



Literacy Coalition  
of New Brunswick Ltd.

# Learning Changes Lives/ L'apprentissage change des vies

---

CELEBRATING ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

APRIL 19<sup>TH</sup> TO APRIL 23<sup>RD</sup>, 2021

CÉLÉBRER LA SEMAINE DES APPRENANTS ADULTES

19 AVRIL AU 23 AVRIL, 2021

The Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick

303-212 QUEEN ST, FREDERICTON, NB, E3B 1A8 | 506-457-1227 | TOLL FREE/NUMÉRO SAN FRAIS:  
1-800-563-2211

## Table of Contents/Table des matières

<b>Widad Ali</b> – Adult Literacy Fredericton .....	2
<b>Owen Allaby</b> – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA) .....	4
<b>Martin Comeau</b> – Dieppe CCAA (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est) .....	5
<b>Zoé Dion</b> – Lancaster CCAA (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est) ....	6
<b>Sara Dobson</b> – Oromocto Evening Adult Learning Program (CVALA) .....	8
<b>Ryan Draper</b> – B.E.S.T Program, Saint John Learning Exchange.....	9
<b>Cheryl Dunford</b> – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA) .....	10
<b>Destinee Frey</b> – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA).....	12
<b>Ryan T. Garnett-Goguen</b> – Saint John Learning Exchange.....	13
<b>Marina Higgins</b> – Oromocto Adult Learning Program (CVALA).....	15
<b>Tina Labonte</b> – Nackawic Adult Learning Centre (WVALA).....	17
<b>Natasha Landry</b> – Lalande Adult Learning Centre (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud) .....	18
<b>Brenda L’Hirondelle</b> – Moncton Headstart (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est) .....	19
<b>Nancy McGraw</b> – Miramichi Adult Learning .....	20
<b>Rebecca Mellish</b> – Highfield Adult Learning Centre (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est) .....	21
<b>Jessica Nicholas</b> – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA) .....	22
<b>Sean Nicholas</b> – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA) .....	23
<b>Kianne Nicholas-Perley</b> – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA) .....	24
<b>Kenneth (Bernie) Parent</b> – Oromocto Adult Learning Program (CVALA) .....	25
<b>Ellen Peng</b> – South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est.....	26
<b>Allison Perch</b> – Fredericton Distance Adult Learning Program (CVALA) .....	28
<b>Jacob Sexton</b> – Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Program (CVALA) .....	30
<b>James Trevors</b> – Miramichi Literacy Council .....	31
<b>Michael Webb</b> – Woodstock Adult Learning Program (WVALA) .....	32
<b>Sarah White</b> – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA) .....	33
<b>Wayne T. Worster</b> – Perth-Andover Adult Learning Centre (WVALA).....	34

## Learning Changes Lives

**Widad Ali** – Adult Literacy Fredericton

<http://www.adultliteracyfredericton.org/>

Teacher: Gail Tucker

Hi, my name is Widad Ali and I am originally from Iraq. When I first arrived in Canada, as an immigrant, my family and I registered our names with the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF), in order to get Level 5 English for the citizenship application, in the future. Then I noticed that in Canada, everyone is encouraged to learn, no matter the age. Besides, I felt lonely because everyone here is busy, either with work, or study. So, I was thinking of continuing my studies, especially now that my children are grown up and able to depend on themselves.

One day I was in the public library in Fredericton, and I noticed on the announcement board an advertisement about the Adult Literacy Fredericton program. So, I screenshot the notice and later contacted them for more information. The coordinator of the program was such a helpful person and I liked her British accent! Actually, I wished that I speak like her! So, my husband and I started the program and taking lessons at UNB Campus, where our sweet teacher, Gail, works.

Our class was mainly conversational with some theory focusing on grammar rules. My main goal was to achieve a good level of writing. Actually, I showed my teacher, Gail, some of my writing attempts, and she encouraged me to continue writing.

Earlier, I had participated in the 'Living Book' experience that took place in the public library in Fredericton. I was inspired by that experience and the people who I met there, to write a booklet. I don't have a special plan for my writing, I just write what comes into my mind.

I am working on a small goal, which is to publish a story book, so people here in Canada can see the world through an immigrant's eyes. Also, I am trying to break the ice between different cultures.

Besides learning English, I registered in the French program for beginners, which is held by Mathieu and Zakaria at MCAF. New Brunswick is a bilingual province, and learning French will be an advantage for getting a better job, and to help my children in their studies. Also, I like to read all the signs and brochures that are written in French.

I have a hunger to learn everything; in our religion, we are encouraged to learn from the cradle to the grave. The first word in our holy book, Quran, was 'read' - a command to learn and read. Besides, Canada has widened my vision to be open to different cultures and experiences, and in

this country we are encouraged, as individuals, to take action and depend on ourselves to make the change.

So, instead of spending my times on regretting the opportunities that I have lost, let me benefit from the moment that I live in. Let me be positive and make a small change, even if it isn't significant; but at least let me try!

## Learning Changes Lives

**Owen Allaby** – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

I quit school when I was in high school. I have been too many schools all over New Brunswick.

As you may know all schools do different work at different times of the year so I ended up doing things over and over again many times. So I lost interest also, my parents never got their high school diploma or GED done which didn't help me. It kind of made it scary when I was young because I'd be the only one with my high school diploma.

I have lots of goals for the future and would be well on my way with them if I would have stayed in school and finished, one of my goals is to move up north and making seventy thousand a year.

So not finishing my high school messed me up like no tomorrow now I'm twenty one living with his mother going to school with little income which absolutely sucks but now I have no choice if I want to have actual stuff in life I've tried to do it without my GED and High school but all you get is dead-end job and in the end you have more problems than you did in the first place and then when you lost or quite the job you way back at square one so getting my GED is the first step into achieving my goals and maybe taking a trade too amp up my luck to getting a job I'll love.

## Objectif en route

**Martin Comeau** – Dieppe CCAA (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://www.opendoorsged.ca>

Enseignante : Massy Tamdrari

Bonjour,

Mon nom est Martin. Voici l'histoire de mon retour aux études :

Tout a commencé après une absence de plusieurs années au travail due à la maladie et aux problèmes personnels. Après tant d'années à vivre dans l'ombre, je me suis dit qu'il était temps que je me relève. Cependant, suite à ma situation actuelle, peu de choix s'offraient à moi. Le fait de n'avoir aucun diplôme ou de cours, de souffrir d'une maladie rare me ferme plusieurs portes de salut.

