

Buffey McIntyre

Crawford County READ/Family Literacy



Buffey McIntyre struggled in school. Her rocky journey started in the early grades when she “just didn’t get it.” She finally dropped out of 8th grade in 1987 at the age of 16. She wanted a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma, but after entering a local adult education program three times, she was still unable to pass the GED® tests. Then, in 1994, she began working with a tutor at Crawford County READ. In and out of the program for years, she seemed more dedicated on each try, but the time just wasn’t right.

In 2003, Buffy was referred to Crawford County READ’s Family Literacy program, along with her three young children. She was described as being very nervous, putting her hands over her face, and not looking anyone in the eye. This new start did not look promising. She was separated from her husband and dealing with many issues from her past. Struggling with drug addiction, she left the program yet again in 2004.

However, things began to change for Buffy. A church support group encouraged her to return to the Family Literacy program, which she did in 2006. The teacher’s initial reaction was that Buffy would be a challenge, but she later realized she couldn’t have been more wrong. Buffy was ready for a change. She had been off drugs for almost a year. She had gained stability at home and was beginning

to take charge of her life. She enthusiastically prepared to take the GED tests, coming to class morning and afternoon. Her curiosity stretched her teacher, and fellow students found her thirst for knowledge contagious. One year later, Buffy had passed the GED tests and enrolled at Clarion University pursuing a degree in Radiologic Sciences.

As amazing as these accomplishment are, Buffy’s academic success is only part of this success story. With the help of the Family Literacy program, she put together a stable, safe home environment for her children. She engaged them in a positive, uplifting, spiritual setting at church and focused on showing them love. She became an active participant in their learning and demonstrated the importance of education.

Buffey continues to be involved in the Family Literacy program and has created a weekly self-esteem workshop for other participants, put the office in order, and volunteers as a tutor. She also has become an advocate, inspiring community leaders and educators. She spoke at a local legislative luncheon and was the keynote speaker at a GED graduation ceremony. A community member almost cried with joy when she ran into Buffy and her family at a restaurant. Buffy was well dressed, her children were well behaved, and the family was talking and laughing around the table. The chaos was gone.