



PRESS RELEASE

2019 COABE LOCAL PROGRAM ADVOCATE SANDRA CARUSO February 15, 2019

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 Sandra Caruso as the winner of this year's Local Program Advocate Award.

Sandra Caruso is a pioneer in the world of adult education. After a long, successful career with the School District of Palm Beach County as a teacher, administrator, instructional specialist, mentor, and advocate, Sandra retired and decided to advocate at a whole new level for adult education students. Sandra started HEROES Foundation of America. HEROES Foundation is barely into its second year and is being recognized state-wide throughout Florida for its advocacy efforts. Launched in 2017, the HEROES Foundation is committed to helping adult education students realize their maximum potential. This organization was designed to assist GED® students enrolled in the Palm Beach County School District's adult education programs (or recent graduates) with counseling, GED® testing fees, and scholarship opportunities to help them achieve their personal and professional goals. Sandra's vision for the future of HEROES Foundation of America is to provide these support opportunities to GED® students nationwide

HEROES Foundation of America is a non-profit organization based upon the conviction that an educated citizen is essential to a healthy community and economy. The foundation provides scholarship opportunities to postsecondary and vocational programs and support services to GED® students and recent graduates who were enrolled in adult education programs in the School District of Palm Beach County and who otherwise would not have the financial means to fulfill their educational goals. The HEROES Foundation leads a collaborative network of community and educational partners aligned to support student preparation, transition, and persistence to high school equivalency diploma completion. The Foundation sees education as a catalyst of change, a major driver of economic growth, an important benefit to society, and a positive impact on the quality of life for individuals and future generations. Sandra and her board members are pushing the limits to be a powerful voice for adult education students in Palm Beach County. Congratulations to Sandra Caruso and HEROES Foundation of America!

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