



Lewis and Clark Community College GED graduation celebrates resilience

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GODFREY – A total of 128 students earned their General Equivalency Diplomas (GED[®]) through Lewis and Clark Community College's Adult Education department and the Regional Office of Education #40 Adult Learning Centers in 2016.

Of those, 48 students walked across the stage of the Ann Whitney Olin Theatre inside L&C's Hatheway Cultural Center during the 40th annual GED Graduation held June 9.

Keynote Speaker State Senator Andy Manar, who serves Illinois in the 48th Legislative District, stressed the significance of the students' achievements, while congratulating them.



“Today is an important step in your personal and professional journey—a journey that matters,” Manar said. “This celebration and recognition you are receiving tonight—without a shred of doubt—is a meaningful event, an event in your life, a part of your

journey that will never be replicated... The value of Lewis and Clark Community College is immeasurable to our community, to our local economy and to our quality of life, and tonight's graduation is proof of that."

L&C's Associate Dean of Adult Education Val Harris encouraged the graduates to continue their education and become lifelong learners.

"The theme of the night was resilience," Harris said. "More and more, our students are overcoming obstacles to not only earn their GEDs but also transition into college. I am really proud of our staff and our students. Both work hard, and they never give up."

Student Guest Speaker Misty Zerance embodies perseverance. She dropped out of high school, married at a young age, and tried attending a few GED[®] classes at L&C in 1995.

"I decided it wasn't for me, and I left," Zerance said. "In the years that followed, my marriage failed. I was a single mother raising three kids on my own and feeling like a failure. I worked long hard hours at several jobs, but I never had the career I had dreamed of.

Don't get me wrong it wasn't all bad... I watched my kids grow into young adults, making their own dreams, and I always stressed the importance of an education, even though I didn't have one. I also met my current husband, 10 years ago. He is my best friend, my strongest supporter, loudest cheerleader and would be here tonight in the front row if he could."

With encouragement and support from her husband, Zerance came back to L&C to earn her GED[®], 17 years after her first attempt, in 2012. She didn't stop there. She went on to enroll in the Bridge to Health Science program at Lewis and Clark and will graduate with an Associate of Science degree in spring of 2017. She has already been accepted into the nursing program at Pensacola State in Florida.



“For some of you, this may be only the first steps of your learning journey, but whether the classroom or the work place is your next stop, always remind yourself, there is not a set time or age limit to further your education,” Zerance said. “The doors are always open, and everyone here at the college is ready to welcome you back... Believe in yourself and all that you are. Know that there is something inside of you that is greater than any obstacle you may encounter.”

Lewis and Clark’s GED[®] program helps students strengthen their reading, writing and math skills, while preparing them for the GED[®] tests.

Individuals 16 years old and older can enroll in the free basic skills classes, which are offered at various times and locations throughout the district.

L&C’s Adult Education division also offers opportunities for those who do not have a high school diploma or GED[®] through Bridge programs, which allow students to earn college credit while obtaining their GEDs.

Those wanting more information can call (618) 468-4141 or visit www.lc.edu/adulted.