Small, But Mighty!

By: Vicki Bauer, State Adult Education Director

As schools and post secondary education institutions gear up for another year of learning, so does Adult Education. While we are a small, part-time program with limited funding, we serve approximately 10,000 Nebraska adults in need of our services each year! In fact, many of the general public don’t even know we exist, or if they do, they don’t understand the full scope of our program.

Why are we as important as any other institution of learning? First we have a very dedicated staff that go “above and beyond” to assist our adult learners as much as they can; such as staying after class to help an individual student, driving a student to the GED testing center or to an appointment with their case-worker.

We help our adult students in many different ways, whether it is finishing high school by taking the GED tests or helping someone review basic skills in order to apply for a job, keep a job, or enroll in post-secondary education/training.

Or maybe it is to help immigrants or refugees learn English in order to communicate with their children’s teachers, or read directions from the doctor, or be able to communicate with the check-out clerk at the grocery store.

And then, there’s the grandmother who wants to be able to read to her grandchildren or a businessman who has always relied on his wife to take care of the “book work,” but they are now divorced.

We help adults for a variety of reasons, some are unique, and others are not. We help them pursue their goals so they can be self-sustaining and contributing members of their communities and state.

Following are some startling facts that make us even more cognizant of the importance of our vocation to help those adults who come to us:

• In the United States, there are 43 MILLION adults who have not finished high school.
• American businesses lose more than $60 BILLION in productivity each year due to employees’ basic skills deficiencies.
• Nearly one million teenagers stop going to school each year.

Continued on page 5
Cargill Meat Solutions and Central Community College-Columbus collaborated to open Cargill Community Learning Center (CCLC) in January 2008.

Cargill Meat Solutions funds the Learning Center and provides for building costs, staff salaries, supplies and materials for the students.

This generosity is a paradigm of the plant’s participation in the enhancement of the Schuyler, Nebraska community. Central Community College provides the administrative support including Human Resources, Purchasing, Payroll and Public Relations. In addition, Central Community College’s collaboration with the Nebraska Department of Education provides training opportunities to the CCLC staff.

Because of this unique partnership and the efforts made by both Cargill Meat Solutions and Central Community College, Cargill Community Learning Center is able to offer high quality, affordable and accessible learning opportunities.

The Learning Center is open Monday-Thursday from 9:30-5:00 and provides free instruction to plant employees and community members. Our current schedule includes English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, Conversational Spanish classes and a self-paced General Educational Development (GED) program. The Learning Center also hosts a citizenship class and offers a library and computer lab services to patrons.

In the last year, nearly 200 English language learners and GED diploma seeking individuals have studied in the two-classroom facility. All of the Adult Education students at Cargill Community Learning Center experience the benefits of an onsite learning center but are held to the statewide standards implemented by NDE.

In addition to educational goals and workplace skills, community involvement and awareness is a major focus of the learning center. As part of regular classroom instruction, Cargill Community Learning Center has facilitated several community organization presentations to students.

Schuyler Recycling Center, Schuyler Volunteer Fire Department, Schuyler Public Library, East Central District Health Department, American Heart Association, The School for Success and Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services Office of Minority Health & Health Equity have all presented materials at the Learning Center.

Furthermore, Cargill Community Learning Center students have participated in field trips to Central Community College, community meetings and other local businesses to facilitate language learning and community involvement.

As part of its push to have students practice their English language skills in the community, Cargill Community Learning Center partnered with Schuyler Sertoma Club. Each quarter, two English as a Second Language students are recognized and awarded a free lunch at the Sertoma Club meeting.

The meeting provides the students with a connection to community leaders and an alternative avenue to practice their English speaking skills. Honorees share information with club members regarding their studies, native countries and experiences in the United States.

As one of a kind in the state of Nebraska, Cargill Community Learning Center continues to search for new ways to educate students and create a unified community.

The students and the staff at the Learning Center are very grateful for Cargill Meat Solutions’ continued support and the continued support we receive from Central Community College and NDE.

