



Literacy Coalition
of New Brunswick^{Ltd.}

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

Learning Changes Lives L'apprentissage change des vies

CELEBRATING ADULT LEARNERS' WEEK

APRIL 14TH TO APRIL 19TH, 2024

CÉLÉBRER LA SEMAINE DES APPRENANTS
ADULTES

14 AVRIL AU 19 AVRIL, 2024



Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick

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Learning Changes Lives

Arnel Alibudbud – Western Valley Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Deborah Lutes

My name is Arnel Alibudbud and here's my story, My dream was to get a higher diploma than what I achieved in the Philippines because I believed that this would change the lives of my 3 sisters and my father. I came from a poor family and my parents couldn't afford to have me in high school. When I graduated from elementary school I tried to continue studying in high school. I worked at a young age to support my studies, but in the middle of my studies I was forced to quit because my younger sister had to study. I didn't want to stop studying, but I had to do it and give up my dream.

I was forced to venture abroad and move away from my family to earn more money, because my income in the Philippines was not enough to cover our daily expenses at home. At the same time there were large tuition fees to pay for my sister's college education.

I gave my dream of learning to my sister. I told myself that it was okay. If she graduated and succeeded, I would feel like I had succeeded too. With the help of my lord God, my sister graduated and is now a full-fledged teacher. I am proud of her because in the midst of our difficulties in life, she has finished and not given up on fulfilling what became her and my dream.

In Centreville a new door opened for me to pursue my dream of continuing my studies and getting a diploma. I will try to get a Diploma because I have always wanted this and because it is one of the things that is needed to apply for permanent residency here in Canada. With permanent residency I could possibly bring my father and 3 sisters here! I want to show them the things that my eyes see, to see snow that they have never seen before. I want to make them experience the beauty of Canada and experience the good life in this country.

It's not too late, I say to myself. I'm going to take this Good opportunity to achieve my dream with the help of my lord God, and I thank him first and foremost for guiding my life adventure and the people behind this program. The Western Valley Adult Learning Centre gave me the opportunity to re-educate, while working for my Company, BWS Manufacturing Inc. which gave us the job and full support to us so that we could become permanent residents here in Canada. I am also thankful to my hardworking teacher who tirelessly taught us, even in bad weather, who did strive to come to us in Centreville, so that we can be teach. Maam Debbie, thank you and everyone involved, again thankyou very much.

Learning Changes Lives

Taylor Beaulieu – Nackawic Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Maria Donovan

Most teenagers do well in high school, but what about the ones that struggle and fall behind? I had a hard time in high school. I was bullied by not only my peers, but by my teachers and even my guidance counsellor. Due to the bullying, I never wanted to go to school, and when I did, I was so far behind I could not catch up. After struggling for a while, I ended up quitting school. This resulted in me never receiving my high school diploma.

The lack of a high school diploma means there are not many job options available. I settled for Tim Hortons and I worked there for a little over a year until I realized that full-time, minimum wage jobs would never get me to the life I have always envisioned for myself. Upon realizing that minimum wage jobs are not enough, I decided it was time to go back to school so I can get the education I need for the life I want.

I have struggled with depression for a long time, so I felt like my life was going nowhere, and I would never have anything to be proud of. Returning to school has changed my life by making me feel like I am getting my life back on track and implementing healthy practices and routines in my life. Coming back has also helped me create achievable goals for my future. I now have a better sense of the real world and what it will take for me to get to have a happy life I enjoy.

Taking those first steps and coming back to school has given me a second chance to make my dreams a reality, as well as giving me the chance to have the life I have always pictured for myself and my future family. I have always wanted to work with animals, so I plan on going to college to pursue a career either being a vet tech or possibly taking agriculture classes with the goal of having my own hobby farm someday. Also, having a good paying job that I enjoy will benefit my future family by giving us financial stability, which is all anyone can really ask for.

Learning Changes Lives

Kiara Brown – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

My name is Kiara Brown, I'm 21 years old. I have my whole life ahead of me, the world is my oyster. Or at least so I've been told. The reality is, in order to get to where I want to be in this big world, a good start would be to finish my education.

I want independence, to have a place of my own, a job I am passionate about, a steady and reliable income. So to start achieving my goals I'm getting my GED. After that I can plot out my next steps towards a better future. I can find a job and decide what kind of career I'd want to pursue, as well as get some work experience for different opportunities out there. Figure out if I need to continue on after my GED with college, and if so, in which direction I should go. So many options will become available once I'm finished with school.

Getting my GED will help open so many doors I didn't have access to before, allowing me to formulate and pursue long term goals. It will enable me to obtain some sense of accomplishment, as well as a step towards my independence. Most work places won't look at a resume unless you're in school or have the equivalent to a grade 12 diploma. It's frustrating, anxiety and stress inducing, and at times suffocating. I know what I need to do, I know I'm smart enough, maybe even a little stubborn. Until I'm finished, I'll continue to take it one step at a time, make short term goals, and continue until I can be proud with where I'm at, despite all the negativity from people and some positivity from others. Something I am doing for myself, and definitely worth everything leading up to this point in my life.

Learning Changes Lives

Kalista Buckingham – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

Part of being human includes having weaknesses and regrets, whether they are big or small, we all have them. Being diagnosed with severe anxiety, depression, and ADHD in my early teen years led me on a downward spiral. Schooling became my biggest weakness which in turn led me to my biggest regret.

In 2016 (3 years after I had been diagnosed), I dropped out of high school. Shortly after dropping out, I started working. For a long 7-year period I was bouncing from job to job, struggling to get by on minimum wage and crappy part-time jobs. Near the end of the 7-year period, I was expecting to have a baby in May 2023. As happy as I was with the news, it only made things harder for me. I was honestly ready to give up on ever having a future. However, as you could probably guess, my mind changed after giving birth, I wanted better for my little man.

