

Delaware's Outstanding Adult Education Learners



2021



March 2021

Trying to find the right words to describe the students listed in this year's publication is hard! These students found ways to be successful in the midst of a global pandemic, an economic crisis and unprecedented social unrest. These awardees are innovative, persistent, committed and future oriented. They are heroes to their families and in their communities.

Nothing stopped these students from participating in classes and creating better opportunities for themselves and their families. They were willing to expend the extra work and effort to continue their studies when faced with additional responsibilities on a scale never before experienced.

These honorees are women and men who have family, work, and community obligations. Their lives were busy before the pandemic and became even busier as a result of the Coronavirus. Instead of giving up, they found new solutions to continuing their education while satisfying the needs of their children, their other family members and their workplace. They learned new technology skills; completed correspondence courses; drove to library parking lots to access the Internet; and connected with their instructors regularly to ensure that their education was not interrupted.

These learners represent the diversity and cultural richness that exists in Delaware. Some students want to be more proficient in English for better employment opportunities. Others desire to improve their skills to help their kids succeed in school. Still others wish to attend post-secondary education or training programs so they can attain better jobs or enter new careers. Some are refreshing their skills to become business owners; while others are attaining their lifelong dream of attaining their high school diploma to be role models for their children and grandchildren.

Adult Education learners have always been folks who are willing to work hard and persevere. They believe they can learn and achieve more. In 2019-2020, these adult learners proved that regardless of the dire circumstances, they were going to keep learning more!

To those who have shared their stories, thank you. You have inspired others to continue moving forward when the going gets really tough!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maurin White".

State Director of Adult and Prison Education Resources
Delaware Department of Education

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Ronald Brisby

Nominated by Polytech – James H. Groves



Ronald Brisby enrolled in Polytech Adult Education Center in December, 2017. Since then, he has completed a career plan, financial literacy packets, and workforce preparation activities. Ronald also earned a COA in both reading and math. In addition, he also got a job since he started adult education classes.

Ronald has faced many obstacles since moving to Delaware from his home in New York. He moved to have a fresh start and live in a safer environment.

To overcome obstacles and challenges he faced since moving, Ronald worked extremely hard and made excellent choices to support a successful future. He has an unwavering vision of reaching his goal. Fortunately, Ronald has the support of family and friends who help keep him on track. Ronald has unique character traits that also promote his

success. He's kind, caring, and very helpful in class. His teachers and classmates enjoy Ronald's "one of a kind sense of humor". Ronald's goal is to join the military and serving our country as a United States Marine.

"Education is a necessity in life. Without it, you are very unlikely to go far in life."

Katelyn Cannon

Nominated by Sussex Center – James H. Groves



Katelyn Cannon enrolled in the Groves program on August 13, 2018. She had one goal in mind: to earn a Groves Diploma. Katelyn is on-track to meet her goal and graduate in 2021.

It hasn't all been easy for Katelyn. She worked full time while raising three children. In addition, she endured several personal and family issues. But through her perseverance and lots of hard work, Katelyn has come out a winner.

Katelyn is a very positive student who is extremely motivated. She completed all assignments and even did extra on some of the reports. Katelyn plans to continue her education to become an LPN and then an RN.

“The value of my education is higher than many others. Education is the foundation for a greater future for my children and me.”

Emily Chapman

Nominated by Red Clay – James H. Groves

Emily Chapman enrolled into the Red Clay Groves program in September 2020. She set two goals for herself: retain employment and earn a Groves diploma. So far, Emily has maintained employment and even got a second job.

The obstacles Emily has faced are those of a single mother. She must juggle her family, her jobs, and her education. She went to school lacking time management and organizational skills.

Emily worked through her obstacles by learning to use a digital calendar which keeps track of appointments and her daily schedule. She has also learned to balance school and work through her hard work. She displays amazing perseverance when it would have been understandable and easy to give up. However, she saw the big picture and stuck with her education through many difficult times.



