

AALL the News

ARIZONA ASSOCIATION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Letter from the President:

Welcome to the fall 2014 AALL newsletter. With a new year underway, we are excited to share recent adult education achievements and upcoming opportunities with you in this issue. Many of you have taken advantage of AALL professional learning, student scholarships and advocacy trainings/events, and we are grateful that you have shared your experiences with us.

AALL is also pleased to acknowledge the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that was passed with great national legislative support. This piece of legislation will allow states to move forward in providing current and new employment training options at the local level. There will be a two-year transition from WIA to WIOA. Please continue to tell your representatives about the impact that your program has in the community so they can see how their support makes a difference. Also, stay tuned for ADE timelines and new policies, as well as national updates from organizations such as COABE and NCL.

Finally, we would like to congratulate our students, teachers and programs on their accomplishments last year. We hope you will continue to take advantage of community building, advocacy and professional learning opportunities in our state!

Here are some events and opportunities designed for your benefit. To apply for these opportunities, visit our website at www.az-aall.org/scholarships

2014 Fall Awards Conference: November 7th, 2014 at Rio Salado College-

Remember to nominate individuals from your program who deserve recognition for their dedication to Adult Education in our state. Conference information and

award nomination details can be found on page 10 of this newsletter.

Member Professional Development Scholarships-

AALL sponsors conference scholarships for members who wish to attend a local or out of state professional learning opportunities. Scholarships of up to \$500 will be granted to applicants. Scholarship recipients will be asked to submit an article to the AALL newsletter about their professional learning experience.

Student Scholarships- AALL sponsors student scholarships for adult learners who wish to attend student conferences.

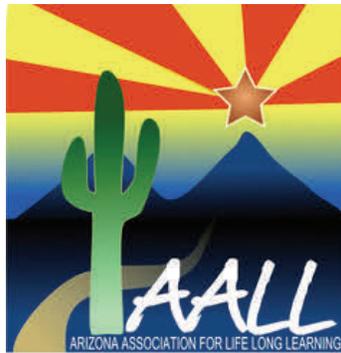
Visit our website for more information.

Request Awareness Fund- AALL will sponsor small awards to support awareness activities hosted by your program like open houses, student leadership activities, visits with elected officials, leadership training, outreach and more. Apply for funds at: www.az-aall.org/awareness-funds-request-forms

Learning Exchange Program- AALL sponsors a Learning Exchange Program for adult educators and program administrators who wish to visit another program site. Visit a program that has piloted an initiative idea that will benefit your students. Share program developments and best practices that have evolved from the new standards and assessments.

Thank you for participating this year!

Regards,
Kelly Stewart
AALL President



Mark Your Calendar!!

Conferences and Events Happening this Fall:

OCT.
7

Webinar: National College Transition Network (NCTN)

‘Getting College and Career Ready in Science’ (Webinar #1)

2pm to 3:30pm, EST

For more information:

<http://www.collegetransition.org/resources.webinars.scienceseries.html>

OCT.
21

Webinar: National College Transition Network (NCTN)

‘College and Career Ready Science Teacher Sampler’ (Webinar #2)

2pm to 3:30pm, EST

For more information:

<http://www.collegetransition.org/resources.webinars.scienceseries.html>

OCT.
27-28

Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE) Conference

‘Winning Together: Teamwork Makes the Dream Work’

Las Vegas, Nevada

For more information: <http://acheinc.org/ache2014/>

NOV.
4-7

Conference: American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE)

‘Adult Educators, Making a Difference’

Charleston, South Carolina

For more information: <http://www.aaace.org/2014-conference>

NOV.
7

AALL 2014
ANNUAL AWARDS
CONFERENCE

**ARE WE ASKING
THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?**

NOVEMBER 7, 2014 RIO SALADO, TEMPE, AZ

SAVE THE DATE!
11.07.14

NOV.
9-12

Conference: STEMtech (Sponsored by League for Innovation in the Community College)

Denver, Colorado

For more information: <http://www.league.org/2014stemtech/>

Attending the MPAEA Conference, Santa Fe

By Marie Bialorucki, Adjunct Faculty, Central Arizona College

The MPAEA Conference was held Sunday, April 27th through Wednesday, April 30th, 2014. The MPAEA is the professional organization for the Mountain Plains Region focusing on Adult Education in the following nine states: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The conference kicked off with pres-session workshops and a Welcome Reception at the Georgia O'Keefe Museum. It was a nice relaxing way to mingle and meet people prior to the conference session.

