The violence needs to stop! That is the first and most important thing that needs to happen in our community so I can keep coming to class. For me, living in this community has been very hard because I worry constantly. I have teenage children who are involved in the street life. Knowing that my children are out there makes it extremely hard for me to concentrate in school. If the community would just come together and work on how we can change things, it would be great. Our kids are killing themselves and I can’t see how a parent could focus on anything else when they have to be worried about the violent environment on the streets.

If we knew that our children were safe, it would be so much easier for me and other parents to motivate ourselves to come to school every day.

For that to happen, we need to come together to change the atmosphere on the streets.

Ilda DePina takes classes at St. Mary’s Women and Children’s Center in Dorchester, MA. She has four children and three grandchildren.

For Discussion

Does violence in your community affect your ability to study? If so, how?

What would you say to someone who was thinking of quitting school because of the violence on the streets?

On pages 10-12, we have read about three problems that adult learners face from the larger community: work schedules, unstable housing, and violence. On the next page, Warren Hardy suggests that “we need to stick together.” He says, “I remember when one person’s problem was a community problem.” Read Hardy’s article. What do you think about his suggestion? Write about it here.