Malgré ces divers obstacles, je ne suis pas laissé abattre. J'ai pris contact avec divers organismes gouvernementaux comme le CINB, Développement Social et le CCRW. Ils m'ont offert de l'aide et nous avons décidé que le retour à l'école était le meilleur choix pour un futur sécuritaire. Pour moi, après tant d'années à ne pas avoir étudié et à ne pas avoir de routine de vie, cela me faisait très peur. De plus, avec ma perte de vision, ça me paraissait impossible de réapprendre. Mais, avec une superbe équipe de soutien et un professeur compréhensif, il était très dur de ne pas vouloir apprendre malgré les difficultés. Au début, j'étais peu motivé et très inconfortable de réapprendre avec l'aide de nouvelles technologies ou avec une grosse loupe ... Mais, avec le temps, je m'habitue, je deviens meilleur. Tout est une question de patience et de confiance. Plus le temps passe, plus je ressens une meilleure aptitude et gratitude d'avoir retourné aux études, car je sais que cela va changer ma vie. En fait, ça a déjà commencé sur plusieurs aspects : j'ai plus confiance en moi, ma routine a changé, je me lève le matin de bonheur, je socialise plus en faisant de nouvelles connaissances et créant de nouveaux liens. J'ai également une meilleure estime de moi, car j'accomplis mes objectifs futurs. Enfin, ce qui me rend le plus fier est de me surpasser malgré mes problèmes de santé et personnels. Être en classe d'apprentissage me fait beaucoup de bien même si certains jours sont plus difficiles que d'autres. Néanmoins, faire ce que je peux chaque jour me rapproche de mon changement de vie.

Quant à mes objectifs futurs, j'avoue qu'ils sont simples. Après avoir fini mon GED, je vais prendre un cours pour devenir intervenant social, car je crois que j'ai beaucoup à offrir aux autres. Il a fallu attendre mes 37 ans pour que j'envisage un futur à ma vie, pour que j'accomplisse quelque chose malgré la maladie et la dépendance aux substances. Tout est possible, il suffit d'y croire. Avec mon expérience de vie, je veux redonner espoir et donner la chance à ceux qui ne l'ont jamais eue. Moi, je viens de saisir la chance qui m'a été donnée.

## Jamais trop tard

**Zoé Dion** – Lancaster CCAA (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://www.opendoorsged.ca>

Enseignante – Carole Bourgault

L'année qui vient de passer a grandement affecté ma vie et celle de plusieurs personnes. La pandémie a causé la perte de mon emploi, donc j'ai pris le temps d'explorer la possibilité de changer de carrière. Ce qui m'a amené à prendre la grande décision de retourner aux études.

Il y a plusieurs années j'ai abandonné le secondaire, je ne me souviens même plus si j'avais complété ma dixième année. À l'âge de 17 ans, j'ai commencé à travailler en restauration, ce qui est devenu ma carrière qui prit fin l'année dernière quand tout a fermé.

J'ai souvent eu la pensée qu'un jour je devrais retourner à l'école, peut-être faire des études collégiales. J'ai une famille, trois enfants, ce qui me causait l'inquiétude de laisser la stabilité de mon travail. Alors cette pensée est restée un rêve enfoui dans ma tête.

Pendant mon arrêt de travail, la pensée « peut-être un jour je vais pouvoir » est devenu une possibilité. Quand les écoles ont réouvert en Septembre, mes enfants sont retournés en classe, ce qui m'a donné beaucoup de temps à contempler ma vie, alors j'ai pris courage et je me suis inscrite au GED.

La nervosité qui a accompagné les démarches de l'inscription était très présente en moi; choisir la langue, si je veux être en classe ou à la maison. Ma conseillère a été très gentille et patiente, elle m'a grandement aidée à faire le bon choix.

J'ai pris la décision d'étudier en français et être en classe à temps plein. Le retour à l'école n'a pas été si facile. Après avoir fait du travail manuel si longtemps, rester assise toute la journée est un défi. Réapprendre à apprendre est une épreuve que je dois surmonter.

C'est impressionnant les changements que je vois en moi-même; être capable d'apprendre les règles de grammaire, écrire des textes, comprendre des problèmes de mathématiques qui n'auraient fait aucun sens quand j'étais au secondaire.

Être revenu à un parcours scolaire change ma vie, change ma perspective sur ce que je peux accomplir. J'ai réalisé que oui je suis capable d'apprendre, capable de changer ma vie et les habilités que je développe mentalement. Finalement, j'ai l'impression d'avoir un choix pour mon avenir.

Malgré le fait que j'ai beaucoup de rattrapage à faire en français et en mathématique, je refuse de me décourager. Bientôt, je vais commencer le livre du GED, ce qui va être un défi en soi. Chaque test que j'écris est une étape qui m'amène plus proche de mon diplôme. C'est un accomplissement qui m'encourage à continuer et à faire de mon mieux.

Quand j'ai commencé le programme, mon but était simplement avoir mon diplôme d'étude secondaire. Découvrir qu'étudier est un défi que je veux continuer à relever, ceci m'incite à essayer d'avoir les meilleures notes possibles.

Je veux continuer mes études après avoir compléter le GED. J'ai souvent pensé que le collège ne serait pas une option dans ma vie. Cependant il est devenu un rêve réalisable.

Bien sûr avoir des options crée un autre dilemme : quoi choisir? Avoir la certitude de vouloir continuer mes études est bien, sauf que pour l'instant, je ne sais pas quel cours collégial m'intéresse. Une chance, j'ai du temps pour explorer les choix. Une étape à la fois! Je vais continuer à y penser, sans me causer de soucis.

Je vais réussir, si tout va bien, à avoir mon diplôme secondaire avant l'âge de quarante ans, ce qui me remplit de fierté! Il n'est jamais trop tard pour faire des changements et réaliser des rêves. J'espère que mon histoire pourra inspirer d'autre personne qui, comme moi, sont incertaines de pouvoir faire un retour aux études.



