

SUCCESS STORIES  
2003

# Learning to Leadership

**PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

**HONORING  
OUTSTANDING ADULT  
STUDENTS IN  
SUCCESS STORIES**

**BUREAU OF ADULT BASIC &  
LITERACY EDUCATION**

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

*For many years now, the Pennsylvania Department of Education has proudly celebrated the stories of Pennsylvania's adult learners through the Success Stories State Leadership project. This year is no different. Through this publication, SUCCESS STORIES: From Learning to Leadership, we acknowledge the accomplishments of these adult learners achieved through their own perseverance and through their teachers' effectiveness and dedication. These adults, working together with their teachers, represent the best in adult education practice. This publication recognizes those adult learners who represent the thousands of Pennsylvanians who have discovered that education is a means to reaching their goals.*

*The ten outstanding adult learners tell their own stories in this publication but their stories reflect the stories of all learners in Pennsylvania who enroll each year in educational programs having set new and higher goals for themselves. These learners have recognized the power of education in their lives to enhance the quality of their lives and those of their families and their communities. The learners' commitment to the accomplishment of their goals, and their hard work and perseverance serve as examples to all of us.*

*It takes more than the efforts of these learners, however, for they cannot do the work alone. Their successes are supported through the efforts of local education providers, family members, employers and the entire community. By recognizing and honoring their achievements, all of us in the Commonwealth support adult literacy and encourage others to pursue their dreams. When learners reach their goals, we all share in those dreams.*

*This publication describes the accomplishments of ten of the many adult learners across Pennsylvania who enroll in adult education programs each year: Through their stories, you will learn what education has meant to them, and they will inspire you to support adult learners and the adult basic education programs in your area. Just as these individuals met and overcame many challenges to their learning, we will meet and overcome the challenges to achieving a literate adult population. Learning truly is a lifetime goal for us all.*



# SUCCESS STORIES 2002



*Learning* TO *Leadership*

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# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

**Willie J. Cannon**

Program: Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council

Sponsor: Donald Block

## **GREATER PITTSBURGH LITERACY COUNCIL**

The Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council (GPLC) provides literacy education in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, GED preparation, instruction in English for foreign-born adults, job preparation skills, workplace literacy and family literacy. In 1997, GPLC opened a learning center that uses the latest methods of computer-assisted instruction, and in 2000 it opened a second computer lab. At the present time, 900 students from Allegheny County are studying basic skills in instructional programs ranging from classes that meet three hours a week to those that meet 30 hours a week. The success of the program is measured by students academic gains and life changes such as learners' getting jobs and leaving the welfare rolls.

Over the past five years, GPLC has been called on to be a site for national projects such as the Families for Learning project of the National Center for Family Literacy. The National Institute for Literacy and others chose GPLC as one of the four agencies in the nation to conduct a Literacy AmeriCorps project.

GPLC's philosophy is to help students set realistic short-term and long-term goals and to work towards the completion of those goals. Many students are taught in one-to-one tutorials and others meet in small groups of three to eight students. Instruction is individualized to meet the unique needs of each student. The Council has a professional staff of 35, with more than 600 volunteers participating in the program.

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Willie J. Cannon

After the divorce of his parents, Willie Cannon and his mother moved to another state where she worked long hours to support herself and her son. However, without regular supervision, Willie soon got into trouble with school authorities. His father, who had only a third-grade education, wanted Willie to stay in school. However, he had little success in resolving his son's discipline problems. Willie always planned to become a draftsman, but in 1956, a guidance counselor informed him that there would be no openings for blacks in that field. Discouraged, he dropped out of school in 12th grade.

An extremely hard-working person, Willie was never without a job, but he wondered how life would be different if he had a diploma. He believes, "If you don't have a diploma backing you, it catches up to you." At one point in his life, he was making \$24 an hour as a furnace worker, a job he held for 27 years. As the industry began to change and cross training became a necessity, he learned eight different jobs before he was finally laid off in 2000. When he sent out resumes and found that all of the jobs in his field had moved overseas, he concluded, "My field is dead," and sought retraining.

At the Pittsburgh CareerLink, 33 jobs popped up on the screen when he entered his employment information. However, he noted that the better-paying jobs required a high school diploma so he enrolled at the Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council and worked diligently on math, writing, and test-taking skills so he could pass the GED tests. In order to come to class in the morning, he took a minimum wage job at a local Hilton. He worked the night shift and then came directly to class without any chance to sleep until afternoon. While in class, he asked a lot of questions and got involved in solving math problems. Willie successfully completed the GED tests and received his Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma one day before his 60th birthday.

