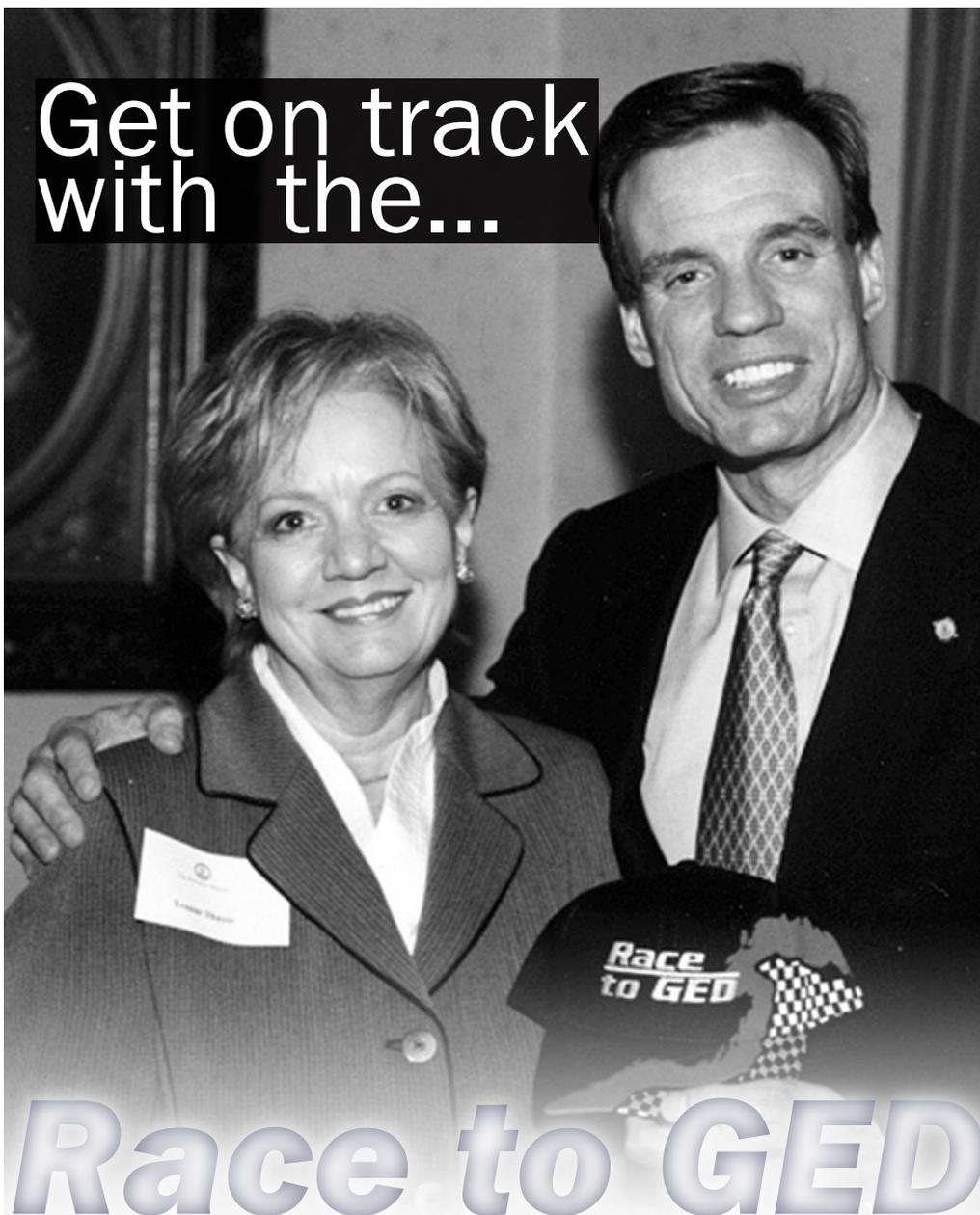


Get on track with the...



Race to GED

by Randall Stamper

Are you ready? Things are about to get exciting. Fast, loud, and full-coverage. The Race to GED marketing team has met several times over the last three months, fleshing out a statewide campaign targeted at getting potential GED students into your classrooms. Building on the momentum of the Fast Track pilot programs, Race to GED will also include targeted marketing for traditional GED students as well as ABE students.

The team, led by Elizabeth Hawa, Associate Director of Adult Education

and Literacy-Virginia Department of Education, has developed a wide variety of materials focused on outfitting adult practitioners across the state with the marketing tools and skills they will need to recruit in their localities. The team has also developed some wonderful partnerships that should elevate awareness of the GED and its benefits.

Race to GED is part of Governor Warner's Education for a Lifetime initiative. As the key adult education project in Virginia, Race to GED is envisioned as the first step toward the Governor's

Marketing

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institutes
2004**

information enclosed ▶

goal of doubling the number of GED certificates awarded by the end of 2005. Speaking of the Race to GED recently, Governor Warner expressed his excitement. "The bottom line is that a better educated workforce will attract better employers offering higher paying jobs. I feel so strongly about this program because I know that it will improve people's lives, Virginia's economy, and the future of the Commonwealth."

Dr. Yvonne Thayer, director of the Office of Adult Education and Literacy,

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PROGRESS

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A Few Words on Progress



The Race to GED is on! Since last fall, when Governor Warner announced his initiative to double the number of GEDs awarded in Virginia by the end of 2005, the planning has been fast and furious to ensure that we are successful. For the Governor's perspective on his initiative, see the front-page article. For more details, see Dr. Yvonne Thayer's letter to the field (pp. 8-9), which outlines the key components of the Race to GED and describes some of the resources that will be available.

Local adult education and literacy programs will soon have an opportunity to join the Race to GED. To help prepare them, we have asked marketing consultant and former professor, Dr. William R. George, to write a user friendly guide to marketing the GED. As a supplement to his article, we have included a compilation of marketing resources available on the Internet. Articles explaining Steck-Vaughn's GED 21st Century, PBS/KET's GED Connection and Workplace Essential Skills, as well as the final phase of GED as Project round out this GED-marketing-themed issue.

So let's start our engines, gather our resources, and get ready to Race to GED.

