

LEARNING CHANGES LIVES

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 CANT!

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!!

Michelle Rideout