My time to overcome my weaknesses and regrets came to me in August 2023. Returning to school to get my GED has been an amazing experience for me. With the help and support from my teacher, I have no doubt that I will be completing my GED within the next few months. Unlike my past experiences with schooling, Joanne has made school quite enjoyable for me, not only by helping and supporting me, but also by treating me as an equal, by talking to me as a real person rather than just another student she must teach.

Today I am 23 years old, and I finally see the future I want for not only myself but my family too. Pending the completion of my GED I will be applying to take the practical nurse course here at the NBCC. I can truly say that learning has saved my life. Schooling this time around has not only taught me book knowledge, it has also taught me the value of self worth. That being said, I really do hope more people return for their high school equivalent like I did.

Learning Changes Lives

Paulett Bullock – Bath Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

As a stay-at-home mum for the past 22 years, I have dedicated my time and energy to raising my children and managing the household. While I have loved every moment of being there for my family, I have recently come to the realization that it is time for me to return to college education. This decision was daunting at first, but I believe that it is the best thing for me to do at this stage in my life.

Starting college education will not only benefit me personally, but it will also have a positive impact on my financial situation. By obtaining a degree or certification, I will be able to expand my career opportunities and potentially increase my earning potential. This is will not provide me with a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment, but it will also help to secure my financial future.

Additionally, going back to school will allow me to stay current with the latest trends and developments in my chosen field of interest. This will make me more marketable to potential employers and give me a competitive edge in the job market. By continuing my education, I will be able to stay relevant and up-to-date in a rapidly changing world.

Furthermore, returning to college education will also provide me with the opportunity to network with other professionals in my field. This will allow me to make valuable connection and potentially open doors to new career opportunities. By surrounding myself with like-minded individuals, I will be able to learn from their experiences and gain valuable insights that will help me succeed in my chosen career path.

In conclusion, while being a stay-at-home mum has been a rewarding experience, I believe that returning to college educations is the best thing for me at this stage in my life. Not only will it benefit me personally and professionally, but it will also have a positive impact on my financial situation. By continuing my education I will be able to expand my career opportunities, stay current in my field, and make valuable connections that help me succeed in the future. I am excited about this new chapter in my life and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead.

Learning Changes Lives

Terrance Clow – Shediac South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est

<https://education-se.ca>

Teacher: Lara MacMillan

Sometimes when you are young, you don't think about the consequences of not completing high school until it's too late. Once you have the desire to better yourself, the positives of learning become much more apparent. This is why I have decided to return to learning and how it is shaping a completely different path into my future.

I was one of those teenagers that didn't think about graduating high school. I had a job, making minimum wage and thought I knew better. As many people in my life pointed out, this would be a decision that I would regret.

For twenty years I worked hard labor jobs, always excelling, yet constantly feeling the need to learn more. These companies didn't care about my personal growth or well-being, they only cared about production. So, in the end it was never worth the physical and mental strain I put myself through. Although leaving never seemed feasible, I felt stuck and that only brought depression into my life.

After a long battle with addiction, I made the first significant decision of my life and got sober. It had its ups and downs, but the biggest thing it did was open my eyes to better myself. After four years, I decided it was time for another life change, I quit my job of 12 years and joined a GED class. With the help from some amazing people, I was then accepted into a Learning program through Working NB. Now I could put all my focus into my studies. This is why learning programs are so important. It gave me another chance at pursuing dreams that I thought were long gone.

I had the desire to succeed, and to prove to myself that I could do it. Because of this, I have now completed my GED and it has made me want to continue learning for the foreseeable future. I have always been fascinated by computers, they are constantly changing and growing. It seems like you can never get bored while working on computers. So, my next goal for the fall is to get accepted into NBCC, and to take an Information Technology: Software Development course. Knowing that I can learn about something I find so interesting doesn't feel like work.

The future is exciting, and the possibilities are endless. I'm looking forward to meeting and building new relationships with people I meet along the way. And share the story of how I've got where I am today. But one thing I know for sure is I will continue to learn. It's a great feeling knowing how to fix something or make something better. So, if you catch yourself saying "I'm not smart enough" or "It's too stressful", don't count yourself out, there are people and programs out there that only want the best for you and will go out of their way to help. If I was able to do it, then anyone can do it, you just need to believe in yourself.

Learning Changes Lives

Michaela Cossette – Oromocto Day Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca>

Teacher: Kelly Coleman

I am sure by this point you have read countless stories about how learning has changed someone's life. Today, I am going to touch on that but also on how my learning will impact the lives of those around me as well.

Prior to seeking to further my education, often times I would feel less than my peers. I would feel like I'd need to fake intelligence to feel equal to my friends and family. Frankly, I found not having a high school education at 28 years old was embarrassing. I struggled to feel like I brought any positive impact to my family or my community or in all honesty, society as a whole.

I have had tons of goals and aspirations over the years but up until recently, they have felt unobtainable. So far from my grasp they've felt like a dream.

Once I began learning with Central Valley Adult Learning Association (CVALA,) I have felt a shift within myself. A sense of pride, a focused energy I've never experienced before, and a sense of personal peace that prior to working with CVALA I have never been able to achieve. They provided the resources, support and guidance required for me to surpass my goal and come out with an education I can be proud of.

Since receiving my GED, I have begun the process of joining the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). This is a long-term goal I have had since I was a teenager. It is a family tradition that runs deep in my blood, and following through with this will be a major change for my family (family of 5). Joining the CAF and moving through the ranks will not only give my family the financial security of a dual family income, but also full benefits, and a mother/wife they can be proud of. Beyond that, I can see myself feeling fulfilled with my career, becoming someone who is a positive participant in society and genuinely being proud of who I am, and how far I have come.

Without the patient instruction, grace and patience of my teacher, Mrs. Coleman, I would not be where I am today. Personally, she has given me an example of what open acceptance and respect of others despite their financial / educational / home life may look like. She is a fantastic example of someone who gives their all to every aspect of their career. Meeting different students with the different energy they require, being supportive and understanding of everyone and overall creating a functional, welcoming and judgement free educational space are all qualities Mrs. Coleman demonstrated as an educator. She has also helped facilitate a better future for my family by guiding me through the process of passing and obtaining my GED. For her, I will be forever grateful.

