



Literacy Coalition
of New Brunswick^{Ltd.}

Coalition pour l'alphabétisation
du Nouveau-Brunswick^{Ltée.}

Learning Changes Lives

L'apprentissage change des vies

CELEBRATING ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

APRIL 18TH TO APRIL 22ND, 2022

CÉLÉBRER LA SEMAINE DES APPRENANTS
ADULTES

18 AVRIL AU 22 AVRIL, 2022

Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick

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Learning Changes Lives!

Mariam Adaiif – Fredericton Youth, Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Christina Kenny

Hello, everyone! My name is Mariam Aldaiif!

I'm from Syria and I have been living in Canada since January 3rd, 2016. I came to Canada with my husband and three kids. Due to the civil war in Syria, we had to migrate to Canada. It wasn't an easy decision to make, but we had to do it for the safety and well-being of our family. As of now, our family has welcomed a new member, and I am proudly a mother of four boys.

After coming to Fredericton, New Brunswick, I went to the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF) to learn English, as I had never learned or spoken English before. Arabic is my native language. I completed level 5 in English through the English as a Second Language program at MCAF and found it to be quite helpful. My English has improved a lot, and it has been great for my confidence as well. I had decided to study in the GED program so that I could continue studying and eventually get a diploma in Early Childhood Education at NBCC, or study to become a hair dresser and possibly open my own business one day. When I discussed the possibility of applying for the GED program, my counsellor Michelle advised me to complete the WES program before working on my GED. Then I applied to this program and got accepted. The WES Program lasted 10 weeks, and I finished on April 13th. Then right after, on May 20th, I started attending the GED program. I am hoping in the near future, to get a job and start working. This will help my husband and I financially support our four children. It is important to me to stay active, so I am not interested in staying at home.

I think the GED program is an absolutely wonderful idea. Giving non-graduate students a second chance to get their high school education is delightful. So I am very thankful to get this opportunity, and I am very excited to continue learning.

Learning Changes Lives

Kim Armour – Bath Adult Learning Program (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Bev Haines

Hello, my name is Kim. I am writing today to let you know why I chose to come back to school and a little about the time I was in high school.

I am not one to like to talk about myself to others, but let's give this a try. Back in 2009 I made the poor decision to drop out of school in my last year. Looking back I wish I could've told myself to stay in school. You don't know how good you have it. Life doesn't always work the way we want it to though. The important thing is I made the choice to come to take my GED in 2011. That year I passed 3 out of 5 Exams. I am not sure looking back why I didn't return the following school year to finish the others but it took me until 2021 to come back. I made the decision to come back not only for myself but for my 3 daughters. I would like to show them anything is possible if you put your mind to it. I am also doing this for myself to show myself I can do this. I would like to go to college to become a Personal Support Worker also known as (PSW) which is my dream job.

I know this time around this is what I want, and I am not letting anyone stop me. In December of 2021 I passed my 4th exam which leaves me one more; I am set to write that one in March 2022.

Hopefully the next time you hear from me is when I am done school and off to my dream job. I would like to take the time to thank my wonderful teacher Bev Haines for helping me succeed on this path and always doing her best at trying to educate my brain which I know sometimes is not easy.

Thank you for the opportunity to finish my school with the best support system being offered.

Learning Changes Lives

Jillise Beckwith – East Saint John Adult Learning

<http://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Teacher: Al Rouse

Learning changes many lives. It helps people feel confident about themselves. It gives them motivation and it can help them find better jobs or go to a good college. Accomplishing something like this is a huge step in my life and it makes me feel better about me.

I returned to learning so, I can please my dad in heaven. He always wanted his kids to graduate school and none of us accomplished that. He is the biggest pull as to why I am doing this. I also want my kids to be proud of what I am doing and will learn from it. I want to feel good about me and feel like I have accomplished this huge step.

Learning has changed my life for the good. I feel motivated to do more. I feel the confidence in me more and I love the feeling. I also want a better job to improve my financial and doing this is going to help me achieve this. Who knows maybe I will go to college and try to accomplish that too?

My goals are to finish my grade 12 and either work at the hospital or go to college. What I really want for my life is to be happy with everything that I do accomplish. I never knew that learning could be so rewarding. If I had known back then when I quit school that it would have been rewarding I would have kept going with it. That is my regret.

Therefore, learning really does have its disadvantages in life. You can do really well by learning everything that you can in life.

L'apprentissage; chance de vie meilleur

Amélie Boudreau – CCAA Lancaster (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca/>

Enseignante : Carole Bourgault

Bonjour, je m'appelle Amélie.

Je suis bilingue et viens originairement d'un petit village appelé Memramcook. J'ai fait jusqu'au niveau 10.

J'ai décidé de retourner à l'école pour plusieurs bonne raison.

Par exemple, l'éducation est très importante dans la vie, pour prendre certains cours, certains emplois demandent le niveau 12.

Je veux montrer le bon exemple à mes quatre garçons qui grandissent si vite, je veux pouvoir les aider avec leurs questions d'école, besoin de changement professionnel et je désire réaliser mon rêve pour raison personnelle, etc.

Je n'ai jamais eu de chance de compléter mon éducation, car j'ai commencé ma famille très jeune. Je me suis toujours dis que je retournerai aux études une fois que mes enfants seront plus vieux et que je peux trouver le temps.

Ce n'est pas toujours facile de retourner à l'école quand on a 35 ans et qu'on n'a pas mis le pied dans une classe depuis des années.

J'étais un peu nerveuse de retourner, mais ça va bien! Mes professeures sont très gentilles.

