



Annalisa Davis is the Director of the Jones Family Resource Center in Mount Airy and serves as a role model for GED students who come through Surry Community College's GED program, which is housed in the same building where she works.



Gennie Payne of Pilot Mountain shows off her GED diploma, which she finished at the age of 55. She encourages others to complete the GED program to earn self-confidence and job opportunities as she did.

High School Equivalency (GED) Diploma Changes Lives

Annalisa Davis of Mount Airy and Gennie Payne of Pilot Mountain both completed the GED program through SCC and hope other people will do the same.

"If I can do it, you can do it," said Payne, 55, who recently completed her GED after being laid off in the textile industry four times. "The GED allowed me to have steady employment where I knew I wouldn't be laid off. I had put in applications at several places, but was I told that I had to have a GED or high school diploma. No GED, no job."

Payne started the GED program at The Pilot Center in December of 2012 and completed it three months later. Not only did Payne earn self-confidence while completing her GED, she also landed a job at Cooke Medical Center in Winston.

"I regret quitting school. I quit in the 12th grade. I was young and made a bad decision and it stopped me from growing in my life. It held me back from having a good job," Payne said. "I worked hard at it and got my GED, and I got a good job in the process. Without the GED, I wouldn't even have a job. It's changed my life because it's made me upbeat because I was discouraged. I didn't have enough money to pay my bills. I was about ready to give up."

Completing the GED was a life goal of Payne's, and it turned out to be a process that she enjoyed.

"Getting my GED gave me self-confidence. Without the GED you are limited on what you can do. The GED opened doors for me that would have never been open before. It might be a little intimidating going back to school, but the people at centers are nice. I felt comfortable with my instructor and the other students. It was a laid-back environment; I liked it."

Annalisa Davis, 42, dropped out of school when she was in the 10th grade and then completed the GED at the age of 19

through SCC.

"I knew that if I didn't go back and get my GED, doors would not be open for me. I knew it had to be done if I wanted to get ahead," Davis said. "It's never too late. For those who are thinking about going back to get their GED, I would definitely encourage them to do so. It is worth the time, effort and energy that you have to put into it. It will open doors to you that won't be open if you don't go back and get it. I have never regretted getting my GED; I have regretted dropping out of high school."

Davis worked in the textile industry and restaurant industry and now serves as the Director at Jones Family Resource Center in Mount Airy, managing the facilities and grounds where 14 non-profit agencies are housed including one of SCC's five GED program locations.

"I talk to the GED students on their first day here and tell them that I am a GED recipient as well," she said. "I tell them when you get your GED, you are going to be satisfied and have more confidence. It will boost your morale."

The first step in obtaining a GED is calling Surry Community College to register for an orientation session. The time required to complete the GED varies depending on the academic level, motivation and dedication of each student.

"We design their program of study based on their unique academic needs. We will advise them on an individual basis because everyone has different needs and goals," said Virginia Stammetti, Director of College and Career Readiness. "We also counsel students and get them ready to enter post-secondary education with the community college system."

For more information, contact Virginia Stammetti at (336) 386-3243 or Mary White at (336) 386-3261.