

## Alternative high schoolers earn diplomas

Thursday, Aug. 10, 2006

by Brooke N. Garner

Staff Writer

Several musical performances and tearful speeches made the commencement exercises for the Community Based Classroom an emotional event. The ceremony took place at the Newton White Mansion in Mitchellville on Aug. 3.

Community Based Classroom Principal Tammy J. Williams was unable to attend due to a family emergency.

Eighty students received their diploma from their respective high schools. The Community Based Classroom (CBC) is designed to assist students who left public high schools but wish to earn their diploma. Upon completion of the program, students receive a diploma from the high school they originally attended.

“I can’t even put into words how excited I am. It has taken a lot to get to this point,” said Gwen Bradford whose son, Brett, was one of the graduates.

“I couldn’t be more proud of him. I have been waiting a long time for him to walk across that stage and get his diploma.”

Before the ceremony, students anxiously waited in a side room twirling their caps in their hands and peering behind curtains at the growing audience.



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Bryan Haynes/The Gazette

(Above) Brittany Howard, 17, of Mitchellville looks over to a family member during Thursday's Community Based Classroom graduation ceremonies at Newton White Mansion in Mitchellville. (Right) Shakeya Robinson of Landover smiles as she gets a hug from a faculty member. Eighty students received their diploma from their respective high schools. The Community Based Classroom (CBC) is designed to assist students who left public high schools but wish to earn their diploma.

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“It hasn’t hit me yet but this is an accomplishment,” said Miles Hampton III. “I am glad I had the opportunity to try again. A lot of people don’t get a second chance so I had to utilize mine.”

Songs with lyrics such as “your trials came to make you strong” and “you must endure, you must hold on” brought tears to many of the graduates and their families eyes.

“At CBC I learned educational discipline and as a result I am receiving my diploma today,” said a tearful Mallory Strawbridge.

Tiffany Bronson, also overcome with tears, thanked her husband, two daughters and CBC for their support.

“When I was in [regular] school, the days were too long and the classes were too hot or too cold,” Bronson said. “At CBC, the classes were small which meant more one-on-one time for me. The staff were very understanding of my situation.”

Commencement speaker and Prince George’s County Board of Education member Judy Mickens-Murray stressed the importance of believing in yourself.

“You have already shown you can fly because you did not give up. You stayed the course,” Mickens-Murray said. “Don’t let anybody tell you that you can’t be successful. That is your choice. Chart a course for yourself and start that today.”

At the ceremony, graduates Miyoshi King and Tetus Washington were presented with \$250 scholarships from the school.

The Community Based Classroom is located at 9470 Annapolis Road Room 217 in Lanham. For more information call 301-918-8726.



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