Monday, April 28th, the conference kicked off with an opening ceremony similar to the Olympics. Each state presented their state flag and welcome to the conference. It was a unifying event that made all conference attendees feel part of a team. It really set a positive tone for the entire 3 days. The people attending the conference were all unified by all the new challenges that are currently facing Adult Education and educators across the region. The new testing requirements and different approaches from each state made for lots of conversations during the event.

States are experiencing a lot of change throughout their programs. The conference gave us the opportunity to talk about these changes and problem solve for solutions together for the good of all Adult Education. One of the most interesting facts that were presented was the fact that there are currently three different High School Equivalency exams currently being offered throughout the Mountain Plains Region; the HiSET (High School Equivalency Test), TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion), and GED 2014 by Pearson Corporation. It was also interesting to note that many states are offering more than one option for their adult education students to choose which test is right for their needs. Arizona and New Mexico are only currently offering the GED 2014 for their adult learners. While I am curious if there will be others offered in the future, I mainly focused on the tests that are available to my Arizona students.

The increased testing requirements and rigor were some of the main focus points at the MPAEA conference. Several sessions were offered for assistance on Extended Response categories, Mathematical Reasoning, Science Instruction that Works, LACES student management systems, Political Advocacy for Adult Education, and Essential Computer Skills necessary to be successful for the new tests. Regardless of which test their states were offering, there were plenty of good content rich sessions to help educators at all levels of professionalism in the Adult Education

world. Whether you were an instructor, supervisor, Program Manager, or Program Director, there was content to reach all levels in the profession.

There was a variety of sessions at each time slot to choose from. Overall, the content was varied and directed towards all levels of educators attending the conference. The sessions on Extended Response and Mathematical Reasoning were great enthusiastic, informative, and entertaining sessions. The GED 2014 session really helped me understand the testing requirements, content expectations, and overall skills necessary for my students to be successful on the new online version of the 2014 GED Test. The presenter for the GED 2014 session works directly with the test and the computer online program, so it was easy to ask questions, clarify concerns, and feel confident that I am instructing students in the most effective way for their success.

The sessions gave some good tips for educators. Mathematical Reasoning and Hands on Banking talked a lot about relating Math to real life scenarios. People use math daily by balancing their checkbooks, shopping at stores, and paying their bills. The more ways you can have students do their math like they already do when they shop or balance their accounts, the less fear they will have relating to math. Also, the courses remind us to have the student not guess, but actually explain how they are working out the problems. The new testing requirements and standards are all about having student explain the process of their solutions not just focus on a single answer. The session about Retention and Persistence did team building activities and games as a way to make the room environment more comfortable for students so they want to come to class instead of dread coming to class. If they interview each other, play jeopardy, who's who in the room, and have students work together in a cooperative fun learning environment, they will be more likely to continue attending than drop out. I have personally played four corners and name games with the students in the first week of class, and it really makes a difference for setting a positive tone in the room and helps ease the tension of students. The most important tip I could give for educators is to really make connections with your students. Set reasonable goals together, and follow up to ensure the students are able to feel confident in their own learning. This will lead to higher student gains, higher retention, and increased attendance.



Arial view of Santa Fe's historic district



(cont. from page 3):

Overall, it was so nice to be able to share and communicate and bond with fellow educators who share the same passion, commitment, and hope for Adult education. The networking with fellow instructors, and educators across the state was priceless. That feeling that someone can completely relate and brainstorm ideas to help programs improve is vital to keeping things moving in a positive direction. As an instructor for the past 8 years in Adult Education, this was first opportunity to be able to attend a regional level event and interact with fellow educators who truly understand the day to day trials and tribulations I face as an Adult Education instructor. During our state level meeting, I explained to Blair Lid-dicoat, Program Manager for Rio Salado College that, "I learned more about Adult Education in 3 days that I have learned in several

years." The networking is so important to keep the motivational level high for both the educator and the student. I was able to connect and form relationships with educators from several states. It's nice to know that we are a unified group working towards a common goal in Adult Education.

Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning (AALL) is an incredible organization that helps so many people. The passion for education and learning is something that should be kept inspired in everyone. As educators, we understand the value and the need for continuous learning. It is so important to share our values and passion and keep the movement going for all. I am very appreciative for AALL for the opportunity to experience such a wonderful event in the MPAEA Conference. This experience has sparked my passion for helping everyone see the positive impacts and continuous growth for adult learners in our communities. Thank you AALL.

