

Holmes Herald

PROMOTING ADULT EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY THROUGH COMMITMENT

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Enjoy the First Edition

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Holmes Community College Adult Education Newsletter!

As we embark on a new program year, I am filled with excitement and optimism for what lies ahead. At Holmes, our mission is clear: to empower adult learners with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to succeed—not only in the classroom but in life.



Earline Smith

Adult Education in Mississippi is undergoing a powerful transformation. Today, we offer more than just a pathway to earning a High School Equivalency. Our program also opens doors to career exploration and workforce training, equipping students with the skills and confidence to pursue meaningful employment and lifelong learning.

This progress would not be possible without the dedicated support of our WIOA Partners, community members, Office of Adult Education and civic leaders. Your continued collaboration helps us strengthen our services and reach more adult learners every year. We thank you for your steadfast commitment to adult education and the success of our students.

We look forward to a year full of growth, achievement, and new possibilities. Together, we are changing lives and building stronger communities—one learner at a time.

Warm regards,

Earline R. Smith



Herald Success Spotlight—Theodora Cork

In 2016, Theodora Cork made the decision to become a high school graduate. She knew that decades had passed since she last sat in a classroom but she also knew that she had a dream and she wanted to pursue it. The then 52-year-old entered the Holmes Community College Adult Education Program in Yazoo City, knowing that she'd have to work harder than many of the students present because of her absence from education, but she believed that it was a goal she could accomplish.

After a year of feeling that she would not achieve her dream, Theodora withdrew from the program. However, she still had an urge to pursue her dream. In 2018, she made a call to the Yazoo Teen Center, only to find out that a new instructor had been assigned. After a thorough discussion with Instructor Daphne Higgins, Cork returned to the program.

Cork admitted to the instructor that she was not comprehending the information as easily as the other students and wondered why. She said, "When I questioned myself my teacher told me that I am not everybody else and that I need to be patient. She promised me that we would find a study pattern that would work for me. She assured me that if I believed in myself, I would achieve my dream."

Theodora stated that during the years that followed her second enrollment, she exhibited moments of anxiety, self-doubt, and even

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GRADUATION TAKES CENTER STAGE ON THE GOODMAN CAMPUS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

The Holmes Community College Adult Education Graduation was held on June 19, 2025, in McDaniel Auditorium on the Goodman Campus. Forty-five students from the Attala Center, Ridgeland Campus and Yazoo Center received their High School Equivalencies (HSEs).

Students graduating included: Ava Atkinson, Gradyon Atwood, Anyah Banks,

Christopher Beliew, Jeshua Benson, Grace Berch, Anna Cabiniss, Lonnie Chaney, Qia Xia Chen, Theodora Cork, Sara DeMoney, Hasten Dickerson, Nasir Dobbey, Madeline Easley, Braxden Hill, Emme Hill, Bryson Hollowell, Quin Pink Huang, Alaya Levine, Alan Lin, Ayden Martinez, Promise Mason, Aubrey McCarty, Hyland McDonald, Landen McMillon, Andrea Mondy, Shaneika

Moore, Oterria Moss, Chloe Palato, Marisol Quintanilla, Jakarius Rawls, Ivyunna Roberts, Jaylen Rogers, Cody Sanderock, Alexandria Sylvester, Torian Thompson, April Toney, Elizabeth Turner, Denise Washington, Hayden Watson, Willie Mae Watts, Stefanie West, John Timothy Williams, Keshuan Williams, and Zoey Williams.

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Herald Success Spotlight

bouts of depression. She admits that she began to wonder if being out of a classroom for decades and then returning in her 50s was really the path that she should have taken, but those thoughts were quickly dismissed by her fellow students and instructor. She believed that she had found a strong support system and was determined to apply herself more and

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biting some of the same tendencies she experienced.

Theodora admits that once she embraced the team concept that the instructor was promoting across the classroom, comprehending the information became easier. She enjoyed her daily class sessions and rarely missed a day. She states that praying was also an important component.

On June 2, 2025, her persistence paid off. Ms. Cork completed her HSE and June 19, 2025, she walked across the stage of the McDaniel Auditorium in Goodman with her fellow classmates of Holmes CC to the shouts and congratulatory screams of friends, family, co-workers and church members. Her village surrounded her with joy. Now, a recipient of her HCC, Theodora has set her sights on new goals and her Holmes family is cheering her on all of the way.