Elles me donnent la confiance d'être capable de réussir quand je ne comprends pas mes devoirs. Elles m'aident à mieux comprendre. Mes enfants me donnent le courage de continuer et je me donne des objectifs positifs à accomplir.

Si j'obtiens mon diplôme, je continuerai à travailler avec les personnes âgées, car j'adore travailler avec elles.

J'ai commencé à travailler à seulement seize ans dans ce domaine. Avec mon diplôme, je pourrais aller plus loin dans mon éducation et prendre des cours spéciaux pour avancer dans ce que j'aime. Mon rêve serait un jour de m'ouvrir mon propre foyer pour personnes âgées, car il a tellement de personnes âgées qui sont à l'hôpital qui attendent une chambre dans les foyers. Les foyers sont pleines et ils n'y en a pas assez pour tous les personnes qui attendent une chambre. Je ne pourrais pas les aider tous, mais je peux en aider un peu.

Je peux pas prédire l'avenir. Cependant j'aimerais beaucoup d'accomplir plus, même si je réussis pas je peux dire que j'ai essayé.

L'avenir nous le dira, mais je n'oublierai pas ceux qui mon aider dans ce chemin d'éducation.

Ma grand-mère qui est décédée en 2017. Elle était une maîtresse d'école pendant plusieurs années. Elle adorait lire, apprendre toutes sortes de choses qui aidaient à la mémoire. Ma grand-mère disait faut utiliser le cerveau pour ne pas qu'il rouille. Elle m'avait toujours dit de retourner à l'école quand j'aurais la chance. Je sais qu'elle est avec moi durant cette aventure et elle est fière de moi.

Je vous suggère de penser à revenir au études, car ça peut changer ta vie d'une bonne manière. Tu es capable! Il faut toujours essayer avant de dire que tu n'es pas capable. Tu verras! Cest plus facile que tu penses. Si ça peut changer ma vie, ça peut changer la tienne. Vas-y, lance-toi dans l'aventure!

Learning Changes Lives

Jocelyn Mackenize Brown – St. George Adult Learning Program

<http://ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Elizabeth Kneabone

Why I'm returning back to learning(school)after 30 yrs,is such a complex question for me .There are many reasons I could say. For starters, I feel like I owe it to myself to at least see what I can accomplish .

When I left school at the age of fifteen I struggled with learning .I felt stupid and not able to understand the assignments that were given me .I found the more the years went by the harder my struggles became.It was a different time back then. If you weren't able to learn ,you were put at the back of the class and were just passed through.You sat in class wondering why you were even there .I never had any question why I left and never returned.

When my children started going to school , I was often worried I wouldn't be able to help them with their homework. They didn't struggle in school so helping them with their homework was something I didn't have to do. They hardly ever brought homework home.When I asked, they said they did it in class. It was such a relief to me to not have to worry about helping them because I worried about looking different in my kids eyes .(The childhood fears of not being smart enough were still lurking in the back of my mind)

As the years went by, I had several jobs from fishing,salmon farming ,dulsing,to even cleaning ditches,that were always physically exhausting.The reason for these choices was because it required little to no education.I'm not saying there is anything wrong with these jobs, they paid my bills and fed my children, but it wasn't my first choice in careers.As I get older I realize the damage I have put my body through.

It was finally time for a change.I decided to take the GED book my daughter had bought me a few years ago and return to school. I nagged one of my childhood friends to come with me to keep me accountable. Thankfully she agreed.

Everything I've learned thus far, is how my brain works.Sometimes people just need the time to be assessed to see why they struggle.I learned that I struggle with an inattentive ADHD disorder. So with this being addressed there are different ways to help in my learning .It is such a relief to know that I wasnt the dumb girl after all ! I just needed some extra attention sent my way .Part of me looks back on that little girl in the back of the class wondering how much different her life could have been.

So as I ponder about my future,wondering what I'd like to be when I grow up, I realize I can be anything I want to be .I can continue on with school and go become that nurse or the heavy equipment operator. There's no stopping me now!

Retour vers le future (partie 2)

Martin Comeau – CCAA Dieppe (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)
<https://education-se.ca/>

Enseignante : Massy Tamdrari

Mon nom est Martin Comeau, je suis un apprenant au CCAA Dieppe depuis 2020. Mon histoire est plus qu'une suite de mon retour aux études, car j'ai fait cette rédaction l'an passé. Pour moi, cette suite est pour démontrer que tout est possible malgré les circonstances.

Ce retour aux études est jusqu'à maintenant très bénéfique pour moi, autant sure plan psychologique et physique. Je suis devenu une meilleure personne envers moi-même et envers les autres. Je suis plus responsable, j'abandonne moins vite devant les obstacles. Le Martin d'avant aurait trouvé une excuse pour interrompre son apprentissage à cause du manque des interactions sociales causé par la pandémie de covid 19.

Fréquenter le centre d'apprentissage et l'idée d'avoir mon diplôme m'a sauvé la vie. C'est sûr que rien n'est facile, rien n'est offert. Il est plus tentant de gaspiller son énergie à penser négativement au lieu de la mettre au profit de ce qui est positif. Je vous assure qu'il est préférable de dépenser son énergie pour créer du positif. Bien entendue, tout est dans l'attitude et l'acceptation de faire des sacrifices. De plus, avoir un bon professeur n'est pas donné à tout monde, mais quand tu l'as, cela a un impact sur l'estime de soi et vouloir continuer jusqu'à la fin.

