



Literacy Coalition  
of New Brunswick<sup>Ltd.</sup>

Coalition pour l'alphabétisation  
du Nouveau-Brunswick<sup>Ltée.</sup>

# Learning Changes Lives L'apprentissage change des vies

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CELEBRATING ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup> TO APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2023

CÉLÉBRER LA SEMAINE DES APPRENANTS  
ADULTES

16 AVRIL AU 22 AVRIL, 2023

Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick

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## Learning Changes Lives

**Vivian Adee** – Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Christina Kenny

I came from South Sudan. Due to the effects of the war in Sudan, we lost our parents. I was an orphan, but then I got to grow up with my aunt. Since then, we moved to Uganda as refugees in the camp. My aunt could not afford to pay all the school fees alone by herself. So some of us as young adults had to drop out of school so the young ones can continue with school.

Then later I was home doing nothing. So I had to join skilled training for plumbing and hairdressing. Plumbing for 6 months and hairdressing for 1 year. It was not my dream to do skills training, but it was the best at the time without high school. My dream is to become a nurse.

So, an opportunity came for some of the refugees to come abroad. We succeeded in coming to Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. I thank God for hearing our prayers. Many have tried but we succeeded.

We are here in Fredericton as one family but we are divided into two homes because we are 17 people. Since I never completed my education, I decided to return to school to learn. The decision to return to learning depends on your goals and aspirations and whether higher education can offer you something that meets your needs.

Education can stimulate economic growth directly by increasing innovation, productivity and human capital. Education also has a history of fostering positive social change by encouraging things like political participation, social equity and environmental sustainability.

My goal for the future is to become a nurse. I am taking my GED now. I started this week.

In the future, I am going to learn practical nursing because I want to help sick people. My goal is to become a successful woman in the future. I love my aunt. She is a brave woman. She took all 17 of us in. She brought all 17 of us to Fredericton. She is the woman I had wanted to make proud.

Thank you for listening!

## Returning to School

**Paulett Bullock** – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

Since entering the Adult Learning Pregame in spring of 2022 so many changes happened. It's given me a purpose to start every day with a positive outlook.

Since I was a little girl, I was always told that I would never amount to anything because of being diagnosed with dyslexia.

One of my teachers who tried to help unfortunately I think she made things worse. Being a left-handed person made it hard for her to teach me as she was a right-handed person. I was made to write with my right. This will not work because my brain can't work that way. It was easier for them to let me sit and draw rather than try to help me to learn. With thirty-five, other students, who needed her attention, I understand, she could not help me all the time she was one woman by herself.

Once I left school without any real qualification, I could not get a proper job. I just worked in low paying jobs such as a shoe factory as you didn't really need much of an education if you were willing to work. I was there for about three years. As you can imagine I did not have much self-confidence, I didn't believe in myself. I went on to get married and have two boys; unfortunately, I had to give up my job to take care of my boys.

My uncle told me that I needed my passport, and. driving license, for identification purpose; I didn't realize what he was trying to do. He pushed me to be a better version of myself. Since I didn't have a father, he was trying to fulfill that role and be that father figure that I needed. I went on to pass my driving test with excellence and applied for a passport. Eventually, our family moved to Canada, for a different way of life.

As life moved on, I went on to have four more children. As I moved on in our life I eventually divorced my husband and now I'm a single mum having to learn how to do things for myself. Over time my confidence has grown; it is an amazing feeling. I realize that I would need more education, so I could get a respectable job or start a new career. I wanted my children to see my accomplishment and to be proud of me.

I must admit attending class is enjoyable; it gives me a sense of purpose, even though it can be difficult some days. I hate math but I still must go as I need to set an example for my children.

In the future, I'm sure my children will have their own challenges, and I hope they can look back and remember what I have accomplished. A wise old man always told me that if something is worth having, it is worth doing properly the first time around. The only way to get it is through sheer hard work. I can't wait until I get that G.E.D. diploma in my hand then I can progress on to university.

## L'apprentissage change nos vies

**Cécile Cloutier** – La Plateforme Canadienne de Formation à Distance (PCFAD)

<https://www.coalition.ca/projets/pcfad/>

Enseignante : Dhouha Baklouti

Mon nom : Cécile Cloutier, marié à mon amour Jacques depuis 48 ans. Nous avons quatre beaux enfants deux garçons et deux filles, âgés de 47, 45, 43, et 36 ans.

Étant coiffeuse de profession depuis 18 ans, j'ai toujours un livre et une plume entre les doigts.

J'ai retourné aux études car j'adore écrire et apprendre. J'aime composé j'écris des poèmes que je conservent dans une boîte trésor.

Je suis musicienne je joue de la guitar je chante depuis l'âge de dix ans. J'ai plusieurs de mes propres compositions d'écrit, en étant compositrice -interprète, j'ai composé la chanson pour la JOURNÉE DE L'ARMISTICE, qui s'est déroulé à l'Auditorium de la Polyvalente Thomas Albert ici à Grand-Sault, N.B.

En réalité et en toute franchise, j'aime apprendre et découvrir avec les années l'apprentissage m'à permise d'aider mes propres enfants à l'école et d'écrire aussi mon autobiographie qui sera terminé sous peu.

Sur ce, je remercie la PLATEFORME PCFAD, je suis capable de suivre des cours à distance BRAVO! !

Mes objectifs futurs c'est d'aller aider les enfants dans les écoles, ceux qui en ont vraiment besoin , aider les professeurs, leur tendre mains fortes. Merci à Mme Baklouti, un SINCÈRE MERCI.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Diane E. Cormier** – Moncton Lions Community Centre (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca>

Teachers: Kevin Godin & Brian Robichaud

I feel that learning does change lives. There are so many adults that have quit school, and have gone back to get their GED. Later in life, they realized that without their GED they would not have the chance to learn and better themselves.

When I was in public school it was really hard on me. Back then if you had a hard time in school, they would put you in a modified class, they did not take the time to find out what the problem was.

From my personal experience it was the worst thing they could have done to me. All they did was push me through, I did not learn a thing in modified, and as a result I struggled for 12 years, felt like I was stupid, and wouldn't do anything with my life.

When I was 17, I was extremely sick so my doctor, removed me from school for one year. At the end of the year, I tried to go back but I was told that at 18, I was too old. I never did go back to public school. I was 18 with no education. That left me with few career opportunities, and even less self-esteem. I had no understanding of why I could neither read, speak, nor write properly. Also, I was laughed at and bullied by others because of not knowing what you are supposed to know at that age.

Today I am 56 years old , and I have a second chance to get my education. My daughter told me about a program called (PETL-N.B). I immediately contacted them, and they got me started in my GED program. Tammy LeBlanc my employment counselor, at (PETL--N.B) is the lady that set everything up for me for my GED. She made arrangements for psycho-educational testing to determine my current ability and academics levels as well as my preferred learning style. From the testing, I found out that I have a learning disability. It only took 50 years for someone to take the time to see what was going on with my learning. Unfortunately, this same scenario has been repeated thousands of time in New Brunswick, and throughout Canada.

I am now in my GED program. I have an amazing teacher his name is Kevin Godin. He has my psycho-- educational reports, and he takes his time to work with all his students. We all have different learning styles. After a few weeks, my teacher noticed that I was having troubles hearing. he took the time to find a place for me to get my hearing tested. He was right, I do have a hearing problem both ears. I needed two hearing aids. I told Tammy about my hearing difficulties, and she made the arrangements and now I have hearing aids. I can hear properly for the first time in my life. I feel so good about myself just because two wonderful people that cared. I have a second chance in life, thanks to all of them.

They cared enough to find out why I was having a hard time in school. They gave me my confidence, and my life back again. Nothing is going to stop me from getting my education. The

GED program is amazing program, without it all of us would not get another opportunity. I would like to thank everyone, who cared enough to help me, without them I would not be on my journey to better myself.

So I was asked does learning change lives? Yes, it does change lives , I am a prime example, and so many before me, we all have a second chance in life all due to amazing people that care for us.



## Learning Changes Lives

**Madison Degen** – Oromocto Day Program (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca>

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

When I left school in 2019, I was a semester away from graduating. I had been waiting to drop out since I was in grade nine. I knew I could handle it and graduate academically, but that would mean attending regularly. Regularly attending meant having panic attacks in hallways and teachers whose wise words were, "everyone gets nervous", no matter how many times I explained what an anxiety disorder is. Although I had always planned to finish school and attend university, I never knew what I wanted to study. Sure, computers seemed interesting enough, and math was fun, but that didn't direct me to a career I was passionate about. That only added to my panic as I got closer to graduating and couldn't find what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, or at least the foreseeable future.

So, I decided to drop out, telling myself I'd finish school but needed to learn a few things first. I needed to learn how to manage my anxiety, communicate my needs, and self-advocate without going into a fight or flight reaction; most of these interpersonal skills aren't taught at an institutional level. I also wanted to explore my interests to find what were just cool hobbies and what I wanted to pursue as a potential career. So, that is what I did! I spent three years learning to manage my anxiety and figuring out what I wanted. I don't know where I'd be without the learning I did during that time.