After reading my testimonial, I'm sure you can see the impact that learning has on lives. Not only of the learner but of those who surround them as well. The personal growth, self-empowerment, sense of accomplishment and pride are all second to the stability a parent / spouse with an education can provide. At this point in my life, I feel like the world is at my fingertips and it is all thanks to the way learning has changed my life.

Learning Changes Lives

Kevin DeKoker – Bath Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

Learning has changed many lives, mine most certainly.

Many years ago, while I was still attending school, I never saw the true value that having a good education would have on my future. While in the ninth grade I knew I wanted to pursue a career in the tattooing industry, leading me to leave school that following year.

Tattooing allowed me to meet with many great people, some very intelligent people as well. Once final factor played the biggest roll in returning to my education. I wanted to grow within the artistic field and do more than just tattooing. I wanted to become a barber.

I needed to complete my education or GED equivalent to attend eastern college, where I would be taught the fundamentals of barbering. Owning my own space one day where I would be able to live out both dreams is where I see myself. Barbering mainly to me is a way I will be able to reach a community not easily reachable with tattooing such as kids and adults with disabilities.

Tattooing is great and I love it, but reaching the kids and helping them and the parents that find it difficult to get their hair cuts done will be my main focus in my barbering career.

Once I have successfully completed this course, I will have a better chance and opportunity to live out what I have just written about. hopefully this might encourage someone as well.

For any one that reads this that might be interested in doing the same as I have done, please contact myself or Bev.

GED is a great learning program and is very well recognised. I highly recommend it to any one wanting to make a change in their lives by futhering their education.

Learning Changes Lives

Samantha Dennett – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Basil Kazakos

I am a twenty-five-year-old student of the Tobique Adult Learning Centre. In the summer of 2023, my son and I moved to New Brunswick to start a new life. Although we are living with family, my immediate focus was finding gainful employment. In the beginning, I attended several job interviews. However, I could not get past the interview stage. I quickly realized between not having my high school diploma, and not knowing anyone locally, I was at a major disadvantage.

In the summer of 2023, I decided to go back to school. I contacted Brooke Lockhart of PETL (Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour) to inquire about local adult education programs. She informed me that I could receive financial support to not only attend class full time, but also to send my child to a wonderful preschool. In addition, Brooke gave me all the information I needed to get started, and she set me up to write the intake test at the Tobique Adult Learning Center.

I have been enrolled in the Western Valley Adult Learning Program for approximately five months. In this time, I have successfully completed three of the GED tests and I am scheduled to write the last two tests next month. Following this, I will complete the GED and I will be moving towards my post-secondary goals. I look forward to pursuing a career in Phlebotomy.

Going back to school has been one of the best decisions I have made for myself and my family. I have developed several new skills and now I have the confidence to pursue post-secondary education. I know that with my GED, I will be able to provide a better life for my child and we can live a comfortable life. Furthermore, we will be able to travel more, which is something my son and I love to do.

There are several people within the Western Valley Adult Learning Program that have helped me achieve my goals. However, my teacher, Basil Kazakos, has been my biggest supporter in this program. He has been very patient and attentive to each student's individual needs. In addition, Basil encourages us to stay on track, and he applauds us for all of our accomplishments. And for that, I am grateful. On a final note, I would recommend anyone looking to earn their GED to find an adult education and get started.

Learning Changes Lives

Matthew Everett – Bath Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

Why I came back to school. My name is Matthew Everett and this is why I came back to school. I've been living on my family farm for five years not paying my way. With the G.E.D I can finally turn my life around. After I pass I plan to go to NBCC and learn more, get a real job and help take care of the people I love. I'm looking forward to making my mother and father proud of me and showing people that just because you drop out of school doesn't mean your life is over as long as you have a good plan and stick to it. Even if you are stuck in one place you can make it out with the right love and support. In summary, I've came back to school to try and take care of the people that mean the most to me and to prove my life isn't a waste of time and money. Thank you for giving me the chance to talk about why I came back to school.

Learning Changes Lives

Dawn Forsythe – Saint Mary's Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca>

Teacher: Michelle Adams

I decided to go back to school at 51 years of age to get my GED and graduate. Now that I am older, I have limited jobs I can do, because I have fibromyalgia and osteoarthritis in my spine.

I quit school in second semester of grade 11. I lived with my parents out of town, and it was a forty-five-minute drive each way. My parents both worked in town and my dad dropped off my mom and me off at her work. I walked over to Kings Place to catch the city bus uptown to the Fredericton Mall and then walked over to Fredericton High School. Unfortunately, I was late 5-10 minutes for homeroom each day. My teacher did not like that I was late. She called my parents at their work, and told them that I needed to be on time every day. My parents both told her that it would be impossible for me to be on time, as they had to be to work at a certain time as well, and this was the best way for me to go to class. As a result, I ended up quitting school, and did not graduate. This made it very hard for me to get a good job. Therefore, I ended up babysitting or cleaning, or was unable to get a job. I applied for other jobs but did not get hired without a diploma.

While taking my GED, I learned new things about the material I was studying. In every subject, there was a lot of information I did not know, and I learned different ways to figure out things as my teacher, Michelle Adams, is very resourceful. She is very knowledgeable and helpful in finding ways to help each of her students learn and proceed in their education.

After I complete my GED, I would like to find a job. I am interested in a few different jobs, such as providing homecare services and helping people with house cleaning and organizing. To get one of these jobs, I need my high school or GED diploma.

It is taking me a little over a year to take my GED and I am still struggling with math, but I am doing my best to graduate. I wish to be finished and find a good job that suits my needs. I hope my math test re-write will be successful, since it is my last subject to complete for my GED.

If you are thinking of going back to school, you will prove to yourself that you can do anything if you put your mind to it. You just have to try. There are older people that go back to school to further their education for better jobs for themselves and their families every day. So, if you are interested, please try it. You can take classes at a Central Valley Adult Learning Association classroom.

