed a formal agreement to make the *Journal of Adult Education* a part of the ERIC system. ERIC stands for the Education Resources Information Center. It is an online digital library of education research and information. ERIC is sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences of the U.S. Department of Education. Its mission is to provide a comprehensive, easy-to-use, searchable, Internet-based bibliographic and full-text database of research and information in education. To accomplish this, ERIC provides ready access to education literature to support the use of educational research and information to improve practice in learning, teaching, and educational research. The ERIC system is used by researchers, teachers, educators, administrators, librarians, students, and the general public throughout not only the United States but also the rest of the world. ERIC reports that its users conduct more than 8 million searches each month

Journal Section (cont'd)

through the ERIC Web site and other participating sites and services. Users will now have access to *Journal of Adult Education* through this service.

The *Journal of Adult Education* is now part of the three major online digital databases for materials in education. The journal is also part of the ProQuest and EBSCO databases. Consequently, practitioners, researchers, and students from around the world can now readily access and use the information in our journal. Consequently, if you want your ideas to be heard around the world, consider submitting a manuscript, theory-to-practice idea, or book review to your journal.

Information Series

Last year we published our first issue of The Information Series of the *Journal of Adult Education*. The Information Series is a series of publications on special topics to provide the membership with practical, research-based information that is focused on a specific topic. Because this series is published electronically, there is no financial cost to MPAEA for producing it, and it is provided free to the membership.

The name of "Information Series" was specifically chosen for this series in order to honor two special adult educators who contributed much to the field and, more importantly, to the personal and professional development of their students and colleagues. These two outstanding individuals are John A. Niemi and Robert M. Smith. As co-director of the ERIC Clearinghouse in Career Education with David V. Tiedeman at Northern Illinois University, Niemi created the "Information Series" as a publication to deal with special topics. The tenth publication in this series was *Learning How to Learn in Adult Education* by Robert M. Smith. Smith used this publication to initiate his formal inquiry of some of the components and implications of the "learning how to learn" concept. He later expanded these ideas in *Learning How to Learn: Applied Theory for Adults*, which received the first Cyril O. Houle World Award for Literature. Niemi and Smith were not only professional colleagues but also close personal friends. Together they encouraged others to constantly question the nature of the learning process and to systematically seek answers to intriguing questions. Although these two special men are no longer with us, this series is dedicated to their spirit of never-ending personal, professional, and intellectual development.

The first issue in this series dealt with English as a Second Language. Dr. Jiuhan Huang of Regent University led a team of special-issue editors in soliciting, reviewing, and editing articles for this issue. Because of the success of this issue, we have decided to include annually an issue on ESL. Dr. Huang has volunteered to once again be the special-issue editor for this ESL issue. She currently has about half of the articles for the issue but is open to receiving more manuscripts. If you are interested in contributing to this special issue on ESL, contact her immediately either by phone or by e-mail to discuss with her the idea that you would like to submit. She will also provide you with the guidelines for submitting your ideas for this issue. Since this issue will be coming out in the next few months, this is your chance to get your ideas in print quickly. Remember that in addition to this issue being sent electronically to the membership, it is also included in the ERIC, EBSCO, and ProQuest worldwide databases. You can contact Dr. Huang at:

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NMAEA Updates by Susan Morss

Updates from New Mexico Adult Education Association NMAEA is moving forward as an all-volunteer board this year. Since NMAEA did not submit the request for professional development funding from to the state for fiscal year 2010-11, we are operating on a shoestring budget. A strong Board of Directors is committed to advocating for adult education in New Mexico and creating opportunities for collaboration among our members.

In November, NMAEA joined forces with NMTESOL (New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) and presented a successful Annual Conference. One hundred fifty people participated in the joint conference. We offered eighteen workshop sessions and six interest group meetings. Two excellent keynote speakers inspired participants and spoke eloquently. NMTESOL and NMAEA are already planning next year's conference and hope to continue this tradition of sharing and networking.