Though my time in high school wasn't good, my memories of learning were positive, and it meant a lot to me that I continued. In my time off for my personal growth, I began casually learning new languages. I watched more documentaries than I thought was possible. I went to counselling and took in as much information as possible about anything. I realized I had never learned much about "normal" things, like classic books or movies. I even had historical events and figures I had yet to hear of as they never pertained to the curriculum. Leaving school was hard on my friendships and a detour in entering university, but it gave me the time and space to feel confident in my future.

After those years off of school, I was proud of my progress. I felt secure enough in my growth that I was ready to return to learning. I returned in October 2022 because, along with developing the skills I wanted to, I discovered what I'm passionate about. I am endlessly intrigued by language.

My goals for my future are to attend university as a mature learner and get a linguistics degree. I want to use that to teach those interested in learning English as a second language, and I'd like to be a translator. I want to understand and learn from the experiences of those from all over the world. I knew that I could only accomplish these goals after finishing school.

As of submitting this, I've written three of my five tests for my GED, and I'm happily attending a classroom environment again. I'm in a wonderful class with a fantastic teacher who supports my learning and is always happy to see the academic success of her students. Kelly's environment for those attending her GED class in Oromocto is comfortable and welcoming. The atmosphere is a massive part of my newfound comfort in the classroom. I'm incredibly grateful to Kelly for her support and encouragement through this program.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Matthew D<sup>e</sup>Merchant** – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

Hi my name is Matthew D<sup>e</sup>Merchant and I have a new lease on life thanks to adult Learning center in Bath, New Brunswick. I started GED April 29<sup>th</sup>/2022 and have really enjoyed the program!

Also during this time I've been able to take a Digital Learning Course, which also gave me a boost in my overall learning.

Schooling as a whole has really encouraged me that a good life is available if one trys and accepts help.

I must mention that I've had a tremendous amount of help. I now know the importance of education, since I started my GED. I've felt better about myself and others, because of the computer course, I've been able to communicate a lot better with my daughter who lives an hours drive away.

I know that I could not of made it this far without the tremendous amount of support from Mental Health Woodstock. Also my parents, and having a great whose name is Bev Haines. All the people in my life have really encouraged me to stick with the program.

I have learned a lot over the past year and surprised myself not to mention others. I'm not really sure what the future education goals are yet, but I am giving serious thoughts towards the future, and am now more confident that I will make it.

I would like to say a special thanks to Sara who is my occupational therapist from Mental Health Woodstock. Thank you so much for giving me the encouragement that I desperately need to take the first step.

Another thank you to Stephanie Paul for the financial support and encouragement. Also thank you to Franklin for having the patience to teach me the computer course. I wish that I would have had the support back thirty five years ago. I feel that I'm a better person now that I have a better understanding of knowledge.

I'm so glad that a great team of people seen value in me! I would like to say if there is anyone out there who needs help, it's available! GED has made a difference in my life for good and I am excited for what's next!

This point in time I've passed four out of five exams, and planning on passing math exam in the next couple of months.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Ashley Denny** – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

Remember high school? Felt like every day was a competition. Who's the most popular, the most athletic, smartest etc. I was never the kid with the new Nike sneakers. I was the middle child of 5, so we didn't have lot. My parents did their best to just keep food in the house let alone, buy 5 new pairs of sneakers. I tried my best in grades 9 and 10 but the pressure of my peers was more than my young self could comprehend. I didn't have the guidance and self-discipline I needed at the time to succeed.

You may have guessed I quit school, something I would come to regret. I moved, got small jobs here and there, met my soul mate and we became pregnant in 2006. This might sound like the worst thing that could happen to a 16-year-old. Yes 16 years old, I couldn't imagine as mother myself now. The school district won't want me, I thought. Unknowingly this was the start of a new beginning for me. When we had our daughter, we knew as parents we wanted the best for her. My spouse and I decided I would be a stay-at-home mom; and thanks to his job it was possible. I made sure our daughter and son, who was born 2014, had all the opportunity's I didn't. My daughter is now in grade 11. the same year I didn't get to finish. I'm beyond proud to say she is an honor list student.

Now GED is helping me become the I person I know I can be. This program has given me new life and a chance at a future. It gives me the opportunity to graduate before my daughter. I love being a mother, but more importantly I love to be an example to my children, I'm proof you can do anything you set your mind to.

I was nervous my first week, stepping back into the classroom can be intimidating. though it was nothing of the sorts. Joanne McIsaac is the GED instructor for the Woodstock class at the Woodstock New Brunswick Community College. Joanne makes everyone feel included and contented. She helped me realize that I can learn anything with time and perseverance. Our teacher plays a huge roll in the classroom she gives me a push when I need and most importantly, she believes in me. I've always wanted to own a small business or get into counseling. With such great guidance and knew found confidence. The Adult Learning Program has made it possible for these dreams to become reality.

The GED Adult Learning Program has left me with the skills and confidence to continue onto college. My goals are to become someone my children will be proud of. To show my family and others that you can achieve what you once thought was impossible. I am very excited for my future as I look into college courses like the Graphics and Communications Course. I have so many more options now then I had with a grade 10 education. This program has changed my life in so many positive ways. I couldn't be prouder of myself for choosing education.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Tanya Doucet** – Beechwood ALC (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca>

Teacher: Natalie Lockhart

As a child I was bullied a lot in school by the time I got to high school it only got worst. I thought then it would be best to just drop out halfway threw grade 9. By the time I turned 17 I got my first job working at kfc at age 17. Wasent doing much with my life until I got pregnant at the age of 22 years old, then became a single mother by the age of 23 to a beautiful little girl. I couldnt go back to school even tho I really wanted to as I now had a little girl to take care of full time. I was 29 by the time I signed up for ged with Nathalie Lockhart for online learning as I face challenges with school and motherhood, now that my daughter is more steady at school it has made it convenient for me to get my Ged it's changing my life by opening doors for me, I already have my homework done for my beauty school course just have math test left to graduate then get to work my dream job. I'm working towards achieving All the goals I let go of at a young age and wasent able to achieve until now, it is never to late to better yourself there is always room to improve & to learn. I will forever be grateful for My teacher Natalie and to have been able to sign up for ged learning, I have been doing my ged for 2 years now been stuck on math for a really long time but I am starting to get better at it my teacher Natalie never gave up on me always kept pushing me towards the finish line. No matter how many times I have struggled with math she has never let me down, She is a 10/10 teacher. Also that now my daughter is in Grade 4 I am able to help her with her homework as before I struggled really bad with math. It's been overall a great experience would definitely recommend ged online learning.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Terry Fredericks** – Nackawic Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Maria Donovan

Returning to school to get my GED is important to me because I have a lot of certificates, but I don't have my GED. Learning can help me gain the knowledge I need which can help me with making better decisions in life. I left school very young because I had to go to work. Due to a workplace injury I had to leave my job and return to school to train for something new. I hope returning to school will improve my communication skills, help me get a better job, and achieve my life goal of getting my high school diploma.

First of all, returning to school at the Nackawic Adult Learning Centre was my first step to improving my communication skills. I can run a chainsaw and operate heavy equipment all day long but my reading and spelling was weak. You can go all your life and have people do it for you but it's nice to be more independent and able to express my own thoughts. I've improved my computer skills and I am doing math that I've never done before and it is challenging me, but I'm learning, and I like it.

Secondly, I hope returning to school will lead to a better job. I've been on workers compensation and I can't go back to my old job. A good job helps paying the bills and a great deal of the better things in life, but the jobs I can do now require a high school diploma or GED. Getting a good job can help me achieve my life goals and will create a more filling life for me and my family.

Thirdly, returning to school and learning the skills I need to pass the GED exams can help with achieving my goals. I have always wanted to get my high school. Everyone of my family members has their high school diploma but me. Getting my GED will help me achieve my goals in life.

Returning to school and learning new things gives me a better understanding of solving life's challenges and is a way toward improving my future. Getting my GED, will lead to me getting a new job and improving my ability to communicate and will lead to a more fulfilling life. School and education increase knowledge. It helps with making better decisions in life and returning to the Nackawic Adult Learning Center was a good decision. Learning can change lives. It helps us to move forward.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Joseph Garvin** – East Saint John Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Teacher: Al Rouse

Something I never thought or desired to do was to get my GED. My dislike towards reading and writing stems from my childhood. When I was older, I made money by being self-employed. However, I never did the bookwork the proper way. We all know that no job is finished until the paperwork is done. My lifelong addiction took everything good out of my life. There had to be a way to get back on track. I had to decide to fight to change the negative aspects of my life. I was filled with a burning desire to change. The people around me encouraged me to start my GED. I seriously did not think I had the smarts to do the GED course and pass. I said, what the heck, let's give it a try.

I had an average childhood. I was brought up in a middle class home in the North End of Saint John. My mother's teaching methods left me with a love hate relationship with both my parents and school work. I have a learning disability that was not discovered until I was an adult. I do not decipher information as quickly as average people do. My learning disability had not just affected my learning, but my whole life. Others judged my performance at work, even my social interactions were hindered because of the slow reactions. If someone asked me two questions at once, I could not process that.

