MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello AALL members.

Last fiscal year marked the 50th anniversary of the Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning. The association has seen several transformations throughout the years, starting with our beginning as the Arizona Adult Education Association (AAEA). However, one thing has stayed the same: a commitment to improve opportunities for educational growth by promoting and inspiring lifelong learning and adult literacy in Arizona. In support of our mission, last year AALL hosted a fall and spring conference with themes, Transformative Learning and The Education – Vocation Connection. We also continue to sponsor Arizona Adult Literacy Week and the awards event which recognizes student learning and contributions made by adult education.

AALL also represented the state of Arizona at the COABE Capitol Hill days in the fall and spring. These were opportunities for two of our own board members, Laura Porfirio and Kelly Stewart, to represent Arizona in Washington, talking to legislators and their staff on the importance of adult literacy and education. Arizona and AALL led the way with this event by being the first state to bring a student on the trip to give our representatives a firsthand account of the difference that adult education is making in student lives. Our students made a great impression and now COABE is sponsoring students to attend each year through scholarships.

This year also saw the beginning of the ALAN network to help increase awareness and advocate for adult education and literacy within and outside of our member base. Our awareness committee is working hard to help maintain state and federal funding levels by reaching out to as many people as they can to spread the word on the importance of the work we do and the difference it makes in the lives of so many of our students.

An upcoming event AALL is very excited to be a part of is the 2018 COABE Conference which we will help to host in Phoenix this March 25-28 at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel. AALL is working hard to help make this national conference a great opportunity for relevant and timely professional learning for our adult education stakeholders and students. This will also be a great opportunity to network with programs from across the nation and share our best practices and successes in serving our students.

(continued on page 2)
I RIDE MY BICYCLE TO CLASS
BY TUONG, STUDENT AT QUEEN CREEK ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

I don’t understand why everyone is so surprised that I ride my bicycle to class four days a week. Yes, it takes me one hour from my house to school and one hour from school back to my house. I ride my bicycle because I do not have a car.

I am in the Beginning Group at school. Learning English is hard for me. The change to living here is hard. I lived through the war in my country. But learning English is tough, too.

In Vietnam, I was a high school math teacher. I understand the students who struggled with math a lot better now. I really want to become a United States citizen. I have passed the written part of the test, but I failed the oral examination. This was a very big disappointment.

Last year, I was hit by a car on my way to school. That was scary, but I never thought about giving up. I will keep studying English. I need to reach my goal, and I love my school. The teachers and my classmates are so nice. They all say I am improving. The school is like a family even when we cannot understand each other.

I would tell anyone who is studying English to keep studying. Never give up on learning.

Marybelle Aguilar, ARIZONA CENTER FOR YOUTH RESOURCES
Bridget Blixt, PHOENIX INDIAN CENTER
Wendy Finlayson, MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Lynanne Lasota, RIO SALADO COLLEGE
Craig Lefever, YAVAPAI COLLEGE ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
Elizabeth Martin, RIO SALADO COLLEGE
Marcela Reed, FRIENDLY HOUSE INC.
Patricia Urdialez, MESA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

They join our current Board members:
Lily Beth Brazones, RIO SALADO COLLEGE
Katy Brown, PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Gail Campbell, NORTHLAND PIONEER COLLEGE
Diane Jackson, QUEEN CREEK ADULT EDUCATION
Blair Liddicoat, RIO SALADO COLLEGE
Laura Porfirio, PIMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Kelly Stewart, RIO SALADO COLLEGE
Philip Suriano, RIO SALADO COLLEGE

If you would like to contribute to the support and projects AALL works on to help advance adult education and literacy in the state of Arizona, I would encourage you to consider becoming a member of the Board next year. Additional representation from other programs is also very welcome!

As I begin my third term as AALL president this year, I look forward to the many contributions our members will make in helping promote adult education and literacy in Arizona. The work you do for our students and the need for this work is the reason AALL strives to support your efforts. I hope you will share your feedback and suggestions as to how we can support you better and I look forward to the next year.

Philip Suriano
AALL President

www.az-aall.org
ARIZONA STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDS COABE’S CAPITOL HILL DAY
BY HEATHER ASHMAN (STUDENT AT RIO SALADO)

If anyone had asked me six months ago where I thought I would be today, sitting in Rio Salado College’s café and writing about my recent trip to Washington D.C. would not have been in the realm of my responses. One minute I was signing up for High School Equivalency classes and the next I was packing for a trip to the nation’s capitol to advocate for adult education, pondering all of the ways in which I could stress the importance of adults having proper access to education no matter the circumstances.

