



2011 GED class, made possible by a partnership between Charlottesville's Adult Learning Center and University of Virginia's Human Resources and Facilities Management

Adult Learning Center Partnerships

by Susan Erno

What do you do...

...when funds decline and demand stays steady or increases?

...when allocated funds don't cover a service adult learners desperately need?

...to attract community members who need to complete GED® testing but aren't responding to outreach efforts?

In a word: partnerships.

At the Adult Learning Center (ALC) in Charlottesville, our operating philosophy includes a belief that in addition to preparing adult learners to take active roles in the community, we must also prepare the community to appreciate and support adult learners. So, we welcome all kinds of partnerships to the extent that they support our mission and benefit both parties. At a basic

level, any partnership raises the awareness of the ALC program. It gives a face to the need for and benefit of our services.

The Honorable Ken Plum once said that the job of adult education is to "educate the whole community, not just the students in a classroom." He went on to explain that without community awareness, it is very easy for funding to disappear. Partnerships fulfill this need as well. They bring both needed resources and heightened awareness. My role as program manager includes forming, building, and nurturing community relationships. The best relationships become mutually beneficial and productive partnerships.

Here is what I have learned about partnerships over the years: they are time consuming, constantly changing, all about forging and cultivating relationships, collaborative, and essential for our survival.

Continued on page 6 ...

Partnerships

- 1 ALC Partnerships
- 3 LCNV Collaborates
- 4 GED + CRC & Beyond!
- 7 Progress Polls Readers
- 8 OAEL & VCCS
Work Together
- 11 An Interview with
Dale Temple
- 12 An Interview with
Stacey Wright
- 12 Resource Center
Training Calendar
- Back An Interview with
Betsy Mathias

Progress is published by:
[Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center](#)
Virginia Commonwealth University
3600 West Broad Street, Suite 669
Richmond, VA 23230-4930

Permission is granted to reproduce articles from this newsletter. Please credit the author and *Progress*.

Subscriptions are free to Virginia residents. To subscribe, contact the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at:

(800) 237-0178
(804) 828-6521
vdesk@vcu.edu
or subscribe online through ERO.

Submissions and letters are welcome.
Contact Hillary Major, *Progress* Editor, at:
(804) 828-7535
(800) 237-0178
hmajor@vcu.edu
We reserve the right to decline publication.

Director of Adult Education and Literacy
Randall Stamper

VALRC Manager
Barbara E. Gibson

Editorial Team
Hillary Major, *Editor*
Katie Bratisax, *Webmaster*

This product was paid for under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998; however, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department should be inferred.

GED is a registered trademark of the American Council on Education and may not be used or reproduced without the express written permission of the American Council on Education.



A Few Words on *Progress*

We have been hearing a lot about the value of collaborations and partnerships over the last two decades. What we don't hear about nearly as often are successful collaborations and partnerships that have stood the test of time. What do they look like and how do they function? In this issue of *Progress*, program managers describe partnerships that have enabled their programs to maximize their resources, expand services, and reach more students.

Especially in times of economic recession, partnering with organizations that have similar values and goals can help all partners achieve more than they could alone. While reduced or level funding might be the impetus for seeking partners, partnerships that succeed have more than money keeping them together. Successful partnerships and collaborations create synergy that leads to new ways of providing programs and services to benefit our adult learners.

In Albemarle and the Rappahannock Region, partnerships with faith-based organizations have made a difference in the numbers of students reached and served. Susan Erno describes working with a predominantly African-American Baptist church that developed a highly successful program to recruit prospective students to take a GED practice test that is offered at the church on a regular basis. The church makes important contributions by coordinating recruitment across the community, while the adult education program reaches more students than it would have alone. Betsy Mathias has worked with churches that offer ESOL programs in her region, providing tutor training, hosting quarterly luncheon meetings, and making referrals when she has a waiting list. Both of these are examples of win-win collaborations.

Strong partnerships can bring new perspectives and innovative programming into adult education. They can help to enhance services, reach new students, and support retention efforts. As the articles and interviews in this issue demonstrate, creating and sustaining partnerships takes time and commitment, but the rewards can be well worth it.



Calendar

November

17-20

National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention
Chicago, IL

January 2012

9

Registration for VALRC Winter Online Courses Begins

February

1

National Digital Learning Day

3

VALRC Winter Online Courses Begin

March

5

Registration Begins: VALRC Spring Online Courses

21-25

VA Festival of the Book
Charlottesville, VA

25-27

National Conference on Family Literacy
San Diego, CA

29-31

TESOL Convention
Philadelphia, PA

April

9-13

COABE / VAACE Conference
Norfolk, VA

Strengthening Adult Education through Collaboration

by Patricia M. Donnelly

Collaboration is more than just a buzz word at the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia: it's an organizational value. We