Being self-employed, I found I was good at the labor work and terrible at bookwork. I made good money in the carpet cleaning business. I also did well in the taxi industry. When it came time to keeping the books and filling out HST and tax forms I was pathetic. I was unmotivated to do any reading or writing even with the threat of being audited by the government. I was caught up in what seemed to be a lie. I was not confident enough to figure out how to do my taxes.

Along with the challenge of not wanting to read or write, I have an addictive personality. That means I do not like being told what to do or how to do it. Every decision was about me, and what I would get out of every situation - mainly money. Struggling through twenty six years of recovery from addiction I have a greater understanding of how this disease held me back in my life. In addition, I am determined to see who I can become. This decision to do my GED is turning out to be one of the best decisions that are helping with my recovery. I can fill in my time by reading or writing which I full enjoy now, thanks to the GED course.

My goal is to finish my GED and take an addiction-counselling course. I have real life experience to go along with the courses. My experience with addiction helps me understand where others are struggling in their addiction and help them find the next step in their recovery. I thank God for the GED program that has given me a chance to make the changes in me possible. Now I will be a lifelong advocate for the GED program.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Lisa Giggie** – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

I have returned to learning to get my high school diploma. My son and daughter have graduated, so I thought it was my turn to do the same. I am learning new things that I hadn't learned in high school. Everyday there is something new to learn.

Getting a diploma will change my life. I have always wanted to help my family with what they need, and getting a good job will help.

I want to prove it to myself that I can accomplish my goals. My goal is to be healthy, happy, and be a good provider for my family. I am content being where I am now, but there is more out there for me.

My goal is to better myself in the subjects I have trouble in: math is certainly a challenge for me. I have a difficult time to remember all of the formulas and concepts that one needed to be successful with math.

Reading and writing are easier, I can read well, but writing an essay is also challenging, making sure I have words spelled correctly and have the right punctuation in the right places.

Social Studies and Science are easy to read, but when it is multiple choice questions, I seem to be confused on what they are asking.

My future goals in life is to get my diploma, and get a good job. I am older than most who are in class and I may have a difficult time finding a job; however, I'm going to try my best.



## L'apprentissage change des vies

**Jocelyne Gionet** – Dieppe CCA (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca>

Enseignants : Esther Gaudet & Roland Losier

Je vais vous parler de mon parcours de vie. Je vous raconterai de quelle manière je me suis trouvée sur un banc d'école pour obtenir mon GED.

Premièrement cela a tout commencé à l'âge de 16 ans. À ce moment-là, j'étais au début de ma 11<sup>e</sup> année. Comme j'étais assez souvent malade et que je vivais des choses assez difficiles, j'étais très stressée. C'est pourquoi j'ai dû abandonner. Mes parents n'acceptaient pas vraiment mon choix. Alors, ils m'ont dit que je devais aller travailler. Ils ne voulaient surtout pas que je reste à la maison. Je me suis trouvée un emploi. Je suis devenue gardienne d'enfants et j'ai travaillé dans différents domaines. J'ai travaillé dans des usines à poissons et des usines à couronnes de sapin de Noël pour en nommer que quelques-uns. J'ai travaillé dans des mauvaises conditions, beau temps mauvais temps il fallait y aller et tous ces travaux pour un maigre salaire.

Alors, à mes 56 ans, je suis partie de mon petit village pour la grande ville de Dieppe. Arrivée en ville, j'ai dû me trouver un emploi parce qu'il fallait bien que je gagne ma vie. Je devais chercher un appartement et payer mon loyer, la nourriture et d'autres dépenses. Comme je ne connaissais personne dans cette ville, j'ai dû me débrouiller. Je me suis trouvée dans un petit café. J'ai demandé à la serveuse s'il embauchait du monde pour travailler. C'est à ce moment-là qu'elle m'a parlé d'aller voir un conseiller à l'emploi. À partir de là, j'ai fait des recherches et j'ai trouvé les informations que j'avais besoin. J'ai pris rendez-vous et j'ai été voir ce que je pouvais faire afin de m'aider.

Par la suite, avec cette personne, elle m'a demandé si j'avais fini ma 12<sup>e</sup> année. J'avais un peu honte de lui dire que je ne n'avais pas terminé mes études secondaires. Alors, elle m'a dit qu'on allait commencer par là en premier. Elle m'a aidée à m'inscrire au cours du GED qui équivaut à une 12<sup>e</sup> année. J'ai commencé ces cours en novembre 2017. J'avais peur que les autres étudiants se moquent de moi car je savais bien que j'allais être la plus âgée de tous. Mais non, j'ai tellement été bien accueillie. J'aimais ça et je progressais assez bien. La conseillère avait même réussi à me trouver un moyen pour que je puisse être rémunérée.

Malheureusement, en mai 2018, le médecin m'a annoncé que j'avais un cancer et qu'il fallait enlever la tumeur. Après cela, j'allais avoir de la chimio aux deux semaines. Les effets secondaires de la chimio me rendaient tellement malade que j'ai dû interrompre mes études. Ça me rendait triste, j'aurais tellement voulu continuer. Mais, il fallait que je prenne soin de ma santé en premier. Au moment où j'étais prête à y retourner, il y a eu cette pandémie de la covid. Comme ma santé était toujours fragile, j'ai pris la décision de ne pas retourner.

Au début septembre 2022, je suis allée apporter le matériel que l'on m'avait prêté. Quand je suis entrée dans la classe, j'ai ressenti un bien-être. L'enseignant qui m'a reçue m'a alors demandé si je serais intéressée à finir ce que j'avais commencé. Je lui ai dit que je n'avais rien à

perdre malgré que j'étais encore plus vieille puisque j'avais 61 ans mais au fond de moi je ressentais que je pouvais y arriver. Là, je suis en apprentissage et tout va pour le mieux. Je fais beaucoup de progrès depuis septembre.

Finalement, tout pour dire que ça en vaut la peine et vous en sortirez gagnant et fier de vous-même. Ne laissez jamais personnes vous influencer et allez vous inscrire le plus rapidement possible. J'espère vous voir bientôt dans mes cours.

## How learning has changed my life

**Amanda Gould** – Bath Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

Learning has and continues to change my life in many ways. I never believed having an education was necessary to becoming successful in life; in fact, I watched many of my siblings drop out of school. Thus, making me believe education wasn't important. After struggling with my mental health, I knew something needed to change, that's when I decided to return to learning.

I have three older siblings, two of which never finished school. Leaving the impression that if something gets too hard you can easily quit, so that's exactly what I did. My last year of high school was hard for me, I struggled tremendously with my mental health and feelings of uncertainty. So, following in my siblings' footsteps I too threw in the towel on learning. Never knowing how badly this decision would impact my future and mental health.

For as long as I can remember I struggled with the thoughts of not being good enough or smart enough. I felt like somehow, I was always lesser than my peers, after I became a high school dropout people around me surpassed me in their schooling and went on to get jobs or go to college. This took me to a very dark place in my mind. I thought that dropping out was supposed to be easy and freeing but it was nothing of the sort, instead I had created my own prison of self-doubt. Feeling Trapped, I turned to substances for a way to cope, it was my only escape from the thoughts of being a no one with no future.

Thankfully, I have since recovered from my addictions but the negative narrator in my head wasn't going anywhere. This is when I realized the only way, I was going to overcome this was to face the very thing that was causing the dark thoughts. I needed to invest time in myself and my future, so I returned to learning at the Bath GED program. Returning has been a significant turning point for me on my journey to self-discovery. I have been receiving positive feedback from my teacher and family on my progress of my course work. Hearing how well I'm doing has made me realize I am capable of so much more than I ever could have imagined. I want to help people who struggled with mental health and addiction someday and now I believe I'm smart enough to succeed in doing that with the right effort put forth.

School was hard for me but leaving it turned out to be even harder. I think the most important thing I have learned from returning to learning is that no matter how hard you think things are, they can always get better with a little bit of self-kindness and effort. That I'm willing to bet my future on.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Lindsay Herrera** – Restigouche Adult Learning Inc.

<http://aaral.ca>

Teacher: Debbie Blake

School had always been grappling for me. I had an immense desire to learn but due to a rather unfortunate home life and extreme difficulties in mathematics, I had left school in the ninth grade. My name is Lindsay Herrera. In this essay, I will briefly explain the difficulties that led to me to my early departure from school; what led me to pursue my diploma years later; and how learning has positively impacted my life.

I didn't have an ideal upbringing. I am the daughter of a Latino immigrant who had never attended any kind of educational training and a Canadian mother who despite being one credit shy of her high school diploma decided not to complete it. My parents separated, which left my mother to raise three young girls on her own. It was very difficult for her to balance everything. So, despite my love to learn new things, I was very much on my own at home when it came to learning. This made advancing through school very difficult.

