



CUTLINE: Southern State Community College honorees in the annual AOC Recognition Celebration include (first row, l-r) Alexandra Payton, Nancy Vaughn, Barbara O’Neil, Richard Wirmel Jr., Janet York, Tammy Sams, Maranda Tolle, Jolinda Barber; (second row, l-r) Lynda Wheatley, Angie Unger, Hayden Davis, Nathaniel Dowdell, Taylor Callender, Melissa Pennywitt, James Hall, Xochitl Alonso, Brenda Hardin, Anita Duffy; (third row, l-r) Jacob Rothwell, Camron Lindsey, Robert Lanter, Kari Singleton, Leslie Fithen, Brenda Barnes, Carla Grooms, Danielle Hunter, Shelby Schmittel; (fourth row, l-r) Stephen Smith, Colson Stewart, Kelly McFadden, Mary Shaw, Bridgette Jones and Robert Rittenhouse.

SSCC’s Adult Opportunity Center holds recognition celebration

Area residents who passed the General Education Development (GED) test were honored June 14 at the 24th annual Adult Opportunity Center’s Recognition Celebration at Southern State Community College’s Central Campus in Hillsboro.

“This recognition ceremony reminds me of a very special lady in my life,” said Dr. Kevin Boys, SSCC President, as he opened the evening’s celebration. “At the age of 16, my grandmother married a tall, handsome farmer. One day, he was working in the field and was involved in an accident which left him disabled. At that time, my grandmother had three young children and wondered what she would do. Well, she decided to go back to school. She finished her high school diploma, then went on to Morehead Teachers College, taking courses every summer until she earned her teaching license. Her decision to go back to school changed my grandmother’s life; it changed my mother’s life; and it changed my life. Education is what lifts us up from where we are. It opens doors for us that we didn’t think were possible.”

For the 2012 AOC Recognition Celebration, student Nicole LaCroix was invited to be the guest speaker. LaCroix’s essay, “Finding Strengths in Overcoming Weaknesses,” was selected for publication in “Beginnings 15,” a publication of adult student writing of the Ohio Writers’ Conference through the Ohio Literacy Resource Center.

“As far back as I can remember, getting stronger from my weaknesses is how I seem to operate,” LaCroix said, reading from her published essay. “As a young adult, I was clearly depressed and it became hard to stay strong.

I fought for what I believed to be right, but it was as though I was stuck in quicksand. This was a very ugly time in my life, but I really believe it was needed. Sometimes it is necessary to struggle through the low times in order to find strength to shine.

“It has been a long road, with lessons learned. Now that I am a mother I can share some of my experiences with my children ... They may have a better developed relationship with their self-talk and, having studied my examples well, they will be much better prepared to pursue their goals in life. These stepping stones, properly placed before them, may be just what they need to grow and succeed.”

Karyn Evans, Dean of SSCC’s Adult Opportunity Center, announced the names of honor students who achieved high scores on the tests: Bianca Dickens (math), Leslie Fithen (reading), Nathaniel Dowdell (science, perfect score), Barbara O’Neil (social studies) and Chad Moore (writing). The honor students were awarded gift certificates which were provided by local businesses Horney’s Barbecue, Stephen’s Construction LLC, Ridgeway Construction, Wilmington Savings Bank and NCB.

Trustee Honor Scholarships, in the amount of \$500 each and awarded to the highest scorers from their respective counties, were presented to Carla Grooms (Adams County), Leslie Fithen (Brown County), Barbara O’Neil (Clinton County), Chad Moore (Fayette County), Christopher Music (Highland County) and Brenda Hardin (Ross County).

Named as the 2012 Outstanding Students were Anita Duffy, Nicole LaCroix, Kelly McFadden and Melissa Pennywitt. The students were awarded gift certificates which were provided by local business Pizza Hut.

The annual “Friends of ABLE” award was presented to Life Impact Church, and Norma Duran was recognized as an honored volunteer.

GED preparation is offered free of charge through the Adult Basic and Literacy Education program at Southern State’s Adult Opportunity Center (AOC), under the direction of Karyn Evans, with assistance from staff, part-time instructors and volunteers.

Through Southern State’s Adult Opportunity Center, ABLE classes are free and offered on each campus and in several off-campus locations. All books and materials are provided. Morning, afternoon or evening classes are available for adult literacy, GED preparation, nursing program preparation, college refresher courses, workforce education, and reading, writing and math improvement.

Southern State’s ABLE program is a state and federally funded program offered at no charge to participants. Orientation is the first step for all enrolling students and pre-registration is required. For more information, please visit www.sccc.edu/academic/aoc/default.html or contact Southern State’s Adult Opportunity Center at 1-800-628-7722, ext. 2687.