

Frederick Abisi
Adult Education Center
408 Merrimack Street
Lowell, MA 01854
978.937.8989

THE MELTING POT

A Publication for our Students & Supporters – Thank You!

A Season of Reflection and Growth

As another school year comes to a close across Lowell (and the rest of the country), this is a powerful time to pause and reflect.

For many people, this season marks a moment of achievement, personal growth, and new beginnings.

At Abisi Adult Education, we know how hard our students work — balancing school, jobs, family, and all of life's responsibilities.

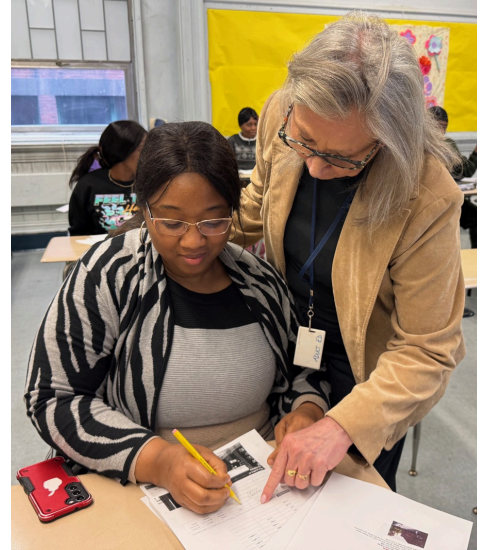
Whether this was your first year in our program or one of many, take a moment to ask yourself:

- *What goals did I set for myself this year?*
- *What did I accomplish that I'm proud of?*
- *What challenges did I overcome?*
- *What do I want to improve or try next?*

These questions help us recognize progress — not just in reading, writing, or math, but in confidence, consistency, and commitment. Even small steps forward are signs of success.

We hope you take pride in everything you've learned and the effort you've put into your education. No matter where you are on your path, you are moving forward. That matters.

Let's celebrate growth, keep setting goals, and continue showing up for ourselves and for each other. We're proud to walk this journey with you!



Donna and Djenabou share a proud moment: a reminder of growth and hard work at Abisi

Celebrating Success Together!

ESOL and HSE students recently came together to celebrate their hard work & progress. Director Betty McKiernan & our dedicated teachers proudly handed out certificates for excellent attendance & goal achievement.

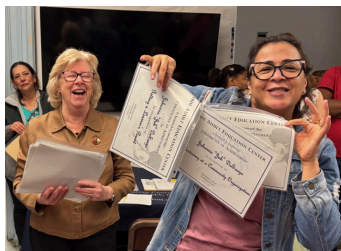
In total, attendance certificates were awarded to:

- **79 ESOL students**
- **20 HSE students**

and the number of students honored for goal completion:

- **43 from ESOL, and**
- **13 from HSE**

Congratulations to all — we're proud of your dedication!



Jaksonia (above) & Frantz (below) are new drivers!



HSE students show off their hard work!



Students from Donna's Th/Fri class display their certificates.



Meg's Th/Fri class has had great attendance all year!

Student Spotlight: A Path to Success & Service

Here at Abisi, we believe that every student's voice and story are important. In each edition of "The Melting Pot," we are proud to feature a student profile from our program to highlight the inspiring life stories of our students. This month's profile is on Aaron Soto (HSE program). While Aaron has only been at Abisi for a short time, he has made a big impact on both Abisi staff members and fellow students.

Meet Aaron Soto, one of our inspiring HSE students at the Abisi Adult Education Center. Though originally from Wilmington, Massachusetts, Aaron moved to Lowell to be closer to family. One family member in particular—a proud GED graduate from Abisi—inspired him to enroll in the program just three months ago.

"I heard about Abisi through my aunt," Aaron shared. "She spoke highly about the program and told me how it helped her succeed. That made me want to join, too."

Since enrolling, Aaron has been motivated by the support he's received in the classroom. "What stands out the most to me are the teachers. They truly want to see every student pass and succeed."



Aaron has been turning goals into reality, one assignment at a time!

While working toward his High School Equivalency (HSE) diploma, he is also preparing for an exciting future: a career in the U.S. military. "I'm leaning towards the Air Force," Aaron proudly notes. "The military offers great benefits and helps with extra schooling. It wasn't something I always thought about, but now I see how helpful it can be."

When asked what he hopes for in the future, his answer was clear: "I want a steady, successful career and to be able to take care of myself comfortably."