NMAEA Updates (cont'd)

February 15, 2011 was Adult Basic Education and Literacy Day at the Roundhouse, New Mexico's legislative chambers. Approximately one hundred fifty adult students attended, proudly wore green Do You Know ABE? T-shirts and packed the galleries of both the House and Senate. NMAEA selected four exemplary ABE students to represent adult learners. In the House, the reader read an executive proclamation and our sponsoring representative introduced our students, teachers and directors who were sitting on the rostrum. In the Senate, our sponsoring senator introduced a Memorial and many senators spoke of ABE's importance and the need to maintain funding for such essential educational services. The recognition succeeded in keeping ABE in the spotlight and presented ABE in a positive way.

NMAEA also continues to support several support groups for its members. The Director's Council functions as a forum for program directors to discuss issues and supply input from the field to the State Director. The Teacher Support Team solicited new members in the fall and plans ways for teachers to collaborate. An annual tradition, the Teacher's Institute will take place the end of April. Teachers will serve as workshop presenters at the Institute and there will be many opportunities for sharing and camaraderie in a rustic, mountain setting. The NM Data Council is also maintaining its momentum as a support group for new and experienced data technicians.

The current NMAEA Board members include Susie Morss, President, Todd DeKay, Past President, Tom McGaghie, President-Elect, Teri Wimborne, Treasurer, and Gloria Gonzalez, Secretary. Area Representatives from the five regions are Marlene Herrera, Jamie Bearden, Judy Hofer, Hilda Pacheco-Peeples, and Deb McCormick. The NMAEA Board and Mission are stable and NMAEA plans to continue its strong tradition of advocacy, collaboration and solidarity for adult educators in New Mexico.

US Department of Education Office of Vocation and Adult Education submitted by Nancy Lambott

President Announces 2012 Budget Request for Career and Technical and Adult Education

President Obama announced his FY 2012 budget yesterday, framing a comprehensive and responsible plan

that will put the country on a path toward fiscal sustainability in the next few years. Agencies and programs across the government are facing level funding, or even budget cuts. The budget calls for a five-year freeze on discretionary spending other than for national security. It requires tough choices since every decision to invest requires cuts somewhere else. Education is a priority for the administration, which views it as a prerequisite for prosperity as well as an obligation we have to the next generation for ensuring their success in a career and in life. Although these are challenging times, we must educate our way to a better economy by investing responsibly, advancing reform and demanding results. The administration is committed to investing in and improving our education system, continuing its commitment to protect students most at risk while supporting reform at the state and local levels. A key administration goal in creating the FY 2012 budget is to maintain fiscal discipline by prioritizing programs that are best aligned with the president's education reform agenda. During FY 2012, in preparation for the *Perkins Act* reauthorization, the Department plans to promote reforms in career and technical education (CTE) that lay the foundation for strengthening CTE. Consequently, the president's FY 2012 budget request includes \$1.0 billion for **Career and Technical Education (CTE) State Grants**, \$160.9 million below the 2011 continuing resolution (CR) annualized amount. The administration is not requesting funds for **Tech Prep Education State Grants** and, instead, proposes to consolidate the program with the Career and Technical Education State Grants program to offer more flexibility to states. Funding for **Career and Technical Education National Programs** was preserved at the 2011 CR level of \$7.9 million. The opportunity for reforms in CTE will open up real opportunities for students and ensure accountability for results. As Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, "Career education is vitally important to America's future, but we need to strengthen and reform our programs before expanding them."

The administration is requesting \$635.0 million for **Adult Education State Grants**, \$23.3 million for **Adult Education National Leadership Activities**, and \$17.2 million for **Workforce and Community Transition Training for Incarcerated Individuals State Grants**.

