

PRESS RELEASE

2019 COABE OUTSTANDING TEACHER OF THE YEAR

LISA CLARK

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COABE's mission is to inspire educators so adults succeed and communities thrive. We exist to provide leadership, communication, professional development, and advocacy for adult education and literacy practitioners to advance quality services for all adult learners. One way that we engage in these activities is by spotlighting excellence in the field. The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) represents the field of 55,000 adult educators and provides a variety of services, including professional development through annual, state-of-the-art national conferences, more than 50 webinars annually, and publication of the *COABE Journal*. COABE also launched an award-winning national public awareness campaign and an advocacy campaign that has mobilized the field to more than 100,000 connections with legislators since inception in April 2017. COABE also highlights excellence in the field of adult education by providing competitive, national-level awards valued at \$10,000 each, special recognition awards valued at \$2,000 each, incentive grants to encourage and promote best practices in the field, and scholarship opportunities, all through special funding provided by The Dollar General Literacy Foundation. It is with great pleasure that COABE announces Lisa Clark as the winner of this year's Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award.

Lisa Clark sets an example for teacher excellence in Rhode Island with her comprehensive planning process, which begins with her effectiveness at establishing comfortable relationships with students and then getting them to identify and relate their goals to her. Based on these goals and student needs, she then researches best practices for what she needs to teach. Her creativity is apparent in how she uses songs and music to relate to students' work and life experiences and in how she uses relevant websites to help students research opportunities and practice their skills in and out of class. By incorporating career pathways, experiential learning such as field trips, creative texts like poems and songs, and relevant websites, Lisa consistently creates engaging and fun standards-based lessons that help her students improve and reach their goals. There has been a long-standing need for helping adults who are not literate (or fully literate) in their own language learn English. Identifying this need among her learners, Lisa created effective ESL Literacy classes at her site in East Providence, one of the only such programs for ESL learners in the state.

Lisa has been quick to share her best practices with other RIFLI staff and generous in allowing many other teachers and student-teachers statewide to observe her classes. She is a partner to many local adult education agencies, establishing a good working relationship with East Bay Literacy Volunteers to serve her students with additional tutoring services. Lisa was the 2017 recipient of the RI Adult Educator by the Rhode Island Department of Education because of her success in teaching English language learners and building a successful program in her city. By successfully motivating her students to continue learning outside of class, Lisa has had high attendance (over 540 visits this past year) at her "Learning Lounges," which are blended learning opportunities for her students to practice their literacy and language skills. Lisa has successfully grown her RIFLI site, expanding the number of classes offered and tripling the number of those served. Her EFL completion percentage rates for the past fiscal year are 50%. These numbers are excellent, given that Lisa doesn't shy away from accepting low-literacy students, students with special needs, or highly advanced students who may take a long time to advance up an EFL level. Congratulations to Lisa Clark for the outstanding work she is doing with adult learners in Rhode Island!

To learn more about COABE's prestigious award program, go to www.coabe.org or contact awards@coabe.org.