Si je raconte mon histoire comme ça, c'est dans le but d'encourager les autres à retourner aux études et leur dire que tout est possible. Présentement, j'ai terminé mes cahiers d'apprentissage, je suis rendu niveaux GED. J'ai l'intention d'écrire mes examens un par un, je prépare mon test de français pour les deux ou trois prochaines semaines. Je sens que je suis très proche de mon objectif d'obtenir mon diplôme. J'ai l'intention de terminer d'ici septembre, pour pouvoir m'inscrire au collège pour la rentrée scolaire prochaine.

Concernant mes projets futurs, ils demeurent les mêmes à savoir prendre un cours en intervention jeunesse dans le but de travailler avec des jeunes délinquants et les faire sortir de leurs dépendances, de la violence, des abus familiaux...Bref, leur redonner goût à la vie en utilisant ma propre expérience de vie. Je termine avec la phrase que je me dis beaucoup : tes choix du passé ne définissent pas tes choix du futur.

Learning Changes Lives

Ryan Drost – Nackawic Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Maria Donovan

It's 2007 and seventeen year old me decided that dropping out of High School was the right option. I had a job, and was making enough money to keep me happy and in the moment. Although I was happy, I would often ask myself "Is this enough?". Fast forward twelve years and I'm still working the same job and maintaining a comfortable lifestyle for my children and I. I knew that having an education would allow me to apply on and have a better chance on more competitive job postings, however it was daunting to grasp the concept of being without an income all while juggling returning to school and still being able to support my family. So once again I put taking the steps towards my high school equivalency on the back burner.

When the global pandemic forced shut-downs my employer had no choice but to sell the company and I was left without work. When I started searching, there were many jobs available, but there was one thing holding me back from getting the jobs that interested me most. I needed an Education. I started to do some serious thinking, and with the support of my family, decided that it was finally the right time to hit the books!

I was made aware of a program called PETL. After some research, I was shocked to learn of all the resources that this program has to offer. All with the sole purpose of helping me to achieve a better life. Without the funding that PETL provides I would still be working the jobs that 'just get you by'. I now sit in a classroom, with a great group of class mates, and teacher that has helped me learn things that I just couldn't wrap my head around back in my high school years. I am grateful for this opportunity.

Earning my High School Equivalency is the start of endless opportunities. After completion, I plan to further my education and am looking forward to building a career. I plan to further my education in Forestry and Conservation. I have put a lot of thought in to deciding to work towards this career path. I am passionate about nature and wildlife and am confident that going to work in this field would support the lifestyle that I live and love. My goal is to be able to answer that question that I often ask myself "is this enough?" a lot more differently. I will answer it with more confidence in knowing that I have worked towards and achieved my goals.

If you're reading this and somehow can relate to my story, stop overthinking it and take the leap! It's never too late to educate yourself and make a positive change for your future. It's been a long road and there are a lot of people that have contributed to helping me get to this point, program faciliators, educators, friends and family just to name a few. I can't wait to see what the future has to offer once I complete my High School Equivalency.

Learning Changes Lives

Cheryl-Lynn Dunford – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

As I sit down to reflect on my time as to why returned to school as an adult, there are many reasons to consider. The most important reason for me to go back is to give my kids a better future. Most good paying jobs will require a grade 12 education or more. Having more self-esteem has helped me grow and develop better skills.

Education has never been easy for me. Having learning disabilities at such a young age and being Indigenous during a time when you were consider being a bad kid if you did not catch up to the other kids, was a nightmare. School has never been a place where I wanted to be as a child. I struggled with simple tasks that other kids never had to work hard to get. It was not fun to learn. Now there are so many changes in our education system to better help children and adults with learning disabilities. I am able to learn at my own pace and have extra time on my exam. As I work on getting my GED at the age of 40, it's helped make me become more confident in most areas of my life.

Going back to school to get my GED was a tough decision, but the right one for me. I have 2 more courses to pass. They are taking me awhile to get, but this has given me a great feeling of knowing I passed 3 exams and can pass these last 2. I feel like I can look to the future without all the feelings of failure now. My future has way more opportunities by being able to continue with my education.

Learning Changes Lives

Jairah Espejo – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Joanne Mclsaac

Jose Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, once said “Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan.” which translates to “The youth is the hope of our nation.” This phrase has been drilled to my head for as long as I can remember, and it has always been followed by the question “How?”. My young mind could not find an explanation then but the only answer I could find is education; They say when you have an education, you will be heard, you could make a change, you can have a better life, and it’s something that will never be taken away from you. Things don’t always go as planned though, I am now 23, and I am left wondering yet again, would I still be a hope or a change I once aspired to be? But how? With experience, I now fully understand, and the first answer I could find is education.

I am Jairah Espejo, I am an immigrant from the Philippines where I was raised by my grandparents while my mom works overseas. I’ve always loved learning, though getting an education in my home country is more of a privilege, I am grateful that I was surrounded with people who supports my passion for education growing up. Growing up without parents is tough, or so I thought. I became a parent myself, to twin boys at the young age of 18 before I even finish my high school. Unfortunately, I didn’t have a village to help me and I was with someone who emotionally abused me to stay with him for his own benefit, I basically have to do it by myself, that also means sacrificing one of the many things I loved doing, studying, and men! Being a parent yourself is tougher, especially when you have nothing, and no one to run to. In 2018, I had the opportunity to come and live in Canada with my kids who were just barely walking then, it’s still rough and I’m still alone. When you’ve been with someone who made you believe you’re nothing without him for so long, you’re going to start to believe it, I never thought I’d still have the confidence to go back to learning, but I realized there is so much more I could do, I would never go through all this hardships for nothing, if only I could open more doors and I could only open certain doors through education, my first love! I may not be a hope of my nation, but I will be a hope to the youth that I brought into this world.