strongly believe in collaboration, both internally and externally, and have discovered that the more you reach out and share, the stronger your program becomes. The Literacy Council of Northern Virginia has had the privilege of working with AmeriCorps members through a federal grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service. About 15 years ago, LCNV started working through a program with D.C. Learns to secure two AmeriCorps members. In the past ten years, we have worked with the Virginia State Commission Office for Volunteer and Community Service to apply to the federal grant program. In 2007, LCNV expanded its program to five AmeriCorps service members, four for LCNV and one member for Loudoun Literacy. Last year, we cast the AmeriCorps net further to our literacy neighbors in Prince William County and applied for seven members. LCNV now serves as the fiscal agent for a grant award of more than \$106,000 to manage seven AmeriCorps members teaching beginning-level English language and literacy skills to adults across Northern Virginia including Loudoun and Prince William Counties. Loudoun Literacy Council, which has two members, and Beacon for Adult Literacy, which has one member, are as

happy as we are at LCNV to be hosting capable, energetic young professionals willing to work for 1,700 hours over the course of a year for a tiny living stipend of \$15,400. All three programs are stronger because we are sharing training resources, exchanging program best practices, and sharing the benefit of a federal grant.

The AmeriCorps members start their program year with an orientation day at LCNV. The week-long training continues at their respective organizations, but much of the material is similar across all sites, using best practices and standard materials such as the BEST Plus training and ESOL Basics. Throughout the year, the three CBLOs continue to collaborate on social events, training opportunities, and service projects, bringing both the AmeriCorps members and staff together to share ideas and success stories. In this year's program, we are reaching beyond our literacy organizations and planning activities with regional agencies also hosting AmeriCorps members: Greenbrier Learning Center, Arlington Four Mile Run Project, Arlington Works, and Center for Children and Families. Imagine how much we can learn from each other as the network expands! ■

Patricia M. Donnelly is Executive Director of the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia.



2010-2011 AmeriCorps Service Members

GED + CRC & Beyond!

by Mary Ellen Dreybus

The idea of a potentially **fruitful relationship** between adult education programs and community colleges in Virginia has always been a no brainer for many of us in our field. After all, don't we have the fruit that's ripe for picking: **already identified adult learners who want both a high school credential and postsecondary training?** So why is it so hard to partner? Don't we want the same thing: a seamless pipeline of GED recipients heading off to workforce training or to two- or four-year institutions of higher learning?

There are probably numerous research projects concerning the complex issues of educational hierarchies partnering to accomplish smoother transitions. Any of us who have attempted to battle with the silos of two separate institutions can tell you at least two verifiable truths: each partner must have something worthwhile to be gained from the arduous effort, and it takes time, relationships, and patience.

In this article, I will describe some of our struggles and successes over the last four years in a partnership with Thomas Nelson Community College (TNCC) that has ultimately evolved into a unique Middle College program in which we share responsibilities. I will also include the numbers of clients who have been involved in our processes in order to illustrate that for us the partnership has not been as immediately fruitful as we originally hoped but has had a steadily increasing rate of return. The learning curve for our program has been and still is tremendous as we stretch ourselves to think of transitioning students as part of our core mission.

First, to give a snapshot of the number of clients each year in Hampton who could be offered the support of a transition program, we'll look at some data from our 2009-10 GED testing year. I have chosen 2009-10 numbers because we have the complete data picture, including the results of matching follow-up target goals for core outcome achievement (NRS Table 5) with actual achievements.

In 2009-10, we tested 931 adults for the GED credential. More significantly, 582 of those passed the GED exam. And we know that many of these clients wanted more than a credential.

**Why is it so hard to partner?
Each partner must have
something worthwhile to gain,
and it takes time, relationships,
and patience.**

Based on 931 responses to NRSpro questions, we also know that 31.9% (297) said that one of their reasons for testing was to enter a two-year college. Other significant responses were: 20.3% (189) were testing to enroll in a technical or trade program, 20.3% (189) to enter a 4-year college, 11.8% (110) to receive a skills certificate, and 9.7% (90) to receive job training. Plus, 48.4% (451) of the testers were unemployed but seeking employment, and 54% (503) of the testers were between the ages of 18 and 25.

There's no question we have a large number of potential college and workforce training students in contact with our program. And we always thought we were doing enough for them to make the next jump. We have always had structures in place that we thought supported the transitions that adult learners would want to make. Many years before the collaboration of a Middle College program, we built a partnership with TNCC and with the Peninsula Worklink to help our students make the transition between the two agencies. We have offered monthly OPT and TABE assessment and intake counseling at the Peninsula Worklink One-Stop for many years. Our staff assesses and interviews clients at the regional location and then, based on the clients' home addresses, directs them to appropriate adult education classes all over our region. Likewise, for many years representatives from the One-Stop and TNCC have come to our site each month to present their orientation workshops to our students. Yet, these efforts produced very little measurable data on our National Reporting System (NRS) follow-up target goals. Students in our ABE program were rarely matched as having met their follow-up goals of either entering postsecondary education or employment.

