



Anna Oswald, Halles West, LaTyphani Littlejohn, Destinee F. Greene and Lisa Hannon.

ACHIEVE program. Upstate Workforce Futures

Adult education graduates receive laptop computers

By MACY PETTY

On Wednesday, March 9, Spartanburg Community College students Destinee F. Greene and Hailee West were presented with laptop computers through the Upstate Workforce Board's ACHIEVE program and the Upstate Workforce Futures Corporation.

Both are recent graduates of Union County Adult Education, having received their GEDs in December, and were enrolled in the ACHIEVE program while completing this portion of their education. Now, both are entering the next chapter of their educational journey, and members of ACHIEVE gathered to celebrate their accomplishments and give them a resource to aid them in their studies.

"It has taken me seven years to get here," said an excited West as she set up her new laptop. A mother of four boys, West said that providing for her children has always been her main goal. Now, she is pursuing a career in nursing to do so. She is currently studying to become a certified nursing assistant through SCC and is completing training courses at Union Medical Center. She hopes to one day become a nurse at Ellen Sagar Nursing Center.

"Everyone at ACHIEVE was very helpful in helping me make this transition," she said.

Greene also received her GED from Adult Ed. in December. She is currently pursuing an associate's degree in the Applied Science of Nursing in addition to working full time at the Dollar General Distribution Center.

"ACHIEVE prepared me for college after taking a long break after high school," she said. "I would encourage anyone to take part in this program."

"We are so proud of these students," said Lisa Hannon, a career coach with ACHIEVE who presented the graduates with the laptops along with director Anna Oswald. ACHIEVE stands for "Academic Challenges Helping Individuals Expand Values and Education." This program, administered through USC Upstate, seeks to support high school dropouts and newly graduated students (ages 16-24) in Spartanburg, Cherokee and Union counties and help them complete their education and expand their career and college skills. They partner with the Upstate Futures Program, the non-profit organization of the Upstate Workforce Board, to provide computers to their graduates. Grant funding to purchase the computers is provided by Broad River Electric.

In addition to providing computers for their gradu-

ates, ACHIEVE also offers many opportunities to help youth who are not in school or unemployed complete their education. They work with college and career navigators to find programs for their students and offer job shadow programs and paid work experience. They even provide transportation for students who do not have a way to drive to and from their school or job. Through ACHIEVE, West and Greene also attended a professional development workshop to build their resumes and workplace skills, which both said was instrumental in preparing them for the next steps in their education.

Both students expressed their gratitude to Union County Adult Education for supporting them as they worked to realize their goals.

"We are really excited for our graduates," said LaTyphani Littlejohn, the new director of Adult Ed. "We look forward to following their success stories."

Littlejohn said that Adult Ed. is dedicated to increasing the education levels of their students and encouraging them to achieve self-sufficiency.

Union County Adult Ed. offers classes to students of all levels of proficiency who are seeking to earn their high school diploma or GED, or improve their reading and math skills. They offer morning, afternoon, evening and online classes to accommodate the schedules of all students. All classes are free of charge. To enroll, students must first attend an orientation. Dates can be found on SCC Union's campus website www.sccsc.edu/union.

The ACHIEVE program is open to anyone age 16-24 who has dropped out of high school or graduated and is unemployed or underemployed. Applicants must be residents of Spartanburg, Cherokee or Union counties. Additional information and prescreening forms are available online at <https://www.uscupstate.edu/about-the-university/community/achieve/>.