PRESS RELEASE

COABE Outstanding Administrator of the Year Award Runner Up: Karisa Tashjian
Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative, Providence Public Library
Providence, Rhode Island

The Commission on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is 13,000 members strong and growing, and provides a variety of services including providing competitive national-level awards, incentive grants, and scholarships opportunities annually through special funding provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

Our mission is to inspire educators so adults succeed and communities thrive. COABE exists to provide leadership, communication, professional development and advocacy for adult education and literacy practitioners in order to advance quality services for all adult learners. Thirteen thousand members strong, One way that we engage in these activities is by spotlighting excellence in the field. Karisa Tashjian was nominated for COABE’s Outstanding Administrator of the Year Award and was selected as Runner Up.

Karisa Tashjian is the director of the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI), a 16-year-old library-based adult education program offering services in nine libraries and community centers, and the local OneStop Career Center. Karisa is a rising star on both the state and national levels, especially in the area of technology initiatives that build a cohesive, integrated solution to address students’ digital literacy needs. RIFLI’s programming brings together English language instruction with digital skill development in response to the practical and immediate needs expressed by immigrant learners. Karisa’s work in "blurring the lines between language learning and using technology," has received national attention from LINCS, Digital Promise, and the Institute for Museum and Library Science (IMLS) for her creativity in extending programming outside the classroom walls to make learning as accessible as possible. This work has been written up in the National Skills Coalition blog, the Digital Promise blog, and the IMLS blog, and described in a LINCS webinar on Integrating Problem-Solving, Digital Literacy, and Access into Instruction as well as an NELRC webinar on Strategies to Move the Dial on Digital Literacy. Karisa is also accomplished at building collaboration across agencies, including agencies that may historically have been in competition for funding. She coordinates one of five networks chosen nationally to be part of OCTAE’s Networks for Integrating New Americans (NINA) initiative. Under her leadership, the RI network is developing joint strategies to educate employers about the immigrant workforce, partnering with job trainers to offer integrated training and English, and making employers aware of the varied education and work readiness services that adult educators provide. On the state level, Karisa represents adult educators on the state’s Workforce Alliance, the Career Pathways and Development team, and the Technology Advisory Committee to the Department of Education, which she has chaired or been a member for at least eight years.

To learn more about COABE’s prestigious award program, go to www.coabe.org or contact info@coabe.org