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## SOUTHERN STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESS RELEASE

**Cutline:**Orientation is the first step for all enrolling students. Registration is required. Enroll TODAY!

### 'I love to see the successes' Adult Opportunity Center offers GEDs, basics classes for free

Karyn Evans wants people to know that if they don't have a high school diploma, don't feel prepared for college or just want to brush up on basic academics, they can get it all done at the Adult Opportunity Center in Hillsboro for FREE.

"Our services are always free for the student, including materials," said Evans, the dean of the center.

The center, located at Southern State Community College's central campus in Hillsboro, got its start in 1975 and has been grant-funded ever since, according to Evans. Services are offered at all of Southern State's campuses and in West Union. The center will soon open an additional satellite location in Clermont County, Evans said.

In addition to offering GED services, the center covers adult literacy; basic academics; and preparation for technical or general college programs.

The general college preparation classes are directed toward people who have a high school diploma but want to "brush up" on academics before beginning college, according to Evans.

"Often, they can skip some of the general education items that might be required otherwise," Evans said, "so instead of paying for those classes, they can take the readiness classes here for free."

All the teachers at the center are licensed and qualified, Evans said, and they develop individualized learning plans for students based on individual assessments.

"We walk them through from start to finish," Evans said. "Our teachers teach."

According to Evans, classes include math manipulatives, science concepts and literature units that students often enjoy.

Evans, who has been at the center for more than 35 years, said enrollment is currently low. Much of that is due to the economy: people can get jobs without a diploma.

“The problem is, when the layoffs come—and they always come—the people who don’t have a GED will be the first ones out the door where they work. So, we’d like to encourage people who are working but don’t have a diploma to do that now while they have the funds for gas.”

Evans said many people without diplomas can now get a job because local businesses are desperate for employees, but typical employment is only entry level, and promotion is unlikely.

“When the economy turns, the population that does not have the minimum requirements are the first ones that get laid off,” she said.

According to Evans, students at the center are trending younger than in years past. For years, the majority of students at the center were in the 25-35 age range. Now, the largest group is in the 18-25 range.

“I think that there are fewer older adults who need our services,” Evans said. “That’s just my instinct. For the most part, we’re beyond the point that we have adults who had to drop out for the depression... we’re past the point of the WWII veteran... we’re past the point where you could get a really good job without a high school diploma.”

Still, Evans said the center has served students from a wide variety of ages. The youngest was 16, and the oldest 87.

“We had an 81-year-old get a GED, and the 87-year-old had a diploma but wanted to brush up a little bit,” she said. “We have amazing students and sometimes the stories are just wonderful.”

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