



AAE graduates 77 students

By BROOKE EDWARDS Staff Writer
June 10, 2008

APPLE VALLEY — Themes of friendship marked the Academy of Academic Excellence's graduation at High Desert Church on Tuesday evening.

"Success is happiness and happiness is what life is about," said Valedictorian Rebekah Sklar.

Skylar earned the charter school's title of valedictorian, with Ashley Alvarez, Marleen Castillo and Carmel Pearson named as salutatorians.

The graduating class also included four foreign exchange students, with two students from Germany, one from Italy and one from Australia.

For Kerianne Pinkstaff, AAE's ceremony was her second graduation in the last week, after receiving her associates degree from Victor Valley College on Friday night. Though several AAE graduates took concurrent courses at VVC, Kerianne was the only one to earn a degree and diploma from both schools at the same time.

"It was cool to get a degree at the college, but this will be more emotional graduating with all of my friends and my teachers," Kerianne said after finishing rehearsal Tuesday afternoon.

Kerianne started attending VVC as a high school freshman to keep a friend who was taking a course there company.

"I started off taking one or two classes and I was enjoying it so much that I just kept going."

Kerianne took two classes each semester, rushing over to her night classes at the college when AAE let out for the day. She said the college students were kind to her, though she definitely stuck out as being the youngest in most of her classes.

Though she admits it was challenging to balance work for both programs, Kerianne still managed to maintain a 3.95 weighted GPA in high school. She is one out of 25 percent of AAE graduates to finish with honors.

Kerianne also took Advanced Placement classes and served as president of AAE's Science Club, as well as being involved in other leadership activities.

With her AA degree in liberal arts out of the way, Kerianne plans to study genetics at the University of California, Davis, in hopes of becoming a doctor of some sort.

Out of the 77 students who graduated from AAE Tuesday evening, 89 percent will go straight to college, with the majority aiming for bachelors degrees and beyond in the future.

One student plans to go to work straight out of high school, 4 percent will attend technical schools and another 6 percent will enlist in the military.