After GED, I envision myself going to a university to study Sonography so that I’d be able to work in a hospital or clinic as an Ultrasound technician. I want to give my kids a comfortable life, and I somehow believe that my compassion and empathy could touch a lot of people. I hope someday, I could say that I did it, no matter what.

Life is unpredictable no matter how good you plan it, things may not fall where we want to be but it doesn’t mean we can’t go back on track and work for our dreams. Our causes might change, our dreams might not be as big as what we were hoping it to be but what matters is you’re taking a step to make it happen. Sometimes, time is an illusion, progress, no matter how small is still a progress and we will get there.

Learning Changes Lives

Lisa Giggie – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Bev Haines

Why I am returning to "Learning Changes Lives" is to get my grade 12 education. I have been out of school for 20 so years. There is so much I have missed. My 2 children have graduated high school, so I thought it was about time I should get my GED. It may take me a couple of years or so to complete it, but I will do it.

It is changing my life; there is so much to learn with things that I didn't take in school. My goal in the future is to get my grade 12, find a steady job and go on from there. I have learned a lot since I started GED, and thanking Bev for helping me when I struggling in math. I know I will get the math; I just have to keeping working and do my best, it will take time.

Learning Changed My Life

Britny Gould – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Bev Haines

There are many reasons I decided to return to learning. Firstly, obtaining a diploma is one of the major goals I had set for myself at a younger age, so not pursuing that goal would be unacceptable. Secondly, I return to learning for my family. As a young mother to five wonderful children, I feel I have a certain level of responsibility to be the most positive and knowledgeable role model that I can be in their lives. Lastly, I once stumbled across a quote about education that I felt spoke to me on a personal level. I'd like to share the moving words of Nelson Mandela himself, to which he said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." My interpretation of these words was that education is the best place for one to gain knowledge, reasoning, and the right skills to make this world a better place.

I didn't always think so highly about education as I do now. At sixteen years old I dropped out of high school; education had always been very difficult for me. In the first grade I was diagnosed with learning disabilities and ADD. Labeled as different, I started to notice my brain wasn't the same as the children in my class. I couldn't learn at the same pace and my thoughts were unfocused and unclear. Instead of learning what was being taught in the classroom, my mind would wander and race. Making even the simplest of work very difficult, soon enough I wholeheartedly believed I was an outsider, lesser than my all peers. I strayed from the idea that I too could one day learn like everyone else.

It wasn't until after the birth of my first child that I started to gain real knowledge and I began to realize learning was important. I also realized that everyone's learning style was different. That's when I set the goal of obtaining a diploma so that I could do more for myself and my children. For the past eight years my children have been my main source of acquiring knowledge. I am very grateful for all of the lessons taught to me in motherhood but unfortunately, with no high school diploma, or college degree, a future career in the field that sparks my interest would be unattainable. I needed to grow academically, so in August of 2021, I made a life altering-decision to return to learning at the age of twenty-five, here at the Bath Adult Learning Center.

The decision to return to learning did not come without doubt and irrational fears for the future. In the weeks approaching my first class I became very nervous. The idea of being a second time drop out surfaced; the thought of what my children would think of me if that were to happen became overwhelming, but I continued on with my plan. I attended my first class, then my second and so on. Soon I began to realize that I could learn; not only that, but learning was something I really enjoyed. My life started to feel purposeful, I was proud of myself and I finally felt like I was on the path to becoming the best role model I could be for my children.

I am interested in the idea of being a lifelong learner. With that said, when I finish the GED program, I would like to continue my education. I am fairly certain that I want to specialize in helping people with substance abuse. After losing my best friend to addiction and being in recovery myself, I feel I have many qualities that will help to enhance me in this particular field. I didn't always believe in my future and the goals that I have set, but with the help from my very supportive and kind teacher Bev Haines, I now believe this is something I can truly accomplish through learning, dedication, and hard work. I am very grateful for the opportunities learning and the GED program has helped make possible for me and I look forward to my contribution of making this world a better place through my education.

Learning Changes Lives

Holly Grenier – L.E.A.P. (Learning Exchange Academic Program) – Saint John Learning Exchange

<https://sile.org/programs/education/leap/>

Teacher: Ginny Hooper

I moved back home to Saint John two years ago. During the first year home a lot of things were crumbling around me and I couldn't seem to get things to slow down. Throughout all of this, I knew that I wanted more out of life. I did a lot of self-reflection and realized that school was where I wanted to start my new journey at.

Since starting school I have more self-confidence than I have ever had. I am grateful for all of the people that I have met and am working with. I learn much better in a comfortable environment and everyone here goes out of their way to make this the best experience that we can have.

Learning for me was not easy growing up. I find that as an adult, I seem to be able to concentrate much more than when I was a child. Also as an adult, I love learning now! The more I learn and grow, the more I just want to keep growing.

There have been quite a bit of bumps in the road along the way, but they seem to only want to make work harder. Since I have been in school, my daughter Shyla, has seen me grow and she grew interested in my school as well. She is now a student in another class, with a different facilitator than me and she seems to like it. I feel so blessed that her and I can share these experiences, with these amazing people guiding us.

Right now, I am working on getting my high school diploma. Afterwards, I plan on attending bible college; I have an idea of what I want to do (just not all pieced together yet). My career choice involves helping people understand their worth and value. It truly breaks my heart to see people not realize how much they are valued and loved. We (all of us as people) do matter! Everyone should know it.

