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Thursday, September 17, 2015

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Program Gives Adults Second Chance to Graduate High School

By Erin Clarke
 Friday, July 17, 2015 at 07:00 PM EDT



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Saskia Khan
School is in session this summer for some adults in the Bronx who are working towards getting into college years after they left high school. NY1's Erin Clarke tells us about a program that believes "It's never too late" to get an education.

Lezette McCarthy had almost given up on college. She was 15 when she had a baby and dropped out of school, and for years, life prevented her from going back.

"It's just like something was getting in my way," said McCarthy.

But last month she walked across a stage in cap and gown with other women in similar situations after passing her high school equivalency exam.

"That felt so good," said McCarthy. "So good, and proud of myself that I did complete something. I completed the thing that I really wanted to do."

In the fall, McCarthy will attend the Borough of Manhattan Community College. Something that would not have been possible if not for this place -- Grace Outreach.

It's a second chance school just for women 18 and older where they study to pass the high school equivalency test and gain skills to help them land a job.

"With society today, it's technologically driven and we see the need for our women to not only have a high school equivalency diploma, but to have more than basic proficiency where computer literacy and

computer technology is concerned," said Derrian Robinson, Director at Technology Center.

The goal behind the non-profit school is to re-start educational paths in a borough that ranks last out of the state's 62 counties in the level of schooling completed by residents.

Many of the students here are mothers, wives, women who have other responsibilities.

They said going to school with other women who understand their struggles gives an added boost to succeed.

"We kind of meshed and grouped and gave each other support," said Kim Daveiga, student.

And after students pass the high school equivalency exam, it's not goodbye. Grace Outreach helps them move on to the next step as well.

The school also has a college prep course for students who pass the equivalency test.

"We train the students to be able to take and pass the compass, the entrance exam at CUNY," said Andrew Rubinson, Executive Director of Grace Outreach.

And several come back to work at the school.

"All of our tutors are former graduates who are now working on their bachelorettes," said Zeiki Blanding, Director of Mathematics. "All of our tutors. So they are an example to our students. If we can do it, so can you."

Encouraging the next class to fulfill their dreams.



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