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seedsofliteracy.org



Our Mission

To provide personalized education that empowers adults to succeed in their communities.



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the SEED

Spring 2018

Mother Breaks Cycle With GED

Rosemarie dropped out of school in the 10th grade and her mother's education ended at 4th. She knew that if she wanted to break the cycle for her children, she had to make a change.

"You need to believe in yourself," says Rosemarie Watters, a Seeds graduate. "If you don't, who will?" Rosemarie knows first-hand the power of having faith in yourself, and the possibility of changing your life through education.

After Seeds, Rosemarie received her associate's degree in accounting and is now employed as an accountant at an industrial distribution company in Cleveland. "I love numbers and the thrill of being able to figure out the final product. Numbers are never-ending; how far you go with math depends on you!"

And Rosemarie herself has come quite far. She was involved with Children and Family Services at age fifteen, had truancy issues during high school, and left school in tenth grade to "go a different route."

Her mother's education stopped at the fourth grade, and while her father had an associate's degree in engineering, he left the family when Rosemarie was five. Deep inside, Rosemarie wanted something else. "I wanted to break the cycle."

The GED® was Rosemarie's key. She heard about Seeds from her aunt, started classes, but got bored and quit.

A year later, "I realized I couldn't do anything without a GED, so I came back." Motivated by what the GED could lead to, Rosemarie kicked into high gear. "I went full force. Once I passed the first practice test, I went for the real deal!"

Rosemarie is the first member of her family to finish college, and is a great role model for her three children. "Education is strong in my house," she states. "My kids both started



preschool early, and the youngest was doing kindergarten-level work in preschool. They love school and the homework I give them!"

Her best advice for students applies to all of us: "Don't give up. Remind yourself that you can do it. I don't know your story or where you came from, but keep moving ahead; don't look back."

Rosemarie is a 2007 graduate of Seeds. She received her associate's degree online in 2015. ✨

EVENTS

Thank you to all of our attendees! Your support made these events memorable. Click the "Get Involved" tab on our website to see more upcoming events.

TASTING TOUR OF ITALY 3.05.18 ▶



◀ 3.10.18 BYOP@APPLETREE SEEDS SLUMBER PARTY & READ-A-THON

World Read Aloud Day 2018

Each year, on World Read Aloud Day, people around the globe read together and share stories to advocate for literacy as a human right that belongs to all people. On February 1, Seeds East celebrated WRAD by reading a selection of poems and a short speech. After morning class, students, tutors, and staff gathered to listen to poetry read aloud.

- "Life is Fine" by Langston Hughes, read by Lynnette S.
- "I Will Rise" by Maya Angelou, read by Charmaine H.
- "It Couldn't Be Done" by Edgar Guest, read by Kathy Z.
- "Numbers" by Mary Cornish, read by Fatima K.
- "If" by Rudyard Kipling, read by Laquita F.





Dear Friends,

As a small non-profit, we often seek counsel on best practices from other agencies, our board, and our volunteers. But as we've grown over the last year, *something special has happened*. Other people have noticed our successful one-to-one tutoring method and have started coming to us, *seeking our counsel* as experts in adult literacy.

This year, we worked with a doctoral student at **Yale University**; a journalist from **The Columbia School of Journalism's Hechinger Report**, which

covers innovation and inequality in education; and connected a pharmaceutical labeling company working with the **FDA** to our students, to test labeling standards with low-level readers.

Our peers at agencies have begun connecting with us online, not only in the US, but from as far away as **Tanzania**.

The local news has featured our staff in discussions about Cleveland's illiteracy issue and awareness events. More than once, we've been approached by national news outlets such as **NPR** for background research.

We're currently working with **The Cleveland Foundation**, who was chosen by the **Knight Foundation** to participate in an 18-month *Human-Centered Design Project*. This national project identifies what resources are missing in communities and then find the solutions to bridge those gaps. The Cleveland Foundation selected adult literacy as their focus, and Seeds is an integral part of this project.

Margaret Patterson, one of the few independent researchers in the field of adult literacy (and the former head of research for GED) visited Seeds in February. We connected her with our referral agencies, who in turn provided interview subjects such as CMHA residents. She's currently researching why people do NOT engage in adult education, hoping to identify and prioritize deterrents, root causes, and propose solutions.

It's an exciting time for Seeds, and I look forward to the results of these studies as the research unfolds in the coming year.

These opportunities have helped us build relationships critical to our future success and have further propelled the issue of adult literacy into the public eye.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Bonnie Entler, Executive Director

Math: The Universal Language

Dr. Chantal Doherty has been volunteering as a math tutor with Seeds of Literacy for six years. When she was a physician at MetroHealth, she popped down the street to the West 25th Street location for evening classes.

As luck would have it, Seeds East opened just as she retired after more than 29 years as a neonatologist (a pediatrician specializing in newborn care). Since she lives on the East Side, the convenience of the new location made her continued work with Seeds seem almost fated.

Whether working in the delivery room resuscitating babies or on duty in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Chantal used math a lot on the job. She appreciates how universal math is, and prefers to teach it over language arts. "Math translates well – I like math. Because I'm from Belgium, I speak French so I don't like to tutor English, so I do math and that's fine."