Attending the MPAEA Conference, Santa Fe

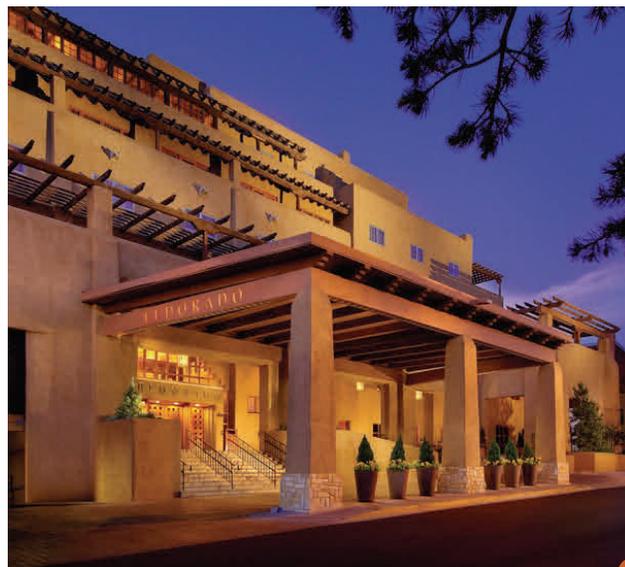
By Susie Morss, Director of Adult Education, Cochise College

Hearing that the MPAEA Conference was going to be in Santa Fe presented me the opportunity to re-connect with my friends and colleagues from both NMAEA and MPAEA. I worked in Adult Education in New Mexico for six years, before moving to Arizona a year and a half ago. During my time in NM, I had the privilege and challenge of serving as NMAEA President and representing NM on the MPAEA Board.

I am so proud of the NMAEA Board for stepping up and hosting this regional event. Gloria Gonzalez, Letty Naranjo and Tom McGaghie who all served as consecutive Presidents after my term and the entire MPAEA Board, deserve tremendous recognition for the excellent job they did in organizing and delivering a fantastic conference. The venue, Santa Fe, NM, showcases all the impressive culture, history, and food that NM has to offer. In terms of warmth, that had to come from the people attending, as the weather did not get the Spring Message. But that is New Mexico, all seasons in one day.

I blew into NM on Saturday, April 26, spending one night in Bent, down by White Sands. The sky was completely gray with the white sands that entire day and night. On Sunday, I was buffeted all the way to northern NM, dodging snow flurries and rain. I arrived at the lovely Eldorado Hotel and the climate improved dramatically. I attended a pre-conference session, Integrating Career Awareness to Enhance College and Career Path-

ways Programs. The presenter, Priyanka Sharma, provided strategies from the curriculum guide, "Integrating Career Awareness into ABE and ESOL Classrooms." The design of this curriculum guide centers on four areas: Self-Exploration, Occupational Exploration, Career Planning and the overarching theme of Cultural Context. One of the many excellent activities presented is



El Dorado Hotel and Spa, venue of the MPAEA conference

(cont. from page 4):

one for students to use to delve deeper into careers they may be interested in, is an Informational Interview, where students either individually or in groups, interview professionals working in various fields. Two other useful activities presented were a lesson planning template to guide the integration of Career and College lessons into classroom settings and a planning worksheet for students to use as a record of their explorations and findings. The four hour session was full of information and useful resources. The ICA curriculum guide can be downloaded in pdf form from the website <http://collegetransition.org/publications.icacurriculum.html>. There are also Word versions of the handouts on that website so that teachers can modify the pages to fit their needs.

On Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning, I attended the double sessions of Evidence-Based Writing Instruction presented by Dr. Mary Ann Corley. As a program director, I was interested in this workshop because it was described as a train-the-trainer model. I was looking for new material to present to my instructors at Cochise College Adult Education as part of next year's professional development. These sessions were amazingly full of practical and research-based writing strategies. The focus of the sessions was to assist all adult education instructors in shifting the writing instruction to meet the College and Career Readiness Standards. One of the most interesting parts of the first day's session was the findings from three meta-analyses research findings on writing instruction. The three studies are as follows: Writing Next, Writing to Read and Informing Writing: The Benefits of Formative Assessment. All three are available at this website <https://teal.ed.gov/>. Dr. Corley shared the common findings from all three studies and designed the rest of the workshop around teaching these skills.