Aaron's message to others thinking about starting the HSE program is simple but powerful: "Remember, you're not alone. You've faced tough things before—and you can face this too."

Update: We're proud to share that Aaron has now passed all of his HSE exams! This means he has officially completed the program at Abisi and earned his High School Equivalency diploma. Congratulations, Aaron! We're honored to have been part of your journey and couldn't be prouder of your accomplishment! 🎓



As a new HSE graduate, Aaron plans to enlist in the US military.

HSE: June 2025 GED & HiSET Testing Appointments

GED & HiSET (Paper-Based Testing)
are available on:

June 13th (5pm) & 14th (8am)
August 1st (5pm) & 2nd (8am)

(Computer-Based Testing) available on:
Thursdays at 12 noon/ 1 subject only
July 10th - GED
July 17th - HiSET

Voucher Codes

GED:

1st & 3rd Test in a Subject – MAFREEGED1

Retake in a Subject – MARETAKE

2nd Retake in a Subject – MAFREEGED1

HiSET:

All Tests – MAHISSET

Where I'm From": A Poetry Journey by HSE Transitions Students

Four students from our **HSE Transitions** class worked hard to write special poems called "**Where I'm From.**" These poems were inspired by a well-known poem written by **George Ella Lyon.**

With guidance from their teacher, **Nancy Bernard**, the students reflected on their lives, families, memories, and cultures. Then, they turned those reflections into **powerful poems** that tell their personal stories.

Each poem is **meaningful and unique.** The students shared where they are from, what life was like in their home countries, and what matters most to them.

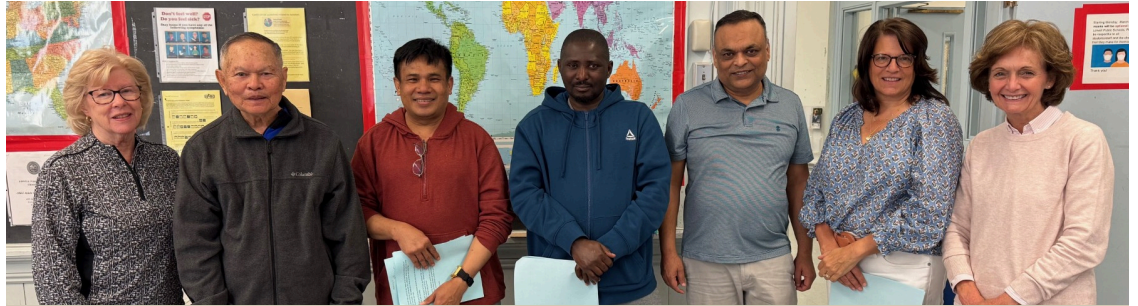
Sovanny wrote about growing up in Cambodia, losing his parents, and being raised by his **caring older sister.** He shared joyful memories of playing games with friends and **celebrating Khmer New Year** at the temple with his wife.

David shared his memories of growing up in Bunagana, Congo, and attending school in Uganda. He spoke about the **strong bond** with his family, their **deep faith**, and the warm meals his mother lovingly prepared.

Hakchrum wrote about his small home and **garden** in Cambodia, his large family, and his experience as a **high school professor.** He also expressed his happiness about living in the United States.

Manhar told stories of his small village in India, where everyone knows each other. He wrote about his **close-knit family**, their shared meals, and how they always worked together to **solve problems.** These poems were presented during a special poetry reading. Their teacher, Nancy Bernard, shared the **creative journey** each student took and how proud she is of their work.

We are proud, too! These poems reflect the heart, strength, and unique stories of our amazing students!



Student poets and staff celebrate a beautiful poetry reading together. From left to right, Abisi Director, Betty McKiernan, Transitions students - Hakchrum, Sovanny, David, and Manhar, College & Career Advisor, Martha McQuaide, and Transitions teacher, Nancy Bernard.

COMMUNITY SERVICES & EVENTS



Lowell is the place to be for summer fun. With so many programs, activities, and events, it is impossible to list them all! To find out about summer activities and programs, use your phone to scan the QR codes (to the right). Have a great summer!

Lowell Recreation Department:
For Public Pool Swim Times, Summer Camps, Youth Sports, Summer Feeding Locations, Community Events & MORE...



City of Lowell:
For a list of youth programming and organizations around Lowell.



Pollard Memorial Library:
For Adult, Family, Teen, and Children's programming - events & summer reading programs, etc.



