



***Celebrating Adult Learners' Week
2016***

April 3rd - April 9th

Literacy Changes Lives



Literacy Nova Scotia acknowledges and thanks the Government of Nova Scotia's Department of Labour and Advanced Education for their support.

Produced by Literacy Nova Scotia

Introduction

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO's International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) is an annual celebration of lifelong learning. It is always a highlight for Literacy Nova Scotia when we celebrate Adult Learners' Week with promotion and awareness initiatives, a learning opportunity and public events or presentations. The actual week is set by UNESCO but we anticipate that it will be held the first week of April 2016. Premier Stephen McNeil proclaimed April 3 – 9, 2016 as Adult Learners' Week in Nova Scotia.

Literacy Nova Scotia offered a number of skill enhancing workshops for adult learners in programs funded through NSSAL. We invited learners to share their stories and entered all eligible submissions into a draw for an iPad mini. Bria Marsman, Options Work Activity Program, Halifax was the lucky winner.

LNS received 18 submissions and are pleased to share these learning stories in this booklet. Literacy Nova Scotia thanks all who shared their stories and enthusiasm for adult learning. These writings demonstrate how learning has made a difference and will inspire others for years to come.



Nova Scotia

Proclamation

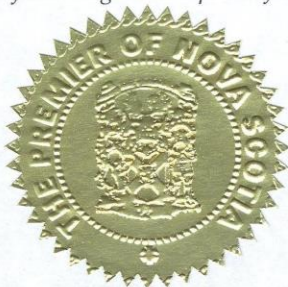
International Adult Learners' Week

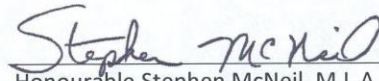
WHEREAS Nova Scotians are joining together at events across the province to recognize the remarkable achievements of adult learners during Adult Learners' Week April 3rd to 9th; and

WHEREAS learning is the foundation for growth in all aspects of our lives, and Adult Learners' Week raises awareness of the value of lifelong learning, and the supports and services available to Nova Scotians who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills; and

WHEREAS lifelong learning has a significant impact on individuals, their families and communities, by providing personal empowerment, admirable examples for children and others to follow, and skills for jobs and further learning;

THEREFORE I, Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia, do hereby proclaim the week of April 3rd to 9th, 2016, to be "**International Adult Learners' Week**" in the Province of Nova Scotia, and urge all citizens to observe this week and to be more fully aware of the importance of a lifetime full of learning in all aspects of their lives. .




Honourable Stephen McNeil, M.L.A.
Premier of Nova Scotia

Signed at Halifax, Nova Scotia

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Going Back to School is Tough

Viola Barker

Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton County

My high school years were pretty scary but I honestly think it was all in my head. I was so excited to go back, making new friends are very important to me. Since it was high school one thing to consider was your class load. I try not to take classes that are too hard or too easy but please challenge yourself. Do not skip a class or slack in your work because it will always come back to get you in the long run. Try not to get to overwhelmed with everything that is going on around you , life is very tough but just stay true to yourself and keep your head up no matter how bad things get. Just remember things will always, change around for you. Well I have to admit that I came a very long way in school. I use to have trouble with my math, spelling and reading. I took a lot of course that I never thought I would ever get in life.

Thanks to the Adult Learning Association for helping me set my goals in my life. They were my math and spelling. Now I have a very special person who is going to need my help in life and that's my grandson. I putted a lot of stuff ahead of my life. My family and my friends I worry about them a lot. I felt that my family need me more but it's my time to my life back on track. I want to be happy in life.

Make Learning Great Again!

Ryan Blackburn

Options Work Activity Program

I returned to learning because due to some big life changes, I felt like I didn't get the full learning experience that I wanted out of schooling. It's also very good to expand your knowledge.

Learning has changed my life because it has made me realize that I'm very smart and not as dumb as I originally thought I was. It also has boosted my self-esteem and I am more sociable and have been making a lot of great friends.

My future goal is to work for Brinks and to save for my own house and get a truck. I would also like to be a volunteer firefighter.

Literacy Changes Lives

Jenna Boivin

Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton County

I have been asked why literacy changes our lives. One major reason why I believe it does is because we would not know how to read or write. When you know how to read and write, you have a better chance of understanding things with much more opportunities around each corner. I dropped out of school 2 and a half years ago, I became a mother and that was more important than school at that time.

