



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 12TH TO APRIL 18TH, 2026

CÉLÉBRER LA SEMAINE DES APPRENANTS
ADULTES

12 AVRIL AU 16 AVRIL, 2026



Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick

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L'apprentissage change des vies

Alioune Badara Dia – Saint John Kings Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Enseignante : Mathias Zangue

L'apprentissage pour adulte est un des moyens pratique de changer une vie, qui a la base était déjà faite, déjà remplie.

En effet, un adulte qui décide de revenir à l'apprentissage, relève un certain nombre de défis liés à sa situation matrimoniale, à sa position professionnelle, à ces responsabilités et surtout à un défi temporel, le temps dans tout son ensemble, optimiser son temps pour apprendre. En ce qui concerne ce sujet, ou je suis acteur et témoin, je serai plus à l'aise de vous raconter mon quotidien, avec quelques détails prêts.

En effet, je suis revenu aux études après 27 ans de vie remplie, avec 3 enfants, une femme, une vie professionnelle dans le Marketing, une activité annexe faite les weekends qui génèrait des revenus, une voiture à entretenir, etc....

Arrivé au Canada à 53 ans, je décide avec le concours de ma femme et de mon conseiller à l'emploi de reprendre les études, avec comme perspective une meilleure vie à l'horizon. Je l'avais essayé dans mon pays mais avec d'énormes contraintes qui m'ont finalement vaincues. Pourquoi le faire maintenant et ici au Canada, c'est un vieux rêve qui grâce au tout puissant est réalisable, laissez moi vous citer quelques avantages de le faire dans ce moment aussi propice et dans un endroit aussi universitaire que le Canada.

Tout d'abord, la réorientation de carrière : l'apprentissage nous permet de changer de carrière, nouvelle impulsion, exemple : j'étais agent commercial dans une agence de communication, je compte faire autre chose, de plus fun avec plus de temps pour ma famille.

L'évolution professionnelle et financière : chance d'avoir un meilleur salaire et des débouchés. Exemple : les diplômés payent à sa juste valeur en Amérique, ma femme en est la preuve .

Le renforcement des compétences : Mises à jour des compétences et le développement de nouvelles capacités. Exemple : je refais ma 12^e année et je compte aller au collège.

La Motivation relevée, si ma motivation est élevée, l'apprentissage devient plus efficace.

Le Bienfait personnel, j'ai toujours voulu donner le meilleur de moi à ma famille.

L'estime en soi : ma confiance et mon honneur mis en jeu, je me dois de réussir tel est mon CREDO.

Enfin, avec le bilan des avantages je crois que c'est une étape audacieuse qui offre des récompenses significatives tant sur le plan professionnel que personnel, la conciliation entre travail, famille et études n'est pas acceptée dans nos sociétés, mais avec l'expérience, je conseille vivement à mes frères et soeurs qui hésitent encore de se lancer, ``keep going``vous avez une chance à saisir, et l'âge et les responsabilités font partis de votre capital. Apprendre

toujours c'est aimer la vie, nous sommes des acteurs autonomes capables d'utiliser notre expérience passée comme levier et moteur pour acquérir de nouvelles compétences.

Learning Changes Lives

Jennifer Bouley – READ NB Southwest

<https://readnb.ca/readsouthwest.html>

Teacher: Bronwyn Tanner

After 12 years of running my own business, I made a decision that surprised a lot of people. I went back to learning.

Not for another certification.

Not for a new title.

I went back to learn math.

For most of my life, math was something I struggled with. Numbers never felt natural to me. In school, I was the person who needed extra time, who reread questions three times, who felt their confidence drop the moment an equation appeared on the page. I learned early how to compensate—how to memorize steps without really understanding them, how to rely on calculators, spreadsheets, and software to do the heavy lifting.

Like many people, I learned to work *around* math instead of through it.

And for a long time, that worked.

I built a business. I hired people. I made decisions. On the outside, everything looked solid. But underneath, there was always a quiet tension. When reviewing financial statements or sitting in conversations about projections and margins, I could not follow along. I understood *what* the numbers were saying, but not always *why*.

Over time, that gap started to matter more.

There were moments when I hesitated before asking a question. Times when I deferred instead of challenging an assumption. Situations where I trusted others' interpretations of the numbers because I didn't fully trust my own. Not because I wasn't capable—but because I'd carried this long-standing belief that math simply "wasn't my thing."

Eventually, I had to admit something to myself:

I didn't want to just get the answer anymore.

I wanted to understand the process behind it.

So after more than a decade in business, I decided to face the thing that had challenged me for years.

I went back to learning math.

Not because I had to.
Because I wanted to understand.

And it hasn't been easy.

There are days when concepts that seem simple to others take real effort for me. Times when I have to slow down, rewind lessons, and sit with discomfort instead of pushing past it. But this time, the experience is different. I'm not learning to pass a test or meet someone else's expectations. I'm learning with curiosity, patience, and purpose.

Learning the *why* behind equations has changed how I think—not just about numbers, but about problem-solving in general. I'm developing more flexible thinking. I'm noticing patterns. I'm asking better questions. What once felt overwhelming is slowly becoming something I can approach without fear.

But the biggest change hasn't just been about math.

It's been about confidence.

Confidence in my business.
Confidence sitting at boardroom tables.
Confidence contributing to conversations about financials and strategy instead of quietly hoping someone else explains the numbers.

I'm noticing how this confidence carries into other areas of my life too. I'm less hesitant. Less quick to doubt myself. More willing to engage deeply instead of staying on the surface.

Returning to learning has reminded me that growth doesn't stop just because you've been in your career for a while. In fact, sometimes the most powerful learning happens after we've built experience—when we finally have the context to understand *why* something matters.

And I'm just getting started.

My goals are simple, but meaningful:

- To confidently give feedback when reviewing financials
- To do my own taxes one day
- And maybe most importantly... to be able to help my child with their math homework—not with anxiety or avoidance, but with calm assurance

This journey has reminded me of something I often tell the people I coach:

It's never too late to learn the things that once felt impossible.
Sometimes, going back to the basics doesn't set you back at all.
Sometimes, it moves your life—and your confidence—forward in the biggest way.

How Learning Changes Lives

Janine C – Miramichi Adult Learning (NBWCC)

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Jennifer Doucet

How would you feel if you couldn't afford the life you knew you deserved? If you physically couldn't give yourself the life you so desperately were seeking? I will tell you that is causes desperation. It will put you in positions you otherwise wouldn't ever be in. So here I sit, as an incarcerated, fentanyl addict writing an essay from behind bars about why I returned to learning, how it changed my life, and my future goals. I have come to the conclusion that I will need to be educated in order to achieve my goals.

So why did I return to learning? I returned to learning because it's a stepping stone to the career that's going to stabilize my life and ground me. I'm living an unsuccessful, unpredictable, and unpleasant life. I'm incarcerated for potentially a few years. I've yet to hold a steady job, I don't have my kids, I can't afford a decent house, and my house has no running water or power. The windows are boarded in, and the foundation is caving. It's a "shack" at best. To top things off, I steal food to get by each and every day. Try and put yourself in my shoes, it's tough; it's desperation at its finest.

So how is learning changing my life? Well, it's not...yet! But it goes hand in hand with my goals. Hopefully, with some education under my belt, I'll have a fighting chance. Even though jail isn't necessarily a good place to be, it is for me. It's helped me get sober, and has allowed me to be enrolled in the C.A.E.C. program. (Canadian Adult Education Credential) I want a life genuinely worth living. What does that mean to me, "a life genuinely worth living" ? First of all, I want to be able to choose my job, a job that pays enough to support me. Trading your life for minimum wage is so degrading. Secondly, I don't want to trade my life and my back for my job, working vigorously for sixty hours a week. I don't want to just barely get by. I aspire to have a life of tranquility and serenity.

What are my goals for the future, and all of my hopes and dreams? Some hope to be rich, others hope to be big stars. I hope and wish that I can make it in the real world. I want my kids, and I want to be able to give them the life they deserve, all four of them. I want my education, and I want to live a normal, sober life. Even though "rich" would be nice, I just want a normal, non-delinquent existence. I think that I would like to become a spokesperson at schools to talk about the dangers of addiction and what that can look like. I would like to finish my schooling and take an electrician's course. Finally, I would like to stay sober. NO, I NEED to stay sober so that I can achieve all of this.

I am really hoping that furthering my education will lead me down a path of success, happiness, and pride. I am hoping education will change my life. That is why I returned to learning. That is how learning will change my life.

Learning Changes Lives

Amber Comeau – Miramichi Adult Learning

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Tammy Hamilton

Going back to school as an adult hasn't been easy. For a long time, I carried the weight of regret, feeling like I had missed my chance to follow my dreams. Life moves fast, and I put everyone else's needs before my own. Deep down, I felt disappointed in myself and afraid that it was too late to try again.

Making the decision to return to school was terrifying. I doubted myself constantly. I worried about failing, about not being smart enough, and about whether I could balance school with everyday life. There were moments when I wanted to quit, but something inside me kept telling me to keep moving forward. I knew I needed to do this not just for a better future, but also to prove to myself that I am capable.

As I continue this journey, I am slowly beginning to see myself differently. Every assignment I complete and every obstacle I overcome is helping rebuild the confidence and self-worth I had lost over the years. I've learned that struggling doesn't mean failing—it means growing. I'm starting to feel proud of myself again, for the first time as an adult.

Education has given me more than knowledge. It has given me hope. I no longer feel stuck or unsure of who I am or where I am supposed to be going. Now, I wake up with a purpose, knowing that I am actively working toward a future that I want and deserve.

Going back to school has also changed how I see my worth. I've learned that my past does not define me, and it's never too late to change my life. Choosing education was choosing myself. It was choosing growth, strength, and a future built on determination rather than fear.

In conclusion, returning to school as an adult has been one of the most difficult challenges I have ever faced, but it has also been the most rewarding decision I have ever made.

Learning Changes Lives

Keenan Doiron – John Howard Fundy Learning Centre

<https://johnhowardsj.ca/>

Teacher: Carla McAfee

When I was a child, I was mistreated by my parents. Sometimes I was locked in my room, beaten, and starved. I was also sexually abused. This was just some of the parental abuse. My family was on welfare and we didn't have much. I barely had enough clothes or food to go to school.

I went from being a good student to hating school because of bullying. I suffered through verbal and physical abuse from my classmates. The bullying was relentless through school. As a result, I was a troubled kid. My kindness was taken as weakness. The constant bullying pushed me to the point of quitting school in grade nine (9). I felt worthless and helpless to change my situation.

After this, things got even worse. I turned to drugs and alcohol. For the next ten (10) years I suffered in an active addiction. The drugs, booze, and trauma stopped me from returning to school. I was not myself anymore. I was unable to focus or think straight. My life became nothing but a struggle to survive. I lived in poverty. I didn't work much and struggled to get food and clothing for myself. This led me to experiencing deep depression for many years. I thought that I would never have a normal life. This was my rock bottom. I did not want to live. I knew I had to make a change. I successfully stopped using drugs and alcohol. Then, I decided that going back to school was my next goal. This was the scariest but best decision I have ever made.