Three and one-half years ago, we began to do the transition business a bit differently. We learned in the spring of 2008 that TNCC might be eligible for a Middle College grant. In working with them to plan for this, we decided to begin with what resources we already had to help GED recipients transition to TNCC. A Cooperative Education Coordinator from TNCC Workforce and I piloted a program that we named *GED + CRC and Beyond*. (The CRC is the Governor's Career Readiness Certificate.) The program was designed for 18-24-year-olds who had already received their GED credential through Hampton's testing center and were interested in short-term training opportunities or in postsecondary classes. TNCC was awarded a six-month grant for a pilot program to serve this age group with workforce training opportunities. Using a mix of this grant and WIA funding, the Workforce wing of TNCC planned to offer WorkKeys training toward a CRC and short-term training for about 15 clients.

So, in the fall of 2008, we sent out 150 flyers to recent GED recipients within the age group and talked about the program to all of our students. Approximately 200 clients were invited to participate in a focus group, and we had exactly 40 responders to our RSVP. Twenty showed up to hear the proposal from a panel of professionals from the college and One-Stop as well as our staff. The focus group was followed by one-on-one interviews and many, many calls and conversations on the part of our staff and that of TNCC. Eleven students completed at least some part of the pilot program. This was not a very auspicious beginning, but it was enough to teach us many aspects of forming a cohort and working with a workforce partner.

In 2009, the Middle College grant was awarded to TNCC. Because of the "success" of our pilot, we decided to continue as a partnership in which the GED content would be taught at our site and the workforce or college entry classes would be offered at the Peninsula Worklink or TNCC. We began to target the learners we thought would be most interested in the program by having all GED registrants fill out a "Future

Goals Survey," which indicated their interest in all types of training opportunities. We also targeted students attending our classes who might benefit from this partnership. In FY 2009-10, 34 students were referred to Middle College from our program, 23 were enrolled, 19 of those received a GED credential, and **12 of the 19 completed the Middle College program.**

Along with our new Middle College partnership, we continued to offer monthly "transitions" workshops at our location presented by either Peninsula Worklink staff or staff from TNCC. These workshops served 78 students in FY 2009-10. However, even with all these structures and processes in place, our **Core Follow-up Outcome Achievement (Table 5)** for 2009-

10 was disappointing. While we met the goals of *Obtain GED* and *Retain Employment*, the two goals we had been working so hard to meet, *Enter employment* and *Place in post-secondary education*, were not met. **Only six of the 17 students (35.29% with a state target of 46%)** identified in NRS

as having placement in postsecondary education as an outcome goal actually achieved that goal according to Table 5. We were even worse in the *Enter employment* category: **only five of eleven students (45.45% with state target of 62%)**. We were already aware of some of the disconnect, since we knew that we had referred students to the Middle College program who did not need even the 12 minimum hours of our GED classes, so these students could not be entered into NRS. Other factors involved the data collection process of the Middle College Program and the varying data entry dates for our two separate institutions. Needless to say, our weighted average percentages for achieving outcomes were a disappointment.

This past year, we referred 29 Hampton students to our 2010-11 Middle College Program. Again, not all of these were students we were able to document on our NRS report. Of the 22 students enrolled in Middle College through Hampton, 16 received their GED credential; three more are still enrolled in our 2011 fall

Continued on page 10 ...

We have always had structures in place that we thought supported the transitions that adult learners would want to make. Yet, these efforts produced very little measurable data on our NRS follow-up target goals for postsecondary education or employment.

Adult Learning Center Partnerships

(continued from front page)

For this article, I have chosen to highlight three diverse partners: a service agency, a faith-based organization, and an employer.

Agency Partner: Charlottesville Department of Social Services (CDSS)

Challenge: CDSS clients need computer skills to obtain and keep jobs.

CDSS clients, mostly single moms, take GED class but also need to find jobs, often before completing their coursework. Barriers have been the online application process, computer literacy skills, and access to computers. Funded by a small Community Development Block grant, ALC has a lab for CDSS clients co-taught by social workers and an adult education teacher. In addition to supplying an instructor, CDSS is designing the curriculum and recruiting students.

Faith-based Partner: First Baptist Church and GED Ambassadors

Challenge: Decline in Official GED Practice Test participants

The Reverend Hodari Hamilton, minister, wanted to support the community by providing an opportunity for more people to be successful



GED graduate Scott Jagers and family, just one month after taking the OPT at FBC

GED completers. The First Baptist Church (FBC), an historic African-American church, is prominently located on West Main Street, very visible, and easy to get to; it also provides good parking options. After much discussion, we decided that using their space for monthly GED Official Practice Tests would be beneficial.

Monthly GED practice tests offered at the Charlottesville First Baptist Church are not out of the ordinary: many programs offer GED Official Practice Tests throughout the year at various locations. What makes this partnership unique is the ownership the congregation has taken in recruiting testers. Kaye Monroe, a GED graduate herself, spear-headed the creation of GED Ambassadors, congregants who also happen to be GED graduates. ALC created GED information packets and Ambassador ID badges. The minister announced the OPT test dates from the pulpit and the GED ambassadors actively recruited from the larger community. Consequently, we have effective outreach partners and now see GED completers who may not have otherwise found their way to the Adult Learning Center.

