

PWSCC Supports Students Young and Old



Above, Michael Holcombe and Joey Eastman (pictured in black) with the 2011 PWSCC GED recipients. Right, Pamela Hoffman was the recipient of a \$1,500 CVEA Community Foundation scholarship. Photos courtesy PWSCC

Prince William Sound Community College has been helping adults get their General Education Diploma since the late '70s when they became the first delivery system for General Education Development (GED) testing in our communities.

This is made possible through the Adult Basic Education (ABE) Program, which many may not realize, also encourages adults to go into post-secondary schooling, vocational education or training programs, helps those new to the United States learn how to communicate so they can work and be a part of the community, and helps people improve their skills so they can advance in their current jobs or try to get newer, better jobs.

Adult Basic Education through PWSCC is designed to provide individualized and group instruction to adults in the following specific areas.

ABE Basic Skills Development

ABE provides instruction in any basic academic area such as math, reading,

grammar or writing. Individualized study plans are developed for personalized learning to enhance anyone's employability skills and/or to meet other specific needs.

Adult Secondary Education

ABE offers instruction specifically designed to assist those who did not complete high school. Students can obtain their General Education Diploma (GED).

To receive a GED, students must pass a 7.5 hour test battery made up of tests in Language Arts, Writing, Social Studies, Science, Reading, and Mathematics.

It is designed to measure major academic skills and knowledge in core content areas that are learned in high school.

The GED is recognized as a high school diploma. It can be used to enter college, get a job, enter vocational school, enter a training program, or to enlist in the military. In Alaska, 23% of all high school diplomas are GED.

The GED part of the program will be changing in 2013. At that time, any GED

test a student has taken and passed will be VOID, and they will have to start over.

All students who have started the GED testing are strongly encouraged to come to the PWSCC ABE testing centers and finish the program. ABE programs in Alaska all share the same statewide database, so even students who began testing elsewhere in the state can finish in Valdez or Glennallen. They can also access pre and post testing scores for assessment purposes.

English as a Second Language (ESL)

ESL provides instruction to individuals with non-English backgrounds. Individualized study plans focus on oral and written usage of the English Language and promotes cross-cultural exchange.

Life Coping Skills

Life Coping Skills provides instruction and workshop opportunities that focus on specific practical skill development and community/individual enhancement. Topics vary from family budgeting, resume development, nutrition, child care, to almost any expressed need.

Any person over 16 years of age can enroll in ABE programs. PWSCC has had students up to 90 years of age.

According to Mike Holcombe, ABE Program Administrator, "any person who did not finish school, whose primary language is not English, who wants to improve their job skills, or who wants to improve their math, reading, or writing skills should consider taking advantage of the program." They offer one-to-one tutoring and have begun more class based instruction as well, whether it is distance learning from around the state or local classes on their campuses.

One added benefit of the program at PWSCC is that there is no charge for the

services provided.

If a student needs textbooks or school supplies, the program will provide them. They also offer a PWSCC GED specific scholarship to help students of the program enter post-secondary education.

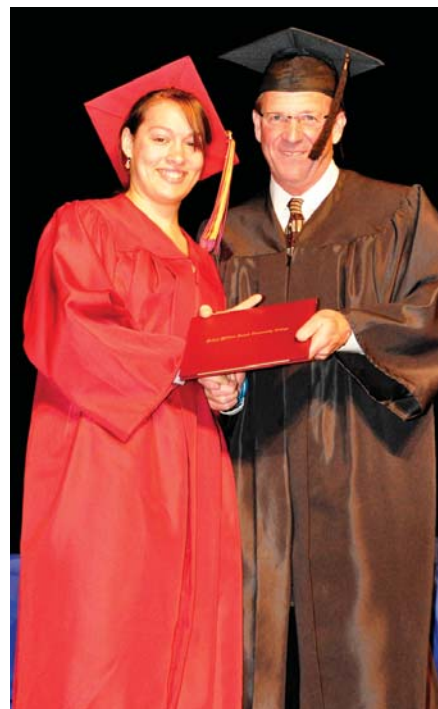
In addition, in 2011, the PWSCC ABE program received a \$1,500 scholarship from the Copper Valley Electric Community Foundation to assist students in the Copper Basin District to attend PWSCC for this academic year. Pamela Hoffman was awarded this scholarship and will go on to continue her education.

All of these programs are funded by state and federal grants managed by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The United Way of Valdez

also plays a major role, providing grant funding that enables the program to continue running throughout the year.

The ABE program at PWSCC exists solely to help students, young and old, reach their potential. This program is an excellent opportunity for people in our communities to get the help and support they need to reach their educational goals.

The ABE center will be open Tuesday and Thursday evenings throughout the fall semester. For more information about tutors, testing, GED, ESL or any ABE component of the program, please contact Michael Holcombe, in Valdez, at (907) 834-1671 or Joey Eastman, in Glennallen, at (907) 822-5573. ■



PWSCC has just launched the Outdoor Leadership Program, a two year Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree and the first of its kind in Alaska.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the need for qualified recreation professionals in Alaska exceeds that of the national average, with a 15% increase expected before 2016. PWSCC hopes this program helps fill this need by providing a qualified work force.

The program is intended to prepare students for life and work in the outdoor industry. There are four main areas students with this degree can likely move into: public parks and recreation, commercial recreation, natural resources management, and experiential education. Students completing the associate degree will be ready to enter the job market or transfer to a four year school to work towards a bachelor degree.

When asked who should consider this program, Amanda Hatton, PWSCC Wellness Coordinator and Outdoor Leadership Advisor, commented, "Anyone who has an interest in working in the outdoor industry is a great



fit for this degree. Additionally, people who are interested in gaining knowledge and experience in group dynamics, leadership, and program planning should consider it. Students can earn a full associate degree, take a single course, or anything in between."

Some of the program's courses are classroom based, such as Foundations of Adventure and Experiential Leadership, while others such as Wilderness First Responder are a mix of classroom and field experiences. Students pursuing the AAS degree will also participate in at least one internship before graduating, allowing them to gain professional

experience in the outdoor area of their choice.

No prior experience is required; however, the activity based courses do require the ability to function in cold or inclement weather and participate in extended activities such as hikes. Any concerns regarding preparedness can be directed to Amanda. She wants you to know that all attempts will be made to facilitate full participation in courses and went on to say that, "the main prerequisite for this program is simply an eagerness to learn, have new experiences, and participate in the learning process."

There are similar programs offered at community colleges throughout the United States. The most successful are located in areas conducive to experiencing and practicing skills in the outdoors. Students attending any of PWSCC's three campuses are at an advantage because they are located in the heart of paradise. Opportunities abound for students in this program to experience the outdoors year round.

For more information, call 834-1685 or email outdoors@pwsc.edu. ■