



# California Adult Schools

LEARNING FOR LIFE

## ADULT EDUCATION WEEK MARCH 15-19, 2010

### California State Consortium for Adult Education Generic PR/Promotional Materials

*The California State Consortium for Adult Education (CSCAE) is pleased to offer these materials to assist your school in promoting this important California adult school event.*

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## Memorandum

**To: Adult School Directors/Principals**

**From: California State Consortium for Adult Education (CSCAE)**

**Subj: California Adult Education Week (AEW), March 15-19, 2010**

Adult Education Week is a good time to build awareness of your programs within the community. Ask your mayor, city council or county board of supervisors to declare one day during the week as "Adult and Continuing Education Day." Plan events for the week and let your local media know about them. Schedule an open house, create in-school displays and bulletin boards that focus on your school's programs and achievements, hang a banner, honor your students, recognize teachers. It's a week to tell the community where you are and what you do.

### **How to Promote Adult Education Week:**

The files on this page of are designed to assist in publicizing your own Adult Education Week events. These are suggested formats and can certainly be improved and enhanced; all will have to be edited to conform to your school's activities and specific programs:

- Planning for Adult Ed Week. Guidelines for organizing AEW at your school, including 16 ways to promote it.
- Press Release #1. This generic press release pre-supposes your school will focus its AEW activities on Family Literacy. It can be amended, however, to fit with any program. Send two releases; one to arrive at 10 days before the start of AEW and the second to arrive one or two days prior to the open house
- Press Release #2. You should also send out a press release if your school chooses to honor a person or group during the week. This one should arrive just before or at the start of Adult Ed. Week. A follow-up phone call will improve your chances for success with any press release.
- Public Service Announcement #1 Family Literacy. Send on school letterhead, all (15 sec. & 30 sec.) in the same envelope but on separate sheets. A cover letter with information about your school's services will help. These should be sent to radio, TV and Cable public affairs directors 3 to 6 weeks before the event
- Public Service Announcement #2 Start Right Now. (10 sec., 20 sec.,

& 30 sec.) These "Start Right Now" PSAs are more generic and not program specific.

- Mayoral Proclamation Language (Generic). If you haven't already contacted your mayor's office (and/or county board of supervisors) do so now.
- Electronic Promotion: Create a page on your school's website (and your district's) that displays the events and activities at your school during Adult Education Week. Send emails to current and former students announcing Adult Ed Week and inviting them to appropriate activities
- Dealing with the Media and Tips on Writing News Releases. Self-explanatory.
- Stats and Backgrounder. Facts and a few figures on the problem and need for Family Literacy. Suitable for inclusion as background info with press releases and PSAs.
- Brochure Language. Suggested phrases and language for use in Family Literacy brochures and flyers.

If you have questions or if you think the Consortium can help, please call 541-488-8462 or send an email to bob@gemut.com

## Organizing Adult Education Week

The purpose of Adult Education Week in California is to draw the attention of the public and of education decision-makers — legislators, school board members, your superintendent, city officials, etc. — to the good programs and people at your school. The idea is to enhance your school’s credibility and demonstrate its value to the community. You’ll need a theme and some activities. All of which will require promotion and media support.

If you haven’t already, we suggest you to appoint an Adult Education Week coordinator for your school. CSCAE is available at 541-488-8462 to answer any questions you or your coordinator may have.

### Theme:

This year it’s “Literacy: A Family Affair” but, of course, you can choose to focus on another program if you wish such as GED, High School Diploma, ESL, Citizenship, EL Civics, etc.

### Activities:

Adult Ed Week is five days, Monday through Friday. You may want to have an event each day, even if it’s just a short ceremony that honors worthy students and teachers.

Schedule a different event for each day of adult ed week:

**Monday:** “New Citizen of the Year” recognizes a Citizenship student.

**Tuesday:** “Comeback Student of the Year” recognizes a high diploma or Adult Basic Education student.

**Wednesday:** “Older Adult Student of the Year” honors an older student

**Thursday:** “Family of the Year” recognizes a family involved in Family Literacy or Parent Ed.

**Friday:** Schedule an Open House. Invite former teachers and students, potential new students, and local educational decision-makers to tour the school.