I applied to the John Howard Fundy Region Learning Centre. This is where I am currently enrolled in the C.A.E.C. (Canadian Adult Education Credential) I want to prove to myself and others that I can get my education and make something of myself. At first, I was scared and nervous. I assumed that I was dumb and did not belong, but my teacher (Carla McAfee) was very kind and understanding. She helped me one step at a time which led me to learn how to read and write much better. Then I started to learn how to think clearer, even showing up on the bad days that normally wouldn't have happened. Slowly, I got stronger and more confident in my abilities.

Returning to complete my education is changing my whole life. My depression has started to diminish. I now feel proud of myself, and realize that my kindness is not a weakness, but that it is my strength. Things I never thought I would accomplish became a reality. My Learning Centre provides home made breakfast, bus tokens, and grocery gift cards. Returning to school has given me discipline and self-respect. It had also shown me that I am worth something, and that I can live a good life.

In my future, I plan to finish the C.A.E.C. program and continue with college, so I can have a steady career. Education has significantly helped with staying clean and my mental health. I also can help others who are struggling with the same, letting them know that it is possible to change. Learning really does change lives, as it has completely changed my life!

Learning Changes Lives

Alexander Dowling – Miramichi Adult Learning

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Beth Losier

You can fit in a whole lot of learning in just a few years. Regardless of whether it's emotional, physical, tactile, oral or visual we all learn. My name is Alexander Dowling. I'm a student at Miramichi Adult Learning. This is my story about how learning changed my life, why I returned to learning and my goals for the future.

It all starts at ten years old; I remember this day vividly. I woke up bright and early on a sunny Monday morning, and I walked down my stairs expecting this day to be like any other. When I caught a glimpse of my parents sitting silently waiting for my brother and myself, I knew instinctively something wasn't right. My parents stood up in unison, wrapping me in a warm embrace. What they told me forever changed my life. With tears in their eyes struggling to keep composure, they stated in a mournful tone that my brother Cole had committed suicide in his dorm room the night prior. My head spun screaming with denial, life had never been so loud.

After the tragic passing of my brother, I started home schooling, it helped but still affected my learning severely. Every waking moment was plagued by the thought of his death. I couldn't concentrate in school or at home and my grades were slipping, I felt numb, a shell of who I once was. I tried therapy but nothing would fill that void. Eventually it became easier to accept, and I used learning as an escape turning that grief into something positive, taking the time to learn about things I'm interested in.

At eighteen I went into the Miramichi Adult Learning Program to finish what I started all those years ago. While attending classes I rediscovered my love for writing, reading and the creativity that comes with it. From then on, my goal has been to write a book series with a world that you can get lost in, something that will give people comfort in their times of trouble and grief.

We all go through tough times, but in the end, we can overcome it, what I've learned from my times of grief is never be afraid to start learning it can be a crutch for many including myself. Putting that anger and sadness into something beneficial, something you love can strengthen the acceptance of your situation. It can be as simple as reading a book or learning a new skill. Never be afraid to do something that makes you smile, that's what our loved ones would have wanted. This is how the return to learning changed the path of my life but also my goals.

“Sadness is kind of a gift. It's kind of a lovely thing to feel, in a way, because it means you really loved somebody when you miss them” – Andrew Garfield.

L'apprentissage change des vies

Leila El Hacem – Saint John Kings Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Enseignante : Mathias Zangue

Je suis retournée à l'apprentissage parce que je voulais poursuivre mes études afin de devenir une personne active et responsable, capable de contribuer à sa famille et à la société.

L'apprentissage a changé ma vie. Il m'a donné l'espoir de réaliser mon rêve d'obtenir mon équivalent d'études secondaires (CAEC) au Canada, malgré les obstacles. Aujourd'hui, j'ai confiance en moi. Avant, je passais beaucoup de temps à faire des loisirs et je manquais de motivation. Grâce à l'apprentissage, je suis devenue plus organisée, régulière et autonome. Je respecte maintenant mon horaire : le temps d'aller à l'école et le temps de rentrer à la maison. Cela montre aussi un bon exemple pour mes enfants.

Mon objectif est d'acquérir des compétences qui me permettront de devenir infirmière, d'améliorer mes compétences en anglais, et de devenir une personne capable d'apporter une valeur à mon environnement et de jouer un rôle positif dans ma communauté.

L'apprentissage change des vies

Hajar El Kabir – Éducation des adultes du Nord-Ouest

<https://www.facebook.com/educationadultes>

Enseignante : Patricia Laplante

Je m'appelle Hajar El Kabir Medrek, j'ai 36 ans. Je suis mariée et mère de deux merveilleux garçons : Ali, 8 ans, et Noah, 5 ans. Ils sont bien plus que mes enfants, ils sont ma force, mon moteur, ma lumière dans les moments d'ombre. Pour eux, je serais prête à soulever des montagnes. Ils sont cette énergie inépuisable qui me relève quand je doute, cette voix silencieuse qui me murmure de ne jamais abandonner.

Quand on est jeune, on sous-estime souvent la valeur de l'école. On ne réalise pas à quel point chaque effort, chaque leçon, chaque devoir construit les fondations de notre avenir. L'éducation n'est pas seulement un ensemble de connaissances : elle est une clé, une passerelle vers des possibilités infinies. Sans elle, les choix se rétrécissent, les horizons se ferment, et l'on se retrouve trop souvent face à des chemins étroits et peu valorisants.

Puis vient le moment où l'insouciance s'efface, remplacée par la réalité. Pour moi, cette prise de conscience a été brutale. Mon rêve d'enfance -devenir infirmière- semblait s'éloigner, comme un horizon qu'on aperçoit sans jamais pouvoir l'atteindre. Entre mes responsabilités de mère et les exigences du quotidien, ce rêve paraissait s'effriter, lentement mais sûrement.

Mais parfois, au cœur même des doutes, naît une étincelle. Une prise de conscience, presque une révélation. J'ai compris que renoncer serait la véritable défaite. Alors j'ai décidé de reprendre mon destin en main, de me battre pour redonner vie à ce rêve que je croyais perdu. Comme l'a si justement écrit Antoine de saint-Exupéry:

«Faites que le rêve dévore votre vie, afin que la vie ne dévore pas votre rêve . »

Éducation des adultes du nord-ouest ainsi que WorkNB, m'ont offert bien plus qu'une formation : ils m'ont offert une seconde chance. J'y ai rencontré des enseignantes d'une bienveillance exceptionnelle, dont la générosité et le dévouement m'ont profondément marquée. Grâce à leur soutien, j'ai pu franchir une étape essentielle en obtenant mon C.C.E.A.

Aujourd'hui, je poursuis mon chemin avec détermination : je suis inscrite au programme d'infirmier auxiliaire au collège. Une grande partie du parcours est déjà derrière moi, mais je sais que le chemin reste long. Pourtant, chaque pas compte. Car comme le dit le proverbe, le voyage de mille lieues commence toujours par un premier pas - et ce premier pas est souvent le plus courageux.

Si je regarde derrière moi aujourd'hui, je vois une femme qui a douté, qui a hésité, mais qui a choisi d'avancer malgré tout. Et si je regarde devant, je vois une vie pleine de promesses.

À tous ceux qui hésitent encore, je voudrais dire ceci : il n'est jamais trop tard pour croire en soi. Les rêves ne disparaissent jamais vraiment - ils attendent simplement qu'on ait le courage de les réveiller. Peu importe les obstacles, peu importe le temps écoulé, chaque effort est une

pièce posée sur le chemin de votre réussite. Osez recommencer, osez apprendre, osez rêver encore. Car parfois, il suffit d'un seul pas pour changer toute une vie.

L'apprentissage change des vies

Geffrard Emmanuella – Éducation des adultes du Nord-Ouest

<https://www.facebook.com/educationadultes>

Enseignante : Brigitte Martin

Bonjour, aujourd'hui c'est avec une immense joie que je vous écris pour vous faire part de mes projets à propos de l'apprentissage.

Déjà, dans mon pays en 2015 je passé mon baccalauréat j'ai été ajourné par manque de points puis par la suite je échoué, le pays allait déjà très mal , le stresse, les parents, les amis, donc je n'étais pas vraiment concentré pour bien passer l'épreuve de l'examen, alors je échoué, mais je ne suis pas resté là , pendant les vacances je me suis inscrit dans des cours tels que, l'informatique bureautique, secrétariat bilingue, et ensuite communication française journaliste je m'étais spécialisé en présentation radio et télé , et il y'avait d'autres cours que je commence et abandonnée je passé six mois a étudier la science Juridique je voulais être avocate dans le passé mais ça à fini par me sortir de la tête, après vient le catastrophe.

Je suis tombé enceinte de ma première grossesse je eu une petite fille en bonne santé Dieu merci mais ,je dois m'occuper d'elle 24/24 alors je ne rien d'autre à faire que de fermer toute mes dossiers concernant mes études, j'ai eu un autre enfant encore une fois, la maintenant toute espoir de retourner à l'école s'en allait devant moi, pour moi c'était finit , l'idée de retourner à l'école n'était plus, maintenant là tache était plus difficile avec deux enfants.

Vu que l'opportunité de rentrer au Canada, juste avant de rentrer au pays, je demande aux représentants du gouvernement canadiens dans le pays où j'étais, est-il possible pour moi, quand je suis au Canada est-ce que je peux retourner aux études, je voulais prendre une formation en infirmière auxiliaire , le représentant m'a dit: oui vous pouvez car vous allez recommencer votre vie toute est possible vous êtes encore jeune donc bonne chance dans votre nouvelle vie " alors il y'avait une sorte d'espoir sur mon visage et je aussi pleurer de joie.

Des , notre arrivée aux Canada le lendemain j'avais rendez-vous, avec les gens du centre pour nouveau arrivant je leur ai dit que je voulais m'inscrire à l'école, ça a pri des semaines, elle m'ont emmenée à travaille NB , pour l'inscription et mon donner rendez-vous quelques mois après pour passer le test pour rentrer au études.

Oui je passer le test, ils m'ont évalué, maintenant je suis aux études juste pour avoir mon diplôme puis aprè pour aller prendre la formation que je souhaite étudier de tout mon cœur, j'aime bien l'apprentissage même si parfois la routine est vraiment dure et fatiguant pour moi avec mes deux enfants, mais je me suis résigné je me suis toujours dire que je dois réussir, pas seulement pour moi mes pour tout le monde il ya des gens qui compte sur moi , je dois pas les décevoir, j'aime bien j'apprends même si parfois c'est dure à me souvenir des choses la maîtresse m'aide elle est si gentille avec elle on apprend beaucoup de chose et je suis vraiment très contente d'avoir eu la chance de retourner au étude , à l'avenir je serai une grande infirmière je vais travailler très dur pour arriver à mes fins merci un grand merci au gouvernement du Canada , pour la chance que j'ai eu maintenant je peux réaliser un rêve. Rêver c'est facile, réaliser n'est pas impossible.

Un parcours de résilience et de reconstruction

Marie-Michèle Gionet – Apprentissage pour adultes Péninsule

<https://www.facebook.com/ApprentissageadultesPeninsule/>

Enseignante : Sylvie Brown

À l'âge de 13 ans, mon parcours de vie a pris une direction difficile. À une période où l'on devrait normalement se concentrer sur l'école et l'avenir, je me suis retrouvée confrontée à des défis personnels majeurs. Ces épreuves m'ont menée à décrocher du milieu scolaire et à m'éloigner d'un cadre structurant, incapable à ce moment-là de mesurer l'impact de ces choix sur mon futur. Je n'avais ni les outils ni la maturité nécessaires pour comprendre l'importance de l'éducation dans la construction d'un avenir stable.