Barbara E. Gibson
Manager, VALRC

Calendar of Events

<http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/vaelc/events/calendar.asp>

June

21-22

Workforce Improvement Network Summer Institute
Harrisonburg, VA / <http://vawin.jmu.edu>

July

19-20

Inquiry Process Institute - Christopher Newport University
Newport News, VA / <http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/si04/>

22-23

Reading Institute - Radford University
Radford, VA / <http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/si04/>

28-30

English Literacy Institute - Marymount University
Arlington, VA / <http://www.aelweb.vcu.edu/si04/>

August

18-19

Program Manager's Meeting (tentative)
Location TBA

October

7-9

ProLiteracy Worldwide Conference
Oklahoma City, OK / <http://www.proliteracy.org/conference/>

November

3-6

AAACE Annual Conference
Louisville, KY / <http://www.aaace.org>

Hello and welcome to Click, a regular technology column in Progress. As webmaster at the Resource Center, I hope to share my passion for technology, featuring tools and tips relevant to the educational field.

Hackers Hit New York Times. Microsoft Gets Slammed By Worm. These may read like sports headlines, but they're not. They're harbingers of a coming battle, stories of relatively minor skirmishes along the front lines of the technological revolution. As our work and our lives become more deeply entwined with computers and the Internet, computer security will become increasingly more important. And while perfect security may be unattainable, the following easy tips can help safeguard your computer and documents.

Keep Updates Up-to-Date

From time to time, software developers discover problems in software and release updates (or patches) to fix those problems. It's important, as a user, to keep current with these updates; otherwise, the problems they are designed to fix might allow a malicious hacker to gain access to your computer. Most software companies provide updates to their software free of charge. For instance, you can find updates for Microsoft Windows at <http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>. Some applications often have built-in updating options, whereas others still require that you manually download updates from the web.

Virus scanning software is also updated regularly to react to new viruses that appear. Every major virus scanner has a method for updating its software, and many of them can do it automatically. Check the Help documents (or with tech support) if you're not sure how to configure your software to download updates automatically.

Think of updating your computer just as you think of taking your car for

a regular tune-up. If you set aside a little time each month to update the software you own, your computer should run better and longer as a result.



Software updates and better security for your computer are just a click away.

Find virus scanners online:

- **Norton Anti-Virus**
www.symantec.com
- **McAfee VirusScan**
www.mcafee.com

None Shall Pass

Your password is as important as the key to your house. Don't write it down anywhere it can be easily found. Don't give it to anyone you don't trust implicitly. (Bank or account personnel should never have to ask for your password or pin – if they do, consider switching to a different service.) Because your password is the first (and sometimes only) barrier between a hacker and your personal data, you should choose carefully. Specifically, don't use the names of relatives, birthdates, addresses, or plain dictionary words. Instead, the best password is a random sequence of numbers and letters (in upper and lower case), for example 7xL3iQ4r. If you're worried about remembering it, a helpful method is to type it over and over again in a text program like Notepad or Word until your fingers have memorized the motions. Then, after a few days of repeatedly typing it to log in, it should come naturally. Hackers, on the other hand, will have to work much harder to break down your door.

Save, Backup, Repeat

Saving often may seem like common sense, but it's hardly common practice. Develop the habit of saving first and often. When you first create a new

document, be sure to save it immediately with a name that will make sense to you later. In most programs, saving a file is as easy as hitting Ctrl-S on your keyboard.

Find software updates online:

- **For Microsoft Windows**
<http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com>
- **For Microsoft Office**
<http://officeupdate.microsoft.com>
- **Other software**
www.versiontracker.com
www.download.com

So why not get into the habit of saving whenever you take a mental break? Once you've acquired the habit of saving often, you'll have less to worry about if something goes awry while you're working.

Backing up your files may not be as easy as saving them, but it's no less important. Frequent backups store multiple copies of a document so that the file can be recreated if the original is deleted or corrupted. While you can buy software and hardware for backups, you can accomplish just as much by copying your most recent documents to a floppy disk, Zip disk, external hard drive, or CD-R. How often you need to backup your files depends on how much you produce in a given time period, but if your backups occur less than once a month, you're probably asking for trouble.

What's Next?

In the next issue, we'll discuss how to put spam back in the can and keep an eye on spyware. Until then, practice the habits of updating your software, saving, and backing up your documents frequently. ■

Got a question or suggestion for a future topic? Email sdgrainer@vcu.edu with the subject "Click on this."

The Real Scoop on the **Virginia Reading Project**

by Susan Holt

HAVE YOU NOTICED THE INTEREST IN PRODUCING BETTER READERS? *Reading Today*, April/May 2004, puts it this way, "...as a profession, we find ourselves at a time when there has never been such widespread public and political support for increasing reading performance for all students and for erasing the pernicious and well-documented achievement gap. There is genuine public interest in improving reading outcomes for all learners" (Farstrup, 8).

Desiring the best instruction for Virginia students and recognizing interest at the federal level for research-based reading instruction, Dr. Yvonne Thayer, Director of the Office of Adult Education and Literacy in the Virginia Department of Education, initiated the Virginia Reading Project. In October 2003, a pilot training team of instructional specialists and program leaders was gathered together to train a small group of teachers in research-based instructional strategies for teaching reading. The project would also collect data on the effectiveness of the training and provide training materials for the ABE/GED programs in Virginia.

The training modules are based upon two research documents and research carried out by the Equipped for the Future Reading Project. The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) and the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) collaborated on a document that focused on adult learners, *Research-Based Principles for Adult Basic Education Reading Instruction*. Where there were gaps in the research on adults, the authors of the report developed ideas and trends from the K-12 research in the *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* (2000).

According to an article in the *Journal for Adolescent & Adult Literacy* (Bell, Ziegler, & McCallum, 2004), the *National Reading Report* (2000) found that even though many adult educators have

a K-12 teaching background, they may have received very little instruction in the mechanics of reading. The authors went on to state that "...there is a continuing mismatch between what teachers know and what research supports as effective reading instruction....somewhat more surprising is the relatively low level of knowledge adult educators possess about vocabulary and comprehension strategies" (543-544). Therefore, the experts see a need for professional development

"... though many adult educators have a K-12 teaching background, they may have received very little instruction in the mechanics of reading."

to train adult educators in the latest research findings.

In Virginia, the Governor's initiative, Race to GED, has raised the bar, setting a goal of 20,000 students passing the GED by the end of 2005. This initiative has three components: Fast Track, GED Prep, and Adult Basic Education. In order to accomplish the goals of this initiative, programs need to analyze the learners' needs and develop plans to move them along through the levels as quickly and efficiently as possible. As noted in the Reading volume of the *GED as Project* series, "...reading is a thinking skill, and thinking skills are strongly emphasized on the GED 2002"

(Workforce Improvement Network, 2003, 1). Improving reading skills and critical thinking skills will help students to pass the test, move into better jobs, and lead easier lives.