An important research-based finding is the fact that teaching grammar out of context is not an effective writing strategy, as grammar practice in isolation does not transfer to one's writing. Dr. Corley instead presented how teaching the various ways to combine sentences is a more effective and contextualized way to teach writing conventions. Another important aspect of the research is the understanding of how complex the writing process is and why. Writing requires multiple brain functions and abilities operating simultaneously. The writer must formulate ideas, organize, and sequence points in logical order, select vocabulary, check for grammatical correctness, spell words

correctly, punctuate and write legibly. According to Corley (2014), "Writing requires simultaneous and sequential integration of attention, language, long-term memory and working memory, motor skills, higher-order thinking, and metacognition." Whew! I am thanking every teacher I ever had right now!

The rest of Day 1 of this session covered strategies to motivate students to write and ways to increase writing fluency, encouraging collaboration and writing communities, explicitly teaching the writing process and strategies to teach sentence combining and summarizing. Some of the strategies to increase writing fluency include Quick Writes, One-Minute Essays, Journaling, and Bio-Poems Dr. Corley suggests using one of these strategies for an extended period of time to develop students' comfort, ease, and writing fluidity. She also suggests having students keep these writings in a bound notebook, so they can see their progress over time and also that the teacher does not need to correct these writings. I left Day One fully energized and ready to take this material back to my program in Arizona and share it with my instructors.

Day Two did not disappoint and went on to emphasize how to teach students to distinguish text types, use writing frames, write strong thesis statements, and how to cite evidence from text in their own writing. Dr. Corley presented the constructed response requirements of the new GED test and showed how to teach these types of responses. The workshop was an excellent balance of research findings, addressing student needs, and strategic practices all very clearly explained and presented. At the end of the session, Dr. Corley asked each participant to commit to making one change in our practice. I vowed to use this workshop framework to focus on writing instruction next year. I will present this workshop to my instructors over the course of next year's professional learning meetings. Dr. Corley has years of experience in adult education in multiple roles. If you ever have a chance to attend one of her workshops, jump in with both feet and dedicate the time to learn from her.

Dr. Corley's (2014) final slide asks us to always remember, "There is a vast difference between causing writing and teaching writing. We must explicitly teach writing." An excellent mantra for all educators!

(Corley, M. A., (2014), Evidence-Based Writing Instruction: Helping Learners Meet 21st Century Demands, (PowerPoint Slides).

Watch Out for that Bear? Or Puma, or Jaguar!

By Katy Brown, Instructor, Pima Community College Adult Education

Thank you AALL for the opportunity you gave me to participate in the May 1-4, 2014, Wildlife Tracking Workshop offered by Sky Island Alliance. What does learning about animal tracks and scat (yes, scat) have to do with preparing students for their future career and college goals? In my opinion, every-

One, a happy teacher, passionate about learning, is energizing for students.

Two, it is very valuable for a teacher to be placed in the role of a student once-in-a-while. Learning new things is not always as easy as I make it sound in the classes I teach.

Three, learning to track certain target animal species will allow me to be involved in the gathering

of real data, to be used in real decision-making situations, to be used by real scientists, politicians and engineers to build real-world systems that make a difference in our future.

And my students will hear about it in class.

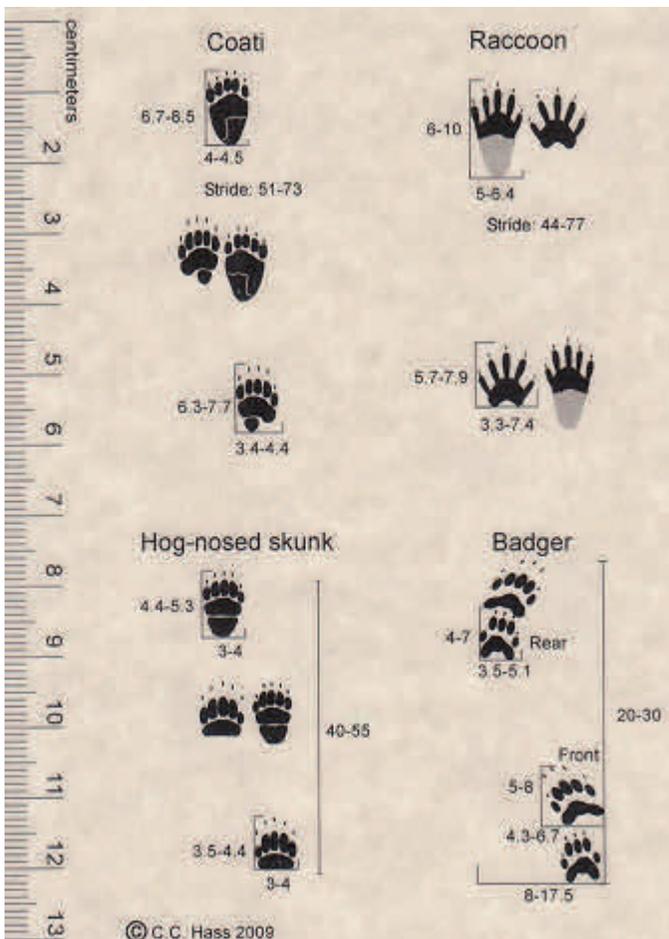
So what did we see in our workshop? Yes, we saw bear tracks, and skunk, raccoon, mountain lion, fox, bobcat, turkey, roadrunner, and many other little critter tracks. We saw trailside wildlife cameras and the photos they capture. We learned to make plaster casts, how to follow a transect and record our findings. And we learned of the value of this data to wildlife, wilderness and society.