OVAE (cont'd)

The request for **Adult Education State Grants** is \$6.8 million over the 2011 CR level. It makes \$75 million of the state grant amount available for integrated **English literacy and civics education** services to immigrants and other limited English proficient populations. It includes an 8 percent set-aside, equivalent to \$50.8 million, for a new **Workforce Innovation Fund**, administered with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and in partnership with the Department of Labor. The fund will provide grants for projects that encourage innovation and validate effective strategies that improve service delivery and outcomes for beneficiaries under the *Workforce Education Act (WIA)*. The request for **Adult Education National Leadership Activities** is \$12.0 million over the 2011 CR level. Of the \$12.0 million increase, \$6.0 million would support a new impact evaluation of “college bridge programs” that assist adult learners in transitioning from adult basic education to postsecondary education and training. The remaining \$6.0 million would support the development of a comprehensive technology infrastructure for adult learners and adult educators. The balance would provide continued support to the adult education and literacy field.

Website <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/index.html>

e-mail: ovaenewsletter@ed.gov

Student Success Stories in Nevada by Sharon Yanoshak

Lert learns to cook up tasteful reports

As supervising chef of Garde Manger (cold kitchen) at The Four Seasons Hotel in Las Vegas, Lertsak Seeboonruang is responsible for all cold foods served in the restaurants and at banquets. He is also known globally as a frequent competitor on the Food Network, recently placing second in the world for fruit and vegetable carving!

Lert's duties require him to write annual reviews for each of the staff members he supervises. Lert's boss, Executive Chef Michael, deemed his reports unacceptable and enrolled him in the ESL/Customer Service Class offered by the College of Southern Nevada at The Four Seasons. Although he was focused on improving his writing skills, vocabulary, grammar, and other English mechanics, Lert had a secondary goal — he wanted to become more comfortable speaking in English and more willing to speak during weekly management meetings.

“Lert was extremely enthusiastic,” said his instructor, Elizabeth Lane. “Not only did he have perfect attendance, but he came early, sought help during the breaks, and stayed late to ask questions and seek extra help. Before long, he was seen as a leader in class. His written work exceeded expectations and he readily volunteered to speak, frequently asking questions which led to valuable class discussions.”

As class progressed, Lert reported he felt more confident at management meetings and he began to offer appropriate ideas. Finally, the time for the annual reviews arrived. Lert felt he had produced thoughtful, well written, reports that were grammatically correct and would be helpful to his employees. He asked Elizabeth to proofread what he wrote. Were they good? Indeed, they were. She could not find anything to correct ... and Chef Michael couldn't, either!

Unintended consequences: Lert is on-tap to teach a non-credit course on fruit-carving at CSN. Chef Michael volunteered to support this effort by sending other chefs to help him!

On the road to a medical career

Although Veronica Adrian was working at the Reno airport for a limousine/shuttle service, she realized that she needed a career that would sustain her family. She enrolled in Northern Nevada Literacy Council's GED program in April 2010 and received her GED just six months later.

Reflecting on how the GED changed her life, Veronica said, “It has given me more employment opportunities and has encouraged me to send résumés to more companies. Now I don't have to skip over those jobs that require the GED certificate. I am not scared any longer to go for it when applying for jobs. And now I'm getting call-backs from companies!”

Veronica plans to continue her education in the medical field and become a phlebotomist. Truckee Meadows Community College (TMCC) in Reno offers the classes she needs and she plans on entering the program once she purchases a computer. “My weird work schedule right now makes it hard for me to attend school but as soon as I get a computer I will be able to take many of the TMCC classes online. I have a young son and that would allow me to stay home while taking classes. Once I complete those classes, I will then continue on with the hands-on-

Student Success Stories (cont'd)

training.

Justifiably proud of her GED accomplishment, the young mother also has plans for her son. "How can I preach to him when I messed up in school? I will inspire him to stay in school and graduate from high school!"

Budding math teacher — in her own words

My name is Yu Cui Liu (Yurie). I am a student at the ESL center of Great Basin College in Elko. I have been studying at the ESL Center since I came to America.

