


## GED Connection Activities to Debut on LiteracyLink® Website

continued from page 3

**38 GED Internet Activities** – These shorter, skill-focused activities are based on external websites called “destination sites,” Del Bianco says. “They provide practice in both GED content and in the GED test-taking format by posing four to five GED-like, multiple choice items per activity.” As in the other sections, responses are saved in the learner portfolio. Constantly, learners are both “gaining knowledge and also practicing skills.”

**“You can access this  
anytime – from home,  
work, the library, anywhere”**

These activities “tie most closely to the workbooks and video programs, but there is no one-to-one correspondence among workbook chapter, video episode and Internet activity,” Del Bianco explains. “The materials are integrated and may be used in any combination; but they support each other – they are not complete, independent units and could not replace each other. All would share the same learning objective and focus on the same type of knowledge. The most complete approach would be to use all three media – which is the overall goal of the project. Let each medium do what it does best: video – modeling, introduction, context, illustration; workbooks – review and skill practice; online – application, reflection, synthesis.”

Online learning modules and practice tests will be available free of charge in early November. Workbooks may be obtained for a nominal fee. 

For more information, visit

[www.pbs.org/literacy](http://www.pbs.org/literacy), [www.ket.org/ged](http://www.ket.org/ged)  
or call KET at 1-800-354-9067.

**KET Enterprise**  
560 Cooper Drive  
Lexington, KY 40502-2200

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, or are receiving more copies than you know what to do with, please cut out the complete address label below and send it to our return address. Help us save trees!

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit 377  
Lexington, KY

The *KET Adult Learning Quarterly* is produced by KET, The Kentucky Network, Enterprise Division and is distributed nationwide to adult educators and those with related interests.

Articles examine methods and technologies; explore locations and applications; and feature leaders who find successful, innovative ways to reach adult learners using KET materials. Unless otherwise noted, the material in this publication is not copyrighted. Please feel free to use it in the cause of adult education.

If you have comments, questions or story ideas, please send them to Margaret Norman, editor, or Phyllis Youngerman, writer, by mail: KET Enterprise, 560 Cooper Drive, Lexington, KY 40502-2200; by phone: (800) 354-9067; by fax: (859) 258-7396; or by e-mail: [AdultEd@ket.org](mailto:AdultEd@ket.org).

You can see this issue on our web site at: [www.ket.org/GED](http://www.ket.org/GED)



- |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| • KET Unveils Professional Development Materials for GED 2002 ..... | 1 | • NC Community Colleges .....                                    | 5 |
| • VALUE an Invaluable Resource for Literacy Programs .....          | 2 | • Ambassador Works Pro Bone-o .....                              | 5 |
| • GED Connection Activities to Debut on LiteracyLink Website .....  | 3 | • Low Income Workers Can Receive Tax Credit in Advance .....     | 6 |
| • LiteracyLink Partners .....                                       | 3 | • Elements of LiteracyLink .....                                 | 6 |
| • Molly Maid's One-Two Punch .....                                  | 4 | • Workplace Essential Skills Provides Template for Montana ..... | 7 |
| • Finding Qualified Candidates Quickly is Goal of EARN .....        | 5 | • WATERMELON - An Acronym for Living .....                       | 7 |

### Address Change/New Subscriber

If your address has changed or you know someone who would like to receive the *KET Adult Learning Quarterly*, please send us the information below. If changing an address, please include the label from this issue.

- New Subscriber
- Address change (Fill in new information below and attach mailing label.)
- Please send me a **KET Catalog**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

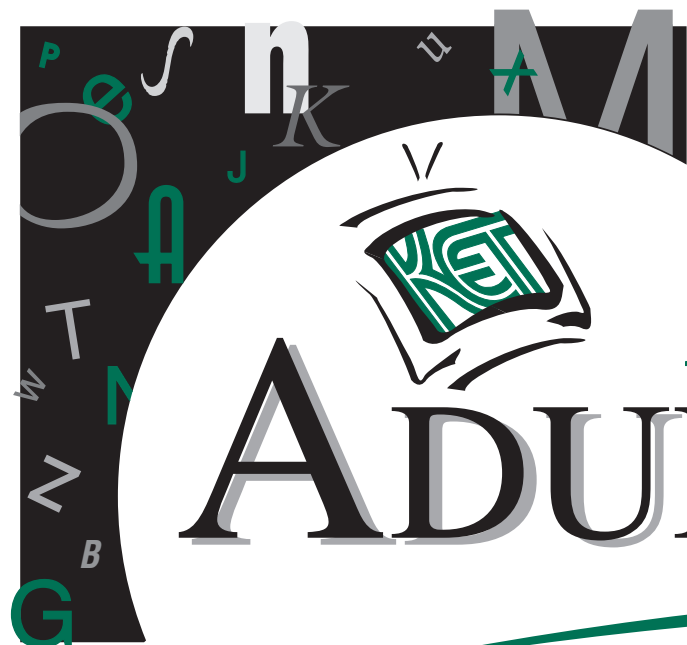
Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**KET**

**SEND TO:**  
Circulation Dept., KET Enterprise Division,  
560 Cooper Drive, Lexington, KY 40502-2200  
or call (800) 354-9067, fax: (859) 258-7396



# ADULT LEARNING

QUARTERLY

## KET Unveils Professional Development Materials for GED 2002

**K**ET is unveiling an assortment of staff development materials to help teachers prepare for the new GED 2002 Tests, including a website, self-study guides, and workshops containing trainer's notes and reproducible handout masters.

The five content areas on the GED have been combined into three training strands: *Mathematics*; *Writing*; and *Critical Thinking and Graphic Literacy*, according to Caren Van Slyke, President of Learning Unlimited, who oversaw development of the new materials. "The training focuses on these areas because they are emphasized in the new GED Tests."

