



FRIENDS OF PORTLAND ADULT EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

144 students honored at PAE's 164th graduation

“Should you doubt the transformative power of public schools, just attend an adult education graduation. Tonight at Merrill auditorium I saw about 100 people get their diplomas. I heard astonishing stories of persistence and – people from dozens of countries along side those who have grown up here and for whatever reason never finished high school. Nothing makes me prouder of Portland than the way this program changes so many lives. Congratulations to all of you!”



Erik Jorgensen, Maine
State Representative



On June 16, 2016, Portland Adult Education celebrated its 168th graduation with 42 students earning their high school diplomas and 102 students completing the HiSET (high school equivalency, formerly the GED) exam. The diploma graduates take the same number of courses as students at Portland's high schools to earn their credentials. Many HiSET graduates have had to pass the five sections of the HiSET test to earn their credential which can take up to seven and half hours to complete.

The Class of 2016 was a highly educated group with one third attaining a second high school diploma to

strengthen their English language skills and five having prior college degrees. Two of the five students with college degrees could not access their academic documents so they had to take more than 20 classes to achieve their high school diplomas.

Friends of Portland Adult Education
is thrilled to have a new website
thanks to Eric Wagner from *5th Cup LLC*.
Please check it out...<http://friendsofpae.org>

Director's Update

Portland Adult Education is currently revitalizing its workforce programming. A work group was formed consisting of staff from PAE, NMRC (New Mainers Resource Center) and FPAE board members who represent private business. The goal of this group is to ensure that our workforce programming is bridging the gap for those hardest to serve and with the most barriers to employment and to meet the hiring needs of business. Our partners are an integral part of this work and we will continue to engage *Goodwill*, *SMCC*, the *CareerCenter*, the *Greater Portland Workforce Initiative*, *Friends of PAE* and additional business partners in consultation with our staff to transform our programming.

We began with a market analysis, which included a business survey and we learned about the new Workforce

Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidelines from *Goodwill*. We also gathered data from the local Workforce Board to ensure that our programming is in alignment with their priorities as required by the new WIOA law that took effect on July 1, 2016. The market analysis also helped us reach out to businesses to gauge their involvement in curriculum development.

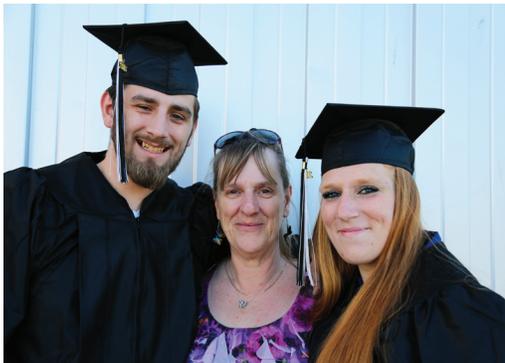
Given this process and the data we gathered, we are creating a new delivery model for our Healthcare Career Pathway and will be piloting our Healthcare Career Academy in the fall. Stay tuned!



*Bethany Campbell
Director of Adult and
Community Education*

2016 Graduate Stories

Destiny Albert and Gabriel Fulia, Jr. are sister and brother who both passed the HiSET test this year. Their mother still works for the Portland Housing Authority which



employed her after she completed her bookkeeping, medical office, and office certificates at PAE nearly 20 years ago.

Nyabore Luak fled devastation and war in Sudan and arrived in Portland in 1995. She only had three years of formal education before becoming a student at PAE where she has been taking classes for 21 years. Nothing has come easily. Nyabore has a large family and exhausting work responsibilities. No matter what, as one teacher indicated, "She is committed and keen to learn." Nyabore would love to become a nurse.

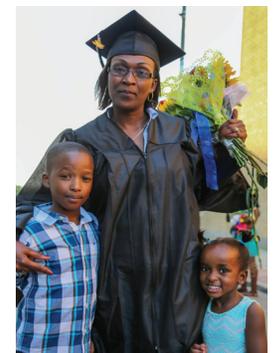


Mohammed Al Mshakeel

completed his second high school credential. Forced to flee Iraq, he was unable to retrieve his educational documents, so he started over at Portland Adult Education. By taking four courses each trimester (20 hours of classes per week) and volunteering at the Barron Center for 120 hours, he pushed to finish his credential last year, but a serious illness waylaid his plans. Working to support three young children and attending school simultaneously is tough, but Mohammed earned the diploma and is now preparing for college.



Diane Nizigiyimana lost her husband and her home to the violence and political unrest in Burundi. Both losses have only strengthened her resolve to provide stability and health for her two young children and contribute to the health of others by studying to become a radiology technician. Her progress at PAE has been remarkable; after starting in an intermediate English language class in January 2015, she has already passed her college placement exams. She hopes to start her degree at SMCC in January 2017.



Please consider making a donation to Friends of Portland Adult Education in honor of our 2016 graduates! Send a check to FPAE, PO Box 3185, Portland, ME or pay by credit card at our website at <http://friendsofpae.org/donate/>. Help us transform more lives in Greater Portland with your support. Thank you!