Employer Partner: UVA Human Resources and Facilities Management

Challenge: Workers need adult education.

UVA Facilities Management has sponsored ESL and GED classes onsite for employees since 2004. UVA Facilities Management, the largest division of the university, employs landscapers, custodians, and housekeepers. Approximately 40 employees take GED and ESL classes annually. Recently, UVA HR has assumed responsibility for the program and is striving to market it to other divisions. "It is part of UVA's mission to create a rich employee experience and to cultivate lifelong learning for all UVA staff," stated Bryan Garey, Director of Employee Development. As evidence of their commitment to their employees, UVA recently featured GED and ESL student profiles in a series of articles in *UVA Today*, writing: "Hassan attributes his enjoyment of life in the States in part to his ESL class. It has helped him communicate with others and adjust to the culture here. Lailuma is looking forward to her daughter attending college. When she and her family lived in Afghanistan under Taliban rule, it wouldn't have been possible." (See <http://www.virginia.edu/uvatoday/newsRelease.php?id=15549> for more stories)

Partnerships are work. Attending and following up on meetings, forging relationships, and maintaining a visible presence in the community all take time and effort. I believe this is time well spent for program managers. The more hands we have to help us, the more people who know our work and why it is important, the easier our load is to bear. ■■

Susan Erno is Program Coordinator of Charlottesville City Schools' Adult Learning Center.



2011 ESOL class at UVA

Tell Progress What You Think ... And Enter to Win an Amazon Fire!

by Hillary Major

In 2010, more than 50 *Progress* readers answered our online survey about the newsletter. More than 40% of respondents had been reading *Progress* for more than 10 years (one wrote, "I have been reading it since it looked like a mimeod church bulletin."), although a few were hearing about *Progress* for the first time. Many of you recalled learning about the newsletter at a specific VAILL conference or from a particular colleague or trainer. For those of you who read and value *Progress*, I hope you will continue this tradition of word of mouth referral by forwarding a link to the latest online issue, printing out an article to leave in the breakroom, or simply mentioning *Progress* to a colleague or collaborator.

Among their favorite aspects of *Progress*, survey respondents mentioned "feature articles from people in the trenches," stories that validate best practice, policy updates, and information on current trends. In describing areas for improvement, a number of respondents wished for a greater variety of voices and perspectives. In response, the Resource Center has issued several Calls for Articles over the VAELN listserv to invite potential new voices to submit articles and ideas, made our (very brief) editorial guidelines

clearly available online, and sought nominees for a "Teacher Feature" column. Comments, questions, letters to the editor, suggestions, and story ideas are always welcome and can be sent to hmajor@vcu.edu.



Amazon Kindle Fire

In order to continue to gather information about which articles are most relevant to you and to bring you the resources you will value most, we've added a survey to the page for the current issue of *Progress* on the Resource Center website. Once you've perused an issue, simply scroll down past the online newsletter and answer our two-question survey to let us know which article you enjoyed most and which was most useful to you in your work. If you leave your name and email, you'll

be entered into a raffle to win an Amazon Kindle Fire (a device we hope will connect you to many other valuable reading opportunities as well as provide a means of exploring some of the latest digital technology). For each *Progress* issue you respond to, you'll receive another chance to win; our prize drawing will be held in June 2012. ■■

Hillary Major is Progress editor and VALRC Publications and Communications Specialist.

Virginia Collaborates

OAEL and VCCS Work Together Across the Commonwealth

by George Bailey and Caroline Thurston

In the past, partnerships between adult education and community colleges in Virginia, when collaboration existed, consisted largely of activities – field trips, campus visits, referrals, etc. They had not been organized or structured into programs. In addition, there has not been specific funding directed to develop them. However, Virginia’s adult education providers and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) have implemented several programs that formalize their partnership and maximize funding.

Both the Office of Adult Education and Literacy (OAEL) and VCCS, through its Middle College Program, are committed to serving low-skilled, low-wage adult learners in programs that further their abilities to obtain gainful employment and/or entry into and successful completion of postsecondary education. These programs are particularly important for workforce development efforts statewide, and the result of combining the resources and expertise of both adult education and the community colleges will, it is hoped, result in greater opportunity for adult students in Virginia to compete effectively in the current, challenging job market. With the increased emphasis on postsecondary readiness for the workplace, education, and career training, it is essential for our students that meaningful partnerships between and among these various providers are formed.

Adult education serves many students who are not yet ready or not interested in going to college; community colleges primarily serve those students who do not need Adult Basic Education (ABE) services. But there is a portion of the population, often working adults, that both can serve. These Adult Secondary Education (ASE) students are only 15% of the total population served by OAEL-funded programs. Of that 15% (approximately 4500 students), only 11%, or around 500 students, set the goal of entering postsecondary education. However, only 275 students per year enter postsecondary

education. OAEL would like to triple that number within the next two years.