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GRADUATES WITH CLASS



Graduates from the Attala Campus



Graduates from the Ridgeland Campus



Graduates from the Yazoo City Campus

Graduates—Continued from Page 2

Instructors Daphne Monix Higgins, Sabrina Moore, Marlena Simon, and Antionay Williams, along with team members, Tammy Jones and Chelia Woodfolk Thompson; participated in the festivities. Brandi Ratliff, who serves as a Program Specialist in the Office of Adult Education at the Mississippi Community College Board, was the commencement speaker. The Director of Adult Education for Holmes CC, Earline Smith, conferred the diplomas to all of the happy graduates.

Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

Ridgeland Student wins in class and in competition

Learning comes in many forms with one understanding being that the student should embrace the best approach to receive and retain information. Once this is recognized, success is soon to follow.

Chloe L. Palato, 19, a recent recipient of her High School Equivalency through the Holmes Community College Adult Education Program in Ridgeland, serves as a model for mastering a communication technique that not only helped her to secure her GED, but helped her to obtain perfection as an equestrian.

Suffering from anxiety in pre-school, Chloe was diagnosed at an early age with ADHD and a dyslexia disorder. From the onset of her education through the ninth grade, she attended private schools where she received assistance from a dyslexia therapist. She later discontinued her private school education and began home-school through an online program.

Because of her early struggles with learning, Chloe had to work harder than the typical student. Building on her communication skills, she mastered the talk to text feature available to many electronic devices which later helped her with her comprehension skills during her HSE studies.

While finding her place in the educational arena, Chloe was introduced to another arena of activity – equine, taking on the challenge of horseback riding. In August 2024, she tore the PCL (a ligament) in her right knee due to an awkward landing when she fell off a horse. Following her surgery, Chloe began her painful recovery and physical therapy. She returned to the saddle in August 2024, and in early January 2025, Chloe, who shows in the English Hunter discipline, was presented with the 2024 Sportsmanship Award by Mississippi Hunter Jumper Association (MHJA). Her horse, Lenny, has qualified for the 2025 USHJA Amateur Hunter Championships to be held at the Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, Ky., in September 2025.

Before her PCL replacement surgery, Chloe spent a lot of time at the barn socializing with others. Following her surgery, she was homebound. She had to protect her knee and follow the doctors' orders while healing. Needing mental stimulation, Chloe arrived at Holmes Community College – Ridgeland campus in August 2024, with her laptop, a locked leg brace, crutches and a smile.



Chloe Palato and horse, Lenny

Her mother, Ronica Palato, shared with the instructor, Marlena Simon, that attending Holmes CC everyday provided the young student with so much, including helping to keep her mind off her pain and her horse, even if it was for just part of the day. "It had been a while since I saw her so excited to go to a classroom. I know you made a positive impact on her time in your classroom. We are forever grateful!"

Chloe, who enjoys Math and Science, will pursue a career in Diagnostic Medical Sonography. She began working towards the prerequisites at Holmes CC in the Spring 2025 and plans to apply to the Diagnostic Medical Sonography program at Hinds Community College after she completes her prerequisites.

Students in Holmes Community College Adult Education Program are Nationally Recognized for Classroom Achievements



Pictured from left to right:

First row (seated): Instructor Sabrina Moore, MCCB Representative Brandi Ratliff, College and Career Navigator Chelia W. Thompson, Instructors Daphne M. Higgins, Elizabeth Shepard, Antionay Williams, and Marlena Simon.

Second row (standing): Students Chloe Palato, Sara DeMoney, Willie Mae Watts, Oterria Moss, Zoey Williams, Aubrey McCarty, and Gwen Cunningham.

Third row (standing): Student John Timothy Williams, MS Representative (District 66) Fabian Nelson, Students Rashad Combs, Shaneika Moore, Avery Staten, Taveon Ford, Felicia Perry and Promise Mason.

The Holmes Community College Adult Education Program held its second National Adult Education Honors Society Induction Ceremony, celebrating the achievements of twenty-one remarkable students from the Attala Center, Crossroad Ministries, Eupora, Ridgeland, and the Yazoo City Teen Center Programs.

During the event, held in the Career-Technical Building on HCC-Goodman campus, the 21 students were recognized for demonstrating the following attributes: 1. Dependable attendance 2. Cooperative attitude 3. Work ethic. Holmes students inducted included: Christopher Beliew, Grace Berch, Lonnie Chaney, Gwendolyn Cunningham, Sara DeMoney, Taveon Ford, Braxden Hill, Lauren Lee, Promise Mason, Aubrey McCarty, Shaneika Moore, Oterria Moss, Chloe Palato, Felicia Perry, Avery Staten, Alexandria Sylvester, Willie Mae Watts, Stefanie West, John Timothy Williams and Zoey Williams. Adult Education Honor Society members received a letter of recommendation for employment from their NAEHS chapter, an NAEHS membership certificate and pin during the school's induction ceremony.