If you are interested in reading more about Cargill Community Learning Center, it was featured as part of Nebraska Appleseed’s Adult Education: Key to Building Nebraska’s Future Workforce.
**!! Wanted !!**

### Research Participants

NDE is looking for 1 or 2 adult education staff members interested in doing some focused resource research for the good of Nebraska ABE/GED/ESL students! The project would include careful exploration and experience with **NE Career Connections AND NE Works**, from the Department of Labor and possibly the national Career Pathways Initiative to assist in making informed decisions and creating training for that decision in collaboration with NDE staff. If you are interested in hearing more about the scope and payment for the project, please contact Jeanette at jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

### Success Stories

If you have student/class/program success stories to share, we would LOVE to put them in the newsletter! Just send them to us with a signed release giving us permission to print.

This is an excellent way to celebrate success!!! It also provides an opportunity for everyone in our readership to hear about the good things going on in Adult Education!!!

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**BEST Plus Literacy**

Earlier this year, thirteen directors and instructors from three local programs conducted a pilot using the BEST Literacy assessment. BEST Literacy was administered to ESL students who had scored at least at the Low Intermediate level on a BEST Plus test. These students were pre tested, received sixty hours of instruction (or as close to it as possible) and then post tested on an alternate form of BEST Literacy. Results varied, but overall the pilot group felt that the BEST Literacy assessment is truly needed to provide a basis for planning quality reading and writing instruction for ESL students. The pilot study highly recommends use of BEST Literacy.

Based on the pilot group recommendation, NDE can make BEST Literacy assessment materials and calibration training available to anyone in the state interested in using the instrument. Future updates of the Nebraska Assessment Policy will quite possibly require use, but for now it is up to instructors. Arizona recently adopted an alternate reading and writing assessment instrument and has graciously forwarded all their unused BEST Literacy materials for Nebraska use.

If you are interested in using the BEST Literacy assessment with ESL students in your Low Intermediate and above classes, please contact Jeanette for materials and training at jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov or 402-471-4806.

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**Workplace Essential Skills and Step Forward**

A few years ago NDE purchased **Workplace Essential Skills** and **Step Forward** curriculum for local programs. Since that time, we are aware that many of you have tried it out or use it consistently. We know that many programs have bought additional materials. However, we also know that many of the programs are very large or cover a great deal of square miles, often making access to available curriculum difficult.

Currently there is consideration for purchasing additional curriculum for local program use. If you have some specific and reasonable requests for curriculum materials from either series, please discuss with your director and contact Jeanette at jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov with your “prioritized wish list!”

Almost like Christmas in September!!!!
Carrying The Load of Lessons Learned

By: Lynn (Boesch) Saffer, English Instructor — Southeast Community College

When I first started teaching English 25 years ago, I thought it would be the greatest job in the world to be paid to help students find meaning in various authors’ words and to find meaning in writing their own words.

Yes, I was ready to challenge ambitious students and to patiently encourage under-skilled students. Egotisticaly, I gathered my books and materials, ready to embrace this new avenue in my life.

However, I wasn’t ready for Daniel.

Daniel was one of my 150 students that year – one who seemed to never care about what was going on, one who would write minimally coherent sentences, one who did not like English class (and even less, English teachers!), one who had experienced little classroom success in previous years.

In one of the many education classes, I learned that fairness means, “everyone gets what he/she needs.” Though he received all the same assignments and tests, Daniel did not get what he needed in my class.

Daniel was only one of the hundreds of students who have crossed my path throughout my subsequent years in education, mostly young adults through GED and community college classes.

It is only recently, however, that I have come to appreciate the fact that in my embryonic teaching years, I thought I would give students my knowledge. Instead, I now humbly acknowledge that students have given me so much more.

Through their written words, they have taught me:

**Good marriages matter.** Hundreds of my young adult students have divulged the hurt they experienced as their parents ended their marriages.