Some of the programs that serve this shared population are PluggedIn VA, the Transition Specialists Program, Middle College, Adult Career Coaches, and Shore Success.

PluggedIn VA is a curriculum framework that seeks to provide motivated adult learners with a contextualized General Educational

Development (GED) program integrated with technical training as a means to develop essential workplace skills for entry-level jobs in targeted industries. Central to the PluggedIn

VA curriculum is the development of digital literacy skills, 21st century

skills, and professional soft skills to prepare learners for employment in a variety of contexts as they

complete their GED credential and Career Readiness Certificate (CRC). This program has a flexible

design in order to meet the unique needs of individual learners at varying skill levels.

The program is approximately six months in duration and is broken into two distinct phases (approximately three months each) with four core content areas: GED curriculum and Career Readiness Certificate, professional soft skills, contextualized curriculum (e.g., digital literacy skills, allied health, mining), and 21st century skills.

A new program based on the PluggedIn VA model is PluggedIn Entrepreneurs, a partnership between Southwest Virginia Community College and Southwest Regional Adult Education. This project integrates comprehensive GED instruction into an innovative entrepreneurship curriculum.

The Transition Specialists Program is a partnership with the VCCS. Two transition specialists, in the Northern Virginia and Tidewater areas, are currently working to recruit individuals with incomplete or non-passing GED Test scores back into adult education programs and to identify strategies to assist these students to pass the GED Tests and be

Only 275 ASE students per year enter postsecondary education. OAEL would like to triple that number.

successful in postsecondary opportunities. The specialists' activities include outreach, financial aid assistance, college visits, and working with local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) to identify workforce opportunities.

Middle College is a college recovery program currently running in nine community colleges throughout Virginia. It serves 18-24-year-old students without a GED or high school diploma with the goal of increasing their income and employability by simultaneously pursuing a GED certificate, a community college education, and a workforce certification in a college environment.

Nearly all Middle College programs work in partnership with GED testing centers and local adult education entities to provide such services as free GED testing, GED instruction, and curriculum development, thereby leveraging resources and offering a seamless transition for adult learners.

Adult Career Coaches, serving adult workforce populations, are beginning to appear in a number of workforce programs throughout the Commonwealth. These include local adult education programs; One-Stop Centers; several community colleges' Middle College programs and other bridge programs; and, the VCCS's Great Expectations program, which strives to increase postsecondary education access and success for present and former foster youth. Currently, the work of the coaches serving adults is not standardized throughout the state; however, the VCCS is currently developing a model for adult career coaching in Virginia as well as a certification program that will include identifying the competencies coaches need to successfully assist adult learners to persist and succeed in their educational and career goals.

Shore Success is a collaborative effort between adult education, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), and Eastern Shore Community College and is designed as a college-recovery program to help individuals who have a desire to pursue college coursework but need to attain a GED credential and/or work-readiness skills. The program focuses on eight short-term training options and includes one-on-one tutoring, mentoring, case management, and transportation for a cohort of students.

By partnering with VCCS, adult education hopes to see an increase in enrollment, instructional intensity, and student retention; an

increase in postsecondary follow-up goals; an increase in the number of GEDs earned; and, an increase in career planning and job readiness. Another important aspect of the relationship

Adult education students will develop a sense of "social capital" that will enable them to see that they are, in fact, "college material."

is the hope that adult education students will develop a sense of "social capital" that will enable them to see themselves as successful postsecondary learners with a highly increased potential for employment...that they are, in fact, "college material."

Through partnerships with adult education entities, students in the VCCS bridge programs may utilize adult education resources, such as adult education's GED math and writing specialists, who are generally not available on the bridge programs' budgets. Adult education offers flexible scheduling times and locations (approximately 500 instructional sites and 300 GED testing sites) for Middle College and other bridge students whose schedules may be fixed and who are, therefore, unable to attend GED classes in the Middle College program. This flexibility may be the key to their success.

Virginia is moving in the right direction for our students and our resources. So, what's next? OAEL has issued two incentive grants to expand PluggedIn VA to two more sites. The Transition Specialist project has added a third specialist, to be located in the Danville area, for 2011-2012. The Adult Career Coach model is currently under development with plans to create a training academy specific to working with adults and to locate Adult Career Coaches in all VCCS bridge programs, adult education entities, and One-Stops. Four additional community colleges have added a Middle College program in the last two years. With this expansion has come an increased emphasis on partnerships with local adult education programs.

These partnerships are expected to grow and to continue to provide meaningful opportunities for our students and for workforce development in the Commonwealth of Virginia. ■

George Bailey is Workforce and Communication Specialist with Radford University and works from OAEL's Richmond offices. Caroline Thurston is Coordinator of Middle College and Adult Career Services for VCCS's Workforce Development Services.

GED + CRC and Beyond!

