

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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NNLC students cite staff, teachers, families

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

Craig Pennington: great timing!

"I got my GED® scores in the mail on Thursday, and on Friday I had an interview," said Craig with a smile. "On Monday, I was hired!"

Craig had worked in manufacturing as a machinist and loved it. Customers even asked to see his manager to compliment him on the quality of his work. When his friend told him about a job at the Hamilton Company, a precision medical supply manufacturer with a facility in Reno, he wanted to apply.

At first he didn't think he qualified because he didn't have a high school diploma. "I wanted that job!" he said. "I had all that knowledge, but no credential." His friend encouraged him to go to the Northern Nevada Literacy Council to prepare for the GED test. Craig decided to give the free classes a try.



From left: Macy and Melissa Hubert, Craig Pennington, and Robin Douglas

"I brushed up my math skills and learned how to set up the essay," he said. He also worked on the mechanics of reading and writing. His good writing skills came in handy when he interviewed at Hamilton, as he had to take a test that included questions on spelling and punctuation. "I aced that!" he said. "They called me the next day, and I was hired for \$5.00 more an hour than I was making before."

Along with more money, Craig enjoys better hours and working conditions. Best of all, he is getting on-the-job training as a computer numerical control machinist operating the Yama Seiki machine. At NNLC's graduation ceremony, he told the audience "I did this to get a better job. "And," he added, "it felt really good to make my mom proud."

Robin Douglas: faces her fears

"I'm from the old school," said Robin. "You go to work; you shine; you move up. But now things are different. You need a degree."

After 12 years as an insurance agent for The Hartford insurance company and looking at an empty nest, Robin wanted a change. "I've always loved the law," she said, "and I want to make a difference — to touch someone's life." Robin saw herself more involved in the community, especially with young people. She dreamed about becoming a youth counselor or probation officer.

"And then my daughter inspired me by graduating from high school ahead of schedule," she said. Robin took the plunge and enrolled in Truckee Meadows Community College's law enforcement program. At that time, she didn't need a GED® to enroll, but she did need it to graduate.

"There's something about the GED that's always terrified me," she said, but with her graduation coming up within two years, she couldn't put it off much longer. "I didn't want to have that little skeleton in the closet anymore." She came to NNLC to get help. Robin worked on her math and essay skills, and soon passed the GED test.

Robin's daughter came to the graduation ceremony to celebrate with her. Robin beamed as she thanked NNLC staff, especially Mike Benson, NNLC's data manager, for working with her schedule; Susan Robinson, NNLC director for "big encouragement;" Mike Cronmiller for math help; and Marianne Rasmusson for essay tips that helped raise her writing score by 200 points. Robin's next step: graduation from TMCC in May 2014.

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Breaking down barriers

By Literacy Services Coordinator Tim McDonald, mcdonaldt@lvccld.org, 702/507-3534, <http://lvccld.org/cardservices/call.cfm>

The CALL (Computer Assisted Literacy in Libraries) program at the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District was awarded a federal incentive grant for the 2013-2014 program year to support the ESL Transitions Project. Often students' non-educational needs present a huge barrier to educational success. Through this project, advisors refer students to resources to meet their basic needs, as well as work with students to create individual action plans, identify relevant post-secondary education and training opportunities, and assist teachers in customizing vocabulary instruction to meet the work and life goals of individual students. Here are a few of the student successes during the first quarter of the academic year.

Fructuoso Castro was having trouble reading the instructional materials at his beginner level ESL class at the West Las Vegas Library. His advisor saw he needed new eye glasses and referred him to the Family Resource Center at East Valley Family Services. Fructuoso received a pair of glasses that had been donated and is now keeping pace with his ESL class.



Fructuoso (center) with Literacy Trainer Carla Adkins and Instructor Albert Angulo



Jaime Vazquez (shown at left with Instructor Albert Angulo) is a very determined student learning English in a beginner level ESL class at the East Las Vegas Community Center. Jaime met with his advisor and discussed financial difficulties that made it a struggle to afford gasoline. Through a referral to East Valley Family Services, Jaime received a donated Visa[®] gas card to help him come to class every day for the next two months.

Dagoberto Sanchez (at right) was a student at the intermediate level ESL class at the Las Vegas Library. Working with his advisor, he identified a training program for housekeeping that will help him pursue his goal of attaining a job at one of the hotels in Las Vegas. He completed the ESL class and is now enrolled in a House Person/Utility Porter course at the Culinary Academy of Las Vegas.



Northern Nevada Literacy Council *(Continued from page 1)*

Melissa Hubert: step-by-step to success

"Baby steps" is how Melissa describes her goals. After working for eight years for Wells Fargo selling mortgages, the housing crash convinced her that she needed a more stable job. She wanted to enroll in the TMCC radiology tech program, but when she applied for financial aid, she found that she needed to get a GED[®]. She knew she needed help with math and writing to pass the test. "My essays would dwindle into something else," she said.

She found NNLC on Google and called. "Mike Benson (NNLC's data manager) was super cool," she said, "He said, 'come in tomorrow!'" Thrilled that she could start immediately, Melissa was a motivated student, organizing study groups with other students on evenings and weekends. In less than one eight-week session, Melissa passed the GED test on her first try.

Her daughter Macy came to watch her mom graduate. "I did this for her," Melissa said at the ceremony. She encouraged others to keep trying: "I can't believe something I put off for so long was so easy. This was truly a confidence-builder."

The week after graduation Melissa took another step toward her goal by attending the reentry meeting at TMCC. She is now working on applying for financial aid and scholarships; she returns to NNLC for help polishing her essays and begins classes at TMCC in two months.



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