Willie talks with the other entry-level workers at the hotel, challenging them to advance themselves through education. After receiving his GED, he will enter an eight-month building maintenance-training program funded by the Workforce Investment Act. He believes that getting his GED will have a positive influence on his family, especially his 29-year-old son, who is searching for direction in regard to a career. Willie's achievement is evidence to his son that anyone, at any age, can move forward on a direct path to success.

*"If you don't have a diploma backing you,  
it catches up to you."*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



CLEARFIELD COUNTY

**Darlene E. Cole**

Program: CIU 10 Development Center for Adults

Sponsor: Carolyn A. Grecco

## **CIU 10 DEVELOPMENT CENTER FOR ADULTS**

As a partner in the community, the CIU 10 Development Center for Adults (DCA) joins in providing programs and managing resources to maximize the potential of Centre, Clearfield, and Clinton County adults so they may assume creative and productive roles in life.

Throughout the Central Intermediate Unit 10 (CIU 10) service area, the DCA provides Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Equivalency Diploma (GED) instruction for those adult individuals who are out of school. Because of the rural nature of the CIU 10, there has been a major effort to decentralize instructional and counseling services by offering classes at many sites, including the CareerLinks, at varying times throughout the day and the year. During the first five years of the DCA's programming (1974-1979), services were provided only in Centre County. However, beginning September 1, 1979, the project became part of the CIU 10 delivery system. With this change, Clearfield County was targeted for services during 1979-80 and then Clinton County with the 1981-82 school year.

In addition to ABE/GED program offerings, the DCA is annually involved in a range of other projects that provide a variety of special services to area residents such as ABE/GED classes in Centre, Clearfield and Clinton County Jails, GED Testing at the Clearfield County Jail, basic skills classes to the area's special needs populations, traditional and non-traditional career guidance workshops and brush-up classes for high school or GED graduates who wish to go on to additional training in college, business and trade schools.

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Darlene E. Cole

Darlene Cole was only 13 years of age when her father died. An individual who always placed service to others above herself, she left school at the age of 16 to help her mother raise her four brothers. In 1997, Darlene moved to Pennsylvania with her husband and quickly made friends in her church and neighborhood through her volunteer activities. Louise, a friend and a volunteer tutor with the PAL program, encouraged her to return to school and in July 1997 accompanied Darlene to her first GED class. Although Darlene's pretest scores were low, she was determined to earn a GED.

Despite her being the caretaker for her mother-in-law, Darlene made every effort to attend classes. To help her, her husband prepared a study for her in their basement, and Darlene spent many hours in her study practicing her lessons and working with Louise. In July 1998, she took and passed the GED sub tests in Writing Skills and Social Studies. In November of that year, she passed the Science test and nine months later completed the Literature and Arts test. Darlene then spent the next 16 months preparing for her final test, Math, which she completed in November, 2000. After three and one-half years, she had earned a diploma with a total score of 225 on the GED battery.

Her continuous growth as a person has given her the voice she uses to promote adult education. As a model for adult learners who could easily fall into a "can't do" frame of mind, Darlene received the CIU 10/Development Center's 2001 Triumph of the Spirit Award. This award is presented each year to the adult education student who lives everyday with the knowledge that "it isn't what you have learned in life, but how you use it." The dignity and cheerful attitude she displays unfailingly to those who know her has endeared Darlene to all who call her wife, mother, grandmother, student and friend.

*"You're never too old to learn; hard work and time can turn most things around for the good. "*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



CRAWFORD COUNTY

**Michelle Wylie**

Program: Crawford County Read Program

Sponsor: Nel Udo

## **CRAWFORD COUNTY READ PROGRAM**

The Crawford County READ Program has been in existence since 1983 when it was established under the umbrella of the Meadville Public Library. In 1991, it became incorporated as an independent non-profit community program. At that time, the focus of the program was one-on-one tutoring using community volunteers. While that is still a major focus in the program, READ has expanded to include family literacy. In addition to the main office in Meadville, the program has a Titusville office and two family literacy sites.

The Crawford County READ Program helps adults learn. Tutors and teachers help learners believe that they are capable of learning and also help them to set and achieve goals. Whether it is learning basic reading skills or pursuing the GED, READ tutors and instructors are well equipped to assist adults in need.

In the Family Literacy program, parents and teachers work together to set goals for the entire family. Parents are encouraged to interact in such a way with their children that both feel nurtured and successful. The whole family grows together while mom or dad achieve their educational goals and increase in confidence.

