



CUTLINE: Southern State Community College honorees in the annual AOC Recognition Celebration include (first row, l-r) Charity Yoder, Karen Yoder, Deseray Sams, Sydney Brady, David Mick, Casey Pendleton, Anthony Slachetka, Amanda Blakeley, Jefferey Blair; (second row, l-r) Anthony Lovejoy, Cliff Whitaker, Alexandra Marion, Brenda Page, Shanna Mongold, Jamacia Moore, Tracey Wesley, Chad Shaw, Tyler Yoakum; (third row, l-r) Shaman Light, Beau Binegar, Andrea Kirk, Arnette Davis, Heidi Addis, Kyle Legge, Ashley Griffith; (fourth row, l-r) JoAnn Clifton, Stephanie Brewer, Carrie Kratzer, Carrie Bowen, Jessica Heppard-Knauff, Erica Dozier, Anthony Howe; (fifth row, l-r) Patrick Neumann and Joshua Latham.

SSCC's Adult Opportunity Center holds recognition celebration

Area residents who passed the General Education Development (GED) test were honored June 14 at the 25th annual Adult Opportunity Center's Recognition Celebration at Southern State Community College's Central Campus in Hillsboro.

"Each of you reminds me of my own grandmother," said Dr. Kevin Boys, SSCC President, as he opened the evening's celebration. "At the age of 16, my grandma dropped out of school to marry a tall, handsome farmer. One day, he was working in the field and was involved in an accident which left him permanently disabled, leaving her with three little ones. 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 family tree; 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."

Following Dr. Boys' welcome, guest speakers Alexandra Marion and Kelly McFadden were invited to address this year's honorees. Marion, who recently completed the program and passed the GED, recounted her decision to move forward with her education.

"As far as the GED program was concerned, I intended to get in and get out as quickly as possible," she said. "It had been nine years since I attended school, but I called Southern State and enrolled in the night classes in Greenfield. My teachers showed no judgment toward me as I had feared; in fact, it was the opposite. They

encouraged self-discovery and I found that I really enjoyed learning. When I passed the GED, I immediately went back to visit my classmates and we all shared in the celebration. I'm now in my second semester of college coursework at Southern State.

"No one ever plans to drop out of school," Marion continued. "When we look back over our lives, we all probably see things we would have done differently. But my teachers and professors have made me realize I'm capable of anything."

McFadden, who completed the program last year, is now enrolled as a college student at Southern State and recently was elected as SSCC Student Government Association vice president.

"I dropped out of school in the ninth grade," she said. "For a long time, I worked in construction but I decided to finish my GED. It took a while for me to complete it, but I earned my GED last year and I came back in the next day to sign up for college classes. I plan to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing and a master's in nutrition. My message to all of you is to never stop pursuing your dreams."

Karyn Evans, Dean of SSCC's Adult Opportunity Center, recognized distinguished guests in the audience, presented a special award to volunteer John Webb, and acknowledged a donation to the program by Teresa Cudkowitz.

Evans then announced the names of honor students who achieved high scores on the tests: Carrie Kratzer (writing), Patrick Neumann (social studies, perfect score), Karen Yoder (science), Amanda Blakeley (reading, perfect score), Charity Yoder (reading, perfect score), Karen Yoder (reading, perfect score), Beau Binegar (math, perfect score), and Karen Yoder (math, perfect score).

A Trustee Scholarship, for three college credit hours, is awarded to any student who successfully passes the GED. Trustee Honor Scholarships, also in the amount of \$500 each but awarded to the highest scorers from their respective counties, were presented to Patrick Neumann (Adams County), Joshua Latham (Brown County), Heidi Addis (Clinton County), Amanda Blakeley (Fayette County), Deseray Sams (Highland County) and Alexandra Marion (Ross County).

The annual "Friends of ABLE" award was presented to Cundiff's Flower & Garden Center, the Rev. Tony Watson, Bill Condo of Candle-Lite, and Adams County Judge Brett Spencer.

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/specialized/aoc.shtml or contact Southern State's Adult Opportunity Center at 1-800-628-7722, ext. 2687.