I always had been a below average student in math, but something was evidently wrong. Despite this, it went unacknowledged by my parents and school faculty. With average marks in almost every subject, I managed to skim by in school for years and advanced to ninth grade. My struggles in math felt as though they were being swept under the rug by my teachers for many years. Ninth grade was no different. Feeling as though my teachers did not care, along with the combination of personal struggles I was facing, I lost my desire to learn. As a result, I left school and failed to return for many years.

Everything changed for me in 2019. I was 22 years old and had a beautiful two-year-old son. Not long into the year my son was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Getting that diagnosis was scary as I knew nothing about Autism. The diagnosis drove me to spend months researching the disorder. Throughout the months, I regained my desire to learn and absorb information. I also knew that in order to provide the best possible life for myself and my son, I needed to complete my education. I was a little reluctant to take this step as I doubted my capability, but I forced myself to reach out anyway. When I enquired about pursuing my grade twelve equivalency, I had to do some testing. One of those tests was to see if I had a learning disability. I was not at all surprised to learn that I had Dyscalculia, and the rush of emotions from validation was intense. I finally knew it wasn't my fault. The amount of confidence I had gained from knowing I have a learning disability has changed my whole outlook on myself, my skills, and capability to receive my grade twelve equivalency.

Attending the program gave me even more confidence. I have a teacher who has never made me doubt myself and puts in so much effort to ensure I'm successful. School has become enjoyable for me. Today I have successfully completed four out of five of the subjects required to receive my grade twelve equivalency and took the exam for my last subject on February 28, 2023. Although I'm not finished my last GED test to date, the choice to go back to school gave me confidence to get a job in 2020. Through this job I was offered a training program to

become a Support Worker. I completed this training with all my final grades in the nineties. In the future, I hope to continue advancing my education and work with special needs children.

If not for my desire to learn, I would not be this far today. I would not know that I have a learning disability, and I would not know just how capable I am. My life has truly changed for the better since I went back to school. Learning changes lives! I like to believe I'm an example of that statement.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Nathan Holt** – St. George Laubach Literacy New Brunswick

<https://lnb.ca>

Teacher: Hope Twinamatsiko

My name is Nathan Holt, and I am 28 years old. I have successfully graduated from the New Brunswick Community College in 2014 from the culinary course through special admission. My main dream is to become a pastry Chef, get a job and make friends.

I was diagnosed with Autism and have some speech impediments which hasn't stopped me from working hard to achieve my goals. I returned to school to learn both soft and hard skills hoping to open new opportunities, improve my self esteem and confidence and help me to face what is ahead in both career and everyday life.

I returned to school because in today's competitive world moving into a more advanced level would be helpful to find employment. I wanted to learn something new and to expand my cooking skills. NBCC was more affordable, set a positive change for me and for personal and professional growth.

Learning essential reading, writing, speaking, listening and critical thinking skills has helped me to function effectively in a job. I have had opportunities to work in different places. I have worked at local restaurants making pizza dough from scratch, which I did very well and was extremely happy for that great milestone. I had a summer job at Granite Town Farm in St George, a very open and inclusive working place where they had a need for someone to bake blueberry pies, blueberry muffins, blueberry syrup and blueberry jam which have been delivered all over the world! This made me to grow personally and professionally and has encouraged me to try new tasks.

I am currently doing the Laubach program, as I attend Community Living Center in St George. This program is helping me to become a confident reader and I have gained experience that I did not have before with both work and life skills and enhanced reading, writing, vocabulary, fluence and comprehension skills.

I am trying not to rely on others for support to get my job done and keep focused in the workplace, more so when times get tough and stigma that I used to have is fading more and more, year by year.

I have had a great impact by doing Laubach program where my skills have improved, my hope is that I will keep being enrolled in this program for a healthier and better quality of life.

My future goals are:

- To give the most exceptional food service to every customer.
- Preparing a wide variety of goods such as cakes, cookies, pies, bread.
- Learn many skills and many recipes to improve my cooking skills.
- Work towards personal development.

- Become an expert in my field. I always loved the idea of creating something beautiful with my two hands.
- Experience career stability.
- Be a mentor for someone else.
- Start my own business.

I am looking forward to becoming a responsible fulfilled mature person.

## Why I want my grade 12

**Lorraine Justason** – St. George Adult Learning Program (CCALP)

<http://www.ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Elizabeth Kneabone

I bought my books for school in August 1970. I was 15 years old and had planned on graduating, but a friend introduced me to this gorgeous guy. He was 22, he asked me to go for a drink and two weeks later we were married. I wanted to go back to school and he said no, so I didn't get to graduate. We had three kids, two boys and a girl. The girl died when she was nine months old. My oldest son quit school when he was in grade 11. I tried to get him to go back and he wouldn't. My youngest son was 21 when he graduated. I told him he needed grade 12 if he wanted to get any kind of a job and I wanted help get it, so I went to school and argued with the teachers that he needed help with his work. He graduated in 1999 and the teachers said they were so glad that he graduated and they wouldn't have to put up with me anymore, going to school and arguing with them over his work because he was a slow reader and needed extra help. I said to my husband "I would like to go back to school then, but he said I need no grade 12 because he only had a grade 6 and I had grade 9 education.

My sister went and got her GED and I mentioned it again to my husband about going to school but he still against, so I just gave up on getting my grade 12.

In August of 2021 my husband found out he was full of cancer and they gave him six months to live. I brought him home and looked after him, we were married for 51 years. He only lasted 3 months. I never thought anymore about school because I figured at that age I didn't need it.

In March of 2022 there was an ad on Facebook about a adult learning program. I just ignored it and decided to late by now to do it. Then two nights I couldn't sleep, I kept thinking about that ad, so finally I went to find it and I couldn't find it, so I tried to forget about it. It was like an itch I just couldn't get it out of my head, so I asked if anyone seen the ad on Facebook and someone answered me back and told me where I could find it. I wrote the number down and still put it off. I finally decided to make the call and make an appointment for the assessment and told her that I've been out of school for 50 years a lot has changed since 1970. She told me there was a lady in her 80's took the course and passed it. I started in April 2022 doing the GED course.

In June my sister and I went to Alberta for a month and bought new clothes and books for school. I was excited about going back to school. She said "you won't need all those books and clothes". I said "you never know". In October I started school and I really enjoyed it. I've made some new friends, met old friends who are taking the GED course. I'm up anywhere from 3:30 to 4:00 o'clock in the morning ready to go to school. I make sweets and take them to school to have with my classmates. I'm always happy and so full of energy that my classmates tell me it was day and night, because when I'm there I just light the place right up and when I'm not there, they don't want to be there cause its to quiet. There a young fella from Romania, he sits behind me in class and we do any writing or have a debate I turn around and ask him what



does he think about the subject and if he says "he don't know", I say come on tell me something I don't care what it is and we'll talk about it, so now I have him talking and laughing and we are good friends.

There's another young guy in class that I joke with and at Christmas time, I told him he was going to get coal in his sock. I find some coal candy and a piece of real coal on the beach. I wrapped the piece of coal up in a small bag and put that inside of six other boxes which I wrapped up. We had a lot of laugh that day, and I gave him the coal candy.

I do all my work but I have fun too. It maybe over 50 years since I went to school, but now I have chance to get my grade 12 at last.

## Learning Changes Lives

**M. K.** – Adult Learning Program Saint John Regional Correctional Centre

Teacher: Andrew Rouse

Google defines learning as the acquisition of knowledge or skills through experience, study or being taught. There is more than one reason why I returned to adult learning while being held at the Saint John Regional Correctional Centre. Students go to school for a diploma or certification. Learning is essential in our every day lives and it can change them. Thanks to the Adult Learning program, my future goals have also changed. Adult learning is important, because it gives us a chance to achieve milestones we haven't been able to reach in the past.

The main reason why I have returned to learning is to achieve a higher education. I did not finish my high school until recently. Having this diploma has given me access to more job opportunities. During my incarceration, I have passed my GED. This will help me with applying for university. My end goal is to further my education and receive further diplomas. This will help me to secure a better job in the future.

Another reason that I returned to learning is that I have the potential to continue learning and be the first in my family with a university degree. Having strayed in the past, I want to pave the way for not only me but my siblings also. This way I can set myself as an example for them that education is key.

My life has changed ever since I started dedicating more time and attention to my education. It has changed me for the better. It has helped me gain more knowledge and to become a better problem solver. Learning in a controlled environment has boosted my focus and self esteem. During my incarceration, I had to use my undivided attention to complete my GED. The fact that I was able to focus in this manner and prepare for the tests made me feel very accomplished. Altogether it has made me a better person.

My future goals are different from when I was still in high school. In the past, the furthest I'd plan for would be for the next year. But now that I have my GED, new doors are now open to me. My goals aren't fantasies, I am aiming to apply for university. I'd like to be able to get at least a Master's degree in business or Accounting. After that, I will get a job in the business sector.