Learning to be a really good animal tracker takes time, and practice. A couple of points that were made at this training struck me as being totally applicable to my adult ed teaching: Nobody knows it all. Learn the questions to ask yourself. Always look at things from different perspectives, close up, from the side, from above, and from far away. Don't make quick decisions, and be willing to ask others for their opinions. Document (show your work).

Already I have brought some of what I experienced to my class.

Today they heard about the value of reference books such as ID books to look up information that is interesting to them and that they would otherwise not have a chance to be exposed to.

Soon, I plan to add on to a lesson on measurement and length/width concepts using a skunk track to expand on the idea that was earlier introduced with a rectangle. I will have charts from the tracking workshop showing the range of foot size measurements that different



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species of skunk would exhibit to see if my class can identify the species of skunk from the size of its track. Great GED question complexity: comparison of a diagram and chart to deduce an identification.

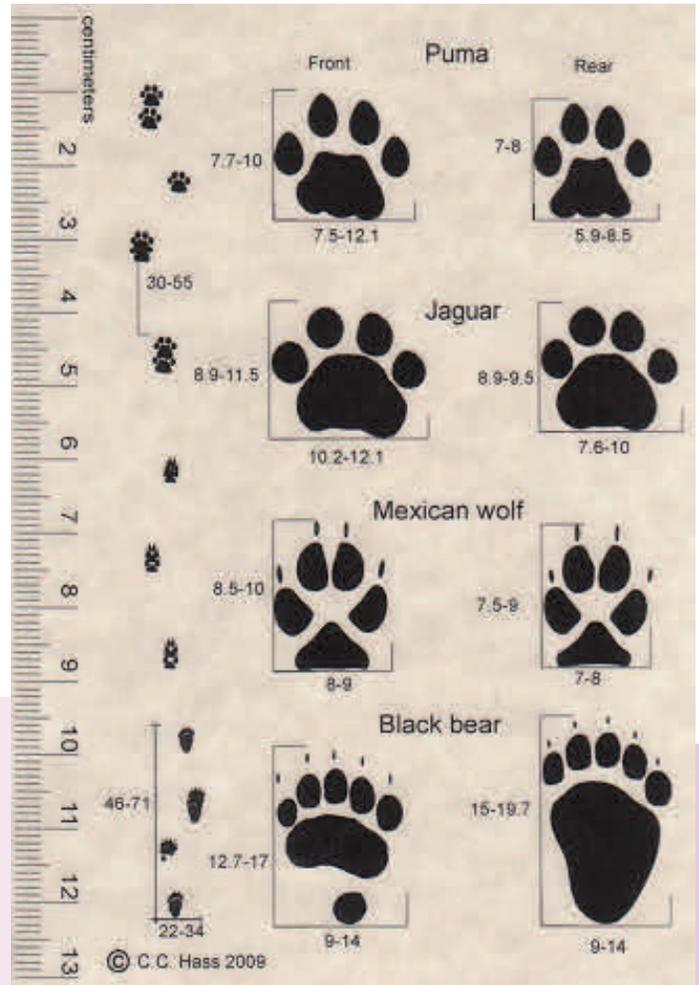
Science is my thing, and thanks to Career and College Readiness and new, higher HSE standards, I feel encouraged to continue to explore current science topics and information so that my students will have access to the best. We need science motivated students. Many of the future jobs available will be science centered. Without the curiosity and wonder that a good foundation in scientific theory and observation can inspire, they may not consider some employment avenues.