Cette période sombre de mon adolescence a toutefois marqué le début d'une prise de conscience importante. À 14 ans, j'ai entrepris une démarche de désintoxication qui a changé le cours de ma vie. Ce fut une étape exigeante, mais essentielle, qui m'a permis de reprendre le contrôle de ma santé et de mes décisions. Aujourd'hui, cela fait 14 ans que je suis sobre, et ce cheminement demeure l'une des plus grandes preuves de ma force intérieure et de ma capacité à me reconstruire.

Dès l'âge de 15 ans, j'ai intégré le marché du travail. Le travail est rapidement devenu une source de stabilité, de responsabilité et de discipline. Depuis cet âge, je travaille sans interruption. Cette constance m'a permis de développer une éthique de travail solide, une autonomie financière et un sens des responsabilités qui m'accompagnent encore aujourd'hui.

C'est également à 15 ans que j'ai amorcé une relation de couple qui dure toujours aujourd'hui. Grandir aux côtés de la même personne m'a appris la persévérance, l'engagement et l'importance du soutien mutuel. Ensemble, nous avons traversé les différentes étapes de la vie.

Pendant de nombreuses années, je croyais que l'école ne faisait plus partie de mon avenir. J'avais choisi de me concentrer sur le travail, pensant que ce chemin serait suffisant. Toutefois, en avançant dans la vie, mon désir profond de fonder une famille s'est imposé comme une évidence. L'infertilité est alors devenue une réalité difficile à accepter, autant sur le plan émotionnel que financier. Cette épreuve m'a forcée à réfléchir sérieusement à mon avenir, à ma stabilité et aux possibilités que je pouvais offrir à mon futur enfant.

C'est dans ce contexte que j'ai compris pourquoi retourner à l'école était essentiel. Mon projet de maternité a été le déclencheur de ce retour aux études. J'ai réalisé que je voulais bâtir une vie plus stable, tant sur le plan personnel que professionnel. L'école est devenue une solution concrète pour améliorer ma situation financière, mais surtout pour me donner accès à de nouvelles opportunités et à un avenir plus sécurisant.

Reprendre les études n'a pas été un choix facile. J'ai dû affronter mes peurs, mes doutes et les souvenirs liés à mon parcours scolaire interrompu. Pourtant, ce retour à l'école s'est révélé profondément transformateur. Il m'a permis de reprendre confiance en moi, de reconnaître mes capacités et de me prouver qu'il n'est jamais trop tard pour apprendre et réussir.

Oui, l'école a changé ma vie. Elle m'a offert une structure, un objectif clair et un sentiment de fierté que je n'avais jamais connu auparavant dans ce contexte. Elle m'a permis de transformer mes épreuves passées en forces, et de voir mon histoire non plus comme un échec, mais comme un parcours de résilience et de persévérance.

Aujourd'hui, mon retour aux études représente bien plus qu'un objectif académique. Il s'agit d'un engagement envers moi-même, envers mon avenir et envers le projet de famille que je porte avec espoir. Mon parcours n'a pas été linéaire, mais il témoigne de la capacité humaine à se relever, à évoluer et à croire en un avenir meilleur, peu importe le point de départ.

Learning Changes Lives

Sabrina Hamilton – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

As an adult returning to school; I have begun going through some positive changes. Ever since then, I've realized how it's changing me, and how it will change my future, and what I want. Returning to learning makes me focus on the goals I have for myself, and what all they will stir up.

Everything will change after learning what I need for my career. I will be another step closer to being able to provide for my children. Even though I just started the CAEC class, it has change me mentally in great ways. I feel way more socially confident about myself, and feel in general good about myself. With saying that, I am putting everything I have in me to learn with my children, and eventually college to learn and have an amazing career. Becoming a veterinarian assistant is a huge motivation; pushing me harder than what I normally would do. I want this more than anything!

Achieving a career as a vet assistant would play in the biggest goal I have so that I am able to provide for my family and not have to worry about living on government assistance. Becoming successful will prove my whole family wrong about what they've always believed about me. It will better my children, and family, but more importantly myself. Being an animal lover, this is the career of my dreams. I won't give up until I get what I want so I can do something I love to do; help animals. The juice truly will be well worth the squeeze, and I am thankful for the opportunity to come back and learn, to make something of myself.

Learning Changes Lives

Jackie Hamilton-Irving – Riverview Lions Centre (South East Adult Education)

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

Teacher: Sharon Warren

The definition of contentment is “a state of peaceful happiness, satisfaction and ease with one’s life.

At 64 years old, I am a mother of four grown children and married for almost four decades to a wonderful man.

I feel happy but not content.

What sparked my return to class to achieve my CAEC was a conversation I had with one of my sons.

He didn’t graduate from high school and told me he regretted not getting his diploma.

I told him I understood how he felt and the feeling never truly goes away.

It’s been over 45 years since my high school days, and I carry the regret like a stone in my hand.

Some days the stone feels heavy and other days, I barely feel its weight.

There was no solid reason, nor any excuse as to why I didn't graduate from high school.

I simply skipped too many classes and told myself, I would study more and make up for lost time.

The tricky thing about missing too many classes; you fall behind and teachers and your fellow students move ahead without you.

I was too proud to ask for help from my teachers and I still recall the sadness and regret I felt watching my friends and classmates celebrate after graduation.

I applied to Saint Thomas University in Grade 12 and got accepted.

It was one of the happiest days of my life.

I let the dream of higher education slip through my fingers by skipping school and not keeping up my grades.

Today, I truly feel by getting my math credit and receiving my CAEC, I can go to university, if I wish!

I’ve been thinking about my maternal grandmother who grew up in a small town outside Sussex.

She attended teachers college in 1910 and taught in a one room schoolhouse before marrying my grandfather.

He was a hardworking farmer, and together they raised nine children.

Two of their daughters became teachers.

My Aunt Patricia, obtained her teaching degree in her 50's.

She taught school all day, ran her family farm and went to night classes at UNBSJ.

My daughter, Mary graduated with a Bachelor of Arts at Mount Allison and received her Bachelor of Education from the University of Ottawa.

Mary is a teacher in Scotland and she is so proud of her mama for going back to school!

I have always loved reading and my fondest memories is taking my four little ones to the library to check out books!

I have instilled a love of reading within my children which makes me so happy!

I want to make my family proud and I am doing this for me, to prove you are never too old to achieve your dreams!

I've been attending class to obtain my math credit since September 2025.

Firstly, with the wonderful guidance of Neha Molhatra and presently with Sharon Warren.

I am filled with determination and grateful for the support and encouragement of these two exceptional teachers.

I have a wonderful life and I wake up every day full of gratitude and happiness.

As I expressed at the beginning of my story, I want to feel contentment.

I want that wonderful feeling of accomplishment and to look in the mirror and say.."Jackie, you did it!"

I visualize the day I hold my CAEC in my hand and no longer carry the stone.

Learning Changes Lives

Kimberly J – Miramichi Adult Learning (NBWCC)

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Jennifer Doucet

Learning changes lives. Truly it does. It has changed mine, but not in a typical way. Not only in the way of going to school, opening the book, writing the test, and moving forward. My “story book” does not qualify as orthodox. I am thirty-two years old, soon to be thirty-three. I have a beautiful twelve year old daughter, and I am currently incarcerated for the first time. This was not what I had envisioned for myself, but I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason. I am sure there is a lesson that I am obliged to learn, or maybe teach someone else. This learning experience has also changed my life.

I did a lot of the “experience” portion of growing up, on my own. I spent a lot of time away from home, not by my own choice. What I did choose, were the people that I grew up with, and continuing to go to school. I, unfortunately, have lost many of those people to a better place. During my times away from home, school seemed to be the one place that was consistent for me. I loved to learn. I still love to learn, which is why that I chose to take part in school while incarcerated. Not only for myself, but to help other women with their work, and to be in a familiar setting in such an unfamiliar time in my life. If people were a subject in school, it would be my favourite to learn about. The best lessons are not taught by nature of a textbook, or in a classroom environment, but learning about others, and ultimately learning yourself. Who you are, and what you can do to make the world a kinder place.

My road is the “road less traveled”, and life on my own began for me at a young and fragile age. This has helped me to relate to many of the women that I supported during my time working with the Elizabeth Fry Society, which is my favourite career choice to date. Ironically, I supported incarcerated women both in and out of imprisonment. It is a new experience as well as a humbling experience being on this side of the fence, but being an advocate is one of my favourite qualities about myself. When I studied nursing, I loved the aspect of assisting others medically, but I found myself spending my lunch hours visiting patients, lost in conversations, wanting to learn about their lives outside of the hospital. Learning about their families, and about what they love to do. I think my end goal in my education was to learn how to help people, and to teach them how to help themselves.

In my opinion, there are no limitations on what you can and should learn. I have learned and I am continuing to learn from my mistakes as well as learning to make better choices. I am planning to continue my education when I leave incarceration to be able to help more people. I want others to have the chance of redemption, to have the chance to make better choices, and give hope by offering support, empathy, and guidance in a non-judgemental environment.

Learning Changes Lives

Stephanie K – Miramichi Adult Learning (NBWCC)

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Jennifer Doucet

Education is a way for you to get to live out your dreams and to live what most people only dream of. Most of us are stuck in a never-ending, repeating cycle going absolutely nowhere. If you are someone who finds that you're stuck in a cycle or would like a better job, no matter how you look at it, schooling is always an activity that pays off. The harder you work at it, school can make your dreams a "real life" everyday reality. Everyone has dreams but very few live their dreams. No matter your age, school is available and these days, school is also available from home and that makes things easier.

Since I became incarcerated, my life has been put on hold. School was offered and I was lucky enough to become a student at the New Brunswick Women's Correctional Centre in Miramichi. During my time in jail, I remembered how much I used to dream, and I also realized how far away that I had wandered from the life that I had wanted. The distance is a massive, almost impossible distance, or so I had thought. Even in my case, those dreams I had are not impossible. With determination and hard work, my dreams are more than possible.

The dreams that I had when I was young, had been derailed due to people putting me down and emotional losses that I suffered, and due to many, many excuses why I'd rather do other things and avoided school. I should have had more determination during high school.

Drugs played a major part in my down fall along with dating while being too young. At age sixteen, I became pregnant with my son, and of course I tried to raise him alone. School seemed lost. As my dreams slipped through my hands, a lot of things happened, making me feel that my dreams were out of my reach and that I didn't deserve them or anything remotely close to living a good life.

Coming to jail, and taking the course for my Grade 12, has brought back thoughts of my dreams. It has also brought back the feelings that these dreams are within my reach, and the belief that I'm worthy of having my dream life and job. Being incarcerated to me has not put my dreams on hold, but rather brought my hope to reach my dreams, and the determination to accomplish them.

Learning Changes Lives

Samantha Keays – NBCC

<https://nbcc.ca/recruitment/adult-learners>

Teacher: Lori Donovan

When I graduated from high school 12 years ago, in 2014, I had only one ambition. To become a nurse. It's all I had dreamed about doing since I was a little girl. I soon discovered it was not the career for me, and I was left feeling discouraged, lost, and unsure what to do with my life. I ended up working in various customer service and retail jobs for almost 10 years, and then finally, after doing some soul-searching and being encouraged by my loving partner, Christopher, I decided to go back to school for something I discovered I had a passion for—working with children. Christopher himself has just graduated from a two-year college program in Moncton, where we lived together, and he ended up securing employment in Saint John. Moving to a new city would be a fresh start for us both, so I decided to apply to NBCC Saint John for Early Childhood Education.