Learning Changes Lives

Becky Foster – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

My name is Becky Foster. I quit school in grade 8, twenty years ago due to what a lot of children deal with; bullying. Children can be so mean and the bullying made me hate myself so I quit. After that I went into the workforce going from job to job.

At the age of 19 I had a little boy and four years later I had a little girl. They are now 13 and 9. I found a full time good paying job, but I was never happy at my job. I went to a job every day for the last seven years that I didn't like and I felt stuck. I had two children to provide for was one of two reasons why I stayed. The second reason I stayed was that I only have a grade 8 education. Most places in my community do not hire without a high school diploma. Recently I got laid off due to work shortage. What was I to do to support my children?

My mom passed away a year ago. She was my best friend, my hero, my everything. My mom always wanted me to go back to school, but although I inquired about the GED class, I didn't follow through. I had too many bad memories of school and no confidence. I love children and wanted a career working with children, but living in an apartment was not enough space to look after children, nor could I make enough to support my family. After my layoff from work, I thought maybe it was a sign to finally follow my dreams and go to school and get a job in the career I wanted. So I contacted the Western Valley Adult Learning Center and started my GED.

I have many reasons for returning to school. The first is my children. I want them to be proud of their mom. I want to show them that at any age if you work hard, you can achieve your dreams; to follow your dreams, never give up and to do what will make you happy. I want my mom to look down on me, to be happy and proud of me for finally going back to school. Getting my GED will give me what I need to attend college and take the Early Childhood course so I can work with children.

I am so happy to have the chance to be in this program. It will not only change my life, but also my families. Class is not like public school. There is no bullying. Everyone is friendly and I get help when needed. My teacher, Joanne McIsaac, encourages me and I feel so much better about myself. I am very grateful for this wonderful opportunity and I feel confident I will be successful. I have taken that first giant step towards my goal. My children are proud of me and I know my mom would be too.

Learning Changes Lives

Nathan Holt – St. George READ NB

<https://www.lnb.ca>

Teacher: Hope Twinamatsiko

My name is Nathan Holt aged 29 I am a trained chef from NBCC (New Brunswick Community College) In St. Andrews.

I am doing Read New Brunswick programs for additional skills training to open doors for me to other new career path like customer services, cashier services which can provide well paying positions.

I am currently working on 'Reading and Writing for today's Adults Voyager 6, that provides skills for success at work, this has given me confidence to define success at work which means many different things like customer care services, performing well my duties, living up to my employers' expectations, being a team player, respecting co-workers and I take pride in myself that I have greatly improved at workplace.

I truly believe, learning is an on going process and has changed my life in a big way, myself confidence has been built and I believe in myself more and this has trained my mind to critically think and then make an informed decision, this has given me an opportunity to grow as an individual, experiment what am passionate about, I must say this learning has created for me better skills and greater self advocacy.

Continuous learning helps to innovate new ideas. I am appreciated, and this makes me happy, have learnt how to embrace challenges, this adult learning is not only about gaining Information but also brings me happiness and fulfilment.

I am noticeably confident to use the wide knowledge that I have gained in my reading and writing, and this has helped me to achieve my professional goals as a pastry chef. Recently, I got a new job at the Hub in St George where I work for 10 hours weekly preparing community meals and 2 hours weekly working at a second-hand store. This has helped to support my basic needs, certainly a feat to be proud of.

Learning new skills has provided tools for both personal and professional success, for example I have been able to read and understand different recipes in a better way than before, have earned more than before, have made many friends and this has greatly improved my self esteem, and have been exposed to a variety of culture. I am so proud of myself because my critical thinking skills have improved too.

Learning has changed my way of making decisions, I can ably make informed decisions, am open to new opportunities for personal and professional growth.

I am trying my best to learn to be less dependant on others and have a strong sense of independence especially at work, for example at the second-hand store, I work independently, the hands on experience is the best and I can do a lot by myself.

Through adult learning, have been able to make meaningful connections with others, have made friends and can engage with others easily both at work, center and in my community and have been able to apply the social skills learnt, I feel my teacher has given me a strong feed back, motivating me to keep working hard and this has increased my self esteem, confidence and overall wellbeing.

My goals for the future are:

- ❖ To Save money by 2026 and have a business operational plan in place.
- ❖ To open my own small business by 2027 and have basic knowledge in business operation.
- ❖ To Acquire skills in business management and learn how to manage risks.

Learning Changes Lives

Zachary Kinney – Bath Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Bev Haines

Learning is the main part of life; we learn from the past and we also learn from mistakes, some that hurt; some that don't and that changes lives.

Let's look at some people who killed by dui, they ruined their life by 1 bad mistake, and it changed their life greatly even if it was an accident. So yeah, learning changes lives.

The 80s didn't have as much technology as we do today and that is another example how learning changes lives unlike DUI's this can go either way good or bad with better technology means tracking is easier so that is good for those who are lost and help from 911. it is also bad because if enemy soldiers get their hands on advanced technology, then we civilians and allied troops are in serious danger.

So, this is why learning can change lives. so, this is why I returned to learning with the help of the teacher I can achieve my goals and dreams and join the Canadian army and get my mechanic's license then go on to take classes of forging. which in order for me to get into the army I need a GED/ grade 12 and if I get a GED, I'll have even more opportunities.

As I had mentioned before about the army a dozen times already, I need a GED or a grade 12 plus I can give my family a better life than the life we lived. so, my future goals are army and mechanic's license and get my dream car which is a matte black 1969 Dodge Charger with a 440 V8 and a 5-speed manual transmission, and drive through the night enjoying what life I have or will have.

So, in conclusion this is why I think learning can and will change lives.