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Michelle Wylie

Failing to complete an assignment during the Christmas break while in the 11th grade, Michelle Wylie decided not to return to school. When a few years later she became a mother, her goal for her daughter, Halle, was to provide a stable, loving environment for her child. As a single mother, she knew that what she did with her life would have an impact on her now two-year old daughter. So in July, 2001, she entered the Crawford County READ Program despite her fear that she might fail and her concerns about leaving her daughter in the child care room.

When Michelle entered the program, one of her personal goals was to toilet train her daughter. Not only is Halle now trained, she is a well-adjusted child. Halle's great vocabulary can be attributed to the fact that her mother read to her since she was an infant. Michelle had other goals, one of which was to overcome her fear of interacting with others. Michelle has worked hard to conquer her shyness. Trusting in herself was also hard for her but she has taken steps to improve in this area and has gained insight into her abilities. When called upon, Michelle is willing to help others and support them.

She has learned to manage her time efficiently and to take responsibility for her own learning. She decided how much work she needed to undertake in order to pass the GED tests. She also learned to take credit for what she accomplished; in September, 2001, she passed the GED tests with a score of 290 out of a possible 325 points. Michelle would like to attend college but realizes that she will have to work to achieve this goal one step at a time. For now, she wants to get her driver's license and expects to enroll in a nursing program. Continuing her education will give her the opportunity to become financially more independent. Michelle has no doubt she will be able to achieve all her goals and dreams because she understands the value of education.

*"The main thing is to go for it.  
When things got tough, I told myself; 'I might as well  
finish it since I've come this far.' "*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



CUMBERLAND COUNTY

**Alim Rameloric**

Program: SCI Camp Hill Educational Program

Sponsor: Wendy Keller

## **SCI-CAMP HILL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Corrections education is an integral portion of a prescribed treatment plan that prepares an inmate for re-entry into society. Consequently, the purposes of public and corrections education merge into a single plan: meeting the adult learner's intellectual and developmental needs and challenging them to achieve personal and prescribed goals. The ultimate goal of the Camp Hill school organization's academic and vocational-technical programs is to produce self-directed, life-long learners and responsible citizens.

The school's mission statement reflects the purpose and goals of Corrections education at SCI-Camp Hill: to provide educational opportunities, which will enable students to become responsible and productive citizens in a diverse society. Corrections education at SCI-Camp Hill provides participants with the educational opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills, develop integrity, process information, think critically, work independently, collaborate with others, and adapt to change.

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Alim Rameloric

Alim Rameloric dropped out of school in 1995 after being told that he was "stupid" and that he would never get a job or be successful. Because he is extremely articulate, he was hired for various jobs but always struggled to keep them because of his learning difficulties. Knowing he needed help, Alim enrolled in SCI Camp Hill's ABE program on January 8, 2001. To be successful in the program he had to address both his reading impairment due to dyslexia and scotopic sensitivity syndrome, an inability to read black print on a white background.

Alim used innovative approaches to achieve his personal and program goals. To address dyslexia, he enlarged the print contained in textbooks, focused intensely on reading and comprehension skills and concentrated on his essay skills by creating a "window" to separate text. To address scotopic sensitivity syndrome, he used a colored marker to highlight text in a book. This enabled him to discriminate between the words and the paper. He also wrote everything in color and used a yellow overlay to take the GED tests. After an emotional battle and plenty of hard work, he successfully completed the GED battery of tests and received his diploma at a graduation ceremony on September 25, 2001.

Alim has a passion for music. He plays piano and drums, writes lyrics and composes music that is inspirational both in melody and harmony. Alim won the Camp Hill regional talent show and is planning to attend the state finals. He assists the music committee and helps with video taping and editing special activities within the institution. He plays a leadership role by offering encouragement and tutoring to his peers in music, literacy and other academic areas.

Alim plans on becoming a veterinarian. Currently employed at Camp Hill as a librarian's assistant, he is researching animal science and biology and inquiring about correspondence courses in these areas. He also attends the Job Skills Business Management program and is involved in intramural sports. Alim maintains a positive relationship with his wife, mother and other immediate family members. Through his own success and positive attitude, he has helped improve the lives of others by encouraging them to pursue their educational goals and by being a model of perseverance, courage and hope.