I knew going back as a mature student would take dedication and hard work. I knew challenges would arise, and my world would be hectic, but I was gravely unprepared for the life-altering news that would make this already effortful experience even more difficult. In February of 2025, halfway through my first year of Early Childhood Education, I was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma. Breast cancer. I cried for almost a week straight. I was devastated. Dismayed. Disheveled. Demolished. How could I get diagnosed with cancer not only at the young age of twenty-eight, but also, how could this be happening *now*? Just when I was figuring things out, finally finding a field I am passionate about, and starting to get my life in order!

But my learning gave me something to focus on. My studies provided me with a sense of control and stability during a time when many other aspects of my life felt uncertain. I soon began eighteen weeks of chemotherapy; I had countless scans, blood tests, procedures, examinations, appointments, and visits to the hospital, but there was something I could do through it all that kept me sane: learn. I chose to study. I chose to remain committed to my education and to my future. I worked hard. I pushed myself, and I will admit, there were times when I thought it was impossible, but the support and encouragement I received from my instructors, friends, family, classmates, and my partner made it possible. I strived and continue to strive for academic excellence because each assignment, test, discussion, and project reminds me why I started my educational journey in the first place. I have maintained a 99.8% average while being a class representative in both my first and second years, a peer tutor, volunteering when I can, *and beating* an aggressive cancer. I'm proud of all that I have accomplished in almost two years of being a student again.

Learning has changed my life in ways I never expected. Through my program, I have gained practical and hands-on knowledge, lessons, and skills, while growing my resilience, empathy, and understanding of others more than I could have ever imagined. My goal is to become an Early Childhood Educator and become employed in an early learning centre where I can help create safe, inclusive, and engaging environments for all children. I want to encourage

and foster curiosity, confidence, and a love of learning in the children I work with. I also hope to continue advocating for the importance of quality early childhood education and the impact that caring, knowledgeable, and qualified educators can have on a child's life.

Pursuing my education during such a demanding time has revealed the true power of learning. It gave me purpose, strength, and hope when I needed it most. Learning truly does change lives; not only for the children that educators support, but also for the courageous individuals who choose the path of continuing their education, despite life's challenges.

L'apprentissage change des vies

Kenfack Karen – Éducation des adultes du Nord-Ouest

<https://www.facebook.com/educationadultes>

Enseignante : Patricia Laplante

Tout a commencé quand je faisais mes premiers pas, j'étais exciter de découvrir le monde de l'éducation. J'écrivais partout même sur les murs de la maison j'avais tellement envie d'aller à l'école malheureusement je n'avais pas encore l'Age adéquate.

J'ai enfin eu l'Age de commencer l'école, de pouvoir apprendre l'alphabet, connaître les différents animaux et leurs Song, apprendre la numération. Les bruits des feuilles, des élèves qui bavardait. Je priais à chaque fois pour que le temps passe lentement pour que je puisse profiter du tableau remplis d'alphabet et d'animaux. Plus j'avançais, plus j'étais curieuse d'en savoir plus.

A l'école comme dans la vraie vie, j'étais une personne qui se donnais des challenges et se donnais les moyens pour réussir. Je faisais partie des meilleurs à l'école, je me surpassais je voyais tout comme un défi ce qui me permettait de donner plus que le meilleur de de moi-même l'école c'est vraiment mon refuge depuis toute petite.

Tout a basculé quand j'ai commencé à fréquenter des personnes qui n'avait pas les même objectifs, ambition et vision que moi. Ceux-ci fuyaient les cours dès que l'occasion se présentait plus je trainais avec eux, plus je m'éloignais des mes objectifs. La différence entre eux et moi était qu'ils comptent sur les parents mais moi ma famille compte sur moi je n'ai pas droit à l'erreur.

J'ai réalisé que je me perdais vraiment quand j'ai commencé à me comporter comme eux, fuir les cours, ne plus réviser et j'ai fini par échouer ma session chose qui ne m'étais jamais arrivé. Ce jour je me suis posé mille et une question pourquoi je suis aux études j'ai réalisé que j'avais totalement changé et je marchais avec des personnes qui n'avait pas la même vision et énergie que moi de là j'ai décidé avec couper les ponts avec toutes ces personnes et tout d'un coup, ma rage de réussir et de rendre ma famille fière de moi est revenu.

Un mois après avoir obtenue mon baccalauréat, je suis venue au Canada pour moi c'était de nouvelles portes et opportunités qui s'ouvrait à moi j'étais tellement exciter à la fois j'avais un peu parce que, j'étais dans un environnement nouveau, un climat et des cultures différente de celle de mon pays d'origine le Cameroun. Je devais m'adapter à une façon différente de m'habiller, un accent différent, avec un système scolaire totalement différent ce changement me faisais peur j'avoue. Au début je me suis dit cela allait être facile parce que je suis une personne qui s'adapte à tout mais la frustration d'être différente et venir d'un continent différent ma envahis j'ai voulu abandonner et rentrer chez moi. Puis je me suis que la dernière volonté de mon père avant de mourir était que je prenne soin de mes frères et de ma mère à cet instant j'ai compris que je me devais d'être forte je devais respecter la dernière volonté de mon père et me battre jusqu'au bout mais pour être honnête j'y croyais plus vraiment j'avais plus vraiment d'espoirs.

Quand j'ai franchi la porte du centre d'éducation pour adulte, j'ai senti une énergie positive et j'ai compris que quelque chose allait changer. Effectivement oui quelque chose a changé j'ai été transformé de zéro à héros et aujourd'hui je peux dire haut et fort que oui l'apprentissage change des vies. J'ai regagné ma confiance en moi, j'ai appris à accepter les épreuves et difficultés de la vie.

Aujourd'hui, je suis fier de mon parcours jusqu'ici et j'aimerais dans le futur m'associer à des associations, des bénévoles pour pouvoir aider des personnes sans-abris, accompagner les nouveaux immigrants qui ont du mal à s'intégrer, venir en aide à des personnes vulnérables tels que des enfants qui sont mal nourris, des personnes âgées et les mères célibataires qui se battent au quotidien pour offrir une vie meilleure à leurs enfants. Je le redis haut et fort l'apprentissage change des vies et j'en suis la preuve vivante et je suis convaincu que l'apprentissage va continuer de changer ma vie.

Learning Changes Lives

Marissa Long – Charlotte County Adult Learning

<https://ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Josée LeFebvre

Doors of opportunity started closing at a very young age for me;

From growing up with an overlooked learning disability to language barriers, I often worried I would remain behind my peers in education. My name is Marissa Long and I've been attending the C.A.E.C program since September. In those few months alone I've been able to open doors I was sure would stay closed permanently.

My first door closed very early for me as I grew up in a small French speaking village. While growing up speaking French as my native language was my biggest blessing, it came with its drawbacks.

The French language is recognized as an official language in both New Brunswick and Canada, yet it remains the minority as English is predominantly spoken nationwide.

The average French speaking student doesn't begin taking English classes in school until the end of elementary, with lessons being very basic. When my parents moved across the province for work, I slammed head first into that closed door as the town we had moved to had no native French speakers and only an English school curriculum available.

Luckily I picked up on the language quickly enough to pass the school year but after spending the previous eight years learning in a completely different language, my next few years wouldn't be easy.

I struggled immensely trying to keep up with my English speaking classmates as I hadn't grown up with the language, it felt like trying to run before learning how to walk. Fortunately, when I joined the C.A.E.C program I was met with full French language testing in all subjects and I was paired with an amazing French speaking teacher that helped me through any language barrier I faced.

The second door I slammed into happened during the Covid pandemic. It put the world on pause and that pause included education. During the span of nearly two years, we lived in times of worry and uncertainty. To keep the spread of the virus to a minimum, many trial and error measures were put into place. During the first year, online classes were put into motion so that students could attend class virtually, but many students including myself didn't have access to the necessary materials to attend them. Nearly an entire semester of crucial class time was missed during the first year alone. During the second year of the pandemic, in person learning returned to many schools across the country but students could only attend in person classes for limited times during the week before having to return home for virtual learning. With so much missed class time, I wasn't able to catch up in order to graduate on time. This left me with a sense of incompleteness and worry regarding my future. Luckily, with the C.A.E.C program I've been able to catch up on missed time with ease.

My final and most formidable door in education is having grown up with a learning disability that went unseen for many years. Until a few years ago, I had no idea that I had been struggling with autism. Sadly, many learning disabilities including autism, dyslexia, and attention disorders go undetected in many women and girls. Throughout my school years I often struggled to catch onto and retain certain subjects. Despite paying close attention to the subjects I was being taught, I frequently needed more support to understand certain subjects fully. In a standard classroom setting, a teacher with a full class can't put sole focus on one student alone, which led me to do poorly in the subjects I struggled with. Finding support was difficult as most teachers felt I could improve by simply paying closer attention during class.

Thankfully, the C.A.E.C program provided me with a teacher that could give me in depth explanations, as well as the support I needed to excel in places I once fell behind in.

The reason I took the initiative to return to learning is because the C.A.E.C program opened my eyes and allowed me to see that my closed doors could be opened and stay open. The program has given me the opportunity to pick up where I left off with my education, with all the help and accessibility I could ever need to succeed. It's given me a sense of worth and belonging, and most importantly, it has revived my dreams of a bright future. Thanks to C.A.E.C, I no longer feel limited about jobs and careers I can pursue or great feats I can accomplish. My goals for the future are simply to become the best version of myself I can be, and now it's finally possible.

-Appreciatively, an upcoming graduate.

Learning Changes Lives

Alicia M – Miramichi Adult Learning (NBWCC)

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Jennifer Doucet

I was born in Fredericton, NB. At the age of seven, we moved to Moncton. By this time, I had already attended four or five different schools. Needless to say, our lives were anything less than stable. I grew up with three brothers and one sister, and I was the baby of the family. I was the one who always got picked on. I used school as my escape for the most part, it was somewhere I loved going....at first.

I loved English class, and every day I arrived early for class. I enjoyed writing. Being able to write my thoughts, feelings and express myself freely and openly was the most amazing feeling I could ask for.

I was a bit overweight in High School and quickly learned how brutal other kids could be, and my self-esteem plummeted from slim to non-existent. I started skipping school and quickly became involved with the wrong crowd. They were heavily into drugs and before I knew it, I was expelled from school. I was no longer allowed to attend the one place that originally felt like my safe haven. It quickly turned into what I felt like was my enemy. I lost all faith and hope within myself, and didn't know where to turn.

At a young age, I had been removed from my Mother's care for a short period, but it made me realize how much I wanted to help children when I grew up. At the age of fifteen, I was living with a boyfriend and his family who didn't care if we went to school or what we did. I knew I wanted better for myself than what they were doing. They were living on welfare, did not have any ambition or goals for themselves, or their children. I redirected my "troubled self" back to a classroom at an alternative learning school where I continued my studies. I was doing phenomenal, acing every test, and I was even tutoring other classmates. Once again, however, it felt like my world got turned upside down.

