



It's never too late to go back to school

My academic adviser helped me stay on track to graduate

By Lena Wilkins, 8/17/09



I made a decision when I graduated from high school 20 years ago not to go on to college. I had planned on attending—had even been accepted—but upon graduation, I changed my mind. I graduated from high school in June of 1984 and by August had found a job at a local bank as a teller.

Through the years, I took a course here and there through the American Institute of Banking. Many of these classes were accredited classes with transferable credits.

In 1997, I had a life-changing event occur that made me re-evaluate what was important to me. I made the decision at that time to go back to school. I had no idea where to begin.

I went to an appointment and ended up leaving with a degree program in hand. I had also registered for my first class, English 101. I took the classes on a weeknight at a local high school and ended up graduating from the management diploma program at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). I was one step closer to my degree.

Working full time in a professional managerial position, single parenting and going to school have been a challenge. However, I can say that I have been successful with the help and dedication of the staff. My academic adviser has done a great job letting me know where I stand and automatically registering me for my classes. This has kept me on the right track.

I am proud to say that I am close to completing my dream of obtaining my undergraduate degree. I will continue on for a graduate degree, too!

It hasn't been easy, but hard work never is. What I have gained from my studies at RIT has been invaluable in my personal and professional growth. My advice to adult learners is to meet with an academic adviser to develop your strategy and plan for what you are looking to accomplish.

With that plan, hard work and dedication to achieving your goals, going back to school can be one of the most satisfying experiences of your adult life.

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We're Interested in Hearing From You

Let us know how you're able to spread positive lifelong learning information in your community. As a way to inspire your fellow Learning Ambassadors, we'll include results and your good ideas in upcoming issues! Send your experience and results to Karen Roney at karen.roney@ci.longmont.co.us, or call 303-651-8633.



Writer heads back to get his diploma

Some 10 years after he was lured away from high school by a full-time job, this writer heads back to get his diploma in order to get more than a dead-end job. David Madrid is an editor for Silicon Valley Debug, a project of New America Media.

New America Media, Commentary, David Madrid, Sr., Posted: Sep 24, 2007



As that job – working at a damn movie theater – came and went, along with others there after, dropping out of school became one of my biggest regrets. I remember sitting in my grandparents' living room looking at all the graduation photos of various family members, when it hit me. I had become another statistic. I was stuck in a daze, staring at my Uncle Tony's picture on the wall, with "Mt. Pleasant High class of 1970" written under it when my grandpa shook me up.

"Go back to school!" he said.

My grandpa was 58 years old back in 1969 when he finally received his high school diploma from the San Jose High Adult Education program. He truly embraced the value of education, coming from a generation when U.S. Latinos were treated as second-class citizens and school was a privilege not to be taken for granted. He went from a poor boy, who grew up in California's Central Valley picking fruit and vegetables, to obtaining a contractor's license and starting his own construction company. And it was because of his high school diploma that helped make that possible.

SAN JOSE – I just got home from my second job, but there is no time to kick back. I only have enough time to grab a bite to eat and kiss my wife and son goodbye, before I'm right back out that door. It's Wednesday night so I have class at the Adult Ed and I don't want to be late.

I dropped out of Independence High School mid-senior year back in 1996. Not because I was lazy or some juvenile delinquent – as the stereotypes might have you believe – but because of the pressure to work a full-time job.

The truth is – I was discouraged early on in my high school career. I transferred from East San Jose to a school in North Monterey County my freshmen year. I remember sitting in an office surrounded by blue-eyed counselors with posters on the wall that said: "Dare to Dream" and other encouraging slogans. They were there to help me plan out my high school career, and ultimately my future. They asked me what is it that I want to do with my life. I replied with stars in my eyes: "I want to help people. I want to be a youth counselor." The room fell silent, then one of the counselors looked at me and said: "There's too much school involved for that, why don't you pick a trade?"

And there it was, I dared to dream.

The following years up of high school were endless. I was in school all day and at work all night, with a girlfriend somewhere in between. Looking back, I wasn't a bad student at all. I really did try. I had no problem getting to school. I completed my homework and maintained a decent grade point average. But with the lack of support and no motivation, I was destined for failure. I fell into the trap that a lot of young people from the neighborhood seem to fall in. Picking a dead end job is no different from those who choose to sell dope or steal as a means to get by. We get caught up in the here and now and tend not to think about the future.

So I took his advice and, as the years rolled on, I did try dropping back in a couple of times. I hit up some night classes at the East Side Adult Center and I even enrolled at San Jose City College for a while. I jumped into a full week of classes. But it didn't last. It was hard for me getting into the school mode, since I'd been out of school for so long. I got overwhelmed and lost my drive.