## Learning Changes Lives

**Sara Dobson** – Oromocto Evening Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca/>

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

I started my GED learning experience back in September 2019. I felt as a mother of two young children, I needed to set a good example for my son and daughter. I dropped out of high school when I was in grade 10, and I didn't want my children to follow in my footsteps. I want them to succeed in life and graduate from high school. If I can do it, I know they can!

Being in the GED Program has changed my life in a couple of ways. First, it gives me motivation to make something out of myself. The more tests I pass, the more determined I am to keep learning and to get my GED. Attending the GED Program has also given me confidence in myself. I am not letting anything slow me down in getting my GED.

I have a couple of goals for my future. The first one is to finish my GED and receive my diploma. That will be one of the happiest days of my life! Next, I want to attend NBCC to take Administrative Professional: Health Services Program. Once I complete that program, I am hoping to start my career at the Fredericton or Oromocto Hospital. This will allow me to feel more independent and feel like I am contributing more financially to my family. My husband is the only one working at this time because I am a stay at home mom and wife. I attend school in the evenings, so I can be home when my children get home from school. In the future, I want to be able to tell people I am a working mom and wife and not just a stay at home mom and wife.

I am enjoying attending GED classes in the evening. It's nice to get out of the house and talk to other adults. My teacher, Mrs. Coleman, is amazing the way she teaches. Her way of teaching makes it so easy for me to learn. I always had a hard time in school and hated going to school and that's why I quit. I actually enjoy going to class and learning a lot of different things. When you have a good teacher who actually takes the time to teach, it makes a huge difference to me and all my classmates. Mrs. Coleman loves teaching and seeing all of her students pass all their tests. She's proud of everyone and displays their diplomas on the walls around her classroom. Although I cannot wait to pass my last two GED tests and go on to college, I will definitely miss Mrs. Coleman when I am finished my GED.

## How Learning Changes Lives

**Ryan Draper** – B.E.S.T Program, Saint John Learning Exchange

<https://www.sjle.org>

Teacher: Janelle Flanagan

Growing up in the foster care system, my focus was on how to survive my day-to-day struggles, not on my education. When I was 35 years old, I decided it was time to move on. After much reflection, I had come to the conclusion that in order to better my life and let my best self shine through, I must reach out for help.

In November, 2019, I reached out to the Saint John Learning Exchange where I became a student and started my journey on the path to learning...learning about life, about myself and my academic studies. Learning that I did not give myself enough credit...not believing in my abilities...in myself.

It has been a year+ and I have passed three of my five GED subjects. In that time, I learned how to love me more! I have learned that I must take one day at a time and appreciate the simple things in life. I have learned how being patient and forgiving others can have a healing impact on one's life.

Growing up in the foster care system, I could never have imagined how much learning could change my life. Learning has changed my life over the years in the following ways:

- I have learned how to love and appreciate myself more.
- I have learned the value in forgiving others and healing power it has.

When I am finished writing my last two GED exams, I have a desire to go on and study Nursing. I want to help others on their journey. Learning has changed my life and I am a more knowledgeable person for it!

## Why I Returned to School

**Cheryl Dunford** – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne Mclsaac

There are many good reasons why I chose to go back school to get my GED, even though it took me 24 years to do so only to find out I have a learning disability.

School has always come hard for me. My father was in the Military all of my childhood and we moved to many different provinces only having to move again.

Being one of the few First Nation children in school was a struggle and having a hard time with learning on top of that was not easy for any child yet a child who had no clue why she was treated different because of adult views at that time, it was not fun to be in school at all.

It took me to becoming older and looking back to know that I was not a bad student, I just had more of a struggle than other students, yet I feel that I was always put aside then some of the other children that showed more promise than me. I got held back 2 times in elementary school and that was so hard to deal with when other children would call you stupid and be hurtful and mean about it.

As I made my way to jr. high and barely making by with my grades the school decided because of my age I should be sent to the high school in the city. I go to from failing 2 grades in school to skipping 2 grades because my age at that time thought it would be the best for me. I was not ready at all.

When I started high school, I felt like I was sinking so low and could barely make by, I choose to quit high school for good. That decision has made my life hard, to dealing with everyday struggles of being an adult to filling out just simple paperwork and even following simply recipes are a struggle.

Deciding to go back at 38 was a hard decision to make, but the right one for myself and of course my children.

As my children were getting older and starting school, I realized that I was not able to help them along the way as they continued to move up their classes.

I never wanted my children to look at their Mom and think its ok NOT to finish something or lack of an education is alright. I want my children to grow up and be very independent and successful in their lives.

I have gone forward and done my GED science exam and I'm very proud of myself for passing my first test.

I've been very blessed to have an amazing teacher that has yet given up on me, even when there were times I wanted to myself. She is helping me to get my confidence back with my education and finding ways for me to understand the material in different ways. For that I will always be thankful for her guidance and most of all her patience with me and to know that I'm able to learn when I thought I never could.

Even though it's challenging and hard at times I refuse to give up again, and be able to show my children anything is possible when you work hard for something.

## Returning to Learning Changes Lives

**Destinee Frey** – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Susan Howard

This year, I decided to return to school to better not only my life, but my family's life as well. I want to be financially secure enough to take care of the people around me. I could open the business I have always been dreaming about or gain strengths that I didn't even know I had. My options would be limitless!

The first reason I returned to school is for my family. My family owns the biggest piece of my heart and if I could give them the world I would, but I would settle for a steady income. As a single mother, I am aware that my children are affected by my decisions and are watching all my moves. It only pushes me to do everything I can for them. For me, this includes finishing school.

Secondly, I've always dreamt about owning my own business. As soon as I complete school, I want to open a bake shop. It's an intimidating idea, but when I open the doors and do amazing, it will be worth all the hesitation, worry and hard work. I could finally be self-reliant!

Finally, I have achieved some personal growth by returning to learning. Whenever someone goes through dramatic changes, they will develop personally through perseverance. I have gained more confidence and feel more secure in my decisions. Not only have I grown personally, but professionally as well.

