

LOCAL      JUNE 30, 2016 9:17 PM

# Manatee Technical College confers diplomas on more than 100 GED and ESOL grads

**HIGHLIGHTS** .....

MTC is official GED testing center for Manatee County

Superintendent Diana Greene presented diplomas



BRADENTON — Manatee Technical College's adult general education graduation ceremony Wednesday at Bayshore High School Auditorium conferred degrees on 101 students from its GED and English for speakers of other languages programs.

Another 226 adults who passed the GED during the school year were invited to the ceremony.

Adult ed students overcome all kinds of obstacles to achieve their dreams, according to a MTC press release.

MTC student Amanda Alligood, a 37-year-old mother of three school-age boys, achieved her GED.

"I want them to know no matter what happens in life, it's never too late," she said. "I want to pursue a nursing degree, but to get in I needed a GED."

In addition to going to school, she works part time, takes care of her fiance's grandparents, works on a local political campaign, and donates blood and platelets.

"Today I have the support to achieve my dreams," she said.

GED graduate Aaron Williams spoke to the audience without notes about growing up on the streets of South Florida and going down the wrong path before turning his life around.

"It's possible to change," he said. "I gave my life to God."

The audience applauded.

Today, Williams is enrolled in postsecondary education to become a chef. He also ushers and mentors youth at his church.

"I want people to know you can make mistakes and still have a future," he said.

Linda Agresta, who retired at the end of May as assistant director for AGE programs, announced the graduates and choked back tears as she made her closing remarks. Agresta was in charge of the

programs for 10 years. She expressed her gratitude to all those who supported her.

Superintendent Diana Greene presented diplomas. Manatee County School Board member David Miner and Deputy Superintendent Cynthia Saunders congratulated each graduate as they walked across the stage.

Director Doug Wagner gave the welcome. Program supervisor Ellen Sage led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Curriculum specialist Kelli Kennedy sang the national anthem.

MTC's adult general education programs also include adult basic education, applied academics and citizenship. Omar Edwards has been named to step into the assistant director position beginning Friday.



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