I became pregnant at sixteen, and had no idea what I was going to do. I had decided to keep the baby, but in the early months of my pregnancy, I lost the child due to complications. Once again, my whole world came tumbling down. At this time, I shut everyone and everything out once more. Weeks and months went by, and I was still too devastated to not blame myself for something that I had no control over. I eventually started counselling, and I started taking my life back again.

I moved west to Edmonton, Alberta, and got a job, and then another, and another. I had continued to put my schooling on the back burner, stating to myself, "Next week I'll do it", or "the week after, I'll get to it." That "week" never came.

Fast forward to today, I am Twenty-nine years young, and I am currently taking Adult Learning classes, and I am about to write my first C.A.E.C test. I now have three, beautiful boys ages eight, six, and five and if not only to show myself, I want to show them that no matter what life puts you through or you can go through, always continue to do what you love, and

strive for things you believe in. Here I am, at the age of Twenty-nine, still striving and working towards a better education and future for myself and my family.

Learning Changes Lives

Anna M – Miramichi Adult Learning (NBWCC)

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Jennifer Doucet

As a child, I loved learning new things and new ways to look at the world. I remember how excited I was when I got to board the big, yellow bus that first day of school. Optimistic and thrilled to finally get to learn how to spell words, about the dinosaurs, and outer space like my older sister did. But unlike my sister and many of the students in my class, I struggled greatly due to having ADHD. I had a mind that I couldn't settle; that was always racing with multiple things all at the same time. My mind was on what I was learning in class, what I could see out the window, what was in my desk, and what I would do after school with my younger sisters. I was always getting frustrated with myself because I didn't learn or express myself like the rest of my class. I struggled with tests and to even remain in class without being sent to the hallway for fidgeting in my desk or distracting other students.

I often remember having the correct answers, but my methods of getting the answers were not what was accepted, so I would lose marks or sometimes get blamed for cheating. I stayed dedicated to my schooling though, always determined to get my Grade 12, attending university and one day owning my own business.

My direction of my future changed when I became pregnant in Grade 10 for my son and ended up failing two credits at the end of the year. I did attend Summer School during the last trimester of my pregnancy, allowing me to enter Grade 11 unexpectedly with a baby boy almost two weeks old. The requirements of being a Single Mother caused me to pause my goals of my Grade 12 Diploma, and going to college or university.

Now at forty-six years old, I found myself incarcerated with mental health disorders and a brain injury that required me to self-secure for my own physical and psychological well-being. Four months into my sentence. I was unexpectedly offered the opportunity to acquire my CAEC (Canadian Adult Education Credential). Two wonderful ladies came to my cell and with their understanding and amazing support, they arranged for me to study for my CAEC exams from my cell with unlimited access to their time, and guidance. They removed the physical and psychological boundaries, allowing me to thrive with their unconditional understanding and support. In an unimaginable environment, my long-forgotten dream had now been revived into an achievable, unexpected journey of learning. Equipped with the guidance and aid of Jennifer and Joly, I have excelled in my studies with consistent grades averaging from the high 80%'s up to 97%. I now have the confidence to focus on my very achievable goals. With my very dear friend, and retired teacher Fern's, support, encouragement and pride in my determination to acquire my CAEC, I will hopefully be able to continue on in college or university.

I am enormously grateful and extremely fortunate to have gotten this opportunity to continue with my education. I was able to empower myself with this gift of learning that has granted me the ability to pursue my Grade 12. Now with my 47th birthday in two days, the dreams of Post-Secondary Education is becoming a reality. Learning has empowered me to

have options for my future. I move forward into my future with the greatest appreciation and love for my three teachers and all teachers for the true gift of allowing us to learn and aspire to greatness.

L'apprentissage change des vies

Megne Talla Merveille Larissa – Éducation des adultes du Sud -Est

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

Enseignante : Sonia Mezani

Je m'appelle MEGNE TALLA Merveille Larissa, j'ai 22ans et je trouve que l'apprentissage est un droit fondamental, et un levier puissant de transformation personnelle et sociale. Pour un adulte, retourner aux études représente souvent un acte de courage, de détermination et d'espoir. À travers mon parcours, j'ai compris que l'éducation ne se limite pas à l'acquisition de connaissances, mais qu'elle permet aussi de construire la confiance en soi, de réfléchir ses objectifs et d'ouvrir de nouvelles perspectives d'avenir.

Depuis mon arrivée du Cameroun le 11 septembre 2024 au Canada, j'ai décidé de reprendre mes études parce que je voulais avoir un bel avenir et dépasser mes propres limites dans ma vie quotidienne, pendant longtemps, le manque de formation constituait un obstacle à mon épanouissement personnel et professionnel. Je me sentais restreinte dans mes choix, incapable de saisir certaines opportunités et me sentais marginalisée dans la société. C'est ce qui m'a poussée à reprendre mes études dans ce beau pays qui m'a ouvert les bras, c'était juste pour l'obtention de ma formation en main pour le contrôle de mon avenir et de montrer que l'âge ou les difficultés passées ne doivent pas m'empêcher d'apprendre.

Depuis que j'ai repris l'apprentissage, ma vie a profondément changé. J'ai développé des compétences en lecture, en écriture et en communication qui me permettent de mieux comprendre le monde qui m'entoure. Je suis désormais capable d'analyser des informations, de rédiger des documents et d'utiliser les outils numériques avec plus d'aisance. L'apprentissage m'a aussi appris la rigueur, la persévérance et la gestion du temps. Chaque progrès, même modeste, renforce ma confiance et me motive à poursuivre mes efforts. Au-delà des compétences techniques, l'éducation a transformé ma perception de moi-même. Elle m'a permis de croire à mes capacités, et de comprendre que je peux contribuer positivement à la société. J'ai découvert le plaisir d'apprendre et l'importance de la culture, de réflexion critique et du savoir. Cette transformation intérieure est selon moi, l'un des efforts les plus importants de l'apprentissage. En classe, j'apprends quatre matières : les mathématiques, la langue française ,les sciences et études sociales qui m'ont appris beaucoup d'informations sur l'histoire et la géographie du merveilleux pays qui m'a accueillie .

Mes objectifs futurs sont clairs. Je souhaite poursuivre mes études, afin d'obtenir un diplôme reconnu, intégrer à un secteur professionnel stable et améliorer mes conditions de vie. À long terme je voudrais également m'engager dans des projets éducatifs ou sociaux pour soutenir d'autres adultes qui hésitent à retourner à l'école. Je crois fermement que l'éducation est un moteur de développement pour les individus et pour les communautés. Je suis actuellement inscrite au programme d'éducation des adultes, où je bénéficie d'un encadrement pédagogique de qualité. Mon enseignante, Madame Sonia MEZANI joue un rôle essentiel dans mon parcours. Grâce à sa patience, son professionnalisme et ses encouragements, je progresse chaque jour et je garde la motivation nécessaire pour continuer.

En conclusion, l'apprentissage a changé ma vie en profondeur, il m'a offert des connaissances, une nouvelle vue de l'avenir, une confiance renouvelée. Je suis convaincue que l'éducation peut transformer des vies briser les barrières sociales ouvrir la voie à un avenir plus juste et prospère. Mon parcours d'apprenant adulte est la preuve qu'il n'est jamais trop tard pour apprendre et réussir.

L'éducation a changé ma vie

Laetitia Melom – Éducation des adultes du Nord-Ouest

<https://www.facebook.com/educationadultes>

Enseignante : François Sincère

Depuis mon enfance, j'ai toujours cru que l'éducation était une clé importante pour construire un avenir meilleur. Quand j'étais à l'école, j'aimais apprendre et découvrir de nouvelles choses. Je rêvais déjà d'avoir un bon travail et de pouvoir aider ma famille.

Malheureusement, la vie ne s'est pas déroulée comme je l'avais imaginé. Très jeune, j'ai dû arrêter l'école parce que ma famille n'avait pas assez de moyens. Ma mère était la seule à s'occuper de nous. Elle faisait tout ce qu'elle pouvait pour payer nos cahiers, nos uniformes et les frais scolaires. Malgré les difficultés, elle nous répétait souvent que l'éducation était importante et qu'il ne fallait jamais abandonner.

Quelques années plus tard, je me suis battue pour retourner à l'école et continuer mes études. Je voulais prouver à moi-même que je pouvais réussir malgré les difficultés. Mais un an plus tard, ma vie a encore changé lorsque je suis tombée enceinte de ma fille. Après sa naissance, j'ai essayé de continuer mes études malgré les obstacles. Ma fille n'avait qu'un mois lorsque je devais déjà la laisser à la maison pour aller à l'école. Pour une jeune mère, ce moment était très difficile. Même lorsque j'étais en classe, je pensais souvent à mon bébé et je me demandais si elle allait bien.

À un moment, j'ai compris que je devais faire un choix. J'ai décidé d'arrêter l'école pour rester à la maison et prendre soin d'elle. Ce n'était pas une décision facile, mais je savais que ma fille avait besoin de moi. Pendant longtemps, je me suis demandé si je pourrais un jour retourner à l'école et terminer ce que j'avais commencé. Être mère est une bénédiction, mais aussi une grande responsabilité. Entre les tâches de la maison et les difficultés du quotidien, il était difficile de penser à reprendre les études. Malgré tout, au fond de moi, je n'ai jamais perdu mon désir d'apprendre. Une petite voix me disait toujours qu'un jour je pourrais recommencer.

Plus tard, ma famille et moi avons immigré au Canada. En arrivant ici, j'ai compris que j'avais une nouvelle chance. Ce pays m'a donné l'opportunité de recommencer ma vie et de poursuivre mes rêves. À ce moment-là, j'étais encore enceinte de mon deuxième enfant. Malgré cela, j'ai décidé de passer le test d'entrée pour commencer le programme d'éducation des adultes, parce que mon rêve a toujours été de devenir infirmière.

Après la naissance de mon fils, j'ai vécu un accouchement difficile qui s'est terminé par une césarienne. Pendant un moment, j'étais découragée et j'ai pensé abandonner mes études. Mais au fond de moi, je savais que je devais continuer. Quand j'ai repris les cours, mon fils n'avait qu'un mois et demi. Je devais le laisser à la maison avec ma mère pour aller à l'école. Ce n'était pas facile, mais chaque jour je faisais un pas vers mon objectif.

Il y a eu des moments de doute, de fatigue et de peur, mais je n'ai jamais complètement abandonné. Je voulais montrer à mes enfants que même lorsque la vie devient difficile, il est possible de se relever et de continuer à avancer.

Aujourd'hui, je suis mère de deux enfants et je comprends mieux la réalité de la vie. L'apprentissage m'a donné confiance en moi et la force de continuer. Mes enfants sont ma plus grande motivation. Je veux leur montrer qu'il ne faut jamais abandonner ses rêves, même lorsque la vie devient difficile. Aujourd'hui, je sais que l'éducation peut changer une vie. Elle donne de l'espoir et la force d'avancer.

Learning Changes Lives

Jessica Milbury – Woodstock Adult Learning Centre (WVALA)

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

Teacher: Joanne McIsaac

My name is Jessica Milbury, and I am a student in the CAEC program in Woodstock. My journey back to education has been a decade in the making. At sixteen, I found myself pregnant and in need of a full-time job to support my growing responsibilities. Because of this, I made the difficult decision to drop out of high school. For a long time, I believed I had lost my chance to earn my diploma.