Now I know that my little girls need a parent with a good education or everything will be just as hard for them as it is for me. I did correspondence courses for a while, lost concentration, time and was not given the help that I needed. I did however pass whatever work I had finished in that subject and got a 63% in return. It felt so good to know I did not lose all the sense in my head. I am still smart but needed to hear it out loud I guess. I had so much more work to do and I did not think I had the time.

Now I know that 63% is a great mark and we all have enough time on our hands to finish what we need to do for our families and for ourselves. I see grade 12 right around the corner, you are always close enough to never look back, even if you want to. You will always have time to learn new things. Literacy is what makes you know the words or even the way to communicate with people. The effort to show something you like and how you explain it, could not be shown without knowing literacy. Without words you just have a rhythm with no words to finish the song.

Math is one of weakest subject but after learning a few new tricks here and there, numbers actually started to make sense. Numbers starting falling into place to where it was easier to understand. Equations became much more simpler. I found the sum of (x) came to me a lot faster, pi even makes more sense when you can explain it in words. That time you thought you never had, you always had it, time will never turn its back on you. There's enough to go around for everyone.

Literacy means to read or write. So my question is without Literacy what language are we speaking?

My Main Reason

Vivian Bonnick

Dartmouth Learning Network

My main reason to go back to school is to get a better education so I can get a better job. Without education I am a dead man. I am from Jamaica I use to going to Canada and come back home to Jamaica but thank God for my wife to have me here to make my life better so I can get a better education. Without my wife I would not have the opportunities to get better education. It is a great pleasure to be in Canada with my wife. Education helps me to get a better job and a better life for me and my family. Education makes a big difference in my life. I can do a lot more things for myself without anybody to help me.

A good Education is my goal. With a good Education I can get any type of job I want.

My Journey the ALP

Jenna Chabot

NSSC Adult Learning Program Burridge

Coming back to school has been the best decision I've made in a long time. Although I am only twenty, it was a great challenge. Living on my own since I was freshly eighteen, school was my last priority. I needed to get a full time job to pay my bills, because they don't just pay themselves.

Since 12 years old, it was only ever just me and my mom. Her and my dad split up when I was only 2 years old, and I only visited him when he was around. My dad was an alcoholic, and just one month after my 18th birthday he passed away from Cirrhosis of the Liver.

I grew up in a small town in northern Manitoba and was dead set on leaving this town once I graduate. I skipped a lot of school and as result of that I knew even if I busted my butt there would be no way that I was going to graduate. When my dad passed away, that was kind on the cherry on top and I stopped going to school all together. I became depressed and decided the best thing for me would be to move away from Flin Flon.

So off to Lloydminster, Alberta I went. I moved in with my sister, her husband, and my three nieces. Shortly after moving there, I met my boyfriend Morgan who is originally from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. After a year and a half of us dating, when the oil field started going downhill, he got laid off. After not much consideration, we moved here to Yarmouth "on a limb."

Being away from my friends and family is one of the hardest things I've ever gone through in my life. It's not like I can just drive 8 hours to see them, it's completely across the country. Now in a small town, what can I do besides serve in a restaurant like I've always done when you don't have a grade 12, or any certification for that matter? After Morgan nagging me to come here to Burridge to the ALP course, I finally did it.

I am here now, halfway through my first year and absolutely love it. I needed 9 credits and was a little upset because I wouldn't be able to finish it within one whole year. About halfway through my year, I found out that if I keep up the pace I've had since day one, there's no reason I can't graduate this year. Not only this, but I will be graduating with honors around a 90% average. To top off this amazing news, I am also accepted into the Continuing Care program for this September, 2016. Without the ALP course and that amazing staff here at Burridge, I would not be where I am today, and not nearly as close as where I will be 10 years from now.

Literacy Program

Heather Corbin

Dartmouth Learning Network

I like to learn how to read and write and learn math. I like to come to school and I miss school on Fridays because it is closed. The weekend is too long and the learning week is too short. I come to school on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. I enjoy science and social studies. Five years ago I did not know how to read like I can now, I sound out the words I do not know instead of guessing. I would like to know, how to read the paper better so I can read to people and being able to read will help me get a different job I want to get better with my math so I can work on cash in a store. Literacy is important because it helps with reading, writing spelling, doing math and catch up on my grades.

