



NAMELINE: Sommer Green

## Sommer Green spotlights SSCC's free GED program

Thinking about your GED? Sommer Green has a message for you.

"Life sometimes gets in the way," she said. "You may feel like you have to choose between working and going after your GED. Maybe you don't have a flexible schedule, maybe you're struggling to find a job, or to find a better job. We know that. We also know that for you to move up to that next step, you need your GED. We're here to help that happen."

Green is in a newly created role within the Adult Opportunity Center (AOC) at Southern State Community College. She is the Retention and Assessment Specialist and, among other things, she is tasked with increasing community awareness about the AOC's free programs. It's a job she seems to have been born to do.

"Adult education has always been a part of my life," said Green. "My mom had my brother when she was really young. She always had it in her mind that she wanted to graduate before my brother did. When my parents received their GEDs, they framed their certificates and hung them on the wall. And when my brother graduated from high school a couple years later, his diploma was hung beside theirs. Education was very important to them.

"The work ethic I have, I learned from them," she said. "We were very poor and I watched my parents struggle. But I also see how far they've come. I am so proud of my parents

for earning their GEDs. My dad went on to be very successful in his career, and my mom owned her own business. They are a perfect example of the successes of GED programs.”

Green’s adult education background inspired her to seek positions within an adult ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program, and as an advocate with a domestic violence agency, prior to her taking on her new role at the AOC.

“I’m really excited about the position and I think that we could do really great things,” she said. “I want to collaborate with other agencies that are helping people to see how we can work together. We all have the same goal; we all want people to be successful.”

As part of her outreach plan, Green will visit nonprofit service organizations within the communities served by the AOC’s programs.

During a free community Thanksgiving meal in November, she set up an info table at The Well at Sunnyside—an organization in Washington C.H. that provides meals, school supplies, household items, tax filing, and more—to citizens of Fayette County. Green is visiting The Reserves Network in Hillsboro on Dec. 15 and Staffmark in Wilmington on Dec. 19.

“I’m trying to think outside the box, by trying to go where I know people will be. The more resources that we give people, the more successful they’re going to be,” she said.

She encourages other nonprofit service agencies to contact her. She’s concerned that the public is not fully aware of the free services offered through the AOC.

“For as long as this program has been here, I’m actually surprised when I go places and hear: ‘I can’t believe your classes are free’ or ‘I didn’t even realize you were there,’” she said.

The AOC provides Aspire (formerly known as ABLE) classes on each SSCC campus and at several off-campus locations. The program is offered free; all books and materials are provided and no fees are charged for instruction. Morning and evening classes are scheduled, with fully qualified instructors present at each site. Services include: adult literacy; college refresher/readiness courses; GED preparation, including practice testing; nursing program preparation; reading, writing, and math improvement; and workforce education.

“Life does get in the way; it’s about finding a way to make it work. Perhaps it didn’t work six months ago, but maybe you could do it now,” she said. “The GED preparation program is self-paced because everyone comes in at a different level. Some people are with us for a few months; some people are with us for a few years.

“We all have different stories. How boring would it be if all our stories were the same?” she says. “And we can meet you wherever you happen to be in your story.”

So, if you *are* thinking about your GED, follow this checklist to get started:

- Call us! 800-628-7722, ext. 2687;
- Attend a mandatory orientation; there’s one coming up in January;
- Attend classes two mornings or evenings per week, for as long as you need;
- Take the practice test; and, when ready,
- Take the GED test.

For more information or to register for the January orientation, contact Green at SSCC’s Adult Opportunity Center by calling 800-628-7722, ext. 2687, or emailing [aoc@sscc.edu](mailto:aoc@sscc.edu).

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