The professional development materials are designed to help teachers make the transition to the new test and also to provide new teachers with an orientation to the GED Tests for years to come.

In addition to the GED 2002 Professional Development website, programs will also be able to obtain print self-study guides and/or workshop manuals.

"All three resources cover the same basic information: How many questions per test, how much time, etc.," Van Slyke says.

"In all modules, there are sample questions, and teachers get feedback. On all three, we tried to come up with different activities that work best in each medium. For example, in the website, there are games like 'Algebra Jeopardy' and crossword puzzles. It's all information, it's all interactive, and it's also fun.

"It's a flexible system; an individual can study almost any way and any time he or she needs to. For example, a teacher could go to a workshop and then later, use the web

### GED 2002 Online Professional Development

materials to reinforce what was learned. All three resources can stand alone, or they can be used to support each other."

Van Slyke collaborated on the materials with chief writers Susan Pittman and Bonnie Vondracek. "These two individuals were chosen by the U.S. Department of Education and the GED Test-

ing Service to do national training all over the country on the new test. They are nationally recognized as experts on the new GED."

The web designer and programmer is Steve Loper, who attended the University of Central

Florida after obtaining his GED, and is now a professional web designer. "He's done a wonderful job," Van Slyke notes.

The website, at [www.ket.org/GED2002](http://www.ket.org/GED2002), contains four modules. The first is **Orientation**, which includes a clear, user friendly, step by step introduction for those not used to "being on the web," and an overview of the new GED Tests.

The second module, **Math**, focuses on math problem solving strategies, the new grid formats, and use of the Casio® fx-260 solar scientific calculator. "Much of this material is new to teachers," Van Slyke says. "Teachers can go through the online module, answer questions, and get feedback. Pop-up windows give tips and strategies, which the teacher can print out for students. There are also links to other sites for teachers and to 'cool' math sites for students."

The **Orientation** and **Math** modules are scheduled to be up and running in October.



### WHAT'S INSIDE

- VALUE an Invaluable Resource for Literacy Programs .....2
- GED Connection Activities to Debut on LiteracyLink Website.....3
- LiteracyLink Partners .....3
- Molly Maid's One-Two Punch.....4
- Finding Qualified Candidates Quickly is Goal of EARN .....5
- NC Community Colleges.....5
- Ambassador Works Pro Bone-o .....5
- Low Income Workers Can Receive Tax Credit in Advance .....6
- Elements of LiteracyLink .....6
- Workplace Essential Skills Provides Template for Montana .....7
- WATERMELON - An Acronym for Living .....7

KET

continued on page 6

**Let Our Educational Consultants Design an Instructional Program to Fit Your Needs**



**RON GRIFFIN**

National Sales Manager, KET  
560 Cooper Drive, Lexington, KY 40502  
Phone: (800) 354-9067, Fax: (859) 258-7396  
E-mail: rgriffin@ket.org

**BILL ANTHONY**

SYNSOL — Synergetic Solutions  
6416 Kiko Street, Diamondhead, MS 39525  
Phone: (228) 255-0369, Fax: (228) 255-0169  
E-mail: synsol@msn.com

**ROBERT BOYET**

Life Long Learning of Louisiana, LLD  
5518 Antioch Blvd., Baton Rouge, LA 70817  
Phone: (225) 753-4396, Fax (225) 756-0670  
E-mail: bboyet@excite.com

**TONY BUTTINO**

87 Treehaven Rd.  
West Seneca, NY 14224  
Phone: (716) 675-5129

**ERNEST CINO**

World Enterprises  
228 Kinkaid Court., Des Plaines, IL 60016  
Phone: (305) 364-3200, Fax: (305) 364-0085  
E-mail: globaltraining@usa.net

**KEITH EISENBERGER**

750 Mill St., Suite D4  
Belleville, NJ 07109  
Phone: (973) 844-1566, Fax (973) 844-0351  
E-mail: eisyuga@cs.com

**JAMES KIRKLAND**

2722 Franklin Court  
Alexandria, VA 22302-3019  
Phone: (703) 824-9374, Fax (703) 824-9375  
E-mail: kirkjm@home.com

**ANN & GARY LEAR**

Resource Development Systems  
P.O. Box 3185, Lake City, FL 32056-3185  
Phone: (904) 754-0920, Fax: (904) 754-0094  
E-mail: adlearn@rds-net.com (Ann)

**ARLENE MICKLEY**

15235 Brand Blvd., Suite A107  
Mission Hills, CA 91345  
Phone: (818) 898-3340, Fax (818) 898-3342  
E-mail: edtextbooks@aol.com

**JAMES USITALO**

Innovative Education, Inc.  
212 West 10th Street, Suite A260  
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3007  
Phone: (317) 917-9770, Fax: (317) 917-9773  
E-mail: jusitalo@innovativeEducation.com

**CHERYL & SAM WACHTEL**

Designing Success  
7900 NW 27th Ave. 77 West Plaza  
Miami, FL 33147  
Phone: (305) 836-6969, Fax: (305) 836-3334  
E-mail: 133 Cheryl@aol.com

## VALUE an Invaluable Resource for Literacy Programs

**I**t takes great courage for an adult to admit that he or she can't read. It takes courage to get help. Even then, courage is still needed – to deal with society's attitudes.

"We're dealing with a monkey on our backs," explains Martin Finsterbusch, Executive Director of Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE). An adult learner – the stereotype would have it – "is anyone who was ever in a learning program." The learner may be viewed as "stupid, needy, helpless or weak. I have had people walk away from me when they find out I'm an adult learner."

Such attitudes are not universal, but they are prevalent enough to impact many jobs and relationships, and to render an organized response imperative.

