

The Faces of Adult Learners: 25 Years in the Making



Age: 24

Immigrated from the Dominican Republic in 2006

Adult Education Program: EI/Civics

Adult Education Coalitions: Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy and Jamaica Plain Egelston Square Adult Education Network

Carmen Cabral

Carmen Cabral is an amiable 24-year-old from San Cristobal, D.R. Since enrolling, at her father's urging, in ESOL classes at JFYNetWorks in January 2008, Carmen has displayed tremendous aptitude as a student, and her teachers were not surprised to learn of her completion of three semesters of collegiate study of psychology at the Universidad Autonoma de Santo Domingo. Her ascent through the ESOL program at JFY has been nothing short of

remarkable; she has progressed from the initial level of ESOL classes to the most advanced class in only three semesters.

Carmen feels that her improved English skills have made an enormous difference in her life. For her, not only does a better command of English offer better employment opportunities, it has made navigating her way through a new city and a new culture much easier. "Before, when I would ask how much or how to get somewhere, it was confusing. Now, I understand better."

Her teachers at JFY are extremely impressed with her commitment and ability as a student, and grateful for her warm and accommodating personality. Carmen has repeatedly distinguished herself in class, establishing herself as a quiet leader and helpful classmate. She is friendly and approachable, willing to help all of her peers, and many of her classmates seem to gravitate towards her. She is focused and diligent in class, and her enthusiasm often seems contagious. All of her teachers feel that it is gratifying to teach such an eager and earnest student.

She hopes to enroll in college in the Boston area and pursue a career in psychology.

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: 44

Adult Education Program:

ABCD LearningWorks

Adult Education Coalition:

Downtown Initiative for Adult Literacy

Deneice Garrett

Deneice epitomizes how Adult Basic Education can help people move from poverty to self-sufficiency.

As a single mother of two, I knew I had to find a better way to support my children then welfare. Working as a part-time lunch monitor at my son's school made it clear that I needed to continue my education. After ten years out of school, I returned to the classroom at ABCD LearningWorks.

With support, I earned my GED in 1994, but still did not have real skills and was starving for a better quality of life. I wanted my children to have someone to look up. I enrolled in

ABCD's seven month Administrative Support Skills Training program.

My entry level job at a non-profit agency was ok, but I felt I could do more. I pursued academic studies at night while working a fulltime job, caring for my children and other family, and managing a chronic disease. I graduated in 2000 from the Urban College of Boston with an A.A. degree in Human Services and in 2007 from UMass Boston with a BA degree in Human Services Administration.

In 2001, I purchased a home in Dorchester through a matching down payment program; it was a dream come true to go from being a single mom on welfare to being a home owner!

The steps I took to get from welfare to a fantastic job have made a major difference for me and for others. I have encouraged friends and family to go back to school and many of them have. They saw that someone who has lived as an inner city teen mom in poverty achieved some real goals, gave back to community and society and remained positive despite the obstacles.