Learning Changes Lives

Jessica (Sun Kyeong) Ma – Adult Literacy Fredericton

<https://www.adultliteracyfredericton.org>

Teacher: Joan Somerville

I came from South Korea. I found out ALF a few months after moving to Fredericton (Dec. 2022). I stopped by the library and happened to see an application on the wall by chance. I felt like I met a savior then. Because I was very hard to improve my English skill while working at the same time. I applied right now and a new journey of my life has begun. It is a precious and many changes to my life which as scary and difficult. After I started learning, I changed my daily life to become lively, confident, grateful, and a dreamer.

First of all, I have two fixed schedules to improve my English skill every week. I am so excited and happy to go back to being a student, pack my books and bags, do my homework, and meet my teacher. During class, I forgot my actual age and became a high school student who liked detective novels again. For me, who is working hard as a cook in a restaurant, the time to learn has become the joy of my daily life. Anyone who has worked under an employer in a restaurant for PR will know that it's a struggle.

Second, I felt confident and rewarded with my gradually improving skills while reading and writing new books under the guidance of my teacher. The teacher always waits patiently until I can understand and encourages me that I can do it well. So, I had a dream to study more specialized field in university in the future. I feel like I'm getting younger. A few years later, I am thinking about studying with young friends and exercising hard for my physical strength. So, my body has become very healthy. This is the result of not being able to buy it even after paying a lot of money.

Lastly, the following is about people. Through reading, I have experienced indirectly as the characters in the books, and I laughed and got touched. It also entertains the tired mind. I always look forward to the class with excitement because I can connect not only the contents of the book but also what happened in my daily life. Most of all, I feel like I am a member of ALF. It has been a strong supporter for me who was unfamiliar and had hard time physically and mentally. I am sure that I was able to overcome the loneliness of living abroad after getting to know ALF and meeting my teacher. To me, talking about the stories and feeling in the book with my teacher in class is the vitality of my life.

In conclusion, I will not forget the appreciation that I received from ALF. I want to be a helpful person to people who will be in the same situation as me. Also, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my teacher as my English skill improve quickly. I imagine myself in the future as a university student again. I look forward to meeting my teacher next week and starting a new book. This is a remarkable journey in my life that I've come across that I've never imagined before. And the important thing is that it's not end, it's currently in progress.

Learning Changes Lives

Sarah MacManus – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

Learning changes lives in many ways. I feel more inspired and motivated since I decided to continue my education. I want to further my education for the sake of my children's and my well-being. There are more job opportunities when you are educated.

Returning to school was a difficult decision to make. Self-doubt of my capabilities has held me back. Each day I attend school, I would find a piece of me from the past that remembers my self-worth. Every day I find challenges, but I do persevere.

My children are my world. I am a single mother of two amazing kids. I am the only parent that provides financially. Having the right education and qualifications can be beneficial to my family.

I often lay awake at night hoping my children will be take care of when I leave this earth. My goal is to make sure that happens if I am here or not. I want to continue my education and land a career in information technology. I plan to be financially stable coming years.

Learning does change lives. I experienced positive changes which lead to some self-growth. Continuing my education to be able to financially support my children and myself is significant.

Learning Changes Lives

Katherine Matchett – Saint Mary's Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca>

Teacher: Michelle Adams

After 10 years of being out of school I finally decided it was time I go back and get a proper education. I left school at a very young age; I was only 16, with my entire life ahead of me but in my mind school didn't matter. Now as a mature adult, I know that getting an education is the best thing I can do for not only myself but my three children too.

When I was 8 years old my parents went through a rough divorce when in turn resulted in becoming an aggressive not so caring child. I started skipping school in grade 7 and just not focusing on being a child and getting the education I would need as an adult. I went through some mental health issues from grade 7-9 which resulted in multiple hospital admissions at the IWK Childrens Hospital so I didn't work on school work while I was there causing me to get behind in schooling. Finally, I made it to high school, I saw the light at the end of the tunnel then bam I got into a car accident in 10th grade. I ended up having to stay in the hospital for a couple months and basically learn to walk all over again, after finally being released I decided from losing so much time that I would quit school and just work full time. After many years of working a minimum wage job I knew my life wasn't going far.

As the years have gone by, I have had three beautiful children and have realized the example I set for my children will go positively towards their lives. Getting an education is so incredibly important, now a days you can't get a decent job without a proper education so that is why I have decided to get my GED. I have done 2 out of 5 exams, and am hoping in the coming months to have all 5 finished.

After I have finished my GED I have a few ideas as to what I want to do for an education, I plan to be in the medical field. I'm currently stuck between two different career choices, I'm not sure whether I was to become a PSW or a Paramedic. I love to help other people, from the young to the elderly. I want to able to make a difference in someone's life in a positive way. I know with both these career choices that it's not always easy, but I know it's a career that I will love.

I now know how important it is to get an education, life is hard especially as an adult. No one prepares you for the reality of true life. It's expensive, it's scary but as long as you get a proper education and can guide yourself though the tough times life throws at you, you'll have a wonderful, happy life.

How Returning to Learning Bettered my Life

Erin Merrithew – Personal Support Worker Program (NBCC)

<https://nbcc.ca>

Teacher: Janet Christensen

In high school, sitting in a classroom, behind a desk, with a textbook open in my lap was never really appealing in the slightest to me. If truth be told, I had never been considered one of the “over-achieving” students who received straight A’s or awards for my academic performance.

Despite my mother’s persistent encouragement, and her high grades that she had attained back when she was in grade school, her many degrees from university and her obvious high hopes I would follow in her footsteps in order to have a successful, happy, and most importantly, financially stable life, just simply the thought of school and learning itself seemed to make me yawn.

After graduating high school in 2015 and determined to live up to my parents’ educational standards, I had intended to relocate to Fredericton, and work on obtaining my journalism degree from St. Thomas University. If I had to choose one school subject I was slightly intrigued by, and received a decent grade in, it would have been language arts. I did enjoy writing from time-to-time, and if truth be told, I was very articulate when it was required of me. If my parents were fixated on the concept of me going straight from high school to a post-secondary education, St. Thomas was where it was going to be and my desired outcome was going to be a degree in journalism.