Walking into a classroom for the first time after ten years, was a mix of nerves and excitement. I remember sitting at my desk, staring at my notebook and realizing that this space was for me, too. It wasn't just about the textbooks; it was about the quiet realization that I was finally doing something for myself. That first day, the "what ifs" and "how's" turned into "I can do this" and "I have resources".

I grew up fast, from a very young age, I sacrificed my own desires and education to focus on taking care of my family. I am now twenty-six years old and ironically enough, the children I put my life "on hold" for, are my loudest supporters. Along with my husband who has always rooted for me and our family. They are all my biggest motivation. I am finally taking the steps I need to take, in my classes to achieve my high school equivalency. This decision grew from a deep desire for something better, a career that feels desirable, meaningful and fulfilling.

One thing I learned instantly upon returning to school and something that brought me true comfort, was that course is really for anyone regardless of age. It is a humble opportunity and a genuine second chance at education. Life is different for everyone, and the realization that you can pursue your goals counts for more than words have to offer.

Seeing my children faces when I sit down to do my homework along side them has been a perspective shifter. They see me working through math problems and practicing my writing, and it's teaching them that learning doesn't have an expiration date. When they ask how my day at school was, or if I passed the test I just did, it reminds me that I'm not just getting a diploma for a job. I'm actively showing my kids that you never give up on yourself, no matter how much "life" happens in between.

This course has changed me by giving me hope. Everyday I show up, its teaching me that perusing your dreams has no time limit. For the longest time, I spoke about what I wanted while secretly believing those goals were out of reach. This program changed my opinion on what I thought could be impossible. I've realized that anything is indeed possible when you take your time while putting in your best effort. Sometimes it's the "baby steps" that make the journey worth while, and I've learned that's okay.

Once I earn my diploma, I plan to continue my education through NBCC to eventually become a Teachers Assistant. I want to be the kind of Teachers Assistant who recognizes the potential in every student, especially those might feel like they are falling behind or don't fit "societies

mold". Because of my own journey, I have a unique kind of empathy to offer. I want to tell students that their life path doesn't have to be a straight line to be successful. Helping a child realize their own worth in a classroom, is to me, the ultimate way to give back to my own community and maybe even more.

Having children of my own, I see firsthand the significant difference that dedicated educators make in their lives. It would be an honour to one day be a part of providing the quality education that all children deserve.

Learning Changes Lives

Amy Mills – Saint John Kings Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Teacher: Al Rouse

A year ago, I completely changed my life. For many years, I struggled with addiction, and I finally reached a point where I knew I needed a fresh start. I made the big decision to move from Moncton to Saint John to build a better life for myself. For a while, it felt like a rollercoaster, trying to pick up the pieces and start over from where I had left off so many years ago. It took many difficult steps and a lot of hard work, but I was determined to keep moving forward.

During this transition, I attended a course at Working NB. That is where I met my employment counsellor. Even though I didn't have any high school credits at the time, she saw something in me. She told me to keep her number and to phone her whenever I felt ready to start my CAEC. It took several months to find the strength, but I finally gathered the courage to make that call. Looking back, that one phone call opened several doors that I truly thought were closed to me forever.

My biggest motivators are my daughter and my family. While attending recovery support groups and counselling gave me a vital foundation, I knew I needed more to truly accomplish my goals. I needed my education so I could build a solid future for my daughter and my personal growth. Even so, my self-esteem was low. I struggled with the thought that I could never actually carry out this goal. On my first day of class, I had so much anxiety that I remember walking in and out of the front door several times before I could finally force myself to stay inside.

Once I was through the door, I quickly realized I didn't have anything to worry about. It was a very kind and friendly environment, and I saw that I wasn't the only one starting from scratch. Slowly, my confidence began to improve. I started learning new things about the world, improving my writing and reading, and developing the essential mathematic skills I needed. People in my personal life started to see a big difference in me, and I started to see it too.

After many years of feeling hopeless, I can finally say that I want a bright future. Not only that, but learning has actually become exciting! I have already passed my exams in English, Social Studies, and Science. Now, I am down to Math—my very last one. I already have a plan and meetings set up for college, which is somewhere I never could have pictured myself being just a year ago. I finally have hope and a positive vision of where I will be in five years.

Learning changes many lives. No matter what circumstance you are in, you can do it. This essay is just a summary of how much education has changed my life, and I want to encourage anyone who is struggling to push themselves toward their education. I believe everyone needs to have a passion in their life, and for me, returning to school was the best way to figure out what that passion is.

L'éducation a transformé ma vie

Fablizi Nduwimana – Éducation des adultes du Nord-Ouest

<https://www.facebook.com/educationadultes>

Enseignante : François Sincère

Tout a commencé dans mon pays, le Burundi, qui est l'un des pays les plus pauvres au monde. J'avais environ 10 ans à cette époque. Une guerre dangereuse a commencé, ce qui a fait en sorte que moi et ma famille n'avons pas eu le choix de quitter notre maison et laisse tout derrière nous. J'ai donc quitté l'école en 5e année. Nous sommes allés de maison en maison et de ville en ville pour nous réfugier et trouver la sécurité. Un jour, ma mère a été informée du processus pour venir au Canada. Elle a tout de suite entrepris les démarches et nous avons été acceptés.

En arrivant au Canada, j'avais 11 ans. On m'a directement placé en 6e année puisque j'avais arrêté l'école en 5e année. Ensuite, je suis arrivé au secondaire, où j'ai rencontré quelqu'un que je connaissais dans mon pays, ce qui a facilité mon intégration. Par la suite, j'ai grandi et j'ai eu de gros problèmes d'acné qui envahissaient mon visage, ce que je n'aimais pas du tout. On me traite de mochette, de saleté que j'ai pue sur toute mon corps, que j'étais malpropre, que je n'allais jamais avoir une copine, qu'aucune fille ne voudrait sortir avec un garçon laid, que les gens en me voyant marcher allaient directement fuir parce que mon visage ne faisait pas beau à regarder.

Certains camarades de classe se moquaient de moi, ce qui m'a fait perdre confiance en moi. J'ai donc quitté l'école. À ce moment-là, j'étais en secondaire 3 et je n'avais pas terminé mon année.

Six ans plus tard, j'entends que j'allais devenir père. À ce moment-là, j'étais l'homme le plus heureux au monde. Quelques mois plus tard, j'ai eu un enfant avec ma copine. Cet événement m'a poussé à retourner à l'école.

La raison pour laquelle j'ai décidé de retourner à l'école, c'est grâce à mon fils et à ma copine. Je vais me marier avec une personne qui a un bon niveau scolaire et qui m'encourage à réussir. Dans ma famille, nous sommes sept enfants. Ma grande sœur n'a pas pu continuer l'école non plus, donc je suis un peu l'espoir de ma famille pour la réussite de mes petits frères et sœurs. Je veux aussi être capable d'aider mes enfants à l'école, sans que ma femme ait toute la responsabilité.

Ce cours a changé ma vie, il me donne de l'assurance en un avenir meilleur. Je peux même dire que J'ai maintenant le contrôle de ma vie. Les professeurs ont été présents tout au long de mon parcours. Ils m'ont encouragé et aidé à terminer mes cahiers en répondant à mes questions. Je suis fier de dire que grâce à eux, je vais terminer mon secondaire 5 l'année prochaine pour pouvoir enfin faire ce que j'ai toujours rêvé. À la fin de mes études je compte aller dans une école professionnelle pour devenir charpentier-menuisier, car j'ai toujours aimé tout ce qui touche à la construction.

Voilà ce qui conclut les raisons pour lesquelles je suis retourné aux études.

Learning Changes Lives

Sairudee Nuannet – Miramichi Literacy Council (READ NB)

<https://readnb.ca/miramichi.html>

Teacher: Joyce Driscoll

My name is Sairudee Nuannet, and I was born in Thailand. As part of my education, I took English classes and attended university. However, my understanding of the English language was quite limited because my studies were in Thai. I spoke only Thai at home, at school, with friends, and in the workplace. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to practice the English I learned in school outside the classroom. I always dreamed of travelling abroad.

In May of 2025, my husband and I made the big decision to leave Thailand and move to Canada, a country I had never visited before. I was thrilled about the new adventures awaiting me. We chose to settle in Miramichi, New Brunswick—a small town with stunning natural scenery and a peaceful atmosphere. The predominantly English-speaking community here is filled with kind, friendly, and welcoming people. It's a place where individuals from diverse backgrounds can live harmoniously together.

One of my biggest challenges since moving here has been communication. I am not fluent in speaking, writing, or reading English, which motivated me to return to school and improve my language skills. Effective communication is essential in society, whether it's for work, shopping, studying, or making appointments.

My friend from Thailand, who also lives in Miramichi, informed me about the LAUBACH Literacy NB tutoring program. She shared the contact information, and I made an appointment with the Miramichi Literacy Council to discuss becoming a student. After evaluating my English skills, I was assigned a tutor.

I met my tutor, Joyce, in June of 2025. During our first meeting, I could only understand a little of what she was saying, which made me realize how much I had to learn. Joyce is incredibly dedicated and explains things clearly. She also provides valuable advice on various aspects of life here, such as making medical appointments and finding work. Tutoring has become a lifeline for me.

In July, I applied for a job and had an interview scheduled. I told my tutor about the interview, and she met me at the park the evening before to prepare me for potential interview questions. Despite being nervous on the day of the interview, the preparation paid off. I was successful, and I started working the following week. I owe my confidence during the interview to the tutoring sessions.

Through tutoring, I have been improving my listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. My understanding of the English language has significantly improved. I am now able to make appointments, ask questions in stores, and seek assistance at the library—tasks I would not have dared to attempt when I first arrived in May of 2025.

I have also enrolled in the Language Institution for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), which has also helped to improve my skills. Currently, I meet with my tutor for 5-6 hours per week, covering many topics. Joyce assigns online work and occasional homework, which usually takes me one or two hours to complete. We review the assignments at the beginning of the next tutoring session. I am still learning and improving my skills, and my confidence in English is increasing daily thanks to the dedication of my tutor and the LINC program instructor.

Education has also changed my mindset. Instead of fearing mistakes, I now see them as part of the learning process. I have learned to be patient with myself and to keep trying. Education is not just for young people; it is a lifelong journey. No matter our age or background, we can always learn something new and improve ourselves.

My goal for the future is to achieve a high score in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) so that I can apply to a community college and enroll in a Pharmacy Technician course. I hope to have a stable and good income in the future. This is my life challenge, and I believe that practicing English every day without giving up will help me achieve my dream.

Nowadays, learning truly changes lives by providing opportunities, increasing confidence, and giving people a stronger sense of purpose. Education helps us to build a better and brighter future.

Thank you for having such a wonderful program. I am deeply grateful to Canada for supporting people to return to education, to my tutor for guiding me and sharing valuable information, and to the Miramichi Literacy Council for providing me with such a dedicated tutor. I believe that with hard work and determination, I will achieve success in the future.

Learning Changes Lives

Savannah Nutter – Charlotte County Adult Learning

<https://ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Maureen Dean

My journey back to learning; A Path to Growth and Fulfillment.

Why I returned to Learning

Once and a while life has a way of nudging us, sometimes gently, but other times its forcefully, towards a path we may not have intended. My return to learning was one of those nudges, a soft persistent voice in the back of my mind that grew louder and clearer with time. It was not born out of sheer necessity but out of a deep-seated root to become the best version of myself. This journey of mine has been transformative, reshaping not only my perspective on the world but also the understanding I have for myself.