In conclusion, learning is the concept of knowledge or intellectual information being captured by the human brain, transmitted through studying, an experience or one another. I returned to school to obtain a high school diploma. Now that I have calmed down and turned a new leaf I know how useful and important an education is. It will also allow me to pursue a higher education. Learning has changed my life. I am more focused and a more informed member of society. My goals for the future have transformed as a result of the Adult Learning program. Adult learning programs are a service provided to the public. It is another opportunity at learning. It gives you a second chance at high education and a new career.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Joel Lemi**– Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Christina Kenny

Life is always a test that we have to overcome. To learn life's lessons, people always think big, but using our thoughts in a wise way is the difficulty most of us face. I know how life gets; it takes courage and dedication to achieve what you want in life.

I come from an extended family of about seventeen family members. All these members were raised by a single mother who sacrificed all that she could to give a better life for her children. Most of us are from humble families, old houses, and small towns with sad stories. However, the dreams that most of us want are all ahead of us. Getting to your dreams requires an education of a certain level which brought me into the Adult Learning Program. Some people say school is a waste of time, but it only depends on what you want to do in the future.

The Adult Learning Program helps one in different ways. I need to improve my Reading, Writing and math skills to have a certain level, and the Adult Learning Program was best for me because I am older.

Learning in this kind of program isn't easy. It takes only your ability to learn to get to your dreams. I am finding it fine because I am catching up with plenty of stuff. My Reading, Writing and math have already improved. I am hoping for better achievements in this program.

My goals are to graduate, have a better job, go back to school, pursue my dream job, and be an inspiration to all other people who still doubt themselves and take care of my family.

I am currently doing my GED.

## Never Too Late

**Chris Lozier** – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

As adults, we all have experienced some sort of regret in our lifetime. For me, not finishing high school was at the top of the list of regrets.

At the age of sixteen, I found myself losing interest in school. By grade twelve I had dropped out even though I knew I had great potential. At the time I just didn't realize the importance of graduating and receiving a high school diploma.

Outside of working the odd job for minimum wage, I spent most of the following two years experimenting in drugs, alcohol and partying. As a result, I found my mental health starting to deteriorate. Shortly after my nineteenth birthday I made the decision to head west to British Columbia to try the workforce which was booming at the time.

While spending a large portion of my twenties in British Columbia, I was able to find work in a variety different fields, but always had to start at the bottom being paid the lowest wage possible. Whereas those with a diploma or equivalent often got a position paying a higher wage.

Even though British Columbia was a beautiful place to live and I started the perfect family there, we were forced to move home suddenly when my brother passed away unexpectedly in 2017 to be closer to my mother who took the loss extremely hard.

Tragedy did not end with my brother, as the mother of my children passed away a few short years later in a car accident leaving me to be a single primary caregiver to our two amazing six year old twins. Subsequently, I found myself lost and confused. I knew I had to pull myself together and be the father, roll model and friend my children needed now more than ever.

While part of me dread returning to school, I knew I was not going to excel in the workforce without a higher education. Therefore, I would not be setting a great example for my children. After eighteen years I finally made the decision to walk into NBCC Woodstock to inquire about the GED Program.

Let's be honest, stepping back into the classroom after so many years would be nerve racking for anyone. I certainly did not know what to expect. It didn't take long to feel accepted by my instructor Joanne along with my fellow peers. Even though I didn't believe so much in myself at the time, Joanne had ways to helping me repair my self-confidence.

Since returning to school I've gained so much more confidence in myself that I though was long gone. I've set and crushed multiple goals. I feel now that nothing can stand in my way from achieving anything I set my mind to.

Starting off, I set the goal to pass every exam required to graduate the GED Program which I am one exam away from completion. My next goal was to get accepted into a trade course which I

have been conditionally accepted into the Skilled Trades course in the fall of 2023 pending completion of my final exam. I then went on to quit smoking marijuana, quit drinking alcohol, deleted social media apps, and started exercising and eating healthier. I have no doubt that I will continue to dominate any tasks set in front of me.

That being said, something as small as returning to school has opened doors I thought were forever closed. For that I am grateful. I can genuinely say that this experience has made me a better father, mentor and all around better member of the community.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Nicole McIvor** – East Saint John Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Teacher: Al Rouse

I made the important decision to go back to school to get my education for many reasons. Firstly, the type of work I have always done did not provide me with any pension or benefits. I was a waitress for twenty years. Another reason for going back to school is to get myself into a healthy routine. Lastly, and most importantly, is to take a trade once I graduate. I need the drastic change. I know this decision will change my life.

I woke one morning dreading going to work. So I thought to myself, this is a dead end job with no benefits or pension. As I get older having benefits and a pension are very important to me because now a days you need it with the high cost of living. I made the wise choice to go back to school to get the proper education in order to be successful.

Making the choice to be back in school is a life saver for me. It's more than just education and money. It has helped me immensely. It has helped me change my mind set into thinking more positive and has put me into a healthier routine. I get up early and try at least ten minutes of meditation so I can start my day with a clear mind. Having my education will open many doors for me. I need to put all my effort into this and graduate in a timely fashion so I can have a better career.

When I finish school it will be a major accomplishment and I will feel extremely proud of myself finally doing it and not getting discouraged or giving up. When I finish school I will be taking a trade. Today there are many opportunities for women in trades. I would like to become a welder. I will be coming out of my comfort zone and learning something completely new. My income will increase which is a must. I also feel that I would be good at a trade as my spouse has been in the industry for many years and would be able to assist me.

In conclusion, returning to school was the major decision I could have ever made. I know things will improve for me as long as I put the hard work in to do so. It has opened my eyes that I could have a career that will provide me with a pension and benefits. It has also started to put me into a healthier routine which is good for my mind and body. Lastly, this will get me where I want to be which is a welder. I am excited for the change in my life and what better time to have this incredible opportunity provided to me by the wonderful people that are making it possible for me to do so. I look forward to the happiness it will fill me with and having a much more secure job and income. Learning can change lives for anyone. It has certainly changed my life.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Jami McMahon** – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

I returned to learning for more than 1 reason. I had a baby when I was 20, and I figured I would complete my highschool so that I didn't have to worry about it. I ended up dropping out once again because I was only 1 month postpartum when I started. I lasted about 2 months but being a single mom with lack of sleep and eating took a huge toll on me along with my body still healing.

I gave up on the fact that I could finish school, until my mom and I moved to New Brunswick and I had no daycare so I couldn't work. I remember feeling so discouraged and hopeless as if there was no way I could get anything done and Postpartum Depression was really affecting me. I went on Social Assistance for about a month or so after my maternity leave and when I expressed how I felt to my social worker along with my plan of wanting to get back into the trades, she told me about the GED program. I felt like it was too good to be true because in Ontario they don't offer services like this. It was my first time ever hearing about it. For the first time in a long time I was excited to build a future for not only myself, but for my daughter as well. It gave me hope for a better career and a better life.

I have only been here for about 5 months now, but being in class everyday has changed my mindset and has made me disciplined to do things that I need to do and have a set routine as well as take better care of myself. I get up early, get my daughter to daycare; I even took up powerlifting in my free time and I'm planning on competing soon. It's definitely changed my attitude about life and has given me something to look forward to. I received my digital literacy certificate which is the first certificate I've ever recieved and I've also applied to college for the fall of 2023, these small achievements have made me feel so accomplished.

My teacher Joanne has taught me so much that I never thought I'd ever learn. I struggled a lot in public school and out of all the teachers I ever had, no one has ever given me the time and patience the way Joanne did. School, along with my teacher has made me so confident in myself, as well as jumping out of my comfort zone and challenging myself in not only academic studies but everything in life. My family has always made jokes about how I'd never in their lifetime make it to college, that I'd either be dead or in jail. Which yes, maybe a few years ago that would look accurate, but enrolling into the GED program has been the best thing I ever did.

I now have a plan to become an electrician, which is something I will forsure stick to because I have the confidence and determination to tell myself I can do it and I will do it.

## L'apprentissage change des vies

**Sandra Nadeau** – La Plateforme Canadienne de Formation à Distance (PCFAD)

<https://www.coalition.ca/projets/pcfad/>

Enseignante : Guylaine Castonguay

Bonjour à vous tous, c'est Sandra.

Me voilà à cinquante et un an qui scrute les livres et fais des devoirs.

J'ai décidé de retourner aux études pour moi-même afin d'assurer mon avenir. Parce que durant toute mon enfance, j'ai dû lutter, bûcher car il n'y avait aucune aide pour me guider.

Heureusement qu'avec le temps, les choses se sont améliorées. En autres, mes études ont changé ma vie, amélioré mes aptitudes et mes compétences à tel point que ça m'a donné plus de confiance en moi. Évidemment, ce n'est pas toujours facile cela demande beaucoup de rigueur, d'organisation et même physiquement, très exigeant par moment

Maintenant, j'entrevois un bel avenir car plusieurs options s'adressent à moi, ainsi que de recevoir de l'aide pour avancer. Tout ce travail, d'heures, de sacrifices et d'acharnement, cela permettra de donner de bons résultats. Oui les amis, c'est vrai que ça paie au bout de la ligne! Il suffit de croire en soi, quel que soit son niveau, les bénéfices seront nombreux. Je demeure confiante pour me trouver du travail qui répondra à mes besoins et mes capacités.