To wrap it all up, finishing school has done nothing but benefit my future. I could become a role model to the generations behind me. I could be the boss of my own business. I could become a well-known professional. It all begins with that first step of taking charge of my life and returning to complete my schooling.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Ryan T. Garnett-Goguen** – Saint John Learning Exchange

<https://www.sjle.org>

Teacher: Stacey Doyle

I started my venture back into learning a whole year before getting into the Learning Exchange. It all started with wanting to change the fundamentals of who I was. As an individual diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, I struggled all through my schooling never fully understanding how to cope with my disability; able to retain and use the information taught there, but never able to adapt to the fast paced and crowded environment. During my last year of high school, I buckled under the stress and required at-home tutoring to finish up my schooling. The fact I buckled at all was a large blow to my self-esteem, and things spiraled out of control for another few years. Once we've hit rock-bottom in life though, the only way left to go is up.

During 2020, a bad decision had given me a new perspective on who I was then, and who I wanted to be in the future. I had to change; I needed to start from the beginning. I took it step by step, starting with my eating habits, then working on daily exercise, then even proper coping strategies like meditation thanks to some classes. By the end of 2020 I was certainly a different person, but I felt like the options I had to further my learning were becoming less and less; I felt as if I was stagnating.

This is when I learnt of the Learning Exchange via Horizon Health. Instead of letting my motivation and drive slip away, I was suggested I continue developing my abilities and self-esteem through professional development courses. The very thought was daunting. Having had such bad experiences in the past with education, I ended up creating a sort of negative bias to the idea of learning; but I refused to let my hard work over 2020 be for naught, and to regress back into who I used to be.

I seized the opportunity and decided that if I was to continue to develop myself for the workforce or post-secondary education, that this was the correct move. My time in the Learning Exchange has taught me a lot about work-place essential skills, proper communication skills, and even familiarizing me with computer programs like Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, and Excel. Most importantly though, it has given rise to a self-confidence I'd forgotten about.

Thanks to their incentive program, it's also helping me discover what kinds of goals I want to achieve. When I started getting money, it was right around the time I quit some costly habits I used to indulge in. So without realizing it, I didn't have anything to spend it on. I personally decided to create my own goal to build a PC. The goal itself has encouraged me to self-study to understand how to pick and choose parts that are compatible by teaching myself about

computer hardware specifications. Ideally, I'd like my long term end goal to be that I can one day look into post-secondary education in Computer Science courses.

I think it's important to remember that humans have always evolved by challenging adversity and overcoming it. Don't let age, IQ, or mental disabilities deter you away from learning; remember that challenging oneself and mistakes are an essential part of learning.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Marina Higgins** – Oromocto Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca/>

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

I left the education system at 19, after spending a majority of my youth hating school; not because I necessarily disliked learning, but because I had a particularly harder time socially and emotionally as a highly sensitive person. This stemmed from my naturally reserved demeanour and sweet personality as a young child. However, it made assimilating into a highly stimulating environment, such as public school, very difficult. This, along with a rocky home life during my teen years (bouncing around different homes and schools made it so my education was not prioritized) or something enjoyed; but a burden I just didn't want to deal with.

After years of toxicity and heartbreak, I realized receiving my high school diploma was opening a doorway that could potentially lead to unlimited possibilities both career-wise, and quality of life-wise. I returned to learning so I could regain my freedom and independence, after years of feeling helpless and held down; whether by my own poor life decisions, or factors that were beyond my control. When I finally broke free from the prison of a 6 year-long abusive relationship, I knew one of the first things I wanted to do with my life (and my freedom) was to receive my education, so I could become self-reliant, hopefully to never find myself in a situation again where I needed another person to support my children and I financially.

I also knew this was the only way I could do the things I dreamt of doing, to fulfil a sense of deeper purpose that I have been longing to fill for years. Re-entering the education system has given me another chance in life to take a better path and make wiser choices. It has given me more drive, ambition, and a greater sense of self-identity. After feeling like I lost myself in years of chaos, I am learning more about who I am on a deeper level – my interests, skills I forgot I had and things I felt passionate about in the past. Simply put, learning has changed my life by adding more depth to it. I luckily have a wonderful teacher, Kelly Coleman, who has shown me an incredible level of empathy, support and understanding as a person coming from intensely traumatizing life circumstances. Not only is she kind, she is patient and understanding when it comes to teaching and the way her students learn. I am grateful to have her through this part of my educational journey.

My goals for the near future are to complete my GED class, and earn my Diploma. I have successfully passed three out of five "tests" and am chipping away at the last bit of it. After I finish this goal, I plan to further my post-secondary education by enrolling into the Social Service Community Worker course. In which I am extremely passionate about, as I dream of helping to provide services and care to the most vulnerable people in our society. A long-term goal of mine would be to become financially stable, and to provide a better life for my children than I had. I plan to achieve this goal by committing to my education and making it of utmost



priority, because it's an incredibly important and valuable tool. As I stated earlier on, education is a key to opening up a doorway of unlimited possibilities and potential.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Tina Labonte** – Nackawic Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca/>

Teacher: Maria Donovan

I had been out of school for over thirty years when I came through the doors of the Nackawic Adult Learning Center. I was so excited to start this new journey and be able to return to school. Returning to school to study for my high school equivalency has been a challenge mixed with joy. Learning Changes lives and it also changed mine and my children's. My life has been better since coming to school and the adult education program in Nackawic, has helped improve my self-confidence. I have encouraged my children to go to college and to improve their own education. I now have hopes and dreams for my future and goals to achieve. I have improved my literacy since coming to Nackawic Adult Learning Center. Education has changed my life for the better.

Returning to school has changed my life and my children's lives. By being a good parent, I encourage my children and grandchildren that education is their life and it is never too late to learn. Education will bring more opportunities for a better life with a good career. Continuing to learn changes lives and education has changed my life for the better. Returning to school has changed my life by helping me set goals and hope for my future. My first goal for my future is to keep working toward getting my GED and when I successfully earn my GED, it will give me even more opportunities. After an accident I could not return to my old job and Nackawic Adult Learning Center gives me hope for a better future. It has taught me not to give up.

Returning to school has made a big difference in my life by improving my literacy. I now can use a computer, I can read with better comprehension, and I have improved my math skills. Learning changes lives and it has changed mine by giving me better literacy skills, set new goals and hope for my future. I plan to achieve my goals one step at a time. Passing my GED is the first step, and it will open up doors and more opportunities for me, and give me the chance to pursue my dream of future education. I am a fifty year old getting her high school equivalency because I believe that learning changes lives and that it is never too late to learn. I'm living proof.