I am eager to bring in current science related topics to help our students better understand the world that they live in and the context in which decisions today are made. Reading, writing and math concepts and topics can be explored through many different avenues. Science examples will increasingly be one of them in my classes. Hopefully I will inspire a student to one day consider a career in science that they would otherwise never have known about. And along the way, I hope that other students become aware of the world around them so that they live, work and vote responsibly.

I think that today's emphasis on career and

college readiness has opened the doors to teachers to the need to continue being students themselves, to keep their scholarship current in a field that they choose to call their specialty.

So Teachers, "What's Your Specialty? What field will you choose to focus on?" Go for it!



AALL Awareness Funds 2014: Report from Queen Creek Unified Adult Education Program Student Ambassadors

On April 22, 2014, seven Queen Creek Adult Education Program Student Ambassadors met with Senator Barbara McGuire at the Capital. This meeting was the final activity in a series meant to showcase and enhance the Ambassadors' advocacy planning and presentation skills. (The first two activities were a presentation for the Queen Creek School Board and participation in a Queen Creek Town Council Meeting.) The Ambassadors were accompanied by Miguel Garcia and Diane Jackson.

The Ambassadors presented Senator McGuire with a plaque thanking her for her support of Adult Education in Arizona and showed her a student made video entitled "Thanks to Adult Education." Each Ambassador had an assigned role for the meeting: Opener/Greeting, Personal Stories, Presentation of the Video, Presentation of the Plaque, and Closer.

(cont. from page 7):



Student Ambassadors from Queen's Creek meeting with Seantor McGuire

Senator McGuire received the Ambassadors on the floor of the Senate and provided them with a tour of the antechamber. She was so moved by the video, she cried. Students also had an opportunity to speak briefly with Senator Lynn Pancrazi, another supporter of Adult Education in Arizona.

The Ambassadors had carefully researched representatives for the program service area and determined that Senator McGuire remained our best hope for a face-to-face meeting. The Ambassadors' meeting planning process and execution were flawless. A debriefing of both this meeting and their year-long training program suggests that they have developed significant skill in making presentations and in advocating for Adult Education. We will have an opportunity for follow-on for measurement of impact in the 2014-15 program year.

A release to media followed the meeting and allowed for additional marketing and dissemination regarding our program and Adult Education in the state.



Queen's Creek Students talking with Seantor McGuire



Senator McGuire with her plaque

Cochise Celebrates Adult Literacy Week

By Tom Lehr, Cochise College Adult Education

Adult Education students participated in activities to prepare them to be confident and competent to address individuals and community/government groups to explain the importance of Adult Education and reinforce the need to continue or expand support for such programs.

Four students from Cochise College attended the training along with their Student Success Coach. One student was a recent GED graduate who is currently enrolled in Cochise College courses, two students are currently enrolled in GED preparation classes at Cochise, and fourth student is currently enrolled in ELLA.

Participants have a much better understanding and commitment to the adult education program. It was valuable for them to see their experience in the context of a much larger effort. It contributed to their enthusiasm about personal goals. In addition, they have already contributed to the Adult Ed program at Cochise by presenting to those attending our recent Family Literacy programs. We look forward to their contributing to College and community activities in the future and to possibly continuing their involvement with ambassador programs at other locations.



Representatives from the Cochise College are ready to head to a two day Statewide Adult Education Ambassadors Training in Tucson recently. Pictured from the left are Tom Lehr, Student Success Coach and current students Eduardo Palomares and Perla Iturrald, who are current students in Adult Education programs and Shawn Beech, who recently completed his GED and is currently attending classes at Cochise College. Not shown is David Escaveda.

Adult Literacy Week at the Phoenix Indian Center

By Olivia Hendricks, Adult Literacy Instructor/Coordinator

On February 12, 2014, Phoenix Indian Center Inc. celebrated 2014 Arizona Adult Literacy Week with a Book Presentation & Exchange. Seven children, ages 5-10 years, promoted literacy by presenting books of their choice. Children had the opportunity to share the plot, theme, characters, setting, etc via poster board, oral presentation

and/or choosing various excerpts from books. Not only did children share their literacy, they also had the opportunity to experience their first presentation with a live audience. Children were awarded with applause, Thumbs Up Trophies and goodie bags. Upon completion, children had the opportunity to exchange books with other guests. We ended the night with pizza and drinks.