The Virginia Reading Project training modules focus on the four key areas of reading instruction:

- Alphabetics: includes phonics and phonemic awareness
- Fluency: the ability to read with ease and speed
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

In April, Amy Trawick and Susan Holt presented the finished project to instructional specialists. The modules are to be used as professional development tools in the specialists' programs. On July 22 and 23, 2004, this training will

be offered to adult education practitioners at the Reading Institute at Radford University. The original pilot team will be on hand to facilitate the training and to share their insights and experiences.

Many, many thanks to the project pilot team and their teachers who contributed their time, effort, and enthusiasm to this project. The core team members are:

- Linda Allen, Russell County Schools
- Karis Berry, Newport News Public Schools
- Susan Grymes, Richmond READ Center

Continued on page 13...

A Crew Chief's Perspective on

The Race to GED

by Stacey Wright

The pace car is heading around the track, and the field is moving forward, building momentum. The pit crew teams are standing ready to make adjustments. They watch intently as the field of cars accelerates toward full speed. As they roar past, it is clear which cars are from the same team, ready to help each other get to the front. The noise is deafening; the desire to go racing is clear.

Strategies are being quickly and carefully formulated—when to pit, when to refuel, what to do if his misclutch breaks the linkage or that missed gear causes a loss of speed. Hours of practice are put to the test. The pace car is ever ready to regroup the pack and re-establish the momentum. The press and the fans are watching intently. Your competitors are watching. The green flag is up. GO RACING!

Crew chiefs (program managers) must carefully formulate all of the options and anticipate the bumps in the road. They must be rich in data—past, present, and projected. They must be able to speak with confidence and clarity about their work. The starting line is to be aware of all of the richness of your area. At a minimum, either commit to memory or to a computer file this list of tools: census information (area, state, and nation), national surveys and studies that have gained popularity for quoted material, quality improvement measures, the NRS standards, your local data as it relates to the NRS goals, the Workforce Investment Board members and committees (their goals and policies), your area(s) poverty levels, the school system's

useful data, the Chamber of Commerce goals as they relate to workforce development, every scrap of data you can gather about your own program's performance, information from the mandated WIA partners, and the legislation (law and code) as it pertains to adult education. Know what is available from the state office and resource center. Know business needs. Find out what has made other teams successful, and familiarize yourself with your own crew's capabilities and strengths. Know the other options for sponsors who are willing to come to the skybox and contribute. Know what makes them want to come to the skybox or even buy a ticket. Build your Race community, and fill it with knowledge about the workings of the race.

Add to this list the components of progressive, continuous staff (crew) de-

velopment, extraordinary communicative abilities with all professional genres (administrative, instructional, school division(s), peers, and other participating agencies), and delivery of services to internal and external customers and you've got the beginnings of the race on championship night. Know the culture and the climate, and look for the fit. Toss in the research and development as the team's commitment to stay at the top of the field forever.

While all of this is occurring, please note that it is imperative to communicate with the other programs that are developing racing teams. Shared information keeps the entire sport at peak performance condition and spawns the spin off types of services that are equally as imperative to success. Crew confer-

Continued on page 13...

Partnerships with local drivers, businesses, and schools are a great way to market your program. Don't forget other types of racing -- bicycle, foot, swimming, and horse races are all possible events at which you could raise awareness about your services.

PEYTON SELLERS

Race to GED
Completing Your Education

Birth date: 10/20/83
Height: 6'1"
Weight: 210
Hometown: Danville, VA
Education: Spring '04 Graduate Candidate,
Danville Community College
Car Owner: Clarence Pickard,
Sellers Racing, Inc.
Crew Chief: H. C. Sellers
Shop: Danville, VA

Danville Community College
CLARENCE'S STEAK HOUSE
Advance Auto Parts

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Race to GED: Marketing Strategy Guidelines

by William R. George, Ph.D.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: DOUBLE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE EARNING THE GED CERTIFICATE IN YOUR COMMUNITY. Since more than a million working age Virginians do not have a GED or high school diploma, a statewide goal of doubling the number of folks earning a GED to 20,000 per year should be viewed as reasonable. In marketing terms, this translates into many potential buyers of literacy training. However, doubling sales in a short time frame is never easy! Thus, effective marketing may be the only way for you to reach this goal. But like everything else worth doing, it requires a lot of analysis to make it work. With the Race to GED theme as a starting point, there are two approaches to market literacy services to those most likely to benefit from GED training: mass marketing or target marketing [market segmentation].

The Race to GED theme is helpful in either marketing approach. The “accelerate your earnings by getting a GED” message is clear. This promotion will raise awareness of the importance of getting a GED to those who are exposed to it. It helps to get the attention of potential GED students. However, it is unlikely to cause anyone to sign up for GED certificate training per se. You must use marketing to convert this awareness and attention into the desired behavior of becoming a GED student. While Race to GED may be the keystone to a mass marketing approach, it is just the tip of the iceberg in a targeted marketing effort. You should consider both marketing approaches before deciding which one will be most appropriate in your community.

Mass marketing is appropriate when you believe all of those without a GED or high school diploma have similar wants, needs, characteristics, and behaviors. If all potential GED students are basically the same, then the marketing strategy is simply communicating to them about getting a GED. Depending primarily on publicity and public relations, you “spread the good news about getting a GED” and wait hopefully for students to sign up for GED training. This over-emphasis on just the communications component of the marketing mix should be avoided because often the response is only a few students. Instead, all marketing mix

variables should be considered.

The seven marketing mix variables are service offering, promotion/communications mix, place/location, price, participants, physical evidence, and service process. These variables are the factors that influence buying behavior. You want to design each of them to attract potential GED students. For a mass marketing strategy the marketing mix is generic because all potential GED students are assumed to be similar. Here, a typical marketing mix might include

“While a mass marketing approach costs less, takes less time, and requires less analysis than targeted marketing, it usually does not work.”

the following features. The **service offering** [#1] is traditional one-on-one literacy training without any adjustments for the particular students being trained. The **promotion/communications mix** [#2] focuses on a general message that is assumed to be meaningful to all potential GED students. The Race to GED materials are ready made so that little additional information is needed in the particular community beyond when, where, and how. The thinking here is that if we just communicate with these folks and get their attention, they will sign up to

be a GED learner. The **place/location variable** [#3] is one or two sites usually convenient to the GED Program Office or GED tutor. The **price** [#4] often only focuses on the fact that the GED learner is not charged any money for this training. The **participants variable** [#5] only focuses on the learner and tutor. The **physical evidence** [#6] consists only of standardized training material. Finally, the **service process** [#7] is also likely to be standardized – e.g., general orientation at a first meeting, one lesson plan for all students, etc.

