

REGIONAL NEWS

Notre Dame Education Center, Lawrence - 20 Years of a Dream

On April 3rd, over 350 current and past students, staff, volunteers, Board Members, East – West team members, Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and Associates, local and state political leaders and representatives of collaborating agencies, gathered in Saint Mary's Church Hall in Lawrence for a community celebration, homemade Dominican food, a wonderful video and some surprisingly short speeches!

April 3rd was a moment to celebrate a dream and to hold up the more than 7,000 adults who have come to NDEC to access English language services, train for careers as Nursing Assistants/ Home Health Aides, prepare for the Massachusetts high school equivalency test, and attend citizenship classes. Their lives are part of the unfolding of a dream in response to the educational, economic and social challenges which impact low-income adults and immigrant families in Greater Lawrence.

Three SNDdeN Executive Directors were recognized for their distinctive gifts. Sister Mary Murphy turned an educational vision into a reality in 1996 when NDEC was founded. Sister Gwynette Proctor worked with a local businessman in moving NDEC into one of the old mill buildings along the Merrimack River in 2006, so that both NDEC and Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School could expand. Sister Eileen Burns, the current Executive Director, increased student services and opportunities through networking with city and state service providers.

On Notre Dame Education Center's logo are the outline of an old mill building, a bridge and these words - *NDEC, A Bridge of Hope*. Each morning, afternoon and evening, the adults who come to NDEC prove that the dream lives on!



Sister Gwynette Proctor



Sister Eileen Burns



Maureen O'Brien, SNDdeN

Sister Mary Murphy