Learning Changes Lives

Larissa Haddow – Oromocto Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

Some People have elaborate dreams. My dream is to graduate from the GED program. Throughout my life, I have faced some very challenging times. One thing that I have never given up on was my dream of earning a diploma and furthering my education in college to become an Early Childhood Educator. It's important to show my two children that education is extremely important to succeed in life and that no matter how much time something may take, it is never too late to chase your dreams.

Finishing my education is very personal for me. I did not have someone to push me to keep going or to tell me the consequences of not finishing my education. Because of this, I felt a void in my life. I always felt like a failure or less of a person because I did not finish school. I made the decision that I wanted a better life for myself and my children.

One day, I made the call. The call that would change my life. Before I knew it, I was attending GED Classes. As I went through each packet, passed the tests and eventually passed the exams, I became more focused, determined and confident in all aspects of my life. This has changed how I live my everyday life now. Today, I believe in myself.

Before making the decision to go back to school, I was working as a Daycare worker. While working with children, I had quickly come to realize that my place in the work field was to help children to learn and cope with their surroundings. I was comfortable in this role and that was when I had decided I wanted to finish my education, go to college and become an Early Childhood Educator. I believe that children need people to be patient with them and to believe in them. Those are things I have learned throughout the years, especially since I have started this program.

There are a lot of emotions that come with going back to school. A few of these emotions are courage, fear, guilt and exhaustion. While those can be scary to experience, there are also other emotions that are rewarding. Pride, confidence, joy, appreciation and peace are some of the positive emotions. Knowing that my children are watching me throughout all of these makes me happy because they are real emotions, and it shows them that although things may be difficult and hard at times, if you believe in yourself you can overcome anything.

All my life experiences have brought me to this moment in my life. I have no regrets as I would not be here writing this essay today, nor would I be accomplishing my dreams. You cannot overhaul your life over night, but every small step helps you to get there.

Learning Changes Lives

Marina Higgins – Oromocto Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

I chose to return to learning to have a better life for my loved ones as well as for myself. I also wanted to show myself I am more than capable of achieving what I set my mind to. Being in classes has brought more stability and structure into my and my children's lives. I am also learning that I can rely on myself as I have observed the ways I have overcome obstacles. It has been a true blessing to be able to see my potential and work toward fulfilling it. My goals after I complete GED are to work through the summer and then hopefully attend NBCC in the fall. Once I graduate from NBCC, I plan to enter into a career that lets me purposefully serve and help the more vulnerable in our society.

I spent the majority of my life feeling incapable of succeeding in regards to my education and had a deep rooted fear that I couldn't count on or trust myself. I took a leap of faith and enrolled in GED classes, so I could provide a better life for my children and me and also to show myself how capable I am. I have watched myself trip and fall many times since I've come back to school and can now clearly see how strong and resilient I am. I am learning to trust myself and my process as I've continuously picked myself up out of the mud, wiping it off while simultaneously overcoming obstacles I believed were way out of my reach.

Being in classes for regular hours has brought more routine and structure to the lives of my children and me which has been a very positive change for us. Having routine and structure in the day has given us a really great sense of stability which has had an impact on the way we function as a family unit and as individuals. As time passes, I am both proving to myself and my children that I am reliable and capable of committing to things that challenge me and seeing those challenges through. It also helps having an incredibly kind, patient and understanding teacher. Mrs. Coleman has given me an abundance of compassion and I am very grateful to have her help as I navigate this part of my path.

Currently, my goals are to apply to NBCC for the Social Services Community Worker program as I am finishing up GED. Once I have completed my GED this spring, I will be increasing my hours at my part time job to full time hours until next school year starts. Continuing my education is necessary to access career opportunities that I am truly passionate about. I plan to use the key that education is to unlock the doors that will provide a better life for those in my care as well as myself.

Learning Changes Lives

Mark Kinney – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

Learning has changed my life in so many ways, if you have a moment, I would like to talk about it in more detail. First I will have to rewind time to back when I was in high school. Being the youngest of a family of five being raised by a single mother, there wasn't much money. I did fairly well in school but there was never anyone backing me to do better, being a kid growing up in the eighties dropping out of high school and getting a job was a common thing.

I regretted dropping out shortly after, and always planned on going back. I guess the easiest way to explain why I never is "life happened". I bounced from one meaningless job to another, I was easily bored with mundane jobs that never seemed to challenge me. This is where have no diploma hindered me the most, I would get as far as I could get and the ladder would always stop for me, my lack of education made sure of that. I always excelled in the jobs I did find, and was often told I was much smarter than my resume stated. I often got frustrated when people I thought didn't deserve a promotion over myself would always get it because of their education. Which would leave me wishing time and time again that I had stayed in school.

I did once have a career choice and wanted to go to college, paleontology always fascinated me. It isn't a lucrative career choice I know, but I thought it would be rewarding in other ways. Could you imagine be the first person to lay your eyes on a new species of dinosaur? What would you name it? Things like this excited me and still do to this day. Growing up with a single mother, an absent father, and barely enough money for my family to scrape by. I never had a positive role model in my life, one by one I watched my siblings drop out of school and get a job then move out. There was no money saved for college, there was never any talk of college.

I raised five beautiful girls, which only kept me in a job that I hated and was bored at. Once they were raised I found myself jobless after dedicating 18 years to my last job, wondering what I was going to do.