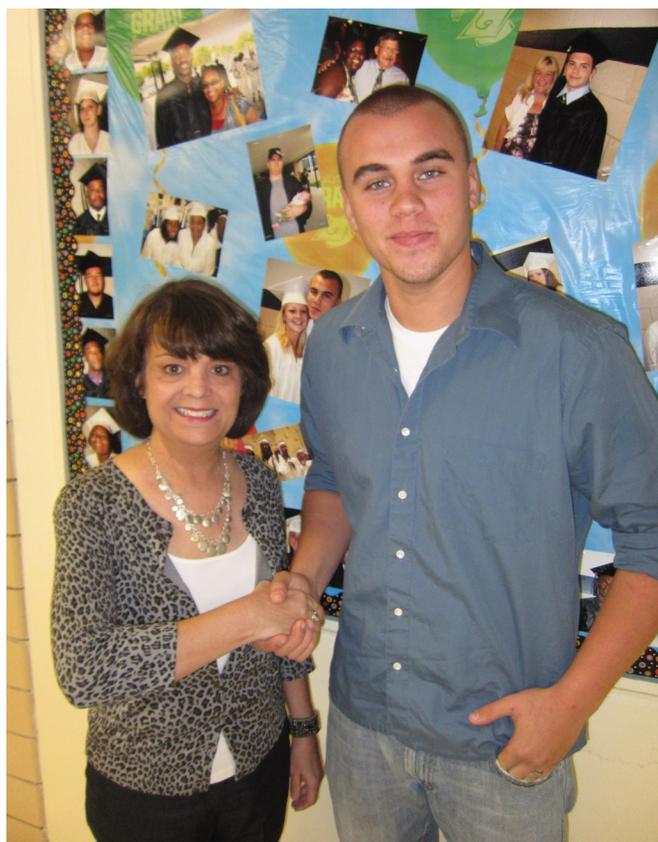
(continued from page 5)

classes. **Sixteen have completed the Middle College program** including receiving a CRC, participating in a career assessment, completing a one-credit Introduction to Computers course, and, for **ten of the sixteen, completing a short-term training program.** (Five young men completed a fourteen-week welding training program; three of these have already been hired full time by either the Newport News Shipyard or Leibherr manufacturing in Hampton. Four young women completed Certified Nursing Assistance training (CNA); two of these have been hired in full-time jobs. One of the ten is taking community college courses.)

Looking at Table 5 for 2010-11, we have seven students entered in NRS in each of the two goals of *Entering employment* and *Placing in post-secondary education*. That makes 14 students who we are hoping will be positive matches for us this fall. While still unsure of the data entry

processes and the deadlines for our partner's measures and with some unanswered questions about our own student exit survey calls, we are hoping for better outcome percentages than in 2009-10 (and keeping our fingers crossed).

And, naturally, we're making changes again this year to smooth the pipeline. Some new strategies we have put in place this fiscal year include having the Middle College representative come to our site more often to meet with potential students, asking for a quicker turnaround in the college's response to student enquiries, making the Middle College students a separate "class" in our in-house data system so that we follow them as a group even when they are enrolled in different classes within our program, and spending more time in our initial screening process getting to know both the goals and barriers of our students. So far this Fall 2011, we have referred ten students to Middle College. Two have already passed their GED exams; the other eight are attending our classes. Three students have been accepted into the 14-week welding training, and all ten are working toward their CRCs. **We have ambitiously set as our 2010-11 Program Goal for 20 students to have *Entering employment* and 20 students to have *Placing in post-secondary education* as their outcome goals.** We are always trying for a larger harvest. ■



Mary Ellen Dreybus with Jonathan Taylor, a graduate of Hampton and TNCC's first Middle College program. Jonathan completed several community college credits and was hired full-time by Hampton City Parks and Recreation. He hopes to eventually become a police officer.

Mary Ellen Dreybus is Director of Hampton Adult Education and GED Programs.

An Interview with Dale Temple

In October, Progress asked program manager Dale Temple to share her thoughts about partnerships. Temple is manager of SPACE, Southside Programs for Adult and Continuing Education, which serves the counties of Charles City, Dinwiddie, Greensville, Prince George, Surry, and Sussex and the cities of Colonial Heights, Emporia, Hopewell, and Petersburg.

What kinds of partnerships have you been involved in?

We have formed partnerships to provide a variety of services such as classes, testing, referrals, counseling, and transition services. Our partners include Social Services, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the Read Center, Rehabilitative Services, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Department of Housing, the Workforce Investment Board, community colleges, YouthBuild, the Salvation Army, Goodwill, churches, jails, federal and local probation and parole offices, the U.S. Army

No negativity: be positive and think outside the box.

National Guard, Fort Lee Army Base, the Chamber of Commerce, and businesses.

Over the years, many services in our region were being duplicated. Therefore, we established a partners' network that meets monthly and adopted a neutral referral form for all agencies to use. In our monthly meetings, we share information and learn about new and existing services offered by each agency; many of these agencies are also represented on our Regional Literacy Coordinating Committee (RLCC).

What is the number one challenge with partnerships?

