

Currently, I am single-handedly running and teaching an adult education program through St. John # 5 Camp ACE (Alert Community Empowerment). This program includes adult literacy, basic math education and pre-GED and GED preparation. The majority of my students are single mothers in their mid-twenties who wish to eventually attain their GED, seek more stable employment opportunities and become financially stable and independent to support their families and children who they are raising on their own. I initially started the program planning on focusing solely on GED preparation. This is still my ultimate goal for my students, but I soon realized that the students need help with basic skills, particularly with becoming fully literate. I am conducting outreach to other people in the community who dropped out of high school and now wish to continue their education. Since each of my four students has very unique and critical learning needs, I have a great deal of work cut out for me as their instructor.

The lack of resources and funds somewhat limits the scope of the program. Camp ACE does not currently have funding for this project. I have purchased educational materials from money out of my own pocket and serve as the “bus driver,” picking up my students and bringing them home in my own car. Fortunately, we received a donation from Love Knows No Bounds (a volunteer group in Ithaca, NY that I was a part of and that makes frequent service trips to post-Katrina New Orleans). This generous donation, along with general resourcefulness, has greatly helped in covering the modest expenses of this much-needed program.

Thus far, I have received extremely positive feedback and attitudes from my very motivated students. Below is a quote a young woman, which I believe highlights the significant need for this important program and form of education:

“The reason why I want to get my GED is because I have three kids to support. I want to have a better chance at getting a good job. I think that me going to school is helping me to help my oldest son better with his homework. Also I want to set an example for my kids, so that they would want to stay in school to get their diploma. Furthermore I would love to be independent for myself.”