## Why Education is Important

**Natasha Landry** – Lalande Adult Learning Centre (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud)

<https://www.opendoorsged.ca>

Teacher: Angela Cook-Berthelot

Personally, there are many reasons why education is important to me. A few years ago, my right, my power to make choices in my life was taken from me. I wanted to go back to school get my GED, go to college and get a great career, where I'm happy and I can provide for my three kids at the time. But being in a controlling domestic relationship with my boyfriend took all my energy to survive. He took so much from me like my right to an education. Fast forward to now and I have four kids. Me being in school doing my GED has been rewarding and gives me hope for greater things to come. I have been able to help my daughter with her homework and in that moment, I knew my choice at thirty-one years old to get my GED and better myself is paying off. I know I'm worth being able to have education.

One of my biggest reasons for why education is important is my kids, all four of them. I did not graduate high school and I regret that and I truly wish I had finished. I don't want that regret and hard life for my kids when they become adults. Not finishing high should never be a choice a teen is allowed to make, but I did. My kids love school and they learn so much from being in that environment. For my daughter school is everything to her she involves herself in every program and activity she can. Since my kids could talk I taught them that education and school is very important for them not to struggle like I did. Going all the way to university or college will help them have a good life.

My past plays a huge part into how important education is. All the things I missed out on, having a prom, graduating, and so much more. I grew up with so much pain and hurt no child should ever go through. I'm a survivor of many forms of abuse. I truly believe over the years that this abuse has impacted me severely. I know that abuse of any kind on a child at a young age or through their life shapes them. We are taught our worth is low and trying to survive life is our number one concern. But now that I am older and away from all the things stopping me, I have plans and life goals to complete and that feels amazing. Being able to have the power to make education a number one importance in my life is a great feeling. Education and schooling is going to be a part of my life for many years to come. Education should be number one for everyone, you cannot go places in life without it. I wish that things were taught to me when I was younger, but my past will not be my future. I hold all the cards.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Brenda L'Hirondelle** – Moncton Headstart (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://www.opendoorsged.ca>

Teacher: Karen Leonard

In 1988, I upgraded to get into Northern Alberta Institute of Technology for the Basic Banking and Business. Once I finished the program, I worked in a bank until I had my son in October 1990. I was very fortunate to stay home and raise him until he started school.

Over the next few years I had a variety of jobs. In 2003, I went back to N.A.I.T. to take the Nursing Aide/Emergency Responder course. I obtained employment as a Nursing Aide for 10 years in Alberta. Then I moved to New Brunswick in 2014. I finally got employment at the Moncton Hospital as a Personal Support Worker (PSW) in 2018.

Unfortunately, I had an allergic reaction to something and my hands broke out in a very bad rash. It took five months for them to heal. I returned back to work, then Covid 19 came, which meant more hand washing, more sanitizing and mask wearing. My skin allergy went into overdrive and my hands and face broke out into an extremely bad rash, so I had to quit work again.

After months of trying different medications and treatments the doctors recommended I choose a different career because I could not do PSW anymore. I contacted the Alberta School Board to get my upgrading history to discover that I was short three credits, so I never graduated. That has led me back to my GED.

Changing careers meant that I wasn't qualified for anything because I did not graduate. My employment counselor recommended I take the GED program to get a high school diploma. I was very apprehensive.

When I arrived at the Moncton Head Start for testing, and met the teacher, Karen, I felt welcomed and encouraged. In the program I started in preGED (grade 7, 8, 9). As I work through the books I realize I am very capable of learning at my age of 56. My goals for the future are to finish the GED program. This opens the door for opportunities. At this time I am leaning towards teaching personal support workers because I have fourteen years experience in this field.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Nancy McGraw** – Miramichi Adult Learning

<https://www.miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teachers: Beth Losier & Joan Johnstone

With age, comes unnoticed moments of learning in everyday life. We all learn at a different pace or time in life. For myself, education is more important now, than it ever was, especially since I have children. I want my children to grow up and believe in themselves, and know that anything is possible at any age. I need to be their role model and set good examples. Most kids grow up like a mirror reflection of their parents so, I want to be a positive mirror in their lives.

Learning, by going back to school and getting my education at the age of forty, and being a single mother of three amazing kids was definitely the most challenging but, rewarding thing I ever did in my life. I had never really put too much thought into my education, until one day my daughter came home from school, and asked me to help her with her homework. I felt really embarrassed that I could not answer a grade four math question. She looked at me and said, "Moms know all the math they are smart. Did you pass grade four?" At that moment I thought this is not where I want to be in life. I had so much to teach her, therefore, I had to get back to school. I wanted to be a striving example for her.

Returning to school was the best decision I have ever made. It has changed my life in so many positive ways. I now have more confidence and self-worth. So many doors and opportunities will open when I achieve my grade 12 diploma. I will no longer be embarrassed when helping my children with homework. I will be able to confidently drop my resumes off to employers, and be proud of my accomplishment.

"Learning changes lives" this title reminds me of one of my favorite quotes, by Christa McAulliffe. "I touch the future I teach". I want to be a positive mirror reflection and the best version of myself. This will reflect on their future, and teach them that anything is possible no matter what age or pace you go.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Rebecca Mellish** – Highfield Adult Learning Centre (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://www.opendoorsged.ca>

Teacher: Kelly Nikirk

For quite some time I have been wanting to finish my schooling. I have always been filled with self doubt which made it difficult to commit to coming back to school or staying altogether, but here I am making the right choice and pursuing my education to become something more for my family. My two rambunctious, carefree children are the main reasons why I came back to better myself and our future. They keep my agile feet right where they need to be.

Coming back to further my education has encouraged me to follow my dreams, and learning new and re-learning old has given me the leverage I need to succeed. Having great guidance along the way really makes this journey wholesome. Without a great mentor this learning experience would not be the same. Learning is most definitely changing my life. It has shown me the confidence I never thought I would have. Feeding my brain new things, and re-learning the old, makes me feel so accomplished. It is bringing me to where I want and need to be in many aspects of my life, such as building a stable future for my family and self. Becoming successful in helping others would truly be rewarding by saving others in a time of need or creating a safe place for ones who do not have a support group.

