

press release

FOR ADULT GRADUATES, A DIPLOMA LIGHTS THE WAY TO A BETTER FUTURE

Deputy Mayor Dennis Walcott And Thirteen/WNET New York Salute GED Graduates And Other Adult Education Students In Annual Recognition Of Lifelong Learning

New York, NY, June 19, 2007 – A diverse student body gathered in the main studio of public television station Thirteen/WNET New York on Tuesday to celebrate a once-in-a-lifetime achievement. One hundred students came from various personal backgrounds and walks of life, but they all had one very important thing in common: they were all there to claim their General Educational Development (GED) diplomas and other certificates, and to hear an inspiring keynote address by Dennis Walcott, deputy mayor of the City of New York.

Among the graduates at the ceremony were students who earned their GED diplomas through on-air courses – *GED Connection*, (Tuesdays and Thursdays) or *GED en Español*, (Mondays and Wednesdays) at 5:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. – which are part of Thirteen’s larger initiative to provide comprehensive educational resources and services to teachers and students of all ages. For information on the televised courses, call Thirteen’s Literacy Hotline – in English at (212) 560-2831 or Spanish at (212) 560-2081.

“When I learned about the *GED Connection* program, I was really excited,” GED Graduate Helen Verello of the New Utrecht section of Brooklyn, New York, told the audience “I was working long hours at my job and would not be able to attend regular classes. When I was in-between jobs, I would take GED classes, but would drop out as soon as I got a new job. Now I was able to watch the program on television in the mornings before getting ready for work, and I studied on my lunch hour. Having my GED diploma will open new doors for me; I may even attend college in the fall.”

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Tuesday's cap-and-gown ceremony included GED, Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language (ESL) students from alternative high schools and other programs in the tri-state area, particularly those of the New York City Department of Education.

Members of this year's graduating class and past graduates of the annual Thirteen event shared their feelings of accomplishment and their hopes for the future, and celebrated with music and poetry. On hand to recognize the students were Shaneequa Wright, public affairs manager for Con Edison, and Ronald Thorpe, vice president and director of education, Thirteen/WNET New York.

Con Edison has provided major corporate support for Thirteen's Adult Education Projects since 1989. Promotional support for Thirteen's Adult Education Projects is provided by WBLS-FM Radio, *Hoy* newspaper and the *New York Amsterdam News*.

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Further information about Thirteen's adult education projects can be found in the Thirteen online pressroom: <http://www.thirteen.org/pressroom> – type in “Adult Education.”

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Thirteen/WNET New York is one of the key program providers for public television, bringing such acclaimed series as *Nature*, *Great Performances*, *American Masters*, *Charlie Rose*, *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*, *Wide Angle*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *NOW With David Brancaccio*, and *Cyberchase* – as well as the work of Bill Moyers – to audiences nationwide. As the flagship public broadcaster in the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut metro area, Thirteen reaches millions of viewers each week, airing the best of American public television along with its own local productions such as *The Ethnic Heritage Specials*, *The Thirteen Walking Tours*, *New York Voices*, and *Reel New York*. Thirteen extends the impact of its television productions through educational and community outreach projects – including the *Celebration of Teaching and Learning* – as well as Web sites and other digital media platforms. More information can be found at: www.thirteen.org.

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