

At 25 years, Project Changes Name

For 25 years, Project Finish gave people a second chance at education. Sponsored by JCCC and the Johnson County Library,

Community
Services

Project Finish helped adult students improve reading, writing and math skills; learn English as a second language; and prepare for the GED test.

But as of July 1, Project Finish received a new name – Johnson County Adult Education.

“The new name better reflects our mission,” said Susan McCabe, program director, Johnson County Adult Education. “Passing the GED test, which results in a Kansas high school diploma, is the ‘beginning,’ not the ‘finish,’ of an education.”

The new name is also a better umbrella term for the program which, after a quarter century, now includes Adult Basic Education; English as a second language; GED test preparation; citizenship classes; Migrant Even Start, a program designed to improve the literacy of migrant families by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program; and the Olathe Family Resource Center, a comprehensive program that offers educational, vocational and case management services to families who live in the Olathe School District.

In August, the Johnson County Adult Education program adds two new classes – *Connections*, a class for ESL learners before they begin Adult Basic Education classes, and *Transitions*, English and algebra classes for Adult Basic Education students who want to transition to college.

In 2007-2008, Project Finish served 2,300 students, a 5-percent increase over the previous year. Of those 2,300 students, 75 percent improved their reading, math or listening skills on national standardized tests. In the same year, 175 volunteer tutors gave 10,000 hours to work one-on-one with students on assigned curriculum under the direction of professional instructors.

Johnson County Adult Education has eight locations throughout the county — Antioch, Oak Park and Gardner libraries; JCCC’s Olathe Center; Olathe Family Resource Center; Center of Grace, Olathe; Briarwood Elementary

School, Prairie Village; and its newest location at JCCC’s West Park Center, 8780 W. 87th St., which will have daytime and night classes beginning in August. With 10 classrooms, West Park will provide more ESL and GED classes.

“West Park will allow us to serve more people and reduce the wait-list for ESL classes,” McCabe said.

Also new, the program received a grant from the Kansas Adult Education Association Past Presidents Development Fund to buy books to start book clubs for ESL learners. Janet Daley, West Park coordinator, said 43 students participated in eight groups throughout the county in June and July. More groups are anticipated for the fall. To volunteer as a book club leader, call Daley at 913-469-7687.

Project Finish opened its doors in March 1983, serving more than 40,000 students in the intervening years. Sporting a new name, the program will celebrate its 25th anniversary with events in 2008-2009.

“Johnson County Adult Education is a life-changing program,” McCabe said. “It’s a springboard to further education and more life opportunities.”

For information about Johnson County Adult Education, contact McCabe at 913-469-7621.



Maria Rosa Bulla, a native of Columbia, gets ready to discuss a biography about Abigail Adams at an ESL book club at the Johnson County Central Resource Library.