

Adult College Students Head Back to College, Thanks to "Graduate! Philadelphia"

Hundreds of men and women from the Greater Philadelphia area will go back to college this fall thanks to free support and advising services provided by "Graduate! Philadelphia."

"Graduate! Philadelphia" has helped more than 5,000 people go back to college to finish their two or four year degree by assisting with applications and helping to remove barriers that prevent adults from continuing their education. "Our mission is to help adults re-enroll in school so they can finish their diploma thereby enabling them to get a job that pays family sustaining wages," said Barbara Mattleman, Executive Director of "Graduate! Philadelphia." "We're proud that we've helped thousands of people return to school and over 700 adults complete their degree."

"Graduate! Philadelphia" is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year by highlighting the stories of "Comebackers"- adults who stopped out of school and have re-enrolled or completed their degree. One Comebacker is LaCountess Ingram, a 40+ year old mother of

two and cancer survivor who will be resuming classes at Philadelphia Community College later this month. She credits Graduate! Philadelphia's College Success 101 program with getting her back into the classroom.

"I decided to go back to school because I felt a need to do more, but I wasn't properly equipped or confident enough to do anything about it until I came across Graduate! Philadelphia," Ingram said. "Being over 40 and a recently remarried mother of two, and having dealt with cancer and holding down a job, I wasn't sure if I could do more. "Graduate! Philadelphia" helped me see that



LaCountess Ingram

I nothing to be afraid of. They guided me through the transition back to school and my first semester back I finished my English class with an "A" and I passed my math class." Maureen Rush, the Vice President of Public Safety and Superintendent of the Penn

Police Department at the University of Pennsylvania, is a Comebacker who took ten years to complete her degree while working as a police officer. She now holds a M.S. degree from the University of Pennsylvania in Organizational Dynamics and leads public safety initiatives for Penn.

"I am honored to be recognized as a Comebacker. Although it was difficult to work full-time in the Police Department while attending classes, I was determined to earn my degree," Rush said. "I deeply respect adults who return to school while raising a family and working a full time job." There are an estimated 70,000 adults in Philadelphia who start-

ed college and never completed their degree.

Graduate! Philadelphia's mission is to help more adults finish their degree, earn a good-paying job and live a happy life. Graduate! Philadelphia will honor Maureen Rush at its 10th anniversary celebration on October 5th at Union Trust in Center City. For information about the event or to purchase tickets contact Alexandra Brown at Alexandra.Brown@graduatephiladelphia.org or 215-933-2100.

To schedule interviews with LaCountess, Maureen, Graduate! Philadelphia and other local Comebackers, contact Anthony Hopkins at ahop117@gmail.com or call 484-433-7490.