

Framingham GED graduates 'open a door'



Art Illman/Daily News staff

Kimberly Bianchin, center, Derek Amorosi and Lisa Cardona-Diaz were among the SMOC Joan Brack Adult Learning Center graduates Wednesday in Framingham.

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By Charlie Breitrose/Daily News staff

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FRAMINGHAM —

Persistence paid off for Kimberly Bianchin, one of the graduates of the Joan Brack Adult Learning Center GED program.

Bianchin joined the other graduates at the South Middlesex Opportunity Council building in Framingham yesterday to receive her degree. The 32-year-old from Leominster plans to go on to college, 16 years after she dropped out of high school.

"It feels very good. It was hard work - every day for a year and tutoring sessions," Bianchin said. "I had taken the GED (exam) five times and failed. This time I am older and put my mind to it and I did it."

The program, founded by Joan Brack, receives financial support from the Brack Family Foundation and Middlesex Savings Bank. Joan's husband, Bob, was on hand to congratulate the grads.

Jim Cuddy, executive director of SMOC, said the GED ceremony is one of his favorite events each year. He told the graduates they should remember this day forever.

"When everything gets tougher, think about this day and how hard you worked to get here," Cuddy said.

The keynote speaker, David Davidowicz, director of Ready Willing & Able, said a GED will open all kinds of doors, for employment, education and other things. He noted some of the famous people who earned their GED, including singer Pink, news anchor Peter Jennings, entertainer Bill Cosby and race car driver Danica Patrick.

"Bill Cosby went on to get a master's degree from UMass and a doctorate," Davidowicz said. "You have opened an important door in your life."

Framingham's Savoun "Fatty" Cheap, who turns 18 today, said he hopes to study computers in community college. He said it took a couple of attempts because he had not been to school in for so long.

"I never made it to high school," Cheap said. "The highest grade I got to was seventh grade."

The 2009 Joan Brack Adult Learning Center graduates are: Derek Amorosi, Lisa Cardona-Diaz, Dennis Douglas, Kerri Gottwald, Igor Lopes, Michael Oliver, Janira Plaza, Claribel Ramirez, Cheryl Roy, Ashley Snyder, Alex Snyder-King, Cheap and Bianchin.

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