In order to form long-lasting partnerships, you need to have communication, collaboration, and commitment. In our region, we've been fortunate enough to have this connection among agencies. Funding has not been a major issue in our region because all partners contribute their share to meet the needs of the clients. One barrier to successful partnerships would be a lack of communication in a region.

PROGRESS .: Volume 24, No. 1

What have been your most successful partnerships?

We have a twenty-year partnership with the VEC and Southside Virginia Community College. We have a ten-year relationship with the Department of Social Services providing transition classes to VIEW and TANF clients.

We have had many successful workplace contracts at businesses in the region to provide pre-GED, GED, and ESOL classes to employees. Several businesses provide classroom space for the community to attend classes. The manager of Titmus Optical, located in Petersburg, once said, "This GED program for our employees is the best thing since sliced bread."

Our biggest success has been that we don't have to search for partnerships with agencies and businesses. They contact us now, knowing that we will provide superior services for their clients/employees.

What tips do you have for programs that want to create new partnerships or strengthen existing ones?

1. Network, network, network!
2. No negativity: when meeting with partners, you need to be positive and able to think outside the box.
3. Always be flexible.
4. Show compassion.
5. Be willing to work with others. ■■



Dale Temple (right corner) at a partners' network meeting

An Interview with Stacey Wright

In October, Progress asked program manager Stacey Wright to share her thoughts about partnerships. Wright is manager of West Piedmont Regional Adult Education, which covers Franklin, Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania Counties and the City of Martinsville, Virginia.

What kinds of partnerships have you been involved in?

We're involved a lot in partnerships with the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and also with many businesses. The Chamber of Commerce has been a great partner through their business committees.

Beginning with the original Race to GED, the WIBs began providing funding and outreach, with great results. At that time, the Martinsville City/Henry County Chamber of Commerce partnered with the local adult education program to sponsor

Business IQ, a program to give incentives to participants in workplace education programs.

In Patrick County, we partnered with an educational foundation that provided student scholarships and support for our GED program. The foundation, which was funded through the efforts of former Governor Gerald Baliles, also supported our recognition ceremony at the end of the year.

Big Bird's Big Twins motorcycle business sponsors our Race to GED bike ride each year. The bike ride is an awareness event that also raises scholarship funds. GR Chevrolet out of Stanleytown is our GED golf tournament sponsor, and, each year, they donate a car as a prize for anyone who makes a hole-in-one.

One of our local programs has a strong partnership to serve clients of the court system's Office of Probation and Parole. The local program provides instruction, and Probation and Parole

Make a Date with the Resource Center

by Jeffrey Elmore

Over the past few months here at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, we have been instituting a few changes that we hope make information about our upcoming trainings more accessible to Virginia's adult educators. Two of those changes are a pair of calendars accessible on our website. In an effort to make planning for professional development easier, we now schedule our trainings in 6-month blocks and publicize this information under "Upcoming Trainings" on our site. You can

access this page by visiting our home page and clicking on the "Training" link at the top, then clicking on "[Upcoming Trainings](#)" in the list on the left side of the page. This is the list, by month, of all the face-to-face trainings we will be offering during the current 6-month time period (for now, July - December 2011). The list contains titles, dates, locations, and SRNs for each training offered. (The SRN is the unique session number for each training; VALRC uses this number in record keeping, and you can use the SRN to search ERO's Course Catalog and register for a specific training.)

We have a second calendar using the popular Google Calendar platform, and it, too, is accessible through our website. On the VALRC home page, in the lower right-hand corner, you will see a calendar icon. Simply click this icon and it will take you straight to this month's Google Calendar page. Here, in a monthly calendar format, you will find links to information about all of the trainings we currently have scheduled. By clicking on a training title in the calendar, you will be taken to a page containing specific information about that training. The information

Fall 2011 **..PROGRESS**

The screenshot shows the website for The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC). The header includes the organization's name and a search bar. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Content Areas, Training, VAACP, Publications, Provider Directory, and About Us. The main content area is titled "Upcoming Trainings" and lists "VALRC Calendar of Face-To-Face Trainings: July-December, 2011". The page is organized by month, with "October:" and "November:" sections. Each month lists several training sessions with their dates, titles, and SRNs. For example, in October, there are trainings on Technology Resources in Rocky Mount, Numeracy for non-math instructors, ABE/GED L152 in Henrico, CASAS in Fairfax, ESOL L153 in Prince William, Teaching Listening & Speaking Skills to Adult English Language Learners, and ABE/GED L251 in Cumberland. In November, there are trainings for Support Staff 1 at Literacy Council of Northern VA, ABE/GED Level 2, Session 3 in Richmond, ESOL Basics in Alexandria, Support Staff 1 in Dublin, ESOL Basics in Fishersville, Numeracy for non-math instructors in Williamsburg, Developing Writing Skills in Adult Learners in Williamsburg, Study Circles for Teaching Reading to English Language Learners in Fairfax, Teaching Reading to Adult English Language Learners in Rocky Mount, and ABE/GED L252 in Lebanon. A "December:" section is also visible at the bottom.

provides excellent follow-up services.

