



Adult Learning Center News

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Giving adults in Strafford County a second chance, a fresh start or a new opportunity.

Director's Message

Deanna Strand

Wherever you are on your educational journey, Career Pathways is here to help.

Dover Adult Learning Center has long been a leader in helping students throughout Strafford County reach the critical milestone of completing high school. Hundreds of students each year have earned GED certificates and starting this year will earn the HiSET (the new high school equivalency test in NH). But, the learning and the guidance do not stop there. Education is a lifelong journey, and like any journey one needs to prepare.

High school completion is just the first step. If you have a high school diploma or a high school equivalency

(GED), we can still work with you to help you improve your skills.

Pam Shore, DALC Career Pathways Coordinator, says anyone who needs to improve their academic skills, in math, reading or writing, or English speaking or writing can get help at DALC. "Maybe you want to go to Great Bay Community College or Granite State College but you haven't been in school for years, the Career Pathways program at Dover Adult Learning Center can help you."

Students can academically prepare by strengthening their math and reading skills for the Advanced Manufacturing Program in Rochester, a composite manufacturing training program that is run by Great Bay Community College.

DALC has a lot to offer people as they take this journey. "Maybe you are a young adult, and you got your GED through an Options program at your high school, and you realize maybe you missed out on some of the academics; this is the place to brush up on those skills. You can come back to DALC," says Shore.

Counselors can advise students on a variety of topics. First is skill building, including reading, writing and math; but also taught are college and career skills like computers, study habits, test taking strategies and time management.

Wondering what training is needed and what skills you need to succeed in it? Or if you have some of the skills already? Career exploration is great way to get a better understanding of what it would be like to work in a field before committing to it.

Once a student has the skills they need, applying to college can still seem overwhelming. Career Pathways counselors can assist in that process as well; what forms and information you will need, and where to go to get services.

President Obama challenged every American to commit to at least one year of higher education or post-secondary training and set a goal for the country: by 2020, America would once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. DALC continues to play a key role in this effort.

Be a part of our success:

- ◆ Serve on a committee
- ◆ Become a volunteer tutor
- ◆ Join our Board of Directors
- ◆ Take an enrichment class
- ◆ Become a Friend of the Center by making a donation
- ◆ Include us in your estate planning
- ◆ Become a corporate or event sponsor

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In Their Own Words...My Best Gift By Faith Wang

Before I was 10 years old, I never heard about the birthday cake and the birthday song. What I did was just studying at school, helping mama to do some housework, feeding the pig, and so forth. My parents were always busy planting rice and vegetables, watering and taking care of them. They didn't have enough time to know what I was thinking about. Of course, my parents never heard them before because the birthday cake and song are Western traditions.

One day after I finished my class in school, I walked home as usual. When I was stepping into my room, the birthday song, the most beautiful one I ever heard, was sounding. My cousins walked toward me with a round thing that looked like a piece of wood. I never forgot their beautiful faces in the candle light. Their voices were so cheering and soft, it made me cry. I was totally moved by what

they did. It was at that time I realized that I was not just a little girl. People liked me. I was not nothing. My parents never praised me and never said they loved me. As a little child I didn't know why. All I could do was try to be the best. What I needed was just to be accepted.

Year after year, I grew up, went to the university, got a good job and had my own family. Finally I knew it's the Chinese education tradition why my parents never praised me. They didn't want to keep their kids being proud of what they did because this would make them unsuccessful. I knew they loved me, but why didn't they tell me? If I had understood their feeling, my childhood would have been full of happiness. I never told anybody about this special birthday, including my husband. It's a secret of mine and the most beautiful memory in my deep heart. It's the best gift which made me understand what I was and encouraged me to do the right things, not just to do something for the praising.

In Our Own Words... is a collection of original writings. In poetry, personal reflection and artwork, they reveal their diversity, as well as their commonality as learners.

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Center Stars - Eli, Arthur and "Lisa"

In June 2011, Eli came from Iran to the United States with little self-confidence, she claims. She says now she has friends, feels good, and has self-confidence. She says that Americans are helpful and treat her with kindness.

A year ago, Eli began attending ESOL classes at Dover Adult Learning Center. She now attends classes five days a week: level 3 with Lien



Harris, pronunciation with Joyce Malley, grammar with Bill Badgley, and meets with a tutor, Andrea Harkness. She has perfect attendance. And, she speaks carefully and clearly, enunciating with care. She laughs as she admits that she probably has a better American accent than her husband.

Her husband is the reason that she is in the U.S. After six months trying to get clearance, he was able to come to the U.S. to work on his PhD in mechanical engineering at UNH. He has maybe another semester before he will complete the degree. Eli almost laughs as she says she obtained her visa in a week. She thinks it is because she came on a F2 visa, which means she cannot work. In Iran, she had a Master's in architecture from Iran University. She worked for six years in interior design. Because of her visa limitation, she cooks and cleans at home for her husband. She does not complain, but looks forward to when it is her turn to get her PhD. She will need to go to another state to find a program in her field.