(cont. from page 9)

The event was organized by six Adult Literacy students. Students were required to fulfill duties including set up crew, greeters, food & beverage crew, and tear down crew. Participants included student's families and members of the American Indian Urban Community. There were 27 people who attended the event, seven children presented books.

OUTCOMES/BENEFITS:

- Children and students built a stronger relationship within themselves, while promoting literacy within the community.
- Children and parents gained the ability to increase their reading and speech Skills.
- Children demonstrated their communication skills
- Children had the ability to make reading fun.

Back row (left to right) Ariel Thinn,
Eva Baltazar, Ariza Agalviz,
Bianca Ragsdale
Front row (left to right) Damien
Galaviz, Natoni Makil,
Landon Martinez



The Storytelling Project: Adult Ambassadors from Flagstaff Working to Advocate for Adult Education

By Beth Lavelly, Adult Education Instructor, Coconino Community College

The Story Telling Project of Flagstaff (STP), Arizona, has taken great steps forward in advocating on behalf of all adult education programs. The group, which was originally formed after a member participated in an Adult Education Ambassador training, has been meeting with leaders to discuss the importance of adult education in Arizona. Thanks to the generous support of Arizona Association for Life Long Learning (AALL), the Story Telling Project was

able to participate in Arizona Adult Literacy Week on February 13 in Tempe, Arizona, along with many adult education groups from around the state.

In Tempe, members of the Story Telling Project collaborated with other Adult Ambassadors to meet with Senator Steve Pierce. Those involved in the meeting were able to both thank Senator Pierce for his continued efforts to support adult education, but also were able to better explain the

(cont from page 10):

purpose and power of continuing to meet with him and share stories. Everyone involved demonstrated knowledge and strong leadership. Hopefully, adult education funding will be approved by the legislature for the next year thanks to the work of student ambassadors and the continued support of leaders like Senator Pierce.

After meeting with Senator Pierce, the STP rushed to Rio Salado to only then be immediately brought forward to the stage to receive an award for stories that the project submitted. The groups' stories tell stories of great struggles and of great achievements; achievements reached through the help of adult education programs. Members of the Story Telling Project noted how impressed they were by how many people came to celebrate Arizona Adult Literacy Week and that they felt proud to be part of the celebration.

After enjoying the celebration, the STP, joined other Ambassador groups back at the Capitol Complex to prepare for meetings with representatives. While afternoon meetings were canceled due to extended House and Senate meetings, Adult Ambassadors from the STP felt proud and much clearer about future work they will do in future months.

The participation in Arizona Adult Literacy week came at the heels of a successful meeting that the STP had the week prior with Mr. Ron Lee, District Director for Congresswoman Ann Kirkpatrick. During the meeting with Mr. Lee, members detailed that the Story Telling Project is working to bring awareness about the importance of adult education locally and that it is part of a greater statewide initia-

tive going on through work done with the Adult Education Ambassadors.

Members of the STP also shared a few personal stories and asked a few questions, which Mr. Lee answered eloquently. One of the questions asked about what representative Kirkpatrick can do in her position to ensure that adult education programs will continue in states that clearly need them. He explained that Congresswoman Kirkpatrick's office



would work emphasize the importance of adult education programs to Arizona state legislators.

Mr. Lee invited members of the STP to future meetings that the Congresswoman holds to discuss important issues, like education, with constitu-

ents of the community. The STP plans on continuing to build a relationship with Congresswoman Kirkpatrick and Steve Pierce's office. The group is fervently working to plan more meetings with local leaders in Flagstaff and another time they can travel to the capitol to meet with legislators.

While the work to raise awareness of the importance of adult education is great, the Story Telling Project believes that taking each small step is an accomplishment to be celebrated. During Arizona Adult Literacy Week this year we all declared that we are "in love with learning". We know that learning is an everyday task that we dedicate ourselves to. All of us involved in adult education have much to celebrate each day as we continue striving towards our personal goals and working to improve our communities. As we do so, we will remember each others' stories and faces and know that we are not alone.

Forging the Future: Attending the COABE Conference

By Elva De La Torre, Assistant Program

I attended AALL's statewide conference in Tucson and was the lucky winner of the grand prize drawing- registration for this year's COABE conference. My first Adult Education conference and I get to go to the National COABE conference in Pittsburgh. My first thought is, "Great! I've never been to Pittsburgh," my second thought is, "Pittsburgh in March, brrr." Yes, it was cold. And yes, it was great.

