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**G.E.D. Program at Haven Shelter Giving People Second Chance at Education**

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VIDEO Link:

<http://www.kpvi.com/global/video/flash/popupplayer.asp?ClipID1=3242762&h1=G.E.D.%20Program%20at%20Haven%20Shelter%20Giving%20People%20Second%20Chance%20at%20Education&vt1=v&at1=News&d1=155033&LaunchPageAdTag=Homepage&activePane=info&rnd=48523390>

Even though the economy is forcing some companies to downsize, and some government programs to be cut there is a new program at a local shelter that is showing no signs of slowing down. In fact, it is expanding, and it couldn't come at a better time.

Connie Hatch is trying to put her life back together. She hopes that soon, she'll prove to her parents she's ready to regain custody of her children.

Connie Hatch: "I'm in the drug court program right now; a lot of my life I've always been in the criminal background, into drugs."

And so as part of that proven change, studying for a test may never have meant so much.

Hatch: "It will help me with my life."

New at the Haven shelter this year, an expanded program that is allowing people -- who didn't finish high school -- a second chance at education, by earning their GED.

Anne Johnson, Haven: "With the economy the way it is, if you don't have a GED you're sunk anyway."

Anne Johnson manages the Haven, and thanks to private funding of course materials, tutors and more classes, there are now 124 students, with 30 graduates -- nine now in college.

Earning the GED here is not intimidating to some like a college campus, and the schedules are flexible for many of the women here who have children.

Johnson: "When kids come here we help them do their homework and they see their parents are studying and so it makes education more important for them."

Instructors say the program is instilling confidence and self-esteem.

Joanne Bates, teacher: "A girl came in yesterday and she was so proud to tell me she's in college now, and she was in jail for a long time."

And in college is where Connie Hatch hopes to be; she'd like to become a nurse. But before EITC, just one final test in a few weeks.

Hatch: "I'm nervous because it's math and that's a scary subject for me."

A math test, and she's on her way, with ultimately a hundred other men and women who will have more promising lives.

Johnson: "It's the way to a better life, better jobs for yourself and show a better life for your kids."

A group called "Partners for Prosperity" is funding the program this year, and Bank of Idaho will take over next year. And with the number of job opportunities tightening, a GED and then college diploma will be necessary to compete for many of those positions.