COMMUNITY SERVICES & EVENTS



SAVE THE DATE

ACRE FESTIVAL & RESOURCE FAIR

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 2025 | 11 AM-2 PM
NORTH COMMON PARK
413 FLETCHER ST, LOWELL, MA

Join us for:

- Music
- Food
- Raffles
- Games
- Resource Fair

Questions? Contact: Dolores "Loli" Sierra
351 353 3335
dolores.sierra@cbacre.org



MILL CITY GROWS

Mobile Farmers Markets
Lowell, Massachusetts

Every Friday
10am - 1pm

Lowell Community Justice Support Center
33 East Merrimack Street
(May 16 - July 25)

SNAP/EBT, HIP, WIC and Senior Farmers Market Coupons,
 WellSense, Apple Pay, Mill City Grows e-Gift Cards,
 S3 OTC/Healthy Grocery Card, cash, credit, debit

MillCityGrows.org • 978-455-2620

CAREER & TRAINING NEWS



TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

-WELDING

210 HOURS OF TRAINING

- OSHA 10 General Industry
- Employability Skills
- Blueprint Reading and Metal Fabrication
- Oxygen Fuel & Plasma Cutting
- Shielded Metal Arc Welding
- Gas Tungsten Arc Welding
- Gas Metal Arc Welding
- Flux Core Arc Welding
- Alloys and Filler Rods
- JIGS

Course Schedule:
 June 16, 2025 - July 31, 2025
 Mondays - Thursdays, 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM
 A few online dates

Location:
 Greater Lowell Technical High School
 Tyngsboro, MA

Eligibility:

- High School or GED/HISET
- Authorized to work in the U.S.
- Unemployed or underemployed
- MA Resident

Call Caitlyn at:
978-805-4731

masshiredlowellcc.com/welding



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION **GREATER LOWELL**

FREE TRAINING

CULINARY ARTS

June 16, 2025 to July 31

BON APPÉTIT

The Training:

- Cooking Methods
- OSHA Certification
- ServSafe Certification
- Allergy Awareness
- Knife Skills
- And much more...

Mondays - Thursdays, 7:00 am to 2:00 pm
Some Online Sessions
Greater Lowell Tech High School
Tyngsboro, MA

Eligibility:

- Unemployed or Underemployed
- High School or GED/HISET
- Authorized to work in U.S.

More Information

Call Caitlyn at 978-805-4731 or go to:
masshiredlowellcc.com/culinary

MASSHIRE LOWELL CAREER CENTER

MassHire Programs & Services are funded in full by US Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration grants.

CAREER & TRAINING NEWS

Abisi Students Investigate the Path to Personal Care Attendant Jobs at MassHire

Abisi Career Advisor Margie Miller and 11 Abisi students walked to MassHire at 107 Merrimack Street to attend an information workshop for anyone interested in becoming a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). The workshop explained what a PCA is and how to become a PCA.

A PCA assists a client in the daily activities of living at home. If you are reliable, punctual, and compassionate there is a job for you as a Personal Care Attendant.

The students learned a great deal about requirements and what the salary and schedule would be. Each student registered on the MASSPCA Directory which enabled them to start the process to become a PCA. The only requirement is a four-hour video to be able to work as a PCA.

Being a PCA is an important job. For ESOL students there are translators in all languages and a support number to answer questions. If you are interested to become a PCA, see Margie Miller. Her office at Abisi is on the second floor, in the back of Room 5, and she is available Mondays and Wednesdays, 9 to 1. You can also get started by going to MassPCA.org and completing a profile.



Interested students attended an information workshop about Personal Care Assistants at MassHire.



Registering in the MASSPCA Directory is the first step to becoming a PCA.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

ELECTRICITY PROGRAM



The 210-hour program taught by Master Electricians is "project-based," and incorporates OSHA-10 Construction Safety training, tool/equipment safety training, and electrical code/theory toward your Journeyman license.

- 10-hour OSHA
- Electrical, Ladder, and Hand Tool Safety
- Installing doorbell buzzers and chimes
- A/C Electrical Circuits
- Wiring Diagrams
- PPE Fundamentals of Hand Tools
- Wiring Methods for Residential and Commercial Installations

Schedule:

- June 16 - July 31, 2025
- Mondays - Thursdays
- 7:00 AM - 2:00 PM
- Some online sessions

Location:

Greater Lowell Technical High School, Tyngsboro, MA

Eligibility:

- High School Diploma, GED, or HiSet
- MA Resident
- Unemployed or Underemployed

More info:

Call Caitlyn at
978-805-4731

or visit

masshirelowellcc.com/electrical



MassHire Programs & Services are funded in full by US Department of Labor (USDOL) Employment and Training Administration grants. Additional details furnished upon request.

