



2024 Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year Samuel Gabaldon

Samuel Gabaldon, adult learner at Luna Community College (LCC), has been named Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year.

New Mexico Adult Education Association (NMAEA) Applied STEM lab instructor, William DuBois, states, "In class, I always found that Samuel encouraged his peers, reinforcing the message that they are smart and strong, etc. Samuel is one of those people who shines bright and touches everyone he meets in a positive way."

Samuel Gabaldon entered adult education with serious gaps in education. As a child he had been diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer that left him bedridden and made education for him very difficult and sporadic. Upon entering the program, Samuel overcame his many health obstacles and began to give back in a huge way, volunteering to help and mentor others, all while studying for his own exam. After only one year, Samuel closed his learning gaps and passed all sections of his high school equivalency exam.

One day, as he was visiting family in New York state, Samuel saw an amazing piece of engineering, the New Croton Dam. As he looked at the dam, he suddenly knew what he wanted to do. After visiting the New Croton Dam, Samuel realized that he wanted to be a part of creating an amazing piece of engineering that would benefit people for generations to come. Samuel has now been accepted into the University of Mexico where he plans to study civil engineering. His greatest hope is to help people in some way for years and years beyond his lifetime.