These are just a few thoughts to get you started. From past experience, we know that all of these will strike a chord with your local media.

Here are some ideas for promoting and publicizing Adult Ed. Week:

### 16 Ways to Promote Adult Ed Week at Your School

1. If you haven’t already done so, appoint an Adult Education Week coordinator for your school. That person should have your support and the support of all administrators and program coordinators. The Consortium is available at 541-488-8462, or by email at [bbestor@cscae.org](mailto:bbestor@cscae.org), to answer any

questions you or your coordinator may have.

2. To get publicity you need activities to tie in with Adult Education Week. An open house is logical and effective though labor-intensive. An easier alternative might be to simply schedule a brief ceremony to honor your “Family of the Year,” “New Citizen of the Year,” a “Comeback Student of the Year,” an “Older Adult Student of the Year,” a “Parent of the Year,” or simply your school’s teachers and teachers’ aides. Be sure to give the honorees plaques and/or certificates.

3. Ask a local VIP (Mayor, legislator, school board person, etc.) to present a certificate and/or plaque to the teachers and students you are honoring during AEW.

4. A proclamation by the mayor, city council or school board is almost a cinch if you ask early enough and are willing to write it. See the Civic Proclamation file on this site.

5. Invite the following to your AEW activities: mayor, city council, county supervisors, congressmen, state legislators, school board members, the superintendent, community advisory boards and anyone else who can help your program. (AEW is a good time also to entertain and recognize members of your community advisory board.)

6. Invite the press to your school during AEW. If they can’t make it, how about offering to visit them? Tell the city editor you can drop by his office with a teacher and a student or two to talk about what’s going on in adult education. Don’t try to tell the whole story; zero in on one topic: your “Family of the Year,” your high school diploma program, parent ed family literacy, etc. Give them the story you want told.

7. Contact press and broadcast public affairs people now to tell them what you have planned for the week. Before you call have an idea for a feature story. If Family Literacy is your focus, suggest a story about a remarkable family (“Family of the Year”). Have enough information about the family or student to interest your target.

8. Send press releases — via email and regular mail — not only to the press, but to school board members, the local chamber of commerce, business & industry, house organs, and trade publications.

9. Be sure to email the calendar editor of your local paper about any special AEW activities at your school.

10. Adult Education Week is an appropriate time to write a letter or email the editor of your local newspaper telling of the tuition-free (and low tuition)

services your school provides the community. Over the years many adult schools have had such letters published.

11. Many radio and TV stations offer “free speech” messages. Contact the public affairs directors of local stations.

12. Some schools prepare an AEW information packet for placement in libraries, secondary schools, school-related agencies, local grocery and convenience stores and other key locations. Make sure includes your school’s list of classes and programs.

13. Call radio and TV stations and offer to provide guests for their public service shows during AEW. It helps to be familiar with the content of the shows when speaking with those who produce them.

14. Schools have good results with outdoor banners proclaiming AEW. Display the banners across the main entrance, on a sidewall, fence or wherever they are best seen. You might check the city sign ordinance first, however.

15. Design and print “Adult Education Week” posters and then place them throughout your school and the community.

16. Make sure your school’s — and your district’s — website features Adult Education Week and its theme. Display a banner on the front page of both sites with a link to a list of activities at your school during the week.

17. Send an email “blast” to all current and former students announcing Adult Ed Week and inviting them to appropriate activities. If you don’t know how to send an email to many addresses at once, open an account at [www.campaignmonitor.com](http://www.campaignmonitor.com). The cost is only \$5 per email and a penny per recipient. You can thus email 5,000 people for \$55. If you don’t know how to create an html template, use plain text. The CampaignMonitor software will take you through a simple and easy process.

## Dealing with the Media

Read local newspapers and tune to local radio and TV stations to identify members of the media who might be interested in your program. Make note of reporters who cover topics such as education, social policy, children’s issues, and parenting. Be sure to ask parents, staff, and board members if they have any personal contacts in the media.