While a mass marketing approach costs less, takes less time and requires less analysis than targeted marketing, it usually does not work. There are several reasons why it does not work. One reason is because it relies primarily on the promotion techniques of publicity and public relations while ignoring the other marketing mix variables. But the primary reason is that mass marketing assumes that all potential GED students are alike in most aspects of their lives. When this is not the case, target marketing is more effective

Target marketing is dividing the total market of potential GED students into fairly homogeneous groups where any group might be selected as a target market to be reached with a distinct marketing mix. Partitioning the total market into various groups is a challenging task that requires creativity -- i.e., recognizing fundamental differences among the total

group of folks who might enroll as GED students. Once this task is complete, you have a number of potential target markets within your total market for GED services. Then a two-step marketing strategy is developed: 1] select a target market from the groups; and, 2] create a marketing mix based on that target market's characteristics. If you wish to attract a second group of potential GED students, then a second marketing strategy is required with a different marketing mix. Guidelines for partitioning the total market of potential GED students, for selecting specific groups as target markets, and for creating marketing mixes follow.

Guidelines for partitioning the total market

Analyze the most general characteristics of your potential GED learners. Basic segmentation criteria such as gender, occupation, job status, income, age, or last year of schooling, might be appropriate for the first partitioning of your community. Since these are overall community criteria, there may be common segments for GED programs across Virginia. Segmentation criteria not used in this step may be helpful in the next step where further segmentation is required. Note there is no one, or right, way to segment a market. As an example of partitioning, your community might have potential

GED students who are in the following three groups – segments of women, laborers, and immigrants. [As a reminder: a mass marketing approach assumes that all three of these groups are motivated and behave in a similar manner!]

Guidelines for selecting target markets

Analyze traits more specific to your particular community. If, for example, your community has a small number of immigrants, then only women and laborers are your relevant groups. Now further segmentation is necessary. Additional segmentation criteria might

Continued on page 12 ...

Different backgrounds and lifestyles demand different marketing approaches. Here, we have an example of how marketing mixes will vary depending on the demographics of the target market.

Marketing Mix	Women: 21-30 years old, with 1-2 children, part-time employment	Laborers: 35-50 years old, \$20,000 to \$30,000 income, worked in same factory for 10 years; employer must downsize to remain competitive
Service Offering	GED certification “to get steady work to support my family” [All of the specifics of the other marketing mix variables comprise the total service offering.]	GED certification “to keep my job and maybe get a raise later on” [All of the specifics of the other marketing mix variables comprise the total service offering.]
Place	teach small groups in the training room of a hospital which is co-sponsoring this program; this hospital is on several major bus routes; offer the classes on Saturdays to allow the students to keep their part-time jobs; offer to give “scholarships” toward day care; etc.	training room at the factory with the employer as a co-sponsor of this program; offer the classes one or two nights a week after work; a van to provide transportation home since the buses have stopped running by the end of the class session; etc.
Price	provide bus fare and lunches, etc.	provide a quick meal before class begins, etc.
Participants	GED student; tutor; co-sponsor personnel who interact with the students during the training day; involve family members especially at the graduation ceremony.	GED student-workers; tutor; employer personnel to arrange for the class and/or interact with the students during the training; etc.
Physical Evidence	hospital training room; training manual developed around health care industry; framed diploma; etc.	company training room; training manual illustrated with company rule books, order forms, product specifications, etc.; framed diploma
Process	double sessions on Saturdays [rather than weekly 2 hour sessions]; etc.	just an extension of the work day; etc.
Promotion/ Communication	develop a brochure with the slogan “accelerate your earnings by getting a GED” and pictures of local GED graduates in the work setting of a hotel or nursing home; hold an informational open house for potential students every quarter with GED alumni and business people as speakers; enlist alumni to recommend two or three potential students every time a new program is offered, etc.	hand out a leaflet in the pay envelope with the “accelerate your earnings by getting a GED” and “help us beat the foreign competitors by getting a GED”; illustrate with employees at another company in town who have gotten their GED and kept their job; etc.



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 2120

RICHMOND, VA. 23218-2120

Dear Adult Education Colleagues,

This is an exciting time for adult education. Our role as a major provider in workforce development has been recognized, and we are partnering with numerous agencies and employers to enhance adult secondary education services across the commonwealth. Governor Mark Warner created the Race to GED as part of his Education for a Lifetime initiative. Governor Warner has challenged us to double the number of Virginians getting a GED by December 31, 2005. To accomplish this goal, the Governor has asked the Department of Education to implement the following initiatives:

- Creation of pilot "Fast Track" GED programs in at least five regions of the state by 2004
- Targeted marketing efforts across the commonwealth aimed at educating adults about the financial and personal benefits of getting a GED

Fast Track Pilots

Currently, there are Fast Track programs in Danville, Hampton, Prince William, Russell, and Virginia Beach. The results are already positive, and we look forward to expanding the number of Fast Track sites in 2004-05. Adult learners are telling staff in these programs that they prefer a structured, quickly moving instructional program to prepare for the GED.

Marketing Committee

A Race to GED Marketing Committee has been organized and has met several times in the last three months to plan and implement a statewide marketing program. This is a dream come true for all of you who have told us over the years that marketing was a missing element in our adult education programs. We are elated to have this opportunity supported by the Governor, and I would like to provide a status report on steps that have been taken and plans for the future.

Partnership with NASCAR

In announcing the marketing initiative, the Governor said that he would form a statewide partnership with NASCAR and NASCAR racing teams to convey the message that workers can increase their earnings by getting a GED. On May 13, 2004, there was a Race to GED news conference and special event at Richmond International Raceway (RIR) hosted by Doug Fritz, President of RIR, with Governor Warner, racecar drivers Elliott and Hermie Sadler, and other dignitaries in attendance. During race weekend, Dale Temple's son, Brandon, who has Race to GED painted on the hood of his Legends racecar, circled the track while an announcement was made promoting the GED. We are planning to be present at the September RIR race, and in the future, we hope to have a presence at smaller racetracks around the state.

Marketing Toolkit

The Marketing Committee is developing a Race to GED Marketing Toolkit to be distributed at the program managers' meeting on August 18th and 19th, 2004. The toolkit will include a GED brochure for adult learners, a

general informational brochure, a brochure for employers, a Race to GED flyer, a fact sheet with hard data, a family literacy video, public service announcements for radio and television, sample giveaway items, sample press releases, and instructions on how to use the toolkit with various markets. On August 18, there will be a special training session on using the materials in the Toolkit for promoting GED, adult education, and family literacy.