**Fathers play a vital role in their children’s lives.** Of course, it is needless to say that mothers are indeed significant parents, but many of the students have declared that they wanted, needed and deserved a father in their early years.

**Family is important.** Many admit that without the support of a parent or grandparent, or other extended family member, they would not have had the motivation or ability to attain the educational successes they did.

**Teachers have had positive and negative influences.** Thankfully, most remember at least one outstanding teacher in their young lives; many can name several.

**Alcohol and drugs** continue to prey in homes and are some of the biggest obstacles students encountered throughout their lives.

Even though they know money does not make people happy, **lack of money caused stress,** increased struggles and undeniable challenges in their families.

Schools are doing a lot to conquer the bullying issue. But many found it impossible to learn math and history when they **worried about getting picked on or hurt in the parking lot.**

**An education is a valuable asset.** Though many regret their past choices, they now have discovered the opportunities education brings.

Though of course it is understood that half of today’s marriages do not endure for a variety of legitimate reasons, children of these circumstances took it upon themselves to grow up and handle their fate in the best way they could.

Most matured, accepted, forgave and carried on; others carry that hurt today. They vow to have better marriages.

They have vulnerable, sometimes wounded, but most always strong, courageous hearts.

They have stories to tell. I cannot help thinking where Daniel might be today if I had at least attempted to make seventh grade English class a little more positive for him. But I’ll never know. I can’t even ask him. Daniel committed suicide several years after graduating high school.

No, I am not so arrogant to think it was because of his seventh grade English experience (or lack of it), though a part of my ego wants to think I could have affected his outcome.

Knowing that much of my confidence came from former teachers makes me scared, makes me humble, yet makes me more determined to be influential and encouraging so that not only the Daniels, but all of my students will experience success, will have the courage to tell their stories, will go out of my class a little bit happier than when they came in.

This column is dedicated to my students – who have trusted me with their stories – and to all teachers who, through their wisdom and understanding, have made a positive difference in their students’ lives.
The AE local program directors met in August for their annual meeting to kick off the new program year. The theme of the meeting was “Transitions.” This is an integral part of our adult education vocabulary and program offerings. To familiarize directors with resources that are available to staff and students, two guest speakers presented.

Theresa Steinage, a field trainer for Kuder, gave us an overview of Nebraska Career Connections. This is a wonderful tool for our adult students. It’s five steps: Assessments; Occupations; Education and Financial Aid; Job Search Tools, and Jobs. If a student is not sure what job/vocation to pursue, Career Connections will help in the entire process and the price is right: it’s free! Explore the website: www.nebraskacareerconnections.org

Joan Modrell, Director of Employment and Training at the Nebraska Department of Labor, gave directors an update about the Career Centers in Nebraska and the up and coming jobs/careers in Nebraska. Of special interest to our adult students is the NEworks website at https://neworks.nebraska.gov

Both Career Connections and NEworks are well worth the time when looking for a job and information about preparing for a career. See page 3 of this newsletter about a project for adult education staff members who are interested in researching these two sites and giving NDE staff input about training for fellow colleagues.

Art Ellison, the New Hampshire Adult Education Director, spoke about keeping Adult Education in the forefront in our communities and in our states. The more we let people know about the successes of our program, the more people know about us and the work we do in helping adults become self-sufficient. It is important that we, along with our students, advocate for the program and its many services.

Jeanette Evans engaged the group in an activity to prepare the directors for the introduction of the TEAL project to go statewide this fall. What an exciting and useful resource for our AE teachers in Nebraska AE!

Jan Drbal introduced the new claim forms that accompany the new proposal budget pages introduced last spring. Jan designed the new forms to streamline the processes for the development of each program’s budget and for reimbursement of funds expended for the program.

Vicki Bauer gave an update from the July GED Administrators’ meeting regarding the new 5th edition of GED tests.