Send information about your program to the writers you have identified, especially when you have something newsworthy to share, or when related events arise in your community. In this way you can establish yourself as a reliable source of information so that they will know to call on you when their research warrants expert opinion.

When publicizing your program or activities, create a press release that is easy for the journalist to translate into an article. The more “print-ready” the release is, the more likely it is to end up in actual print. Be sure to have brief, to-the-point synopses of your service components available so that if the press release is about a specific part of the program, the reporter will have the basics at hand when writing the story.

Collect copies of news articles that mention your program or involve individuals in connected with your program. These can be sent to other media people to attract more attention, as well as potential key educational decision-makers such as district personnel, school board members, lawmakers, etc.

Keep good black and white photographs on hand (at least 5 by 7 inches in size) of your program’s director and other key personnel associated with your program. This, too, makes the reporter’s job easier. You may also want to have photographs of families participating in program activities. Make sure to have parents’ written permission to use pictures for publication.

## News Release Tips

### Do:

- Write the press release on your letterhead.
- Put the date and name of contact person with day and evening phone numbers in the upper-right-hand corner.
- Make sure the contact person is available at those numbers for two or three days following the release.
- Center a headline of five or six words in all caps. Limit your releases to two pages or less; type the word “more” at the bottom of the first page, and -00- or ### at the end of the release.
- Put all essential information — the famous five W’s (who, what, where, why, and when) — in the first paragraph.
- Use a quote in the second or third paragraph if possible.
- Stick to short paragraphs and short declarative sentences.
- Use the last paragraph to sum up your organization.
- Read the newspapers you want to have cover you and write your releases the way their reporters write their stories.
- Follow-up with your key contacts.

### Do Not:

- Try to be cute, and don’t gush. Don’t say “We’re brilliant!” but be sure to quote the mayor if she or he says it.
- Resort to rhetoric.
- Think that because a release isn’t used, it’s been wasted. Every thoughtful and well-written press release increases the reporter’s understanding of your organization.
- Send a release to more than one person at the same paper. Send it to your key contact; then if she does not use it, ask who else might be interested.

## **Family Literacy Background Info & Stats**

### **National Literacy Survey**

- 21-23% of American adults demonstrated skills in the lowest of the 5 assessment levels.
- 90 million scored in the lowest two levels.
- Those aged 21-25 scored poorer than 21-25 year olds in the 1985 NAEP study.
- Nearly one-half of adults in the lowest literacy level live in poverty.
- One study concluded that more than 10 million Americans lack the language and literacy skills of competent fourth grade students.
- Literacy levels of children are strongly linked to their parents’ levels.
- The greatest predictor of a child’s future academic success is the literacy level of the child’s mother.

### **Five socio-demographic risk factors relating to the family are examined in the study:**

- Mother has less than a high school education.
- Family is below the official poverty line.
- Mother speaks a language other than English as her primary language.
- Mother was unmarried at the time of the child’s birth.
- Only one parent is present in the home.

### **Statistics about parents and children**

- Nearly 13 million children live in poverty, more than 2 million more than a decade ago.
- At least one of six children has no health care at all.
- At least 100,000 children are homeless in America on any given night.
- Each year 500,000 young people drop out of school.
- Dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested; 6 times more likely to become unwed parents.
- Every year, approximately 1 million teenage girls become pregnant.
- The percent of all births to single teens increased 16 percent from 1986 to 1991.

### **Family Literacy goals:**

- To help parents become economically self-sufficient
- To improve basic literacy skills of parents, other significant adults, and children

- To increase parents involvement in their children’s education
- To enhance children’s development, school readiness, and school success
- To enhance parenting (and/or caregiving) skills
- To enhance parent (and/or other significant adult) and child relationships
- To enhance the educational level of parents or provide English language instruction.
- To help parents gain the motivation, skills, and knowledge needed to become employed or pursue further education or training.
- To enhance the parenting skills of adult participants.
- To enable parents to become familiar with and comfortable in school settings.
- To increase the developmental skills of preschool children and to better prepare them for academic and social success in school.
- To enhance the interaction(s) between parents and children through planned, regular joint activities.