How Literacy Changed My Life

Darlene Coulstring

Halifax Community Learning Network

When I started school back in the late fifties, keeping up with my class was difficult. The teacher felt that I might do better in a slow learning class. She was right! I learned math, spelling, reading, English and history. Unfortunately, health and family issues forced me to leave school in grade six. That broke my heart! I ended up in the hospital, and the doctor pulled me out of school. I had surgery on my leg and on both wrists. My doctor said I wouldn't be able to work.

Wanting that chance to continue my education, I came to the library and joined the adult basic literacy program. There are so many things to learn and I look forward to my Thursday night class. My tutor tells me that I am doing well. She challenges and encourages me all the way. I can read and write better, do basic math and even use a computer. It is never too late to go back to school. It is the best decision I made under the circumstances. If I cannot work, then I might as well learn.

I want to thank the Literacy Program and Erica for giving me a second chance for an education.

Journey to Lifelong Learning

Linda Crooks

Options Work Activity Program

I returned to learning so that I could make positive changes in my own life. This, in turn, will better my children's lives and will help them understand that learning is not just something that you do from grade primary to grade twelve. Learning, to me, is lifelong.

I don't feel that learning has changed my life. Rather I feel that it changes a little part of my life every day. I am a firm believer in continued learning and try to make sure that I learn something new every day of my life.

My future goals are to get gainful employment working under a qualified chef, so that I can get the hours I need to do my chef's test and then in 7-10 years open my own restaurant.

My Story

Judy Curnew

Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton

YouTube URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RW4OdYLyZw&rel=0>

Learning Changes Life

Kahleah Dacey

Dartmouth Learning Network

I returned back to learning because when people like myself have the opportunity to learn in my own community's. It help's making positive changes for myself, family, and others, Most of all take control of my own life.

I started to think to myself...If I want to start learning something new, what is stopping me? I can go back to school to learn art, music, history, cooking, dance or any number of skills that I can use as a self-employed person or simply to enjoy as a hobby. I learned that it is never too late to start or stop learning.

Me, Myself, I don't really have self-goals, or goals to change the future at the time. But I do know goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about my ideal future, and for motivating myself to turn my vision of this future into reality.

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the "SMART" mnemonic, Smart usually stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound.

When I achieve my goals, if I achieve the goal to easily I make my next goal harder, If the goal took me a dispiriting length of time to achieve I make my next goal a little easier, or if noticed a deficit in my skill despite achieving the goal. I will decide whether to set goals to fix my life.

Goal setting is an important method like deciding what's in my life that I want to achieve, separating what's important from what's irrelevant or distraction, motivating yourself and building yourself confidence based on successful achievements of goals.

Literacy Changed My Life

Herbie Fahey

Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton

YouTube URL: https://youtu.be/yi_pJ4cMLyQ

A New Learning Experience

Halina Fullerton

Options Work Activity Program

I have returned to learning because my job was the same for many years. An injury prevented me from doing the job, and I had no marketable skills. Learning has opened a new world. It challenges you. It broadens your mind and shows you new ways of thinking.

With the help of the Options program, the teachers and counsellors guide you along a path to a new beginning. At first, you would not think that it would be possible. When I finish my program, I will find a job in my career or something else suitable. I may also further my education in a different area of knowledge or get a university degree.

Eager to Learn

Ken Gordon

WHRMCLN- Western HRM Community Learning Network Eager to Learn

When I was growing up in PEI schooling was very hard for me. I went to about grade 3 or 4. At the age of 13 that was the end of the school career for me.

I started work with The Hardy Boys packing groceries and hauling furniture and unloading boxcars. I worked there for around 3 years. Drinking was a problem for me. Then I changed jobs. I started work with the Department of Transportation and Public Works. I worked there for about 10 years. I had my own home by the time I was 18. Then I changed jobs. I went fishing with a friend and I fished for 5 to 6 years. Then I started my own business cutting trees around people's houses. I had a truck with a 60 foot boom. I did a lot of work in Alberton and Tignish, and in that time I bought 10 houses. I would buy them and fix them up, then sell them.

I came to Halifax in 2006 to work. What an eye opener! The difference with the traffic – it was chaos! It was dark when we left to work and it was dark when we got home. Right after that I met Lorna and we've been together ever since. We got the house in 2006 and we've been in it ever since. When we moved in there was Nathan, Jordan, Lindsay, me and Lorna. By and by, Matthew came along.

I wanted to improve my reading and writing, really, to help Matthew and help myself. I heard about it through a friend, Fred. I already knew about it, but I wouldn't do anything about it. When I got sick I had lots of free time on my hands. I was diagnosed with Stage 4 Kidney Cancer. I did something about my drinking and reading and writing. I contacted Deborah and started from there.