For a couple of years, I allowed damaging habits to influence my choices and dictate my trajectory, which pulled me away from routines and responsibilities. I was heading down a road to nowhere, yet in quiet moments I felt a yearning; a restlessness that refused to be silenced. I craved more out of life and knew the decision to pursue education as an avenue was the best start to reaching my potential. At first doubts crept in, whispering fears of inadequacy and failure, was it too late to start over? But alongside those doubts was a spark of determination, a belief that it was never too late to invest in myself. I realized that returning to education was not just about obtaining knowledge or doing it because I had to; it was about reclaiming a sense of purpose and reigniting a passion for growth.

How Learning is Changing My Life

Stepping back into the world of learning has been nothing short of transformative. It feels as though I have entered a new chapter of my life, one filled with possibility and excitement. The classroom has become a peaceful place where I can explore ideas and challenge old beliefs. Every lesson, every assignment and every good grade brings with it a sense of accomplishment and progress, keeping me on the right track to success. Learning has also renewed my curiosity about the world. Subjects I once dismissed as irrelevant now interest me, and I find myself diving into topics eagerly that I never imagined I would revel in. This learning has spilled over into my daily life, enriching my conversations with family and friends and overall broadening my horizons, its as though I am seeing the world through new eyes, appreciating it in ways that I never did before. More importantly, learning has brought out in me a renewed sense of confidence, it has reminded me of my resilience, my capacity to grow and ability to overcome my toughest battles all while reinforcing my belief in myself.

My goals for the future

The ambitions I hold today are inseparable from the struggles that preceded this chapter of my education. It is often through struggles and challenges that our priorities become clearer. The obstacles I have faced in the past taught me resilience, perseverance and have helped me reevaluate my goals and priorities for the future. My goals for the future are no longer abstract

desires, but concrete aims built upon newly bought knowledge and a developing sense of purpose. As I pursue my education, I am positioning myself to access tangible opportunities and equipping myself with skills and expertise necessary to excel in my chosen field.

I am determined to forge a successful and purposeful career path that aligns with my interests, strengths, and aspirations, I picture my career as a platform to make a significant impact. I am committed to pursuing endeavours that not only bring personal satisfaction but also create a ripple effect of inspiration and motivation for others. I understand that success is not a destination but a journey and I am prepared to embrace the challenges and triumphs that come my way.

In conclusion my goals for the future are rooted in my desire to lead a purposeful life, build a successful career, and contribute to society by making a positive impact on the world. Learning serves as the foundation of my aspirations providing me with the tools and knowledge to pursue my dreams. Through arduous work, dedication, and a commitment to my values, I am confident that I will achieve my goals and create a future that is both rewarding and meaningful.

Learning Changes Lives

Barbara Osborne – Charlotte County Adult Learning

<https://ccalp.ca/>

Teacher: Maureen Dean

My goal for the future is to become a chef or a carpenter . I like to cook and build . I learn very well when I work with my hands . Maybe some day I will be a famous chef and teach young students what I have learned . My big dream is to build my own log cabin and invite Maureen and Albert in for a fancy meal and after supper sit in front of the fireplace and talk about the memories when I was the teacher's pet and poor Maureen had to put up with me .

Learning has changed my life in a good way . I have learned a lot in social studies , science and math . Before I came to school I never considered myself being smart at anything . I always thought I wouldn't grasp anything . When I started Maureen's class , she would go down to my level and help me understand the work better . I started to build up confidence in myself , one day Maureen and I got talking about wreaths . I have made wreaths for many years, so one day Maureen said , "Why don't you teach the class how to make wreaths?" I was glad to do so . Ever since then I made it a tradition at school . That was a big boost in my confidence , I also made stuffed shells for the whole class and it was a big hit . I was happy with the outcome on the stuffed shells , coming to the learning adult class has changed my life for the better .

Why I returned is because I have a lot to learn . I'm still working on math , social studies , and science . These are three subjects I really struggle with . Math is the hardest subject , and it will take me a long time to accomplish it . I enjoy learning , but at times I feel frustrated because I have a learning disability and it is hard to keep what I have learned in my head . I try to think of a way to help me remember things . I don't learn as fast as other students, but I keep trying . I love writing and spelling . Maybe someday I will be a famous writer .

I really enjoy coming to school and seeing Maureen. She is the best teacher ever. This past year has been a hard road for me . I lost my husband on February fourth, 2025 , then I lost my brother in law on April fourth, 2025 . I lost them both to cancer . I had been with my husband for close to twenty years , and before he passed away , he said , "Make me proud and get your GED ." This is another reason why I have returned to learning . I'm also setting a good example for my grandson . You are never too old to learn in life, and it's so important to have an education . I'm so thankful to Maureen and the rest of the staff who make it possible for me to learn and get a goal in life .

Learning Changes Lives

Cassandra P – Miramichi Adult Learning (NBWCC)

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Jennifer Doucet

I have been trying to sum up my life. I do not want to fail to recognize my hardships, but at the same time my life has not been one long hardship either. It is true that I am no stranger to heartache, but I am no stranger to a lot of joy and triumphs as well.

I was raised by my Grandmother. I have never met my father, and my mother had six kids that she did not raise. It took me half my life to accept and forgive my parents as well as their choices, yet I have. My attachment bond was severed when I was an infant. If a person takes a few moments to think about what that could mean, it is self-explanatory and sums up my life quite well.

School work was never difficult for me. I did not have to do homework for hours every night because I would finish my work at school along with the work of whomever I believed needed my help. I did school work for fun. Too bad that no one thought to teach me the law or Criminal Code while I was in school.

I have never struggled to write an essay. I am so full of words that they usually just pour out of me. English has always been my niche. It is one part of my roller coaster life that I can control. I am extremely grateful to the person who thought English should be part of the education curriculum. I took a leap of faith and returned to school! I am forty-three years old and I will soon have my high school diploma. If life and rules were school work, I would not be sitting here all these years later but here I am.

I am not exactly sure where I went wrong, so I am going to start at the beginning and focus on my education. I try to stay positive no matter what happens or where I land. Right now, I am in jail so I will use this time to better myself and learn from my mistakes. I will start with my education and go from there. I am excited to say that I will begin writing my CAEC testing soon. I am SO PROUD of myself. My CAEC diploma is the first “brick” in my foundation. I need to work on myself and something that I have never done, is focus on me. The concept sounds so simple, yet I have never done it.

I am a very proud Mom to three wonderful children. They are 24, 21 and 8. My eldest is a Teacher’s Assistant/Mentor at an elementary school in our hometown. Me and my 2 eldest children all attended the same school as kids. My second oldest child, just graduated from Culinary School last year at Holland College in PEI. They both graduated high school. I had always told them that I would walk them to class in my pajamas if they even hinted at dropping out. I would say that that threat worked! They are amazing young men. My daughter is 8 and she has two role models who are also my inspiration. I have learned so much from my kids. They have never been arrested, they have traveled to exotic places, and they both have their own vehicles. They are the best parts of me and their father and I are so proud of them.

I have not led a conventional life, but it is mine. I am in jail trying once again to get my CAEC diploma. I have fallen many times but I have gotten back up. Everything that I have learned in my life, all the programs that I have taken have not been in vain.

I have always stressed to my kids the importance of a good education, yet I only recently truly grasped the concept myself. I now also understand the importance of forgiveness. I can honestly say that I know the true meaning of compassion. I truly love myself. My steps are lighter now that I do not carry guilt and shame from past mistakes that may, or may not, be mine. I have forgiven people who have hurt me and I have asked for forgiveness from those I have wronged. I have stopped focussing on my faults and the person that I see looking back at me is ME, and I am beautiful!

Learning Changes Lives

Bradley Pond – Gibson, Central Valley Adult Literacy Association (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Michelle Adams

For many years, education felt like a chapter of my life that had already been written and closed. Responsibilities, hardships, and difficult circumstances pushed school further and further into the past. I began to believe that the opportunity had simply passed me by. Yet this year something changed. Through faith, encouragement, and the support of people who believed in me, I found the courage to begin again. At thirty-six years old, I am returning to education not as the uncertain teenager who once walked away from it, but as a determined man who now understands the true value of learning and the power of second chances.

I would like to begin by thanking God, as well as my social worker and new friend Erin, who introduced me to the opportunity to enroll in the Canadian Adult Education Credential (CAEC) program. Their encouragement and belief in me helped open a door that I once believed had been permanently closed. Without that support, I may never have taken the first step back toward education.

Returning to school as a thirty-six-year-old man has been both humbling and inspiring. This year has brought many life-changing moments, but none more meaningful than January 28th, the day I found my way to God. In that moment I felt the love of Jesus and made the decision to surrender my life to the Lord. That choice gave me direction, peace, and the motivation to become a better man each day.

My journey through high school, however, was far from peaceful. Bullying became a daily reality that affected my confidence, attendance, and grades. Peer pressure from other students convinced me that “no one likes a snitch” and that I should handle my problems alone. Instead of seeking help from teachers or trusted adults, I tried to face everything by myself.

Like many young people who feel hurt or isolated, I developed my own way of coping. I used humor as a form of protection. If I could make the jokes first, then perhaps the words of others would not hurt as much. Comedy became both my sword and my shield, allowing me to hide my pain behind laughter.

At the same time, my family faced financial challenges. We were not completely poor, but we could not afford many new things. My mother was a hardworking single parent who did everything she could to provide for us. Unfortunately, other children did not see her sacrifices. They only noticed that I reused clothes, shoes, and my backpack whenever possible.

Because of this, I was labeled “the poor kid.” Combined with being overweight, pale, and having bright red hair with freckles, I became an easy target. I was often called names like

“soulless ginger,” “fat boy,” and “carrot top.” Words may seem small, but hearing them day after day slowly wears away a young person’s confidence and sense of belonging.

By the eleventh grade, life placed even greater responsibilities on my shoulders. I began working a second job at the Fredericton Bottle Exchange on weekends while also working forty hours a week at McDonald's from four in the afternoon until midnight, Monday to Friday. Every workday was also a school day, and every school day became a workday.

When my high school girlfriend became pregnant with our daughter, my priorities changed completely. I worked to buy a car seat, a crib, and everything needed to prepare for my child's arrival. At that time, providing financially felt more urgent than finishing school, and eventually I withdrew from my classes at Leo Hayes High School.

Years passed before I believed returning to education was possible. Earlier this year, after finding faith, I made the decision to finish what I had started so long ago. Walking into the CAEC program felt like stepping into a second chance.

From the moment I arrived, I was welcomed with kindness, understanding, and encouragement. The classroom environment is calm and supportive, making it possible to focus and learn. With the help of an incredible instructor and supportive classmates, I have completed the work required to write my first exam in April.

When I complete the CAEC program and finally receive the diploma I have waited twenty years to earn, it will represent far more than academic success. It will represent perseverance, faith, growth, and the belief that it is never too late to change your life.

My goal is to continue learning and pursue a career in carpentry or structural engineering so that I can build a better future for myself and my family.