The first time that I went into the Learning Center, I could not understand the teachers, and they could not understand my Chinese English. In November 2008, I took the placement test at GBC; my basic grammar scored 84 out of 150 and my reading comprehension scored only 46 out of 150. With the help of my ESL teachers, I worked on my English — including listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

In the spring of 2009, I took some college classes for my major (I attended ESL class at the same time). It was so hard, and I had to struggle. I could not read the textbook by myself, nor could I understand what the teacher said in class. I could not understand the meaning of my assignments. Even though I had many questions, I never asked them in class because I could not pronounce the words. It was the ESL program that helped me. The advanced ESL class taught me grammar, vocabulary, and practical English. The conversation class improved my speaking and listening. Also, I went to the ESL Center for personal tutoring after class. The teachers in the Center were very patient with me. They taught me to pronounce every letter and every word correctly. They helped me to correct my grammar mistakes and taught me reading skills. At the end of my first semester, I obtained all A's for my four courses and was listed on the Dean's List at GBC.

In order to enter the teaching program, I must pass the Praxis of the National Education Test Series (ETS), which includes mathematics, reading, and writing. It was so hard for me. According to education psychology, English language learners can only have normal conversation with peers in an English-speaking area after two years. And it takes another five-seven years to reach an academic level. I do not want to wait that long, and I know the teachers in ESL always can help me.

I scored 175 on my Praxis-I Writing Test (the passing score is 172) in June 2010. I also scored 173 on my Praxis-I Reading Test (the passing score is 174). Although I did not pass the Praxis Reading Test, I am very satisfied with my progress in reading and critical thinking and have confidence that I will pass it the next time.

For my practicum class, I taught geometry and algebra classes at the Spring Creek High School in the fall of 2010. I know as a future teacher, I must speak fluent standard America English. After class, when the students gave me "high fives" and said "Awesome!" I felt so happy that my lead teacher and the students completely understood what I had said in the classroom!

I will finish all my courses by the fall of 2011, and I will be a student teacher in the spring of 2012. I appreciate every teacher in the ESL center very much. They not only teach me English, but also help me toward my academic success and give me useful advice toward my studies and future career as a teacher. They are like cultivators — always plowing and weeding their students with their diligence, wisdom, and love.

2011 MPAEA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS!

Arizona
Regina Suitt, Laura Porfirio and Mary Guillen

Colorado
Jolene Goerand, Glenda Sinks and Barbara Vaille

Idaho
Kevin Laughlin

Montana
Donna Bakke and Detlef Johl

New Mexico
Thomas McGaghie and Susie Morss

Nevada
Mary Koscinski, Ken Zutter, Aiko Nagao and Kathleen Jameson

Wyoming
Mickey Douglas and Kessee Miller

Utah
Lou Workman, Tracy Moore and Claudia Thorum Al-ison

Durango Colorado Success Stories submitted by Jolene Goerand

The Durango Adult Education Center is located in the Commons Building at 701 Camino del Rio and offers Graduate Educational Development preparation and testing, college-preparatory courses, adult-enrichment classes and English for Speakers of Other Languages for low fees to cover materials. Free child care is available.

To learn more about the center and to donate, call 385-4354 or visit www.durangoaec.org.

The center will hold its annual fundraiser, Spellabration Snowdown, at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Henry Strater Theatre, 699 Main Ave. To register a three-person team, call 385-4354.

“In all my 30 years of teaching, the high school dropout rate has stayed steady at 20 to 25 percent,” Stephanie Moran, GED program director and teacher at the center, said. “That number has not budged despite the money, time and programs thrown at it. We’re the only alternative after people drop out.”

Last week, 36 new GED graduates moved their tassels to the other side of their mortarboards as a crowd of more than 100 celebrated their accomplishment. “We invite you to applaud and cheer for the graduates,” said Paulette Church, executive director of the center. “These are highly motivated and courageous people who walked in and asked to get their GEDs after leaving high school. It’s not easy, because 40 percent of high school graduates can’t pass the test.”

Graduates ranged in age from 17 to 37 at Friday’s observance, one of two ceremonies the center holds each year. Each person has his or her own journey to the diploma. The center has served students from 31 countries and five continents.

“The power of your story means that you have to share what you have done,” said Dene Kay Thomas, president of Fort Lewis College and the commencement speaker. “You’ve been through struggles, successes and failures to reach this point. Now you have many more choices than you had before.”

