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SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE



Photo caption: Pictured above are recent graduates of Southern State's Aspire and Graduation Alliance Programs. Front row: Hannah Johnson, Katelynn Appleman, Samantha Beatty, Lia Coblentz, Jalynn Harrison. Second row: Amber Nichols, Marie Fite, Sierra Harris, Ashley Way, Chloe South, Amberlee Wright. Third row: Hannah Lanning, Nightlyn Hisey, Trinity Covert-Rhoten, Katie Paige, Shawna Keilback, Victoria Stokes, Teresa Twaddle. Fourth row: Elmer Hendricks, Kaylee Garrison, Mae Robinson, Velma Simmonds, Samantha Widener, Maranda McGary. Fifth row: Daniel Norris, Austin Smail, Adam Prendergast, Layne Looper, Jessica Daulton. Sixth row: David Peters, Corey Dotson, Dennis Woods. Not pictured are Adam Baird, Jaydon Burns, Shyann Cox, Mariah Fairchild, Katie Fetto, Samantha Garcia, Laura Guinn, Ryder Land, Amy Mausling, Vanesa Melendez, Kyle Myers, Cody Pfeffer, Ezekiel Rodriguez, Jia Sexton, Angel Stiffler, Maria Williamson, and Hailey Plummer.

Southern State's Adult Opportunity Center hosts recognition celebration for the Aspire and Graduation Alliance Programs

Area residents who passed the General Education Development (GED) test or completed the Adult High School Workforce Diploma Program were honored recently at the 36th annual Adult Opportunity Center's Recognition celebration at Southern State Community College's Central Campus in Hillsboro.

During the 2024-25 academic year, the Adult Opportunity Center served 162 students. Of those students, 52 percent improved at least one academic level with 37 students earning a GED®.

The ceremony began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Southern State's Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Erika Goodwin. The greeting and introductions were provided by Susan Armstrong, Director of the Adult Opportunity Center. Southern State President Dr. Nicole Roades provided the welcome.

During the program, Senior Vice Chancellor Gary Cates of the Ohio Department of Higher Education addressed the graduates, along with Ashley Kerr from the Ohio Department of Education Workforce.

Special awards were presented to the following individuals:

- Vanesa Melendez, of Highland County, was presented the "Outstanding Student" award. Since receiving her GED®, Ms. Melendez has become a student at Southern State Community College and is furthering her education.
- Students from each county in the Aspire service area who received the highest GED® exam scores were recognized for outstanding achievement. Awardees were Ryder Land of Adams County, Daniel Norris of Brown County, Cody Pfeffer of Clermont County, Jessica Daulton of Clinton County, and Cole Adam Prendergast of Highland County.

The "Friends of Aspire" award was presented to the Adams County Training and Business Center for outstanding partnership with both the Adult Opportunity Center and Southern State Community College. Accepting this award was Mr. Paul Worley, Director of Adams County Economic and Community Development.

Both the Aspire program, directed by Susan Armstrong of the Adult Opportunity Center, and the 22+ program, coordinated by Anya Brennan of Graduation Alliance, provide adult education opportunities through Southern State Community College. All books and materials are provided, and a choice of morning or evening classes focusing on adult literacy, GED preparation, college refresher courses, workforce education, and basic reading, writing and math skill improvement are available.

Southern State's Aspire and Graduation Alliance programs are state and federally grant-funded and offered free of charge to participants.

For more information about the Aspire program, please visit www.sccc.edu/specialized/aoc.shtml.

For more information about the Graduation Alliance program, please visit www.sccc.edu/specialized/22plus.shtml.

To speak to someone directly, call Southern State's Adult Opportunity Center at 937-393-3431, Ext. 2687. Anyone wishing to enroll in Aspire classes should call the number listed above. A new class will be starting in July 2025.

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