

Student Success Stories



Helping Nevada adults improve basic skills and get jobs through GED, Career Pathways, Literacy, ESL, Civics, Citizenship, & Transition to Postsecondary programs. Nevada Adult Education services are federally funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

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Claudia keeps climbing toward her goal



Shown with Claudia, from left:

WNC Vice-President of Academic and Student Affairs Connie Capurro (now retired), Adult Literacy and Language Program Coordinator Angela Andrade-Holt, Nevada Adult Education Director Brad Deeds, and WNC Dean of Student Services John Kinkella.

It became impossible for me to go back to school then. I gave my full attention to my family and set aside my dreams of being a professional. They didn't seem as important at that point.

When my son was four years old and started kindergarten, I found myself with a bit of free time that I immediately used in pursuing my not-so-quite-forgotten goal. I enrolled in classes again and finished two semesters, and then again got pregnant. Again I quit school and actually gave it up for good. Or so I thought.

Many things happened in the course of the next three years. I came to the United States and for the first time in my life I got a job. These events made a bigger gap between my goals and my situation. Now it was not only my family obligations preventing me from attending school, but also my job and my limited knowledge of the English language.

Time went by; more changes happened. My kids grew up and my oldest son went to live by himself; I got divorced and lost my job. It all seemed to happen at the same time, and made me question the decisions I made when I was younger and told myself that education was not a priority. Having a degree at this point in my life would surely have made things easier. But as they say, there's always light at the end of the tunnel. All these events motivated me to once and for all put aside all the excuses I used to give myself permission to live a life that wasn't meeting my goals. I was in my mid-thirties when I decided to go back to school and continue until I got my bachelor's degree in business.

I enrolled in the GED[®] preparation program at WNC, which was a bigger blessing that I thought it would be. I got my GED and won two scholarships for college, which I intend to use this upcoming semester. I also was able to enroll in the Carson City JOIN (Job Opportunities in Nevada) program where I earned a certificate for completing a course in Computer and Office Skills, which led me to a work-student position as a clerical aid in the Adult Literacy and Language Department at WNC.

Being able to see tangible progress has given me the motivation and strength I need to go on in my life. I feel so blessed for all that God has given me lately, and so grateful to all the people that have supported me through all this.

All there's left to say is: Pursue your dreams, they might not become a reality as soon as we wish they would, but as Shakespeare said, "To climb steep hills requires a slow pace at first."

Editor's note: According to Angela Andrade-Holt, program coordinator of [Western Nevada College's Adult Literacy and Language program](#), "Claudia passed the GED with a 758 average. She had three perfect 800 scores in Science, Reading, and Math and was just 30 points away from a perfect score in Social Studies. She scored 620 on the writing portion, her 'weakest' subject, still well above average. Claudia is enrolled at WNC this fall and working in our office as a student worker. She also volunteers her time to tutor GED students. She is such an incredible asset to our program!"

NNLC GED® grads stepping up to their goals

By NNLC GED/ABE Instructor Marianne Rasmussen,
marianner@nnlc.org, 775/356-1007

Joey Mesa: Just getting started

As a teenager, Joey (pictured at far right) thought school wasn't important. He knew he could get a job without a high school diploma, just as some of his friends had, so he left school and got a job as a pipefitter. He was good at his job, but after a few years he found himself unemployed and on disability.

To get some help finding a new career, Joey went to the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (<http://detr.state.nv.us/>); he decided to become a diesel technician. Before he could start the training however, he needed his GED.

While studying for the test at Northern Nevada Literacy Council, Joey especially enjoyed the small class size. "I could ask any question," he said. And ask he did! "Some people are reluctant to ask questions, but if Joey didn't understand what we were studying, he would keep asking until he got it," said Math Teacher Mike Cronmiller. In just under a year, Joey passed the GED test on the first try. His family celebrated his success by chipping in to buy him a car to help him get to his new classes as he studies diesel mechanics at TMCC. "I'm just getting started!" he said, and advises others to "Keep asking questions!"

Laura Baldinovez: Budding entrepreneur

Laura (third from left) describes her effort to get her GED as a journey. She went to high school in Battle Mountain but dropped out in 11th grade to get married and start a family. "At that point, I didn't think I was ever going to get my GED," she said. "I didn't really believe in myself."

But Laura had two reasons that inspired her to start on the quest to get her certificate of high school equivalency: to set an example for her kids, and to own a hair salon.

Laura took her first step when she enrolled at NNLC to study for the GED exam. She chose the school because her mom was a student there. A dedicated student, Laura moved quickly from the beginning to the advanced classes, making friends along the way. "I love this place," she said, as she began to see herself differently — now she was someone who could accomplish her goals. She took and passed the GED test after six months of study.

Laura's newfound confidence will help her in her next step, which is to get a cosmetology license. She is now enrolled at the Milan Institute where she will take business and accounting classes in addition to cosmetology to prepare for owning a salon. Laura's future looks bright; she has progressed from not believing in herself to, "With a lot of hard work and perseverance, I can achieve anything I want to. It's just a matter of doing it."

Andrea Ruiz: On her way to college

Andrea (shown at far left) stopped going to school in the eighth grade. "I was a rebel," she said. She got jobs working in fast food restaurants, but they weren't the kind of jobs she really wanted. Passionate about helping people, she wanted to study psychology, but to do that she knew she needed to go to college. She also had another reason to go back to school: to set a good example for her nieces and nephews. She didn't want them to think that not finishing school was OK, so after a few years away, Andrea headed back to class.

At NNLC, Andrea immediately felt that she was in the right place. "This school was so comfortable to walk into, not overwhelming at all, and the teachers are nice," she remembers. The flexible schedule allowed her to continue working while she studied. After a few months of math, reading, and writing classes, she proved herself ready to take the GED test. After all her preparation, taking the test wasn't too bad. In fact, she says, "It was really easy! That's why you've got to keep trying," she told the audience at her graduation ceremony.



From left: Andrea, Jeanette Stimmell, Laura, and Joey.