Présentement, je suis des cours avec le programme PCFAD de Codac NB, que j'aime beaucoup pour leur flexibilité et je suis aussi un cours en ligne avec le CCNB. J'ai beaucoup de soutien et de contacts pour mes tâches, si j'ai des questions, ce que j'apprécie.

Pour le moment, je me garde à jour puisque j'étudie à temps partiel et que je suis proche aidante pour ma mère. Elle demande beaucoup de la surveillance, car elle à la maladie de démence/Alzheimer. Quand le temps sera importun, je vais refaire des démarches plus actives dans ma recherche d'emploi.

Il n'y a pas d'âge pour apprendre, l'éducation est la richesse du bonheur. C'est une phrase que je me répète continuellement.

Un de mes objectifs, que je caresse depuis mon jeune âge, est d'écrire un livre. Écrire une histoire que j'aimerais lire à mon entourage pour montrer mon talent. Combien mon cœur d'enfant est encore vivant dans mon intérieur!



## Learning Changed my Life

**Jasmine Panting** – Fredericton Day Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Alexa Washburn

Returning to learning has changed my life in so many ways. When I was in school in the past I could never learn as fast as the rest of the kids. I left school because my seizures were getting worse. Since I have returned to school my teacher has made my learning so much easier. In the future I plan on owning my own business and I can't wait.

When I left school it was in grade 10 so I was around 16-17 yrs old. I could never learn as fast as the rest of the kids. I was always frustrated because I could never understand what was being taught. I could never get help if I asked for it. Whenever they did help me they were always mean about it. The teachers never understood how I wasn't understanding what they were teaching while all the other students were. This all led to me having no confidence or respect in myself or my learning.

I started having seizures when I was 12 yrs old. I was in grade 7 at that point, and that's when my grades went downhill. Over the years my seizures got worse, school got harder, and my stress levels were through the roof. That's when I decided to leave and never go back.

I returned to school because I wanted to be able to get a job. Since I have returned to school my teacher has made my learning so much easier. I get a lot less frustrated while I'm learning now because she told us that everyone learns at their own pace and that's okay. Whenever I ask for help I can get it. She's always nice. She understands that I learn differently than the rest of the students. With all that being said since I came back to school I have gained back the respect and confidence in myself that I had once lost.

After I finish this program I plan to go to university or college, to take the courses that I will need to run my own grooming, training, and boarding business. That includes marketing, management, computer science, and economics. I will have to get certified to become a dog groomer. To become a pet trainer I will need to learn animal behavior, body language, first aid, and obedience. To be able to board animals while their owners are on vacation, I have to get certified to be able to do that. That requires facility design and policy courses along with canine and feline familiarization courses. My grandparents did the same job when they were younger. I want to be able to pick up where they left off. I want to be proud of myself for what I have accomplished. I also want people to be proud of me.

Returning to learning has changed my life in so many ways. If I had never returned, I wouldn't have any of the opportunities available to me that I have now that I did return. I am very thankful for the people who believed in me, and kept telling me not to give up no matter how much I wanted to. I am also thankful for my teacher for understanding me and helping me to learn and get a better education. Without her I don't think I would be where I am today.

## Learning Changed My Life

**Daniello Provenzano** – Nackawic Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Maria Donovan

One of the most significant ways of opening new doors is to apply for school. I returned to learning because with more education comes more growth, and I am trying to grow to my maximum potential. I want to work on my personal development to achieve my goals in life. Learning has changed my life because it gave me motivation, confidence, and a routine.

Firstly, I decided to return to learning because I knew that education would give me the motivation I needed to get my life together. Prior to returning, I was suffering emotionally, I was living unhappily with myself because I didn't know what I wanted in life. Being out of school for so long made me notice that I was losing confidence in myself and falling behind, so I needed to do something about it. My mother recommended the GED program and so I decided to sign up. Everyone knows that learning is important and getting an education is a good experience because school can be beneficial to everyday life. Math and English are the most important subjects to learn because the world revolves around literacy, numbers, and communication so I felt like returning back to learning would help refresh my memory and will help me mentally.

Secondly, I felt returning to school was a superb idea because learning has definitely boosted my confidence. Back in elementary school, I was diagnosed with a learning disability called IEP. For years I suffered to read and learn but as I started getting older I eventually grew out of my difficulties and now I am determined to learn new things. Being back in school has taught me new things that I missed out on learning as a kid. With IEP I missed out on lots, but all this new stuff I am learning from GED makes me think differently. I can see the world from a different perspective and have gained a deeper understanding of how things work.

Thirdly, the most important thing school offered me was a routine, by joining the GED program I now feel I have a purpose to wake up and have a healthy day-to-day lifestyle routine. My goal is to keep being consistent and learn new things every day. With education, I will have more opportunities in life and I hope someday I get a good-paying job that accommodates the cost of living. As for a career, I would love to get into the modeling and photography industry and I hope someday I get sponsored in kickboxing. I want to inspire others and help people mentally, physically, and financially. I plan to blog about my journey and share with others that life can be challenging but everyone has the potential to be great. It all starts with education.

In conclusion, with new doors opened in my life, I can officially further my education and I will be able to reach my future goals to grow to my maximum potential. GED gave me the chance to work on my personal development and gave me a healthy mindset. Returning to school changed my life because it gave me routine, boosted my confidence, and lastly gave me the motivation I needed to get back on track.

## L'apprentissage change des vies

**Lynda Recine Boissy** – Charlotte County Adult Learning (CCALP)

<http://ccalp.ca/>

Enseignante : Josée Lefebvre

Bonjour mon nom est Lynda. J'ai déménagé à St-Andrews au Nouveau-Brunswick, il y a presque 5 ans. Je suis originaire de Montréal au Québec. Pourquoi avoir décidé de faire mon diplôme d'étude général ( GED ) à l'âge de 47 ans? Simplement pour accomplir quelque chose d'inachevé, un rêve tant convoité dans ma jeunesse et aussi pour avoir un meilleur salaire.

Quand j'étais encore à l'école secondaire, à l'âge de 14 ans, j'ai vécu un incident (un viol) qui a fait en sorte que j'ai dû abandonner mes études. J'avais peur de me rendre à l'école alors une policière venait me chercher le matin à la maison pour me conduire à l'école et elle venait aussi me reconduire à la maison le soir après les cours. Je trouvais insensé de finir mes études de cette manière. Je n'ai jamais eu la possibilité de poursuivre mes études par la suite avec le travail et les enfants, cela m'était impossible.

Très jeune, je voulais être infirmière pour prendre soin des personnes malades. Avec le temps, je me suis aperçue que ce que je voulais vraiment était de devenir préposée aux bénéficiaires puisque c'est eux qui ont le plus de contact direct avec les patients. J'ai aussi eu à prendre soin de personnes près de moi; ma grand-mère maternelle, durant deux ans qui ne pouvait plus se laver seule, ni faire ses repas seule; ma belle-mère qui était en fin de vie; mon conjoint qui avait subi une chirurgie au niveau du dos et qui ne pouvait pas se déplacer durant quelques mois; et finalement, ma mère qui a eu un cancer très agressif, qui ne pouvait bouger sans se casser les os et qui est décédée en l'espace de cinq mois. Je trouve que prendre soin des personnes est valorisant et apprécié. Beaucoup de personnes âgées n'ont aucune visite de leur famille respective et les préposés deviennent leur deuxième famille, puisqu'ils les côtoient presque tous les jours.

Toute ma vie, j'ai travaillé dur dans les cuisines de casse-croûtes et de restaurants pour des salaires médiocres. Maintenant, avec les années, je sais que travailler dans le domaine de la santé est beaucoup plus payant, enrichissant et offre des avantages sociaux. C'est pourquoi j'ai choisi le métier de "PSW = personal support worker" en français on dirait plutôt, préposée aux bénéficiaires ou aide-soignante.

Finalement, ce sont toutes ces principales raisons qui font que j'ai choisi de poursuivre mes études, soit l'obtention de mon GED, et ensuite continuer mes études pour l'obtention de mon PSW. Je me suis donc inscrite au programme d'étude pour adultes. J'ai été localisée au centre le plus près de chez moi, Charlotte County Adult Learning de St-George. Le plus gros défi a été que j'étais francophone dans un milieu anglophone. Ils ont, en fin de compte, trouvé une enseignante francophone pour moi. Cette professeure, Josée Lefebvre, est super géniale et elle prend le temps dont j'ai besoin pour me faire bien comprendre. Elle est patiente et dévouée. Il me reste qu'un examen en français à passer pour enfin avoir mon diplôme d'équivalence d'études secondaires. Je suis très fière de moi. Je recommande ce centre à tous ceux qui veulent faire leur GED, elles sont extraordinaires!

Le plus important pour moi aujourd'hui est d'être heureuse et d'aimer mon travail pour me sentir enfin épanouie. Avoir le sourire le matin et avoir hâte d'aller au travail pour enfin voir mes patients. Je prends à cœur le bien-être des personnes qui en ont besoin. J'espère aussi vous faire apprécier ce doux métier. Peut-être même, vous faire penser à moi lors de prochaines visites dans un service de la santé!!

