

The Faces of Adult Learners: 25 Years in the Making



Daniel Velasquez, Jr.

Daniel's personality and management skills gained him the positive recognition of his employers during his senior year. "At that point, money was more important," he says about his choice between finishing high school and accepting full-time work and a better salary. Later though, Daniel was told he wasn't qualified for a promotion because he didn't have a high school diploma.

Age: 31
Adult Education Program:
Charlestown Community Center/Adult Education
Adult Education Coalition:
Charlestown Collaborative

Daniel went the route of the Alternative Diploma Program (ADP) and was awarded his BPS high school credential in 2004. He credits the patience and reassurance of his Charlestown Adult Education teacher, Judy Clough, with much of his success.

Daniel joined the staff of the Charlestown Adult Education program as a counseling intern working towards his Associate's degree in Human Services at Bunker Hill Community College. He was soon hired as the program's Computer Skills teacher for ESOL students, and in the next semester stepped in to cover a class vacated by a teacher on emergency medical leave.

Daniel is now an integral member of the CCCAE staff, instructing two sections of beginning English, plus the computer lab, and offering his time as a counselor and a logistical expert.

Daniel is currently a B.A. candidate in Psychology at the University of Massachusetts in Boston.

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

Isatu Peters

Isatu, a refugee, was resettled by IIB and enrolled in our daytime refugee ESOL and Literacy program for newly-arrived refugees. She attended 2 cycles of English classes and was able to move from the literacy class to the beginning reading and writing class. Job readiness skills are incorporated into these classes with a specific focus on resume writing and interview skills, exploration of types of jobs and career ladder opportunities, understanding the American work place, problem solving and team work.

With the help of staff at IIB, Isatu found a full-time housekeeping job less than 8 months after arriving in the USA. While continuing to study English at night, she purchased a condominium and got her driver's license. She attended an Avon recruitment session at IIB in the spring of 2007 and began selling Avon products to supplement her income. Isatu completed an IIB computer class and worked with staff to learn the skills she needed to place her Avon orders on-line, thereby increasing her income. In summer, 2008, Isatu became an American citizen. She is still working full-time as a housekeeper. Her job responsibilities have increased along with her salary.

Isatu still has her sights set on the future, hoping to return to school to start working on her GED, become a supervisor, bring the rest of her family to the USA, provide a good life for her children, and ensure that her children can go to college.



Age: 23
Immigrated from Sierra Leone in 2003
Adult Education Program:
International Institute of Boston (IIB)
Adult Education Coalition:
Downtown Initiative For Adult Literacy