

# The Faces of Adult Learners: 25 Years in the Making



**Age:** 54

**Immigrated from Egypt in 2002**

**Adult Education Program:**  
Haitian Multi-Service Center, Adult Education Program

**Adult Education Coalition:**

## ***Chrystal L. Jackson***

Chrystal has contributed to our economy and society in very admirable ways. She drove a bus for 10 years and she started an approved daycare business in her home, as a licensed daycare provider in the State of Massachusetts.

Chrystal was a volunteer for ten years at a community center where she organized a tap dancing group for girls called "The Tobin Tappers." She has canvassed for elections and also organizes support groups for twelve step programs, and survivors of sexual assault.

Although Chrystal has been very successful as a community member, worker, volunteer, and a single parent of three, she has always wanted to complete the GED and go to college. So Chrystal attends classes at the Haitian Multi-Service Center in Dorchester.

Chrystal brings experience, success and a positive and confident attitude to the GED class that is contagious. Her presence helps other students want to rise up and continue, when the grind and discipline of studying and juggling responsibilities becomes a challenge. She is a great example.

After she gets her GED, Chrystal plans to go to college and prepare for a career as a medical coding specialist or to return to daycare work.

## **This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> 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!***



**Age:** 49

**Immigrated from Lebanon**

**Adult Education Program:**  
Southside Head Start Adult ESOL Program

## ***Vyoulit Mykhayel***

Vyoulit Mykhayel lost her husband and younger daughter to violence in Lebanon. When she left for Boston at age 49, she promised her mother she would return to Lebanon if she could not learn English.

Eleven years later, Vyoulit is still seeing where her dreams can take her. After diligently studying English, she has returned to her lifelong profession as a seamstress and now holds a permanent position with benefits at the dry cleaner, Zoots, and sews habits for the Daughters of St. Paul who are delighted with her work. "She's very skilled. A lot of Americans don't have that skill anymore," says Sister Linda Boccia.

Vyoulit now owns her own home and a car. Soon, she will be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship.

However, Vyoulit's road was not an easy one. She struggled to learn English on her own until hearing about the ABCD South Side Head Start Adult ESOL Program in Roslindale. She recalls, "When I first went there, I could not say one word of English. It was difficult but I studied, sometimes until two in the morning."

Vyoulit stays connected to the school to which she feels she owes so much by urging funding support. Vyoulit pleads, "[p]lease don't shut the money off. It's a wonderful program. Without this school, how can we make our living? My life has been changed from earth to sky. If you don't have the language, you can't do anything."

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