Celebrating Adult Learners’ Week
April 1 – 7, 2018

Literacy Changes Lives

Literacy Nova Scotia acknowledges and thanks the Government of Nova Scotia’s Department of Labour and Advanced Education for their support.

Produced by Literacy Nova Scotia
**Introduction**

Adult Learners’ Week (ALW) in Nova Scotia is an annual celebration of lifelong learning. It is always a highlight for Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS) when we celebrate Adult Learners’ Week with promotion and awareness initiatives, a learning opportunity and public events or presentations. Premier Stephen McNeil proclaimed April 1 – 7, 2018 as Adult Learners’ Week in Nova Scotia.

LNS offered a number of skill enhancing workshops for adult learners in programs funded through NSSAL. We invited learners to share their stories and entered eligible submissions into a draw for an iPad mini. Frank Brown, a learner at the Halifax Community Learning Network, was the lucky winner.

The submissions received are featured in this e-booklet. Literacy Nova Scotia thanks all who shared their stories and enthusiasm for adult learning. These writings demonstrate how learning has made a difference and will inspire others for years to come.
Proclamation

Adult Learners’ Week

WHEREAS Nova Scotians mark the outstanding achievements of adult learners during Adult Learners’ Week at events throughout the province; and

WHEREAS a literate community means more opportunities for Nova Scotians to access better jobs, and strengthen our economic potential which helps individuals, families, the community and our province; and

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia recognizes the value of adult literacy, and supports the development and delivery of adult literacy programs in communities all across the province;

THEREFORE I, Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia, do hereby proclaim April 1st to 7th, 2018 to be “Adult Learners’ Week” in the Province of Nova Scotia.

Honourable Stephen McNeil, M.L.A.
Premier of Nova Scotia

Signed at Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Once Upon a Time
Beverly Brace
Nova Scotia Community College – Truro Campus

I left school many years ago due to becoming pregnant at the very young age of 14, had another child at 19 and married at 20 to a not so nice man.

I took the time I needed to raise my children and do what I needed to do in life to make ends meet. After many years, I always felt shame and guilt and felt I was missing something by not getting my grade 12 and not pursuing a course in order to obtain a career.

I was told by my parents that I was smart but others in my life deemed me to be stupid and worthless, so I tended to believe them, fell into deep depression and didn't pursue anything for fear of failure. That fear along with my low self-esteem stopped me from trying to better my life. When I was able to get away from negative people somewhat, my parents, who were my everything, passed away suddenly 2 years apart and sent me again into a downward spiral and I attempted suicide because I felt I no longer wanted to live. Fortunately, as years went by, my amazing encouraging children, a divorce, my great friends I have made, I decided that I had to do something for me for a change and at least try and get my grade 12 certificate.

I found about the ALP course here at the Truro campus and applied right away. Being out of school for about 30 years and being older, I was so nervous that I felt sick but didn't let that deter me because I had something I never felt and that was determination. I am now in my second year of ALP and love it!
Continuing with Learning
Patricia Leroy
Yarmouth County Learning Network

I, Patricia Leroy, have returned back to learning to better myself for myself, and to look back in life to say I actually did something with my life. I want to teach the young kids I babysit to stay in school, not to drop out, because if they can put anything in their mind that they can do it. By putting my foot down now and sticking to it, I'm glad I have come back to school, not only to help the young kids out, but to do something for myself.

Compared to high school, classes here at the learning center are fun. I enjoy it here at the learning center a lot better because if there is a problem and you talk to one of the staff. They will do something faster compared to when I went to the high school in 2010. The reason why I left school in 2010 is that I was getting bullied/called names and the people who bullied me, well I do not see them as anything. But now I feel I am better than what they were.

Since I have been here at the learning center, I have been working with Julie one-on-one. She has taught me the reasons why vowels and consonants are used in different ways, to make small words out of a big word. A 7-year-old I baby-sit had to read a book that he didn't know how to read, so I remembered what Julie said about how a letter has a sound. It made me feel good about myself, knowing I've had helped him and that he had read the whole book all by himself the second time. So, learning has changed my life because from what I am learning, I could teach other kids about it.

My goal for my future is to get my grade 12 because jobs I may want may need a grade 12, so by getting my grade 12, I will better myself and will set my future for better things. To know that I have got my grade 12, would make me happy and I would feel great about myself because knowing that I have set my mind something and succeeded would be awesome. I would love to do makeup. I have gotten jealous watching Drag Queens because their make up is so perfect. With my grade 12, I could study Cosmetology at NSCC and I could work in a salon. And I would love to make people feel good about themselves.
Why Did I Decide to Return to School?
Herve Kiyoso
Nova Scotia Community College

Returning to school was a very natural decision for me. It seemed to be the next logical step in my personal and career goals. My ultimate goal is to be happy and healthy and be a good provider and role model. With that set aside for now, my next goal is to be financially stable and able to provide for my family in ways that my family was not able to provide for me. I definitely expect to work for what I want and earn every bit of it. The most recent motivator was that my company was willing to contribute a huge chunk of the yearly tuition, therefore removing some financial burden. This makes me feel like they truly care about my future and they really want to see me succeed.

There are many good reasons why I chose to go back to school, despite it took me 12 years after graduating high school to make that choice. First, taking care for my children in the future is the number one reason why I am currently studying to get a nursing degree. Having an education opens many doors for me to succeed and provide a better life for them. I want to give them the opportunity to further their education after high school.

First, I want them to be proud of me; Second, I want to encourage them to keep studying; and third, make them see that getting an education is the best decision, and they follow my example. I want to secure their future, by having a college found for both of them separately, so they do not have to worry about money for college. Another good reason is the career Advancement. Whether you’re unsatisfied with your job, your boss, your social status, or your pay grade, going back to school could help you get a leg up in the professional world.

Career advancement is a driving force for getting a degree because no one wants to earn an entry-level salary (or wage) after 15 years on the job. Third, Sense of Accomplishment is one of my reason. A degree, diploma, or certification can sometimes be worth it for no other reason than saying you did it. It’s satisfying to call yourself a graduate; it means you’ve accomplished something that not everyone else has. It’s a way to prove your worth to yourself and remind yourself of your value. You’re likely to receive a lot of support and congratulations for it as well, as those close to you share in the victory. Last, I want to make adequate preparations for our retirement plan, so my children and my family do not have to worry about us, when I get old. One last reason is to make myself proud, to achieve a degree on a career I enjoy. Going back to school has been the best choice I made, and all my reasons for it, makes it so much worth it. As you might have noticed, this list isn’t just about what others have done; it’s also about what you can do for yourself. Going back to school could be easier now than it’s ever been. You can
study from the comfort of your own bedroom while still wearing pajamas. You can progress toward graduation on your timeframe, even with a demanding work schedule. There’s never been a better time to go back to school and get what you want out of life.
What the Adult Learning Program Has Done for Me
Matthew Amero
Nova Scotia Community College Adult Learning Program

Wow, where do I begin? There is so much to say. First, a bit of information about myself. I am in my forties and came from a hard-working family of twelve kids. I seemed to be able you figure out anything I put my hand to. For example, mechanical work, carpentry, electrical, etc. I had people tell my father that he had a jack of all trades working with him, and yet I felt so unskilled. In my heart, I always knew I wanted to finish my education and go into a trade but, with the workload that was put on me at home and the bullying at school, it seemed impossible. All my life I hated filling out forms and anything that involved writing. Then later in life, I hated resumes because my grammar was so bad. I felt in my heart that I was pretty much a “blockhead”, and still my heart longed for knowledge.