*"Education is the light that illuminates the darkness of ignorance."*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



DAUPHIN COUNTY

**Nicole Taylor**

Program: Harrisburg School District

Sponsor: Carolyn L. Henry

## **HARRISBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT**

For 31 years, the Harrisburg School District has served the community by offering an Adult Education Program. On March 21, 1983, the Harrisburg School District demonstrated its commitment to the educational needs of the community by adopting a school policy that addressed the adult learner. The ABE program is offered to adults who would like to improve their academic skills. The GED program is offered to adults, 17 years of age or older, with less than a high school diploma. Upon enrolment, students are given a reading inventory to determine their appropriate academic level. Students completing the program and receiving a Commonwealth Diploma by passing the GED tests are able to exchange their Commonwealth Diploma for a Harrisburg High School Diploma.

Since its inception, the Harrisburg School District program has grown and reflects current community needs. It offers English as a Second Language classes, Basic Computer classes, and Spanish for beginning, intermediate and advanced students. Harrisburg School District program graduates are encouraged to become lifelong learners.

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Nicole Taylor

Nicole Taylor's family and friends view her as an articulate person, determined to help others and raise her three sons. But, her "secret" of not having a high school diploma was revealed at a Christian Women's retreat when the featured speaker requested everyone to be honest and to stand if her question applied to them. Nicole sat quietly as fellow retreat members stood for each posed question. The final question was, "Will women who have not completed high school, please stand?" Nicole bravely stood and later met with the speaker who counseled her.

At that moment, Nicole, felt her life begin to change. Following the retreat, a teacher told her about the Harrisburg School District's GED program. She enrolled despite the fact that she had to juggle work, daycare, and taking her oldest son to school with going to school three nights a week. She excelled on the GED pre/post assessments, as well as on the tests and passed with a score of over 280 points. While studying herself, she tutored and encouraged her fellow classmates to complete their goal.

After obtaining a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma by passing the GED tests, Nicole felt more confident at taking risks. Unhappy with the job she held, she applied for work with human service agencies and was offered a job at a local shelter two weeks before graduation. Her employer was so impressed with her that she was hired and given ninety days in which to obtain the required driver's license. Nicole began her new career one week after graduation.

Currently the shelter's Youth Care Worker/House Manager, Nicole works with children and adolescents ranging in age from eight to 18 years of age. These groups of young people include runaways, "throwaways", the displaced, and the homeless. Both students and her co-workers seek out Nicole for advice and comfort. Her future goal is to further her education in the field of human services. An active member in her church and community, her personal mission statement taken from Proverbs is: "To Learn You Must Love Discipline..."

*My personal mission statement is:  
"To learn, you must love discipline." Proverbs 12:1NLT.*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



DELAWARE COUNTY

**Louella McCall**

Program: Delaware County Community College

Sponsor: Mattie N. Lloyd  
Chester Center GED Program

## **DELAWARE COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

Delaware County Community College (DCCC) has been awarded an Adult Literacy grant each year since 1993-94 to assist county residents in obtaining the GED diploma. The program has served some 315 students annually since that time. In July 2000, DCCC consolidated with the Delaware County Prison Program in Thornton, Pennsylvania. DCCC gives adult learners the opportunity to set concrete, realistic goals at the beginning of their educational program, so that they can experience practical successes and realize that education as well as personal growth and development is a continual and rewarding part of life. The program believes that a positive atmosphere is one of the most important aspects of education - one that highly motivates its students to complete their commitments and plan long-term goals.

At DCCC, teachers create a learning environment where students are encouraged to use critical thinking skills and seek answers to questions in a non-threatening atmosphere. Adding smiles and humor to the serious business of learning, when appropriate, makes the classroom a pleasant place to engage in learning. This kind of comfortable classroom environment promotes genuine caring interaction between student and teacher and encourages students to take ownership of their learning process.

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## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Louella McCall

When Louella enrolled in the GED test preparation class in Chester in the spring of 2001, she had been out of school for 63 years having left school during the 9th grade at the age of 17 in order to be married. She said God's word had inspired her to become an evangelist, to take the GED test, and to continue her education by enrolling in college. At the time of her enrollment, she had been attending the Citywide Interdenominational Christian Training Institute in Philadelphia for two years. Although classes for both programs met on a Monday, she was able to complete them at about the same time, maintaining perfect attendance in the GED program. During this time, she also took care of an ill daughter and a twin sister while conquering whatever limits her age placed upon her.

Louella passed the GED Tests earning a diploma and is taking an English course on the Collingdale Campus of DCCC. She has enlisted retired teachers and friends to critique her prolific writing assignments - personal and inspirational essays and poetry. Her homework and class work are completed with care and accuracy, and she has even mastered the computer math program. Her presence and active participation encourages others in the class.