The GED is a battery of five exams in subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics. Students must achieve an average score of 450 out of a potential 800 on each test

to earn the diploma. The center’s GED graduates average 542 in writing and 538 in math, Moran said. About 22 percent qualify for the 3000 Club Academic Award with scores in the top 16 percent.

“I already graduated in Brazil,” Cortez resident Andre de Faria Filho, 18, said. “I came and did it in English because I wanted more paper.” De Faria, Filho’s mother, married a Cortez man a year ago, and both mother and son came to the education center to take classes in the English for Speakers of Other Languages Program. He was taking the SATs the day after graduation with plans to study exercise science in college. “I came knowing a little bit of grammar, but the speaking and understanding I learned here,” he said.

For others, it took only one bad decision to end their high school education. “How many young people make a mistake?” Moran asked. “We don’t want them to be done at 19.”

Sara Dahle, 17, became pregnant at 15 during her sophomore year of high school and gave birth at 16. She’s still working on getting her GED diploma but has no doubt she will complete it. “For me, it’s all about my son, Benny,” she said. “I need to be able to talk to his teachers in an appropriate way. I don’t want to be dumb. It’s better to be here than home and doing nothing.” Sara is hoping to go into law enforcement.

While the center offers classes to prepare people to take the GED tests, not everyone needs them. “I have to compliment the teachers at Durango High School,” Aaron Mallett, 29, said. “I was more prepared than I thought, and I was able just to take the tests and pass.” Mallett said he didn’t finish high school because he got into some trouble and had to get a job. Now married with two sons, he works as a supervisor at Roseberry Plumbing & Heating Inc. “In this economy, you’ve got to always be looking to better yourself,” he said.

Krystal Price, 18, is one of the center’s many success stories. She dropped out of high school at 14 to help take care of her mother and came to the center to get her GED diploma. The center had to get an age waiver to allow her to take the GED when she was 16. “I really loved going to Sue’s (Petranek) classes,” she said. “I could talk to her about anything.”

Durango (cont'd)

Price is in her final semester of an associate's degree at Southwest Colorado Community College, where she will be a student ambassador recruiting high school and GED graduates to the school. Her ultimate goal is to earn a doctorate in psychology.

Every graduating class includes six to eight students who earned their GED while incarcerated at the La Plata County jail in the center's Jail Program. Between 30 and 40 students ranging in age from 18 to their 60s are on the roster any Tuesday or Thursday when teachers Petranek and Charlie Love offer classes at the facility.

"We get some who are nearly unable to read, and others, we just dust them off and give them their tests," Petranek said. "It's hard for anyone to get a job, then throw in a felony. Many have gotten bitten by a bug to learn, which is so exciting."

Whatever their route to the GED diploma, one thing is for sure. "This is a true alternative, a true gateway to higher education," Church said. "Now they can go into the field or career or path they want."

Article by [Ann Butler](#) Durango Herald Staff Writer

The Spring 2012 MPAEA conference
in Helena, Montana will be
FANTASTIC! Stay tuned...

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David Strong 1965-2011 and son Bridger (age 9)

Board member, David Strong and his youngest son, Bridger, were tragically taken on Monday, Feb. 21, 2011 in a car accident in central Montana. The following excerpt is taken from a nomination letter that David's Access to Success team wrote earning him the MPAEA Award of Merit. His staff will be accepting the award in his honor at the MPAEA Awards Luncheon in April.

"David has a passion for helping students of all ages achieve their goals. His primary philosophy is that we need to do the right thing for our students and sometimes doing the right thing means changing how we previously thought things should be done. David's work is crucial to the strength and longevity of the adult education programs in Montana.

David is a tireless worker, a dedicated educator and an incredibly supportive administrator. In addition to all of David's hard work for our students, his colleagues and his staff appreciated his mild mannered demeanor, his "can do" attitude, his endless smile, and his willingness to go the extra mile to create change in the lives of our students. David believes in his instructors, his staff, and more importantly he believes that students, who have been unsuccessful in the past, deserve the opportunity to be successful in the future."

