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COALITION ON ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

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ADULT EDUCATION
An Investment in America's Future



ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY

Derek Neilson | Utah

As an undiagnosed person suffering from schizophrenia, high school was an extremely challenging time for Derek. Adult education gave him the space he needed to showcase his best qualities as a smart, motivated and caring individual. High school can be unkind to those who struggle with mental health issues, and Derek faced unnecessary judgment and hurdles as he tried to navigate his schooling.

It was not until he turned 18 that Derek was diagnosed with schizophrenia and could begin to get the treatment he needed to engage well with society around him. It was at this time that Derek decided to continue his education and not give up. With the flexibility of the Ogden Adult Education program and its asset-based approach, Derek was able to showcase his high-quality coding and computer programming skills.

Derek has since received his high school diploma and is working as an independent contractor in the field of artificial intelligence. Today, Derek plans to open a business and continue to make contributions to education. He will take his first step this fall when he enrolls in Weber State University. Derek's advice to anyone considering their path forward to success would be, "Know who you are and be proud of yourself. This is the first and most important step to achieving your goals and brightening your future." ■