



CUTLINE: Southern State Community College honorees in the annual AOC Recognition Celebration include (first row, l-r) David Mossbarger, Connie Wilson, Christina Hamm, Melissa Collins, Samantha Kelly, Paul Burke; (second row, l-r) Christopher Gallimore, Stephany Davis, Aaron Collett, Amanda Hurles, Logan Bourne; (third row, l-r) Bethany Rinehart, Nicholas Yoder, Joey Elsass, and Jennifer Ridenour.

SSCC's Adult Opportunity Center holds recognition celebration

Area residents who passed the General Education Development (GED) test were honored June 11 at the 27th annual Adult Opportunity Center's Recognition Celebration at Southern State Community College's Central Campus in Hillsboro.

For the 2014-15 academic year, the Adult Opportunity Center served 658 students. Of those students, 575 enrolled in one of the AOC classes and almost 70 percent improved at least one level. So far, 41 students have received their GEDs, and many have already started their college careers at Southern State.

Guest speakers Netti Newbry and Kelly Schierloh were invited to address this year's honorees.

Newbry shared her decision to enroll in GED prep classes at Southern State.

"After my children were grown, I decided to go back to school," she said. "It took one and half years and I passed it all except social studies so I went back and tried it again. That time I passed and enrolled in college classes right afterward. Last month, I graduated from college. If I can do it, you can do it."

Schierloh addressed the new graduates of the AOC program. "I am so proud of you;

many doors have just opened for you,” she said. “I passed my GED in May and it was a dream come true.”

Kelly recounted a childhood in which survival was her only option, not education, and she did not complete high school. Later, as an adult with three children, she tried several times to work on her GED but life and circumstances got in the way. Finally, she connected with the program at the YWCA in Cincinnati and earned her GED.

“The support I received from the instructors and other students was a blessing and it changed my life,” she said. “I felt like we were a family and we were fighting the same battles.”

Kelly now studies civil engineering and architectural drafting at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College and plans to pursue a master’s degree in the field.

Karyn Evans, Dean of SSCC’s Adult Opportunity Center, said that – counting the 2014-15 class – more than 20,000 students have now been served since the program’s inception.

Evans then announced the names of honor students who achieved high scores on the tests: Brittany Allen (social studies), Logan Bourne (science), and Nicholas Yoder (language arts and math).

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 Melissa Collins (Adams County), Amanda Hurles (Fayette County), and Joey Elsass (Highland County).

The annual “Friends of ABLE” award was presented to Adams County Public Libraries.

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.