After I started my family, I pushed my children to achieve what I felt I couldn’t. I became a proud parent of honor students. After the two oldest came of age and graduated, they went into hard, low paying, physically demanding jobs. I questioned once again where I had gone wrong. This is the type of thing I was trying to save my children from needing to do. The quote is that your “children will follow in your footsteps”. After a medical issue, I had my doctor tell me that maybe this would be a good chance to follow my dreams and make a life change. Seeing my children following the life I had made me even more inspired to show them that anyone can succeed if they put the work into it.

After asking around and going online, I found out about the Adult Learning Program (ALP) program put on by NSCC. I thought are there really people out there who would like to see others receive a second chance? Well, be informed that if you have the drive they are there to help you.

Since I started ALP, my grammar has gone from a 2 to a 7 out of 10 (in my opinion). I used to ask my children why they had to study history, what would that ever do for them? Well, did ALP ever teach me of the ignorance I was carrying. It opened my mind and my commitment to making a change in life. The staff is so helpful that it helps me to keep pushing on, no matter how many troubles cross my journey. I was so impressed after joining the program to run into so many in the community who had completed the program. I applied for student summer work and the one hiring also encouraged me by sharing with me that she too had taken the program at an older age. NSCC has staff who have completed the program, not only showing me that the program works but that the staff can relate to some of my challenges.
ALP has encouraged me so much that I feel even my children are inspired to move forward. I can now have knowledgeable conversations with my family; my daughters will even ask for my help on projects and homework at times.

So, a big thank you to the program. A couple of quotes I've often heard in the past that I try to live by are; “Work hard in silence and let your success make all the noise” and, “The road to success comes through determination, hard work, and sacrifice”.
Obtaining an iPad would help me in many aspects. I am taking a program to better my employability and literacy skills. I have been working with the local small business owner’s entrepreneur agency to develop a business plan to be a UAV ground pilot operator offering my services to the community. I took my certification course and am now able to work on the business.

When a UAV pilot performs safe flight operations they count on having a good working portable device not only to plan autonomous flights but to store valuable flight data before during and after a flight operation.

An iPad would help me keep track of progress within my flights, business and adjusting settings while in the field to maintain a safe flight. This will assist in offering efficient and quality service to customers. Thank you for your consideration!
Sincerely, Joshua.
My Journey Back to School
Lakesha Smith
Yarmouth County Adult Learning Network

Hi, my name is Lakesha. I am a student at Yarmouth County Learning Network. It’s been a very good experience, and I am very glad I came back to school.

I was 16 years old when I dropped out of school. I finished my grade 9 at Barrington Municipal High School, but during the summer I started feeling sick and drowsy all the time. I knew something was wrong. I decided to get a pregnancy test; it came back, that sure enough, I was pregnant at 16. I decided to go through with the pregnancy, and it wasn’t easy. When school started in September, I decided to stay home. When my son was born, I wanted to be with him.

A couple years went by and I decided to try and go back, so I went to NSCC. I was only there for a short time until my dad got sick with terminal cancer. I couldn’t do school anymore with that always on my mind. I was always wondering how he was and how long he had left. My dad died in September 2014; I couldn’t go back to school because I was devastated and couldn’t seem to think about myself.

Later at 19 years old, I got pregnant with my 2nd son, which was unplanned. Again it was a hard time for me to think of going back to school with 2 kids, my dad being gone, it wasn't easy and I knew I wouldn’t be able to focus on myself.

Now it was around November 2016. I’d been thinking of going back to school because I wanted to better myself and be able to help my kids. My sister, who was also a student at the Yarmouth County Learning Network, told me to go there. She said it is very easy going, less students, less commotion and a lot easier to work at your own pace. I decided to call and book an appointment. I was very nervous but excited at the same time to finally go back to school. In January I started school; it was very welcoming. The teachers made me feel less nervous and told me I could do it. Throughout the year that I have been here they have helped me with a lot. They work with you, sit down with you, and speak one on one with what you need help with. I am really glad I decided to come.

This is my story about dropping out and finally going back to school. For those who are thinking and wondering if you want to go back or not, DO IT! I’m very happy I decided to go back to school. I’m feeling confident that I will be able to finally finish and get my grade 12.

Remember, it’s never too late to go back and chase your dreams.
Coming back to school has made a difference in my life in so many ways. The three most important things to me are that it felt really good to pass some tests, it has helped me to set new goals for myself, and it has also made me more optimistic about my future.

Firstly, since coming back to school I have passed three of the five GED tests. At first, I was nervous, but once I passed the first test, the nervousness subsided. I realized it wasn’t as bad as I thought it was going to be. Plus, passing some tests has given me more confidence to write the other tests. I am proud of my achievements thus far.

Secondly, returning to school has helped me to set new goals for myself. When I graduate from the GED course I would like to take the Business Administration course at NSCC and then work for a nice company. In the past, I have had many jobs that I haven’t enjoyed. It will be nice to be able to do have a job that I really enjoy doing.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, my success has made me more optimistic about my future. I know I am going to succeed in achieving my GED; therefore, I can move on to take the Business Administration course that I am interested in taking.

So, in conclusion, education is making a huge difference in my life by giving me the confidence to succeed, to set some goals for myself, and to be optimistic about my brighter future. So for anybody that is thinking about returning to school to better your education, now is the time. Don’t put it off, just do it!

I am writing this story to try and explain my lack of education and how that came to be and most importantly what I am doing to change it. When I grew up in the fifties and sixties, school was not a top priority. I made a real mess of school!
Going Back to School
Kelsey Taggart
Yarmouth County Learning Network

Hi, my name is Kelsey Taggart. I’m 24 and am attending the Yarmouth County Learning Network and am working towards completing my GED at this point in time.

One of the main reasons I went back to school was to further my education. When I was 18, I moved away, and a year went by and I lost the opportunity to go back to school. When I moved to Yarmouth and heard about the Yarmouth County Learning Network, I came back to school.

Going back helped me to learn new skills like doing my taxes, reading, budgeting, and spelling better. My speech has also improved over the years of being back in school. I have a new outlook on life and strive to get better each and every day. I have already accomplished two GED passes, and I am hoping to pass another test soon.