I took a long look back onto my life and said its time that I got the education that has eluded me for so long. So at 52 years old I enrolled into community college. Next time I apply for I job, I will finally be able to click the box when it asks if I have a high school diploma "with a smile" I might add.

Going back to school was scary at first, day by day it's getting easier. The teacher has been patient and great, she has been the first person in my life to push me to go further. I am almost done my GED now, I have passed the first four exams with great marks. With the praise of the teacher and her always pushing for me to go further, I have applied and been accepted into

electrical next year. I wish I had had her for a teacher in high school, things may have been different. It's never too late to get an education though, and I am going to make the most of it!

It is always better to lift someone up, that can't be stressed enough!

Learning Changes Lives

Stacy Leakvold – St. George Adult Learning Program

<http://ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Elizabeth Kneabone

The decision to return to learning was encouraged by an old friend. Recently relocating back to New Brunswick during the pandemic, my life was changing. I previously had been enrolled at N.A.I.T in a Parts Technician Apprentice program, but it was not something I could complete here. Being in my late forties with no real education closed a lot of doors for me. So, when my friend said, “hey come do this with me so I do not have to go alone “I said “OK.”

At first coming to class was a thing to get me out of my house with the possibility of meeting new people, but as time went on, I was excited to come and study. I was beginning to see the benefits of the program and the choices it was giving me. When I started, I was feeling like I was getting too old to bother. Now I am seeing you are never too old.

Once I complete the GED program, I am considering upgrading some of my classes such as math. In high school math was not a class I enjoyed but now I have discovered I am surprisingly good at it. I have discovered I enjoy the challenge of math.

I am considering college courses in Business Administration Management or LPN. I honestly thought that what I could do with my life was so limited and looking at college courses seemed out of reach. Now I am looking at jobs in different fields with an” I can do that “attitude opposed to me wish I could do that.

Who would have thought a friend wanting me to go to GED prep class with her would have been such a life changing thing for me. If someone had asked me a year ago, where would I see myself today? This would not have even been on my list. I really need to take that friend out for dinner and thank her for convincing me to come with her.

Mes progrès

Jean-Marc Lebreton – CCAA Lancaster (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca/>

Enseignantes : Carole Bourgault et Dominique Roy Ross

Je suis retourné aux études, car ma famille et mes amis m'avaient parlé. Ça m'a donné le goût de revenir aux études.

Je suis ainsi privilégié en classe pour apprendre, j'ai plus de soutien avec les enseignantes, c'est génial!

Ce qui me plaît est mon progrès en math et en français. Maintenant je suis capable de me débrouiller seul pour faire mon travail.

Dans mes progrès j'ai adoré la façon que j'ai avancé et que je me suis amélioré.

Par exemple, je pose plus de questions et toujours à temps dans mes devoirs. Ce que j'ai le plus retenu est la stratégie à bien présenter mon travail. Je suis fier de moi.

C'est tellement super que j'adore aller à l'école maintenant! À présent, j'ai le sentiment d'être persévérant avec objectifs de réussite. Cela me motive à plus m'appliquer. Après beaucoup d'efforts j'ai plus confiance en moi, j'arrive à avancer et comprendre mieux mon français et la math. J'aime mon changement positif que ça m'apporte et je vais sûrement le conserver jusqu'à la fin!

Je suis content que ma vie va bien, ce qui m'aide à l'école. J'aimerais travailler dans le domaine des soins pour personnes aux besoins spéciaux. Avec cet emploi je vais avoir la satisfaction personnelle de soi et de mon besoin social. Pour conclure ceci, j'adore travailler avec l'équipe de l'école des adultes au GED.

Learning Changes Lives

Melissa Lewis – L.E.A.P. (Learning Exchange Academic Program) – Saint John Learning Exchange

<https://sjle.org/programs/education/leap/>

Teacher: Ginny Hooper

When this tale begins it was 2009 in the winter. I found out I was pregnant at a young age which is hard enough, but on top of that, my mother was also in the last days of her fight with cancer. There is a choice and a promise was made. I would stay home and begin to raise my child, while also helping my mother while she was sick. One of her final wishes for me as well as a final promise I made to her, was that one day I would return and receive my high school diploma.

During the interim years of my mother's passing and my return to education, I lived many hard years. I became a victim of abuse as did my children. At this time, I had an encounter with a social worker that would change my life at that time and this is what I want to do in the future.

I have chosen to pursue a career in social work in hopes of helping other families who live with the abuse or home issues I have. To accomplish this goal after I obtain my Adult Hight School Diploma from Saint John Learning Exchange "LEAP program", my next steps will be to attend the social work courses at N.B.C.C. I need to study and work hard towards my graduation and then begin my chosen career. In doing so, I hope to grant my mother's final wish.

I want to show my children that no matter what life throws at them, or how many detours the roads may take if they know what they want in life and truly work hard toward their goals they can accomplish anything their heart desires, just as Mommy has.

Education truly is the key to one's future and can have a large array of effects. As of now, I am finding that learning has helped me raise my self-confidence, I find myself smiling more because I'm happy I can grant my mother's final wish, as well as show my children what hard work can accomplish. It also gives me the opportunities to provide a better and more fulfilling future for myself and my family.

In closing, I would like to take a moment to thank my teachers (Ginny, Amanda, and Janelle) and all the staff at the Saint John Learning Exchange. You have all been a great help to me and reinforced the fact that truly "Learning Changes Lives".

Learning Changes Lives

Kayla Logan – L.E.A.P. (Learning Exchange Academic Program) – Saint John Learning Exchange

<https://sile.org/programs/education/leap/>

Teacher: Ginny Hooper

My name is KAYLA LOGAN and this is my story.