While pursuing her educational goals, Louella continues to nurture and care for her five children, 20 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren and 15 great-great grandchildren. She is involved with many organizations; she participates in her church's Sunday School, speaks at Sunday services, visits the sick, volunteers as a receptionist, and serves as a visitor for nursing homes and senior residences.

A strong promoter and supporter of the GED program, she encourages students with problems to persevere, attend class and strive for success. Because she has a large family and has lived in the area all her life, she knows many people and actively recruits students to enroll in the program. At the present time both her daughter and her granddaughter attend classes. People respond because she is a living testimony of what an individual can do if she is really determined and has support from family and friends.

*"God's word inspired me to become an evangelist, complete my GED course, take the GED test and continue my education by enrolling in college."*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



MIFFLIN COUNTY

**Jenny Lynn**

TIU Adult Education Center\ Lewiston Careerlink

Sponsor: Helen Guisler

## **TIU ADULT EDUCATION CENTER\LEWISTOWN CAREERLINK**

The TIU Adult Education Center\Lewistown CareerLink began in February 1984 as a small subcontractor to the local Job Training Act (JPTA) office. The Center is now in its 18th year of dedicated service and growth in Mifflin County. Beginning with one GED program for 20 participants, the Center has expanded through a diversified funding base to serve 1,500 local participants in a variety of programs each year. Services include adult basic education and GED preparation, Even Start and Family Literacy programming, Welfare-to-Work programs, basic education for the homeless and incarcerated, job search instruction and career counseling, job development and placement, workplace education, at risk youth counseling, GED Test administration and professional development for adult educators.

The Center is open full-time with ongoing classes year-round. Programs impact all age groups from birth to senior citizens and all backgrounds from those who have never worked to dislocated workers with decades of experience. A staff of over 80 supports the Center's wide variety of activities. Tuscarora Intermediate Unit #11 administers the Center. Funding from state sources include Pennsylvania's Departments of Labor and Industry, Welfare, and Community and Economic Development as well as Education.

The Center strives to provide quality programming and accomplishes its goals with the support of the agency, elected officials, the community and most importantly, program staff.

*Learning  Leadership*

## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Jenny Lynn

Jenny Lynn entered Adult Education and Job Training Center programs in 1994 having left school when she was in the 9th grade. Although she had two very young children at the time, she participated in job-training summer work crews for both youth and adults before beginning work with the Family Literacy program in September, 1996. Her goal of obtaining a diploma by passing the GED tests stems primarily from her desire to demonstrate the importance of education to her children. She also realizes that a diploma will improve her employment prospects.

Being the sole financial support for the family sometimes resulted in Jenny's working at more than one job at a time. Such a work schedule made it difficult for her to attend center-based classes. Nevertheless, at the age of 18, she combined an eight-hour work schedule with a three-hour family literacy class in addition to her responsibilities as a wife and a mother. She also found the time to acquire the skills necessary to get a diploma and her driver's license. Jenny received her driver's license in the winter of 2000 and, after five years of hard work, she passed the GED tests in the spring of 2001.

One of Jenny's most admirable traits is her determination to find and maintain desirable employment. During the eight years that she attended the adult program, she was always employed, even when it meant walking five or more miles to work because she had no other transportation. Having a job that allows her to spend quality time with her children and to be involved in community activities is an ongoing priority. Each job that Jenny obtains is an improvement over the last offering better salary, schedule, benefits and opportunities for advancement. Currently employed at a packaging company for nearly a year and due for a promotion, she is just now examining all her options for the future, including nurse's training.

She and her children have been involved with Head Start, Girl Scouts and an elementary school achievement program. Jenny and her husband plan to stay committed to these programs that help them teach their children. She also attends a child abuse awareness group. Jenny loves to learn and has instilled this same desire in her children. She is eager to see them graduate from high school and would like to see them attend college. Jenny has always been a strong supporter of the adult program and hopes that her story will inspire and motivate other parents with young children.

*"Without respect for yourself and others,  
education is ignorance."*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

**Aurora Perez**

Program: Lutheran Settlement House

Sponsor: Alice Redman

## **THE LUTHERAN SOCIAL MISSION SOCIETY/LUTHERAN SETTLEMENT HOUSE**

The Lutheran Social Mission Society/Lutheran Settlement House (LSMS/LSH), which opened in 1906 as part of the Settlement House Movement, created childcare, kindergarten, vocational training for women, and family relief efforts. In 1976, LSH offered its first GED class and now provides 20 free adult classes, along with individual tutoring, vocational and educational counseling and computer-assisted instruction to some 700 students each year.