After completing my GED, I hope to complete some advanced level classes and to get my high school diploma. Also, I am planning to take the IT Generalist course at Burridge in Yarmouth in the next three years. I am looking forward to achieving my goals, and I look forward to my future with great enthusiasm.

Schooling has made my life a lot better and will still do so in the future.
I have encouragement from my peers and family and will continue to learn.
My Story
Muhamad Abaker
Nova Scotia Community College Adult Learning Program

My name is Mohammed. I am from Sudan. The reason I went back to school is because education is the most important. So that is why I came back to learning.

I left school when I was in grade four, and it was not even English. It was Arabic. When I came to Canada I did not speak enough English. So that is why I decided to go to school and get my high school diploma. After that I will go to college and take some courses and get a better job. There were a lot of difficult things I faced when I came to Canada. For example, in Canada, if you are looking for a job people always ask how good you are in English, or if you have a high school diploma or GED. Even if you want to have a cleaning job they are looking for high school or GED, which is very hard for me, when I came to Canada with no English.

I feel I’m getting more improved than past years. I have more understanding of my words in English. I’m working at my schooling for a better life in the future. Also, it is very hard to do two things at the same time, but I’m doing it because life is not easy. I’m working full time and going to school, too, at the same time. It is not very easy to do the homework.

I started learning English from level one at Cunard Learning Centre, and it was very difficult for me to go to the morning school and come back to go to work. Today, I’m in the community college for my high school diploma, in my first year. Then, I will get a diploma and go to college to be a mechanical engineer. This is my future goal: I want to be a mechanical engineer one day.
It was just yesterday when I had in my mind what I thought I wanted in life. I was 19 years old. I grew up in the first six years of schooling in a 2-classroom school with 4 classmates in my grade level. In 7th grade, I entered public high school, with a minimum of probably 30 per class. I did not adapt well. Anxiety and panic soon set in. My parents then had a trying time getting me through with many doctor’s appointments and missed time due to anxiety. Fast forward to 10th grade as academic math was introduced, and I was not grasping well and probably held an attitude with it. I’ll never forget the day when I finally had the courage to raise my hand and ask for help. The teacher asked what my problem was, and I told him I didn't understand.

His answer to me has haunted me to this very day and very second. His ever so dominant voice ridiculed me and said, “you’re just a stupid East Sider- that’s why you don’t understand”. I then lost the courage to ever ask for help in that class again.

Hence life carried on and ‘schooling’ did not become an overly huge priority to me. At age 19 I married and at age 20, I gave birth to my first of 2 daughters. I later completed our family with 2 sons as well. I was fortunate enough to be a full time stay at home Mom. I raised all 4 successfully and made sure they all graduated with their High School Diploma. That in itself is my proudest accomplishment.

In 2006, I entered the workforce as a substitute school bus driver as it complimented the times that I needed to be home with the family. From there, in 2009, I successfully applied and was awarded the position of Dispatcher of the local school board. I am currently still employed in this position full time.

Continuing my education has always been a yearning and in the back of my mind to do! I have chosen the ALP program because it fits ideally into my life at this current time. Nearly three years ago, my husband suffered a serious cerebellar stroke at the age of 49. This was and is an altering eye opener for me on how short life can be and that tomorrow is never promised. ALP allows me to work and continue my education at the same time at my own pace. My teacher is awesome with making me feel comfortable. I am very confident that I will achieve my grade 12. Knowing that I can learn is the most calming factor for me and makes my learning experience totally enjoyable!
I will proudly graduate with my High School Diploma and see what doors may open for me as tomorrow is always a mystery! I may become a registered nurse and help others who are or have gone through health crisis in their life.
Literacy Changes Lives
Frank Brown
Halifax Community Learning Network

I never returned to learning, because I never learned how to read from the beginning. How can I return to something I never had? What I mean is I never learned to read in school, I wish I had but I am learning to read now, thanks to all my tutors. I meet with my tutor every week at the Halifax Public Library and they are teaching me how to read! I do this for many of reasons. To satisfy myself, to use Facebook, to text, to write and read letters, and so I am able to write stories like this!

Learning changed my life because there are so many things I can do for myself now! In the past 4 or 5 years of tutoring I can now write this letter, and for that I am proud of myself and for my tutors for helping me along the way.

In the future I would like to continue to keep working with my tutors and one day read a book on the bus.

Thank you all for reading my story.
Returning to Learning
Terry Newcombe
Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Literacy Network

When I went back to learning, it was to better my math. I went for a job position as a spray technician for N.S Power. I had to pass a test on volumes and calibrations and didn’t pass. I started back with just getting math tutoring. The teacher suggested I do the GED, so I agreed.

I’ve been in the class for 4 years now and have almost completed the text book. I went and wrote the science and social studies parts of the GED and passed! My goal now is to complete the rest of the GED before the end of the year. I want to apply for a job at the new Cabela’s store in Dartmouth Crossing, Nova Scotia.

I would like to get my diploma to hang on the wall with my wife and children’s diplomas and to have the proper qualifications on my resume to possibly get back into the workforce.

In conclusion, I think the GED program has done a lot for me. It gave me more confidence and self-esteem and made me look at things differently. It just made me feel better about myself and my future.
Let us go back to 1979, I graduated from a two-year course of Business Education and obtained my Grade 12 certificate. For two weeks at the end of that course, all we students had to do a two-week work placement and I went to Pictou Regional Assessment Office and did my two weeks with them. As it turned out they hired me on after that, about 4 years later when a government job arose, and I applied and obtained the job of accounting clerk at Department of Motor Vehicles. That lasted until I applied to the Pictou District School Board in their pay roll Department. I kept my job with the School Board until 1993, at which time, I retired. Being the Accounting clerk, I had to relieve the switchboard Operator for her lunch hour. While doing that the day came when the Head of School Bus Drivers came in and was posting jobs for School Bus drivers, as he was walking out past the switchboard I asked him, what the chance of someone like myself becoming a driver, he looked me straight in my eyes and said, “Apply and find out.”.

So, I applied and was hired, the Board itself trained me and I received my license on a very stormy January day, it turned out to be a storm day for the District. The driver trainer took me out for my road test and low and behold I passed with flying colours. After several years of being on the spare list I received a full time Bus Driver job. I continued driving that same run until I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. The cancer itself was caught relatively early, so they removed the thyroid with radiation therapy. At the very point when I was finally cancer free I became a very happy stay at home mother to our son.

The years after that seemed to go bye in a hurry. I was 58 and a patient in the Pictou Detox when I was told, by a counsellor there, that there was an Adult Education course going on in the county at the NSCC. After being out of Detox for several weeks, I decided to check it out, and have been attending every Tuesday and Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 working on journalism and loving it. My husband is having health problems therefore I have missed several evenings to be with him when needed.