With a learning disability, Finsterbusch was teased in school and graduated with a low self-image. Through a local literacy program, he "jumped six literacy levels in one year." He began a career in food service and rose from a cook's position to supervising others. However, when he won a literacy award and people "found out that I was an adult learner, they laughed at me." He was removed from his supervisory role and wanted to quit, but didn't. "I stayed, worked my way back up and eventually became manager of the operation, with 70 staff reporting directly to me."

Such scenarios are played out too often, but they needn't be. "We need to get adults who are not afraid to talk about it; learners who will go to civic clubs and say, 'It works.'... We need to take on this mindset that (learners are a) drain on society. We are not poor or stupid. We pay taxes. We can make a difference. We do have value."

That's where VALUE comes in.

The nationwide organization of present and past learners was designed for students by students. Through VALUE, "we are connected, with members all over the country. We can talk to each other and support each other. Now, we take the risk together. We are trying to break this image that the adult learner is 'less than.'"

But there is more here than individual support, essential as that is.

"We are finding each other; finding our voice," Finsterbusch explains. When a learner achieves literacy, the relationship with educational programs should not be over: "We want to stay in the field and help."

"There are many phases of adult education: literacy programs, GED programs, numeracy classes, etc.," Finsterbusch points out. "Only one group crosses all boundaries – the students."

Are there concerns about attracting and retaining students?

"If students are not part of the system, there can't be an answer," Finsterbusch says. That may mean a student voice at Board level; or a student voice on program staff. "Adult learners are a valuable resource – why can't we help?"

For example, learners are a "Number One resource for recruitment. We know which of our neighbors, co-workers, relatives, etc., need adult education." Encouragement to seek help can come more easily from someone who has been in the same situation.

But persuading someone to enter a program is not enough, when "the average dropout rate is 50%," Finsterbusch notes. "We can also help improve retention rates. We can be on staff to encourage new learners; to say, 'I did it, you can too.' Only an adult learner can do that for another learner."

If there are problems, a student may be more open with an "equal" than with a teacher or administrator. If a student drops out, the record simply may reflect that he or she apparently lost interest. Another learner may be able to elicit reasons from the student and facilitate solutions for that individual and others with similar issues.

"Learners play a critical role in the whole thing – if the people most affected are not involved, we'll never get answers," Finsterbusch says.

Suppose a program would like to publish a newsletter, but has no extra staff. "Use the existing students to help," Finsterbusch urges. "They would be learning real world skills in a safe environment." In the same way, existing students can help plan group activities. They'll be developing organizational and teamwork skills.

"We are pulling students together," Finsterbusch says. "We want to develop a training program that will give adult learners the skills to be more effective in the literacy field. Such skills may include public speaking, workshop presentation, time management and more – skills that learners then can take into other arenas, as well. Meanwhile, we are doing student conferences and workshops, and helping other organizations with their conferences."

Both existing students and "graduate" learners can be an invaluable resource for recruitment, retention, future staff and an eager volunteer corps, Finsterbusch concludes. "Providers think of learners as clients but not as a resource. If we change that mindset, it will help the programs, and the rest will take care of itself."



### About VALUE

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, adult learners began to hold sporadic national meetings and voice their desire to assist in the whole process of adult education. One such learner was Martin Finsterbusch, who sought the formation of learner support groups and other learner-focused organizations. Another was Archie Willard, an adult learner from Iowa, who formed a committee that would lead to a 1998 meeting at the Highlander Center in Tennessee and the formation of Voice for Adult Literacy United for Education (VALUE).

This national organization of current and former participants in adult basic skills programs has adopted as its mission: *To expand the role of adult learners in the effort to promote literacy throughout the United States.*

**To fulfill this mission, VALUE has identified these goals:**

- Increase the numbers of adults participating in adult basic skills programs.
- Increase program retention. (That is, help adult learners to persist in their learning once they have joined a program.)
- Increase understanding of adult learners' special challenges, needs and rights; and increase support for adult learners and adult education among the general public, policy makers and funders, employers, unions, social service agencies, and other stakeholder groups.
- Help school administrators, teachers, parents and children better understand adult learners' experiences as school children, and encourage them to take steps to ensure the success of all children in their school years.

In just three years, VALUE has established a board, obtained non-profit status, opened a national office, become a voting member of the National Coalition on Literacy, held its first national conference (July 2001), and attracted members in 32 states. For more information or to join VALUE, visit the website at <http://literacynet.org/value/>; write to VALUE, 2217 Providence Ave., Chester, PA 19013; or call 610-876-4811.

# GED Connection Activities To Debut On LiteracyLink® Website

*Suppose every learner could have a personal teacher, available 24 hours a day, virtually anywhere.*

The LiteracyLink® program will offer services almost that comprehensive when GED 2002 segments come online this November.

The LiteracyLink home page, accessible through [www.pbs.org/literacy](http://www.pbs.org/literacy), “directs you to sites, depending on whether you’re a teacher, learner or visitor, and provides means for teachers and students to communicate,” explains Ashley Del Bianco, Senior Research Manager for the National Center on Adult Literacy (NCAL). NCAL, charged with developing all online curricula for teachers and students, is one of four partners in the Internet-based adult education initiative.

For students, LiteracyLink’s LitLearner<sup>SM</sup> program offers great flexibility. “This is not a disk or something you have to carry around; you’re not tied to one place or having stuff with you. You can access this *anytime* – from home, work, the library, anywhere – and pick up right where you left off,” Del Bianco says.

LitLearner was designed around two sets of curricula.

Already up and running are online lessons for *Workplace Essential Skills*, which also includes a series of videotapes and workbooks. The series is designed to help pre-GED learners get and keep a job. Students can access free, web-based lessons that complement the tapes, or televised programs, and the workbooks, which help learners practice skills.

