



## **Column: Community Education serving more people than you think**

Posted on Feb 19, 2016 at 9:20 p.m.

By Sharon Johnson, District 518

WORTHINGTON — District 518 Community Education engages area residents in a wide variety of learning opportunities. When many people think of Community Education, they think of the quarterly Classes & Activities catalog that comes in their mail and the enrichment classes promoted in it. In fact, you may have just received the spring quarter catalog that was mailed last week. We are currently receiving many telephone and online registrations for upcoming enrichment opportunities. Last year the Enrichment Department had 2,213 enrollments. Fifty-two percent of those enrollments were adults.

In addition to promoting enrichment classes, our quarterly catalog contains information about educational opportunities offered by other Community Education departments as well.

The Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) department offers 10-week classes designed for parents and their young children to attend together. Classes are offered once a week for 1.5 hours. Both daytime and evening classes are available in English and Spanish. Last year, 475 people participated in ECFE programming.

The Early Childhood department also manages a school readiness program and a Pathways II grant, which are designed to provide pre-school learning experiences. Last year, 106 children received preschool education through District 518 Community Education's Early Childhood department. Another service provided by the Early Childhood department is preschool screening, which is a developmental screening required by the State of Minnesota for all children prior to entering kindergarten. Last year, 278 children were screened. The next preschool screening is scheduled for May 3; invitations will be sent to families with children in the eligible age range. However, if your child is 4 years of age and has not been screened, please contact our office to find out if your child's name is on our census list.

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) department serves adults from 13 school districts in our region. ABE offers a wide range of classes including English language classes, GED preparation, civics and citizenship education, digital literacy training and employment readiness classes. ABE provides daytime, evening and online learning opportunities, free of charge. Last year, 905 students attended Adult Basic Education classes. ABE currently has some exciting opportunities for adults who did not finish high school to pursue either a GED, or the new adult diploma

option. If you or someone you know is interested in these opportunities, please call Community Education for more information or to attend an orientation session.

District 518 Community Education also houses the Community Connector and Parent Liaison programs. The Community Connector and Parent Liaison programs serve primarily immigrant and refugee families. Community Connectors assist people with learning about and navigating systems in America such as housing, health care, employment, and others. Last year, Community Connectors assisted 764 individuals. Parent Liaisons provide education and support for families with children enrolled in District 518. Currently, Parent Liaisons are offering the Parents Advocating for Student Success (PASS) classes for parents of students in grades K-8. Additionally, a monthly program called Parents in Connection to Education is offered for parents of high school students. Last year, the Parent Liaisons served 496 individuals.

Over the last year, 5,247 individuals participated in the wide range of educational opportunities offered by District 518 Community Education. We hope that even more area residents will be inspired to participate in our programs in the year ahead.

If you are interested in finding out more about any of our offerings, check out our Classes & Activities catalog, like us on Facebook, visit our website at [www.isd518.net/commed](http://www.isd518.net/commed), or give us a call at 376-6105.

Sharon Johnson is District 518's Community Education director.