So I kept on pushing ahead, living life figuring I don't need school. And for the most part, everything seemed to be working out. I'm now pushing 30-years-old, married with children, working two jobs I love. And – can you believe it – one of them is even being a youth counselor.

But now the road has come full circle, that little piece of paper I thought I could do without is now holding me back from stabilizing and securing my future. I have been working with a non-profit organization for the last few years contracted with the East Side Union School District as an at-risk youth counselor. I would be a perfect candidate for a possible permanent position with the school district, if only I had the proper schooling and college education.

Achieving that diploma is the first step I need to take. So I'm off to night school again at the East Side Adult Center, to finish what I started. But this time I'm gonna do it one step at a time with direction and a solid plan. I'm only down a few high school credits, so it won't be long before I get my diploma. Then I'm off to pursue my college education.

To all those in high school: Get it done the first time. And to those who have dropped out, remember it's never too late. You can never be too old to drop back into school.



Longmont Learning Center: a partnership of Front Range Community College + SeniorNet + Longmont Senior Services dedicated to bringing technology access and computer education to adults 50+!



SeniorNet's mission is to provide older adults education for and access to computer technologies to enhance their lives and enable them to share their knowledge and wisdom. Find out how you can become a part of SeniorNet and start enjoying the benefits of membership today!

If you are looking for some help to learn new or enhance existing computer skills, you have found the right place. Welcome. Come on in and make yourself at home. SeniorNet is the nation's most respected nonprofit organization that specializes in computer and Internet education for older adults. Since 1986, SeniorNet has empowered over one million Boomers and Seniors providing encouragement, lifelong learning opportunities and new worlds to explore via the Internet.

Classes

- Each class is limited to 14 students (with a minimum of 6).
- SeniorNet supports and promotes a "peer to peer" model - older adults teaching and assisting older adults.
- See our GO Catalog for the current selection of classes.

Registration & Membership

- Registration is taken care of through the Longmont Senior Center. You may call 303.651.8411 or come in.
- Most computer classes require that you be a member of SeniorNet for a low annual membership fee. The money from the membership fees contribute toward software and curriculum upgrades for the program.
- For more information about SeniorNet, the national organization, please visit their website at www.seniornet.org.
- Annual Membership includes: ability to register for classes, Lab time, access to members only information on the SeniorNet website, low

instructor/coach-to-student ratio, and more!

Class Location

- Class sessions are held at Front Range Community College computer lab.
- Front Range Community College
- 2190 Miller Drive, Longmont, Colorado
- Room 1502
- Parking and entrance are off Miller Drive

Friday Afternoon Labs

- Fridays, 1:00 - 4:00 pm
- Open to SeniorNet members.
- Located at Front Range Community College.
- An excellent opportunity to practice what you are learning, at your own pace, with coaches available for assistance.

Volunteering for the Longmont Learning Center

- We are always looking for more volunteers for our team. Find out the benefits of being a volunteer coach or instructor. We need you!
- Call Kari, 303.651-8495 or email her at kari.grotting@ci.longmont.co.us for details.

Public Computers available at the Longmont Senior Center

- Two public computers with SeniorNet software and internet are available for free use. They are located in the atrium at the Senior Center. Just drop in between 8:00 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Use time is limited to one hour in order to allow others to use the computers.



Become a Teacher Contractor for Longmont Recreation Services

Do you have a skill or hobby to share with others? Consider becoming a contractor for Recreation Services and get paid to do what you love! It's easy! Look over our current recreation brochure to see what is currently being offered: we are always looking for new, creative, and unique courses to offer!

- Share your concept for teaching a program or class with a Recreation Program Supervisor: e-mail RecSupport@ci.longmont.co.us or call 303-651-8404 to be transferred to the appropriate person.
- After talking with the supervisor, complete a class proposal form. Minimum and maximum class sizes are determined, as is classroom set-up, etc. Determine if your class requires contractor-purchased insurance.

- Determine the pricing structure with the supervisor. Contractors are generally paid a percentage of registration fees paid. Contractors are paid at the end of the month in which the program ends.
- Obtain a Sales Tax Use License with Sue Marcott at the Longmont Civic Center 303-651-8672

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Recreation Services at 303-651-8404!



Volunteer to teach English



We are looking for volunteers to teach English to adult immigrants in one-on-one and group settings. Training, materials and ongoing support are provided. No prior teaching experience or second language skills are required. We need people who are patient, enthusiastic, and able to volunteer for a minimum of 50 hours which usually occurs over a span of 3-6 months depending on how often you teach.

No prior teaching experience is needed and **YOU DO NOT NEED TO SPEAK SPANISH TO VOLUNTEER.** We only request that you bring enthusiasm and the desire to learn from other cultures to this volunteer opportunity.