Partnership with the Virginia Lottery

At the Governor's request, we are working with the Virginia Lottery to partner Race to GED with as many Lottery activities as possible. The Lottery graphics staff is developing a backdrop that will be used at events where the Lottery has a presence, with our display beside the Lottery table. We will hire staff to work with the Lottery on site at these events that include the following in 2004:

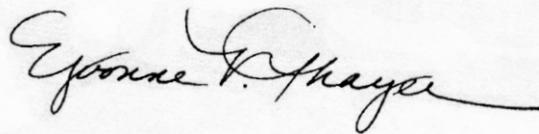
- Summer Concert Program, Richmond, May – August
- Virginia Pork Festival, Emporia, June 9
- Harborfest, Norfolk, June 11-13
- Salem Fair, Salem, June 30 – July 4
- Galax Fiddler's Convention, Galax, August 12-14
- NASCAR/Bristol Fan Appreciation, Bristol, August 26
- Soul Music Beachfest, Virginia Beach, August 28-29
- Hillsville Gun Show, Hillsville, September 3-6
- Hampton Bay Days, Hampton, September 10-12
- Virginia State Fair, Richmond, September 23 October 3

I invite you to volunteer to work at events located in your county or city. No one can provide better information on your program and GED testing than you and your colleagues. Patty Shortt, specialist for workforce development in the Office of Adult Education and Literacy, can provide information on these events. Other possibilities with the Lottery include displays in retail stores that sell Lottery tickets and a GED spot as a part of the televised Lottery drawings.

Partnership with the Richmond Reading Ambassador

We have established a partnership with Angie Miles, Richmond Reading Ambassador and former news anchor for the Richmond CBS affiliate station. Angie begins a new radio program on April 26 in the Richmond area, and she will air a 30-second Race to GED advertisement and a two-minute GED success story segment each week. The success story interviews will be conducted by telephone and will take approximately 15-30 minutes. Please contact Patty Shortt with suggestions for GED graduates from any locality who have a success story they are willing to share with Angie and her radio audience. Also, we plan to have the audio tapes that Angie develops available for your use with radio stations in your locality.

This is only the beginning, and we anticipate many more partnerships that will contribute to doubling the number of GEDs awarded in Virginia. It would be impossible to discuss every aspect of the Race to GED marketing program, but I hope this has provided useful information on the major components. We are delighted to have this leadership role at the state level, and we hope you will respond to our challenge at the local and regional levels. Success with the Governor's initiative will require a concerted effort among all agencies and organizations that serve adult Virginians who do not have a high school credential.



Yvonne Thayer, EdD - Director
Office of Adult Education and Literacy

The GED Essay Scoring Process

Part II of the Language Arts Writing Test presents the candidate with a single topic based on general knowledge on which the candidate must offer an opinion or explanation. The GED Testing Service (GEDTS) chooses topics based on their potential to interest and engage the writers. No specialized knowledge is required to respond to a topic. Writers are encouraged to draw on their own observations and experiences.

Candidates will have 45 minutes to write about the assigned topic. The directions encourage candidates to plan their essays, to make notes before writing, and to revise and edit their final products. Candidates will write their final essays on two ruled pages in the answer sheet

booklet, which also provides two pages of scratch paper for drafting and notes.

Each essay will be scored holistically on a four-point scale by two trained readers, and by the Chief Reader if the two scores differ by more than one point. Essay readers will evaluate each essay based upon its overall effectiveness using the GEDTS essay scoring scale, which draws readers' attention to elements of support, elaboration, organization, and control of grammatical conventions.

The GED Essay: Holistic Scoring Process

The holistic scoring process rests on two assumptions: (1) that each of the factors involved in writing skill is related to all the others, and (2) that no one factor can be separated from the others. Thus, readers must judge each GED essay as a whole. A misspelled word, a

comma splice, a sentence fragment, or a misplaced modifier carries no independent weight in such a scoring model. The candidate is writing in a tense, timed situation without recourse to a dictionary, and without the customary time for deliberation.

If the writing contains some mistakes, the reader will judge the general quality of the paper most effectively by reading it as a whole. Similarly, if the writing is poor, that will be part of the reader's first impression. ❖

Reprinted from the September/October 2000 issue of GED Items, the newsletter of the GED Testing Service. The authors are Arthur M. Halbrook, Writing Test Specialist, and Marion M. Mohr, a member of the GEDTS Writing Committee.

Interactive Curricula Can Help Students Finish Fast Track

by Jason Guard

For those who are on the verge of GED readiness, Virginia's new Fast Track programs are offering innovative resources for success. As every adult educator knows, our learners come to us exhibiting a wide array of aptitudes, abilities, and attitudes. Often, each individual needs a different tool for study, practice, or instruction, from hands-on tutoring to self-guided exercises. Understanding our learners' differences allows us to direct some to prepare and test quickly while we make more time for the intensive instruction others require. Three products currently available could provide teachers and tutors with that extra time they need.

There are three programs that can help accelerated learners prepare for both the GED and employment at a rapid pace – Steck-Vaughn's *GED 21st Century* and the multi-faceted PBS Literacy Link offerings of *GED Connection* and *Workplace Essential Skills*. These programs offer the gambit of practice, diagnostic assessment, instructional activities, communication skills, and critical thinking development. For the Fast Track learner,

these programs allow enough freedom to vary the subject material and to determine how much time one spends in any area.

With *GED 21st Century*, learners have access to a series of computerized practice tests that give diagnostic feedback about areas of deficiency. This will suit those who lack an exposure to the GED test's specific style of questioning one's critical thinking skills. After the first round of practice tests, learners can either retake practice tests in each GED section, hoping that their scores will improve until they are prepared for the full-battery, or the learner may take quizzes called "Skill Builders" in each content area suggested by the *21st Century* program according to the practice test results.

The technological centerpiece of *GED Connection* is its online learning environment. This sophisticated and comprehensive resource is available to anyone with web access. The core of this tool is a series of exercises beginning with a 25-question practice test, module assignments for holistic learn-

ing, activities for specific lessons in GED skill development, test taking tips, and a post test. Each step may be evaluated and responded to by an online tutor. Ideally, a learner will go through each of these exercises in order, taking the time to experience the imaginative, real-life scenarios that PBS/KET offers through internet links. However, *GED Connection* also includes thirty-nine television episodes that are broadcast by PBS stations and some local educational access stations throughout the state, as well as a set of colorful workbooks. Each element stands on its own, but only to the extent that the learner will dedicate the time to carefully follow the detailed explanations and activities.

