Reasons For Supporting Adult Program...

Education, Or Lack Of

The economic welfare and social standing of an individual, a family, a community, a parish, a state, or nation is in direct proportion to the educational levels of its population. This measure is more pronounced today than it was 30 years ago.

Education, or the lack of it, is not just a school's problem and responsibility, alone. It is a community problem, a parish problem.

If the newly-launched expanded adult education program in Vermilion parish is to continue reaching more adults, its success will be determined by the degree of support it gets from the community as a whole, beginning with city officials, leaders of civic, business and religious organizations, Parent-Teacher Association groups, and the people themselves.

It is an established fact that personal contact is needed to make people who did not complete high school aware of the advantages of this adult education program. The advantages that accrue from increased education are not realized by the individual alone, but by the entire community.

Everyone benefits.

This past year, 13,436 adults enrolled in the program over the state of Louisiana in 59 parishes. This means that 537 classrooms were added to the public school system without laying a single brick or buying a single desk or chair. The already established school facilities are used at night. That makes sense. Since increased education to adults makes dollars... the program of adult education makes 'dollars and sense.'

In addition to the 1,450 who completed their high school education in this program last year, nearly 22,000 others upgraded themselves an average of almost two grades per person - 19 to be exact, at an astonishing low investment of $13.71 per grade elevated.

They are enabled to progress as fast as they can learn.

The preceding paragraphs have indicated that adults who participated in this program have upgraded themselves educationally. Now, how does the community benefit from this increased education?

According to the 1960 U.S. Census, a person with less than a high school education, on an average, has an increased earning capacity of $1.02 per day for each academic grade elevated.

A recent survey in Louisiana shows that, by increasing the education of adults through high school, an increased income of $708.00 per year per person, on the average, would result.

What would this mean for Vermilion parish? There are over 16,000 adults in this parish who do not have a high school education. Half of these adults are less than 45 years old. Over 8,000 have an average age of 33 years of productive service ahead of them before reaching retirement age. If these 8,000 adults com-

It, Is A Community Problem

pleted their high school education and realized the average increased income of $708.00 per year per person, it would require only simple mathematics to determine that the economy of the parish would be boosted by several million dollars per year.

Could this happen in Vermilion parish? Not only could it happen, it is happening. At the Abbeville high school organizational meeting on December 17, a male enrollee, in his mid-thirties, stated on his enrollment form that if he succeeded in getting the high school diploma, his employer would pay him an additional $140 per month. That figures out $1680 more per year, more than double the average increase as reported by the survey.

If this man works for thirty more years, and never gets another raise, he will earn an extra $59,400 because he came back to school and earned his high school diploma. This is just one example. Hundreds of others could be cited. Will the community benefit from the adult program?

Each business will bet its share of the additional money these adults have to spend. This may be the beginning of their use of the banking facilities; the building and loan business is increased because the survey shows that 19.2% purchased homes since they graduated. Other economic and social improvements revealed by the survey that: 18.6% obtained employment, 22.1% earned promotions in employment, 15.8% enrolled in college, 13.6% enrolled in vocational schools, 21.8% exercised citizenship responsibilities, 17.2% added telephones, 4.1% added electricity, 4.7% added natural gas or butane gas, 6.0% added running water, 16.4% added air conditioning, 7.3% added sanitary bathroom facilities, 13.6% purchased newspapers, 7.8% purchased radios, 14.5% purchased TV sets, 27.8% purchased magazines.

The increased income of adults begins at once; therefore, the increased spending also occurs immediately. There are other intangible benefits of education to numerous to list here, but education helps everyone to be more of an individual, to think and reason for himself, make decisions and be less dependent. This alone, regardless of resulting material benefits, is reason enough for anyone to enroll in an adult class.

The readers of this article are asked to lend support to this program and accept some responsibility for its growth.

Encourage those adults that you know who are 19 years or older and have not completed high school to enroll in the program. Pass this information along to him (or her):

The program is free; you can enroll at any time; classes meet only twice a week; you progress as fast as you are capable; you are taught individually. To find out more about the program, ask the adult to call the principal of the local high school... if he appears reluctant, offer to call the principal for him. Remember, an adult can enroll at any time. New classes will be organized throughout the parish until the end of the school year.