

Hardy County Adult Learners Earn GED

By Daniel Silver
Special to Examiner

Fifty area students from the tri-county area — including 29 from Hardy County — earned their GED high school equivalency diploma this past year, and a formal graduation ceremony this month in Petersburg honored their achievement. Except for six home-schoolers, all of the graduates earned their diplomas through the Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) program administered by Eastern WV Community and Technical College for residents of Grant, Hardy and Pendleton. Eastern hosted the event at its Technology Center in the Grant County Industrial Park near the airport.

The Hardy County graduates included Patricia A. Aristidou, Carolyn J. Benito, Tina L. Bobo, Kristin M. Boeddeker, Nicole R. Boggs, Destiny M. Chill, Michelle N. Clay, Karen A. Constable, Scott G. Crites, Kyle C. Davy, Thomas W.C. Hatcher, Hali L. Jarrett, Carolyn E. Jones, Arno L. Ketterman, Jr., Stevie L. Lantz, Koty W. Luttrell, Stephen T. Mills, Nicolaus J. Nocar, Nytasha L. Prather, Juan I. Vargas Ramos, Jennifer M. Ray, Dyllin C. Riggleman, Robert E. Shockey, Anita N. Smith, Nehemiah D. Snyder, Kenneth S. Thorne, Carl D. Valdez, Jessica L. Warner and Harley R. Weatherholtz.

Student speakers Brandi Hose, of Petersburg, and Carolyn Benito, of Moorefield, each spoke of the pride they took in reaching this milestone, and both thanked their instructors and families. Eastern president Charles ‘Chuck’ Terrell delivered the keynote address.

Moorefield’s Kyle C. Davy won special recognition as the program’s

top scorer for 2013, an accomplishment that also earned him a one-year scholarship to Eastern.

For Davy and five other home-schoolers, the GED test accredited independent studies with an official diploma. For many of the older students, “job lay-offs forced them to make education and career changes,” noted Vera Shockey, Eastern’s A.B.E. coordinator and instructor for Hardy County.

With the GED diploma, she pointed out, all of these new graduates have brought within their reach numerous life possibilities that might otherwise have been unattainable, including further education or training, and better-paying jobs.

“Of the 50 graduates this spring, almost half are currently attending post-secondary education or training, or are planning to do so in the fall,” Shockey said.

The current GED test series ends next December, and the new 2014 test will use a different format that students will take online at one of the local testing centers. After December, Shockey warned, anyone who has already begun the GED test and not yet passed all five sections will lose those scores and need to start the test over in 2014.

So anyone who has started and not yet completed the test should contact her at 304-434-8000, or toll-free: 877-982-2322, she said.

Like the student speakers, keynote speaker Terrell also emphasized the credit that individual accomplishment often owes to a larger supporting team. “Tonight we celebrate an individual accomplishment, earning your GED,” he acknowledged. “Your success is because of the commitment you

made to reach your goal and to discover your potential.”

Along the way, though, each of the graduates “also discovered cheerleaders and coaches who supported your goals: teachers, classmates, friends and family members who acted as your personal cheerleader,” he said. “And the results can be seen tonight.”

Across the nation, GED graduates have historically included “a U.S. Surgeon General, state governors, congressmen, television sitcom stars, and everyday heroes like teachers, nurses, and firefighters,” coordinator Shockey recounted.

And the GED exam is no easy ride. “Forty percent of today’s public high school seniors cannot pass the GED test the first time,” she said.

With focused motivation and purposeful preparation, however, 18 million adults have earned the GED since the test first debuted seventy years ago.

For more information about Eastern’s financial aid opportunities, programs of study, workforce training and community education, call toll free: 877-982-2322; or check the website www.easternwv.edu.

Serving the residents of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton and Tucker counties, and fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College is a comprehensive and equal opportunity community and technical college bringing the resources and assets of Education That Works to the families, communities and employers of the Potomac Highlands.



Photo by Daniel Silver

Students who earned their GED participated in commencement ceremonies. Eastern President Chuck Terrell delivered the keynote address.