Workplace Essential Skills (WES), a sister program to *GED Connection*, has been aired on local PBS stations around the state for several years. The TV shows, workbooks, and online lessons offer realistic scenarios that convey constructive advice for career advancement. This program helps the user find a suitable job, plan for upward mobility, communicate successfully in challenging

Final Phase of *GED as Project* Tested and Ready to Debut

by Marcia Phillips

The final phase of *GED as Project*: Pathways to Passing the GED features the two remaining content areas: Science and Social Studies. The task of organizing these two massive subjects, consisting of several separate areas of study – biology, earth science, chemistry, physics, history, geography, government, and civics – was daunting. This was compounded by the reality that these areas get significantly less attention than math and reading in the GED classroom. But we believe that this phase is an integral part of the whole project and can be used to reinforce other content areas.

situations, and tackle the mathematical and analytical problems that are common in the workplace. WES also provides instruction in the pre-GED skills necessary for advancement into *GED Connection*.

Using this trio of programs, Virginia's Fast Track learners can enter the workforce as self-starting, technologically competent, clear communicators who will shape our society for years to come. If you would like to hear more about the Fast Track program, please contact the adult education offices in Hampton, Virginia Beach, Prince William County, Russell County, and Danville/Martinsville. If you would like to find out more about any of the programs mentioned in this story, please contact me at the GED Helpline 877-376-9433 M-F between 8:30 a.m.– 4:30 p.m. ■■

Jason Guard is currently the GED Assistant at the Resource Center operating the Virginia GED Helpline, specializing in distance learning, and coordinating a Literacy Link virtual classroom.

Rather than being organized around the massive content areas, this phase is organized directly around the PA tests. It has served as a reality check in many cases, a reminder to learners and instructors alike about what the test actually contains. With the changes in the test and its focus on higher order thinking skills, identifying facts is no longer sufficient. This is markedly true in the Science and Social Studies PAs. Very few of the questions can be answered by identifying supporting details. Consequently, test takers have to apply what they know from other situations and draw conclusions from material they read.

The most noticeable change in the new science and social studies tests is that about half of them feature charts, graphs, maps, or pictures. This reflects the increased usage of such visuals in our everyday lives. But graphs and charts are not studied in quite the same way that general reading material is. With visuals, some context is established from the type of graph used or the organization of the chart, but that is not enough to understand the visual on its own. One must also draw from the surrounding material that the visuals illustrate or complement. Understanding this is critical to success on the GED 2002. Therefore, the first three Learning Projects in the new book consider graphs, charts, maps, and pictures.

All of the new Inquiry Activities (IAs) offer excellent opportunities for integrating other content areas into the inquiry process. Graphs of all kinds can work back to math. Social studies and science topics are great sources for essay writing; in fact, writing up a science experiment provides an excellent organizing principle for clear focus and effective topic development. Enhancing reading skills and understanding of the types of questions can be effectively done in any content area.

Three sites again provided field testing for *GED as Project, Science and Social*

Studies. These were Mt. Rogers Regional Adult Education Program, Prince William County Public Schools Adult Education Program (for the third time), and Pruden Learning Center in Suffolk. Each of the Inquiry Activities was tested at least once, making this field test the most thorough of the three phases.

From the onset of the field testing, the teachers were enthusiastic and shared some excellent insights that helped us to fine tune the final product. The teachers liked having an approach for the visuals, especially since these are so important on the test. They were particularly pleased by having a way to approach test-taking skills within the content areas. Responding to their feedback, we developed a logo that identifies test taking skills. These logos appear in both the teacher notes and student direction. We have also adjusted the appendices based on comments from the field, including in them a wide range of links, documents, graphic organizers, maps, and some inexpensive, hands-on science activities that can be conducted in any classroom.

As we observed the sites, we were all taken with the ease and effectiveness with which the learner groups worked together. In one case, the instructor worked one-on-one with learners still following the IA and the process. Several of the Prince William instructors have thoroughly adopted the process, making it their own. In several cases, as they worked with the process, instructors modified an IA to work more effectively with their particular classes. We're excited by the success and anxious to debut the final phase to the field at large. Phase 3 will be introduced this summer at the Inquiry Institute, July 19 and 20 at Christopher Newport University in Newport News. ■■

Marcia Phillips is the Project Coordinator for Phase III of GED as Project and served as the Lead Specialist for Phase II.

Marketing Strategy Guidelines

(continued from page 7)

include community characteristics such as age – 21-30, 31-45, etc.; family size – single, 1-2 children, 3 or more children; job status – unemployed, part-time employment, full-time low wage job, etc.; community needs – a local employer with job opportunities for manual laborers, etc.; size – a larger group means more students; etc. Relevant segmentation criteria depend on the needs of your

Guidelines for creating unique marketing mixes

Formulate the seven marketing mix variables based on the specific characteristics of the target market selected. The starting point is always the service offering variable. It should be based on “benefits sought” by the target market and the basic GED certification features. Marketing research about the target mar-

“It is more likely potential GED students will respond when they experience the marketing mix that meets their particular wants, needs, characteristics, and behaviors.”

community [i.e., citizens and employers] and your organization’s resources.

Going back to the two relevant groups of women and laborers, one example of a selected target market might be: women who are 21-30 years old, with 1-2 children, and part-time employment. This target market might be selected because they are your largest group of women and your community has job opportunities in hospitality and health care industries. While both women and laborers may have the basic need of getting a job or keeping-or-getting a better job, your marketing strategy must be vastly different for each selected target market to get it to enroll in GED training. These differences require creating a unique marketing mix for each selected target market.

Another example of a marketing strategy using laborers as the target market with a very different marketing mix illustrates why target marketing is so powerful. This time the selected target might be: laborers who are 35-50 years old, earning between \$20,000 to \$30,000, working in the same factory for at least 10 years where the employer must downsize to remain competitive.

ket is very helpful in determining what offering will appeal to them. Nonprofit organizations have to be especially careful to not create a service that the target market “should want because we know best” and then trying to impose it on the target market.

The **place variable** focuses on how the organization facilitates the service offering and makes it accessible for the target market. Issues here might include: location, transportation, training days and hours, day care, etc.

The **price variable** includes the

While both women and laborers may have the basic need of getting a job or keeping-or-getting a better job, your marketing strategy must be vastly different for each selected target market to get it to enroll in GED training.

traditional charges for any service, plus energy, opportunity, and psychic costs. “Free” GED training sessions that require a two hour bus ride with three transfers [energy costs] and time off from work every week [opportunity costs] are probably far too expensive for many GED candidates. A big sign on the door that says “GED TRAINING” may em-

barrass the students [psychic costs] and cause many of them to turn around and go home.