It all started with a scholarship opportunity that I was informed of whilst working with Lily Beth Brazones on my graduation speech. Ten adult learners across the United States were being chosen to attend Coalition on Adult Basic Education’s Capitol Hill Day; a day in which we would spend in our nation’s capitol speaking to representatives about adult education. I had my application turned in within an hour of learning about this opportunity and spent the following hour learning more about COABE. I had already come to terms that I was not chosen when I received a congratulatory email from COABE two weeks later.

I left on a Tuesday morning for my big day in the Capitol. I attended with Kelly Stewart from Rio Salado College, an institution that had grown dear to me during my time as a student and volunteer. Kelly had never lobbied or been to D.C., either, and it sedated my nerves to know that I would be there with someone who had just as much experience with it as I. Our travelling together awarded me the chance to learn more about Rio Salado College and her the chance to learn more about the college from a student perspective. By the time we got off the plane, I was overloaded with ambition and focus, and eager to put myself out there as an adult education advocate.

I awoke early Wednesday morning to prepare for the day, starting with nursing a coffee to wake my jet lag addled brain. At six o’clock in the morning, the view outside of my hotel room window was something to behold. Buildings sat on a dark gray backdrop and loomed over me. I was awestruck, the view outside of my hotel room window was something to behold. Buildings sat on a dark gray backdrop and loomed over me. Our meeting with Helen was brief, but informative on multiple levels. Our improvised corridor meeting gave us a taste of what the day would be like and left a lasting, surreal impression on me.

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Visiting Capitol Hill was an experience that is unfathomably crucial to the future I want for myself, and one I will take with me to all of the places I go. Little did I realize before this trip just how fast and loaded my life was becoming, all thanks to the effort of a single step forward. There as a moment not so long ago that I looked at obtaining my general education diploma as a stopping point; the strike through the last line of a bulleted list. I look at that list now and see that it has grown, evolved, and is running off the page.
### AALL SPONSORED STATEWIDE AMBASSADOR TRAINING

On April 28th and 29th, 2017, AALL sponsored a 10-hour Ambassador course hosted by Queen Creek Adult Education. The training is intended to prepare participants to advocate for adult learners and adult education programs with policy makers, the business community, elected officials, and the community at large. The training also focuses on the development or enhancement of presentation skills and helps participants develop stories for change. Thirty-three adult learners, administrators, and instructors participated from six programs across the state. Diane Jackson, an instructor at Queen Creek and the Ambassador Coordinator, was the lead trainer with the help of four Queen Creek Ambassadors who have gone through a year-long training program and have real-world experience in meeting with people in power. The training included a practice session with the President of the Queen Creek Chamber of Commerce as the guest. Opportunities emerged from this encounter for potential future collaboration between adult education programs and chambers across the state. Participants in the training program praised the Queen Creek Ambassador team and were amazed by the student stories incorporated in the training. Another participant commented, “After this program, I am motivated to come back next year and be an Ambassador!”

### AMBASSADOR TRIP TO THE CAPITOL

On March 7th, 2017, fourteen Pima College Adult Basic Education ambassadors along with six staff members traveled to Phoenix to meet with legislators. Students applied their ambassador skills by telling their stories and facilitating small meetings with eight different legislators. Lawmakers were both touched and impressed with student stories of resilience and their drive to use education to further their lives and opportunities. Students had one large group meeting with Senator Farley on the senate floor where he answered questions about government. After the meetings, students were introduced on the House and Senate Floors by Representative Gabaldon and Senator Farley. This awareness activity taught students that state lawmakers are accessible and willing to make time to hear from their constituents. They also discovered that many legislators are genuinely interested in hearing their stories; in fact, in some meetings there were commonalities found between student and lawmaker backgrounds. Finally, students received enthusiastic commitments from lawmakers to visit our centers, attend our upcoming HSE graduation and/or attend our end of year celebration of student achievement. On behalf of Pima’s ambassadors and staff, we would like to thank AALL for their generous and continuous support of our students’ civic engagement activities.

### ADULT EDUCATION AMBASSADORS

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Overshadowed by the COABE (Coalition on Adult Basic Education) and AALL (Arizona Association for Lifelong Learning) conferences, the Mountain Plains Adult Education Association (MPAEA) Conference flies under most of our radars. However, the MPAEA conference definitely merits your attention. Smaller than the national COABE conference, yet much larger than AALL’s conferences, MPAEA’s conference offers a myriad of events touching on the social, professional, and inspirational areas of teaching. This year, members from Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, and Colorado convened in Salt Lake City April 11-13.