Unfortunately, however, my mindset when I began at St. Thomas my first year, was still equivalent to the mindset I held during my previous four years at Tobique Valley High. I detested going to class, studying for tests and exams, and homework, well... that was my worst enemy. And the most painful reality of it all was, I legitimately could not settle down in a chair at a desk and remained focused on something for more than five minutes. My mind in university was completely occupied with four things: meeting new friends, partying, sleeping in every morning, and most importantly, at long last, enjoying the freedom of living away from my parents, no longer having to follow their rules.

My lack of interest in my studies at St. Thoams soon came to bite me in the butt faster than you can think. I spent a year and a half at my post-secondary institution of choice before, during the Christmas break, I received a letter from St. Thomas University, stating I was being placed on academic leave. That meant I couldn’t go back for the second semester. Although I slightly foretold the arrival of this letter, I still sensed the immense shame and disappointment I anticipated from my parents. Fortunately, they welcomed me back with open arms, words of comfort, and encouragement.

I spent the next few years jumping from job to job. During those few years, I had plenty of time to really consider what I wanted out of life, what I thought would make me happy and fulfilled, career-wise, and what I believed I could spend every single day in the near future enjoying, all the while getting paid for it. I mean, they do say, you'll never work a day in your life if you love your job!

In 2018, by that year, I was well aware that a minimum wage job wasn't going to cut it. I did not want to spend the rest of my life behind a cash register, or serving customers, or stocking shelves. Then, an opportunity arose nearby I just couldn't seem to pass up. And after spending years think about who I really am as a person, what God intended for me, and what kind of career would suit my personality, my passion, and make me feel gratified at the end of the day, I knew I had

A program that is offered through the New Brunswick Community College in Woodstock, was also being taught at the Victoria Glen Manor in Perth Andover. Although throughout my life and at the time, I knew nurses, were friends with people my age interested in taking nursing and/or working in the healthcare field in some way. Despite the "horror stories" (they claimed to be called) I had heard from a lot of them, (especially from the ones that were, at the time, working at a hospital or doing their clinicals/practicums in a nursing home) that elaborated on demanding, troublesome and bad-tempered patients, agonizingly long shifts and endless amounts of staff shortages at hospitals and nursing homes, something about working in the healthcare field seemed to have an alluring appeal to me.

So, when I learned of this opportunity, I instantly signed myself up, gave my two weeks notice at Tim Hortons, and began classes for the Personal Support Worker course the first week of September, 2018 at the Victoria Glen Manor. Over the three and a half years that I had spent working a minimum wage job, I kind of began to notice the absence of the classroom setting, and after maturing over the years and realizing that a post-secondary education was going to help me in the long run financially and open up more doors for me to some day work a job that was meant for me, that I was passionate in doing, and that I loved, my mindset about school did a complete 180.

A fair amount of the Personal Support Worker course consisted of hands-on training. Every Friday, we would spend half the school day in the "laboratory", performing what we learned in the classroom on artificial patients. Although these "patients" were not real and couldn't respond to us, we had to treat them as though they were, communicating and examining them as we spoke, under the observation of our teachers who would ensure we were obtaining all the information we required from identifying the patients, to their level of pain, as well as observing their demeanor while entering the room. Every detail was important when it came to working in the healthcare field, so that we could ensure every individual was receiving the proper care that they required.

Three months into the course, right before Christmas break, we spent two weeks participating in what was called our “clinical”, where we did our real hands-on work with actual residents, at the Victoria Glen manor. This was most definitely the most eye opening portion of the program, as to what working as a personal support worker was really like. This was also the moment when I determined the healthcare field was my calling, and that I wanted to work in a nursing home when I completed the course.

There was, and still is to this day, an extreme shortage of nurses. Being a healthcare worker is an extremely demanding job in every way.

Learning Changes Lives

Madison Murphy – Moncton South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est

<https://education-se.ca>

Teacher: Cliff Wight

2017, a year before my high school graduation, I found out I was pregnant. At 17 years old that was a scary thought, especially when it came to what other people might think. At the time, my solution was to drop out instead of dealing with the fear of hiding a baby belly or being talked about negatively.

Shortly after my beautiful baby boy was born, I quickly realized how important having an education was. I had heard of a local GED program available and quickly signed up. I tried very hard in reaching my goal to graduate, but as a young full time single mom I found it very hard to study and tend to my son all at once. Every year for 3 years I would sign up and hope that this time I could do it. But my son was always my top priority.

Fast forward to November of 2023. My son is now 5 years old and going to a school of his own. I then took it upon myself to sign up for online classes one more time. While my son was in school, so was I. It had become a very amazing experience for us to say "have a good day at school" to each other each morning. He alone truly gave me the motivation and strength to finally do this.

I had decided to educate myself and achieve a goal I've been longing for, for years. To be graduating. At the same time setting a good example for my son.

Now I am proud to say I am one exam away from graduating. (by the time you read this I may have already passed and graduated.) My future will be bright with whatever I choose to do. I couldn't have done it without the support from the GED program. It allowed me to come back and try for so many years. They truly never give up on making sure people get the education they deserve and help reach their goals.

Whether you are doing it for yourself or, to get started on a new chapter in your life on furthering your education, I highly recommend the GED program. It's never too late. Thanks to the GED program, I will proudly someday hang my son's high school diploma right next to mine.

Education is Important to Me

Jessica Nicholas – Tobique Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Basil Kazakos

My mother was a single mother of four children. The two of our oldest siblings lived with other family members. My older sister Melody lived with our grandmother. The second oldest, who is Wendell, lives with his father in Canada. Our mother took care of me and my brother, because our father worked a lot. We have family all over the USA and Canada, so we moved a lot. As a result, we never got to finish our education.

Once I had a family of my own, I realized I wanted to finish my education. That is why education is important to me. I decided to go back and get my secondary education. I want my daughter to see that education is important to finish and to use our education to further our lives, to help us find the career we want. I feel that my education is what I have been missing to complete our lives and to make it better. This is why education is important to me.

