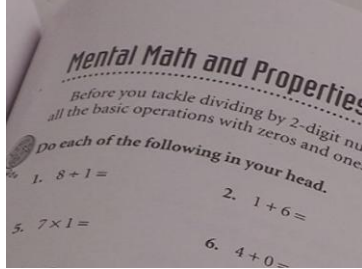


Local church offering GED classes

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By Tyana Williams - [bio](#) | [email](#)

BATON ROUGE, LA (WAFB) - After learning more than half of Baton Rouge's 18 to 24-year-olds do not have a high school diploma, a local pastor began knocking on doors. Pastor Donald Hunter said what he found was that his Zion City community needed an education awakening.

"When you look at the reports, the crime you know, something is wrong," Pastor Hunter said.

Hunter says his church, New Beginnings Baptist Church on Ford Street, started the course after seeing and hearing about the violence in and around Zion City. Their mission, he says, is to give the neighborhood a better image

"Some have left school, involved themselves in risky situations and circumstances such as drugs and crime and they represent a threat," said Hunter.

Classes are funded through the literacy coalition and the YWCA. So far more than 40 students are signed up.

"Don't think it's too late. Don't give up on yourself," said Shalonda McGill. McGill, 29, says a friend told her about the GED program at the church. She says she's hoping to be finished by next year.

Pastor Hunter says they've had between five and ten people complete the program in the past three years. "That's not a whole lot. But consider those 10 would have gone in another direction," he said.

Hunter says he wants the surrounding community to contribute to society, not the streets. "The only thing you need to have is a made up mind and a willing heart that you want to get an education."

The GED program at the church is free. If you are looking to earn your GED visit one of the links below for help.

- [GED Testing Locations in Louisiana](#)
- [Ascension Adult Education Services](#)
- [Livingston Parish Adult Education/GED Classes Program](#)
- [EBR Adult and Continuing Education](#)

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