New this fall will be *GED Connection*, focusing on the rigorous new GED 2002 test. As with the workplace skills curricula, “we try to integrate instruction across video, print and online so people can do what they’re most comfortable doing,” Del Bianco says. Each medium has a significant role to play: “Video helps students visualize; illustrates; models learning. Workbooks facilitate practice. Online components use the power of the web; use online materials and build instruction around them. Students learn by using real resources.”

Individuals simply register, and select a personal, confidential password. Then, they can access **free online practice tests for GED 2002**, one each for the content areas of Writing, Math, Science and Social Studies, and two for Writing. All tests are multiple choice and half the length of the actual exam, meeting all criteria for official practice tests. There are a total of 10 practice tests for each category.

Scoring will occur instantly, Del Bianco says; and feedback will include explanations of answer choices and will indicate by type of question (for example, comprehension or synthesis) which type needs more practice within a given content area. Score records are saved in a learner portfolio, and learners may re-take a test and replace earlier scores as competence improves.

Test-takers will not compose essays online. “They would be too hard to assess and grade instantly,” Del Bianco explains. However, learners will get a good deal of writing practice as they work through each learning module.

**Free learning modules** for each of the five content areas: “These extended, course-like units of instruction can take several weeks to complete and can be pursued independently or in conjunction with an instructor via a virtual classroom.” Del Bianco

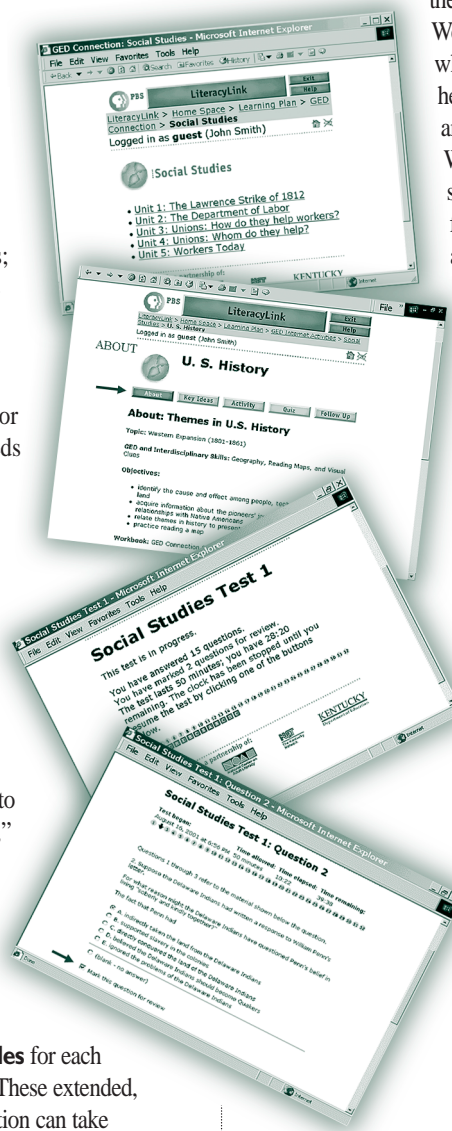
explains. “Extended units use online resources and explore deeply one aspect of a subject. For example, in Social Studies, a focus on U.S. government might revolve around an intense look at the U.S. Department of Labor and

unions, their history and how they relate to workers.

We’re not trying to do the whole content area, but to help the students reflect” and analyze information. Where applicable, video segments are incorporated for instructional reference and enhancement.

Open-ended questions are designed for extended responses and cumulative skill/knowledge development. When a student signs on and starts working, he or she can type in answers, which will be saved in the individual’s portfolio. The learner portfolio allows the student to track his own progress over time. If he is working with an online instructor, the teacher can review activities and compare different answers given to the same question over time. Teacher and student also can “talk” via e-mail.

(The personal password prevents anyone other than the learner and the teacher from viewing individual records.)



continued on back cover

## PARTNERS IN LITERACYLINK®

Funded through the U.S. Department of Education and its Star Schools program, LiteracyLink combines video, workbooks and online instructional service to help adults advance their learning and workplace skills, while providing teachers with a “virtual” online resource center featuring technical assistance, a guide to materials on literacy education, and videoconferences and other development aids. Partners in the development of LiteracyLink are:

**PBS** — a private, non-profit corporation providing non-commercial television programming to millions of American households. PBS manages the project, coordinates partner activities, and operates the online instructional services on the Internet.



**KET** — Kentucky’s state-wide public television network, a not-for-profit, technology-based educational communications institution dedicated to making learning opportunities available to all. KET has produced two new LiteracyLink series:



*Workplace Essential Skills*, designed to help pre-GED learners get – and keep – a job; and *GED Connection*, created specifically to help students prepare for the new GED 2002 exam. Each combines videos, workbooks and online components.

**The National Center on Adult Literacy of the University of Pennsylvania (NCAL)** — which is developing all online materials for teachers and learners with easy-to-use, icon-driven menus and audio instruction.



**The Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Workforce Development Cabinet** — providing curriculum development support for both video series.



# GED Connection

# One-Two Punch: Business Cuts Turnover Rates while Helping Workers with Literacy and Education

**M**olly Maid, Inc. and the North Carolina Community College System have developed an outreach that can not only help employees, but also significantly reduce turnover.

The project began when Molly Maid, which sells and supports residential cleaning franchises, looked at improving retention, according to Stephanie Z. Hamilton, Senior Director of New Business Development for Molly Maid, Inc. Together, the 210 American franchises employ about 5,000 persons. 95% are women (many of them mothers and mainly single mothers); 50% are Spanish speakers; many do not have a high school diploma.

In our tight labor market, all businesses hunger for ways to keep good employees, Hamilton notes. More specifically, with residential cleaning services a virtual necessity in today's world of two-income families, there is "more need out there than our franchise owners can serve." Business growth is limited only by the number of workers a franchise can hire – and keep. Molly Maid's home office targeted retention by staging local employee rallies. Topics included team building, self-esteem, safety issues and conflict resolution; the atmosphere was one of sharing and fun.