THE GREATER LOWELL

SPRING JOB FAIR



THE SEASON OF OPPORTUNITIES

JUNE 3, 2025

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

**CHELMSFORD FORUM
2 BRICK KILN ROAD,
NORTH BILLERICA, MA**

REGISTER

WWW.MASSHIRELOWELLCC.COM/SPRINGJOBFAIR

An Educational Spin on a New England Tradition

Earlier this month, Abisi Adult Education students took a special field trip to Leda Lanes in Nashua, New Hampshire to experience **candlepin bowling** — a sport invented in New England and unique to this region. While it may have looked like just a fun day out, our students and teachers brought learning right into the lanes!

Many students had never been bowling before, let alone tried candlepin — a version of bowling that uses smaller balls and thinner pins. Teachers used this opportunity to introduce new vocabulary, explain the history of the sport, and explore comparisons between different kinds of bowling.

Our **HSE students** put their math skills to work, calculating **mean**, **median**, and **mode** from game scores. They also used graphic organizers to **compare and contrast** standard bowling with candlepin bowling. Other classes focused on reading, listening, and speaking skills by learning the **rules**, **strategies**, and **terminology** of the game — all while having a blast.

The trip wasn't just about academics, though. It was a chance for students from different classes to connect, have fun, and celebrate the approaching end of the school year together. After bowling, everyone headed to the **park near the Tsongas Center** to enjoy lunch together outdoors. Special thanks to **Martha R's class**, who prepared delicious sandwiches for everyone to share!

We are so grateful to **Leda Lanes**, **Lowell Public Schools**, and all the staff who helped make this field trip a memorable success. It was a perfect example of how learning happens everywhere — even at the bowling alley! 🍷

For more field trip pictures, see *Oh Snap!* (page 8)



HSE students strike up some fun with their teacher, Donna (3rd from right).



Students from Liz's class enjoying the field trip.



All eyes on strike



Bringing History to Life: Students Visit Lowell National Historical Park

Students in Carrie and Daisy's classes have been learning about the history of Lowell in social studies. A key part of their lessons is the **Lowell National Historical Park**, which offers many opportunities to explore the people and places that have shaped the city—both in the past and today.

To bring their lessons to life, students went on two field trips this spring. On April 15, they visited the **Mogan Cultural Center**, where they explored two exhibits. At the **1840s Boarding House Exhibit**, students stepped inside a recreated mill boarding house and learned about the “mill girls”—young women who worked in the factories—and also about their lives outside the mills. In the **One City, Many Cultures** exhibit, students discovered the stories of immigrants and refugees who have called Lowell home, past and present.

On May 6, students visited the **Boott Cotton Mills Museum**, where they saw and heard historic power looms still weaving cloth. They explored exhibits tracing Lowell's history from its beginnings as East Chelmsford in the 1700s to its role in the American Industrial Revolution. In the museum theater, students watched a film about the city's history and modern life in Lowell today.

We are grateful to **Lowell National Historical Park** and its staff for making these field trips both meaningful and memorable.

Digital literacy grads with Aiden (center) & their new Chromebooks!



Abisi Partners with UMass Lowell to Bring Technology Classes & Computer Help to Students

Thanks to our ongoing partnership with UMass Lowell, Abisi students received valuable tech support and digital literacy instruction this spring.

For eight weeks, UMass Lowell student volunteer Aiden O'Keefe visited once a week to offer one-on-one help with mobile phones, laptops, apps, and more. Many students took advantage of Aidan's knowledge and friendly support.

In addition, Aiden led a special 8-week digital literacy class for 12 students. At the end of the course, each student earned a free Google Chromebook to continue practicing their skills.

We are deeply grateful to UMass Lowell – and extend a big thank you to Aiden – for helping our students grow their confidence and tech abilities!

Citizenship Class Success!



Students successfully completed the free Spring citizenship classes offered by Abisi Adult Education Center (AAEC) on May 20th. Along with 22 students in the fall, **42 students** participated in the program during the 2024–2025 school year.

The 10-week courses were offered both **in person** (Thursdays, 9:30–11:30 AM) and **remotely** (Wednesdays, 6:00–7:30 PM). Students prepared for the U.S. citizenship interview and test by studying **Form N-400**, practicing **English skills**, and learning the **100 civics questions**.