I have always enjoyed writing since as long as I can remember. I have been doing this sort of thing for a very long time I have always kept a journal, as well as write poetry and have written many songs. I have been a pen pal of 50 people started in grade eight for a school project and the country of Finland was my subject.
Therefore, when I thought about attending Adult school at my age, I wondered if I could possibility improve my quality of writing. I so want to improve my abilities in this field and see where that might take me. I look forward each week to attending these classes and I feel as if my mind is able to create ideas the sometimes totally leave my mouth hanging open in amazement of just what I am capable of doing with words.

I can hardly contain myself to see where I might be next year at that point.
Back to School
Carol Brown
Nova Scotia Community College Adult Learning Program

I returned to school after leaving. I was told that I was too stupid to become a flight attendant or anything else that I wanted to do. I came back to school to prove to everyone who told me I couldn’t do anything I want to prove them I can do whatever I set my mind to and I'M DOING IT.

Learning has changed my life knowing I can accomplish anything that I want to. It gave me more confidence. Doing math before I came back to school if I didn’t understand it I would just walk away from it and not try to figure it out but now I keep at it until I know how to do it. I have learned so many things coming back to school, like doing math writing a paragraph and having the ability to do these things.

My goal for the future is to graduate from the ALP program in the next two years with my grade 12 diploma. My plans for the near future are to go to Fort Saint John’s B.C. to visit my daughter and her family. She is going to show us around Fort Saint John’s. I hope we get to see some moose. Our granddaughter Charlie bear will be helping mommy showing us around. I can’t wait to get there. It is going to be an awesome trip.

The advice I have for someone returning to learning is to have confidence in yourself, if you need help the teacher are always willing to help you. It does get hard at times, but you can get through it. Don’t let anyone tell you that you are too old because it’s never too late to learn. Most of all don’t talk yourself in to thinking you can’t achieve your goals, you will miss out on getting your diploma and getting your dream job. Take a deep breath and go for it.
I’m Back Again / Literacy Changes Lives  
Carla Chetwynd  
Shelburne County Learning Network

I am a 49 year old female from the south shore of Nova Scotia who has recently returned to a local community – based learning network. I am currently upgrading so that I can attend Nova Scotia Community College to complete my grade twelve and finally after thirty-two years receive a diploma. I’ve decided to return to learning because I have always felt that it’s never too late or that you’re ever too old to go back to any form of learning.

When I was 27 and my children were small, I started a learn at home program, I came very close to completing my credits for high school but had to return to work and gave up. I had always told my children that one day I’d go back because I had regretted dropping out in grade eleven, not once but twice. Having years of life experiences under my belt made the transition of retuning to a classroom much easier than I had anticipated. Also, I find mathematics much easier and fun compared to back in high school. My grown children tell me now how proud they are of me which is a huge boost.

Learning has changed my life in many positive ways. Mainly because of meeting new people around my own age and older doing the exact same thing as I’m doing. We go to classes for three hours twice weekly which is perfect for my busy schedule. It helps with networking as I have recently started my own painting business. I’m enthusiastic about learning. I always have had a quest for knowledge and have never stopped reading books and journaling. Learning gives me the motivation to follow my dreams and goals in life which I no longer call dreams but plans instead.

My goals for the future are to complete grade twelve by next year. After that I would love to go to college. I am interested in a few different things like forestry, oceanography or horticulture and botany. I love working as a painter, but my life’s passion is art. I may possibly find myself in university one day, even if I am sixty –five years old in a classroom full of young minds. I have always believed that freedom and success are not measured by money and materialism but rather education and learning.
Learning by Growing  
Gertrude Nickerson  
Shelburne County Learning Network  

I am five years of age and a grade primary student. I should be happy to attend school and make friends. The girls and boys are mean. They call me names, laugh at me and don’t want to pick me to be on any team sports. The teacher’s voice is loud, her face and neck are turning really red and I am scared to ask for help to do my work. I hate school. I want to go home.

I am a teenager and a grade nine student. The teenagers are no different than when I was in elementary school. The name calling, and the laughter continues, and I am still scared to ask for help from the teachers to do my work. I hate school and want to go home.

I am 53 years of age. A high school dropout and now a learner at the Shelburne County Learning Network. There is no name calling or laughing here; we work as a team. I have made many new friends and asking for my instructors help when needed. My goal is preparing to write and pass the GED exam for self-satisfaction. I am forever grateful for this learning network where I am always eager to attend classes and learning.
Returning to Learn  
Jennifer Nickerson  
Shelburne County Learning Network

I have returned to the community learning center to refresh my upgrading. I have been trying to get my upgrading for years, and I have learned over the years that I need my grade twelve to accomplish my goals in life, to be in a much better place in my life then I already am today.

Learning has changed my life by experiencing different life changes by working in different environments. I have the experience in book keeping, and I really like doing that kind of work. I also like to have the experience in hospitality work, where I am striving for after I pass my upgrading. I love working with different people and getting to know them.

The different goals I have set for myself, is to move away in a foreign county like Varadero, Cuba and to work as a hostess at a hotel on a resort. I also would like to have a fabulous job and make lots of money, so I could help out the poor to live in a better environment and housing. I would give them money for their children to get a good education and go to college. I would make sure that they would have plenty of food and water etc. I think that some people in life deserve a better living, then to worry about where their next meal is going to come from. I would like to see the whole world become a better place and nicer environments for people to live in and not worry about anything.
How Learning Changed My Life
Colette Rabideau
Dartmouth Learning Network

In September 2017 I returned to school after 26 years. I was very nervous at first, but I knew it was what I needed to do, to better the future for my children and myself. I pushed myself each day, especially on days where the easiest thing to do was to just stay home. I met so many amazing people along this journey and I have made some lifelong friends. I love both of my classes and all of the students are amazing. I always enjoy Thursday afternoons when Trish has her 1A class. Seeing that group brightens up my day.

Since returning to school, I realized things about myself that I had underestimated. After not working for 9 years, I now have a part time job that I love. The people I work with and the regular customers make my job that much easier to do. All these things and changes have helped with my self-esteem tremendously. I definitely have people to thank for being so supportive and making me feel like I could accomplish anything I set out to do. The wonderful staff at DLN, Tyler, Karen, Alison, of course my awesome math/science teacher Brent, he has taught me so much. Amanda for all she has done to get me ready for this piece I am writing, as well as so many other things. Trish, well she was the first teacher I had when I started at DLN. From day one, she made me want to be there. She has a beautiful heart and soul. I am forever grateful to all of them for everything they have done and continue to do for me. My family, my children, amazing friends and an incredible man by my side, he inspired me to take this step. He knew my worth and he believed in me, when I did not. I am truly blessed. It honestly feels amazing. I look forward to seeing what the future has in store for me. I am more motivated now, then I have ever been.