I would like to thank my instructor, Michelle Adams, for her patience, encouragement, and dedication. She has reminded me that learning has no age limit. I hope to make her proud, and I wish every adult learner courage as they pursue their own second chance

God bless

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Dawson Porter – Fredericton Day (CVALA)

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

Teacher: Alexa Washburn

Hi, my name is Dawson Porter. My journey to coming back to learning was one I never thought I would come back to. When I stopped going I was around 14 or 15 in 9th grade. I was extremely unmotivated because I always struggled with subjects in school, and that made me feel like giving up on school completely. I'm honestly so glad I came back to learning because it has helped me so much.

When I finally decided to come back to learning, I had just been fired from the place I was working at. I was really discouraged as it was my first job. I felt unmotivated and discouraged to even try coming back to learning after that had happened, but I knew that I needed to do something, or I would always feel unmotivated and that was a cycle I wanted to break. I'm really happy I am currently attending CAEC classes. It has proved to be a very positive experience for me.

Coming back to learning was something I wanted to do not only because it would better my future, but also because I felt it was important to have this chapter of my life finally be complete.

Learning has definitely helped me in multiple ways, like staying motivated. Staying on a schedule having something to do with my day was extremely good for me. Another thing that changed was being more social. I started meeting new people and talking more in group settings, which was always something that made me super anxious when talking to new people.

Currently what I want to do for my career is still something I have yet to fully figure out. What I do know is, whatever it may be I want it to be something that can help people or animals. It's always been a goal of mine to do something that can help give my family everything they deserve. There are so many other small goals I have that I want to do in the future, such as traveling outside of Canada at least once in my life. I also would really like to become good at some kind of art form. I have always found people who are artists super cool and inspiring.

Overall learning is very important for everyone and has the possibility to change anyone who chooses to come back to it, regardless of how long it's been since you stopped going. I'm only 22, so it hasn't been that long since I stopped going even though it feels as if it has been way longer. I'm so glad I came back to learning. I have been so much happier, and although it's been hard at times I have grown to really like it here. It will be weird once I graduate, and I won't be coming here everyday. Nonetheless it will be a good thing when I complete my CAEC.

If I could say anything to anyone who is thinking about going back to learning but is unsure if they should, do it. Learning is something that can impact anyone, so I would encourage anyone who wants to go back to school to do so.

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Miyah Raven – John Howard Fundy Learning Centre

<https://johnhowardsj.ca/>

Teacher: Carla McAfee

In 2020, I decided to drop out of grade 9 (nine) due to Covid-19 and bullying. I had no plans of going back to school, ever! I never thought that I would go back 5 (five) years later. I decided in July of 2025 that I wanted to do the C.A.E.C. (Canadian Adult Education Credential) program. I always knew that I wanted to be something great, like an architect or a baker, but I also knew that I wouldn't reach my full potential to do either of those things without graduating.

In school, I was constantly told negative things about my appearance. One time, a girl even followed me home and verbally harassed me. Being bullied helped me realize my full potential, because it made me want to work smarter, not harder. Now, I have something planned and started for myself. I am now leaning towards becoming a kindergarten teacher. I have a huge passion concerning younger children and their wellbeing. I've been frequently volunteering at my church with the kid's ministry, and this has grown my enthusiasm and love of children. I want to ensure that children feel supported and encouraged to keep working towards their future, and also ensure they believe in themselves.

I had a difficult time believing in myself. The constant verbal abuse negatively impacted my self-esteem and self-worth. I did not feel supported by the teachers or school administration. I was at the point where I wanted to give up on an education all together. I felt that I was stupid and could not learn anything in school. I do not want to see a child have to go through the same things I endured in school. This is why I am thinking of becoming a kindergarten teacher.

Learning has been something I have always struggled with. However, with the right work and teacher, it has become more fun and now I understand things more clearly! I am incredibly grateful for my teacher, Carla. There were many things that I didn't know I had interest in. History is a good example of this. I am incredibly thankful to her for enlightening me on things that you would normally have to dig for online. Having a supportive teacher like Carla has made a huge difference in my learning. She's taken time to show me things I wasn't fully understanding, kept patient even when I doubted myself, and never made me feel like I couldn't do what I was learning.

In my experience, learning changes the way people think, how they can grow in other areas, and empowers the learner. I think that's beautiful! It helps build confidence, character, and resiliency. My mindset with things has changed drastically while working on my C.A.E.C. diploma. This has helped build my character. The more I learn, the more I begin to feel more confident in my abilities. Subjects that have always seemed difficult to me, are starting to make more sense. Now, I realize how capable I truly am and I no longer fear facing new challenges. Learning does more than just teach facts, it helps shape who people become. My journey is a

clear testimony that it's never too difficult or late to show growth, improvement, and to create yourself a better future.

Learning Changes Lives

Carole Robichaud – John Howard Fundy Learning Centre

<https://johnhowardsj.ca/>

Teacher: Carla McAfee

My name is Carole Robichaud. I am forty-six (46) years old. When I was school age, I considered school a joke. I had an “I don’t care” attitude about school. I believed that I didn’t need an education. Unfortunately, this was the furthest thing from the truth.

I quit school because I was pregnant. I made several poor choices when I was younger. I kept having children which prevented me from attending school. My kids are grown now and living on their own. I am also a grand mother. I guess I had to mature before I could see the value of having an education. My opinion about getting an education has drastically changed over the years. I now understand how extremely important it is. I am doing this for myself and I have to work very hard at it. Learning new things is even more difficult now then it was when I was younger.

I have goals and dreams and I realize that education is the key to unlocking these things. Therefore, I enrolled in the C.A.E.C. (Canadian Adult Education Credential) program. I have been studying, for about a year now at the John Howard Fundy Region Learning Centre. I am blessed to have Carla McAfee as my teacher. She pushes me to be the best I can be. She is caring and has encouraged me to believe in myself. I know that getting my education will change my life! I struggle understanding some concepts. However, I will not give up no matter how long it takes me to get my credential. I am currently on Social Assistance, but I do not want this situation on a long-term basis.

My first goal is to get my C.A.E.C. diploma. Following this, I plan to enroll at N.B.C.C. Saint John. I want to take the Licenced Practical Nurse (LPN) course. This program is for two years. I am passionate about helping others. As a licensed practical nurse, I will be with people during their most vulnerable moments. My education will not only change my life, but also the lives of my future patients.

Once I get my LPN certificate, I plan to continue in the Registered Nursing (RN) program at N.B.C.C. Saint John. Health care in New Brunswick needs more professionals. There always seems to be a shortage of nursing staff. I intend to provide excellent care to my patients.

I realize that this will not be an easy journey for me. I tend to fall behind my peers in the classroom. I plan to excel at the hands-on part of the program. I realize I will face numerous challenges completing these courses. In my opinion, challenge drives personal growth. Nothing in life comes easy, but my positive attitude about education will support me and I will be successful. I am looking forward to my future. I am committed to reaching my goals. Getting my education will change my life as well as that of my children and grandchildren. I want to feel proud of myself and my accomplishments.

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Camira Unique Ashante Rodney – Miramichi Adult Learning

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Margaret Crawford

My name is Camira Rodney, and I am writing to share a significant chapter of my life's journey—one defined by resilience, growth, and an unwavering commitment to learning. I have always held a deep passion for education; however, I believe that life sometimes introduces interruptions that ultimately serve to strengthen one's character and development.

During my final semester of high school, I learned that I was going to become a mother. Recognizing that my environment at the time was not stable enough to raise a child, I made the pivotal decision to venture out on my own. I chose to prioritize creating a secure foundation for my family, taking the necessary time to establish stability and provide the best possible start for my baby. Today, I am proud to say that I have built that foundation. Thanks to the **Miramichi Adult Learning Program**, I now have the opportunity to return to my studies and expand my academic horizons.

To me, the ability to learn is a beautiful and invaluable asset. Education does more than just provide facts; it builds the adaptability required to navigate a constantly changing world. While I once had many different dreams, it was through this journey of learning and personal growth that I found my true calling.

I am deeply moved by the challenges others face—from women denied the right to an education to individuals struggling with mental health and addiction who receive criticism instead of support. Driven by the knowledge I have gained and the perspective my life has given me, my goal is to become a dedicated advocate for those whose voices are often unheard. I am ready to embrace this next chapter of my education to turn that goal into a reality.

The Reason for Me Going Back to School

Marleen Theriault – Saint John Kings Adult Learning

<https://sjkingsadultlearning.ca>

Teacher: Jennifer Moland

I have always wanted to go back to get my Grade Twelve. Then when my husband came into my life, I told him about going back to school. He told me that if this is what you want to do, then go back and finish High School.

I am so happy now for going back to school and trying to graduate. I am the first one in my family to get their Grade Twelve. My mom and my son would be very proud of me. I just wish that they were here now.

I am going to do my very best and work hard to get my Grade Twelve. My goal is to finish The CAEC. I am so very glad to be able to be back in school again.

Learning Changes Lives

Lourefeigh Villamor – Miramichi Adult Learning

<https://miramichiadultlearning.com/>

Teacher: Siji George

My name is Lourefeigh Villamor, a 42-year-old Filipina, a mother of three boys whom I lovingly call “TresNiños,” and a wife for 19 years to my husband Ryan. It will be my pleasure to share you my story.

Being able to wear a black toga has been my ultimate dream ever since I stopped going to school to become a mother.

I dreamed of standing on the stage to receive a diploma, and most of all, wear a black toga. I would often joke with my family and friends that if I were to pass away without achieving that dream, they should let me wear a black toga in my casket. They would laugh, but for me, it was never a joke—it was a reflection of a dream I carried for so long and I want to dedicate that dream to my hardworking parents whom I owed a lot for supporting me back then regardless of my consistent shifting of courses in College.

Let me take you back a little about my past. April 14, 2007, was my last day as a second year Accountancy student at the University of Cebu in the Philippines. Back then, I made the most difficult decision I have ever made—to stop pursuing my studies. I truly wanted to finish college, but reality confronted me with a greater responsibility: I was about to become a mother. From that moment on, completing my education was no longer my priority.

So, in December 5, 2023, I arrived in this beautiful country with a heart full of prayers and hope. I dreamed that one day, we would all be reunited here and build a better future together. I was able to find job here in Canada as a Fish Plant worker. One day I came across a decision that I never thought could make my unfulfilled dream come true- to wear a Black Toga.

January 2025, a Filipina shared to me about the GED exam here in NB and that if successfully passing the tests, I will have the opportunity to get a High School diploma in Canada. When I arrived home, I immediately researched the links she gave me from the GNB website. And without hesitation I submitted an application to CAEC learning and they called me the day after and was assigned to my teacher, Ms Siji George. While answering the admission assessment, I was very thrilled because its been 17yrs since I was in school. I couldn't explain the feeling to be able to answer assessment and worksheets again. With so much eagerness, I scheduled myself after a week for my 2 reading and writing tests. I wasn't expecting much from myself then. But by God's grace, everything went well and I was able to schedule my 3 more subjects after. It was indeed fulfilling when I passed them all. I couldn't explain the joy when I saw my transcript and diploma that are made in Canada. From then on, the desire to go back to school ignited once again. I joined the zoom of the Working NB and several schools, but unfortunately, I am not yet eligible to study due to my status.

However, I am positive and looking forward that someday, I would be able to graduate in College. I know this little steps will bring me into realizing that dream, maybe not now, but I won't stop praying that one day, God's perfect time will allow our prayers to be fulfilled.

I sincerely hope that CAEC can continue to help people like me—those who once lost hope—by showing them that it's never too late to pursue their dreams with your support.