Participants are defined as all those involved in the service delivery – e.g., GED student [and family members], tutor, other GED personnel, other GED students, co-sponsors, GED certificate holders, etc.

The **physical evidence** acts as a surrogate for the intangible GED service offered by the organization. The environment where the GED training is offered, the training manual, and the GED certificate are examples of how this service is made tangible in the market place.

The **service process variable** is the flow of activities and actual procedures by which the service is delivered. GED training via the Internet is a very different service process than that experienced by a small group of five GED students in a class room.

Once you have an understanding of the first six marketing mix variables, then **promotion techniques** are developed using advertising, personal contact [selling], and sales promotions such as public relations and publicity. Your goal is to persuade the target market that your service offering will meet their needs based on this unique marketing mix. It is also

important to manage actively positive word-of-mouth for your program by developing an involved alumni group of GED graduates and a group of employers who have hired your graduates. These folks can speak for your organization in ways that are perceived by the community as being more relevant and reliable than any other promotion tech-

Barbara Gibson Accepts Leadership of VALRC

by Randall Stamper

The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center is pleased and proud to announce that Barbara Gibson has accepted the position of manager of the Center. Barbara served as the interim manager for approximately six months following Susan Joyner's retirement. Her impressive resume includes positions as Associate Director of the Virginia Lit-

eracy Foundation and Vice President of Virginia Blood Services. She brings nearly fifteen years of experience in the adult education field to the Resource Center, as well her expertise in fund development, marketing, community relations, and strategic planning.

In addition to managing the Center, Barbara will retain her position as

Associate Director of the Virginia Literacy Institute. Her dedication to adult literacy and exceptional leadership skills are known to many in our field. Those who have worked with her attest to her acumen. Please join us in welcoming Barbara to the Resource Center. ■■

niques you may use.

Marketing mixes for the selected target markets of women and of laborers are illustrated on page 7. Note that the marketing mix for laborers would be irrelevant to the women in the first target market selected and vice versa.

It is more likely potential GED students will respond when they experience the marketing mix that meets their particular wants, needs, characteristics, and behaviors. This is the reason targeted marketing to enroll GED students is more effective than mass marketing. Clearly it requires more analysis, takes more time and costs more. However, it is far more likely to get you to your goal of twice as many GED graduates.

The marketing strategy guidelines provide the structure to repeat this analysis with other target markets – e.g., immigrants, etc. You don't have to reinvent the wheel. Just follow the guidelines carefully. Make thoughtful decisions when selecting your target markets and encourage creative ideas when designing unique marketing mixes.

A final note: if someone who is not specifically defined to be in the target market is motivated to sign up as a GED student because of this marketing effort, you will most likely want to enroll them in a community-wide program. ■■

William R. George, Ph.D., taught services marketing and management for thirty-five years, including six years at Virginia Commonwealth University, 1973-1979. He retired from Villanova University in 1999. Bill has worked with literacy groups since the early 1990s.

Virginia Reading Project (continued from page 4)

- Jenny Leadbetter-Bolte, New River Community College
- Betsy Mathias, Spotsylvania Vocational/Technical Center
- Lynda Waldenville, New River Community College

Our appreciation also to the staff of the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center, who coordinated, supported, and will now be the conduit for this training to reach adult educators in Virginia. ■■

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Susan Holt coordinates communications with the regional specialists and oversees a variety of other projects for the VALRC.

Crew Chief's Perspective (continued from page 5)

ences should be routinely scheduled to enhance performance and secure the progress of each and every team. Everyone has a role, and it takes everyone's hard work to even get to the track in the first place. The entire sport excels when all of the teams succeed.

Managers can take Race to GED to extreme sports, to bike road rallies, to Olympic tryouts, to the winner's circles, to victory lane, or to the local store. Managers may find that they need to fine tune or begin with a shorter race to build the local fan base. The work is fuel injected, and once the systems are in place, the events can re-occur in the locality as well as in new complexes.

Program managers (crew chiefs)

must be inventive, spontaneous, adaptive, and progressive. Built from good research, best practices, and knowledge skill sets, the chassis of the Race to GED machine offers a sleek and speedy ride to get to the GED finish line and continue to the next level of competition.

Find your team a champion, a sponsor. If one is not obvious, then grow one or sponsor your own team. Mix the special octane, prepare your car and your team, and take a deep seat. The pace is definitely going to accelerate. ■■

Stacey Wright is the Program Manager and Planner for the Danville/Martinsville area. Her program is one of the five Fast Track pilot programs.



The Race to GED marketing team, from left to right: Sue O'Connor, George Bailey, Dot Preston, Randall Stamper, Dale Temple, Stephen Grainer, Dr. Yvonne Thayer, Barbara Gibson, Elizabeth Hawa, Beth Coakley, Kathy Anderson, and Shelia Harper. Not pictured are Susan Utt, Patty Shortt, Victoire Gerken Sanborn, Charmayne Vincent, Eric Weiss, and Darlene Johnson.

Race to GED *(continued from page 1)*

points out that the Governor's support of Race to GED indicates that adult education professionals have been recognized as a crucial part of workforce development (see letter pp. 8-9). As such, our responsibilities are great. The marketing team has focused on supporting local programs as they strive to live up to those responsibilities. In August, at the program manager's meeting, a toolkit will be debuted. The toolkit will include a wealth of materials such as a marketing manual, sample public service announcements, flyers, brochures, speaking points, and press releases that all feature the Race

to GED message.

"Recruitment is the first step toward the success of Race to GED," Governor Warner said. "To that end, the team is working hard to put together a comprehensive marketing toolkit that local programs will be able to rely upon when recruiting in their regions."

The support and excitement surrounding this initiative is overwhelming, and the next year should be very busy. Are you ready? ■

Randall Stamper is the publications manager for the VALRC.

Workforce Improvement Network to hold Summer Institute

WIN will hold its Summer Institute for adult and workforce educators on June 21 and 22, 2004. We'll gather at James Madison University in Harrisonburg for two days of intensive study, to catch up on what's happening in the adult and workforce education fields, and to just catch up with each other.

The Institute begins on Monday with registration from 12 noon to 1 p.m. Then, we'll enjoy a catered lunch and a welcome from Dr. Yvonne Thayer, Di-

rector of Adult Education and Literacy, Virginia Department of Education. After Dr. Thayer's address, we will break into focus groups.

This year's Institute will have two areas of focus: GED Training in the Workplace with Carol Coffey and Building Websites for ESOL Students with John Vaughan and Pamela Brown. Participants will choose between these two workshops.