My goals for the future are to complete my GED. I would like to do something that allows me to work in the health field in some way to help people who may need it. I know that I will continue to work hard and stay focused. I want my children & grandchildren to learn from my past mistakes and also show that even though I waited so long to go back to learning, anything is possible. I am proof that you can do it. And YOU are in control of what choices you make in life. Giving up, is not an option. It’s amazing what faith, hard work and dedication/determination can do. Returning to school was one of the best decisions I’ve ever made. As long as you believe in yourself and make the effort, great opportunities can come to you and change your life.
Back to School
Kristy Swinimer
Shelburne County Learning Network

Way back when I was young and dumb
I skipped classes I thought it was fun
But now I know how dumb it was
I missed out on a good education
By not learning right from wrong
Now I’m back and eager to learn
So, I can get a good stable job
So, I can be able to move out
I hope I get my GED and pass
And so, my past can kiss my ***
Why I Returned to Learning

Iesha Harris
Dartmouth Learning Network

I’m 26 years old and I returned to learning because I work 3 jobs and don’t have stable work hours. I graduated High School and then from NSCC and received a diploma for Child and Youth Studies. Upon graduating I realized that jobs were slim, unstable, and pay was just above minimum wage. So, I started my research to find another career that would allow me to help others, give me purpose when I step into work daily, but not limit me to a desk job. This career had to have stable pay, with health and dental benefits, and the opportunity for a pension.

I was becoming a bit of a workaholic. It is unhealthy because there is no life balance just work, plan where I would work, how I would get there in time using the transit system, if I had time to go to both, or only one that day so I could fit in eating, sleeping, and life chores. I began to feel like I lost my purpose, became lonely and estranged from normal life. I failed to work myself into my own schedule. This routine became my norm and I didn’t realize it until someone asks me “What do you do for fun?” and I had no answer. Also seeing coworkers move on to more substantial careers and I began to wonder why haven’t I? What’s holding me back? I had no answer besides fear of choosing the wrong career again, fear of failure, and routine normality or safety blanket.

I decided to get past this fear and apply to the military to become a Supply Tech. I wrote the aptitude test but did not pass due to math. I learnt that you can’t just rewrite the test until you get in. There was a limit of three attempts and rules on what you need to complete in preparation. I needed to work hard and be certain I was ready for the second attempt.

I decided I would seek out tutoring. I learned that Dartmouth Learning Network does this for free. One of the tutors does one on one specifically for the CFAT (Canadian Forces Aptitude Test). I attend every week learning aptitude skills such as spatial recognition, grammar, interview skills, and math. There was a class just for math that I could also join twice a week on top of my tutoring to help boost my learning even further. So, I joined it as well.

From this tutoring and learning experience my life has changed. I’ve began to get out of my workaholic mind-set by allowing myself to take these 2 days to better myself and regain some balance. I have better confidence. I’ve learned that I am more competent than I thought. I also know that should I not pass the CFAT at least I will be more educated and prepared for other aptitude tests in other fields such as Border Security/Police Academy.

My goal for the future is to get out of this multi job situation, pass the CFAT, and all other steps needed to successfully join the military and have a stable career. I hope to live a happy life with a healthy work/life balance and get away from the work, eat, sleep, pay bills for life routine.
My Learning Experience
Savannah Geizer
Cunard Learning Centre

Hello, my name is Savannah Geizer. I am twenty years old, and I am currently enrolled in the Cunard Learning Center, Adult Learning Program. When I was sixteen, I dropped out of school and began working, I have always found school was difficult for me and when I needed help I felt ashamed to ask for help because I felt that I had asked too much. My grades where very low; I struggled with attendance, and I honestly gave up on myself. I thought at the time it would be better for me to work then to stay in school, but I was very wrong. I struggled to write, read, and do simple math, over the past five years, my father stressed to me how important it was to go back to school and get my education, but I never went back I also didn’t let him or anyone know how much I struggled in school. When my father passed away last March 2017 I decide to change my life for the better not just for me but also for my father all he wished for is for me to have my education and have a better life and career then he did. So, I pushed myself to make the right decision that I knew had to be made, if I wanted to be successful and not constantly struggle with the basic things I had to go back to school and get my life on the right path and honestly, I couldn’t be happier with the decision I made.

Now today my focus is on my school. I love being in school, learning new things each and every day, before if you would have asked me three years ago, I would of said I don’t want to go back to school the reason being I was so scared of failure I let it control my choices, but today I can proudly say that I want to be in school and this time I’m not giving up on myself, I can do anything as long as I put my mind to it as well as the time an effort into it. In the past few months I’ve become more comfortable doing math problems reading and writing as well. Learning is changing me for the better and it is giving me goals I want to achieve. I wake up happy to know that I’m doing something to make my life better as well as happy with the way I am learning and understanding things if it wasn’t for my communications teacher (Dale) and my math teacher (Cheryl) at Cunard Learning Center I honestly don’t think I would be here doing as great as I’m doing today, unlike all the other teachers I’ve had, they put the most time and effort into teaching like all teachers should, they help me until I understand and never make me feel ashamed for the things I do not know, they make school less stressful for me because when I feel I need help they come help me and I never feel ashamed top ask for their help.

My goals for my future are to be successful to be able to understand the things I don’t and continue learning because there is always something new to learn every day. I hope when I finish school and have my grade twelve I can become a hair dresser it is something I would love to do for a career I am so beyond grateful to be able to have the support I need to get me through my learning process. A big thank you goes out to each and every person who is helping me.
The Reasons Why I’m in School
Ken Barrett
Cunard Learning Centre

My name is Ken. I am 51 years old. I had a hard life when I was in school. I bounced from school to school trying to work at the same time which made it hard to stay in school. I left home at an early age and lived anywhere I could, so I could attend school and work. When I was in high school I lived with friends that went to the same school as me. One day I went home after school and everything was gone out of the house and I still had 2 weeks left of school. But I had nowhere to live, so I got a phone call from a company in Toronto to go to work so I left.

I stayed there for about 6 years and I took a course at King’s College while I worked. I completed the course, and I continued to work. I met my ex there and stayed with her for 8 years. We had 3 beautiful children. Things went sour with her and I got the children. I tried through courts, which was a long process, to let her have access with them. To make a long story short, she never kept it and it was hard to work, to go to school and raise 3 children. So, school got left behind, but I don’t regret any of it cause I got to raise my three children for about a year.

Then I met my wife now. She had 2 older children and she had a bond with my children from the get go. It was weird how I met her at a fire that was next door to my house. I couldn’t even get into my house for the smoke, so when I looked at my kids she had my kids with two of her friends going down the street so the provided us with a place for the night. From that point forward she has been the best mother our kids ever had. I got a good job at M.R.H.A. It wasn’t enough money for everyone, so I took on several jobs to keep us going.