ONE-ON-ONE TEACHING

Volunteers and students generally meet twice a week for an hour and a half each time. One-on-one pairs meet at the student's home, and the schedule is flexible. We have students with all different types of schedules. Therefore, volunteers could meet with someone in the morning, afternoon, evening, weekends, weekdays or whatever works for you and your student!

SCHOOL CLASS TEACHING

Our school classes have a preset time and location.

They are held in public facilities and are currently scheduled as follows:

Angevine Middle School in Lafayette on Mondays and Wednesdays
Boulder High on Tuesdays and Thursdays

There are four terms a year. Teachers are required to teach a minimum of one term. Class times are from 6:30-8:00pm during the following months:

- mid-January to mid-March
- early April to early June
- early July to end-of-August
- mid-September to end-of-November



GROUP CLASSES

Sometimes, local organizations working with immigrant populations come to us with a previously assembled group of students. We look for a teacher for these groups. Intercambio does not generally seek out these groups, so there is no set schedule for them. Groups typically meet once or twice a week and meet at public locations, facilities provided by local organizations or the Intercambio office.

TRAINING

For either the one-on-one or the school class teaching, you will start by attending a six-hour volunteer training, usually conducted over two days. There is a \$25 suggested fee for the training, which covers background checks, food at the workshop and teaching materials. If you decide to teach a one-on-one class, we are able to match you up as soon as you complete the training.

If you decide to teach a school or group class, there are a few additional hours of training involved which may include observing a class.

If you're interested in volunteering, please fill out the online application. Once we get your application, we will keep you posted on days and times of upcoming trainings. If you have questions, please e-mail: Rachel Fuchs.

Thank you so much! The link below will take you to the volunteer application.

http://www.intercambioweb.org/volunteer_form.php





They Say You Learn Something New Every Day...

Now your library can help you make that happen. Longmont Public Library has just subscribed to a dynamic new product called UniversalClass.

UniversalClass offers over 500 online non-credit classes that you can take from the comfort of your own computer. Want to become a better photographer? UniversalClass will help you to do that. Perhaps you need help in starting your own business; you can take a class to do that too. Cooking, psychology, history, and religion are just a few of the subject areas you can explore using this service.

UniversalClass allows you to enroll in up to five classes and each one has a real instructor who you may communicate with using email. You can work through the selected course at your own pace though the coursework needs to be completed in six months.

Best of all, these personal enrichment classes are free to our library members, all you need is a current library card. Go to our library homepage, select the Library 24/7 bar and then select the Learn Something New icon. You will need to register and after that, begin having fun as you pore through over 500 continuing education options. Select your area of interest and then take the class.



Or register here at

<http://longmontco.universalclass.com/register.htm>

One of the 500+ classes available to you for FREE from UniversalClass: Computer Basics 101

Course Description

Do you find yourself intimidated by computer jargon? Would you like to have a clearer understanding (in non-jargon language) of how your computer works? Computer Basics 101 will both demonstrate and explain how your computer works in an easy-to-follow, self-paced format.

This class is designed for the first time computer user, but it's also intended for those whose familiarity with computers is limited and who want a better understanding of the basics. It's also geared towards anyone who has not grown up with a personal computer and now needs to acquire the same assuredness of the younger "internet-surfing" generation.

When you complete this course, you will be able to navigate your computer system, be familiar with some of the most popular software, know how and where to find difficult information quickly, and navigate the internet with the utmost confidence.

Whether you're a novice or simply someone facing a daunting basic computer skill challenge, this course will give you a greater



understanding and confidence in your technical skills--whether on your home or office computer. So why not join today and let's take the stress out of using your computer!

Learning Outcomes

- By successfully completing this course, students will be able to:
- Describe basic computer equipment and basic computer terminology.
 - Describe the processes involved in managing data.
 - Demonstrate basic Internet usage.
 - Demonstrate email skills.
 - Summarize computer shortcuts and tips.
 - Perform basic file operations.
 - Demonstrate how to quickly access frequently used programs.
 - Summarize steps to take when the computer is not working properly or needs repair, and
 - Demonstrate mastery of lesson content at levels of 70% or higher.

About LifeLongmontLearning

LifeLongmontLearning is a community-based, City-sponsored movement to increase access to learning opportunities available in our area. It is the vision of this effort's leadership—which represents government, education, community and business—to ensure that all children enter school ready to learn; for all students to acquire the education and skills to be successful in the 21st century; for all working adults to improve their employability in a changing world; and for retired adults to continually enrich their lives. For more information, visit www.LifeLongmontLearning.com.