My goal for the future is to address other's emotional needs. Due to my history of mental health and past traumas, I feel deeply that I could make a difference in other's lives. I believe that my own techniques and way of thinking can help others dramatically.

I am hoping to write my own book, to share my story with others. I want to share what has helped me get through the worst years of my life, filled with all the trauma, abandonment and addiction. I have been through many things that have shaped me into the person I am today. That being said, my heart is set on making a difference.

I think I could be a huge help to our youth; studies have shown that drug use and mental health issues are worse now than they ever have been. I could make a huge impact on our youth by sharing my experiences and the challenges I have still to this day in hopes it would make them want to correct their mistakes and would give them hope. No matter the situation, if it may be addiction, abandonment issues, or abuse from parents, and I know that I could make a change, and I know I can help others.

## Returning to Learning Changes Lives

**Jessica Nicholas** – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Susan Howard

When I came to the Adult Learning Centre, it changed my life for the better. As soon as I started going to classes, I felt better about myself. I felt proud. I also want to do better for my daughter. I want to finish the Adult Learning course and earn my diploma, so I can work towards getting a better job or career.

Learning changed my life in the following ways. I felt unaccomplished. I felt like something was missing. The people around me finished their education and they got better jobs instantly. That's what I wanted and it gave me more of reason to go back and finish my education. I knew it would be what I needed to feel more accomplished in my life.

I want to finish my education for my daughter. I want to show her that it's never too late to go back and finish school. I want her to see how important education is so she will complete her education. I want her to prosper in her life.

Without an education, the only jobs I could get were cleaning jobs. I want to do something better. All my life, I worked cleaning for other people and I really don't want to do that anymore. I want to have a career working with children or the elderly, or I would like to be a hairdresser. Once I finish with this goal of obtaining my GED, I know it will open up many more doors to change my career.

By coming back to learning, I hope to get a better job or have a better career so I can make a better life for my daughter. I want her to see that education is important and that learning can change lives.

## Returning to Learning Changes Lives

**Sean Nicholas** – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Susan Howard

I decided to return to school to get my General Education Diploma. There are many reasons why having a diploma is important. I believe it will help me to be better suited for employment, to go further in education and have a career, or just to feel a sense of accomplishment. There is really isn't a good reason not to get an education.

I decided to return to school after I lost my job at the Maliseet Gas Bar. It was a struggle to find another job without a diploma. If I had completed school, a lot more opportunities would have been available to me. If I had known how hard it would be to get anywhere in life without an education, I would have returned to school a long time ago.

Returning to learning improved my time management skills significantly. I usually spent most nights watching television and Netflix. I often slept in until noon or late afternoon. I was discouraged because I was unable to find work for so long that I didn't see the point in trying anymore. School helped change all of that for better.

At first, I only wanted to get my diploma just to secure any old job. Then I realized I can expand my horizons and learn many different skills to secure not just a job, but a career. With my background in music, I'm hoping to study Audio Engineering so I can one day become a music producer.

In conclusion, I decided to go back to school to earn my General Education Diploma, whether it be for work, career development or to feel accomplished. There really isn't a reason not to continue learning. My life is already starting to change for the better.



## Returning to Learning Changes Lives

**Kianne Nicholas-Perley** – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Susan Howard

Learning has changed my life daily and continues to do so. I returned to the Tobique Adult Learning Centre to finally finish earning my diploma so that I can start a new chapter in my life. My future goal is to become a veterinarian.

Since I started coming to the Tobique Adult Learning Centre, I have had more motivation than ever before. I wake up early, workout a couple of times a week, and eat a healthy breakfast. I have started looking at colleges and university programs and daycares for my son. I strive to do better in class every day, and also in all aspects of my life.

I returned to learning because I wanted to finish earning my general education diploma. I hope that doing so will also help to motivate my son when he is older to continue his education. I desire to be the best role model for him.

My future goal is to become a veterinarian. Writing is still close to my heart and a passion of mine, but my main career goal and focus is to work with animals. Eventually, I want to build and operate my own animal shelter and clinic in my community.

Returning to learning has changed my life for the better. It has led me to a new chapter in my life and has helped me to achieve my future goals. I hope to inspire people with my story, including my son and other family members. I feel with a good education and confidence in yourself, the possibilities are endless!

## Learning Changes Lives

**Kenneth (Bernie) Parent** – Oromocto Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca/>

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

It's been a long time since I've attended a school environment with a teacher and fellow classmates. At first, I was petrified of entering this type of environment for the reasons based on bad experiences from the past such as being called unethical names. To this day, I still believe these terrible names and it's still difficult to forget. I've been in the military for 34 years and for me to complete this education at this time in my life would be a big weight off my shoulders. Also, the demons that were cast on me in the past would be arrested and put away.

I have been attending GED classes since 2016, but only a couple of hours a day for two days per week. On that note, since I have been attending GED classes with an abundance of help from both my teacher and classmates past and present, I see myself as eager to learn more and more each time I attend the classes. I have been reminded that a person is never too old to learn and I still believe that. Since 2016, I have written and passed two out of five standard GED subjects. I can say my experience in the military has helped me organize the priority of learning all the material required to get my GED. Learning is a delicate tool in which in my opinion was overshadowed in the past regarding each person's ability to learn. Today, there are so many teaching tools that teachers have access to and this allows them to teach anyone at any time whatever needs to be taught. My teacher, Kelly Coleman, helps prepare students to feel more confident in attending class and completing this program. She has a great way of explaining any concept to her students. She is an excellent teacher!

As for my goals on completion of the GED Program, this would be a great accomplishment for my personal life because I did not had have the opportunity to do graduate from high school. Additionally, for me this accomplishment would satisfy any doubts that I have had overcoming employment obstacles. Taking my GED has improved my confidence 110% and this confidence has helped me with my military career. This improved confidence has also given me the motivation to continue with my GED even when I retire next February.