## Learning Changes Lives

**Denecca Reynolds** – Saint John Kings Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Teacher: Tara Ahearn

My names Denecca. I am going to tell you about learning, why I returned, how it has changed my life, and what my future goals are.

I have a lot of reasons why I chose to come back to learning after so long. Firstly for myself; when I was in high school I didn't believe in myself, I didn't think I was smart enough, I was picked on and got in with the wrong group, then dropped out in grade ten when I became pregnant with my oldest. Secondly, I came back to show my kids that no matter how hard life gets or throws things at you to always believe in yourself. That you can do anything you put your mind to. Lastly, I want my kids to have a mom they can look up to.

Learning has changed my life. Whether it's schooling, taking courses to better myself, or programs, you can always learn something new. Even with being a full time mom to a special needs child and another one with ADHD learning has helped me believe in myself. It's taught me that I am smart and can do this. Learning has also helped me to become a better person inside and out, and it has helped me to help my kids never give up or say they can't do something.

I have so many future goals I don't know where to start. After I get my grade twelve I want to go to college. I have wanted to be a counsellor for youth to help them from personal experiences not just text book. I know when I was growing up and going to counselling, I used to get annoyed at having to talk to someone who I felt didn't understand and was just going by text book. I want to own a house, live a stable life, and just be happy. Learning opens many doors for the future.

Whatever your reasons are for going back to learning , how it's changed your life or what your future goals are know learning changes lives.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Rodney Roberts** – Woodstock Adult Learning Center (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

I decided to return to school because education is important, and it is the key to being successful in the future. Dropping out of high school is one of my biggest regrets, and I returned to learning to correct my mistake. Learning has changed my life for the better and will improve the quality of life for me and my younger brother. After my dad passed away, I had to take on a lot more responsibility. I've taken custody of my younger brother, gotten my own apartment, went through a driver's education, and finally got my driver's license as well as a vehicle that I can use to drive myself to and from school. Since returning to school, I've accomplished a lot, and I am only one exam away from graduating with a GED. I am proud of myself for returning to school, but I wish my dad could still be here to see me graduate. He always wanted me to get an education, and I know he would be very proud of me for going back to school.

After graduating and getting a GED, I plan on upgrading even farther by learning a trade or taking a class in university. I haven't decided what class I want to take yet because I want to find something that I will really enjoy before picking a class and going to college or learning a trade. I would like to take a class in welding or carpentry unless I can find a different class that I would be interested in, but I still have time to think things over until I finish graduating. Learning has changed my life for the better and it will pay off when I am successful in the future. It's never too late for someone to better their lives with an education and I know having my GED will improve my life by giving me more opportunities. Learning is not only making my life better, but it will also help me make life better for my brother. My going back to school has been a good influence on him.

I'm glad I get the opportunity to better my life with an education and get a second chance to do better. Learning has changed my life a lot in the past couple of years and even inspired me to get my driver's license so I wouldn't need to rely on anyone else to drive me to school every day. I am truly grateful for the experience of taking the GED class and I am certain it will pay off in future and help me accomplish my goals as well as building a life for myself and my family. I never imagined myself graduating but now I'm just one exam away from being a graduate, and it feels great to know I've come this far even though the last few years have been difficult to say the least.

## The one thought

**Ghazal Saadatmand** – Fredericton Day Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Alexa Washburn

I'm Ghazal, and I thought my story would go like this:

A young girl with many dreams, who had to move as a teen, who was a refugee and had to put all her hopes and plans on hold. A girl who wanted to do many things, but she couldn't.

Fast forward: It took some time, but now I know that it doesn't have to be the way my story goes.

Maybe I learned that the hard way, but now I can never forget, "you are not the bad things that happened to you.

You are what you love, you are what you think, the music you listen to." And most importantly you are who you choose to become.

When life gives you barriers, maybe they are not there to keep you from being great. Maybe...just maybe...they are there to make you become greater.

For me, to get my GED, means for the first time, I can have control over my life. Means I didn't let the hardships decide for me, I could finally get a hold of my life and decide how I wanted my story to continue.

Means I didn't let the world take away my light, and when I missed the happy and joyful person that I was once, I got her back, or at least, I'm getting her back.

I felt like giving up... time after time...but I didn't.

Sometimes all you need is that spark.

Honestly, you just need that one thought... the one that reminds you who you are.

I AM NOT JUST A REFUGEE.

I can someday start writing my own story and still dream the dreams I once put on hold.

Those dreams are not gone...

The girl who dreamed of being a painter, someone who loves what she does, someone who helps, someone who smiles, someone who works hard, graduates and does what she loves best, and simply, with that one thought my life can change in all those ways.

I couldn't let the bad times make me someone who isn't smiling anymore.

So, whenever you find yourself in a place where you feel like you have let go of all the things you once dreamed of, just know that one thought, one spark can change everything!

Just know that you can be all the things you wanted to be and more.

Instead of thinking what if things don't work out, think, what if it all goes right!

That will change everything for the better.

I want that to be my new now.

I mean... I am working on my GED, something I thought would be so hard, something that made me feel I'm behind everyone my age, made me feel insecure and think I'm not good enough. I came to Canada just recently and I started trying to get my GED and it makes me so happy that I can.

We might just work to pay the bills, and might forget going after what we love to do, but why not work on doing the things we love?

"Why can't I make a career out of my art, or photography, or becoming a designer?" I thought. Just a thought like that and you are halfway there! Believe me, inside you there is power to be great, to make those dreams come true. To become what you hoped for. To be HAPPY...

Isn't that what we all want to be...?



## Learning Changes Lives

**Shiloh Sewell** – St. Stephen Adult Learning Centre (CCALP)

<http://www.ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Marion Jamer

Two of my favorite quotes pertain to this particular subject. The first being this one; “Learning never exhausts the mind” – Leonardo DaVinci. I have always enjoyed soaking up as much knowledge as I can. Unlike so much in life that exhausts one, I have never found learning to be one of those things. My most favorite quote was quoted to me by my Nan who quoted B.B. King. He had said “The beautiful thing about learning is no one can take it away from you.” This one always stuck with me.

Growing up we never had a lot at times it seemed more was taking from us then we earned. As much as life or people can take from you, the knowledge you learn, that is always yours!

I returned to school for a few reasons. One of those being I feel exhausted by minimum wage jobs that leave you barely able to afford the basic necessities in life. I got tired of struggling to meet ends meet. I want to do better for myself as well as for my children. Another reason I returned to learning, I felt I owed it to myself to do better, to be better. I wanted to challenge myself, also to prove to myself as well as those who doubt me that I can do it. I had put my goals off for so long that they began to feel out of reach. Most importantly though I returned to learning to be a more positive role model for my children. I am a firm believer in leading not just by preaching, but by setting the example. I want my children to set goals for themselves and know that with hard work as well as dedication they can achieve their goals.

Learning is changing my life in a sense that I can now help my kids with their homework, whereas before I didn't know how to help them. Learning again has given me confidence in myself as well as my capabilities. It has changed my outlook on the future, and is opening up so many opportunities for me that I am looking forward to exploring.

As for future goals, I want to start with a course to become a Licensed Practitioner Nurse. When I achieve this goal, I would like to get a job in this field and move on to further my education to become a Registered Nurse. My Nan was a nurse for many years. When I had gotten really sick when I was little, I was hospitalized. She was one of the ones to look after me and even though I felt my absolute worst she had always found a way to make me smile, to make me feel better. She really took care of her patients; she genuinely cared for them. She was my inspiration. I also enjoy working with the elderly, being part of a support system for them especially when they didn't, always have someone else to be there for them. Through experience with my Gram being in a retirement home, as well as working at an Independent Living Home for the elderly, I have observed that they do not always get the respect, care nor the patience they deserve. I would like to make a difference there if I could.

In conclusion, learning changes lives every day. It stimulates personal growth. It is the most effective way to achieve your goals as well as to break through barriers. It is the foundation of change. Education fosters positive change in people as well as society. My Nan was a wise woman.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Ryan Spencer** – Hartland Distance Learning (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Calvin Brymer

This should have been the year I celebrated my 20 year high school graduation, unfortunately, the universe had a different plan. I was young and the world was full of opportunities, but my chosen path would take me on a two decade roller coaster ride. And so began my journey of “self-discovery”.

Fast-forward a few years, being a mature student, I was able to enroll in Cosmetology at a Private College in Nova Scotia. When that career path didn't work out, I decided a new city and new start was in order. With no clear direction I bounced across the county for years, all while battling debilitating mental health and addiction issues. Seeking employment presented a unique set of challenges, but I managed to navigate around educational requirements due to my post secondary education.

I kept moving to larger, and larger cities, where I knew jobs would be plentiful. What I didn't expect was how easy feeding my addiction would be. I found myself in Calgary, where I hit rock bottom. Things were good at first, but the “better” things got the worse my addiction became, until it eventually consumed me. I became a paranoid recluse whose mental health had all but shattered. All that remained, was a shadow of my former self. I became a man who had lost all sense of purpose.

