

June 21, 2004

Dear Editor

Census data indicates that over a million adults in Illinois lack a high school diploma, including 20,000 adults in Parkland's district. Approximately 25,000 adults, yearly, earn a GED/high school equivalency award, and during the last year, 300 adults in Parkland's district achieved this distinction. To honor their achievement, Parkland College hosted the annual GED Graduation Ceremony on the evening of June 9. Many of the awardees, their families and friends, attended this year's ceremony. The GED Graduation Ceremony is a joyous event, one that demonstrates the commitment and determination of the recipients to gain a high school equivalency award by successfully completing a test that assesses their critical thinking skills, ability to analyze data, write a five paragraph essay, and answer and solve algebra and geometry questions.

Adults who earn a GED can apply for federal financial aid and continue their post secondary education. Post secondary education is necessary for most jobs that pay a living wage, a necessity for gainful employment in our increasingly complex and technologically advanced society. An educated workforce is essential for the prosperity of the residents in Parkland's district, the State of Illinois, and the country. The skills of our workforce will be the determining factor in our ability to compete in an increasingly global economy.

Parkland College is committed to increasing the literacy and workforce skills of the residents in East Central Illinois. GED preparation classes are free of charge and are offered on campus and at 10 district sites. GED on-line, an internet based GED preparation program, is a resource for adults who cannot attend classes because of work, distance, or family commitments. For more information about these programs and additional literacy and workforce education services available at your community college, please contact the Adult Education/Literacy Center at Parkland College, 217/351-2580.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Bennett, Secretary  
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Board of Trustees

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