Learning Changes Lives

Emily O'Neill – Hartland Adult Distance Learning (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Calvin Brymer

My reason for returning to learning is pretty simple, but important. You see, I've been working on self growth since I turned 32 and Covid hit. I had a lot of time to think, as did many of us since we couldn't really leave the house at that point. I took a TESOL course because I enjoyed teaching English as a second language to children online. That is until they changed the qualifications and eventually wanted a bachelor's degree from all teachers. So I changed it up as I did not have such a degree and took a few more courses in other areas such as insurance and finance. Those were great but again didn't really take me anywhere.

A few months ago my almost 18 year old son sent me a screenshot of a free program that allowed adults to go back to school and work towards graduating highschool level. I thought to myself that if my son wants me to do this, i know it would make him proud to see me succeed. So i took the step towards this goal and now im doing it.

Learning has changed my life by activating my mind in a way its been sort of dormant for soo long. Which helps me learn about other topics as well. And now im reading books daily and i learn a lot from those too. I guess it sparked me.

My biggest and most important goal is making my kids proud and being a mother they can look up to and know that everything i do, i do it for them.

Learning Changes Lives

Michelle Rideout – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

<https://www.wvala.ca>

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

I didn't think I could go back to school at my age. I thought I would be laughed at and shamed and talked about badly, but I was wrong. I walked into the classroom at the Woodstock Adult Learning Center, and I was so nervous. Going back to school was a bit scary, but on this road called life, we have to take chances. I quit school in grade 9 because I was pregnant, and I just wasn't doing well in school, so I decided to quit and go back after I had my baby. I never went back to school unfortunately.

Like a lot of people life wasn't easy for me (not looking for pity) My mom died when I was 4 years old, and she left behind 6 children. I was working 40 plus hours a week doing great then my life changed in 2017. My partner passed away. My daughter and myself didn't have a chance to grieve, because just three weeks later our daughter gave birth to her first child, our first grandchild.

My daughter had a hard time after she gave birth as well as I did but there were people who needed me. My daughter couldn't look after the baby so I helped her. I had the baby 4 days a week from birth and when the baby was 8 months old my daughter asked me to take the baby. It was like raising my daughter all over again. I moved back to my hometown of Perth Andover to give my grandson a better life and for us to start a new chapter of our lives.

I got into a relationship with a new person. Big Mistake. Four years in a toxic abusive relationship. Everyone says there is help out there, but how do you ask for help, as I thought that was a sign of weakness. But I thought I had enough of the abuse and being controlled, and I couldn't take any more beatings and I couldn't take beatings for his senior mother so I went to the store to make the call for help. My grandson and I went to the Sanctuary House in Woodstock. My abuser found us and we went back...only to end up at the Sanctuary House again. I realized that the abuse and controlling wasn't my fault so I called my sister in Ontario and she came home to get me. Things didn't work out there so my grandson and I came home. My grandson and I were homeless and didn't have anywhere to go so I went back to my abusive partner. My sister called Child Protection Services on me because I came back to NB and they came and took my grandson from me. That almost killed me!

I fought for three months and went to court and got awarded custody of my grandson. From that day on I made a promise to that little boy that things needed to change. I got an apartment, and we started out from rock bottom; we had hardly anything! My Aunt and second sister Tina helped me so much and I knew I could never repay them for all they did for my grandson and I. When everyone else walked away and gave up on us they didn't! I am so thankful for them and forever will be.

The road to starting over from rock bottom wasn't easy, but it was never meant to be. All my life I have been run down and told I wouldn't succeed or amount to anything, but I proved them all wrong.

My grandson started school in Woodstock and he loves his school and all his friends he has met. I cannot say enough about his teacher, Miss Emily MacInnis! She is an amazing teacher and is so kind and caring. My grandson and I adore her. My grandson has learned a lot from his teacher and I am so proud of him and his success. He loves school and loves to learn and loves to read and is very independent.

I went back to school after I got my grandson settled into a routine. I am proud of myself for once. I am doing great in school and have one exam left to write, and it is all thanks to my teacher, Joanne McIsaac. She is one amazing kind smart thoughtful and caring human. I have never had a teacher quite like her. She has faith in her students and never gives up on us. I honestly do not think I would have made it this far in my course without her and her knowledge. She has a heart of gold and wants us all to succeed. She is patient and encourages everyone just to do our best. She is always positive and taught me to have faith and believe in myself and to have courage. Everyday is a new day to learn. I also participated in a Digital Literacy course with Gabby, who was an amazing lady. It may not mean a lot to some people but that certificate means so much to me.

I am determined to succeed in getting my GED Diploma and Joanne is a huge part of making this happen and my success. I am stronger and so very proud of myself because of her. This program has taught me to say I can instead of I CAN'T!

It took me many years to accomplish a lot of things, but as I write this, I know I am making my grandson proud and he is the reason I took this step to bettering our future. I know he will succeed just like I am.

My goal after I'm done this program is to help others succeed and to be a good role model. A college course is next for this 50 year old grandmother.

REACH FOR THE STARS

SET GOALS

BE DETERMINED

ALWAYS BE KIND YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT OTHER PEOPLE ARE GOING THROUGH!!

The past, present, and a future

Bryan Stewart – Kingsclear First Nation Adult Learning Centre (CVALA)

<https://www.cvala.ca>

Teacher: Pamela Gilbert

Why I've returned to education

My family and I we've maintained a substantially low point in life, and climbing out of this poverty-stricken diabolical situation is psychologically and physically infuriating. However, I acknowledge it's comprehensibly worse elsewhere; therefore, I'll manage overall. Any-ways I obtained a job, acquired my own apartment, and managed a girlfriend, all while evading Child Protection at merely fifteen; I thought I had my life made.

Within this insufficiently explained chapter upholding personalized opinions, I'd acquire a significant amount of knowledge about influential environments in cutlers. Moving from "the sticks"; as they'd called it, into Saint John was ambitiously overwhelming; awakening if you will. I'd discover some considerably thought-provoking characters, who'd primarily exist there; "strangers" as you'd call them. Well personally, I see unknown potential friends. So, statistically the more acquainted with highly educated the better, changing my prospective of people; you and me.

