

Student Success Stories



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The stars come out at NNLC

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It was cold in Reno in December when the Northern Nevada Literacy Council held a graduation ceremony marking the end of the fourth session of 2012-13, but the emotions of the staff and graduates warmed up the day.

NNLC recognized more than 120 students who successfully completed the session, with a special highlight on five students who recently passed the GED® exam. Family and friends were there, as well as NNLC faculty and board members. Students were all smiles as they were acknowledged for their achievements. The following five students were honored for passing the GED Test:

Karla Reyes: Learning with friends

Karla came to applaud her fellow students at the NNLC recognition event in October — and left getting her own good news. After the fall ceremony she checked on her GED scores on the school computer and found that she had passed the Test in all subjects. The classmates she had been congratulating were now cheering for her!

“I love this school,” said Karla. She began coming to NNLC to improve her English in 2011, starting out in the Introduction to English class. She moved quickly through ESL and basic education classes, and after a year she added getting a GED to her goal. She began pre-GED classes in 2012.

The GED isn’t the only thing she received from NNLC. “I made friends,” she said, and she keeps in touch with her fellow alumni. “Communication is another skill that I have learned here. To have a conversation with people, one important thing to know is how to communicate.” Along with improved English and communication skills, Karla gained confidence: “I feel like I grew personally.”

Karla’s plans to work at a family business and to continue her education in social work or counseling.

Robert Rees: One-session wonder

Robert Rees dropped out of high school to go to work. “At that time,” he said, “I didn’t think I’d need my High School Diploma.” After 22 years working at Lifetouch Studios he acknowledged, “I needed that diploma!”

Robert was a little nervous about going back to school, but after just one eight-week session he was ready to take the GED Test. He passed on his first try. “The worst part for me was the math,” he said, but despite math anxiety he achieved his goal. “I’m very proud!”

With a GED on his résumé, Robert is ready to move on to vocational school, where he plans to study information technology.

James Raymond: Nailed the GED

It seemed that James was built for roofing. His size, speed, and coordination made him good at his job. “I could run all over the roof, and never lose my balance, and I could spot a crooked shingle from one end of the roof to the other,” he said. But roofing is a hard job, and it became harder for him when he developed arthritis. When the building industry slowed to a crawl in Reno, he knew it was time to find another occupation. His first step was to get his GED.



NNLC Executive Director Susan Robinson congratulates GED recipients Robert Rees, Karla Reyes, Manuel Marin, James Raymond, and Cheril Gabbidon.

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NNLC stars shine

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James came to NNLC in 2011 for tutoring in math and writing. Reading and memory tasks were challenging for him because of a car accident that took his mother's life and left James with a head injury at age seven. Although reading was difficult and he had trouble paying attention in school, James had learned something else as a child — how to work hard. He helped his dad as he struggled to provide for and take care of the family.

That work ethic helped James as he pursued his GED. He was sometimes frustrated, but he never gave up; he spent more than a year and a half working toward his goal. Besides getting his GED for his occupation, he was motivated by his grandson, who was starting school. "I didn't want my grandson to be smarter than me!" he said.

After a year of tutoring he took adult basic education and pre-GED courses, focusing on reading. Along the way he learned good study habits and skills. Because he had trouble recalling things he read, he developed the habit of reviewing everything he learned just before going to sleep at night. His hard work paid off this year as he took and passed the GED Test.

Now James is ready to take placement tests and continue on his way to a new career in the medical field.

Manuel Marin: Networking leads to success

Manny, as classmates and teachers know him, was a successful truck driver. He was good at his job, but after 48 years he was ready for a change that would allow him to spend less time on the road. He knew he wanted to enter the medical field, so his first step was to get a GED so he could go back to school.

Manny began pre-GED classes in May 2012. Teachers immediately noticed that he was a motivated student. He studied at home and frequently brought in study guides and books for extra study to reinforce class work. He used the public library and wasn't shy about asking for help. Manny also had a talent for networking with students and teachers. Even after obtaining his GED, he keeps in contact with alumni and the staff at NNLC.

Manny passed the Test the day before starting classes to earn his associate degree; he is on way to becoming a medical assistant. True to form, he has come back to NNLC for help with his new math classes. His dedication and ability to get help when needed have paid off — Manny finished his first semester with straight A's.

Cheryl Gabbidon: Newly found confidence boosts her up the ladder

"I came to NNLC unsure and left confident!" said Cheryl, whose goal is to get a business degree. First she needed to pass the GED Test. In July 2012 she began studying online at NNLC. She also occasionally attended classes, so she made friends and got to know the teachers.

Cheryl had been home-schooled, and she had a good academic foundation. One of her essays was used for other students as an example of well-organized writing. Although she was already a good student, she was grateful for the guided study at NNLC. "This place helped me fill in the gaps," she said.

Cheryl passed the GED Test on her first try and enrolled at Truckee Meadows Community College. She is ready to begin her postsecondary studies with confidence. She grinned as she thanked NNLC and said, "I feel like I'm ready to move onto the next step."

Editor's note: The Northern Nevada Literacy Council (www.nnlc.org) is one of eight Adult Literacy and Language Programs in Nevada. The programs are federally funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and provide instruction in literacy, English Language Learning, GED preparation, and career pathways. Founded in 1978, NNLC is a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization located in Reno.

Additional federally funded programs in Nevada:

- Las Vegas: CALL (Computer Assisted Literacy in Libraries) at Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada, College of Southern Nevada, Community Multicultural Center
- Reno: Truckee Meadows Community College
- Carson City: Western Nevada College
- Elko: Great Basin College

For contact information, visit <http://nvedu.org/abepprograms>. See <http://nvedu.org/studentssuccess> for stories of student successes from all the programs.

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