

Learning Changes Lives

While growing up, learning at school was one of my favourite ways to spend my time. My family was situated in one of the rural communities outside of Miramichi so public outings were sparse and going to school was one of the only opportunities I had to learn of the outside world.

All throughout school, I had a special passion for Science. I would spend months prior to the annual science fairs planning and perfecting my presentations in hopes one day I would advance. In grade 7, I was fortunate enough to be awarded 2nd place regionally and 3rd place provincially for my efforts. The pride and confidence I felt during this time in my life was unlike anything I had ever experienced before.

Unfortunately, after beginning my first year of high school I began to face incessant bullying and fell into addiction as a method of coping. I was expelled from school for poor attendance, and consequently was kicked out of both my parents' homes. After years of hardship, I got myself sober and began working customer service jobs at any company who would hire me in order to provide for myself.

I learned relatively quickly that dealing with the public in low level customer service jobs was and is extremely mentally taxing. Each passing day brought nothing but a mediocre pay cheque and low self-esteem; I was losing hair, losing weight, and losing sight of any hope for a better life. I went through jobs at an alarming rate, none of them brought me happiness or fulfillment.

In July of 2024 I was wrongly terminated from yet another customer service job I had been giving my all to. I was devastated and angry, but I finally understood that if I wanted my life to change, I had to be the one to change it. It was shortly after this I got into contact with Kevin, the Executive Director of Miramichi Adult Learning Inc and scheduled a time to be pre-tested for the Canadian Adult Educational Credential.

Within the first month of returning to classes, I had accomplished more than I ever dreamed was possible. My self-confidence sky-rocketed, I aced all of my unit tests, and most importantly I went home each day genuinely proud of myself.

Since then, I have passed three out of five final exams with flying colours, registered myself for Early Childhood Education in Fall of 2025, applied for several summertime student positions with the government, and am on track to be a 2025 graduate. When I complete my studies, I hope to open a daycare facility that provides childcare to low income families who would otherwise be unable to afford it. Returning to learning has not only provided me with a purpose, but also with the self-love I had been so desperately searching for in all the wrong places.

Abigail Smith