I gathered up information effectively from efficiency, and after many years realized; we're all uniquely influenced. Just trying to progress in a continuously evolving world it's easy to be forgotten in an abundant society, progressing is necessary and top priority to hold myself together; I'm genuinely concerned, in twenty years all I've accomplished is what I'll be left with.

How learning will change everything

This education is essential with positive consequence, yet a mirror fragment in a lifelong journey of pure dedication. I'm genuinely pushing personalized standards beyond comprehension, for the betterment of my family; while, involving whatever remains after. Mainly personalized self-improvement, wishing to be capable of understanding and supporting others one day; if plausible necessary action is required at all cost.

The family's had it ruff; seriously, there's always a lower point and we coped with living somewhere in the middle. It takes all of us to make a world, so don't forget about one another. We've survived our lowest points; I know others haven't. I've seen some places that quite frankly, pushed my generalized mental dexterity's limitations, and psychological understanding. This upbringing resulted in an opened minded, still standing, logical individual, who's seen both sides of our forcefully provided scale.

So; here I am, demonstrating academic proficiency, continuously advancing gradually finding microscopic things to refine automatically. Not just for me, but in hopes to help

acquainted individuals who may have watched or seen humans die or people kill others, but that's just the tip of the ice burg, the sheer number of horrors out there are diabolical. To paint a picture, imagine being blackmailed into organized human trafficking; you'd pray to die. If I could make a dent I'd gladly prevail, so the darkest places below see me knowing of my disapproval.

What is next

College, anything providing assistance in upgrades, time's not playing fair; so, I won't as well. I have bigger problems and achievements, knowing how I learn is already a primary aspect, yet you unwilling insist I establish a foundation. Okay, I'll play your made-up long game, but I'll be cutting corners; watch me.

I'm a frustratingly productive overachiever; I need some time I'm not a genius in a logical fashion, nor am I criminal mastermind in a psycho, logically insane way. I'm just slowly piecing myself together, for an independently sustainable future. I honestly don't know what's next I either try succeeding, or fall into organized organizations within themselves that will find me useful, or useless. If that happens and I collapse more, well that proves my assumption of class that I'm trying vigorously to climb.

Anyways, that's not a calculatable fraction of what I needed to say, and I passed my math; what is next indeed

Learning Changes Lives

Dawn Ward – Lakeville South East Adult Education - Éducation des adultes du Sud-Est

<https://education-se.ca>

Teacher: Duane Copeland

There was a time when I believed that I didn't need a good education or one at all. I used to think that if I could get a good job at a young age that'd I'd be set. I took my High School years for granted. Instead of studying I chose to party. By my third attempt at grade 9 I found myself pregnant at the age of 17. I dropped out of school all together after that. At the age of 21 I was a single mother of a 2 year old working for minimum wage at a Tim Horton's. I knew that was no life for my child and I. I tried to get into community collage as a mature student but I had zero High School credits. I was told by a Friend that there was these trade collages that would accept me with just a 30 question entrance exam. I passed the exam, ended up getting while paying three times the tuition costs as a community collage. I ended up getting a certificate in PSW as well as Med Tech. I had a really good job. I was making so much money I was able to get a nice place to live for my child and I and then in 2009 I lost every thing when I had a back injury at work that required major back surgery to fix in 2010. I lost my income was taken off of work for 3 years. In that time I also lost my home my car and was forced to live back at home with my parents and my child. I was also taking some pretty heavy pain killers that I became addicted to. I was what I found out in recovery as a high functioning addict. After the 3 years I did return to work but I only lasted for 5 months before the company I was working for bought me out. I had put in 15 years at that place and was now jobless. I was still in addiction and needed out of my parents place. I started going on sites like Indeed only to find that every place I applied to I needed my High School. Even at factories that never asked for one before. Even to get a job at a new Nursing Home I had to now show proof of having a diploma. The only job I could get was as a cashier at a Circle K. At that time I also decided it was time to get my life together and deal with my drug issue. I've been clean for a few years now and have joined a sober living house that's helping integrate back into society. I was offered the chance to get my GED as part of the program for free. I'm now 43 years old and I'm taking full advantage the opportunity. Getting my GED would change my life in so many ways job wise but my real goal is to be accepted into a real collage and complete my nursing degree. This GED is going to open many doors for me and I'm ready to walk through them.

Learning Changes Lives

Emily Wu – Adult Literacy Fredericton

<https://www.adultliteracyfredericton.org>

Teacher: Kate Weaver

Hello! I am a stay-at-home mom. I have been looking for work since my child was five years old. He is now twelve years old. Because of health issues, I could not work in the labor market, and therefore I have been taking online administration courses. However, it is not easy to find a regular hour office job. In 2022, I decided to go back to school to study. I must take an English public test for the program which I applied for. To my surprise, I found ALF in the Public Library offer teaching English writing programs free of charge. ALF is supporting those non-native English speakers to return to their profession in Canada. Therefore, I contacted ALF and started learning English in 2023 for a couple of months. I just attended ALF for a very short time as in Fall 2023, I was accepted as a BA undergraduate student in the University of New Brunswick.

Learning is a life journey! I love learning which totally changes my life. Learning gives me confidence and joy. Though going back to school as a mature student and mom is quite a challenge, each course truly inspires me. I am now double majoring in Law in Society and French, and minor in English. Campus life is very dynamic. I feel younger to mingle with the university students. Other than learning English and French, I also take accounting, political science, philosophy, classic and history. Each course has its special characteristics. I love them all.

My goals are applying knowledge that I learnt to where I work. I may become a lawyer, a researcher or work in the banking industry. I do not know what tomorrow will bring indeed, but now I only know to focus on studying with all my soul and all my heart. Last but not least, I select courses according to my interests, not job orientated, otherwise learning would become a burden.