In conclusion, education is very important to me. Everyone needs and deserves an education because without it, society will not be able to function in a productive manner.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Ellen Peng** – South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est

<https://www.opendoorsged.ca>

Teacher: Monique Surette

In my life, my motto has always been: We are never too old to learn. As a result, in every real life experience that I go through, I always keep learning. This year, I am 55 years old, and I started to pursue a GED with South East Adult Learning. After I get my high school diploma, my next step is to continue to study in NBCC.

Honestly, I really like learning because learning changes lives. Learning new information improves my life and helps me to be more energetic and optimistic. Then, I can influence people around me in my community and also contribute positively to the world at large. I want to make the world a better place.

First, learning makes me to be a better person. When I was child, my father bought a lot of books for me, so I learned information that was beyond my regular school work. As a consequence, I had many dreams. After I read Marya Salomea Sklodowska's work, I wanted to be a scientist. After reading Thomas Edison's story, I wanted to be an inventor. I also like writing articles and most were published in newspapers, and so on. All in all, there is a Chinese saying: You can find a Golden House in a book. At that time, I learned a lot from books. Books opened my eyes and made my dreams come true. In 2006, I discovered the International Au Pair program and became a part of it. It is popular in Europe and America, but it was new in China. Nobody taught me the process of being an international Au Pair. I studied online and read books to get more information. Finally, I started this program successfully in China from 2006 to 2019. I am very proud of myself.

Secondly, learning enables me to help and influence other people. During my earlier high school life, I lived at my aunt's house and my cousins did not like to study. I did not blame them. However, I studied hard every day and got good scores. My attitude about studying influenced them and they started working harder. As I stated above, because I was learning and doing well in the Au pair program, I also helped a lot of Chinese youth to become independent and confident. They went to America and Europe by themselves without spending any of their parent's money. They expanded their horizons and enjoyed life abroad. I am so proud of my au pairs.

Finally, what I want to say is that, constant learning has helped me to develop a deeper level of understanding about life. Of course, in such a big world, each of us is very small. Perhaps we are like tiny cells in the world. If we all like to learn new things from this world, become more open-minded and positive, more healthy cells will make the world healthier and happier.

After a lengthy reflection, I know that I'm right. My hope is that those who read this will know that one is never too old to learn. Learning changes lives.

## Overcomer

**Allison Perch** – Fredericton Distance Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca/>

Teacher: Cheryl Ford

I am a 46 year old mother of seven amazing children. I am also a domestic abuse survivor. I dropped out of high school at the age of seventeen, so I never received my diploma. I wanted to return to school several times over the years, but someone or something was always standing in my way. Finally, last fall I worked up the courage and determination to return to school. I am currently enrolled with the Central Valley Adult Learning Association to obtain my GED.

Life has given me many hardships. I spent twenty years in a very controlling and abusive relationship. I was raising seven children with next to no help from their father. I was belittled and physically abused. I was not allowed to work or go back to school. My ex-husband did not want me to really associate with anyone outside of our home. When he did allow me to go anywhere, I was never allowed to go alone; I had to bring some of the children with me. In his eyes, I only belonged at home, raising the kids, taking care of him, and keeping the house in order. Any time I discussed wanting to do something to better myself, I would get bullied or mocked. I worked up the courage to leave him in 2014. In 2015, I moved to Fredericton from Nova Scotia with five of my children. I started a whole new life with my new partner, who has stood by me and cheered me on through everything.

In the fall of 2020, I had reached my breaking point. I had to leave my first ever full time job due to stress and the fact that even after two years of working my hardest, I was still only making minimum wage. I decided it was time for me to take a stand and do something positive for myself. I was referred to distance learning by my social worker, and that is how I met my amazing teacher, Cheryl Ford.

When I first started studying, I felt very overwhelmed. However, the more I worked, and the more I saw what I was capable of, the easier it became. I realized nothing was going to stop me from obtaining my diploma.

Furthering my education has given me a tremendous amount of self-confidence. When I was with my ex-husband, he made me feel like I was never good enough or smart enough and that I would never amount to anything. Since beginning this journey, I have regained my confidence and have been able to accomplish many things. I was able to receive the dental work I so desperately needed and now I have a brand new smile. I have also written four of my five GED tests, which I passed with flying colours. I am now only one step away from receiving my diploma. Once I earn my GED, I plan on attending NBCC to further my education even more. Furthermore, I plan on getting a job that allows me to be independent so I can buy a car and eventually own the home of my dreams.

Life may have thrown me one too many curveballs, but with the help and support of those in my life, including my teacher, I am now able to knock one of those biggest curveballs right out of the park.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Jacob Sexton** – Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca>

Teacher: Megan Munden

I was at a point in my life where I was starting to take on greater responsibility's for the choices and decisions that I was making; and I didn't always feel like I was doing anything useful for myself or other's. I had taken some educational courses of homeschooling with my family but I still needed a little bit more education to be able to write the GED exams: so with my own motivation and the support of my family, I decided to start the GED program.

Instruction from this course has taught me how to really harness the basic skills of everyday learning and has given me the tools to apply this education in ways that I can improve my life's path. I have been able to learn about the roles of economics and the social aspect of education as well as the science of how things work together to create our society today.

In gaining this diploma I will have opened the gate on my path of life making new roads to walk which other wise would have been closed before. It will open up future opportunity for further learning and education, and for possible business opportunity's. This learning will allow me to have the ability to support myself and my future family, it will also allow me to teach others these same skills that I have learned. The goals that I have set and the future ones that I hope to set will all happen because I have been willing to learn and increase in my knowledge.

I already feel like I am on my way to the top; with so much success of accomplishment within my learning course. I am thankful for those that have helped me to work hard, stay focused and to also have some enjoyment along the way.

I hope that I can help encourage others to take the steps they need to further their own learning. I also hope they can find the same feeling of improvement and success as I have been able to feel in gaining my education. I have felt and can testify that learning can change lives.

## How Learning Has Changed My Life

**James Trevors** – Miramichi Literacy Council

<https://www.lnb.ca/about-mlc.html>

Teacher: Pat Hegan

My name is James Trevors. I am twenty-two years and I live in Miramichi New Brunswick.

I graduated from James M. Hill High School in 2016. I wanted to find a program to help me improve my English and speech. My employment counsellor told me about Miramichi Literacy. I had an interview with their coordinator. I started meeting with my tutor twice a week. I enjoyed this time because I was learning quicker than I thought I would.