Turnover was reduced by 25%.

But success brought a problem: Molly Maid couldn't stage monthly, nationwide rallies forever. Input from employees and owners suggested an answer: "We wanted to find a way to uplift and assist the employees... whether through English as a Second Language (ESL) courses or GED preparation," Hamilton says.

At first, local franchises acted independently. Some hired tutors to teach English at the office before the work day began. Others studied Spanish to better

communicate with employees. Such efforts impacted employee loyalty and retention. Employers were excited. But outreach varied from location to location, and not all tutors were certified teachers. What was needed was a consistent, simple approach that all franchises could implement.

Then Molly Maid officials conferred with Dr. Delane F. Boyer, State GED Administrator for the North Carolina Community College System. A dream took shape: a combined effort of the home office, franchise owners and the system. Franchise owners could provide space for classes; the system could provide certified teachers to travel to those sites. And, in North Carolina, services could be provided at no cost to the owner. The design could provide a template for other states, as well.

Chosen as a pilot site was the Chapel Hill franchise of Mary and David Dickinson. Of their 44 employees, 28 attend ESL classes several mornings each week. Durham Technical Community College provides the instructor and absorbs all administrative costs; the franchise provides classroom space, transportation to class, instructional materials, and development of a student recognition program. Employees are paid for class time.

"The intent is to provide basic skills up to the high school level; not *work* skills, but reading, writing and computation," Dr. Boyer says. Adjustments are necessary, because "it's a one-room-school situation. There may be different needs and skill levels all in one room with one teacher. Some students may not read or write in their native language. Such variables must be figured in."

The initial goal in Chapel Hill was to provide contextual and basic English – "work words" and vocabulary. "We try to use their manuals and policies in class so the material is

relevant." Also emphasized is "language in greeting, interaction in homes, departing," Dr. Boyer notes. Homeowners "expect a customer service attitude and language." Another focus – still within the context of ESL – is understanding the compounds and liquids used on the job.

In Chapel Hill, classes also focus on life skills — checking accounts, getting a driving license, community resources.

"People want to help their children with homework, be able to open a bank account, feel confident conversing with their child's pediatrician, or understand a lease," Hamilton says. In addition, "we know that low literacy is tied to domestic violence. So again, literacy training is a good thing."

In programs of this type, "teacher behavior is very important in dealing with different languages and cultures in the same room," Dr. Boyer adds. He or she must be used to dealing with adults, and well versed in the English language – able to explain why we say things the way we do. In addition, tact is essential. Males from some cultures, for example, might find it difficult to sit in class with females or to have a female teacher. The instructor must gently but firmly help students accept that "in America, we do it this way. A *good teacher* is what's important. It all boils down to that type of instructor."

Once literacy is mastered, the potential exists to move students toward the GED, if they wish; and to offer additional customized programs in bookkeeping, use of computers and other advanced business training, or to design training around specific jobs. Some additional costs might accrue in such cases.

Benefits for the businesses are both philosophical and practical.

"It's the right thing to do for individuals, right for business and right for our country," Hamilton says. "America has said, 'Come to us and we'll help you.' It's a matter of living up to that promise. We have always opened our doors to immigrants; they came here for a better life and, as a business, shouldn't we be helping? The way for them to take advantage



of the opportunity is to learn the language.

"We have 210 franchises now, and we're growing. If we could touch the lives of even 100 or 200 people in a year... wouldn't

that be great? At Molly Maid, we believe it's important to give something back to the community and to the people we serve. Not everyone is in a position to give back. We want to give back, and as a *business*, we can do that."

There are benefits in retention and recruitment, as well, Hamilton says. Molly Maid has demonstrated that participants in company-sponsored programs are happier, more productive and more loyal. And "the more employees we can retain, the larger we can grow the business."

The whole process helps to create "a good image for the individual and for the company," Dr. Boyer adds.

What about the employee who receives training and then leaves? If they were satisfied, then they will recommend Molly Maid as a "good place to work," so there is a sound recruitment element in this, Dr. Boyer notes.

With the model developed and a pilot site functioning, Molly Maid is urging its own franchises to get involved; and hopes that other types of franchises will realize the benefits of such a program. Dr. Boyer can actively assist in North Carolina; for inquirers in other states, he can link businesses and home state education departments, and can provide both written information and one-on-one discussion with interested parties (see story on page 5).

For more information, contact Dr. Delane F. Boyer at 919-733-7051, Ext. 722; or Stephanie Z. Hamilton, at 734-822-6800, Ext. 580.

## More about Molly Maid

Molly Maid, the "crown jewel" of Service Brands International, sells and supports residential cleaning franchises. Today, there are more than 540 operations in the United States, Canada, Japan, England, Portugal, and Bermuda.

Molly Maid has received numerous awards for entrepreneurship, software innovation and humanitarian causes.

Molly Maid's Mission: To be the most recognized, admired and respected name in home service.

### Molly Maid Beliefs:

- Integrity, honesty, respect and responsibility are the foundation of Molly Maid.
- By serving others, we help them succeed.
- Relationships matter.
- Teamwork is vital to our success.
- We lead through innovation and continuous improvement.
- We care about our communities by getting involved.
- We work hard and have fun.



# Finding Qualified Candidates Quickly Is Goal of EARN

A marriage broker introduces two people who are well suited but who, without a little help, might never otherwise meet.

The Employee Assistance Referral Network (EARN) offers a similar service to employers seeking qualified help and providers who place job-ready candidates with disabilities, according to Paul Meyer, Senior Program Manager for EARN.

EARN is being implemented through the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The program is a response to employers who told ODEP that they wanted to hire people with disabilities, but did not have the resources to identify candidates qualified for available positions. One problem was finding the right provider, Meyer explains: "Maybe employers were going to a university for a bank teller, or a vocational rehab program for an expert on lasers. There were qualified people looking for jobs, and employers looking for appropriate candidates, but they couldn't connect."