Fees are \$85 for those who register

before May 15, and \$95 for those who register between May 16 and June 1. No registrations will be accepted after June 1. Fees include a catered lunch on Monday and Tuesday and a buffet breakfast on Tuesday. Lodging is extra. For a downloadable registration form, complete schedule of events, and more information, please visit the WIN website at: <http://vawin.jmu.edu>. ■

Internet Marketing Resources

by Victoire Gerkens Sanborn

I want to share a secret: Marketing and public relations are different concepts. The first requires research and a broad strategic plan. The second is about promotion. Most people I encounter, even those who are well informed, use these terms interchangeably. In order to help you use the resources described in this article for their intended purposes, I offer some descriptions from “Basic Definitions: Advertising, Marketing, Promotion, Public Relations and Publicity, and Sales” found on the online Free Management Library (www.managementhelp.org):

“Marketing is the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you’re continuing to meet the needs of your customers and getting value in return. These activities include market research to find out, for example, what groups of potential customers exist, what their needs are, which of those needs you can meet, how you should meet them, etc. Marketing also includes analyzing the competition, positioning your new product or service (finding your market niche), pricing your products and services, and promoting them through continued advertising, promotions, public relations and sales.”

“Public Relations activities include helping the public to understand the company and its products. Often, public relations are conducted through the media, that is, newspapers, television, magazines, etc. ... Public relations is often considered as one of the primary activities included in promotions.”

The following Internet marketing sites will help you develop or refine your program’s message and communicate it effectively to all your stakeholders:

- **Marketing Your Adult Literacy Program: A “How To” Manual**, Revised 1996 by Barbara E. Smith, EdD, with special contributions from Kay S. Peavey, Hudson River Center for Program Development. Download this PDF document at:

www.nald.ca/fulltext/hudson/marketcover.htm.

This practical, 50-page manual takes you step-by-step through the process of identifying market segments, developing a theme, choosing promotional activities, packaging, identifying resources, and completing your marketing plan. With this guide, an experienced facilitator can help program staff develop a comprehensive marketing strategy for their organization.

- **Public Relations and Marketing for Family Literacy Programs**, by Diane Pitz Hesseman, The Family Literacy Resource Notebook, Ohio Literacy Resource Center, 1998. Download this PDF document at: <http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/famlitnotebook/toc.html>, and click on “Chapter 10.”

This valuable resource focuses more on public relations than marketing, covering such essential components of media relations as press releases, public service announcements, and publicity materials. Be aware that Ohio Resource Center materials are heavily promoted (many are available for loan at VALRC as well), and that the media contacts are based in Ohio. (This summer, the VALRC will provide a comprehensive list of statewide and regional media contacts on its website.)

- **The Nonprofit FAQ: Marketing**, Internet Nonprofit Center, a program of The Evergreen Society. www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/

This excellent site provides info about all facets of program management in a frequently-asked-question format. Click on “Marketing” in the third column of the matrix, where you will find answers to questions on recruitment and marketing ideas, strategies, and research.

- **Free Management Library**, developed by Carter MacNamara, PhD and hosted by the Manage-

ment Assistance Program. Type www.managementhelp.org and click on “Marketing” in the third column.

This comprehensive resource covers major marketing subjects for non-profit and for-profit organizations and also offers self-guided training modules.

- **Marketing, Publicity, and Public Relations:** The Literacy Support Center, Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center. Type www.aelweb.vcu.edu, scroll down to “Projects” and click on Literacy Support Center. Click on “Marketing & Public Relations” in the center column under Program Development.

This site will link you to other resources for planning, designing publicity materials, facts and statistics, marketing, media relations, public relations, and national marketing and public relations organizations.



Still want more resources? Here are a few suggestions, but without annotations. Enjoy!

- **Marketing Survival Kit on Optimal Marketing**
www.marketingsurvivalkit.com
- **FAQs: Marketing, Georgia Center for Nonprofits**
www.nonprofitgeorgia.org/faq-marketing.html
- **Marketing: NonProfit Library, Help 4 NonProfits & Tribes**
www.help4nonprofits.com/H4NP.htm (Scroll down to “Marketing”)
- **The NonProfit Times: The Leading Business Publication for Nonprofit Management**,
www.nptimes.com (Scroll down to e-Newsletter links, click “Past Tips,” and scroll to “Marketing”) ■■

Victoire Gerkens Sanborn is Director of the Literacy Support Center at the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center at Virginia Commonwealth University.



summerinstitutes2004 information enclosed

Lifelong Learning in Fairfax ESOL

A *adult Education teachers always admire their students for the time and effort they make to come to class and learn. However, occasionally unique students come along and amaze everyone who meets them. This year the Fairfax County Adult ESOL program has been fortunate to enroll three exceptionally motivated learners who are overcoming physical disabilities to attend English classes.*

Mohamud Jama is deaf, yet he attends a Beginning ESOL class at Willston School. In his homeland, Somalia, he was unable to go to school, but he and his mother developed their own home sign language. When the U.S. sponsored his family, Mohamud began to take advantage of opportunities to learn. First, a cousin who is also deaf began to teach him American Sign Language. Then, Mohamud appeared at Willston by himself with only a note stating that he was deaf and asking if he could take the placement test. Once in class, with the help of a signer, he has worked hard to make progress. For the graduation ceremony at Willston, he taught his classmates how to sign the

Pledge of Allegiance. Mohamud eventually wants to attend Galludet College and become a hairdresser.

Yasin Ahmed, also from Somalia, has cerebral palsy but attends a Beginning ESOL class at Woodson High School. After spending a year in a Kenyan refugee camp, Yasin received U.S. sponsorship. He was given his first wheelchair, received medical care, and began to attend school. The wheelchair has given him the freedom and independence to travel on the Metro, including taking the bus to English class. Yasin wants to go to college to study math and science. He says he wants to study forever.

Raul Romero attends a Literacy class at Holy Cross Lutheran Church under

by Carolyn Kulisheck

the sponsorship of the Make-A-Wish Foundation. He was referred to the foundation when he was seventeen and under treatment for leukemia. Instead of choosing to go to Disney World or to meet Michael Jordan, he chose to take English classes! The Make-a-Wish Foundation drove him to register for class in a stretch limousine, much to his amazement and to the wonder of the registration staff. His daily bus ride to class is much less exciting and takes him 90 minutes each way. Raul came to the U.S. from Mexico hoping to find employment. After some more English classes, he aims to get his GED and to find a better job.

The determination of these students, for whom studying is neither easy nor convenient, has redoubled the efforts of their teachers to give all students the very best instruction. ■■

Carolyn Kulisheck is an ESOL Specialist with Fairfax County Adult ESOL.