

In the NEIGHBORHOOD

Haynes Center awards diplomas to 7

Staff report

LA VERNE — A graduating class of seven students receiving their high school diplomas Thursday during annual graduation ceremonies at the Haynes Education Center on the campus of LeRoy Haynes Center.

LeRoy Haynes Center board member Bob Mason, of R.H. Mason Insurance Managers in Claremont, called the ceremony “a special moment” and “a beginning of a lifetime of learning.”

“That learning will strengthen who you are,” he added, “so get out there and make it happen. We’re all very proud of you.”

Teacher of the Year Margarita Olado, in her address to the graduates, urged the students to “understand your uniqueness” and cautioned against allowing people to “judge you by the things you cannot do” but by what they can do — “because you can do a lot.”

Julie Stride, 22, of San Dimas, who her mother, Jeanine Stride, described as having

high-functioning autism and obsessive-compulsive disorder, graduated after working on her high school credits for the past eight years.

Julie, who was the first student in the LeRoy Haynes Center School for Autism, said. “A part of me is going to miss the school (but) another part is going to say it is time that I moved on.”

Jeanine Stride urged parents of children who have autism to find the right school for their children, adding that the local school district has an

obligation to place the student in an appropriate school.

“I think LeRoy’s is just excellent,” she said, “and they’ve come so far.”

Chris Craft, 18, of La Verne, said, “It feels all right” to be graduating from the Haynes Education Center, adding that he plans to continue in school at the community college level working toward his career goal of a position in a coroner’s office.

The LeRoy Haynes Center provides specialized treatment and educational services to

children with special needs relating to emotional development, autism, Asperger’s Disorder, learning disabilities, neglect and abandonment.

The Haynes Education Center, a non-public school founded in 1989 as a companion to the group home facility, initially provided schooling to the children of what was formerly LeRoy Boys Home.

It has grown to serve not only the children who live on campus but has boys and girls from 14 school districts throughout Southern California.