We've also started a partnership with the *Martinsville Bulletin*. Each week our GED students submit recipes, and the bulletin features a "Cook of the Week," so we get a positive GED story in the news.

Can you describe one challenge you've faced with a partner and how you've addressed it?

The biggest challenge, once you develop a partnership, is the follow up -- getting back in touch with the customers for whom you're referring or seeking services, and getting those participants' stories back to the sponsor.

What's been your biggest success in working with a partner business or agency?

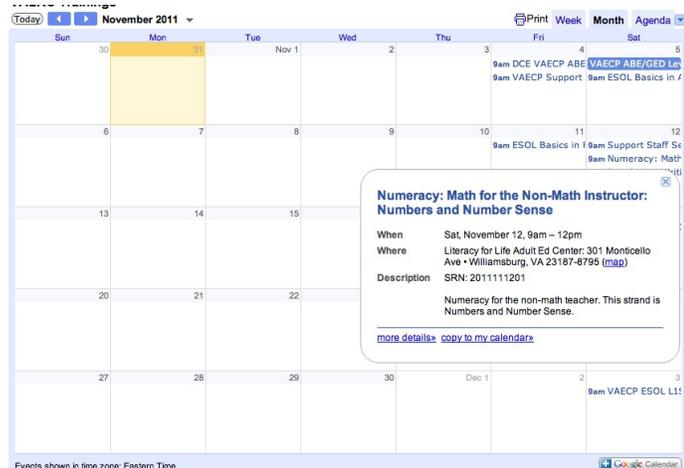
Our biggest success is just the awareness of adult education in the community. The research says that, even with all of our efforts, the best

outreach is word of mouth; so, keeping ourselves planted in people's minds, in a positive way, is a constant outreach effort. You want people to keep talking and telling others about your program.

What tips do you have for programs that want to create new partnerships or strengthen existing ones?

My best advice is to continually contact partners. You can't form a partnership and then just say, "We have a partnership." You need to stay in touch. Other organizations' personnel and focus will change over time. To be successful, you need to meet with them on a regular basis and keep them informed about your program and your successes. ■■

includes a specific address/location for the training and accompanying link to Google Maps that you can use to get directions to the training site; the date, start time, and finish time of the training; the SRN; and a brief informational paragraph about the training itself. For Virginia Adult Educator Certification Program trainings, you will find the afterwork deadline just below the SRN.



As you plan for your professional development, there are a few things that we want you to know. Registration for any of the trainings on the calendar typically opens 6 weeks before the training date, and an initial announcement about the training will be sent through the VAELN listserv about 4 weeks

before the training. A follow-up announcement may come about two weeks before the training. Registration for most trainings closes at 4 p.m. three business days prior to the training. If you are in ERO and trying to register for a training that has not yet opened, you will get a message saying that the session is full or that you do not meet certain restrictions. All of our trainings do have a minimum number of registrants (usually 12), and if we do not meet the minimum number by the close of registration, that training will be cancelled. Those who have signed up will receive an automated notification through ERO. We will do our best to reschedule any cancelled training but cannot guarantee rescheduling, and the new date may not be within the same 6-month time period.

Planning has now started for the January-July 2012 calendar. Jeffrey Elmore has taken training requests from program managers and will be contacting programs to coordinate details for the next round of trainings. We expect to post the January-July 2012 training calendar on December 5, 2011. We look forward to working with all of you to meet your professional development needs! ■■

Jeffrey Elmore is Training Coordination Specialist at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center.

An Interview with Betsy Mathias

In October, Progress asked program manager Betsy Mathias to share her thoughts about partnerships. Mathias is manager of RARAE, the Rappahannock Area Regional Adult Education Program, which serves the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford and the city of Fredericksburg, Virginia.

What kinds of partnerships have you been involved in?

I have worked with most community agencies in our area – social services, health clinics, the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and the One-Stop Center, Germanna Community College, local school divisions, libraries, churches, Goodwill, University of Mary Washington – anyone who shares a common mission and has a need I can support.

Can you describe one challenge you've faced with a partner and how you've addressed it?

The challenge was perceived competition for students, as if we don't have enough needy adults to go around. I continue open discussion about what we each do well and what we need from each other to reach our students.

What's been your biggest success in working with a partner business or agency?

We have a great partnership with churches in our area. They began teaching English to refugees about ten years ago and kept calling me about training opportunities and resources to help them. So, we decided to start a network of churches teaching ESOL students. We provide training for their volunteer tutors, we host a luncheon and resource sharing session once a quarter, and we refer ESOL students on our waiting list to the churches. During one luncheon, several tutors were talking about a particular student from Guatemala. When his name was given, we discovered that he was attending our adult ed classes and also three different church classes. Talk about a motivated student!

What tips do you have for programs that want to create new partnerships or strengthen existing ones?

1. Find out what you have in common, who you are trying to help.
2. Discuss what you need and what you have to offer in the way of services.
3. Acknowledge the benefits of working together, both personally and professionally.
4. Stay focused on your purpose for the partnership.