Friends of PAE President's Report

Graduation is a wonderful celebration of our many students' successes. At PAE there are graduation ceremonies during the year to honor Job Class participants and those earning Job Skills certificates. These adults have committed to improving their lives and have worked diligently with PAE staff to earn their certificates. After PAE they pursue more demanding jobs and we hope they will maintain contact so we can learn of their next successes.

The formal high school graduation is held every June in the Merrill Auditorium – the same venue used by the three Portland high schools. Our ceremony is steeped

in celebration and respect of the barriers that our learners have overcome. It is always humbling and heartwarming.

The Friends of Portland Adult Education is proud to sponsor scholarships and honorariums for the graduates and speakers. It is the least we can do.

Thank you for your support.



Rob Wood
President of the Friends of
Portland Adult Education

Farewell to Octavia Clarkson



Portland Adult Education bids farewell to Octavia Clarkson who is going to pursue her doctoral studies at Temple University. Octavia first came to PAE in August of 2014 as a VISTA volunteer for the New Mainers Resource Center and was able to continue in the position of Program Associate. She had played a vital role in the development and implementation

of programs at NMRC, always willing to take on a new challenge or help a student in any way she could. PAE staff will miss her, but wish her the best of luck in her continued studies.

Grant funding makes big impact

Thanks to the generosity of the *Key Bank Foundation* we will look into ways to create an industry recognized training focused on Banking. Portland Adult Education will also be creating a Career Academy focused on Information Technology thanks to the generosity of the *Maine Community Foundation's Undapassawana Fund*.

We sincerely apologize for not recognizing the *John T. Gorman Foundation's* incredible generosity in support of the New Mainer's Resource Center in our last newsletter.

History Classes take on Augusta

On March 10, students from two U.S. History classes went on a field trip to Augusta. These students were a diverse group, made up of high school diploma students, native English speakers, and students from many different countries.

They'd been studying the nation's founding documents and our federal system of government, so a trip to the state capitol came at the perfect time! Some of these students had never been beyond Portland, so just traveling an hour north on the bright yellow school bus was an adventure for some.

Upon our arrival, we toured the Capitol building, saw the Legislature in session (overheard: "Wow, they talk fast!"), and met several legislators, including Senators Anne Haskell and Justin Alford and Representatives Charlotte Warren and Erik Jorgensen. The group then learned about Maine's past at the Maine State Museum. Students loved seeing the replica of a water-powered mill, in particular. Finally, it was back to the bus for box lunches and an arrival in Portland. Huge thanks to our generous donor for allowing this truly enriching field trip!

Heather Moore Wood & Kathy Carlson, PAE Teachers

PAE Staff goes to Washington



Sally Sutton, New Mainers Resource Coordinator, attended the National Skills and Credential Institute organized by the White House Taskforce on New Americans in Washington DC with **Alain Nahimana**, Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition, **Quincy Hentzel**, Portland Community Chamber of Commerce, **Tae Chong**, Coastal Enterprises Inc. and FPAE Board member, and **Maine Senator Roger Katz** (R - Distr. 15). The team from Maine joined other participants from 16 different states to hear about best practices and strategize for a better skilled immigrant and refugee experience in the United States.

Unum Partners in Accounting and Finance Course

Portland Adult Education is extremely grateful to the Unum volunteers with various areas of expertise who taught weekly topics on auditing, taxation, insurance, GAAP accounting, financial markets, evaluating company performance, researching public companies and investments. In addition there was a session about the US legal system and how it affects business practices. Students also learned contextualized language in class and in an online course focused on reading, writing, listening and speaking the terminology of Accounting. They conducted a job search to identify actual positions and career pathways and completed basic Excel training.

As a capstone event, students participated in a site visit to Unum where they attended a simulated Finance team meeting and met Mike Simonds, President and CEO of Unum US and had the opportunity to practice their “elevator speeches” with Marcia Leander, Unum’s Vice President of Talent Acquisition.

Unum employees who volunteered to conduct classes found the experience very rewarding as well. Piotrek Stamiieszkin, who spearheaded this effort, summarized it: *“This was a great opportunity not only to help people to succeed in the US and use their professional skills to the fullest, but also for us to learn more about differences in business practices. Some of the questions made me pause and reflect on how we conduct business and opportunities we have in our country.”*

Students will continue to be connected to Unum through interview preparation workshops offered by Unum employees and by participating in exploratory interviews.

This course was funded by CEI (Coastal Enterprises, Inc) through a grant from the Samuel L. Cohen Foundation.

Job Skills graduate success



Sharon Lacey, who is now working in the office at Portland Adult Education, began her journey at PAE by taking courses in Microsoft Office, Workplace Communication, Keyboarding, and Writing for the Workplace. Sharon described PAE as a supportive community where you can learn and update skills. Sharon tells us, “Welcoming and knowledgeable teachers and staff guided me through a process that was difficult to someone who hadn’t taken classes in decades. I am thrilled to be a part of this community now.”

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FPAE’s Mission

To raise resources and awareness to support adults at Portland Adult Education striving to become stronger citizens, employees, parents and entrepreneurs

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