Participants included current and former AAEC students and local community members. We're proud of their hard work and dedication!

New classes will begin this fall. For more information, email Gail (gforman@lowell.k12.ma.us) or call/text 978-918-3517.



Ana, proud to share the beauty of El Salvador



Sothearea shows off her native country, Cambodia



Sokhoeun - sharing traditions, language, & love fom Cambodia

Let Me Tell You About My Country...

Students in Meg's class have been researching, preparing, & presenting about their home countries—sharing history, culture, & personal stories to help classmates learn more about each other & the world. Amazing work, everyone!



Josefina (L), from Colombia, assists Lucio (R) with his presentation about Peru.



Maria displays the flag of Ecuador.

Let Me Tell You About My Country... continues on page 9



Andre, representing Brazil with pride!

In honor of Haitian Flag Day (May 18), students from Carrie & Daisy's classes shared homemade Haitian dishes & gave a short, engaging presentation about the flag's history & meaning. It was a fantastic, delicious, & informative celebration of Haitian culture!







We've Got Class(es) Everywhere!



Students (Meg & Donna Th/Fri) sitting in City Councillors Seats



Well done! Students from Martha's class stand with Jeanne D'arc Credit Union representatives at the conclusion of their 4-week Financial workshop.



Meg & Donna's Th/Fri Classes visited City Hall & Vice Mayor, Paul Yem.



Beautiful cake made by student Dre Alves for Teachers' Day



Khmer New Year Celebration: Students (Martha's class) gather to celebrate the Khmer New Year with traditional foods they prepared.



Meg's Class Throws a Party to Honor Meg & Jen on Teachers' Day



Library Pass Classmates joined their teacher, Martha, for a recent visit to the Pollard Memorial Library to check out their vast array of services.

Let Me Tell You About My Country...continued



Exploring the food culture of Ecuador



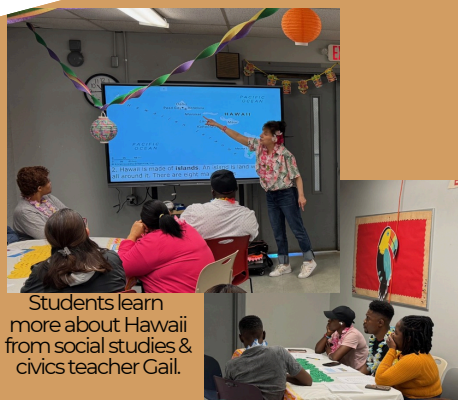
Elvis is proud to represent Cameroon!



From Haiti with Love!



Thi Minh leads classmates on a virtual tour of her home country, Vietnam.



Students learn more about Hawaii from social studies & civics teacher Gail.



Daisy (R) and her son Nico prepare food for the event. Nico (L) also played the ukulele - an important instrument in Hawaiian culture.



In honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month in May, Carrie and Daisy's classes celebrated with a luau and a fun lesson with teacher Gail about Hawaii, America's 50th state.

Meet the Abisi Team: The People Who Make a Difference

AAEC Program Manager: Adriana Giraldo

Behind every student's success is a team of dedicated teachers and staff. In this feature, we highlight those who make a difference at AAEC. This month, meet Adriana Giraldo, Abisi's Program Manager!

Can you share how your journey with the Abisi Adult Education Center first began? What brought you here as a student, and what were those early days like?

I came to AAEC looking to improve my English, especially because the classes were free. I had already been in the country for about a year, staying at home with my daughters. Every spare moment, I read, wrote, and watched TV in English, but I had few opportunities to practice speaking. When my daughter started preschool, I took the opportunity to register for classes.

From the moment I started, I knew I was in the right place. There was such a strong sense of community. I was learning not only about American culture, but also about cultures from around the world.

I was connected with local services and, most importantly, I had a structure to work on personal goals—employment, education, civic participation, parenting, housing, finances, and self-improvement. That goal sheet became my compass, helping me stay focused and build my new life here.

After moving from Colombia to the U.S., what were your biggest personal and professional challenges?



Personally, the hardest part was being without the family support and community I had back home. It felt overwhelming at times.

Professionally, it was a big shift to go from working full-time in the tech industry to being a stay-at-home mom. I didn't have the English skills to return to my field here and I couldn't afford day-care. I also didn't have a network to rely on.

There were so many small frustrations – things that are second nature in your home country and language become difficult hurdles in a new one.

After more than 20 years of helping students, is there a moment or story that has been especially meaningful or impactful for you?