Later I was taken out of work because I have really bad knees and got to get them replaced so while I am on Disability I decided to go back to school to better myself. My kids all have grown up and moved out. It is just me and my wife at home now, and her health isn’t the greatest now and she can’t get a job. So, I still am the one responsible for taking care of everything that I can. She stays at home and cleans the house and cooks and I do almost everything else. It is still hard, but I manage one day at a time. I also volunteer at the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity. We keep in touch with all our children. My father and mother are so proud of me going back to school. I may not be able to go back to M.R.H.A. because the work I use to do is to aggressive on my knees.
My Return to Learning
Emmanuel Negash
Halifax Community Learning Network

I returned to learning to learn, read, and to write.

I also want to read the Bible, message friends on my cell phone, and be able to understand forms and mail from the government.

I have noticed that I am better at reading and writing than when I started coming to classes. It feels good.

Before I couldn't read words sometimes and now I can read them. This is how learning has changed my life.

My goals for the future are to keep improving and hopefully find a job.
My Learning Story
Melvin James Neil
Halifax Community Learning Network

I was at a bus stop sitting next to an elderly lady. I said to her, “I am working two jobs. I’m a busy man.” She turned and looked at me and said, “Do you know why you are working two jobs?” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “Because you never finished your education.”

Later that week I was watching the news and MT&T was going out of business. A man 52 years of age, an employee of MT&T said he was going to go back to school to get retrained for a future new job.

I thought about what the old lady said to me, so I went to the library on Gottingen St. I spoke to Jan and she said she would set me up with a tutor. Things took off from there. I started at Cunard Learning Center. The teachers Andre, Dale and Joanne were very good at getting their points across. From there I moved on to NSCC to the ALP program and graduated with my grade 12 certificate.

I plan on taking Culinary Skills at NSCC in 2019 and from there go to Holland College to study the Master Chef Course.

All I have to say is, people keep on dreaming and your dreams will come true.
How Literacy Changed My Life
Brandon MacDonald
Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton County

Literacy has changed my life because before I came to school I had little education. Also, literacy gave me the opportunity to learn new things like getting courses and learning new opportunities. Literacy is the best thing that has happened to me. An education is very important to me. Before I entered into Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton County, I was home wondering what I was going to do with my life without an education. As soon as I started classes my life has changed around for the better.

I am getting new courses; CPR, Occupational Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Stress Management, Food Handlers and WHMIS. Life has been like a crazy ride before I came back to school. I had extreme depression in the past. I was always having low confidence about myself. I went to Income Assistance to get help to get back to school. There was a program called Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton County. Ever since I joined the program I have found best friends in my class and best teacher.

I’m very thankful for being in this program. It made me realize getting an education is important for my future. My main focus is getting my math that I have difficulty with. I’m also focused on what the future will bring to me and I want to be successful and achieve my goals for my future. I would recommend to people who do not have their education to sign up for school because it will change their lives forever.
My Life, Education, and Goals
Natashia Gozansky
Shelburne County Learning Network

I, Natashia, returned to learning because I want to get my high school equivalency. Around here, in Shelburne and everywhere else, you need your education to get a job. Another reason to return to learning is because I want to make a better life for me.

Going to school and learning is changing my life and making me happier. I am happy because I’m inspiring myself and others like my son and family. I would love to see my son Timothy get his education to get a better job and improve his life.

I would love to see my son and I graduate together. I will get him back to finish his education with me. Oh my, I would feel proud to graduate with my lovely son! I would feel excited at graduation because we will be bettering our lives.

Learning is changing my life by teaching me about money. Learning about money is teaching me to pay the right amount on bills so I have a place to live and food in my belly.

Some of my goals in the future, after I graduate, are to get a job I couldn’t get before my education. My last goal is teaching young kids to stay in school, not play hooky and don’t drop out. They need their education. I’d be excited to teach them. My son and family would be excited for me. I’d be proud myself.
Hello everyone. My name is Yasir Adam Ahmed Dawood. I’m originally from Darfur Sudan. I grew up in Darfur, my birth place.

I studied there and completed high school. I worked with my father on the family farm for a long time and worked as a volunteer with different communities in the different places. Work like to help elderly people and help clean the environment in our village and around neighbour villages. My parents and my 13 siblings all live in Africa.

I decided to move to another country because of my secure situation. First, I moved to Egypt and lived in Sinai State. I worked on a farm as a volunteer for two years. I applied to the United Nations to find protection; they did not reply. I decided to move to Israel and lived in Israel for many years in different states. I applied to the government office to find a solution for my situation. I was given a temporary license for every two months which allowed me to live and to work there.

I had so many different experiences and jobs: I worked as a farmer for two years, and a welder. After that I worked in buildings construction of houses, offices, bridges, restaurants, and hotels. I also volunteered as an interpreter with ARDC organization to help my fellow Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers and different local non-official communities to help the elderly. Finally, I worked with my neighbour every Saturday to clean our area.

I can speak than many languages: English, Arabic, Hebrew, Masalit, and so on ...

I waited more than 8 YEARS for the Israeli government to grant me protection. They did not reply, so I decided to move to Canada through my uncle living in CANADA to start to build my live with great future that I have.

I came to Canada in February 2017 as a landed immigrant sponsored by my uncle, a Canadian citizen. I arrived in Halifax with my dream to be welcomed by my fabulous uncle, his family. NOW, I returned to school to improve my math and English at the Cunard Learning Centre and ISANS. When I came I started work with Deep Down Cleaning and I volunteer at Recollege action repairs and I work at La Frasca restaurant. I didn’t speak English well, but now I feel I can speak much better. I plan to attend NSCC community college in September. I hope to be a nurse so that I can keep helping people. I’m very excited to be here in Canada. I am so proud with a hope to be a Canadian citizen soon. In this moment let me to first say thank you so much to Canada for the opportunity they gave me to be in a safe place, with great people, and a
secure future. Thank you so much to my uncle and his fabulous family, many thanks to Cunard and ISANS and special thanks to all Canadian people and communities.
Why I Am Back to School – Life is a Struggle
Saraswati Niraula
Nova Scotia Community College – Adult Learning Program

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". - Nelson Mandela This is why I returned to school.

I am Saraswati Niraula who came from a Bhutanese refugee camp which is located in the Asian country Nepal. I have been living in Canada since 2012. When I was six years old my ambition was nursing, and I am still interested in this goal. I want to work in hospital to help poor and needy people with their health problems because when I was in Nepal, my mother was sick, and we did not have enough money to pay for her treatments and we had to struggle. Thinking of those situation, I feel so motivated to continue my study.

I am a very unlucky lady, who was born into a poor family and did not have opportunity to study in Nepal due to economic situation. When I got the chance to come to Canada, I was so excited that I finally got the chance to fulfill my desire to continue towards my goal. I live with my family, two children and husband. It’s it hard to continue study with head full of responsibilities and chores but I am working hard to arrange time to study. I started in Adult Learning Program in 2016 and I am presently continuing my second year. I chose my program of study at NSCC because I want to make my future bright and want to give good education to my children, make my family and community educated. And another expectation is to help problems of poor and needy people, especially the older ones. My previous education gave me more inspiration to continue my NSCC education. In NSCC I am studying Academic biology, chemistry and communications. These subjects and study help me to prepare and continue toward my professional goal and I am very sure to achieve my goal.