It has worked out really good for me the last 2 and ½ years. Today I can read a little bit and I can write a little bit and I can concentrate a lot better. I can think clearer. I can get on YouTube. When I get jobs my wife, Lorna, shows me where they're at. Really, she helps me considerably. The things I learned in the last year and ½ have helped me considerably. I have a clearer mind. I don't get frustrated when I can't find a place, but if I keep going I mostly find it. I am more organized for my jobs now. I know what I need to take with me and it makes life easier. I'm going to keep going because the help I got is the help I needed with everybody in class.

I hope to learn to read books on my Kobo Reader. I'd like to help Matthew with his reading. Before I started the Literacy Program I couldn't, but now I can help him. He likes me to read to him.

As the Wild Wind Blows

Jeff Hardy

Options Work Activity Program

I've never had any luck at the jobs or work that I have done in the past. I either get bored or in the employer's words: "The work has run out." Either way, I seem to be the one out the door. I'm a lot more positive than most of the people that have laid me off. My conclusion and the consensus of others is that people pick on me, or like to pick on me. My only alternative is to return to school to eventually find something to do – a new way to earn a living.

Learning new things or ideas makes me feel happy. It gives me a sense of well-being, and gives me something to look forward to. Learning makes me feel good.

My goals are to be successful at what I do.

In The Journey Of Learning

Hakim Ibrahim

Cunard Learning Centre

Hello ladies and gentlemen; my name is Hakim Ibrahim. I am 22 years old. I am from Sudan. I left my family in 2010 due to war in my country.

As a child, I went through many countries in Africa seeking peace and stability.

Eventually, in 2011, I arrived in Ghana where I spent almost four years in a refugee camp. Unfortunately, in the camp, organizations and refugee agencies do not provide food and school equipment for children like me who dropped out of school. I went to a government school, but, unfortunately, I was not accepted in primary school because of my age and where I came from! And I could not afford enough to pay for private school.

Secondly, being a refugee without family was not easy for me to cope with the difficult situations, but I never gave up because there is nothing I can change in my life except education!

So I wrote a letter to the Canadian embassy. Then they helped me to get in school and provided me with some school facilities. Furthermore, along with my school journey, I met a lot of people from various humanitarian organizations, as well as people from Canadian immigration services who inspired me to apply for Canadian immigration.

I went through a long process. I had seven interviews and finally I moved to Canada on April 8, 2015. I got a job only two months later. I was so excited to work in my earlier months, but recently I faced so many difficulties communicating with people in my work. Therefore, I asked my caseworker about how to enroll in the school here, and she advised me to go Bedford school.

So I went to Bedford school for six weeks. During my days in Bedford school I always had conversations with my teacher, and she encouraged me to come to Cunard. I came to Cunard last September. I am in level three now. I see many changes in me now! I am able to understand what people say and respond to them confidently. I believe if we are all educated the world will be better place to live!

I want to become a psychologist. My greatest aim of choosing to become a psychologist is, to help people with their problems, especially those with mental illness. As a child I was very traumatized not knowing where my parents were. I remember how people were kind to me and helped me with my problems.

In conclusion, I am very proud of everyone who encouraged me, especially thanks to all my teachers and Cunard in general. Thank you so much for giving me this opportunity to express myself. God bless and God bless Canada!

Literacy Changed My Life

Anna Loppie

Dartmouth Learning Network

My name is Anna I have two girls and a grandson too. Know how to read and write math and spelling that's why I came back to learning. Improved my writing and reading. 5years ago it was very bad. I wanted to learn read and write. I work hard doing it to help me to reach my goal. Learning how I can help someone to read a book. I like to be here on time to talk to people and do my math before class time. One thing I can do to read better is to pick up a book to read it. I want to read and write to help me to get a job. I found out about this school by the YMCA. If somebody ask me how to read I will help them point them where to go to.

Literacy Nova Scotia

Michael Maloney

Port Hawkesbury Literacy Council

Literacy Nova Scotia is there for you. Literacy is an essential skill you need to function in society today, at work and at home. With the growth of social media in our lives, we need to be literate, particularly in the workplace that requires the ability to process information and use technology. Literacy Nova Scotia is there to help you reenter the workforce, with skills in writing and math. They also teach you about job interviews, resume writing, and help you get your grade twelve if needed. This is a free program and everyone who needs it should take advantage. They are truly there for all of us. I am here to get my grade twelve, WHMIS, OHS, first aid and learn how to write my resume. The instructors here are showing us how to speak and act when at a job interview. The instructors are also willing to help us with our goals for the future.

