

Creating new futures at Larch



Antonio Ibarra poses for a picture taken by Clark College instructor Lauren Zavrel to commemorate his passing his GED certification. He was one of 50 Larch Corrections Center inmates to pass his GED in the 2018-2019 academic year.

Every year, just a day or two before Clark College's commencement ceremony, Clark College President Bob Knight and other college leaders attend a smaller ceremony at Larch Corrections Center to celebrate graduates of the college's GED preparation program there. This year, they will have plenty to celebrate: Not only did the program see a record number of students pass the GED during the 2018-2019 academic year, but in May its tutoring program became the first prison-based tutoring program to be certified by the College Reading and Learning Association (CRLA).



Left to right, Jakkob McCallin, Howard Seaworth, and Timothy Tipton have all earned their GED certification through a program run by Clark College at Larch Corrections Center.

Fifty students passed their GED certification test this academic year—four more than the previous record of 46. For these students, passing their GED not only provides them with an important credential—the equivalent of a high school diploma—but it also gives them a sense of accomplishment and self-worth that can help them pursue better paths in their lives after their release from prison.

Larch inmates who become tutors through Clark College's program also gain marketable skills and work experience. Having the program be certified by the CRLA adds legitimacy to that experience.

According to findings published in the Journal of Experimental Criminology, inmates who participated in correctional

education programs are 28 percent less likely to commit new crimes, compared to inmates who didn't.

The program was featured on the front page of the June 9 issue of *The Columbian*.

Photos: Clark College/Kelly Love