I am putting my single free time to my study to improve my listening, speaking, writing and reading skills. After putting my all efforts, last year in ALP I was able to complete 8 credits with an average grade of above 95%. I was very pleased to receive an award from my teachers for my efforts. This year, I am volunteering as an ALP Mentor to help support other ALP students as they enter the program. I have helped at Orientation, at workshops and provided tours. Off-campus, I also volunteer at the Community Garden through ISANS. I have done this work since 2012 to present because I want to be familiar with the new cultural and community.

At the end, I would like to encourage my friends, family and others who are struggle for their life to come back to school and continue, later you will find out the worth of giving time to educated. Education is the bright light of life. There will be never late to start a new way of viewing and change your life in a good direction.
Where I Aim to Be
Monica Musasa
Halifax Community Learning Network

Because I am a new Canadian, sometimes people don’t understand me. Sometimes I don’t understand others.

I’m better at reading than at writing.

I go to adult school. A man I knew from Africa used to go to that school. And he told me I should go there. I went there to do a test in English and in math. I started at level one. Then I passed to level two.

I had a problem with spelling, so one person I knew at school told me to go to the library to do writing. I also go there to work on math.

I want to improve my speaking and writing.

If you cannot read and write it is difficult to understand. You can’t have a job. And many people think if you don’t go to school your thinking is not too good.

Going back to school is not easy because you have responsibilities, but it’s also good because it improves your reading and writing and your thinking.

I’ve made progress and I’m pleased with what I’ve done. I’m not too far, but I’m just like here:

* -----------------> * ------------------------------------------> *

Where I started Where I am now Where I aim to be
My Learning Story
Charlie Corbin
Halifax Community Learning Network

Throughout my life, I have often struggled with the completion of basic tasks and activities due to my limited literacy skills. Considering my difficulties with reading and writing, I believe that I have missed out on many experiences and failed to develop some basic abilities that others appear to possess. I have decided to return to learning for many reasons that will improve my happiness and overall quality of life. There are endless activities that come easily to most others that I often tend to struggle with independently.

In particular, I desire to go out for lunch and have the ability to choose from the options on the menu and proceed to pay with my debit card by reading the screen on the machine. I want to be able to explore my city, using street signs and bus schedules. I want to be able to go shopping and read prices and the names of items without the support of another. I have many interests and hobbies, including hockey, baseball, bowling, going to the movies, and listening to the news; yet, all of these can include aspects with which I require help. I also enjoy spending time at the library, and by bettering my literacy skills, I will enhance this experience with my improved ability to read books and use a computer. All in all, I wish to become more self-reliant and less dependent on others.

Since making the decision to return to learning, I have not only improved upon my literacy skills but I have gained confidence and improved self-esteem. I am better able to independently achieve certain tasks in everyday life and to complete educational exercises with my tutor that I previously had trouble with. I feel proud to watch as I grow and enhance my abilities. The more I learn, the more confident I feel that I will someday reach my goals.

As I experience difficulty with reading and writing, I am limited with the number of daily responsibilities I can accomplish on my own. However, I am determined to continue to learn and enhance my abilities, in order to experience life more easily, and to enjoy the same activities as others. In continuing to learn, I desire to develop the necessary skills to achieve my GED and gain an education. I wish to better communicate with the public through conversation, but to also keep in touch with family and friends by writing letters and sending cards. My main goal in life is to be able to provide for myself and perhaps, one day, a family. Through improvements in my literacy skills, I desire to gain employment and to earn my own funds, and to eventually learn to drive a car and own a house.
Literacy Changes Lives
Robert Lowe
Halifax Community Learning Network

My name is Robert Lowe, and I go to tutoring every Thursday night. I have improved my reading and my writing since I have been coming. It has changed my life for the better because I am learning more.

My goals for the future would be to be a better reader. I want to be able to read at church. I find that the library is a good place for me to go for learning.

I like this program because I am getting better at reading and writing. I like my tutors. I feel like it gives me more confidence when I come to learning.

I think more people should take adult literacy because you can feel better about yourself. The new library is a good place because the rooms are big, and the people are nice.
ALP Changed My Life
Hana Mahmoodi
Nova Scotia Community College Adult Learning Program

My name is Hana Mahmoodi. I am from Afghanistan. I am thirty-four years old and have two smart sons.

I loved to study, but for many reasons I could not study. My family and I lived in Indonesia for three and half years. Living in Indonesia was full of stress. If I write about those days, it will be a book. Since I was depressed, my husband gave me the idea that if I am still interested in studying, so I should be prepared for that. Despite the gloomy days which I had, I enjoyed studying English and Math through internet to prepare to be eligible for getting my high school diploma whenever we come to Canada. I got the information about Adult Learning Program and NSCC in internet.

We came to Canada in February 2017. Immediately, I asked ISANS and my new friend, Ateka, who had studied in NSCC and now she is so successful in her life, about ALP. I registered in ALP and I waited impatiently for September to start the classes. It was like a nice dream. I cannot describe my feeling about this achievement. It was my dream to study, and ALP made my dream. This program changed my world. It helped me to have more self-confident. I can help my sons in mathematics, we can discuss about science, and etc.

Beyond of these, I can step in a bigger world. Now, I can see myself in University. It is funny because going to university was an unattainable dream. I will study Nursing, and it was impossible, if I did not find ALP. Never is it too late to study.

Through this program, all closed doors will be opened, and all dreams will come true. I appreciate my husband who supported me to study, and all teachers, instructors, who helped me to make a new life for myself and my family.

THANKS ALP, NSCC!
My name is Malone Sinclaire. I am 65 years old and I believe that it is never too late to learn.

When I was younger, my aspiration was to go to university but there were too many challenges in my life for that to happen easily. I tried to go back to school several times over the years, but the timing was wrong. Work and life responsibilities had to come first. I worked recruiting nurses from overseas for several years. At age 58, I was working for an insurance company, at 65, I was selling cars. Life doesn't always unfold the way you expect it to.

I went through the OWL (Older Wiser Labourforce) program at Job Junction which opened the door to other opportunities like studying towards the G.E.D. with the Halifax Community Learning Network. I am retired so this is not something that I'm doing for monetary gain. This is something I'm doing for me. For me, now is the right time to learn.

Everyone should have a chance to learn, to build their self-confidence and reach their goals and dreams. Don't think about age. We all have something to offer. It is never too late to learn.
Hello everyone, my name is Eunice Bernard. I am a 53-year-old Mi’kmaq from the Paqtnkek First Nation. Presently, I attend Paqtnkek Adult Learning Program in my community. I do not have many great memories of school. The first time I went to school was the Afton Indian Day School. I then went to Tracadie Consolidated Elementary School for grades primary to six. When I started primary, I was happy. The teachers said I was too smart and got moved up into another grade.

