

VERNON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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27 Earn High School Diplomas Through Vernon Adult Education Program

VRABE Graduates Overcome Obstacles as They Achieve

VERNON, Conn. – In a season of graduations, the 27 women and men who received their high school diplomas Wednesday at Rockville High School were unique. None followed the traditional route to a diploma, but made the decision to return to school while also juggling work and family obligations.

The crowd of family and friends gave the graduates enthusiastic applause and speakers praised them for their perseverance and commitment to learning and bettering themselves.

“This is an extremely special night for many reasons,” said Melissa Iles, the director of Vernon Regional Adult Based Education, which offers academic and continuing education programs to people from Vernon and 13 other towns. “First and foremost, it exemplifies the determination and obstacles you overcame to complete your educational journey.”

Vernon Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph P. Macary told the graduates that it is the mission of the Vernon Public Schools to produce graduates who are critical thinkers, collaborators, communicators, resilient individuals and responsible citizens.

“We call this the vision of the graduate,” Dr. Macary said. “I’m very proud to be here because this group of graduates embodies those values, especially resiliency. You have worked tirelessly to achieve this important goal.”

Two graduates addressed their classmates and praised VRABE staff for guiding them and helping to keep them

The Vernon Public Schools, in partnership with family and community, is committed to provide a quality education, with high expectations, in a safe environment where all students become independent learners and productive contributors to society.

motivated.

Chimyra McCray said she slacked off during her senior year of high school and did not have enough credits to graduate. She decided to try VRABE, working during the day and getting the credits she needed at night.

Again, she told the graduates, she began to slack off in night school, did not attend regularly and did not care about earning her diploma. That changed when she had children. She was newly motivated to earn her diploma and continue her education.



The VRABE High School Diplomas Class of 2023

“This year I decided it would be my year to finish school so that I could do something more with my life, for not only myself but them,” McCray said. She urged others to follow in her footsteps and make the commitment to earn their diploma.

“If I can do it, so can anyone else who wants to,” she said. “This program definitely has helped me change my life for the better.”

Chelsea Willard said she too faced challenges, including pregnancy, during her junior year in high school that caused her to drop out.

VRABE was the key to earning a diploma, she said. The program and its staff were welcoming and supportive, not only for her but for her children too. The support from VRABE staff included encouraging her to take college courses too. And Willard has earned a phlebotomy certification from Manchester Community College.

Andrew Williams dropped out of high school and has been making a living as a truck driver. He signed up with VRABE to earn his high school diploma and to position himself for a job that will better allow him to take care of his wife and two children.

“My kids are 11 and 7 and I wanted to do better,” he said. His goal is to get a job with Collins Aerospace.

For more information about VRABE and its programs, please visit www.vrabe.com.

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