This year's conference theme was *Forging the Future, Building Bridges in the Steel City*. For those of you who've not been to Pittsburgh, it is indeed a city of bridges having been the center of U.S. steel manufacturing from the late 1800s through the 19th century.



It's a great city that's going through major renovation and it was a great place to meet other adult education folk and talk about how we forge ahead in the midst of new initiatives, new GED tests, and many of the same challenges Adult Education has faced year after year.

The keynote speakers provided encouragement as well as information. Byron Pitts, Anchor and Chief National Correspondent with ABC News, opened the conference with a moving story about his struggle to overcome a stutter with the help of a teacher who "saw" him and his mother who worked tirelessly to ensure his education. Dr. Brenda Dann-Messier, U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary, provided insights on the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) Survey and updates on new federal initiatives. The closing session was energetic as well as emotional. Ethiopian refugee Mawi Asgedom spoke about his families' treacherous journey to a Sudanese refugee camp and their

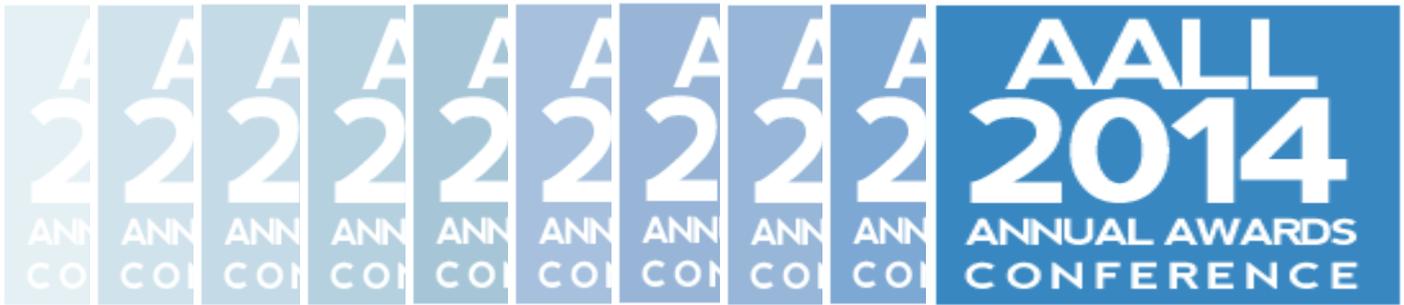
eventual resettlement to a Chicago suburb. The speeches were at times amusing, educational, and certainly inspirational, serving as excellent reminders of why we were all there.

The choice and range of sessions offered throughout the conference was incredible. There were conference strands in Family Literacy, Professional Development, Evidence-Based Practices, Student Leadership, Advocacy, Transitions, and Numeracy. Although there were a large variety of offerings for the diverse audience, one of the standout sessions that I attended was on transitions instruction for ABE learners. It was presented by the Academic Career and Employability Skills (ACES) project. The project is funded by the Adult Basic Education Teaching and Learning Advancement System (ATLAS) through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education.

The project had the broad goal to train every ABE instructor in the state on the Transitions Integration Framework. One of the most notable aspects of the ACES project is that all of the information is available as open source. Here in Tucson we are working through a similar initiative as we incorporate CCR standards into all of our instruction. Sharing the information about this project with instructors upon my return, we discussed how adaptation of this material could benefit our instructor-led Professional Learning Communities.

And finally, let's not forget the COABE app. Burlington English sponsored an app where conference participants posted updates, pictures, and comments about sessions they were attending. It was a great way to meet other educators and learn about what was happening in real time. Of course there was the Dance Your App Off party hosted by Burlington to close out the conference. Many folks did just that; I'm sure there are pictures to prove it.

The COABE conference was a great experience. In addition to the registration that I won from COABE, AALL provided a scholarship that helped me get to Pittsburgh. I appreciated the chance to learn, interact, and network with adult educators from all over the U.S. More importantly it provided opportunities to bring back information and ideas that will likely impact our Adult Education program here at Pima Community College. I look forward to the next COABE conference. It's warm in Denver in April, right?



ARE WE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?



NOVEMBER 7, 2014 RIO SALADO, TEMPE, AZ

**Rio Salado Conference Center
2323 W. 14th St., Tempe, Arizona
See more information at: <http://www.az-aall.org/>**

Newsletter Credits

Fall Edition • September 2014

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