One of the best parts about traveling to a conference in another town is the opportunity to network and socialize with colleagues. This year’s conference kicked off with a pre-conference social held in the Wasatch Ballroom of the handsome Radisson Hotel in downtown Salt Lake, where I met up with several adult educators from Rio Salado College and the Arizona Department of Education. Upon entering the ballroom, adult educators were greeted by the sounds of local bluegrass ensemble, Pixie and the Partygrass Boys. Good times ensued as we enjoyed a variety of hors-de-oeuvres that proved to be a meal in and of themselves. Amid the fanfare, the organizers paused for a drawing for the following night’s final NBA game of the season between the Utah Jazz and the San Antonio Spurs. I didn’t win, but one of my colleagues did, and she gave her tickets to me! The next night, several colleagues and I got to watch the Jazz pull of an exciting victory in the final minutes of the game.

The next days at the conference, educators attended a variety of break-out sessions that ran the gamut from ELAA and ABE to topics in WIOA, immigrant education, and technology. Since I teach reading and writing classes for Pima Community College’s ABECC (Adult Basic Education for College and Career) program, the first session I chose to attend was a practical one, entitled “Four Square Writing.” This simple method has the aim of helping students to write paragraphs. According to the presenter, how to write a paragraph is a skill that many instructors fail to teach, as much of the focus is on the sentence and essay level. I definitely intend to test out this method with my students, and if you are interested you may simply browse the results. The session presenter, Alice Shepherd, recommends the Four Square Writing book for grades 1-3 by Judith and Evan Jay Gould for its ease of use. Looking for more tips to use in my classroom, I opted to attend another session dealing with writing. Although the session’s name was not much of an attention-grabber, “Integrating Reading and Writing” was excellent, as it reminded educators of how we can get great results using the simplest of techniques. I came away a host of useful writing prompts and methods to help students improve the crucial skills of reading and writing. Some of the strategies discussed included connecting to the students’ passions (something that we must keep in mind in this age of WIOA), using visuals for writing, and being generous with praise.

Interwoven throughout the conference were some outstanding and inspirational keynote speakers. Like the sessions themselves, the keynote speeches appealed to a wide array of interests. All of them were directly related to our jobs as adult educators. The conference started off with a fascinating talk by Kim Giles, author of the book Choosing Clarity. Giles, who was named one of the top 20 advice gurus in the nation by Good Morning America, delivered a message to the audience that is applicable to our students, our children, and ourselves. She proposes that “Our value comes from our intrinsic nature and uniqueness,” and that it’s “not affected by appearance, performance, property, or the opinion of others.” In other words, we are all equals--no one is better than anyone else. I feel that this is an important message for our students, given that many of them suffer from a lack of self-confidence, especially in the classroom.

There were many other interesting keynote speakers, but the closing speech really stood out to me. It was given by Kenny O’Rourke, a young man who had a hard life growing up. Kenny didn’t have ups-and-downs, so much as just downs; however, with the help of a teacher who believed in him he was able to overcome incredible odds: years of physical and emotional abuse, homelessness, gang membership, drug abuse, and incarceration. Kenny’s heartfelt speech and unlikely success highlighted just how big of a difference a teacher can make in one’s life, and that, even those who are caught in the vicious circle of drug abuse, violence, and prison can triumph. And, triumph he has, as he recently started his own rehabilitation center to help others in situations that mirror his own trials.

To sum up, the conference that few have ever heard of, the Mountain Plains Adult Education Conference, was awesome, and I highly recommend it to AALL members. Although it will not take place in 2018 due to COABE’s conference in Phoenix at that time, Arizona adult educators should keep it in mind for 2019. It’s easy to get to, and it’s great way to get in some professional learning, networking, and to share in some inspirational stories that motivate us to do the work that adult educators are called to do.
ABOUT AALL

Our Mission:
AALL strives to improve opportunities for educational growth by promoting and inspiring lifelong learning and adult literacy in Arizona.

Our Vision:
Arizona will have an empowered adult population and a dynamic workforce.

Our Motto:
Empowering Learners for Life

COABE 2018—PHOENIX, AZ

AALL is very excited to host the COABE conference in Phoenix this March.
We need volunteers to make Arizona shine at the conference.
Contact your AALL board to see how you can get involved!

EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS AND SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS
March 25-28, 2018 at the Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel

About AALL
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