I have returned to learning because the workplace demands it. If you want a job today, you will need grade twelve, WHMIS, OHS and in most cases first aid as well. Literacy Nova Scotia is teaching the technology I need to return to the workplace, including how to deal with nasty customers.

The instructors here will have you act out a job interview, showing you the right and wrong way of going about it. They teach you the right questions to ask. How you should always make eye contact with the person doing the interview. If needed the instructors will help you get ready for the GED test. This has been invaluable to all. These are lessons we all should know. They have certainly changed my life.

The instructors are willing to get you hooked up with a person for that dream job you may have in mind. This could be anything from a Nursing Home, to working with a photographer; this will help you decide if this is your dream job. Alternatively, after trying it, this is just not for me.

Literacy Nova Scotia has inspired me to write this short essay, without them I would not have known how to write an essay. I still would not know the right way to conduct myself in an interview, or write a resume if it was not for Literacy Nova Scotia. For that, I am very grateful. To have instructors willing to help you with your goal is priceless. I can say first hand that if you would like help from professional instructors, this Literacy Nova Scotia, which is free, can really help prepare you for your future.

Learning: Helping Me Help Others

Bria Marsman

Options Work Activity Program

I came back to learning because I want to move ahead in life. I know that I'm still young and I have my whole life ahead of me. But someday, I'm going to be somebody – maybe the one who helps kids or even loved ones. I want to upgrade my skills so that my learning and my potential will take me far in life. Another reason why I came back to learning is so that I can get better at the things I struggle with and use my skills with others or in the workforce, because learning goes a far way.

Learning has changed my life. I'm smarter. I know things. If there is another person struggling and I know the answer, I can help them. It's helped me in different situations in life. Each step of learning helps me move ahead. Each day is a new day toward success.

My goal for the future is to work with kids, maybe in a daycare or maybe in group homes or orphanages. I love working and helping kids. I even want to try continuing care work with elderly people. These are the things I love doing and I'm going to get there.

My Learning Story

Melvin James Neil

Halifax Community Learning Network

I am going to discuss in this essay why I returned to learning, how learning has changed my life, and my goals for the future.

I returned to learning so I could better my life and gain security and quality of life. I worked basically the same jobs all my life and decided to go back to school to get my high school diploma and to get a better job.

Learning has changed my life in so many ways. It gives me a sense of accomplishment and I feel better about myself. Family and friends give me the support for going back to school. People come up to me that I've known in the past and say I have changed in a good way. If someone came up to me and said they wanted to go back to school to get their grade 12, I would let them know how to go about it.

I received my high school diploma last June after four years of study and work with a tutor through the Nova Scotia Literacy Program. The teachers at Cunard and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) were terrific and helpful in getting my grade 12. I have plans to return to NSCC to take academic math and biology. This would give me the credits I would need to get into a 44 week course called Primary Paramedic. I thought it would be an interesting career to get into the medical field.

My Experience at the Pictou County Continuous Learning Association

Mihai Prunea

Pictou County Continuous Learning Association (PiCCoLA)

My name is Mihai Prunea and I am from Romania. I came in New Glasgow, Canada about one year ago. My English language was not too well, and I was happy to find this nice school with beautiful people.

My first experience was to pass the fear of speaking in English, because I did not know a lot of words and how to express myself correctly.

Another experience I had, was that I met new people, and I learned new things, for example, a little bit of Canada's history.

PiCCoLA helped me to improve my English language skills to speak correctly and develop my skills.

PiCCoLA provides a positive atmosphere and gives me confidence for my future. Also, PiCCoLA is helping me to develop the skills I need to find a job more easily.

This is my few experiences about PiCCoLA school.

Literacy Changes Lives

Stacey Saunders

Pictou County Continuous Learning Association (PiCCoLA)

This is my story about why I came back to school. It was so I can learn how to upgrade my math and my writing. When I was in school I was bullied so bad that I did not even try in school. At the end of it I did not even want to go to school, but I had to because my parents told me I had to go. I went to school every day put my head up high and walked the halls like nothing was/ever happened because I was am the bigger person. For me learning is the most important thing ever because we have to teach ourselves everyday that we can improve our math, spelling, writing and most of all our grammar. I have returned to school to better myself and make myself proud. I have gained so much confidence through learning that I am doing a bullying project and I want to try and take a stand against bullying in high schools. I am also doing a little movie and I learned how to do that in the film course that we took here at the Pictou County Continuous Learning Association (PiCCoLA).

