



PRESS RELEASE

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Eight Achieve Diplomas Through Library's Adult High School Program

Gonzales, LA – For adults who choose to return and finish high school, it often means balancing work, family, and everything else that life demands – while committing to a goal for a better future. It shows dedication and determination. Ascension Parish Library is proud to announce that eight Ascension Parish residents recently completed that goal, earning an accredited high school diploma through the library's Excel Adult High School program; Four of the graduates participated in a special ceremony at the Gonzales library on September 25.

"This diploma, it's more than paper. It's proof that I didn't quit," Tekara Williams said at the ceremony. Williams saw her cousin graduate from the same program in December 2024 and decided to apply. "There were nights I cried. Nights I wanted to shut the laptop and walk away... This is my second chance at life. To walk through doors I never thought would open."

Excel Adult High School is part of the library's ongoing mission to support lifelong learning. Participants in the program must live in Ascension Parish and have an Ascension Parish Library card (free at all library locations). Students complete coursework online at their own pace, with the support of success coaches and one-on-one tutoring. Each student has 24 months to complete the program.



Pictured l to r: Samantha Vicaro, Apriley Winfrey, Barry Smith, and Tekara Williams

"I want ya'll to know that it's never too late to do the things you thought were impossible to do," said Samantha Vicaro, who now hopes to pursue a career in counseling.



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Ascension Parish Library is one of a handful of library systems in Louisiana that offers the Excel Adult High School program to residents 21 and older. Last year, in the program's inaugural year, six students graduated – bringing the total number of graduates to date to 14. Another seven students are continuing to work through their classes.

“Each of our graduates has a unique story, but they all share the same determination to succeed,” said Carlos Contreras, the library’s Adult Literacy Coordinator. He interviews each potential candidate to ensure the program is a good fit for them, checking in with them regularly and tracking their progress from start to finish.

“Thanks to you for not giving up on me and for continuously checking on me through this process,” Apriley Winfrey said. “Now I can proudly say I am a high school graduate.”

Those interested in being considered for the program should email AdultHS@myapl.org.

About APL

Ascension Parish Library (APL) is an award-winning library system committed to providing opportunities for lifelong learning to all ages. APL delivers needed resources through traditional library services, digital materials, and innovative programs. Ascension Parish Library encourages residents to read, learn, and create by visiting their local library. To learn more, visit <https://www.myAPL.org/>.

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