

ADULT LEARNER SUCCESS STORY

Mary Baker | South Carolina



Adult education helped Mary overcome a lifetime of educational defeat. At just eight years old, reeling from the death of her father, Mary was overwhelmed with fear and anxiety. After completing the third grade, she never returned to school because her Romani family did not strongly promote education. Years later in her early twenties, she tried an adult education program and failed.

Having lost hope in her own education, she turned all of her attention to her son's education instead. She wanted him to have the education that she never had. As he walked across the stage at Clemson University, she felt a tug in her heart.

She wanted to complete something for herself, so she decided to pursue adult education again. However, just as she began, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and she felt lost in the system. While her confidence was shaken, she heard from a tutor about the Rock Hill Adult Education (RHAE) program in Rock Hill, South Carolina. The program was often difficult for her, but the staff members were there to build her up every time she struggled. The two years of learning, studying, and working were difficult, but she passed the exams and obtained her GED® credential. She says her goal now is to show others that you can always keep learning, and that you can be more than a victim. You can be an overcomer.

She is currently the property manager for three mobile-home communities, and she volunteers at RHAE two nights a week to help others obtain their GED® credential. She says that now she is a better person for herself, her family, and her community. ■

Inspiring educators so adults succeed and communities thrive