**The most effective family literacy programs incorporate four critical components:**

- Literacy instruction and language acquisition for adults.
- Literacy instruction and language acquisition for children.
- Parent time to teach parents how to advance their child’s educational development.
- Parent and Child Together time (PACT) to facilitate parents’ interaction with their children as their child’s first teacher.

## Sample Public Service Announcements

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

XYZ ADULT SCHOOL

CONTACT: (Name, address, Phone #, email, web)

NOT FOR USE AFTER 3/19/10

Adult Education Week: March 15-19

30 Sec :

Literacy is family affair. Are you able to read to your kids and help them with their homework? If not, maybe you need to improve your own English and reading skills. At XYZ Adult School, we have a free literacy program for the whole family. Your kids will do better if you read to them and get involved with their schoolwork. Learn more at XYZ Adult School’s annual all day open house during Adult Education Week on Friday, March 15, at 345 Main Street in Gotham City. For more information phone XYZ at 333-4444.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

XYZ ADULT SCHOOL

CONTACT: (Name, address, Phone #, email, web)

NOT FOR USE AFTER 3/19/10

Adult Education Week: March 15-19

15 Sec :

Literacy is family affair. Your kids will do better if read to them and get involved with their schoolwork. Find out about the free family literacy program at XYZ Adult School’s all day annual open house on Friday, March 15, at 345 Main Street in Gotham City. Phone 333-4444.

*(Send these double spaced, on separate pages, with a cover letter, to broadcast public affairs directors several weeks prior to Adult Ed. Week)*

## Sample Public Service Announcements

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

XYZ ADULT SCHOOL

CONTACT: (Name, address, Phone #, email, web)

NOT FOR USE AFTER 3/19/10

Adult Education Week: March 15-19

10 Sec

Want to improve your reading skills? Start right now. Call 000-000-0000 for information about FREE reading programs in your community. That's 000-000-0000

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

XYZ ADULT SCHOOL

CONTACT: (Name, address, Phone #, email, web)

NOT FOR USE AFTER 3/19/10

Adult Education Week: March 15-19

20 Sec

Want to improve your reading skills? Join the thousands of other California adults who have made the decision to improve their reading, writing, and math skills. Start right now by calling XYZ Adult School at 000-000-0000 for information about free instruction. That's 000-000-0000.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

XYZ ADULT SCHOOL

CONTACT: (Name, address, Phone #, email, web)

NOT FOR USE AFTER 3/19/10

Adult Education Week: March 15-19

30 Sec

Want to improve your reading, writing and math skills? Join the thousands of other California adults who have made the decision to improve their basic skills. XYZ Adult School offers (provide info about your service) at convenient times and in convenient locations. Start right now. Call 000-000-0000.

*(Send these double spaced, on separate pages, with a cover letter, to broadcast public affairs directors several weeks prior to Adult Ed. Week)*

## Generic Press Release – Family Literacy

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: (Name, address, email, web address, and phone #)

### **ADULT ED ANNIVERSARY WEEK FOCUSES ON FAMILY LITERACY**

Adult and Continuing Education Week, March 15-19, at XYZ Adult School in Gotham City. XYZ will join with approximately 300 other California adult schools in honoring teachers and students in Family Literacy programs. The week's theme is "Literacy: A Family Affair."

"A number of studies have shown that it is important for parents to read to their children and help them with schoolwork," said (name), principal at XYZ. "Our Family Literacy program addresses the reality that many parents simply don't have the English skills to do that. To break the cycle of illiteracy we must focus on educating parents."

XYZ School has scheduled a variety of events (attached event schedule to release) throughout the week including an open house (or other activity/event) on Friday, March 19 (or other time and date), from 9am to 9pm. Tours of all programs offered at XYZ will be available and refreshments will be served throughout the day.

Like many California adult schools, XYZ provides a wide range of free educational services including High School Diploma, GED, Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, Citizenship and Career and Technical Education programs. There are special programs, too, for older adults and developmentally disabled adults. But during Adult Education Week the spotlight is on Family Literacy.

