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*The Voice of
Adult Education
in Massachusetts*

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STATEWIDE COALITION RECOGNIZES CHALLENGES FACED BY IMMIGRANT LEARNERS

Boston Woman Wins Outstanding Student Award

Boston, MA: Immigrants account for almost one-third of all Boston households, and many face severe economic and emotional challenges as they struggle to adapt to a new language, culture and community. Since arriving in the United States from Bulgaria in 2007, Tihilina Kirova has worked hard to overcome those obstacles while simultaneously contributing to her community in Jamaica Plain.

Even when life was extremely difficult, Lina studied diligently in her Distance Learning Class at Jamaica Plain Community Center (JPCC), and later in more advanced classes at Catholic Charities/EI Centro del Cardenal. Always a class leader, Lina organized student events, and was chosen to represent her student body during advocacy visits with state legislators. At JPCC, she also served as an ESOL volunteer serving as a beginner level classroom assistant and literacy tutor. Later, Lina's excellent communication skills, along with her natural abilities as an exceptional educator, caught her instructors' eyes and she was hired as EI Centro's computer class teacher.

"Lina is this year's recipient of the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education's (MCAE) Outstanding Student Award," announced Kenneth Tamarkin, executive director of the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE) that recognizes outstanding student leadership each year. "I consider it a great privilege to recognize Lina for her hard work and determination. She is making a great effort to achieve her educational goals, while also helping her peers. The vast majority of adult learners want to improve their English and basic skills with the hopes of increasing their earning capacity and improving their family's quality of life."

"Lina is patient, knowledgeable, and flexible, and always looking to improve her skills. She has helped to strengthen the computer curriculum to respond to student interests. She has mentored students who have taught units in the curriculum," said Robert Hibbard from EI Centro del Cardenal. "As an adult learner, Lina has experienced outstanding growth and made important contributions to her community."

Jamaica Plain Community Center and EI Centro del Cardenal offer adult basic education

classes helping students to learn English, improve their basic skills and earn GEDs and diplomas. For more information regarding these programs visit www.jpcommunitycenters.com/adultlearning.htm and www.altebps.org/school.asp?schooltype=diploma&recordid=EC1.

MCAE is the statewide organization for practitioners, adult students, individuals and organizations supporting equal educational opportunities for all adults. MCAE is dedicated to the advancement of adult education through high quality services and professionalism in the field from basic literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) through preparation for a high school credential such as the General Educational Development (GED) test to programs such as family literacy, workforce development, and workplace education to transitions to post-secondary education. For more information about adult basic education in Massachusetts visit www.mcae.net.

MCAE annually honors outstanding students and practitioners in adult education at the NETWORK conference each fall. This year's awards were given on Thursday, November 4, 2010 in Marlborough.

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Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education

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