BENTONVILLE, Ark. (March 6, 2013) – Evelyn “Evie” Comfort’s life isn’t about numbers, but one day her résumé can include some truly impressive statistics.

During the typical week, she takes 12 hours of classes, including honors American National Government, at Northwest Arkansas Community College. She had a 4.0 grade point average last semester and has a 3.77 GPA overall. The 55-year-old Pea Ridge woman had never attended a college class before starting at NWACC, and she is now hoping to have completed her master’s degree by the time she is 60.

“I have waited years to be able to go to college,” Comfort says. “This is an amazing journey for me. I am so blessed to have been given this opportunity.”

When she is not at school, Comfort is guardian to her 10-year-old grandson, Isaiah, whom she regularly takes to Kansas City for viral chemotherapy treatments. A widow, she lives with her partner, Mark Coover, their children Tayler and Dylan Coover; as well as her grandsons Isaiah and Karsen. Included in her family locally are her daughter Celina Hanson and grandchildren Haley Hanson and Caine Hanson of Pea Ridge.

In addition to her other responsibilities, Comfort is an active community volunteer who helps Redemption Ministries feed the homeless each month with about 150 people being served. She works with Northwest Arkansas Animal Rescue to place animals on a transport to other states that have “no-kill” policies. She also assists veterinarian Dr. Leeth Harper once a month in a mobile trailer operation that spays and neuters dogs and cats at a low cost to their owners. Typically, surgeries are performed on 30 to 40 animals.
“I am driven by the conviction that NO stray should be euthanized, but be given the chance to find a forever family,” she says.

Comfort was chosen as Northwest Arkansas Community College’s Golden Eagle Award recipient for February. Students are nominated for NWACC’s Golden Eagle Award by an instructor, administrative staff person or a student organization adviser. Each candidate must have at least a 3.0 grade point average in a minimum of six credit hours of class as well as demonstrate social awareness, personal development, a diverse interest and involvement in varied activities, interpersonal communication skills and a commitment to education.

Comfort was recognized at the College’s Board of Trustees meeting on February 18. She is pursuing an Associate of Arts degree and plans to obtain a bachelor’s degree and eventually a master’s degree in nonprofit administration/social enterprise.

She was nominated for the honor by Julie Jarrett, assistant registrar at NWACC. “Evie is a serious student and enjoys attending classes,” Jarrett wrote. “She never thought she could do as well as she is. She took her first honors class in the fall 2012 semester and loved it; she plans on taking more honors courses.”

The assistant registrar also noted that Comfort volunteers with the Boy Scouts and is active in her home church, The Ridge Community Church. Jarrett wrote that the Golden Eagle recipient plans to use her knowledge and skills gained through college courses to make a significant difference in her community.

“Her goal is to continue her education, get her master’s degree and use that degree to help rural communities in Northwest Arkansas prepare and execute a business plan to run financially self-sustaining no-kill animal shelters.” Jarrett says. “Locally, she hopes to begin communication with the municipality at Pea Ridge and would like to see new policies set in place for the strays as well as providing a business plan to open a ‘no kill’ animal shelter.”

“Pea Ridge, along with many of North West Arkansas rural communities, has no shelter,” Comfort says. “If there are no shelters, then euthanasia (death) is the only way to deal with the strays.”

She would like to find a piece of property in Pea Ridge suitable for a shelter. Using the business model from other local area no-kill shelters, as well as promoting and training volunteers, would enable Comfort to help provide the animals a chance to be placed with families rather than euthanized. “Pea Ridge could join other counties in Northwest Arkansas that operate under the no-kill movement, without any added expenditures,” she says.

“With the help of North West Arkansas Animal Rescue, my family and I have rescued, fostered and transported many animals in the last five years that would otherwise have been euthanized,” Comfort says. “With each rescue, we spay or neuter, get the needed vet service, and work with the animal to socialize its behavior, in hopes to give them a better chance for a forever family when they are transported to a no-kill state. With a local shelter and my degree, I hope to change the policies and save hundreds, if not thousands of lives for years and years to come.”
Evelyn “Evie” Comfort was named the recipient of the Golden Eagle Award for February. The award was presented Feb. 18 at the NorthWest Arkansas Community College’s Board of Trustees meeting.

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a smart choice for students wanting to pursue quality higher education. As an accredited institution through The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, NWACC is a public two-year institution that serves and strengthens its surrounding communities in Benton and Washington counties by helping our students maximize their potential and exceed expectations. With state-of-the-art facilities, NWACC provides excellent academic instruction and workforce training needed to succeed, offering personalized attention from highly respected faculty, staff, and administrators. For more information, visit www.nwacc.edu.