Learning has changed me for the better, because I have learned not to use a calculator when doing math. In High school I was given a calculator, and that did nothing for me, but only slowed me down. By writing essays I learned that grammar is very important because you don't always have run on sentences. Writing was always hard but learning new skills has helped me to slow down, and take a breath and think before I write.

I am going to tell you a little about my bullying project. It has been a huge learning curve for me, because it hit so close to home for me where I have been bullied myself. Being born with Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome and going in and out of the hospital over and over again, and experiencing all of the ups and downs has made me want to take my bullying project into the schools and public. I want to get people to help me and take a stand against bullying.

My future is going to be bright, and I want to get more education so I can work with people with intellectual disabilities. Some of my goals are to learn more reading, writing, and public speaking. I love talking, and getting into public speaking is a good thing because I have a lot to offer, like my bullying project. At PiCCoLA, they have helped me a long way and are now helping me get my bullying project up and off the floor to get the public to hear my story about bullying and how it has affected me. I want to show how I learned to overcome everything I been through.

This is my story by Stacey Saunders and I love to learn!

My Learning Story

Melissa Scott

Shelburne County Learning Network

I returned to school because even though I have Grade 12, I.P.P. I have been struggling with reading and writing all my life. In school I got behind. My mom kept asking for help but, they just passed me through. It was hard for me to do the work. Someone would go in the class to help me with my work but they did my work for me. Kids made fun of me because I had to have help and treated me differently.

In high school I still could not read or write so I couldn't understand. I thought about quitting, but I how could I get a job?

My mom would go to the school for meetings and would hear promises of help but programs never got started. Once I was asked to read aloud in front of the class. I stood at the front and struggled to read. My classmates tried to help by yelling words at me. I was completely humiliated.

I graduated but had no idea how to live my life. I had no one to turn to. My parents were not strong readers either. I kept thinking, "What am I going to do?" I was depressed and had anxiety around other people.

For the next few years I had jobs that paid very little and had a hard time. At 25 I had my daughter and I am raising her on my own. When my daughter started school I realized that I needed to learn to read and write too. I couldn't understand her work to help her. I needed to go back to school for us! It was hard for me to go back to school because of how I feel about myself. I wondered if I would be judged. My teachers are helping so much here and I am learning to read and write. I am learning to get through my fears and anxiety by meeting new people.

School has helped me to look after my mental health and get the support I need. I am working with an Integrative Health Coach to help with mental, physical and spiritual health. Krista helps me feel better about myself by setting goals with me that help me to stay on track. She gives me ways to cope and help myself. Even though I hope I never run into any old classmates because of my embarrassing past, I hope with coming to the Learning Center I will get past that as I keep working on myself. I know that I can tell the teachers when I have problems and they will help.

Going back to school means, I can accomplish my goals; like being able to read and write, understand notes from my daughter's school and reading to her. I plan to upgrade my grade 12, get my driver's license, and go to NSCC to become a CCA. I believe I can do this with all of the support I have.

Learning is Living

Josephine Smith

Halifax Community Learning Network -Library

It's funny how the thing we might be looking for can be right under our nose, and yet we miss seeing it. Even though I worked footsteps away from Halifax Public Library for years, I never considered it as a location for continuing my education as an adult.

On my daily walk to work, I would often stop and talk with a friend of mine in the neighborhood—Mr. Ford. We enjoyed a good chat and would have a laugh talking about everything under the sun. One day, his daughter, Jen, was visiting. We had a great conversation, and ended up talking about personal goals. I told them how I would love to have gone further in school and wished I could go back. I told them how I wanted to improve my reading, writing, and spelling. Jen told me that the library offered free continuing education courses for adults. I was so surprised - it seemed too good to be true. I called the next day and made an appointment, an action which ended up being a huge turning point in my life.

I met with a woman named Jen, who coordinated the literacy program at the Halifax library at that time. I was very nervous, especially when I discovered I needed to complete a test—an assessment of my level of literacy. Jen helped me relax—she was wonderful—and discover that instead of being nervous I could be myself, and even find it fun. She checked out some books for me to read, and said she would be assigning me a tutor and would call me soon. I remember leaving, my bag full of books, feeling inspired, excited, and blessed.

