

GED RECIPIENTS HONORED IN TAYLORSVILLE CEMEMONY



(Sisters receive GED Certificate at Catawba (CVCC) - Five sisters from one family recently participated in a ceremony recognizing GED graduates. The proud graduates are (left to right) Cynthia Bolick, Linda Jonas, Sandra Bolick, Geraldine Fox and Teresa Hefner.)

It was an evening of comeback stories. Not athletic comebacks, but comebacks of spirit and self-esteem.

Forty-six persons who had earned their GEDs in the past year marched in caps and gowns to receive their certificates Thursday, July 30, at East Taylorsville Baptist Church.

Four of the graduates spoke at the ceremony, sharing the stories of their struggle and success in obtaining a high school equivalency certificate.

Linda Jonas spoke for herself and four of her sisters, who all graduated at the ceremony on Thursday. Mrs. Jonas, the eldest of eight children, dropped out of school when she was 16 to take care of her siblings so her mother could go back to work.

She later married a minister and raised five children. Her husband died three years ago, and she realized then that she needed to get a job. She found it difficult to get a job with no work experience and without a high school diploma.

One of her sisters convinced her to study for her GED. The five sisters shared their struggles as they worked toward their GED. They knew their goal was attainable, since their brother Mark Pope had earlier earned his GED.

The sisters recognized that night included: Cynthia Bolick, who actually earned her GED one year earlier; Sandra Bolick, Geraldine Fox, and Teresa Hefner.

"My mother begged me (not to drop out)," Mrs. Jonas said. "I told her at that time that if the day ever came when I regretted my decision, I would find some way to get my diploma." Smiling at her mother in the audience, she said, "Well, Mama, I kept my promise."

Mrs. Jonas said her experiences proved to her, "You're never too old to learn, and never too old to go back to school."

She added, "If you want something badly enough, no matter what the circumstances, you can do it."

She concluded by addressing her younger sister Pam, who had encouraged her sisters to study for the GED but who has not yet passed all the GED tests. "Thank you," she said. "We'll be here next year at your graduation."

Other graduates who spoke at the ceremony included: John Treadway, who recounted how he had battled drug and alcohol addiction as well as studied for his GED. "I'm trying to turn my life around, not only education-wise—but spiritually," he told the crowd. Rebecca Byers, who worked two jobs while studying for her GED. She graduates the same year her son graduates from Alexander Central High. "I have always felt people who graduated were better than myself," she said. "I can see clearly now—they were better off, but not better." Wade Bumgarner, who worked many years as a logger and truck driver until two years ago when a log rolled off a truck onto him. Disabled by the accident, he realized he could no longer rely on physical strength to get a job. He returned to earn his GED 21 years after he dropped out of high school. He now plans to enroll as a college student at CVCC.

The graduates were addressed by Ray "Flap" Chapman, Mayor of Taylorsville, who congratulated them on their determination and willpower in getting an education.

During the ceremony, the student with the highest GED test scores was also honored. This student, designated the honor graduate, was Karen Barnes.

Margaret Allen, CVCC



Thanks to those who contributed news and helped:

Bobby Anderson, Florence Taylor - NCDCC; Ken Boham-Wake (WTCC); Debra Harlow - Piedmont (PCC); Sandy Heitt-Giacobbi (CCC); Ann Lanier, Cape Fear (CFCC); Margaret Allen - Catawba (CVCC); Janet Means, Richard Anderson - Randolph (RCC); Judith Smith, Dean Franklin - Haywood (HCC); Gloria Horne - Durham (DTCC); Sandy Thompson, Jeanette Evans, Arleen Oldham, Ron Johnson, Ivory Barbee, Bill Smith, Donna Baber, Kathryn Porter, Keith Stanley, Betty Stafford - Alamance (ACC) (Editors Note: Remember our two Assistant Editors? Where are they now? Kim Caraway was busy having baby, Brittany Nicole, and war correspondent, Candace Howard was taken captive by the enemy! No help there!)

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