As she talks, it is noticeable that she wears jeans, fashionable boots, and a sweater. Yes, she is Muslim, but says she is not very religious. Here, she does not have to wear the monito, or long jacket, and does not have to cover her head as she does in Iran. She speaks with enthusiasm and

positive confidence, so it is clear she will find her way, enjoy her time, and probably educate Americans who meet her, such as this writer.

Two students in Carol Birch's ESOL class have earnestly been working on improving their English. They both were in Jodi Edward's [Level I] class last year, and both progressed to Carol Birch's [Level II] class this year. You will find them there every Tuesday and Thursday evening working on their pronunciation and writing, with a lot of laughter in between. "They obviously care so much and try so hard," said Carol. "They are amazing people!"

Arthur has been coming to classes at DALC for two and a half years. He quietly searches for words to answer questions. He says he comes to classes "to practice for communication." In class he works on English grammar, writing in English as well as learning new words.

He claims both his wife and daughter speak English better than he does. He came to the United States in 2008 from Indonesia. His parents were farmers, and he worked with agricultural fertilizer. Arthur and his wife were able to join their only daughter, who is studying design at New England College in Manchester. As he found work at Goss in Durham rather than Manchester, it necessitates a separation



from his family which he accepts with grace. They all get together every weekend, sometimes going to Boston and sometimes gathering in Manchester.

If the United States is brought up in conversation, Arthur's face beams. He says he loves the freedom. As to the food, he enthusiastically says he enjoys everything from pizza to hamburgers.

Although he can drive, he says he enjoys walking and is known to walk from

Somersworth to Dover and back. Coming from a country with two seasons, warm and cool, Arthur smiles as he speaks of the four seasons in New England. As to whether he enjoys the snow, he politely replies "so, so." And, yes, he has thrown a snowball. At whom was not mentioned in his smile.

Herawati, or "Lisa" for those who cannot pronounce her name, also came from Indonesia. Lisa studies English in Carol's class now and was in Jodi's class last year.

"I worked in Indonesia for twenty years, and I was bored," said Lisa. She was a marketing supervisor in a pharmacy and decided she wanted to live in the United States. She

has been living in the US for seven years years and has been working in motel housekeeping for six years



She enjoys it, but says the lifting makes her back sore. Carol says, Lisa is exhausted, but she finds the energy to come to class each night. Learning to communicate better in English takes on more of an urgency when considering Lisa's home life. Love blossomed when she met an American and married him five years ago.

Although modest, Lisa obviously understands more English than she will admit. She laughs as she recounts the American tv programs she watches. They include Tom and Jerry cartoons, and "Everyone Loves Raymond," which she enthusiastically claims is hilarious.

Like Arthur, it is obvious she enjoys her life here in the States. Lisa says she exercises at The Works with yoga and relaxes in the hot tub. And, as for snow, Lisa who comes from the very large city of Jakarta, also says she enjoys the snow "so, so" and adds that she enjoys it from inside her house!

A Donor's Tale - Bank of New Hampshire

Apple Harvest Day Fun Translates into "Big Bucks" for DALC from Bank of New Hampshire. The Bank set up a booth at Apple Harvest Day that really put the fun in fundraiser. Visitors to the booth got to try their skill at a bean bag toss game. For every toss that landed in a hole, they won play money, which they then got to deposit into the collection box of the non-profit of their choice: Dover Adult Learning Center, The Children's Museum or Strafford County Community Action Partnership. Representatives from each organization staffed the booth alongside employees from Bank of New Hampshire, including Lori Hults, who created the game and the booth. Dover Adult Learning Center of Strafford County received a check for \$400.



Dover

ADULT LEARNING CENTER

Strafford County

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Save the Date!

Red's Run for a Better Community Sunday, April 13th

- ◆ The race kicks off from Dover City Hall at 10 a.m. Check-in is 8-9:30.
- ◆ Run, walk, stroll, pledge or captain a team.
- ◆ Forms are available for at our office in the McConnell Center, on our website, www.doveradultlearning.org or at www.reds-race.com.

Education News - There's a new test in town...

What is the HiSET?

The ETS High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) certifies a candidate's attainment of academic knowledge and skills equivalent to those of a high school graduate. HiSET is the standard for high school equivalency in New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts.

How do I register for the HiSET?

First create an online HiSET account at:
www.http://hiset.ets.org/test_takers/
You will need an email address for this step. If you do not have an email address, we can help you set one up.

How do I schedule an exam?

After you create your online HiSET account, visit our office during regular office hours to schedule and pay for your exam.

When is the next test?

For an up-to-date testing schedule please visit www.doveradultlearning.org

Located in the McConnell Community Center, Dover Adult Learning Center of Strafford County helps adults in the Strafford County area enhance their life-coping skills and improve their lives through basic education, job training, high school completion and enrichment classes. We help our students become more effective lifelong learners, family members, workers and citizens.