

June 22, 2009

To the Editor,

Sixty-two area residents who earned a second chance to “finish high school” received kudos at the annual GED Graduation Celebration on Wednesday, June 10.

A packed house at the Parkland College Theatre listened as three GED graduates shared personal stories of triumph and hope, and proud family and friends applauded their graduates who walked across the stage. The event was a gift that blessed all—those who participated and their supporters.

From June 2008 to May 2009, more than 315 people passed the General Educational Development tests this year at either Parkland or the Champaign-Ford Regional Office of Education. While this number seems only a nibble out of the 12,000+ adults in the district who lack a high school diploma or equivalent (9,000 in Champaign County alone, based on 2000 U.S. census data), it still represents people who now have more employment options, greater chances of success in occupational/vocational training programs, and better prospects for a higher standard of living.

The cap and gown GED ceremony, hosted by the Parkland College and Urbana School District 116 adult education programs, also gave these residents a chance to participate in the graduation they never had. We congratulate all of the 2008-2009 GED recipients.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bennett, Vice Chair  
Parkland College Board of Trustees