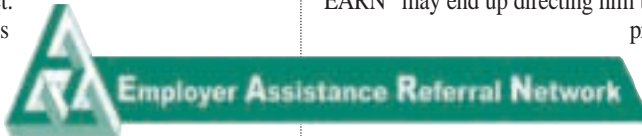
Staff from ODEP met with employers and providers to get their input on resolving the dilemma.

"Find qualified candidates quickly was the goal," Meyer says.

With a design in mind, DOL officials selected a contractor — Birch & Davis Associates, Inc. — and began a nationwide search for organizations placing job-ready candidates with disabilities. These would become EARN's database, Meyer says. "Our emphasis was to get providers first. We're trying to do this slowly, but correctly. You have to be sure you have inventory before you start selling the product."

Now, EARN is preparing formal notification to employers about the services available.

Here's how it works: When an Atlanta employer calls EARN seeking an accountant with experience, for example, EARN targets providers within a specific distance of Atlanta, and contacts them to see if they have appropriate candidates. "Then, EARN contacts the employer and says, 'Here are providers (and phone numbers) in your area with appropriate candidates.' This way, the link is established, but the employer is not inundated with calls. We don't give the employer's name out."



Meyer adds: "We're also engagement brokers. Down the road, we envision that when an employer has had a good experience with a provider, he probably will just go directly to them the next time he has positions open."

EARN can also educate callers about disability issues in the course of conversation; and may provide other referrals, as well. Depending on questions an employer asks, EARN "may end up directing him to other

programs — for example, the Job


Accommodation Network (JAN), another service of ODEP, which deals with providing information on appropriate workplace accommodations for people with disabilities."

"Our goal as an agency is to get a dialog going between employers and providers," Meyer adds.

"We're learning as we go, and we're flexible," he explains. One new idea is describing available jobs (but not naming employers) online. A provider can "zero in on fields appropriate for his candidates. It's like an advertisement for the program." When the provider contacts EARN about online jobs, he

can also be encouraged to add his name to the database, if it's not already there.

Millions of people with disabilities want to work, and this program can benefit them as individuals, and society as a whole, Meyer believes. "I've been in government for 34 years, and this is an extremely exciting project which can really make a difference.

"This service is free to providers and employers," he adds. "Down the road, that's a wonderful investment. It's a really great value when you look at the financial issues of getting people into the workforce and off the welfare rolls vs. the cost of starting this program. . . . This is not a Republican issue or a Democratic issue, this is a financial issue. The (newly employed) work and put money into the (tax) pot rather than taking money out. More is going into the pot and less is being taken out. I'm for that." 

For more information about EARN, visit the website at [www.EARNworks.com](http://www.EARNworks.com); call the toll-free hotline at 1-888-695-8289; or write to EARN, c/o Birch & Davis Associates, Inc., 5201 Leesburg Pike, Suite 600, Falls Church, VA 22041. (EARN is not designed to assist individuals seeking jobs.)

## More about the NC Community College System

The North Carolina Community College System is the state's primary agency for delivery of adult education, literacy and job training programs. The system includes 58 colleges and the North Carolina Center for Applied Textile Technology.

The system's mission is to open the door to high-quality, accessible educational opportunities that minimize barriers to post-secondary education, maximize student success, and improve the lives and well-being of individuals by providing:

- Education, training and retraining for the workforce, including basic skills and literacy education, occupational and pre-baccalaureate programs.
- Support for economic development through services to and in partnership with business and industry.
- Services to communities and individuals which improve the quality of life.



## This Ambassador Works Pro Bone-o

We think of **Miss Apple** as a goodwill ambassador; it's hard not to smile when we hear the jingle of her collar as she trots down hallways and stops to visit friends along the way.

Officially, she belongs to the family of Steve Brenner in KET's Print/Graphics Department, but when she comes to work with him she treats all employees as family. We enjoy her so much we thought you might, too, so we took a few pictures — you may have seen her on a postcard and in our catalog. In case you missed her modeling debut, we're happy to include a photo of her here.

Naturally, we give Miss Apple lots of dog biscuits, chewy treats, and scratches behind the ears when she's here, but we're grateful she likes to work pro bono — and that's no shaggy dog story.



# Low Income Workers Can Receive Tax Credit in Advance

**L**ow-income workers can receive part of their federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) during the tax year, rather than waiting until returns are filed.

"It helps people budget, especially if every dollar counts," says Katherine McKnight, Senior Tax Specialist with the IRS office in Indianapolis.

"The Earned Income Tax Credit is basically a federally funded anti-poverty program to help low income workers reach financial stability," McKnight explains. The initiative is designed to reduce taxes for these workers, to supplement wages, and to make work more attractive than welfare.

To be eligible, the worker must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien all year, and have a valid Social Security number; and may be married, married with children, or single (but not married filing separately). Initially, the program provided that eligible workers filing their tax returns and attaching an EITC form would receive a check for their credit – *even if they did not earn enough to owe any taxes.* The *Advanced* EITC allows eligible individuals to receive up to 60% of the credit "in the paycheck, throughout the year, instead of waiting until the end of the year when they file their tax returns," McKnight explains. The other 40% can be claimed on the return. The split is designed to avoid situations in which the individual might have to pay back some of the credit if his/her financial circumstances were to improve significantly during the year.

"Only about 5% of those who are eligible seek the advanced credit," McKnight says; "many people like the big check at the end of the year. But when you're budgeting, that extra money each month would help – especially individuals with children. If you're working eight hours and gross about \$320 per check, for example, the credit could total about \$84 more each month; and no taxes are taken out of the credit amount."