It was nice to have the directors gather with the State Office staff. We learn and share together and leave the meeting excited about another new year!
The conference begins Wednesday afternoon/evening, October 12. On Wednesday afternoon, there will be **two special training opportunities**:
BEST Plus Recalibration for those who need to recalibrate for the year and a two-hour training session required for a representative of each program requesting *News for You* subscription(s) from NDE for classroom use.

Pre-conference registration will be held on Wednesday evening. As well as registering, there will be a “CSI Kearney” event on Wednesday evening with possible movies, activities and discount coupons. Visit the website at [www.visitkearney.org](http://www.visitkearney.org) to check out what’s going on in Kearney on the conference dates!

A chance to explore, shop and take in the entertainment offered in Kearney on Wednesday evening will be a great way to start the conference experience!

On Thursday, a scavenger hunt/walk will be available for those wishing to participate. The conference will conclude on Friday with a brunch and door prizes.

The focus of the conference is for those persons who are directly involved with the delivery of services: Adult Education program directors, volunteer coordinators and leaders, support staff, instructors, aides and instructional volunteers.

Local advisory committee members and those not directly involved in providing Adult Education services are not eligible to attend.

There will be a specially scheduled session on Thursday to meet with conference vendors to hear about their materials and products.

Each of the following Focus Sessions on Friday will be three hours:

**GED-i** This focus session will be lead by Crystal Hack from GED-i, which is the ABE/GED component of Nebraska’s distance education program. Ms. Hack will be explaining the program; how it is designed and used, who the potential users might/could be and how teachers might incorporate and manage it within their classrooms and programs.

If a teacher is interested in hearing/learning about distance education as it applies to Nebraska ABE/GED students or is interested in implementing the component after the initial pilot is complete, this session would be relevant. Also, any teacher involved in the pilot of GED-i is encouraged to sit in and share experiences. We are going statewide by January 12, 2012.

**USA Learns** A representative from the USA Learns project developed through the Sacramento Outreach and Technical Assistance Network (OTAN) will discuss the features and use of this ESL distance learning website.

There are a few teachers in Nebraska currently piloting the use of this website application. Teachers who are interested in learning more about this resource for ESL student learning are encouraged to attend. Teachers who are part of the pilot group in Nebraska are also invited to participate.

**TEAL** Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL) is an Office of Adult and Technical Education (OVAE) project designed and implemented through the American Institutes for Research. As one of 12 states involved, Nebraska has a team of five who will be presenting information, strategies, tips and techniques in regard to writing instruction to enhance the quality instruction that is already occurring in Nebraska adult education classrooms. Mary Ann Corley and Chris Rauscher, from AIR will be assisting the Nebraska team in facilitating this interactive session.

**4-MAT Learning Styles** Sheila Kepler, Southeast Community College, will be leading this high energy, interactive session. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about, as well as experience techniques to actively engage students who represent a wide range of learning preferences.

**ESL/EL Civics Cohort Group Follow-Up** During the two day ESL/EL Civics Workshop held in June, a cohort group formed to further explore the concept of learning centers as an ESL learning strategy/methodology. *This focus session is a follow up designed for those who participated in the experience.*

Contact your program director about your registration packet for the 30th Anniversary of the AE Conference!
The September 11, 2001 attacks were a series of four coordinated suicide attacks by members of al-Qaeda upon the United States. On that morning, 19 al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial passenger jet airliners. The hijackers intentionally crashed two of the airliners into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, killing everyone on board and thousands of those working in the buildings. Both towers collapsed within two hours, destroying nearby buildings and damaging others.

A third airliner was crashed into the Pentagon. Hijackers had redirected the fourth plane toward Washington, D.C., targeting either the Capitol Building or the White House, but crashed it in a field near Shanksville in rural Pennsylvania after passengers attempted to retake control of the airliner. There were no survivors from any of the flights. Nearly 3,000 victims and the 19 hijackers died in the attacks. Among the 2,753 victims who died in the attacks on the World Trade Center, were 343 firefighters and 60 police officers from New York City and the Port Authority and 8 private emergency medical technicians and paramedics. Another 184 people were killed in the attack on the Pentagon. The overwhelming majority of casualties were civilians, including people from over 70 countries.
www.Englishpage.com
A good website for grammar. Also if you scroll down you can type in a holiday and a passage will come up with vocabulary and a cloze activity.