Just thinking about it brings tears to my eyes. It's hard to pick one moment because I've learned that even the smallest gestures—greeting someone warmly, being available, listening with care—can mean the world to someone in that moment. Every story matters.

What stands out to me most is the multigenerational impact of the support we offer. Helping someone



— “
I bring a different perspective and a strong passion for advocating for both students and teachers.

~Adriana Giraldo

confirm a doctor's appointment, showing them how to ride the bus, supporting a parent through a medical issue with their child, helping someone leave an abusive relationship, connecting families with resources for their teens – these are the kinds of moments that stay with me.

This year, you stepped into the role of Program Manager. What motivated you to take on this new responsibility, and what are your goals for the program moving forward?

Last year, I earned my Master's in Education Administration and Supervision, and throughout my studies, I focused on different aspects of adult education.

When the opportunity arose, I saw it as a way to apply that knowledge and bring my personal experience—as a former student and Student Services Coordinator—into leadership.

I bring a different perspective and a strong passion for advocating for both students and teachers. My goals are to continue offering high-quality education with wraparound support services, to stay innovative, and to adapt to the ever-changing needs of our students and community.

continued on next page

Meet the Abisi Team, continued

What are some of the biggest changes you've witnessed at Abisi over the years, both in the school and in the students who come through its doors?

At the school level, we've introduced online classes, citizenship preparation, integrated civics and math into ESOL classes, implemented digital literacy programs, and offered online registration and HSE and GED testing on-site. One of the most appreciated changes? New bathrooms at our main morning site!

As for our students, each wave of immigration brings different challenges. Accessing basic services has become more difficult due to changing policies, budget constraints, and shifting political climates. These broader issues directly affect the



Adriana earned an M.Ed in Education Administration & Supervision in 2024.

people we serve.

How do you see the future of adult education evolving, and what role do you hope Abisi will play in that future?

The needs of adult learners are always changing, so adult education has to keep evolving too.

What I do know is that Abisi will continue to adapt and respond. We've done it for years, and we're only becoming more flexible, more open, and more committed to our mission.

What advice would you give to students who may feel overwhelmed by language barriers or other challenges as they try to build a new life?

Be patient and persistent. Have compassion for yourself and for others. Forgive. Don't hold on to negative experiences. And remember--you're not alone. 🍵

In Their Own Words: Reflections from our Graduates

Each year, we reach out to former students to hear about their experience with our program. Here are some of the inspiring things they had to say about their time at Abisi Adult Education Center.

"The Abisi education program honestly saved my life.

I dropped out of school when I was 16 yrs old because my life was so dysfunctional at the time & I'd always struggled in school due to a learning disability. I never thought I was capable of obtaining my GED until I enrolled here & was surrounded by so many compassionate, patient, dedicated people who encouraged me to push myself & genuinely wanted me to succeed. They never allowed me to be defined by my past.

I never felt judged at Abisi. It felt like the chance at a new beginning and I felt motivated & determined every day I showed up for class. Not only do I have more hope for my future now, but the faith that's been restored within me now that I know what I'm capable of and all of the opportunities that lie ahead is a priceless gift that I will feel forever indebted to everyone at the Abisi Adult Education Center for.

Thank you from the floor of my heart for everything. I will never forget that surreal feeling I experienced walking across that stage to accept my scholarship & diploma. It healed my inner child & opened up a world of endless possibilities for me."

~ Alyssa Carroll,
2024 HSE Graduate & Graduation Speaker
Elizabeth Tsapatsaris Scholarship recipient

"I will say that this program is really helpful for those who haven't finished school. This program gives people a second chance in success and achievement. It really could motivate those to start a new beginning."

~Adrianna Ean
former student &
recent AAEC graduate

Like us on Facebook!



Visit our Website!

JUNE

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
					 Mobile Farmers Markets Lowell, Massachusetts Every Friday 10am - 1pm Lowell Community Justice Support Center 33 East Merrimack Street (May 16 - July 25)		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
							
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
					 Mobile Farmers Markets Lowell, Massachusetts		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
					 Mobile Farmers Markets Lowell, Massachusetts Every Friday 10am - 1pm Lowell Community Justice Support Center 33 East Merrimack Street (May 16 - July 25)		
29	30	 Looking for summer activities? Scan these QR codes with your phone! to find events in Lowell!					

Pollard Memorial Library Events Calendar

City of Lowell Events Calendar

Lowell Recreation Department