The exact amount of a credit depends on the individual situation. Certain considerations apply – whether qualifying children are living with the taxpayer, and whether there are two wage earners in the household, for example.


"This can apply to a lot of people who are welfare to work, or are part-time students or have had an illness – a lot of people are able to take advantage of this program," she adds. "Or, they may work several jobs yet not earn much

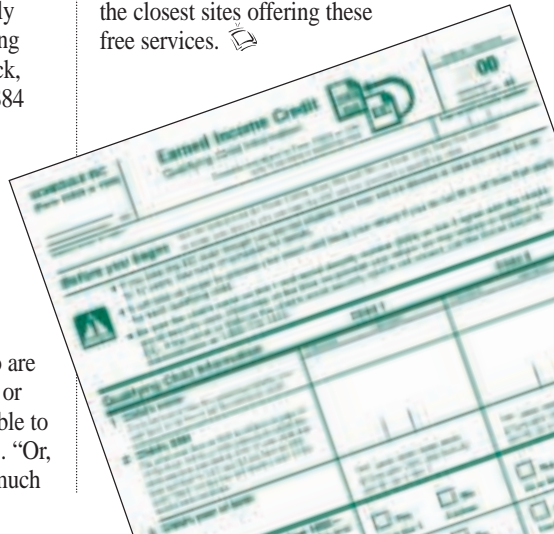
and wouldn't need to file a return. People in that situation may throw their W-2s away, thinking they don't need them." But they would still be eligible for the credit. If that has happened, the IRS can help them recreate records of the last three year's earnings. "People could receive \$4,000 to \$6,000 in that situation. They could make a down payment on a home, or obtain better transportation," perhaps seek more education or vocational training.

The initiative brings a significant amount of money into each state. For example, in Kentucky as of July 5, 2001, for year 2000 returns already processed, 289,475 taxpayers had received a total of \$466,214,340. In Indiana, more than 500,000 individuals have received \$557 million. In Ohio, more than 663,000 people have received more than \$1 billion.

Workers desiring the advanced credit must give their employers a W-5 form, available at the local IRS office or on the Internet. The form must be renewed each year, and the employer must provide the credit if requested. In turn, the employer receives a business tax credit for facilitating the service.

For more information, contact a local IRS office; or call **1-800-829-1040**. Printed information is available in many languages, including Korean, Vietnamese, Croatian and Spanish.

Interested persons also may visit the website at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov). An interactive section will help inquirers learn whether they qualify. From January through April, employees at local tax offices can assist with filing returns. The 800 number can direct individuals to the closest sites offering these free services. 



## KET Unveils Professional Development Materials for GED 2002

continued from page 1

The **Writing** module, scheduled to be online in Fall/Winter, will feature the GED essay, as well as skills and multiple choice questions on sentence structure, organization, usage and mechanics.

The **Critical Thinking** module, which relates to the Social Studies, Science and Reading content areas and is also scheduled for Fall/Winter, will focus on thinking skills and graphic literacy.

The **Self-Study Guides**, available in Fall 2001 - Spring 2002, will allow a teacher to "go off and read" as the individual schedule permits. "Some people learn better in groups; others learn better alone," Van Slyke points out. These guides can be used to fit teachers' personal schedules and can also be used to reinforce material learned on the web or in a workshop.

The **Workshop Leader's Manual**, available in Spring 2002, will incorporate group activities so that participants can exchange ideas, discover new concepts, solve problems together, and share strategies, Van Slyke says. Materials are based on experiences that she, Pittman and Vondracek shared as they conducted GED 2002 training sessions across the country. The manual contains everything trainers need to organize and present




workshops for the new tests, and includes a comprehensive overview, discussion questions, sample test questions, reproducible handouts and suggestions for classroom activities.

Both the self-study guides and workshops can be complemented by the use of tapes from the new *GED Connection* series. These include *Orientation*, *Passing the GED Writing Test*, *The GED Essay*, *Passing the GED Reading Test*, *Passing the GED Social Studies Test*, *Passing the GED Science Test* and *Passing the GED Mathematics Test*. "You can use the workshop manual or self-study guides without the tapes,"

Van Slyke notes, "but they certainly enhance the training experience."

Development of these resources was funded by the Kentucky Department for Adult Education and Literacy. "I applaud KET and the state of Kentucky for having the vision to produce these

materials," Van Slyke says. "KET has such a major impact all around the country on adult education; it's an honor to work with them." 

For more information about the website, self-study guides and workshop training packages, contact KET at 1-800-354-9067. The website activities are free, at [www.ket.org/ged2002](http://www.ket.org/ged2002). The self-study guides and training packages will be available for a nominal fee that covers the cost of production.

● Log on at [www.ket.org/GED2002](http://www.ket.org/GED2002)

### ELEMENTS OF LITERACYLINK®

- **LitLearner** – interactive modules, tailored to meet the needs of adult learners and focusing both on the development of job skills (*Workplace Essential Skills*) and on GED learning (*GED Connection*). In addition to their use online, both new series are available for purchase by individual learning programs and/or conventional broadcast by public television stations.
- **LitTeacher** – designed to enhance adult educators' and administrators' knowledge and professional skills. This virtual resource center includes training in technology issues, technology assistance, a menu of materials on literacy education, and more.
- **LitLinker Forums** – biographies of and statements by individuals who have contributed significantly to literacy in the U.S. For a two-week period, individuals will be able to interact with the current guest via e-mail. Both questions and answers will be posted.
- **Station Links** – guides to local PBS schedules for airing *Workplace Essential Skills* and *GED Connection*, and to other local adult education initiatives.

# Workplace Essential Skills Provides Template for Montana System

The Montana departments of Education, Public Health and Human Services, and Labor are joining together to serve clients needing job skills; and using *Workplace Essential Skills* as their template.