Integers
This website is a sample of video created on the Camtasia platform by Susan Jone, Academic Development Specialist-Academic Development Center Parkland College. Resourceroom.net/math/AddingLikeSignsIntro/AddingLikeSignsIntro.html

Dr. Eric Mazur, a Harvard University Professor, shares his experiences teaching his students, who are actually prospective surgeons. He explains what he believed was teaching when he first started and how he became much more effective once he began giving the responsibility of teaching and learning to his students. youtube.com/watch?v=tn1DLFnbGOo

A Social and Holistic Approach to Numeracy
www.socialnumeracy.ca/

A social and holistic approach sees numeracy as a part of life, for the whole person, within a social context.

Student Kit: Helping Myself to Learn
Stunning graphics help tell animated stories that will captivate students’ hearts and minds immediately. Each one of the five dynamic stories shows how experiences of violence can live on and affect learning – leading students to space out in class or forget what they just learned; struggle with old habits that interrupt their learning; feel like losers or stupid, always comparing themselves to others and coming up short; or quit altogether, weighed down by one crisis after another.

Students will recognize themselves and their friends in the stories and find concrete resources and strategies to help everyone learn effectively. Teachers will value the wide range of thoughtfully conceived activities to explore the issues in depth – using words, images, music, and movement – appropriate for many different literacy levels and situations. learningandviolence.net/StudentKit/reception_desk.html

College Tool: Changing Lenses, Changing Practices
A room with a seemingly simple filing cabinet opens up a whole new world with thought-provoking ways to look at your own and your college’s practices.

This Tool looks at every aspect of the college learning environment to ask – how do students experience our institution and how do our everyday practices support or hinder learning? This online and print resource is simply a must see for everyone who wants to increase learning success in a college setting. learningandviolence.net/CollegeAuditTool/

Community-Based Literacy Reflection Guide: Creating a Culture of Care

A colorful quilt held in place by a diverse group of people hints at the ideas behind this Guide – the acknowledgement of violence in our society and the desire to create community programming rooted in social justice for all students.

This Guide builds on the best of community-based practices to encourage us all to dig deeper and notice how students’ experience of each aspect of the program is shaped by familiarity with violence.

At every stage the authors pay careful attention to individual and systemic violence, inviting us to recognize such forms of violence as racism and classism, and encouraging us to reconsider each of our everyday practices so that we can create the best possible community-based learning environments for all. learningandviolence.net/CommunityBasedResource/

A special thank you is extended to everyone who contributed to the Learning Links Section this month
In early August, the Nebraska Teaching Excellence in Adult Literacy (TEAL) team was in Washington, DC for a four day training institute. The team members include: Sue Pohlman, ABE/GED Instructor at Northeast Community College, Shannon Schaben, ESL Instructor at Mid-Plains Community College, Maggie McLean, Corrections Education Instructor through Southeast Community College, Janet Kletke, ABE/GED Instructor for Metro Community College, and Jeanette Evans, Adult Education Consultant at NDE.

TEAL teams from California, Florida, Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia and Wyoming provided the rest of the participants for the institute. Staff members from the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, presented information regarding other national grant projects, and introduced the guest speakers.

American Institute of Research (AIR) staff members facilitated the workshop, and a variety of nationally known authors and researchers provided sessions through the four days. Ms. Mary Ann Corley led the AIR staff in facilitating the institute. Ms. Corley will be traveling to Nebraska to present at the annual conference which is a benefit to all!

Components of the six online courses were reviewed or enhanced in activities led by AIR staff members. Authors/researchers including Jay McTighe, Charles MacArthur, Gary Troia, and Mary Jo Maralit presented teaching and writing strategies to the group that will be used to enhance teaching and, more specifically, the teaching of writing skills to adult learners in adult education classes across the state.