David's Access to Success Team members: Kari Sutlovich, Kristen Grue, Sharla Crawford, Sam Leonard, and Katie Steckler.

If you are interested in sending condolences to the family of David Strong, you can do so through this website –

www.retzfuneralhome.com



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COABE/MPAEA/CCAE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION DEADLINE NEARS!

As a member of MPAEA you qualify for the membership discount. Visit www.mpaea.org for a link to the conference registration. Remember to check the box that designates your membership in MPAEA when you register, and join us for the MPAEA Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, April 19.. See you there!

Member Fee: \$425.00 **Non-Member Fee:** \$500.00

[Refund Policy](#)

Full conference registration includes all keynotes, plenary sessions, concurrent sessions, President's Reception: A San Francisco Treat, 2012 Virginia Promotional Event, Sunrise Yoga in Cityscape, Networking and More Next Steps Event. The conference begins with the Opening Session on the morning of Monday, April 18 and ends with field trips to local exemplary programs on Thursday, April 21, 2011.

National Conference 2011

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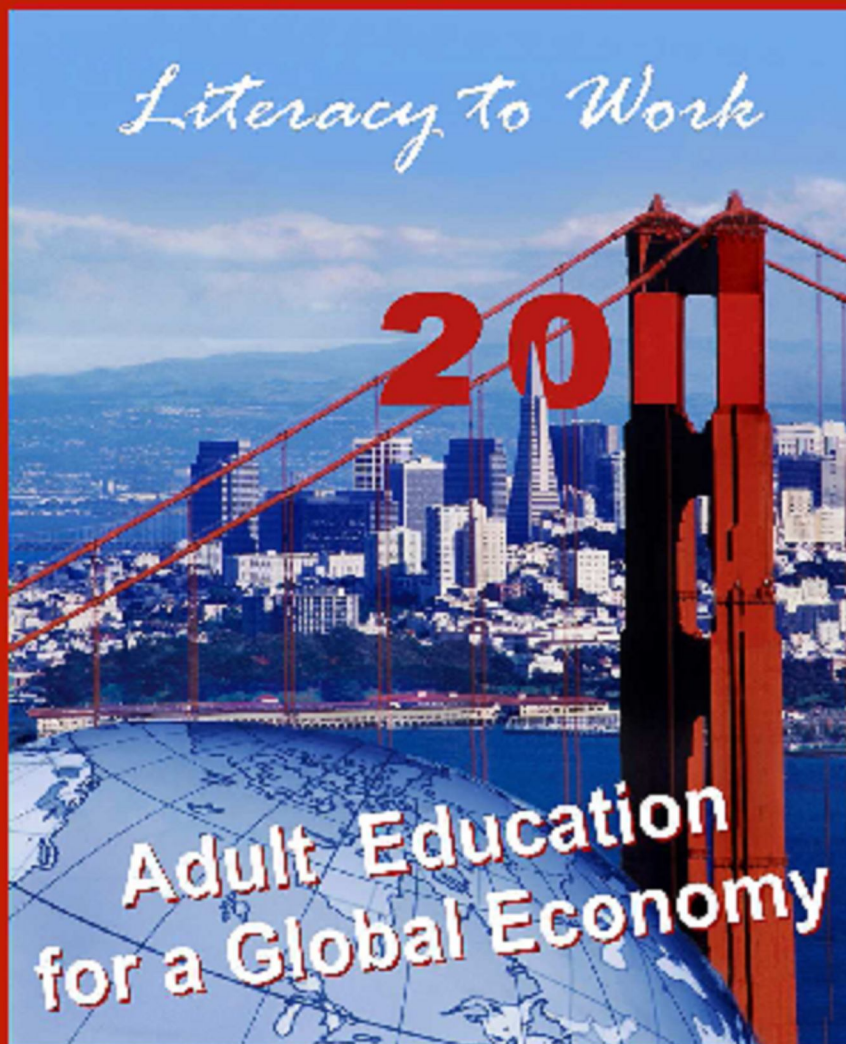


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