Greenfield Community College

Early Childhood Educators Honored
By Mary McCintock, ’82

Abigail Adams Eliot, a Massachusetts social worker and the founder of early childhood education in the United States, would have been proud of Judith Sabola ’80, ’01 and Roni Anthony ’89. Their peers certainly are. The two GCC alumni were presented Abigail Adams Eliot Awards by the Franklin County Collaborative for Children (GCC), a collaboration between Greenfield Community College, Community Action, Greenfield Girls Club, and area family support and community engagement programs. The awards honor outstanding service to children and families. Anthony received the Abigail Adams Eliot Award for an educator working directly with children and families in a family child care or early childhood program; Anthony, of Northfield, teaches in the Early Childhood program at the Girls’ Club in Greenfield. Sabola received a new Abigail Adams Eliot Award for a program manager or supervisor who has made a significant impact on the field of Early Childhood through their work with staff, parents, families and in the community. Sabola, of Sunderland, is the Education Site Supervisor for the Washington Street Pre-School, a Headstart/Community Action! site in Greenfield. Sabola received a new Abigail Adams Eliot Award for an educator working directly with children and families in a family child care or early childhood program; Anthony, of Northfield, teaches in the Early Childhood program at the Girls’ Club in Greenfield. Sabola received a new Abigail Adams Eliot Award for an educator working directly with children and families in a family child care or early childhood program. Kelly Audette, Coordinator of the Student/Faculty Dance Concert, said, “The awards recognize people in a field that is often underappreciated. Judith and Roni both have been in the field for over 20 years and are incredibly well respected by their peers. These awards are a sign of respect and appreciation for wonderful people in our area who are committed to the growth and development of children. We are so proud that both of this year’s awardees are GCC graduates. GCC’s Early Childhood Education program is an important resource for our area and most of the attendees at the award event have been students at GCC.”

Roni Anthony ’89 received an associate’s degree in Early Childhood Education from GCC and a bachelor’s degree in education from Lyndon State College in Lyndonville, VT, and has worked at the Girls Club since the late 1980s. She and two coworkers have been teaching a class of 10-month to 3-year-olds together for over ten years. Anthony loves that age group. She said, “One student to go from being almost nonverbal and handy, being able to speak in full sentences, playing well with others, and realizing there’s more to the world. People don’t always recognize what we do as very hard work.” Anthony found learning in the classroom and high school to be very challenging. That changed when she went to GCC. Kate Anthony ’01 received a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education from GCC and a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education from UMass. She said, “GCC makes education comfortable. The learning environment at GCC is unique; each student is genuinely cared about as an individual, and there is tremendous support from advisors.” Sabola worked in Sunderland’s Preschool Inclusion Program for over nine years and then took a lead teacher position for Head Start. She said, “I love the philosophy as it is rooted in developmentally appropriate practice. We take an account of each individual child and work to improve children’s health and physical development. Utilizing a team approach, we partner closely with our children’s parents. These partnerships bring a real sense of teamwork together, we can make a difference and enhance children’s quality of life.” After being a lead teacher, she became an Education Site Supervisor, supervising seven staff members who work with 30 three to five-year-olds. In her position, she provides support and guidance for teachers, children, and parents, and train and manage community volunteers. For information about GCC’s Early Childhood Education Program, contact Kim Audette at kmccintock@gcc.mass.edu or 413-775-1279.

Judith Sabola ’80, ’01, received associate’s degrees in Criminal Justice and Early Childhood Education from GCC and is finishing up a bachelor’s degree this summer at UMASS. She loves GCC, saying, “GCC makes education comfortable. The learning environment at GCC is unique; each student is genuinely cared about as an individual, and there is tremendous support from advisors.” Sabola worked in Sunderland’s Preschool Inclusion Program for over nine years and then took a lead teacher position for Head Start. She said, “I love the philosophy as it is rooted in developmentally appropriate practice. We take an account of each individual child and work to improve children’s health and physical development. Utilizing a team approach, we partner closely with our children’s parents. These partnerships bring a real sense of teamwork together, we can make a difference and enhance children’s quality of life.” After being a lead teacher, she became an Education Site Supervisor, supervising seven staff members who work with 30 three to five-year-olds. In her position, she provides support and guidance for teachers, children, and parents, and train and manage community volunteers. For information about GCC’s Early Childhood Education Program, contact Kim Audette at kmccintock@gcc.mass.edu or 413-775-1279.