



News Release

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Contact:

Annette S. Garcia, Communications Officer
956.984.6011 angarcia@esc1.net

Region One Adult Education Program Graduates 133 Students Students Demonstrate Dedication and Commitment to Learning

It took 19 years for Rudy Z. to finally walk across the stage, receive his GED certificate, and participate in the time-honored tradition of moving his graduation tassel from the right side to the left side of his graduation cap. But for the Region One Adult Education Program graduate, it was something that he had to do not only for himself, but for his family, as well.

As he patiently waited to enter the assembly room, Rudy Z. recalled making bad choices while in high school which led him down a different path. But he said he soon realized that to better provide for his family, he had to get his GED certificate. Now, with GED in hand, Rudy plans on enrolling at South Texas College in the upcoming Fall semester to earn his degree in HVAC, a move that he says will open many more opportunities for him. Aside from the prospects that a GED will provide for him, Rudy says that he had a greater purpose, "I did it for my kids so that they know that education is the best thing to get in life. I am proud, I am ecstatic!"

On May 29, 2019 the Region One ESC Adult Education Program joined with high schools across the region hosting graduation events. For the first time in 10 years, the Region One ESC held graduation ceremonies and "graduated" 133 students who received either their GED Certificate, ESL (English as a Second Language) Certificate, or their EL Civics Certificate making them eligible for U.S. Citizenship.

Like Rudy, many of the students had similar motivating factors that prompted them to enroll in the Region One Adult Education Program. Their dedication and commitment to learning and improving their life circumstances helped them to overcome the many barriers that face most of them when trying to raise a family and hold down a job.

"Our students come from all walks of life; for various reasons our adult students were not able to go the traditional route and graduate with their peers. What is so inspiring about them is that these students realized the importance of a high school diploma and that a high school diploma can open doors of opportunity for them," explains Maria Cristela Gonzalez, Region One Adult Education Director. "The Region One Adult Education Program has presented a chance to ultimately change the trajectory of their life and that of their family."

Region One Education Service Center (www.esc1.net) serves over 436,000 students and educators in seven counties in south Texas including Cameron, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Starr, Webb, Willacy and Zapata counties. Region One works to assist school districts in improving student performance, assist districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and implement initiatives assigned by the legislature or the Commissioner of Education.

The challenges faced by the graduates did not go unnoticed by those in attendance. Family members cheered as graduates entered the assembly area, shouts of “Go Mom!” could be heard, and family members jockeyed for the perfect opportunity to snap a photo.

“What you have achieved tonight was not an easy task,” Dr. Cornelio Gonzalez, Region One ESC Executive Director told the graduates, “what you accomplished here was a challenge and we sincerely congratulate you and are very proud of you!”

Recalling an educator who instilled in him the belief that he could do anything he set his mind to doing, Keynote Speaker Ruben Cortez, Jr., SBOE Member and Region One Board Member applauded family members for supporting the graduates along their journey and then posed his own challenge to graduates. “A lot of you have not taken the easy road, but it doesn’t matter because you are here today. Set goals, follow your dreams, you will determine the path that you follow.”

“We believe wholeheartedly that education is the key to success, that it’s never too late to improve your education, and that lives can be changed through education,” says Gonzalez. “These are the core values that drive our program; our vision is to provide our students with opportunities to help them become better educated and productive citizens of the workforce and the community.”

The Region One ESC Adult Education program offers a variety of instructional programs to help adult students acquire the skills and knowledge needed to be productive workers, family members and citizens in the United States. Programs offered include English as a Second Language for individuals who want or need to learn English, Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency preparation classes for individuals who have not earned a high school diploma, English Literacy and Civics Education to provide English Language Learners instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, Career Pathway opportunities to prepare individuals to be successful in post-secondary education and/ or training to enter or advance within a specific occupation.

All classes are free and held year-round in locations throughout the region offering flexible schedules and small class sizes. Adult Learning Centers located in McAllen and Rio Grande City host students; classes are also held in city facilities and local school districts possible through cooperative programs. For more information about services in your community, call the Region One ESC Adult Education Program at (956) 984-6270.

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