Classes are held both at the Settlement House and off-site at neighborhood schools, libraries, hospitals and residential treatment centers. On-site classes share a computer lab where students build their basic educational skills, learn basic computer literacy and word processing and can "surf" the Internet as part of the LSH Community Internet Access program. Teachers in the LSH program are committed to involving learners in the learning process, assisting them in defining their goals, providing support as they progress, providing a safe environment for questioning and learning and enhancing their self-confidence and self-esteem. The agency says, "We value all students' life experiences, respect their individual purposes for pursuing an education and assist them in identifying and meeting their goals."

*Learning*  *Leadership*

## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Aurora Perez

Aurora left school in the 10th grade and, at the age of 16, she married becoming pregnant with twins a few years later. Although the marriage was not a safe and secure one, Aurora remained with her husband for four more years. In 1988, she decided to return to school when her two year-old son asked her to read him a story, and she was unable to decipher the words.

Although she did not receive support at home for her enrollment in an educational program, she enrolled anyway and made great efforts managing to attend classes at the Lutheran Settlement House. Recognizing signs of domestic violence, staff referred Aurora to Women against Abuse where she could find support and assistance.

When she found herself on her own, Aurora was forced to put her education aside until she was on her feet financially. Returning to class in 1994, she scored very low on the GED practice test but gained confidence in her abilities as she continued her studies. In 1995, she took another break from her education in order to care for her mother who had a nervous breakdown and her youngest son who was diagnosed with a kidney disorder. Then, in 1996, after rallying her extended family to help with her mother and son, Aurora started classes once more. When she herself became ill, she dropped her studies until 2000 when her health improved.

When she returned to class, Aurora worked with a tutor, re-tested and gained three of the four points she needed to complete the GED tests. In the winter of 2001, her oldest son was diagnosed with bone cancer, and she put her education on hold again in order to care for him. Discouraged by the many obstacles she had already faced, Aurora was ready to quit school once and for all. That spring, the program staff, her sons and her brother talked her into returning. She retook the tests on June 5th and two weeks later graduated in cap and gown in front of her family and friends. Aurora is now working part-time as a receptionist, tutor and volunteer at the Settlement House but plans to go to nursing school. On September 6, 2001 her son had his last radiation treatment for cancer. Throughout her life, Aurora's faith is what has helped her. She believes that God has always answered her prayers.

*"Now I can say I feel more complete  
because I have received my diploma. God has  
helped me overcome all the odds. "*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



PHILADELPHIA COUNTY

**Nabori Rosario**

Program: Community Learning Center

Sponsor: Jennifer Kacimi

## **COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER**

Community Learning Center (CLC), which has provided literacy education to Kensington/North Philadelphia neighborhoods for 15 years, serves about 300 students annually. In addition to basic skills education in reading, writing and mathematics, GED preparation and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, CLC also works with students to improve their employment readiness. The agency's mission is to provide economically disadvantaged adults with literacy skills to help them effect changes in their lives and in their communities. Toward that end, the agency strives to integrate students' lives into curriculum and program planning and to provide support to learners as they determine their next steps after leaving CLC.

CLC is a learner-centered program. Students are actively involved at every level of the organization from setting their own short and long-term goals, co-constructing curricula and class activities, to taking part in assessment and evaluations of themselves, the staff and the program. Education at CLC is a process of development and growth for all, students and staff alike. What the staff learns from their students is integral to their own development as educators and individuals.

*Learning to Leadership*

## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Nabori Rosario

Nabori dropped out of high school in 9th grade believing that the only real education she needed she could get on the streets. Her path was not surprising, having come from a family where drug abuse was common. Nabori herself became an addict, making drug dealing and other crimes her profession. When she gave up on herself, she gave up on her daughter as well. Luckily, a couple that sometimes provided Nabori with support took in her abandoned child. Nabori continued to lead a troubled life until her son was born, and she realized that she would also lose him unless she changed her life.

She became involved with a church and through a friend learned about Community Learning Center (CLC). She found transportation to classes and enrolled in February 2001, relying upon friends to watch her son while she attended GED classes. Nabori had to study at night while her son slept but her biggest challenge was adjusting her mind-set to school and all the responsibilities it involved. Through her teacher's encouragement and her own hard work, she began to believe in herself and her academic abilities. On May 18, 2001, she earned a diploma through the GED tests, and in June gave a commencement speech at the annual graduation ceremony.