It wouldn't be long before I found myself homeless, living in a tent and slowly starving to death. Then one day, fate intervened. Two gentlemen from the Alpha House Society came to my campsite and offered me help. Mike and Dominick would bring me food and check in on me. I got to know them over the course of the following month. By September 11, 2021 Mike and Dom decided that I needed medical attention, as despite their efforts they could see my health was rapidly declining. Regardless of what I thought I wanted at the time, it had become quite evident that my life was in danger, and I was in need of intense medical intervention. I will be forever grateful for this organization and these two individuals. They saved my life!

When I was admitted to hospital weighing in at 105 Lbs, I was confined to a wheelchair to get around. My body had all but shut down and my immune system was almost non-existent. Finally recognizing that I needed to be surrounded by family for the support it would take to get my life turned around, I called my dad and told him I wanted to come home. His reminder that I had a niece and nephew that I had yet to meet led to the sudden realization of my mission in life - to be the best Uncle I could be, and an example to them that they can make mistakes and bad choices in life, and recover, but you have to want to. Not well enough to travel, I spent the next three months in hospital detoxing and building my strength before I was ready for the journey back east. It was tough, but I was determined to make it home to be the uncle these kids deserved.

Landing in Fredericton on November 2, 2021, my recovery was far from over as I was still weak and severely underweight. Slowly, through perseverance and the unwavering support of my dad and family, I got stronger, seeing improvements daily. It took a year before I was well enough to start building my life. Frustratingly, and I do recognize with nothing but love and concern, Dad would say “slow down, its going to take time”. Although not the words I wanted to hear, he was right, and when he suggested getting my GED, I took his advice. Since returning to Education, a long-forgotten confidence and ambition has been awakened within. I have now been clean for almost two years, and can see a future that is bright and full of hope. Completing that task, that I skipped over 20 years ago in my Educational journey, has been the best decision I’ve made in a long time.

## L'éducation change des vies

**Amishya Thibault** – Centre Lancaster (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca>

Enseignante : Carole Bourgault

Du tout premier jour d'école jusqu'au dernier, on te demande à plusieurs reprises qui vous voulez être quand vous serez plus âgé. Une des choses que j'ai pu réaliser, c'est que chacun grandit et progresse à son propre rythme. De trouver le mien était un grand défi. Alors pourquoi reprendre mes études?

Qu'est ce qui m'a inspiré? C'est mon présent. Le plus je pense à ce que je veux dans l'avenir, plus je réalise que je dois changer. Mon rêve depuis ma jeunesse était de fonder un jour, ma propre famille. J'achèterais une grande maison à la campagne avec beaucoup d'espace pour un grand jardin et pour donner un endroit à laisser les enfants grandir et jouer. Mais à mon désavantage, il se trouve que je suis stérile. Maintenant, j'ai appris que cela ne me définit pas comme femme, et j'ai aussi découvert que travailler avec des enfants était simplement un domaine auquel j'appartiens. Une fois que j'ai retrouvé mon étincelle, il restait juste à planifier. Considérant que je ne pouvais pas donner naissance à mes propres enfants, j'ai décidé que j'aimerais tellement ouvrir ma propre garderie pour aider à combler mon désir profond.

Ma première étape est de finir mon GED au centre Lancaster. Ensuite, j'aimerais m'inscrire au CCNB et prendre le cours « d'éducation et développement de la petite enfance ». Une fois que mes cours seront terminées et après avoir obtenu mon certificat, je pourrai enfin être capable d'avoir des connaissances et des compétences de base sur la façon d'exploiter ma propre entreprise de garderie et de donner les meilleurs soins possibles. De plus, j'aimerais travailler dans une garderie pendant quelques années pour acquérir plus d'expériences, d'inspiration et éventuellement être capable d'économiser assez d'argent pour acheter la maison de mes rêves. Une fois que je l'aurai acheté, je pourrai enfin faire le travail que je désire et vivre confortablement.

Comment l'apprentissage change-t-il ma vie?

Bon, poursuivre ma formation et travailler sur mes études au GED me démontre mes propres qualités. Avec cette formation, j'ai repris confiance en moi et ma motivation est plus forte. Je réalise maintenant à quel point il est important de m'exprimer et d'avoir une bonne communication et de la patience avec les autres. Le montant de confiance en soi que je retrouve est inexplicable. C'est comme regagner quelque chose que je ne savais pas que j'avais perdu. J'espère que tout mon travail acharné et mes efforts m'apporteront leurs fruits pour mon avenir! J'ai maintenant plus d'opportunités et je suis plus fière de moi.

J'aimerais aussi prendre un moment pour remercier toutes les enseignantes et éducateurs qui nous aident du jour au lendemain à faire de nos rêves une réalité. Grâce à leur aide, mon avenir est possible et les nouvelles opportunités aussi. Vous êtes les vrais héros, merci!

## Learning Changes Lives

**Phillip Tyrell** – Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Christina Kenny

Education is the key to success. Expanding your knowledge by returning to school is beneficial in many ways because it changes knowledge, creates new goals and paves the way for a brighter future.

First, with the knowledge learned at school, we will have a better understanding of society. They say, “real knowledge comes from practice.” In the beginning, going back to school after being absent for numerous years is very challenging, but the end goal is always beneficial. It enables us to realize how learning is important and how it aids in achieving our goals by preparing the path for the right career selection. It is a life-changing experience knowing that knowledge is a powerful tool and possessing it can ease life’s problems. Developing a career is a very important stage in our life in which an individual can acquire knowledge about a wide variety of possibilities. What you typically gain from successfully completing your studies at the Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Centre is a GED certificate, but by default, we are all looking for our certificates to lead to a more distinct, respected and well-paid profession.

Second, gaining a higher certificate usually makes it possible to get a hold of a better job. As a result of the accomplishment of achieving a certificate, it would not be difficult to find a good job in most cases. It helps you to move closer to your dream job. What is a better way to achieve your goal, and to have a better future for yourself, than going back to school and building on your knowledge? Returning to Fredericton Youth Adult Learning Centre has been an inspiration for me. It is a place where people from different backgrounds get the opportunity to interact with each other. The material provided and the guidance given is off the chart. How they have paved the way for adults to gain what they deserve in life is not lacking at this centre, it can be achieved if you believe in yourself and take the necessary steps to fulfill your goals. The unemployment crisis is very troubling not only to the less fortunate but to all those who get caught in the grasp of its clutches, so the ease of finding a job may play an important role in the decision to return to school.

Last but not least, it is our goal to gain a brighter future for ourselves. Working together at this centre we can help others if we put what we learned into practice. Gaining more education fortifies our values, enhances our skills, and broadens our horizons. With these traits, we are able to extend a hand to those in need of help even better than ever before. Learning is the key to everything that we want to improve, so higher education helps to widen our understanding and increase our intellectual ability. Returning is the beginning of a sequence of moves someone can make in order to accomplish what he thinks best for his career.

In conclusion, acquiring knowledge from learning is power. The more you learn, the more you earn. So I strongly support returning to learning because it can prepare you for a promising future and can make you (as an individual) have a successful life.

## Learning Changes Lives

**Xinan Yang** – Hildegard Adult Learning Center (South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est)

<https://education-se.ca>

Teachers: Joselyn Serrano

After spending three years under the shadow of the global pandemic, it is finally the time for us to take a step forward and start to build our new life here in Canada. It doesn't happen quite often for someone in her late forties to go back to school in the country where I came from. There are many reasons for that, one of which is the lack of social resources. But it is a different story here in Canada.

My participation in the GED program seemed to happen accidentally. I was visiting the GED learning center together with my daughter, hoping to register her into the program. Ms. Joselyn Serrano received us warmly, providing all the information we could probably need. As soon as I learned that I could also take the course I made an instant decision to give it a try. It was not because of how eager I was to learn but rather I knew secretly it would be hard for me to take an actual step later.

I have been away from school for more than 25 years. What's made it even worse is that I never worked anywhere in my life. I have been a housewife ever since I got married. I don't have much choice when it comes to job searching. On top of that I am always nervous when I have to communicate with people in English. I studied English back in school though but not in a very efficient way. I need to improve my English and unlock new skills to survive. It seems the only way I could make a change in my life is going back to school.

I took an assessment before starting. It gave me some confidence right away when I found myself successfully recalling something I learned 20 to 30 years ago. I am simply grateful for having this opportunity to go back to school. It allows me to set a positive role model for my children. I wish I could succeed in the exam and show them that it is never too late to learn.

I hope to go to college after this GED program. I am not quite sure about what course to take yet. Personally, I want a job that not only helps me to pay the bills but also allows me to do something good for people. I need to figure out what options I have first. One thing that interests me is to work as a payroll practitioner and I have a good reason for that. My daughter and I are both working part-time in a warehouse and we are working exactly the same hours but there is often a difference in our paychecks. It happens once in a while, and it is frustrating when I am the one who gets paid less. I am just curious how could that happen. If I work in that position, I am going to try my best to avoid any mistakes.

Now I've been in this program for six months and I'm happy for the decision I made to join in. Learning gives me more confidence and makes my time more beneficial. There's a whole new world out there and I believe learning is the key to it.