

Press Release

BRIDGEPORT ADULT EDUCATION GRADUATION NOTES INCREASE IN “DROP-INS” WITH RECORD NUMBER OF GRADUATES

Need for education credentials spur adults to go back to school

BRIDGEPORT — April 29 2010 — The office of the Superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools is pleased to announce that the Bridgeport Board of Education’s Department of Adult Education is reporting a record number of adult education graduates for the 2010 school year. “The accredited adult high school diploma is on the same level as a diploma from one of the traditional high schools and it receives and deserves the same recognition,” said Dr. John Ramos, Superintendent of Schools. Graduation exercises will be held on **Wednesday, May 5, 2010** for 210 graduates from the Accredited Adult High School Diploma program.

In addition to honoring a record number of graduates, some graduates will receive a special surprise. **For the first time ever, the University of Bridgeport is awarding a *full four-year scholarship, worth over \$100,000 to one of the graduates.*** Housatonic Community College will present a tuition scholarship of 6 credits to an incoming graduate. This year marks the first appearance of Porter and Chester Institute on the graduation program; Porter and Chester is presenting a \$1,000 scholarship to the graduate enrolling there. The recipients of these awards are not notified previously, they come as a total surprise.

Record Number of Graduates

This year’s 210 graduates is a dramatic increase compared to past years. According to the director of adult education, John M. Fabrizi, demand for the full range of adult programs has grown steadily. “People have been asking me if the growth of our student population is due to students dropping

out of the regular school programs,” Fabrizi said. “But there’s a different reason. Our students come to adult ed for a variety of reasons: to learn English in our ESL programs or to improve their basic skills. But—and this is key—adults who have been out in the work force are finding that they need to have a high school diploma to get ahead—or even to get a good job in the first place.” Fabrizi, the former mayor of the city, and a veteran educator even before that, adds, “I like to tell people that our students should be regarded as “drop-ins”—they need to complete high school and we help them do it.”

Denise Clemons, Assistant Superintendent of Schools recognizes the diversity in the programs and the adults attending Adult Education. “This year, Bridgeport’s Adult Education graduates range from 19 to 64-years-old,” Clemons said. “There is a lot of diversity, but the goal is the same for all of these graduates— earning a high school diploma. Our graduates have overcome many obstacles and have amazing stories to tell.”

Pomp and Circumstance

The graduation exercises feature a full program of music, speeches, awards, and finally presentation of diplomas. The Central High School Choir will adorn the event with numbers from its musical repertoire. In addition to school personnel, representatives of state and local governments as well as area universities and community colleges will participate as speakers and presenters. Among the dignitaries, Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch will commence the speakers’ program, followed by Mrs. Barbara P. Bellinger, President of the Bridgeport Board of Education. The Superintendent of Schools, Dr. John J. Ramos, Sr., will give the keynote address. Speeches by Paul Flinter, bureau chief of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education at the State Department of Education, and Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Education Consultant at the Bureau of Adult Education, will close the speakers’ program.

Recognition and Awards

The Bridgeport Board of Education and the Department of Adult Education are proud of all of these graduates, who have overcome so many obstacles to attain their high school diplomas, and take special pride in announcing that a member of this year's graduating class, Maria Medina, has been honored by the Connecticut Association for Adult and Continuing Education (CAACE) as the "Adult Learner of the Year" at its recent conference in March 2010. Similarly, it should be noted that Bridgeport Adult Education teacher, Dolores Crawley, was honored at the same conference as "Educator of the Year."

The program continues with student speakers and the presentation of academic awards and scholarships. Traditionally, awards are made by the Bridgeport Education Association and by the Bridgeport Council of Administrators and Supervisors to those students who excel in the five subject areas of English, History, Mathematics, Science, and General Achievement.

The ceremony closes with the awarding of the diplomas and the recessional.

Graduation exercises for adult education will take place in the auditorium at **Central High School, 1 Lincoln Boulevard, Bridgeport, CT at 7 p.m. Wednesday evening, May 5, 2010.**

The mission of the Bridgeport Public Schools and its supporting community is to graduate all students "college ready" and prepared to succeed in life. For more information about Bridgeport Public Schools visit our website at www.bridgeportedu.com.