Emily will use her experiences and accomplishments to encourage her family, friends, and co-workers to achieve their academic dreams and goals. She plans to enter a training program or college to become a dental hygienist.

“It took me ten years but I finally got it done.”

Stephen Gibbs

Nominated by DCDAL – James H. Groves

When entering the Groves program, Stephen Gibbs set several goals. Those were earning a secondary/training COA, retaining employment, and completing a career plan. Since then, he has met all of his goals.

The main challenge Stephen met was learning content material that he had not studied in many years. To overcome that obstacle, Stephen completed the ABE program to brush up on reading and math skills. He also relied on the support he received from staff and family to keep working toward his goal.

Determination is one of Stephen's main character traits. He enrolled in the Groves program several times but did not finish due to personal or professional struggles. But Stephen has never given up his goal of earning a Groves diploma as he always returns to work on achieving his goal.

Stephen plans to use his program experiences to continue his education. He wants to earn a certificate in Construction Management so he can advance in his career field.



“The value of my education makes me feel complete. It makes me feel like I can do anything I set my mind to.”

Krishna Lassalle

Nominated by Appoquinimink – James H. Groves



Krishna Lassalle enrolled into the Groves program on March 6, 2020. She set a goal of earning a high school diploma and then pursue a career in nursing. Since enrolling she has developed a growth mindset and is looking forward to the next step in her life.

Krishna's challenge was to overcome her fear of not being able to complete the high school assignments. She overcame her fears by not giving up. She met with her teachers on Zoom for extra help. Krishna completed coursework every day and at all different times of the day.

When the Groves program went to remote learning, Krishna was not derailed by the change. She was one of the first to ask for a laptop to take home to complete her classes and write a CEA3

paper. If Krishna had difficulty with a concept, she always reached out to staff for clarification.

Krishna plans to use program experiences to support and motivate other students who may be underestimating themselves.

"Education has its roots that [are] bitter, but its fruit is sweet."

Robert Parella

Nominated by Christina – James H. Groves



Robert Parella enrolled in the Groves program in 2019. His goal was to graduate as soon as possible. Since he enrolled, Robert successfully completed most of his Groves courses and will graduate in 2021.

A challenge Robert faced was an illness preventing him from regularly attending school. Through grit and determination, Robert did not let that challenge derail his goal and he kept on track with his schoolwork.

Robert has many exemplary traits. He is extremely motivated and a hard worker. With a goal oriented mindset, Robert's traits will support his successes in life.

Robert will use his program experiences to attend post-secondary school to earn a degree in sports psychology.

"This education is very important to me since I learned critical thinking skills which will help me all through my life."

Kasha Thornton

Nominated by NCCVT – James H. Groves



Kasha Thornton entered the Groves program at NCCVT Adult Education Division on 9/21/17. She set a goal for herself to earn a GED®. But after having success in the ABE classes, she decided to earn a Groves High School Diploma. Kasha is on track to meet that goal on June 9, 2021.

The obstacles Kasha has faced are adapting to a new style of education and overcoming her shyness. Those obstacles slowly disappeared as she got comfortable with her surroundings, peers, and teachers. Kasha let her guard down and relaxed in school. She also stopped doubting herself.

Kasha also has the character traits to enhance her education. Kasha was diagnosed with autism in sixth grade. Her mom took her out of school to home-school her. Kasha was home schooled for eight years until she started at Groves. Her transition to high school has been an example of her exemplary traits: dedication and perseverance. In the two years Kasha has been a Groves student, she has never missed a class. Punctual and actively engaged, Kasha demonstrates her love of learning. Kasha gained a lot of self-confidence while attending school.

“The value of education is EVERYTHING. I am so proud that I can put high school graduate on my applications for college and work. Nobody can take my education away from me. I have great pleasure in knowing that there are wonderful teachers out there teaching and helping students like myself. I am inspired to do great things in the world!”