

Success You Can Believe In

Proof That Motivates

For the students of Omaha Street School, obtaining a high school diploma or GED is more than just earning a credential.

“Most of our students have grown up in poverty and many of them do not have a permanent address,” explains Jackie Kelsey, Omaha Street School’s ABE Educational Director, Literacy Team Leader and Guidance Counselor. “It’s not just about the GED, it’s about getting all of the pillars of your life in order: education, personal/social, and vocational.”

The Omaha Street School was founded 14 years ago by John Parsons as a way to help set inner city teens on a pathway for a successful life. Students are able to obtain their high school diploma or GED and continue with their learning in the Adult Basic Education program until they are college or career ready.

They All “Get It”

Since the students that they work with have all achieved various levels of schooling, knowing exactly where they stand academically is key to driving them towards success. All students are tested upon entering the program to determine where to place them in the curriculum. However, Jackie felt the assessment they had been using to test the students skill levels wasn’t a right fit for their program. She began to seek out other options.

“The test we had been using was like speaking a foreign language to the kids. They just didn’t get it,” says Jackie. “We were having a very difficult time finding a test out there that was user-friendly enough for our population of students, parents and teachers to all understand.”

That is when she found the Wonderlic General Assessment of Instructional Needs (GAIN)® basic skills test.

“GAIN has helped us tremendously,” declares Jackie. “We can use the information from the report and give the same explanation to the student, to the parent, and to any agency representative that is working with the student, and everyone is on the same page. The ability to communicate with everyone in the same way and provide the same understanding across the board has been the biggest benefit to us all.”

The staff and volunteers also consider GAIN to be a huge improvement for the program. Prior to using GAIN, Jackie was often times called to assist the teachers in explaining the results to the students and their families. “Now with GAIN, the staff can very easily use the report in an advisory way with their students without having to involve me in the process. It’s something they feel comfortable using themselves.”

Building Confidence

Most importantly, GAIN has helped the students build confidence in themselves and their abilities.

Jackie shared the story of one student who had a very traumatic upbringing. The student was on the verge of aging out of the foster care system and never obtained his high school diploma, despite being very bright.

“When he came into the program he was not serious about it at all. He thought we were just another program he was going to have to endure,” explains Jackie. “But then

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he took the GAIN test. The results showed that he was much more ready to take the GED than he or anyone would have ever given him credit for because of his behavior and personality. He looked at his results and **for the first time he felt he really could succeed at doing this.**

“GAIN helps the students see that they can do this...”

Stories and experiences like this are why the staff, volunteers and community partners do the work that they do.

Jackie also believes GAIN is also a part of these success stories.

“GAIN helps the students see that they can do this. They see their results and their progress, and they know that their goals are possible,” says Jackie.



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transformation through education