I didn't anticipate how difficult it would be to be in the role of a student again, but I feel God gave me the strength and will to persevere. The skills I knew most people around me took for granted and found easy—like writing a simple sentence or turning on a computer—were challenging. I even found listening difficult, but I knew it was important.

Spelling and grammar were tools I was challenged with improving, and still are. They are skills which might seem merely technical, but are actually very meaningful. They have allowed me to communicate more clearly, more completely, and to describe things with greater detail. Being able to write and read properly have transformed my understanding of what it means to share. I now have the ability to tell my own stories and to appreciate literature—books, films, theatre, all stories—in a new light. I have learned how to be reflective and critical, to really think about what I'm reading or writing about.

I have learned above all that learning is a never-ending process. It's not just a way of living, it IS living. It's made me more socially confident, and added to my overall well-being. I have learned above all that there will always be more that I can learn.

My Options

Mary Trenholm

Options Work Activity Program

I'm returning to learning to upgrade my grade 10 and learn Basic Office. This is the first time I came to the Options program and I have found it calm and relaxing here. I am getting to know the rule and the environment. I am also getting to know different people here in Options. My goal is to be successful in the Options program and get certified in Basic Office.

How Learning is Changing My Life

Kayla Usher

Dartmouth Learning Centre

Learning has changed my life in so many ways. For instance, I have learned to look at most of my life-learning experiences with a different perspective in positive ways. What I have learned the most is learning how to accept myself and my flaws; most importantly, my mistakes and my regrets and not to dwell on the past and accept things that I cannot change and how to move forward from them. People go through trials and tribulations; going through mine has made me into the person I am today and because of that I have learned that I wouldn't change any of it. I am stronger and wiser. For example, I never ever thought I would get good math grades; this is the first time I have ever felt comfortable with my math skills. Since grade four I have been told I have a learning disability and ever since then I have never had a teacher who had the time or patience to challenge my math skills. I would always get taken out of the classroom and received work that I was already well capable of doing or that was way below my math level; I got teased for it and was labeled "the IPP student". It killed my confidence as a child, even into my teenage and adult years which then lead me to the decision to drop out of school. But not for long.

I returned to school after being out for 7 whole years and making that choice has showed me that it is never too late to go back to school. I have a wonderful classroom setting surrounded by people who prove that every day. Going back to school at this time has given me back my loss of confidence in myself and has restored my faith and patience. Something I thought I would never regain. Since I have been back to school I have seen how much opportunity you can take advantage of and just run with it. And that there are teachers who really do care and will help and won't give up on you and will see you through until the end. And ever since I have become more aware and wiser to how I learn. I now realize I am very much a visual learner.

I returned back to school for three main reasons. One, I am a young single parent who has two young children who depend on me and who look up to me; I have to set a good example for my children. Another reason is I have to be able to provide a comfortable living for them and being illiterate won't allow me to do so. Third, to obtain as much education as I can I want to be a lifelong learner. Doing so can only come with endless opportunities for me and my children.

This is how learning has changed my life. This is why I now know how important literacy is.

Untitled

Cole Zink

Dartmouth Learning Centre

Hi my name is Cole Zinck and I go to the Dartmouth Learning. I came to Dartmouth Learning to learn more because I want to do better than did in high school. The teachers are very nice to me here and my class mates are nice to be around too. The environment is so good it makes me want to come to back all the time. If I didn't come here, I really know what I would be doing right now. I think the teacher in high school does not know to treat students with learning disabilities with considerate if you don't want to go university they won't pay enough attention to you. That's what I think about high school, and that's what I like about going to the Dartmouth Learning because the teachers are really cool to talk about anything and that's why I like about Dartmouth Learning. You can be who yourself and you don't have to try to be someone that you are not. (They treat their students here awesome here they high school dose). I'm going to NSCC to get ready for the cat when I pass my test come September, I will be at NSCC Akeley Automotive Collision Refinishing. I came to Dartmouth Learning to get better with my math like Multiplication and Division, and here to so I can get better at my reading too. I'm working hard so I can do what want to do in the long run....If it was not for Dartmouth Learning I don't think I would have never know how to do math better and my read is getting better. Before coming here I had a really hard time doing my work and even coming to class they treat me like a person then some kid that have a hard time doing school work and they make it easier now then three years of high school.