

The Faces of Adult Learners: 25 Years in the Making

Hawanatu Jallah

Hawanatu was born in 1977 in Pujehun, Sierra Leone, West Africa, and arrived in the United States in 2006 after a long struggle to escape a violent civil war.

In Boston, she found work as a nurse's assistant. This position was an important first step to achieving her goal of becoming a registered nurse.

Education has long been part of her family's tradition, but circumstances in Sierra Leone prevented her from getting her degree. So, Hawanatu enrolled in the GED Program at the JPCCALP in the Fall of 2008.

Hawanatu is taking Math and English ABE courses. The experience has renewed her desire to achieve her dream and has improved her ability to carry out her current duties as a Nursing Assistant.

Hawanatu frequently likes to tell stories about her family that live either in this country or back in Sierra Leone. Her mother, who still lives in the small village of Pujehun, is a constant source of support and encouragement. She is so proud of Hawanatu and would do anything she could do to help her daughter.

While Hawanatu's story is not different in many ways from those of other immigrants past and present, she brings to this country a genuine gift to help others through her caring and generous spirit. For some, she may be just another statistic. But for those who know and interact with her on a daily basis, she is a precious jewel.



Age: 32

Immigrated from
Sierra Leone in 2006

Adult Education Program:

Jamaica Plain Community
Center Adult Learning Program

Adult Education Coalition:

Jamaica Plain Community
Center Adult Learning Program

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

Gregoria Florencio

With two daughters at the Mary Curley Middle School, Gregoria immediately became involved as a chaperone for school field trips and as a volunteer with the School Parent Committee (SPC). Her outreach efforts to other Latino parents was one reason she soon won a seat as a parent representative on the SPC.

On the recommendation of the SPC Coordinator, Gregoria tested and was accepted to enroll in ESOL classes at the Adult Learning Program in Jamaica Plain.

Gregoria has a passion for education and for learning. She is an avid reader and desires that her speaking skills speed up as well. In September 2008, she started her first job in the U.S. as a Teacher Assistant at a Montessori pre-school. It terrified her to work with all English-speaking parents and children, even though she could communicate with the lead teacher in Spanish. The first weeks were very challenging, but now six months later she is doing very well.

Gregoria's future goal is to become a teacher for Boston Public Schools because she loves children and loves to teach.



Age: 38

Immigrated from the
Dominican Republic in 2007

Adult Education Program:

Jamaica Plain Neighborhood
Development Corporation

Adult Education Coalition:

Jamaica Plain Community
Center Adult Learning Program