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MSCC Adult Education Program Provides Second Chances

Everyone deserves an opportunity to make a U-turn on the road of life, and Mid-South Community College's Adult Education program specializes in providing those precious second chances.

"It's just a wonderful opportunity to go back and accomplish something that can be a springboard to a much better life," said Kim Jordan-Fluker, Director of Adult Education at MSCC. "Generally, life circumstances have caused people not to be able to move forward with their education, and men and women without a high school diploma find many doors closed to them, especially now."

"We're excited to play a part in leading these students and their families to a better quality of life. All of us enjoy what we do, and we have created a very positive environment to assist our students toward their goals."

MSCC's Adult Education department and similar programs throughout the state and nation are observing Adult Education Week this week and will recognize Wednesday as GED® Pride Day. Arkansas Gov. Mike Beebe will formally proclaim the state's observance on Thursday.

"It is timely and appropriate that attention be focused on the special efforts and dedication of Arkansas's adult educators who prepare individuals for productive employment and enriched lives," Gov. Beebe said. "I encourage my fellow citizens to become familiar with the services and benefits offered by adult education courses and to support and participate in these programs."

Adult education assists men and women in becoming literate, obtaining knowledge and skills for employment and self-sufficiency, obtaining the educational skills necessary to become full partners in their children's educational development, and

completing their secondary school education. All of the services in Arkansas are free to state residents.

More than 50,000 adults are served each year in Arkansas, and 7,000 to 7,500 state residents earn their Arkansas High School Diploma by passing the certified equivalency exams.

“Arkansas’s future economic success depends on having a well-educated and well-trained workforce,” said William L. “Bill” Walker, Jr., Arkansas Department of Career Education Director. “Thanks to the skill and dedication of our Adult Education Division staff and instructors statewide, we have the resources in place to offer a second chance to many Arkansans who didn’t finish high school.”

“Through his proclamation, Gov. Beebe is once again proving his commitment to education at every level in our state. That commitment virtually guarantees that Arkansans will be prepared for the high-skill, high-demand, high-wage jobs of the 21st century economy.”

MSCC Adult Education students range in age from 18 to 81 years old. Most of them finished junior high but dropped out before high school graduation. They come from all walks of life and from all backgrounds but have at least one thing in common – “People really want to improve their circumstances,” Jordan-Fluker said.

Students who come to MSCC in hopes of earning their high school equivalency certificate find flexible scheduling, full-scale support, and every opportunity to succeed. The process begins with administration of the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) which evaluates the student’s level of academic expertise.

Students have the opportunity to begin classes immediately after receiving the results of the initial exam. The program includes “open entry, open exit” instruction that includes self-paced assignments. The instructional format allows students to come to class at their convenience, stay as long as they need to stay, and leave at their convenience.

All participants must complete a minimum of 60 hours of classroom and lab time to move to the next step -- the practice test. Success on the practice exam does not guarantee that a student will pass the official test, but it is generally a good indicator of

preparedness. Students who earn their GED at MSCC (or any other certified site) have the opportunity to enroll in almost any college or university in the country.

While adult education can help students achieve a major milestone, it is also rewarding for the instructional and support staff.

“I love working with students who want to learn; it makes my job so enjoyable,” said Carolyn Ashley, an Adult Education instructor. “I have had students who actually ask, ‘Do you have any homework I can do?’ That’s just not something you usually hear in a school setting. I just love it; it’s very rewarding.”

MSCC offers Adult Ed classes at several sites in Crittenden County. For specific locations, services, and general program information, call (870) 733-6871.