I made it to Antigonish East High School in grade 7-A. It was hard, but I kept at it. I spent two years in grade seven, and two years in grade eight. I was now fifteen years of age. School is important, and I thought I knew enough to get by in life. I left school and started to explore. I wanted to get a job. I thought if I can read and write, speak English I can make it on my own. I started to drink and smoke marijuana. I found out there were a lot of things I didn’t know about job hunting. Yet, I got my first job at fifteen years old as a janitor at Saint Martha’s Hospital lab. I was there for two or three months. I wanted more work and kept trying and was able to get another job at St. Martha’s in the laundry department. Also, when I was sixteen I got my beginner’s and license.

School was not yet in the picture. I got into a mishap when I was eighteen years old and drinking. A “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman” is what I seemed to be or supposed to be. My perpetrators ejected me from a truck. I was found by a child who seen a truck dumped me off in the yard. When the truck left the kid went to see what the truck dumped off. He went in the house and told his mom or whoever. This kid saved my life. I survived after four months in a coma. I woke up in November and had to learn everything again. When I think about it, I felt like I was born again. When I left the hospital, I was so happy, but I had to be very careful. There were a lot of things I couldn’t do yet. I did decide to go back to school but I wasn’t able to keep up with the class, so I got discontinued due to extent of injuries sustained by the accident. They asked me not to come back, sorry.

I know I need more education and I went back to school at age twenty-six. I don’t have a grade twelve, but I am still trying. My future goals are to get my grade twelve and continue working. During this whole life I did many jobs and wrote my G.E.D many times. Never give up. I know it is important to keep trying.
Literacy: Discovering My Potential
Andrea O’Brien
Colchester Adult Learning Association

I’d like to share some of the changes literacy has made in my life.

Before I came to Colchester Adult Learning Association (CALA), I was working in the fast food industry and I realized I wanted more in life. I knew that I had to improve all of my academic skills to obtain a grade 12 equivalency. Now I am happy to be working on my skills in math, reading, and writing in CALA, on my way to achieve the education that I never completed in school.

I think my family would be proud of me and probably say, “Nice job, Andrea”. It would be nice to show that I have my grade 12 diploma in my hand and I would say,” Yes! I did it.”

Now, after attending CALA Level 2, I have the confidence to move forward in life with a new attitude that says, “I can do it!” I believe that within a few years I will be able to contribute financially to my family, help with some of our bills, and perhaps buy that new steel roof that we want for our home.

My future goal is to take the CCA course here at the NSCC in Truro. This is a career I’ve always wanted to have. I would love to work with the elderly in many ways of extended care. This may include assisting the VON with in - home care for clients by providing meals and personal care.

As I continue learning, it seems clear to me that literacy has changed me in many ways. Through literacy, I have discovered more about myself and the potential I have to make a difference in my life and that of others.
I grew up in Idlib, Syria. I went to school until it became dangerous at age 15. I didn’t write my grade 9 exams because it was too scary to go to school and do the exams. Our government was bombing all organization including the schools. The Syrian army and their allies were bombing us just because we wanted freedom.

Two years ago, I returned to studying after 5 years off. I chose to be educated as a dietitian versus being married and raising a family. We were chosen to come to Canada, and we accepted because Canada is a good place to continue my education in safety.

The first day of school was difficult. I was shocked and surprised to discover that everything was in English, and I could understand nothing. I felt miserable because I could not connect with people, express my opinions, or even ask for help. All I could do was look around and say “hello, goodbye, thank you, you’re welcome, and Ouroba”.

Then I decided to learn English seriously. I spent all my time learning and going anywhere there was help. The teachers supported me in my effort to learn English by providing a tutor, because they noticed that I was such a hard worker. I didn’t stop learning English, even in the summer time. I did many volunteer hours and activities. And now I am bilingual!

I still work hard to get high level in English or to speak like Canadians. My dream was and still is to become a dietitian. I loved this subject when I was a young. Every morning of the weekend my family and I were waiting to watch dietitians and listen to their advice. Since then I have loved this subject and I decided to become a dietitian.

Now I have a goal, and I am working hard to achieve it.
My Learning Story
Annmarie French
Halifax Community Learning Network

Just over 1 year ago I decided to return to learning. I returned to learning because I was struggling with reading and writing. There were goals that I wanted to reach. Just like everyone else, I want to learn and to grow. I did not want my learning story to end. I wanted there to be more chapters in my story.

Since then I have been working very hard to improve my literacy skills. There is such a difference in my ability. Now I am learning and growing and each day I am reaching my goals. With the help of HLCN, and a lot of hard work, I am writing a new chapter for myself. I have even reached my goal of getting a job!

I made the decision to continue to write on the pages of my learning story and once one chapter is complete I will write the next one, and so on. I don’t expect the ending to be written anytime soon. In my next chapter I am going to continue to study and then I will write the chapter about having a family of my own. I am glad that I decided to return to learning. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made!
Why I Returned to School
Margaret Crawley
East Preston Empowerment Academy

I would like to start off my story by first giving praise to God for blessing me at the age of 57 with life and health to be able to return to school. Upon losing my job in 2017 after 25 years, I wondered immediately what my life would be like without income. Would I lose my family home, or would I have to sell the blessing we’ve lived in for 15 years and raised my lovely family? My major reason for returning to school is so that I can eventually help young people who struggle with school work (tutor) and also to be able to assist my grandchildren with their study’s as well.

After a while I had to think about things and check myself because if I claimed to have faith then I needed to exercise it and know in my heart that God would see me through this storm. Then I realized that this was the blessing I had asked for in so many words to be removed from a stressful environment of work. Learning has changed my life to the point of being much more confident in understanding where, how, and when to use the knowledge.

I battled with the decision for a while of going back to school and as I started to look into the job field to my amazement every job required a Grade 12 or equivalent so that was my queue. In order for me to make changes in my life I realized I needed to look in the mirror at me first. As Michael Jackson song lyrics states: “I’m starting with the man(woman) in the mirror, if you want to make the world a better place, take a look at yourself and then make the change”.

Although not having graduated from Grade 12 I did not let that hold me back from obtaining 3 trades through community college. My goal for the future is to enroll in a study which caters to supporting and being a voice for our youth as I feel that they are swept aside at times. Since they truly are our future generation I want to ensure I do my absolute best to encourage and support them in productive, healthy things so they can become the leaders and individuals God has destined them to be.

I love talking, sharing and listening to the young folk because they are very intelligent and have so much to offer our world if we all just take the time to listen, support and give them a chance. So, I would like to thank East Preston Empowerment Academy for the opportunity of being one of their students. Also, a huge thank you to the teachers, educators, mentors, supporters, who have helped me with this journey in my life, it has been a true blessing and a phenomenal learning experience.

And lastly, I want to say Education is “Power” and “Power” is a sign of “Knowledge” which is accredited to a “Higher Education”.