My childhood was very hard, my father was an alcoholic, my mother worked all the time and was not home often to teach us, meaning my sister Melissa and I. I developed a learning disability at a very early age so I felt alone, I didn't fit in, I ended up hanging out with the wrong people. At age fifteen I became a mom. I just was not mature enough. I didn't know where to turn and I left school at grade eight as I was failing.

I had another daughter at age 31, on welfare with no dreams but when the baby was born something hit home. All I remember is me looking at her saying you won't see me fail us! I then decided to first look into fixing my MENTAL health. Not long after my second child was born I found out I have Multiple Sclerosis (MS). I was so scared and I still am so I started to workout, lose weight but still was missing something—my DREAMS. My dream was to get my ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA it means so much!

I had a lot to still learn but there is no quitting for me so I called SAINT JOHN LEARNING EXCHANGE and I was offered a spot in their LEAP program. I have been going and feeling my dreams are happening! After I get my DIPLOMA I'm off to college where I will start my next chapter. School has made me see my world so much brighter I know my life matters and for my kids I won't give up! Our future is what we make it thanks to my teacher GINNY and all your support made me strong enough to fight.

Learning really is changing my life and my future!

Learning Changes Lives

Jennifer Provenzano – Nackawic Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Maria Donovan

I decided to make a change for myself and join the GED class, to work on achieving my diploma to further my education. Making a decision to go back to school at my age, almost feels impossible with all life's obstacles that may stand in my way. I'm thankful for the continuous support I've received from my family, employment counsellor and instructor making the transition to full-time school easier. Furthering my education and meeting the right contacts for the guidance and directions I was able to create a personal road map. Returning to school and being committed to my education is changing my life.

First of all, being a teenage single mom had many challenges, having to grow up at super speed, working any job I could find without a high school diploma to be able to provide for my babies. My children and family understand the importance of furthering my education as they saw my struggles as a low-income family. Returning to school has given me the tools to better understand my children's school curriculum, helping my kids with their struggles and being able to help improve their education in school. Furthering my education has also given me the opportunity to be a good role model to my family, when life throws you lemons, you still have the opportunity to make a refreshing glass of lemonade.

Secondly, returning to school has opened the doors to make new relationships, being able to have the connections to help meet my goals. My employment counselor has been supportive to all my educational requirements, she has also helped with my financial situation and has given me all the resources I need for a successful education plan. My learning instructor has been teaching and preparing me for my GED exams and she has become my inspiration with her own personal accomplishments by completing her GED and furthering education, inspiring me to achieve my own success story.

Thirdly, I created a personal map to use as my guideline taking the steps to the next level of furthering my education. The first step on my road map was calling the GED faculty in Nackawic and enrolling into the GED program. Moving forward on my educational travels, enrolling for an online Biology course, a class that I need to successfully complete to attend the collage course I desire. The next direction on my map would lead me to my biggest treasure, the completion of my two-year LPN college course, achieving my career leaving more room on my map for future educational growth.

Finally, making the decision to go back to school has improved the quality of my life, even though my new chapter is late blooming; age is just a number because there is no end to further my education. Furthering my education, building supportive professional connections and taking life challenges head on, will continue to change my life. Making the impossible, possible with the right directions I am able to follow my road map to success.

Learning Changed My Life

Trent A Scott – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Bev Haines

If I get my GED, I will be very proud of myself knowing that I did it. Then I can get on with my life, make my family proud of me, and get myself a good job. But first of all I would like to go to Community College and get a trade.

That is why I am determined to get my GED. As I have gotten older, I have found it very hard to learn these subjects. But this year I am starting to understand my English and writing a little bit better, and I hope to pass it this time. I am finding essays are a bit harder but I will conquer it.

I have been trying very hard to get my GED, and I learned a lot this year. I find my teacher is a very good teacher and always willing to help you when you need help. That is very important to have a good teacher.

I haven't minded going back to school. I have learned a lot more and enjoy going to school. But I wish that I would have paid more attention when I was younger and in school, and then I wouldn't have to go through all this now.

But all I do now is to do my hardest to get my GED which I pray that I get, and when I get my GED no one can take it from me.

Learning Changes Lives

Tammy St. Amand – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

I am a forty-eight-year-old that has two grown boy's and a grandson. I was once told that you are never too old to learn. So here I am in a GED class getting my education.

Growing up in a small community, I was classified as the class clown in school. From grade one clear up to grade twelve I hated school. I failed grade one twice and passed it my third year. The reason for this was they gave me cookies and Kool-Aid, and we watched films on the big projector. It was so awesome that I didn't want to leave it. The next grade that I failed was grade seven. After failing grade seven, I ended up moving to Perth, NB. I was there for a few years and then moved to Juniper, NB with my sister. I left my sister's place and moved out on my own when I was eighteen. I was entering grade twelve that year and didn't have a care in the world and no one to answer to. I thought I had it all; was I wrong. I ended up pregnant and quit in my last year of school.

I had my child in May of that year, and then I had another two and a half years later so I became a mom at a very young age. Once my children had completed their years of school and both had graduated, my oldest son became a father and my youngest moved out west to pursue his career. Now that both boys moved out, I decided to do something more with my life. I decided to go back to school.

Now that I am back in school, I seem to be enjoying it a lot more than what I did when I was younger. I find the work that I am doing a lot more enjoyable than what it was in high school, and I enjoy the teacher that I have; Which helps out a lot. Now that I am getting my education it is making me more into a person with a goal in mind to do better.