It began when an adult learning service in Missoula incorporated *Workplace Essential Skills* into its own career development program, explains Becky Bird, State Director for Adult Basic and Literacy Education. Part of the LiteracyLink® system, *Workplace Essential Skills* is a painstakingly designed curriculum package focusing on both work and life skills. Included are a series of tapes, workbooks and online lessons designed to help pre-GED adults get — and keep — a job.

Learners in Missoula responded positively, saying the materials “made sense” to them. (For more on this program, operated by the Missoula County Public Schools in cooperation with Missoula Job service staff, see story on Page 1, Winter 2001 edition of *Adult Learning Quarterly*.)

Then came an opportunity through the U.S. Department of Education for the Northwest Resource Literacy Consortium to look at ways of enhancing services. The six member states, including Montana, were to focus on specific aspects of instructional improvement and share results.

“I was interested in instructional improvement and I thought, why not roll Missoula into the project instead of starting over,” Bird says.

The state departments of Labor and of Public Health and Human Services liked what they saw at Missoula, as well; and a team vision was born. “We’re all working toward the same goals and often with the same clients,” she explains; but no program can work “if the participants aren’t ready for it. We have to meet people where they are, not expect them to be what we want them to be. With this new system, we will build the foundation with both education and job skills. We will meet them where they are with this and assist them in going further.



“Participants need basic job skills in order to move on, and *Workplace Essential Skills* provides a template for that. Centers can help them get the GED if they need that, or meet other academic needs, but at the same time provide job skills so participants are ready to get out there and move on to work or further education. This is a uniform way to accomplish that — not just assess a client and refer somewhere else, but a whole, consistent approach. We’re integrating and coordinating services to the greatest extent we can. It cuts down on confusion — bouncing (from one agency to another) — and the human service communities can come together and offer services.

“A lot of the folks we serve have deficiencies in basic education skills or job skills or both,” Bird adds. Combine learners with a history of failing and a too-quick entry into straight job training, and the result could be another failure. But “the really critical thing that *Workplace Essential Skills* can do is provide a foundation; give the basics to fill in the gaps. Learners are not put in a situation where they might fail again; this is how it can assure success. Once through the program, learners can then go on to more intensive training or right into employment, because they have the skills to get a job. Once folks get the foundation, a world of opportunities opens for them.”

*Workplace Essential Skills* inspires confidence in learners, Bird explains, by exposing them to real-world experiences. Later, when learners face specific situations, they think, “I’m familiar with this.” They can do it. They just need opportunities to experiment and grow.”

Also critical is *Workplace Essential Skills*’ online component. Montana is the nation’s fourth largest state, Bird says, but contains only one million people and huge distances between

communities. There is “no public transportation to speak of, and it’s not affordable to travel by air. If (potential clients) have a car, it may not be one that can be driven 60 miles to the next town for health care, education and other services.” But most communities do have a library, where residents can access distance learning through the Internet. “That’s critical for a state like Montana. . . . We can reach people we couldn’t, before.”

When the new system is implemented, individual sites will feature group learning, self-paced activities, or both, with an instructor on site. Bird emphasizes that while the technology is great, “it doesn’t replace the human element. The goal is always to have a live person that participants can access; but the technological component allows us to provide services that we otherwise couldn’t.”

Using the Missoula experience gave planners a jump start on the new statewide project, and “left us more money to analyze operations and results.” An additional \$100,000 gift from the Governor’s Discretionary Account from the federal Workforce Investment Act has provided seed money that will “get this rolling and do it the way we want to: on a large scale, getting folks both the education and the job skills to get out there and make things happen for themselves,” Bird says.

The first step will be developing a cadre of trainers — five or six teams of two who will be available, either personally or through the Internet, across the state for support and assistance. One member of each team will be an expert on job skills, the other on adult basic education “so they’ll bring different perspectives to the task. We learned in Missoula that when you have both, you get a very balanced experience for the participants,” Bird notes.

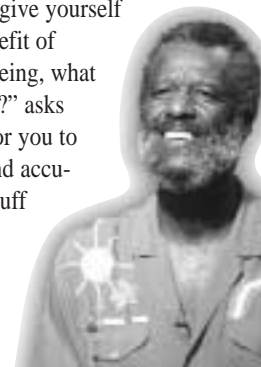
“*Workplace Essential Skills* has many tangible elements and will be used by each community in its own way, depending on the needs there; yet all will be using the same program. Because *Workplace Essential Skills* is the template, there is a uniformity and, ultimately, the resulting data will be more dependable.

“We are building a complete system, not just a program.”

“...the really critical thing that *Workplace Essential Skills* can do is provide a foundation; give the basics to fill in the gaps...”

# An Acronym for Living

“If you can’t give yourself away for the benefit of another human being, what good is anything?” asks Wally Amos. “For you to just sit around and accumulate a lot of stuff you can brag to your friends about — there’s no meaning in that.”



This quote from a profile published in the fall 1999 issue of the *Adult Learning Quarterly* encompasses the vision of a man who has used his fame to promote literacy causes around the nation. Amos, founder of Famous Amos Cookies, is also co-author of *Watermelon Magic*, and host of KET education programs including *Learn to Read*, *Pre-GED Reading: Another Page*, and *GED on TV*.

With Wally Amos’ permission, we would like to share with you the “Watermelon Credo” he has devised to express a sound recipe for living:

- W** – *Whatever you believe creates your reality*
- A** – *Attitude is the magic word*
- T** – *Together Everyone Achieves More*
- E** – *Enthusiasm is the wellspring of life*
- R** – *Respect yourself, as well as others*
- M** – *Make commitments, not excuses*
- E** – *Every day can be a fun day*
- L** – *Love is the answer*
- O** – *One day at a time*
- N** – *Never give up or become a victim*

*Watermelon is a reminder for us to always live from our highest self.*

By Wally Amos