

Adult Education Connection  
By Karen Gent



Vickie Perkins, a native of Marion, Virginia and currently living in Abingdon, works as a business analyst at CGI in Lebanon, Virginia. Vickie does business systems analysis, design, and testing at CGI. In layman's terms, she states that she learns a business and designs a computer system for that business that makes it easier for people to do their work. Vickie relates that in her field of work, one must have a mindset of continuous learning, good communication skills, and good technical skills. She has worked hard to get to the place she is today.

Vickie says that getting a GED was the door that opened many other doors of opportunity in her life. She dropped out of high school to get married and then moved from Virginia to North Carolina because of her husband's military career. "I quit high school, but I didn't want to give up education," Vickie says. She attended a GED preparation class while in North Carolina and then studied at home on her own, eventually earning her GED credential.

After having factory work experience in production and piece work, this young woman decided that she did not want to do that type of work for the rest of her life. Vickie says that acquiring her GED had opened her mind to possibilities that she had never considered before. After a move back to Virginia, she made the decision to go to college, and having a GED made this possible for her.

Vickie attended Wytheville Community College, earning an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Data Processing. After earning this degree, she worked at Raytheon in Bristol and went to school at night at East Tennessee State University, eventually earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer and Information Science. Vickie recalls that this was no easy task to complete considering the fact that she was a single mother at this time. She says, "Single mothers can get through it. It takes determination, but it can be done. Many times I wanted to quit but had gone too far to turn back."

After earning her bachelor's degree, Vickie relocated to North Carolina to pursue another job opportunity. She says it was very normal at the time to have to leave this area to secure a job in the technology field. She was very pleased when she was given the opportunity to return to her native area to work at CGI. She relates, "You don't have to leave home to have a good job in the computer science field. Opportunities are available now that weren't here years ago. It is exciting to come back and work in this area."

Again, Vickie reiterates the importance of lifelong learning. "My whole life has been continuous learning. Computer technology changes all the time, so you don't get bored. If I have to quit learning, I think I'll cease to breathe." Vickie is still in the process of learning and taking on a new project-photography!

You can let the GED open the door to a better future for you. Begin by contacting Southwest Regional Adult Education at 889-5424 or 1-866-581-9935 to sign up for a free GED preparation class.

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