



For immediate release: **May 27, 2022**

**Triton College Hosts 44<sup>th</sup> Annual GED Graduation and End-of-Year Celebration**  
*Ceremony Honors ESL Completers, GED Graduates, National Adult Education  
Honor Society Inductees and Board of Trustees Scholarship Recipients, Among  
Others*

RIVER GROVE, Ill. – Triton College hosted the 44<sup>th</sup> Annual GED Graduation and End-of-Year Celebration on Saturday, May 21, in the Robert M. Collins Center.

The ceremony honored ESL completers, Westlake Scholarship Program completers, Board of Trustees Scholarship recipients, National Adult Education Society inductees and High School Equivalency graduates.

“For us, it’s the best day of the year,” said Jacqueline Lynch, dean of Adult Education. “All of our graduates have brighter futures ahead of them because of their accomplishments and hard work.”

Due to the pandemic, Saturday’s graduation was the first in-person ceremony in two years for the Adult Education Program with 25 graduates completing Triton’s General Educational Development Program.

“The GED graduates receive the full graduation experience,” said Lynch. “They’re the last ones to walk into the auditorium while everyone is standing. They are able to walk onto the stage and they each shake the president’s hand.”

Besides the GED graduates, Lynch said the largest single group of graduates Saturday were the ESL completers, who received special recognition at the ceremony.

Dr. Susan Campos, vice president of Academic Affairs, said that she was really moved by Dean Lynch’s speech regarding the graduation tassels.

“The graduates started the ceremony with their tassel on the right side of their cap, but then they moved it to their left side to signify a new stage in their life,” she said. “It truly shows how education changes your life.”

Both Dr. Campos and Dean Lynch were inspired by the ceremony’s keynote speaker Jennifer Albizures, who received her GED on Saturday from Triton.

Albizures began her GED Program in 2020, and was nominated and inducted into the National Adult Education Honor Society in May of 2021.

“I grew up in an abusive family,” said Albizures. “I dropped out of high school because it was easier to hide the signs of abuse that way.”

After she dropped out of high school, Albizures became pregnant with her first daughter.

“My daughter gave me a reason to be somebody,” she said. “She helped me through depression. I worked hard to support her.”

After having two more children with her first partner, Albizures said the relationship became abusive, and ultimately, she left him. Being a single mom, she worked hard to support her three children. Soon after, she met her current husband and has since had five more children.

“I felt so relieved to have met my soul mate when I did,” she said.

Albizures wanted to go back and finish her GED in 2019 after feeling replaceable at work. She felt a GED was ideal to help keep her position.

“I bought this huge GED book along with notebooks and pens to prepare for what I was going to do,” she said.

Albizures feels her teachers, especially Mr. Malarski, helped her “tremendously” when it came to her studies, keeping her focused and staying motivated to succeed.

Going forward, Albizures wants to attend Triton College credit classes to finish her associate degree and become an ophthalmic technician. She said she really loves the Triton atmosphere.

“I feel brand new,” she explained. “I knew I had to finish my degree for me. There’s a light at the end of the tunnel. I made up my mind that I wanted to finish, because nobody was going to hand it to me and I had to go out and get it for myself.”

Albizures was awarded both a Board of Trustees and the Westlake Health Foundation scholarships at the ceremony and will be taking the prerequisites needed for Triton’s Ophthalmic Technician Program.

“Students come to the GED Program with a variety of academic explorer,” said Lynch. “Our goal is to support and celebrate their educational and personal achievements.”

Lynch said that although these students have faced adversity, they have now completed their GED and are encouraged to continue with their education.

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### **ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE**

Triton College is a two-year college dedicated to helping members of the 25 Western Cook County communities in our district and beyond to achieve

educational, professional and personal success. Located in River Grove, IL, Triton offers more than 110 degree and certificate programs on its 110-acre campus, featuring a comfortable, friendly and diverse atmosphere. Triton holds classes at several satellite locations as well and offers online learning opportunities. Triton's dedicated faculty and staff work to provide high quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 12,000 students each year. Triton College is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at [www.triton.edu](http://www.triton.edu).