

# COABE

COALITION ON ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

*To inspire educators so adults succeed and communities thrive*

## PRESS RELEASE

**COABE Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year Award Runner-Up: Jose Alberto Acebedo**  
**Chicago, Illinois**

The Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) is 15,000 members strong and growing, and provides a variety of services including annually providing competitive national-level awards, incentive grants, and scholarship opportunities through special funding provided by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.

Our mission is to inspire educators so adults succeed and communities thrive. COABE exists to provide leadership, communication, professional development, and advocacy for adult education and literacy practitioners in order to advance quality services for all adult learners. Fifteen thousand members strong, one way that we engage in these activities is by spotlighting excellence in the field. Jose Alberto Acebedo was nominated for COABE's Outstanding Adult Learner of the Year Award and was selected as a runner-up.

Jose Alberto Acebedo and his family first arrived in the United States from Honduras in December of 2014. They came with the hope of obtaining a second opinion from a doctor in Chicago as Jose's six-year-old son, Jose Andres, had a mass in his brain that the doctors in Honduras were incapable of removing. After two emergency surgeries and a month in the intensive care unit at Stroger Hospital, Jose Andres was diagnosed with a brain tumor and his care was transferred over to Lurie Children's Hospital. Jose Andres was placed in a multi-year clinical trial where he is receiving chemotherapy and close medical attention. Meanwhile, Jose realized that he needed to make a plan for how he was going to survive in this country and support his family of five. In June of 2015, Jose found PODER (an English literacy, civic engagement, and job training nonprofit) and enrolled immediately. He always had a desire to learn English, but with his son's condition, it became essential for him to be able to communicate with the doctors directly. Jose added, "Since it was unexpected that my family would end up making a home in the United States, I had not yet been able to secure employment. Learning English also helped me find a job while my son received medical treatment." Since enrolling in English Works at PODER, Jose has also dedicated his free time to volunteering for our organization, assisting in their social enterprise call center and helping with administrative and data collection projects. Since arriving in the United States, Jose's goals have revolved around becoming more proficient in English and securing a job that would sponsor him to apply for an H-1B visa. In Honduras, Jose was an electrical engineer with a master's degree in financial management, and he plans to start a career in the United States in a related area. Currently, he is employed as a receptionist at PODER and is transitioning into a more advanced position as a bookkeeper and data collection specialist. Jose has stated that his time at PODER is not just transitional, as he plans on dedicating his life to helping other English students reach their personal goals. Jose's story reminds us that the United States is a destination synonymous with opportunity, hope, and the possibility to overcome life's obstacles. Griselda Piedra, the operations manager and English instructor at PODER stated, "Jose is an exemplary student. He embodies what we hope for all of our English students in terms of perseverance, attitude, and results." Today, Jose finds himself speaking English on a regular basis and with a level of confidence that he had never expected. He no longer requires an interpreter when speaking with his son's doctor, which he has stated is one of the most rewarding experiences of his life.

To learn more about COABE's prestigious award program, go to [www.coabe.org](http://www.coabe.org) or contact [awards@coabe.org](mailto:awards@coabe.org)