



COMMONWEALTH CORPORATION

MAY 2003

Diploma Plus/ARC Outstanding Students Recognized

Eighteen students from Boston, Cambridge, Cape Cod, Brockton, Holyoke, and Lawrence, Massachusetts, and Baltimore, Maryland, were recognized this month for their achievements in Commonwealth Corporation's Another Route to College (ARC) and Diploma Plus alternative education programs. Students who had been named Most Outstanding and Most Improved were honored at the Fourth Annual Diploma Plus/Another Route

to College Recognition Ceremony held at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, hosted by CommCorp's **Center for Youth Development and Education.**

Among those recognized were two Holyoke students, **Vanessa King** and **Ruben Santana.**

"Vanessa and Ruben have accomplished an extraordinary turnaround from their academic standing a year

(continued on page 2)

CommCorp Research Products Now on the Web

Several of CommCorp's many research projects, administered by its **Center for Research and Evaluation**, have recently been made available on our web site. The first of these, Workforce Investment Profiles, are a series of newsletters with labor market, population, and workforce information collected for each of the 16 Workforce Investment Areas of the Commonwealth, in addition to one statewide edition. These profiles were developed by the Interagency Workgroup for Regional Profiles facilitated by CommCorp, under the auspices of the State Workforce Investment Board.

Also now available on the web, are a series of Evaluation Summaries which give brief overviews of several CommCorp programs, and evaluations of each, providing some insight into what has worked and what hasn't in past and present workforce initiatives.

Look for updates on upcoming Center for Research and Evaluation reports on this newsletter or visit www.commcorp.org/wss/re.

Diploma Plus/ARC

(continued from page 1)

ago,” said Jane C. Edmonds, Director of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development and Chair of CommCorp’s Board of Directors. “It is my great pleasure to acknowledge the effort and determination they demonstrated to pass the MCAS exam and earn their high school diplomas.”

Diploma Plus is a new route to a high school diploma for young people who have left school or are not succeeding in traditional high schools. It challenges students to meet high performance standards while providing support and guidance along the way. The program includes a transitional senior-year experience that involves students in community service, work internships, and for-credit courses on a college campus. Since 1996, 507 students have graduated from Diploma Plus, 70% of whom enrolled in post-secondary education or training in the term after graduation. **Another Route to College (ARC)** is an alternative education program, based on the Diploma Plus model, with an added emphasis on passing state-mandated tests, like the MCAS.

Vanessa King and Ruben Santana are completing their high school senior year at the ARC Program at Holyoke Community College (HCC). Before enrolling in ARC, Vanessa and Ruben had attended Holyoke High School and were struggling with classes and the MCAS exam. While Vanessa found the decision to leave her friends and school in her senior year difficult, the environment and her subsequent success at HCC were worth it. Says Vanessa, “My patience has improved and I don’t give up like I used to in many areas, especially in math.”

Prior to her participation in ARC, Vanessa had unsuccessfully taken the College Placement Test for college course eligibility. This winter she retook and passed the test, and will be taking English 101 at Holyoke Community College this spring. Vanessa’s plans for the future include earning a Culinary Arts degree and opening a wedding cake shop; in preparation, she is participating in an internship in HCC’s Culinary Arts department. “The internship, and this program, made me even more determined to go out there and accomplish my goal,” said Vanessa.

Ruben was failing his junior year in English and math, and had failed the math portion of the MCAS exam twice when he heard about ARC. He applied, attended necessary summer school courses, and then flourished in the program. “[In high school I] acted like a kid, but here (at HCC) I have to act more adult and be more responsible,” he says, “I haven’t missed school anywhere near as much as I used to.” Ruben lists small classes, an autobiography project and presentation, and career interest and strength assessment as helpful to his academic turn-around.

Ruben has since passed the MCAS exam and, after asking for a hands-on internship assignment, was placed at Holyoke Hospital’s emergency room as a greeter, and at times, an interpreter. “I never pictured myself in an emergency room, but that I’m there—I’m amazed,” said Ruben. He has now applied to HCC’s Licensed Nurse Practitioner program.

The other students recognized at the ceremony were:

- **Wyvette Givens** and **Ruth LaRae Sewell** from Baltimore City Career Academy, Baltimore
- **Yan Hua Chen** and **Omar Williams** from Boston Adult Technical Academy, Boston
- **Matt Baker** and **Jaclyn Lindberg** from Cape Cod Community College, West Barnstable
- **Mary-Helena Fowler** and **Andrea Johnson** from Champion Charter High School, Brockton
- **Shawna Martin** and **Eryn Burke** from City Roots South Boston
- **Christina Delgado** and **Carmelo Medina** from El Centro del Cardenal, Boston
- **Alejandra Rosa** and **Nick Mackay** from YouthBuild/Just A Start, Cambridge and
- **Iris Urias** and **Juan Rosario** from the ARC Program at Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill.

CommCorp congratulates all the recognized students for their hard work and excellent progress.

Commonwealth Corporation is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids are available upon request to persons with disabilities. (617) 727-8158; TDD/TTY (800) 439-2370; 529 Main Street, Boston, MA 02129

Mitt Romney, Governor; Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor; Jane C. Edmonds, Director, Mass. DLWD; Jonathan Raymond, President, CommCorp