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Adult Students Receive Diplomas Through Library's Career Online High School

Ceremony for 2017 Graduating Class Held at Central Library on March 22



Los Angeles, March 22, 2017 — The 2017 graduating class of Los Angeles Public Library's Career Online High School program received their diplomas today in a ceremony held at Central Library. The ceremony was officiated by City Librarian John F. Szabo and Board of Library Commissioners President Bich Ngoc Cao.

The 26 graduates range in age from their 20s to their 50s. Currently, 192 adult learners are enrolled in the program, which launched in 2014 to re-engage adults in the education system and prepare them for entry into post-secondary education or the workplace.

Los Angeles has among the nation's highest high school dropout rates, with upwards of 25 percent of adult residents lacking a high school diploma, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. In some areas of the city, as many as 60 percent of adults do

not have a high school diploma. Nationally, the dropout crisis has reached epidemic proportions: every 26 seconds another student gives up on school, resulting in more than one million American dropouts a year, or 7,000 every day.

“I would not be where I am today if it wasn’t for this opportunity,” said graduate Samson Rodriguez. “As a child, my family constantly moved back and forth from the United States to Mexico. So much that at the age of nine years old, I stopped attending school. I was mocked by my peers because I had trouble reading. COHS gave me the chance to reach a higher level in my education. I may have earned a diploma but I have also gained a new sense of confidence.”

Los Angeles Public Library is the first public library in the nation to offer adults the opportunity to earn an accredited high school diploma and career certificate online through Career Online High School (COHS).

“It’s never too late to pursue your dreams and chase new opportunities — and the newest graduates of the Career Online High School inspire everyone who believes in the power of second chances,” said Mayor Eric Garcetti. “This program is another great example of why L.A.’s public libraries are such a vital resource in our communities.”

“Having earned their high school diplomas, these graduates are now better prepared to find a job, advance in their career or continue their education,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “This innovative program is the latest example of how the library changes lives in a very big way.”

The library offers a limited number of grants to residents of the City of Los Angeles at no cost. COHS is administered through Gale, part of Cengage Learning, a leading provider of educational content, tools and services to libraries, schools and businesses. There is no cost to students for the program, but enrollment is limited and demand is high.

The application process includes an online self-assessment, pre-requisite course and in-person interview at a local library. Once a student is enrolled, COHS pairs each with an academic coach, who provides the student with an individual career path, offers ongoing guidance, evaluates performance and connects the student with the resources

needed to master the courses. Students are given up to 18 months to complete the program.

Funding for the Career Online High School is provided by the Library Foundation of Los Angeles, the Clinton Global Initiative Scholarship Matching Program and the California State Library.

For more information about the Career Online High School program, including the qualification requirements and application process, visit the Los Angeles Public Library website at *www.lapl.org/cohs*.

A 2015 recipient of the nation's highest honor for library service—the National Medal from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Los Angeles Public Library serves the largest and most diverse urban population of any library in the nation. Its Central Library, 72 branch libraries, collection of more than 6 million books, state-of-the-art technology accessible at www.lapl.org, and more than 18,000 public programs a year provide everyone with free and easy access to information and the opportunity for life-long learning.

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