



Adult Education Connection  
By Karen Gent

Dorita McClanahan, of Grundy, Virginia, likes to find the missing pieces of a puzzle. She has been a detective-at-heart since she was seven years old. She didn't know at that time that one day, she would find a valuable missing piece of the puzzle of her own life- the GED certificate.

Dorita dropped out of high school at the age of fourteen. She was facing many personal obstacles in her life that prevented her from enjoying school. One of those obstacles was asthma. Dorita experienced frequent illness because of the asthma and missed a lot of school. She loved sports, but was unable to participate, which caused her much discouragement.

Dorita always regretted that she didn't complete high school, so when her sister mentioned the idea of attending a GED preparation class, she was up for the task. Dorita and her sister began a class near the end of 2000. Dorita passed three of the five GED subject tests, but had difficulty with the math and writing. She took a break from the class and returned in 2005 to try to complete her goal. Dorita says that she is not a person who gives up. She relates that she could not be content until she earned her GED.

McClanahan expresses that it was her missed opportunities that made her come back. She wanted more in a career and declared, "I'm not giving up." Dorita states that the GED program made her realize that she could succeed in life. She says that her teacher, Carol Chambers, had faith in her ability to earn her GED and never gave up on her. Dorita satisfied her curious nature by earning certification as a private investigator and security officer. The GED will help her go beyond those credentials.

Dorita McClanahan successfully completed her GED testing in March 2007. At the 2007 GED graduation ceremony in Buchanan County, she received a scholarship to Southwest Virginia Community College where she is presently enrolled in the criminal justice program. Dorita says that she is very excited about attending college to earn a degree and has a new outlook on life because of it.

Is there a puzzle piece missing in your own life? If you or someone you know didn't finish high school, contact Southwest Regional Adult Education at 889-5424 or 1-866-581-9935 to find out more about earning a GED certificate.

Dorita McClanahan encourages others by stating that it is worth it all to go back to school. "You won't regret it," she says; "Don't let this opportunity pass you by."