

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

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Okaloosa County Libraries Celebrate Adult Graduates Earning High School Diplomas

Niceville, Florida – The Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative invites the public to join in celebrating the graduation of 16 local adult learners who have earned their high school diplomas through the Career Online High School (COHS) program.

The ceremony will take place on Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the Niceville Community Center, 204-C Partin Drive N, Niceville, FL 32578.

This year's graduating class includes 15 residents from Okaloosa County and 1 from Walton County. These individuals completed a rigorous, self-paced online curriculum designed for adult learners, earning not only their high school diploma but also a career certificate in a field such as home health care, office management, childcare, and more.

"We are proud to support these individuals who have made the deliberate choice to better their lives and the lives of their families by advancing their education and careers," said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Paul Mixon. "This program has changed the lives of so many people over the years and we applaud the efforts of our Library Cooperative Coordinator Vicky Stever and staff who help to facilitate their progress in this program."

Stever will be retiring from her role with the Cooperative after 13 years of service.

"Vicky has done a great job spearheading this program and we wish her well in her retirement," said Chairman Mixon.

Niceville City Manager David Deitsch will deliver a commencement address, and Wendy Kauffman, Chief Operating Officer of Smart Horizons Career Online Education, will present the diplomas. Other speakers include past and current graduates of the program.

The Career Online High School (COHS) program offers a second chance to adult learners aged 19 and older who were unable to complete traditional high school. Students are awarded tuition scholarships through their local libraries. Applicants must meet eligibility requirements, complete a prerequisite course, and maintain consistent progress throughout the program, which may take up to 18 months.

"Public libraries open doors for people to pursue their dreams through educational programs such as the COHS scholarship program," said Vicky Stever, Coordinator of the Okaloosa County Public Library Cooperative. "A high school diploma is foundational. It's the first step toward college, workplace promotion or a new career path."

"This diploma represents perseverance, sacrifice, and hope," Stever continued. "Adult students balance family responsibilities, jobs, and life's many demands to reach their goal. They are role models for their children and inspire others to follow the dream."

The public is invited to attend this inspiring celebration and support the graduates who have turned ambition into achievement.

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