

Citywide Graduation

Center for Literacy (CFL) was proud to join the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL), other adult education providers, graduates and their families and friends, for the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma (CSSD) Citywide Graduation on June 22 at the main branch of Free Library of Philadelphia.

Eighty-five graduates, including five from CFL, heard welcome remarks from Mayor Kenney and the keynote address from Police Commissioner Ross.

"Learning is lifelong," said Kenney. "What this degree is doing for you is positioning you to do better in life." Ross said, "We are here today to celebrate your accomplishments. You did this, you have the skills needed to achieve success."

Following Kenney and Ross, the graduates listened to the Commonwealth address by Wil Del Pilar, PhD, acting deputy secretary of postsecondary and higher education. Del Pilar described his experiences in attaining education as similar to those of the graduates and later presented them with certificates from MCOL. "We at the Pennsylvania Department of Education applaud you on the sacrifices that have gotten you to graduation. The CSSD is the first step and we hope you continue on a path to post-secondary education."

Six commencement speakers delivered brief remarks to their fellow graduates. Commencement speaker Marlon McGill shared, "Where others saw failure I saw achievement and dreams." Graduates from the Temple University Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (WELL) program were surprised with a scholarship to transition to post-secondary education. Students have access to funds to attend one course at the Community College of Philadelphia or complement training programs in which they have enrolled. Students will receive 50 hours of College and Career Readiness Skills to prepare them for success.

Diane C. Inverso, executive director for MCOL, closed the graduation ceremony with acknowledgements and special remarks. "Today would not have been possible without the support from the adult education community and practitioners, who not only teach, but are dedicated to their learners and encourage them to follow their dreams."

In addition to CFL, adult education providers participating in the ceremony were Community Learning Center, Congreso de Latinos Unidos, District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund, Philadelphia OIC and Temple University WELL.

News and Community Affairs Director for iHeartMEDIA Loraine Ballard Morrill, served as emcee for the ceremony. "We commend your bravery and courage in reaching these goals and sharing your stories, they are truly inspirational," she said. Robert Smith, regional vice president of community investment for Comcast, remarked on Comcast's sponsorship of the graduation. "Comcast is proud to support the Mayor's Commission on Literacy and sponsor tonight's CSSD Graduation."

The CSSD is a high school equivalency credential available to Pennsylvania residents who do not possess a high school diploma and who have met criteria in the Pennsylvania Code. The CSSD may be achieved by passing the GED® test, or the HiSET® exam or by completing the 30 College Credit Option.

Photo: CFL graduates - Marva Plowright, Alisha Bryson, Kiera Tyler, Kayla Benjamin and Alfreda Johnson