She has some tips for math mastery. "Practice the multiplication tables. It pushes students," she says. Taking a concrete, structured approach can be rewarding. "They get to see their progress and that's helpful."

In addition to her work with Seeds, Chantal maintains a packed volunteering schedule. She spends Monday mornings at the Cleveland Food Bank; Monday nights at Peace Action, where she's a board member; Wednesday

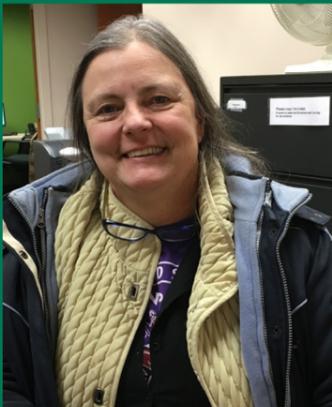
nights at Black on Black; and Thursdays after school with Peace in the Hood.

Overall, she finds the environment at Seeds both congenial and intellectually stimulating "I like the personnel – they're very open. There are conferences that are very interesting."

But it's the students who really make her time feel well spent. "They are attached to me, know my name, ask when I'm coming back," she says, adding that "it's good to feel appreciated by students."

Chantal is impressed by how doing her small part at Seeds of Literacy can make such a big difference. "It's very interesting because tutoring is such a small thing for me to do, but it brings the students a lot." ✨

Seeds is always in need of tutors, especially in the areas of Math and Science. To get involved, contact our Volunteer Coordinator at sharonfarrer@seedsofliteracy.org.



Understanding Ohio's New HSE Options

Although the GED®'s long history and name recognition has made it synonymous with high school equivalency (HSE), it's actually just one of three assessment companies. Some states, in fact, don't even offer it, opting for one of its competitors instead. *Although all GEDs are HSEs, all HSEs are not GEDs.*

In August 2017, the Ohio Department of Education approved three testing assessment companies as providing high school equivalency test options for the state: HiSET®, TASC®, and GED.

All three tests are based on the National Common Core standards for college and career readiness, and employers will accept completion of any of the three exams in lieu of a traditional high school diploma.

DIFFERENCES AMONG THEM

Although the tests represent three different paths to the same destination, they differ in key areas, some of which are critical to HSE-seekers who live in poverty. What follows is a general overview.

Price

The state of Ohio's voucher program reduces each test by \$80 for first time test takers. This is critical as 83% of Seeds students live at or below poverty level. However, the price of the three tests varies: HiSET is \$90, TASC \$94, and GED \$120. This means that students with vouchers pay \$10, \$12, or \$40 respectively.

Method of Assessment

In 2014, the GED became 100% computerized. Both HiSET and TASC

"Although all GED®s are HSEs, all HSEs are not GEDs."

offer paper and pencil versions of the test, and students have the option of mix-n-matching: for example, social studies on the computer while taking math via pencil and paper. For those living in poverty, digital literacy abilities tend to be lower due to lack of access. For Seeds students, a completely computerized test is akin to adding a hidden assessment area – navigating a computer.

Subject Areas

Although all three exams cover Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies, subjects are handled differently from test to test.

HiSET and TASC break Language Arts into two sections, Reading and Writing, so they have five subject tests compared to the GED's four. GED test takers are asked to read two prompts and develop an argument explaining which prompt has the better-supported position. HiSET takers also respond to two passages with differing opinions. TASC takers will be given one of two essay types, either argumentative or informational. Students won't know in advance which prompt they will be given.

In Math, a TI-30XS calculator is permitted for portions of the GED and TASC exams. HiSET and TASC math exams are both divided into two sections — one that allows a calculator and one that does not.

For Science and Social Studies, TASC and HiSET are both closely tied to existing knowledge. GED is more closely tied to reading skills and comprehension of the prompts.

Scoring

Scoring is handled differently among the tests, and subjects are weighted differently. More notably, *who* does the scoring varies. The GED, including essay, is scored by a computer. In rare instances, the computer will send the response to a human for further review. Both TASC and HiSET are scored by a human being, sometimes more than one.

Test Length

The overall length of the three HSEs varies by less than an hour. TASC is the longest, at 7 hours and 45 minutes. The primarily multiple-choice HiSET is the shortest at 7 hours and 5 minutes. The GED lands in the middle at 7 hours and 25 minutes. Subject areas of each test vary in length, as well.

Publishers

Assessment testing is a business. The GED is owned by a publicly traded corporation. TASC was created by a privately-held company. HiSET was created by a non-profit organization.

WHICH TEST IS BEST FOR STUDENTS?

Factors such as cost, test anxiety, question and test format, computer literacy, and problem solving abilities can all play a role. In short, it depends on the student. But with three test assessments to choose from, adult learners and adult educators have new options. ✨

How Seeds Has Prepared For the New HSEs



COMPARED the exams & IDENTIFIED any gaps in the curriculum

REVISED our curriculum to suit all of the 3 HSEs

TRAINED our 200+ tutors about the differences among the HSEs

EDUCATED our students on the new options available to them