My goal in life is to become a more self-sufficient person. Once I receive my diploma in June, I want to come back in the fall and take an accounting class. With this course I am hoping to get a better paying job so I can do more with my life. I figure I have another fifteen to twenty years left to work. I am hoping by then I can retire and enjoy the rest of my life by a lake somewhere sipping on whiskey and watching the sunrise and sunset with no stress or worries.

How I Got Here

Travis Stuart – St. George Adult Learning Program

<http://ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Elizabeth Kneabone

I always wanted to go back to school. I didn't quit school, but I had a hard time learning. I did receive my modified school diploma. After that I was getting counseling because my depression and anxiety was getting out of control. After half a year of counseling I was told about a program called Working Stronger Together. There were many struggles and challenges that I had to overcome and cope with.

On April 20th, 2020, something terrible happen. My brother got into a four-Wheeler accident that took his life. I felt like a piece of me was ripped out and I was left with a gaping hole in my heart. I couldn't believe he was gone and still can't believe it. He's, my twin brother and I will always be proud of him. Troy was always about life and family. After some time of grieving and still going to Working Stronger Together, the counselor of the program told me about the GED in Saint George. I thought about it for a little bit. Then I thought about Troy. He would have wanted me to be happy, have a good job, and live a fulfilling life so that became my goal.

I am a shy and nervous person but despite all that I still went to the GED class, eager and determined to learn as much as I could so I could enroll into college. I have improved a lot since I started. I couldn't believe how much I've learned in the GED program. My favorite subjects are math and writing. I love math because it's methodical and concrete. Now the reason I like writing, there are so many ways that we can write. My favorite form of writing is creative writing I love making stories and new characters and places.

The teacher and students are all very friendly and kind. They really brought me out of my shell. I am now more confident and positive about myself. I'm getting ready for college so I can be an automotive technician. But I won't stop there. I want to get my red seal, then go back to college to get Heavy trucks and transport technician trade and get my red seal in this trade. I know it will take me a long time to do, and who knows? Maybe I will become a teacher in those trades. I know I can do this. It's funny even as I type this, I feel more motivated to reach my goal.

I have so many people supporting me and pushing me forward to do better and I owe it to them and to myself. Thank you, Troy, for giving me the strength to push forward. Mom and dad, I appreciate all the support you have given me. I hope I can make you proud. To the teachers that are helping me in school I appreciate all the time and effort you put in to prepare me for college and the adventures ahead.

Learning Changes Lives

Sarah Sullivan – Fredericton Youth, Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Christina Kenny

I've come back to get my education because I've been wanting to finish my GED for a couple years now. I feel like I'm going to be able to finish this year. Even though I still have some self-doubts, you always have to believe in yourself to finish your goals.

I come to school everyday so my children will look up to me as a role model, and so they will enjoy their life and finish school. When I go to school everyday, I make sure I put one hundred percent into my work so I will be able to finish school and get my education.

This is how learning will change my life: I will be able to get a career and have a better income for my family. I will also be able to do something I love with my education, and I won't have to work at fast food anymore. Being able to be proud of myself with a better job is very important. I will be able to go to college and pick out a career of my dreams.

Learning will change my life for the best because it will show my kids that you can always go back to school and upgrade your education. It will show them that you should never give up on your dreams at any age.

I hope you enjoyed my essay on why learning will change my life.

Learning Changes Lives

Afraa Yako – Fredericton Youth, Adult Learning Program (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Christina Kenny

I want to share how learning has changed my life, and talk about my education plans. My goal in life is to be the best person I can be. I try to be modest, passionate, devoted, hardworking and honest.

I'm from the Middle East(Iraq), it is called Mesopotamia. We speak Aramaic (mother tongue). This language is widespread only in the Nineveh Plain and is very old. The second language is Arabic, which we learn in schools. My family has been cultivating the land and raising livestock for generations.

My father was a physician's assistant in my city. My mother was a housewife. They both love their occupation. The values I have learned from my parents are to be hard-working and passionate.

I have four brothers and two sisters. I studied at school in my town. I graduated from university after studying for four years. I remained without a stable job for more than three years until I was employed after a regime change and we had a new ruler.

After the contract, I was officially appointed to a school near my town and I taught there for about 10 years. In a short period of time, I chose UNICEF, the acceleration education program for students who left school for various reasons including security.

In June of 2014, the bombing began. We had to leave our homes without taking anything, but we did it to save our lives.

We became refugees in our country until we traveled to Lebanon. A new journey began searching for a new job and securing a living.

After a search, I worked in the embassy for about five years. I worked as a receptionist there, and I was responsible for flower and gift arrangements for the embassy officials. I had many friends of different nationalities who left a great impact in my life including: Italian, Belgian, Indian, Lebanese and French.

I arrived in Canada at the beginning of 2019, I learned English at MCAF, and I graduated in level five. I worked as a volunteer in a church all summer long, growing vegetables and working on my English skills. I actually started the WES program and have now graduated from that. I'm currently studying for my GED.

I always try to be positive. I am lucky because my family can grow and we can build a great life in New Brunswick. Some of my family went to different places. One day, I wish to visit

my sister and friends in Denmark, and my old boss who found his new home in Washington D.C. I want to thank him for his support and encouragement over the years at the embassy in Lebanon. My goal is to get my GED, get a western university degree, and find a consulate job helping or teaching here.

**Thank you to all the participants and
their teachers for submitting these
wonderful essays!**

**Merci aux tous les participants et leurs
enseignants pour la soumission de ces
merveilleux essais !**