Today, she is a full-time student at the Community College of Philadelphia studying to become a social worker with the goal of helping displaced children. She believes that if she had received adequate support, she would not have followed the troubled life she led. Nabori works as an assistant case manager at CLC helping students to set goals, make action plans and discuss ways to overcome barriers to reaching their goals. She also calls students who have dropped out urging them to return and uses her own experience and achievements to encourage, inspire, and offer hope. At her other part-time job, as a cashier at a local store, she tries to persuade those in need of an education to join the program.

In addition to her involvement with her church, Nabori and her roommate open their doors to the children in the neighborhood, particularly those children whose parents abuse drugs. Nabori prefers to focus on the teenage girls who remind her of her former self. She encourages them not to get pregnant and to stay in school. She believes that she has a bright future and that she is a good role model for her son and for her daughter whom she visits and cares for regularly. With great pride and confidence, Nabori says, "Now my life is beginning."

*"Now my life is beginning."*



# OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENT



WASHINGTON COUNTY

Linda Remsek

Community Action South West

Sponsor: Brenda Garcia

## COMMUNITY ACTION SOUTH WEST

Community Action Southwest (CAS) is a private, nonprofit anti-poverty organization dedicated to providing a wide range of Human Services to residents of Washington and Greene Counties who are working to achieve self-sufficiency. The agency currently operates over 30 programs including Even Start, Adult Education Services, Community Learning Centers, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Head Start, Early Head Start, case management and transportation services. The CAS mission is to serve as a catalyst to mobilize the resources of the entire community to enable families and individuals to attain the skills, knowledge, motivation and opportunity to become self-sufficient. Over 25,000 individuals and families participated in CAS programs during the FY 2000-2001 program year. This includes some 1,000 adults and children who participated in family literacy projects.

The Family Development Department of CAS operates the Southwest Corner Even Start, Adult Education, Read To Succeed, 21st Century After School, Summer Reading and Family Center programs. Services to 17 school districts are delivered both in family homes and in "centers." While most center activities are held in spaces provided by a church, community group, library, or school buildings, the center at Donora exemplifies the agency's goal of creating a welcoming and comforting environment. At the heart of its Even Start program is the relationship CAS staff develops with families who are partners in developing instructional strategies to meet their educational goals.

*Learning*  *Leadership*



## S U C C E S S   S T O R I E S   2 0 0 2

### Linda Rimsek

Linda Rimsek is a continuing ESL student who enrolled in the Southwest Corner Even Start Family Literacy Program on May 4, 2000. Originally from the Philippines, she grew up in a hut in an isolated village located in the jungle. Her family worked daily just to survive and there was no time for education. Now married to a former Marine, Linda has lived in the United States for 10 years. She speaks English fairly well but struggles with reading and writing. Besides her personal desire to improve her English skills, she was concerned with being able to read to her two children and help them with their homework. A friend suggested that she contact the Family Literacy Program where she found a friendly environment that helped her overcome her fears. She was excited to hear that her children would also be able to attend classes.

Since her enrollment, Linda has made the computer a valuable tool in her instructional program. She is now able to use word processing to create letters and the Internet to keep in touch with her family in the Philippines through email. Using the Internet as the main planning tool, she arranged a trip home in July of 2001 with minimal assistance from the staff. Her trip was a success. In fact, while she was visiting, she paid to have a water supply built to her mother's home.

Linda was asked to lead a class project involving sharing food from other cultures. She led each stage of planning, purchasing and creating a Filipino meal that the class prepared with Linda as the main chef. Since then, she has decided to begin a small business by making and selling Filipino food. She used a desktop publishing program to create a menu of items that people could order.

Linda has her mind set on obtaining her GED. She is very dedicated to her studies and last year, her adult education hours, including center and homework, totaled nearly 700. She is also very involved with the parent and PACT components of Family Literacy and is a member of the Parent Council. She is a role model for other students and her children by demonstrating her commitment to her studies. She tells others that they have to make time for learning; her idea is that we are all busy but it is a matter of prioritizing. Last year she spoke at the annual Awards Ceremony and explained how all individuals need to appreciate their opportunities for education. When both of her children are in school full time, she plans to work with the elderly in a patient care setting.

*"Find what your like to do and go after it."*



## OUTSTANDING ADULT STUDENTS



*Front row (left to right):*

Jenny Lynn, Nabori Rosario, Louella McCall,  
Michelle Wylie, Linda Rimsek

*Back row (left to right):*

Nicole Taylor, Willie J. Cannon,  
Pennsylvania's First Lady, Kathy Schweiker,  
Alim Rameloric, Darlene E. Cole, Aurora Perez

These students were honored at the Pennsylvania Midwinter Conference 2002 co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Continuing Education (PAACE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Bureau of Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE).