The featured speaker, Mississippi State House Representative Fabian Nelson, presented each student with a proclamation from the House of Representatives, recognizing their hard work and dedication. Brandi Ratliff, Professional Development Specialist for the Mississippi Community College Board, shared greetings from MCCB; highlighting the importance of education in transforming lives.

Honoree Photos by campus are pictured on page 6.



Pictured above:
Attala Honorees and Instructors



Pictured above:
Crossroads Ministries Honoree and supporters

Pictured above:
Eupora Honoree and Instructor



Pictured above:
Ridgeland Honorees and Instructor

Pictured above:
Yazoo City Honorees and Instructor

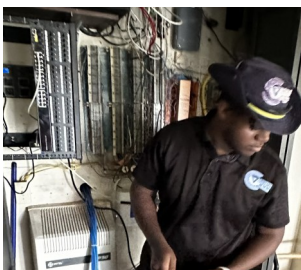
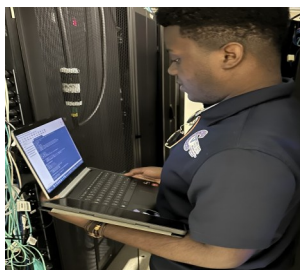


Scholarship, Science and Success The Combs Way

Rashad Combs



Asia Combs



Second Row Photos: Rashad Combs performing work for various businesses.

The journey began during Graduation 2023. Rashad Combs sat in the audience as an observer. He was there to witness the accomplishment of his older sister, Asia Combs, who was receiving her high school equivalency. After graduation, Asia proudly announced to her instructor, Daphne Monix Higgins, “My brothers will be joining you soon. They are ready!”, Rashad did enroll in the Holmes Community College Adult Education Program offered in Yazoo City in the Spring of 2024, and brother Marquis followed in the Fall.

Immediately showing an interest in Science, Rashad Combs became the class “go to guy for all things science-related”. It was later discovered his interest in Science went beyond the classroom. His willingness to help others in the classroom helped to garner him as an inductee in the 2025 National Adult Education Honors Society.

He has been immersed in the world of IT solutions and consulting since the age of 16, learning the trade under the guidance of his father, Raiford Combs. Now 19, Rashad has developed a strong foundation in data management, fiber optics, satellite technology, and a wide range of technical skills essential to the industry.

Connections By RC (CBRC) is an IT solutions provider, working with major companies such as Walmart, Target, Walgreens, Dollar General, Family Dollar, and hotel brands like Holiday Inn and Hampton Inn. The company’s services include data remodels, camera troubleshooting and repair, rack and stack installations, and more.

Rashad’s role in the company is not just about mastering the technical aspects of the business but also preparing to lead CBRC into the future. With a passion for technology and a commitment to excellence, he is poised to drive innovation and help businesses adapt to the fast-paced digital landscape. The ultimate goal is to provide outstanding customer service while ensuring a seamless transition of leadership, allowing Rashad to take CBRC to new heights.

In a boastful voice, the senior Combs said, “I take great pride in his growth and dedication, knowing that his knowledge and vision will propel CBRC forward. This is my hope.”

Poised to receive his HSE in the fall of 2025, Rashad’s journey is leading him down a road of success. His achievements, thus far, proves that with his HSE in hand, the doors of progress will be opened even wider for him.

Holmes CC Instructor to Lead Statewide Adult Education Organization

Holmes Community College Adult Education/HSE Lead Instructor, Daphne Monix Higgins, has been selected to lead the Mississippi Association of Adult Education (MAACE) as its newly elected president for 2025—2026.

A member of the board for the past three years, Higgins is excited to help promote the organization, as it serves as a voice of advocacy and



Daphne Monix Higgins
MAACE President

recognition for students and adult education programs across Mississippi.

She and fellow board members of MAACE, plan to elevate the operations of the organization as they magnify the state's programs, while honoring its students and the communities served through public awareness of academics and the pressing issues facing students and families.

Adult Education and Family Literacy Week Returning to a Program Near You

The time is fast approaching and Holmes Community College, along with other adult education institutions, are gearing up to make it a celebrated event for all participants.

Adult learners, community partners, business leaders, legislators, and friends of adult education join forces the third week of September on an annual basis to magnify the successes of students and their programs. Known as National Adult Education and Family Literacy Week (AEFL), this year's nationwide celebration will be held September 15-19.

Adult Education programs will host speakers and various events to let the world know that AE students are thriving, and just as important, they are making a difference in their communities.

OUR STUDENTS OUR COMMUNITY OUR FOCUS

HOLMES COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ADULT EDUCATION

CELEBRATES

ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY WEEK

For additional information about Holmes CC AE Programs, please call 662-290-0808, ext. 6010.

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