View From The Hill
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Danny Smith - Literacy Clinic

The Adult Literacy Center at WKU has served more than 100 adult learners since it opened five years ago.

In this week’s “View from the Hill”, Amy Bingham introduces us to an adult learner who’se powerful story is hitting home with students.

When Danny Smith was told how many freshmen give up on college, he thought, don’t they realize what a wonderful opportunity that’s in front of them? Ten years ago, Danny couldn’t even read.  But now he’s living his dream of learning on a college campus and making sure other students don’t take their education for granted.

Danny Smith is using his story to motivate these freshmen taking college reading strategies..

“I was telling them I never had a chance to learn, to go to college.  In 2nd grade I was told I couldn’t learn.”

Now the 46-year-old Facilities Management worker can not only read, he writes poems and can recite all the U.S. presidents and their hometowns.  Students are a captive audience.

“I’m thinking Danny’s eight minute talk is worth more than any speech they could hear from a professor on this campus.”

“There were a few that came up to me and said they decided not to quit and they took classes for granted, they took college for granted.”

Dr. Pam Petty and Dr. Sherry Powers met Danny more than five years ago when he came to WKU’S Adult Literacy Center.

“We began working with him and realized he was very special because he had such a desire to learn.”

They allowed Danny to sit in on their classes and even helped him sign up for a class at WKU.

“I have learned so much from Danny because I’ve been able to view the world through a lense I would never have had to opportunity to do so if it wasn’t for Danny.”

The gift of reading has also unlocked a lot of Danny’s social anxieties….and now he’s truly part of the WKU family.

“You walk across campus and maybe one or two people might say hello Dr. Powers but everyone says hey Danny, how ya doing?  So he’s had a great impact on this campus and community.”

Danny Smith recently willed his life insurance to WKU’S Adult Literacy Center so others will be helped the way he has been.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.