All of the presenters have written, taught and/or done research in strategies to assist students to become lifelong learners by employing higher order thinking skills and developing strong writing skills across the content areas.

An additional “perk” to the institute was a visit by Brenda Dann-Messier, Assistant Secretary, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education. Ms. Dann-Messier addressed the group over lunch one day of the institute. She spoke about the need for adult educators to be more assertive about what adult education is, what adult educators do and why the services are important.

Brenda also encouraged the group to consider working more closely with WIA personnel to assure that adult education students have the skills they need to be successful workers in the 21st century.

Following the intense institute, the Nebraska TEAL team is anxious to share what was learned. Team members will be presenting at meetings, workshops, training sessions and conferences around the state.

TEAL is NOT an extra amount of work to already full schedules, but rather the strategies and teaching tips are meant to enhance all the positive things that are already occurring across the state!

By: Jeanette Evans, State AE Consultant — Jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

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**Find GED Contacts**

Click on the corresponding state to find a list of GED testing centers

**Find US GED Administrators:** [http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/test/admin.htm](http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ged/test/admin.htm)

**Find the nearest testing center by ZIP Code:** [http://www2.acenet.edu/resources/ged.center_locator.cfm](http://www2.acenet.edu/resources/ged.center_locator.cfm)

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The GED Tests cannot be taken online.

The GED Tests can be taken only at an official testing center.
Resource Materials To Review

NDE tries to add to the collection of resources available on a regular basis. A $25 stipend is paid to individuals who provide a review for publication in this AE newsletter.

This month we’re offering the following four publications for review:

**Supporting Differentiated Instruction, a Professional Learning Communities Approach**  
*By: Robin Fogarty and Brian M. Pete, Solution Tree Press 2011*  
This book approaches the collaborative spirit of professional learning communities (PLCs) and the rigorous work of differentiated classroom instruction, addressing both teaching decisions for professional staff and learning decisions for students.

**Scaffolded Writing Instruction, Teaching with a Gradual-Release Framework**  
*By: Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, Scholastic 2007*  
The book contains six research-based strategies that begin with teacher-directed instruction and support students as they learn to use the strategy independently to help them achieve stamina, fluency, and confidence as writers.

**Transitions: Preparing for College – Mathematics**  
*By: Dr. Paul Kennedy, Steck-Vaughn 2010*  
This book addresses basic and intermediate algebra concepts that utilize numeric, graphic, verbal and symbolic representations. Each unit guides students through algebraic fundamentals, target skills and advancing-algebra concepts, including essential functions, equations and inequalities.

**Transitions: Preparing for College – Writing**  
*By Carol Jabo, Steck-Vaughn 2010*  
Ms. Jabo familiarizes students with the five most common types of college-level writing: persuasive, expository, reflective, literary analysis and response to a prompt. The book adopts a gradual-release model that guides students through instruction, modeling and practice, ultimately preparing them for independent writing.

**REMINDER:** If you are looking for professional development materials or topics, the state resource library is the place to start! Materials available are listed on the NDE website and/or you may contact Jeanette for more information at 402-471-4806 or email: jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov

NDE Library Materials Available for AE Staff to Check Out

The State AE Office of NDE has a lending library of materials for both AE and ESL. Some are for instructors and others are resources containing practical ideas and exercises to be used with students. [http://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/pdfs/Nebraska_Adult_Education_Lending_Resource_Library.pdf](http://www.education.ne.gov/ADED/pdfs/Nebraska_Adult_Education_Lending_Resource_Library.pdf)

Many of the resources contain EXCELLENT material for students struggling in specific areas. Other materials would make WONDERFUL additions to, or a basis for, staff development sessions. If you would like to preview or discuss any of the materials, just drop in or contact Jeanette. Materials can be checked out for 6 weeks (longer if not in demand). If you should decide you would like to peruse some, please call or e-mail Jeanette at: 402/471-4806 jeanette.evans@nebraska.gov