*PAACE's membership includes teachers, tutors, counselors, professors, administrators, librarians, students and volunteers who work with adult learners in institutions of basic and higher education, businesses and community agencies. In addition to an annual Midwinter Conference, PAACE sponsors special interest sections and publishes a newsletter, journal and membership directory.*

## ABLE HONOR ROLL 2002



*Front row (left to right):*

Carolyn Wisman, Tri-County OIC, Inc.;  
Alice Redman, Lutheran Settlement House;  
Representing Jessica Chambers, Fayette County Community Action Agency;  
Byung Ju Lee, Won Community Service Center.

*Back row (left to right):*

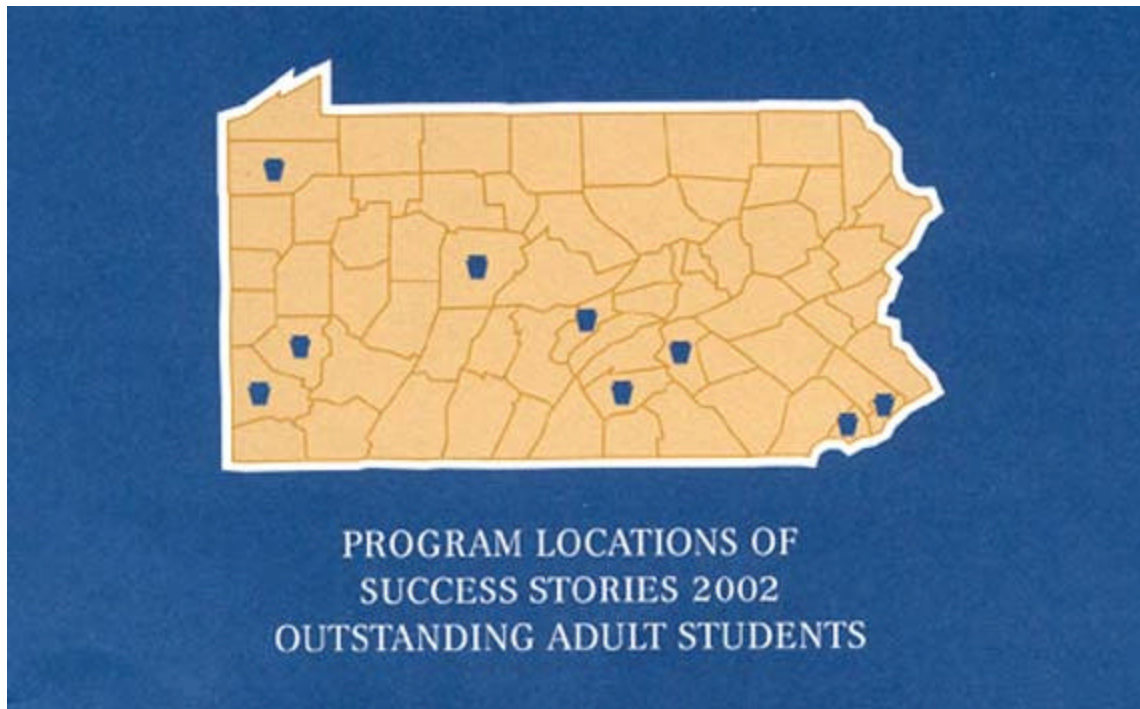
Walter Long, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council;  
James Gourley, Adams County Literacy Council, Lincoln IU 12;  
George F. Benditt, Sr., Bradford-Wyoming County Literacy Program;  
Terry Banford, Community Learning Center;  
Martin Finsterbusch, Delaware County Literacy Council;  
LaVonne McKinstry, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council;  
Michael Peoples, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council.

*Not present for picture:*

Dalia Castro, Community Learning Center;  
Shirley Poole, Community Learning Center;  
Violetta Q. Halper, Even Start PACT-USA/Chester Charter School



*In 2002, the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education established the ABLA Honor Roll in order to recognize the ongoing efforts of former adult education students. These "former" learners currently serve Pennsylvania's ABLA programs as program staff volunteers and advocates. Their leadership through their continued participation in adult education programs is worthy of recognition. On Thursday, February 14, 2002, this recognition of Adult Basic Leadership Excellence was presented at the PAACE Midwinter Conference to the individuals listed above.*



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