With the tutoring, my 'sounding out' words became better and I started to pronounce words clearer and to have more confidence.

My family and friends noticed improvement with my speech. I have more confidence talking to others. I feel proud of myself. I can speak for myself and not have to have my friends say what I want to say.

I continued with my education at Bay Tech College taking welding in Moncton. The course was four months and I worked towards the first block. I went to my employment counsellor to have a tutor to help me with my studies.

I returned to Miramichi to continue with my tutoring and to find a job.

I have been working at Boston Pizza for two years. I read the quizzes that teach me about new recipes. I need to know the ingredients for all the recipes – especially gluten free. I work at many stations preparing different dishes.

I enjoy my video games more because I understand the quests. There are some games that I need to answer questions and to choose an option. I also started reading Manga and recipe books.

I would like to learn more about budgeting. I'm paying off my student loan and saving up to buy a piece of land. I will put my mini home there.

I am interested in many things and will keep learning.

Thanks for listening to my story.



## Learning Changes Lives

**Michael Webb** – Woodstock Adult Learning Program (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne Mclsaac

I stood there, looking upward in awe, my eyes straining from the intensity of the equatorial sun. I processed the rock figure before me; "...and you said these Ma'oi were brought here how??" The last thing on my mind, as I stood in front of this Easter Island giant, was the grade 12 diploma exams 4 weeks away. Soon we would be sailing into the Galápagos Islands to visit George the Giant Tortoise; just one of the many fascinating ports yet to come. Today, 30 odd years later, I find that I am now ready, and wanting to obtain my diploma. Not that I wasn't ready before, I just hadn't reached that waypoint in my life journey.

There really isn't an answer as to why I'm taking my GEDs' at this time. It just happens to be the leg in my life I am on right now. It may help that I now have an idea of what I might like to do, a course to follow, a direction to go! No matter how absurd it may be, I will race the Baja 1000, in a vehicle I've built from the ground up. Perhaps one could say this is why I am here now, taking a step towards my dream of completing that race by first obtaining my GED.

As I navigate through my GED program, I am creating pathways to making my dream of completing the Baja 1000 a reality. I am adding to my list of assets and validating those I have already gained through my life's experience and previous careers. This, in theory, should allow for an easier transition to my new career. Having pathways I can choose to follow is a new opportunity for me, a change. I don't necessarily see it happening, as I am navigating through it each day, yet taking steps towards my goal is creating a change in my life.

My goal is to race in the Baja 1000. This one goal, however, consists of many smaller goals. Similar to driving a vehicle with a manual transmission, one must start with first gear, which for me is my GED, my first goal. Once I am rolling with my GED completed, I can look at grabbing second gear, which will likely be a welding and fabrication program or a business course. Both of these programs, amongst others, will provide the foundation to achieving my goal of crossing the finish line of the Baja 1000.

I find that learning is a constant, occurring almost anywhere, and at any time. I decided to take my learning to the classroom to obtain my GED. While I may not be noticing the changes that are occurring from this learning, I do know that I'm opening the doors of opportunity and that in itself is a change. All this may not sink in until I have crossed the finish line of the Baja 1000, but then I can look back and say "WOW, learning has changed my life!"

## Learning Changes Lives

**Sarah White** – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

Here is a little pop quiz, why did it take the grade nine drop-out so long to return to learning?  
A) She didn't feel like a part of her community. B) Obstacles like poor life choices got in the way.  
C) She didn't believe in herself. Do you give up? It was a trick question and the answer is in fact all three.

If you knew me and seen my name on a list of graduates, you'd be in disbelief. Frankly, I am too. I never thought I'd have the confidence to return to school when I already felt so detached from my own community. Feeling out of place and unimportant was almost of natural occurrence for me. Going unnoticed and the feeling of achieving nothing fought against my confidence. I never realized ten years ago it was my bad life choices and lack of care for myself that destroyed that desire of knowledge I once felt. Bad life choices clouded my judgement and I hit my rock bottom. Becoming an Egyptologist, working in Human Services and even getting certified in a Trade were all just figments of my imagination.

However, since I've started the GED course they have become my goals. The accomplishment of gaining my self-esteem back came from not only myself but the teachers like Joanne McIsaac, who showed they believe in me just as much. I have pushed my limits throughout this course while raising my two year old daughter. Something I never dreamed I'd be capable of doing, and now I'm on my way to college.

After all this time, if someone asked me do you regret taking this long?" I'd simply reply with "No." This time I gave it my all, while being a mom of a beautiful toddler, I'm chasing my goals. My future now means something to me and my accomplishments have made me see myself in my community as someone who matters- who will make a difference. These are all examples I am blessed to share with my daughter. Some may still see me as a drop-out and that's okay. Statistically I am, one drop-out who went back on her own for an education and I am proud.

For I not fear the fear itself

But the fear for not conquering through

## Learning Changes Lives

**Wayne T. Worster** – Perth-Andover Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Karen Garnett

Why do I want to get a GED? I was given an aptitude test by a psychologist, and she was impressed with some of the results of the test. She suggested that I take an upgrade and get my GED. That was 12 years ago when I was 51 years old, and I've been asking ever since. I don't know why one of my case managers would not take a chance on me. But I am glad that I never gave up because I did get approval for some financial support to attend the Perth-Andover Adult Learning Centre.

Here at the centre, I have met some "very" patient and dedicated teachers who have introduced me to things like laptops and iPads. I have been given some lessons in the operation of these devices which has given me the ability to write this essay. I know there is still more for me to learn about this technology, and with some more lessons I will be able to do even more. I can see that there is a great potential in this device, which will give me the ability to pass my English test, at least that is what I am hoping for. It is amazing for me to watch my words appear on the screen in front of my eyes. I wish this privilege would have been granted to me 12 years ago because my life would be a lot different today. But I can't take all the credit, if it wasn't for the teachers and instructors, I would not be able to do what I have just done. Now I can put my words in writing because I can't spell, and I have a hard time reading, and this iPad has changed all that for me.

What will I do with a GED? The real question is what will this GED do for me, will it open doors so I can step through, into a greater education? This iPad excites me, and I hope to write many more essays with it!