

The Faces of Adult Learners: 25 Years in the Making

Adalgisa Perez

Adalgisa Perez is a hardworking and self-motivated immigrant from the Dominican Republic.

Adalgisa enrolled in ESOL classes at El Centro del Cardenal in January 2008, an agency of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Boston. The ESOL program at El Centro is an intensive, 16 hour per week commitment that includes 2-3 hours of computer lab time. Adalgisa's goals were to improve her English skills in order to get a better job, participate in the community, support her two children, further herself, and prepare for higher education.

Adalgisa was a natural leader at school. Within a few months, Adalgisa became a volunteer computer teacher working with Spanish speakers. She was also the facilitator of the student council and a member of MassALL, a student leadership organization that advocates for adult education resources.

Since April, Adalgisa has worked full-time at Wal-Mart. She also teaches Spanish classes to children (K-3) in Melrose. In October, Adalgisa participated in the Voter Education Registration Action (VERA) campaign at El Centro, registered to vote, and voted in the historical 2008 election. She recently applied as a substitute teacher in Lynn.

Although Adalgisa spent less than a year in adult education classes, her accomplishments were significant.



Age: 31
Immigrated from the Dominican Republic in 2004
Adult Education Program: El Centro del Cardenal
Adult Education Coalition: South End Adult Education Coalition

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Boston Adult Literacy Initiative. (ALI)

What is ALI?

We are Boston adult basic education providers that receive funding from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or/and the City of Boston.

What do we do?

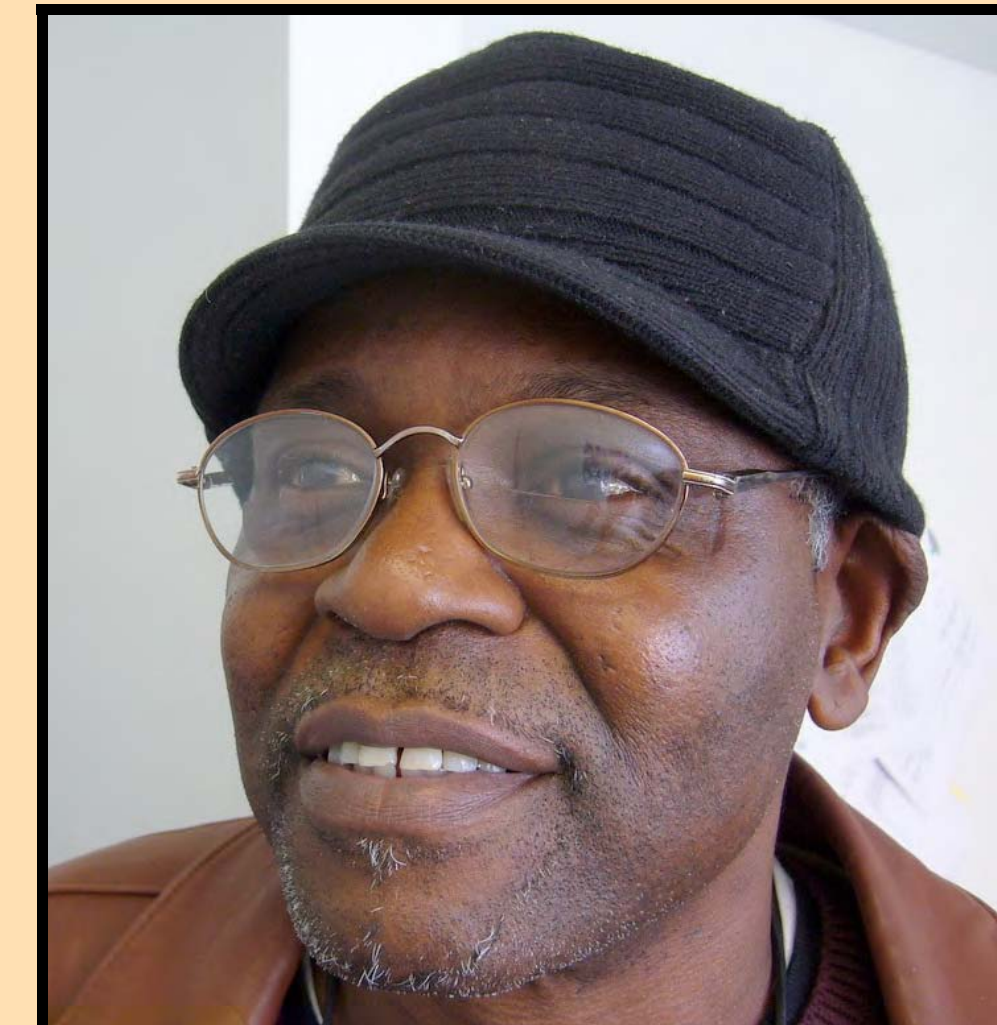
We provide services that help adult learners reach their educational and career goals as workers, parents, and community members:

- ◆ GED preparation
- ◆ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- ◆ Adult Basic Education: literacy and numeracy
- ◆ Transition to college and job training programs
- ◆ Adult Diploma

These profiles highlight the accomplishments and challenges of just a few of Boston's 6,500+ enrolled adult learners; another 5,500 are waiting to enroll.

Education: Improving Lives and Creating Opportunities!

For more info: Brunir O. Shackleton, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, (617) 918-5244 or brunir.shackleton.jcs@cityofboston.gov



Age: 60
Adult Education Program: United South End Settlements (USES)
Adult Education Coalition: South End Adult Education Coalition

Julius Wiley

United South End Settlements' (USES) Harriet Tubman House and Massachusetts Rehab have partnered with Wiley to aid him on his entrepreneurial path.

Wiley, of Dorchester, barely went to school as a child. At 60, a need for improved reading skills to run his business led him to sign up for free adult basic education classes at USES. There, he is learning marketable skills: reading, writing, math, and

technology. For a small businessperson, learning to navigate the internet is essential and Wiley is keen to do marketing via the internet.

Wiley told us how he came to study at Tubman House.

"I decided to come back to school because I feel embarrassed to have to ask someone what words [mean]. I owned my own upholstery business and was embarrassed when I had to write a person's name or type of fabric needed, measurements of each item needing repair. It was hard trying to do that and be an accomplished businessperson. I had to depend on other people."

Wiley was raised in Georgia by relatives who traveled for work. He was enrolled in school late and then never stayed in any one school long. He felt laughed at because he could not read or spell. Wiley later learned he was dyslexic and needed glasses. Wiley says "I have been coming to the Harriet Tubman since September 2007 and my teacher tells me I am doing good. I like to hear that, it makes me feel like I am doing something positive."