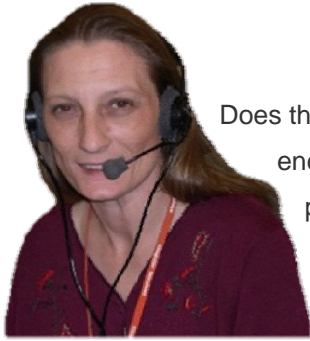


Adult Education Connection
By Karen Gent



Does this face look familiar? You may have seen her recently on a billboard encouraging others to “Get Your GED.” Imagine raising two children as a single parent making minimum wage with no benefits at all. That’s just what Regina Watson did for years before she made some changes that have positively affected her life.

Regina dropped out of high school to get married. In the course of her life, Regina found herself a single mom trying to raise two sons making only minimum wage. Regina says that she “job-hopped” hoping to find a better paying job with some type of benefits, but without a high school diploma, no opportunities presented themselves. She would try to apply for other jobs, but was told she did not qualify because she had no diploma or GED.

While her sons were relatively young, Regina decided to enroll in an adult education class and try to earn a GED certificate. The pressures of working full-time and parenting two young children prevented Regina from reaching her goal at that time. Regina relates that she became frustrated occasionally, thinking that she would never be able to acquire her GED.

Regina Watson says that her sons were an inspiration to her to complete the task. She says that they would remind her from time to time that she hadn’t finished high school. She made it one of her goals to make sure that her sons recognized the value of a high school education.

Several years later, Regina decided to give the GED preparation class another try. She says that the class was wonderful. She was able to receive one-on-one help from the teachers, and the fact that the class was free was an appealing incentive for Regina at the time. Although it took about a year of study, Regina was able to accomplish her goal of earning her GED certificate. She believes, “If I could do it, anyone can.” Two days after her oldest son graduated from high school, Regina attended her own GED graduation ceremony. She says that her sons were very proud of her accomplishment.

Because of this achievement, Regina was able to immediately secure a job as a customer service representative at Cingular. It was her first job making more than minimum wage with good benefits. Regina expresses that this has really been life-changing for her and her family. She enjoys her work at Cingular and notes that her boss, Sandra Cordle, has been great to work with. Regina’s success in the workplace has led her to a position of mentoring new employees at Cingular.

To join a GED preparation class, contact Southwest Regional Adult Education at 889-5424, or call toll-free at 1-866-581-9935. To register for GED testing in the four-county region, contact Joyce Presley at the Buchanan County School Board Office at 935-4551, Cindy Stanley at the Dickenson County Career Center at 835-9384, Glenda Breeding at the Russell County School Board Office at 889-6507, or Toni Tester at the Tazewell County Career & Technology Center at 988-6037. You must register prior to the testing date.