



## 30 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE (CONTINUED)

FDEA and participate in our conference has been and is an important priority for the board. As the outgoing FDEA president for 2008, my hope would be that our membership

will continue to grow, and we will continue to be strong advocates for strengthening our developmental education state-wide. I know that our first 30 years of making a

difference is just the beginning, and we will continue to make a difference for the next 30 years.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you at the conference,

*Nick Bekas*

# FOCUS ON STUDENT SUCCESS: 2008 FDEA Scholarship Award Winners

## PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE AWARD SCHOLARSHIP



The winner of this year's President's Circle Award is Stephanie Chandler. Stephanie is a student at Palm Beach Community College. She hopes one day to help disadvantaged people start their own businesses. Stephanie was chosen because of her academic performance as well as sterling recommendations. Here is her essay.

~Tammy Cherry

### Into Another World

I always enjoyed school, even though I was told I was too dumb to graduate. I was curious and wanted to learn, but school can be an extremely intimidating thing when you think you are "dumb." I just needed a simple class in computers, and then the light turned on.

The light was in the form of Beverley Mas, a guidance counselor at Palm Beach Community College. I was a bit apprehensive of guidance counselors; it was a guidance counselor who told me I was too dumb to graduate from high school. I went in prepared to explain: I did not need credit for the class; I did not need a degree; I did not even need to pass; all I needed was to learn a bit about the computer. They were electric; I had figured out that much, and I just needed a bit more information. That was all. Beverley was as soft as the finest goose down, gently inviting and

encouraging me to at least try. She asked me to go up and talk to the people in the math lab. She was certain they could get me through any class. How could I say no to someone as kind, gentle and sweet as Beverley?

I went to the math lab feeling out of place. If Beverley was the light, the lab was the power source. They were all excited about a bunch of old numbers. "Yes you can! You can do it! We're here to help you!" was all I heard. They actually thought I could understand this stuff. I was planning to take the classes I wanted and then drop out.

Have you ever seen the picture of a person holding on to an electrical wire with the power going through it? They cannot let go! Education was like that for me, there was a power here, an undeniable force that drew me in. I did not want to let go, even though it meant taking a

math class. My attitude was, "The worst it can do is kill me." I had been earning good grades so far, so I signed up for Math Prep 2 with Professor Brown. He was gentle and answered my questions no matter how silly. I really wanted to make this work. I was in the math lab so much that I started joking about claiming a homestead exemption. I passed with a "C", my favorite phrase was still "Math is irrational," but I passed with a "C".

With the help of Beverley Mas and all the people in the lab, I went on and even dared to take an Honors Algebra class. The honors project has now become a book, Surviving College Algebra. Now it is my turn to be the light. I have talked my disabled daughter into going to PBCC, and she is doing very well. We may not be rich, but life does not get any better than when you are learning.

~Stephanie Chandler