XYZ Adult School is located at 345 Main Street in Gotham City. The telephone number is 444-444-4444, or see us on the web at [www.xyz.com](http://www.xyz.com).

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## Generic Press Release – Family of the Year

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT: (Name, address, phone #, email, web)

### **Gotham Adult School Honors its "Family of the Year"**

Gotham City, March 8, 2010 — When a first-grade teacher told Rosa and Manuel Diaz that their six-year-old son, Paul, was having trouble with reading, the couple became frustrated and didn't know where to turn. Their own English skills were such that they couldn't read to Paul or help him improve his reading at home.

Then the teacher told the Diaz's about the Family Literacy program at XYZ Adult School in Gotham City. Reading in the Diaz home soon became a family affair and within a year Paul was reading better and his mom and dad, through XYZ's ESL instruction, had improved their English to the point they could read easy books to Paul. Many of the school's Family Literacy activities involved the whole family.

It took perseverance but the Diaz family is making real progress and now, as part of the March 15-19 Adult Education Week, they have been designated XYZ Adult's "Family of the Year." They will be honored during ceremonies at the school's open house, Friday, March 19 at noon. The event's theme is "Literacy: A Family Affair."

"I wanted my son to learn English but I couldn't help him," said Rosa. "We are lucky. The ESL teachers at XYZ made our English better and Paul got help too. Best of all, we did it together."

XYZ Family Literacy coordinator, Betty Jones, says there are many Gotham City families like the Diaz's and that getting the parents into the school is key.

"A number of studies have shown that it is important for parents to read to their children and help them with schoolwork," said Ms. Jones. "Our Family Literacy program addresses the reality that many parents simply don't have the English skills to do that. To break the cycle of illiteracy we must focus on

educating parents.”

Family Literacy is only part of the story at Gotham Adult School. The school also offers Adult Basic Education, High School Diploma classes, GED, English-as-a-Second Language, as well as programs for handicapped adults, senior citizens and parents. Vocational and job training is another important element of the curriculum and XYZ also offers a variety of community education courses at nominal fees.

## Suggested Proclamation Language

*(Change as needed to fit your school’s programs.)*

WHEREAS, that from (date) through (date) the State of California will observe Adult Education Week, the city of \_\_\_\_\_, its mayor and council, acknowledge that our \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School serves the changing economic and cultural needs of a vigorous, expanding community; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School provides instruction to those in our community who need English as a Second Language and Citizenship courses; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School, recognizing that to break the cycle of illiteracy we must focus on educating parents, provides programs in Family Literacy

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School is a primary community resource for the teaching and instruction of adult literacy; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School provides a way for adults to complete high school studies in their own time and pace; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School provides programs especially designed for our older adult and disabled population; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School provides career and technical training for adults seeking career changes or enhancements; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School provides instruction for parents and families, ranging from pre-birth classes through a wide spectrum of parent education and family literacy courses; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School provides for the unique needs of individuals in a diverse population,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, \_\_\_\_\_, Mayor of the City of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby proclaim \_\_\_\_\_ day, March \_\_\_\_\_, 2010, as: “ADULT SCHOOL DAY” in the city of \_\_\_\_\_ and salute the administration, teachers, and students of the \_\_\_\_\_ Adult School and honor their efforts and accomplishments on this day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and cause the seal of the city of \_\_\_\_\_ to be affixed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2010

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

## **Suggested Brochure & Flyer Phrases**

- GED preparation
- Improve reading, writing, and math skills
- Computer enrichment
- Life skills
- Parenting skills
- Career exploration
- Increase self-esteem
- Discover learning is fun
- Become partners in education
- Take field trips together
- Develop social and language skills
- Have lunch together
- Read books together
- Play and learn together at home and school
- Make games and books together

The best thing you can do to help your children do better in school is to read to them. Reading gives your child:

- The pleasures of reading
- A positive reading role model
- New information
- A richer vocabulary
- Better grammar
- Start reading to your child as soon as possible; six months is not too young.