Celebrating Adult Learners’ Week

April 1 – 6, 2019

Learning 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
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 1-6, 2019, Adult Learners’ Week in Nova Scotia.

LNS offered a number of skills 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. Jessica Coiffi, 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.
Nova Scotia

Proclamation

International Adult Learners’ Week

WHEREAS Nova Scotians mark the outstanding achievements of adult learners during Adult Learners’ Week (April 1st to 6th) at events throughout the province; and

WHEREAS literacy skills give Nova Scotians confidence and open doors to the rewarding education and employment opportunities our province has to offer; and

WHEREAS the Government of Nova Scotia is committed to helping Nova Scotians reach their full potential by supporting the development and delivery of adult literacy programs.

THEREFORE be it resolved that I, Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia, do hereby proclaim the week of April 1st to April 6th, 2019, as International Adult Learners’ Week in the Province of Nova Scotia, and encourage all Nova Scotians to celebrate the value of literacy as the foundation to lifelong learning.

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

Signed at Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Why I Came Back to School

Kelly Wysote Jr.
Adult Learning Program Mikmaq Native Friendship Centre

Hi, my name is Kelly Wysote Jr. and I go to the Mikmaq Native Friendship Centre Adult Learning Program. I returned to school for a few reasons. One reason I am returning to school is that I am 36 years of age with only a grade 9 education.

I always struggled in school and never really did anything in my life to be proud of. I always wanted my education growing up, but when I got to grade 10, I got kicked out of school and that put an end to me succeeding getting my grade 12. I want to get my grade 12 so I can actually complete something I really put my mind too. I have goals in my life now that I am actually starting to achieve. I am an addict, I have been addicted to drugs and alcohol since I was 13 years of age, I live in a long-term recovery home and now 7 months clean and sober.

I also want to build up my self confidence level because I have problems thinking that I am not good enough. So being in school will help with that. Not too many of my family, other than my two sisters, have their high school diploma so I want to be the 3rd person to accomplish getting my grade 12. With hard work and willingness to overcome challenges it will be possible.

How learning changed my life is that I am in a time in my life where I am actually wanting to learn and wanting to attend school instead of being told to or not wanting to go and learn. Attending school is giving me responsibilities and is also giving me confidence and structure in my life. Having the ability to learn will help me in my need to succeed.

My goals for the future are after I achieve my high school diploma, I want to look into taking some kind of course for addictions at the NSCC. I’d love to be an addictions counsellor or work in rehabilitations centers to help other addicts and alcoholics that are in recovery for their addictions.

I’ve always had a need to help others and I really think it will help me also in my recovery by giving back what I’ve learned. I really hope I have a good chance in winning an iPad Mini. This is the most honest I have been in a long time.
Why I Returned to Learning

Brenna Cunningham
Shelburne County Learning Network

I decided to return to learning because I like to upgrade my courses. Also, to get out and meet and greet other people, become a team member, help others out with the skills and knowledge I know and vice versa.

Learning has changed my life by listening to others and being able to use my skills and ideas to help others. My goal is to be able to become an office assistant or book keeper. By coming to the Shelburne County Learning Network, I am able to take courses online at my availability and speed.
Carrie’s Accomplishments

Carrie Caldwell
Valley Community Learning Association

Coming back to school for me was hard as I had been out of school for over 40 years. It was a hard decision but coming back to VCLA (Valley Community Learning Association) to get my GED was the best thing that I could have done. It gave me self-worth and self-confidence and it has made a big difference in my life. Coming to class is like my family. I am so proud of how much I have accomplished. I passed four of my GED tests and now only have my math left to complete.

When I first started coming to class, I walked 45 minutes there and back to get to school. I was really excited about going to class. It was well worth the effort. Being able to tell people that I have almost finished my GED has helped me to feel differently about things. I am much more aware about what is happening in the world and I am more confident in my abilities.

When I finally get my math and get my GED certificate, I am really going to miss coming to class. I have made some life-long friends both with other students and with the staff. I want to say that I have more self-esteem now and that I love coming to class. It makes me feel important and that I am doing something good for myself. I also enjoy helping organize the classroom and making student feel welcome. I especially like working with new students because I have lots of experience to share with them. I love being able to help out the teacher. She is very special. I am very proud to be here.

VCLA has certainly taught me a lot. Thank you to everyone who helped me along the way. I feel so grateful to have known you all.
I am always told I have a kind and caring heart. I have a lot of ambition for success. Growing up I didn’t feel loved or that people cared for me. I was tormented in school and was always teased by my classmates. However, I did have a select few that watched out for me.

Over the years I have been faced with defeat, depression, anxiety and fear. But even though I may have had these feelings, I knew they were there for a reason. Therefore, I was able to start learning about who God wanted me to be because I have learned that He loves me. Also, I have learned and continue learning that our experiences can move others in ways that no one could have imagined. By hearing what others went through gives us peace knowing that we are not alone. Also, God can use our experiences to strengthen others, by being encouraging for others that have dealt with difficult things. God will use them to help us grow.

We are lifelong learners and we learn from our experiences. I will always now look for good in myself and others. Being in school again as an adult is a whole new world and experience. When my teacher nominated me to receive a learner’s award back in November I was honored and full of joy. I felt appreciated for the hard work that I have done. I thank God for that. He really gave me courage and wisdom to help me in my learning. I have a different experience now than I did back then as a child. I can be grateful and say that I have slayed that dragon in my life because of that feeling that I wasn’t good enough or smart enough to do anything right. I know now that I am smart and can learn with no judgement. I will continue to learn and work towards finishing my G.E.D. I have social studies and math left and I am going to continue to work hard to get them. Just as I know that God is working in my life and He continues to show me my growth and that there is always room for improving it with God’s love, power and grace.

In conclusion, my main goal is to get my GED. I am so much more confident and now I know I really enjoy learning and I plan to be a lifelong learner. I know that in whatever career path I decide to take or wherever life leads me that I am more self-assured that I will succeed. I know I can learn and will always grow. Coming back to school was one of the best decisions I could have ever made for myself. This experience has shown me how smart I really am. Also having others around me this time that see the growth in me and that are encouraging me instead of putting me down is wonderful. Thank-you!
Learning Changes Lives

Mary Anne Villeneuve
Mikmaq Native Friendship Centre

My name is Mary Ann. Why I returned to learning? I am forty-six, my brain has gone through a lot of trauma, and to keep it healthy I have decided to come to a community-based learning organization to keep it functioning.

Learning has changed my life on how it has given me opportunity, experiences to learn about different people, strategies, and places. I really enjoy positive things and it helps me with my depression.

“Learning is the process of acquiring new, or modifying existing, knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences. The ability to learn is possessed by humans, animals, and some machines; there is also evidence for some kind of learning in some plants. Some learning is immediate, induced by a single event, but much skill and knowledge accumulates from repeated experiences. The changes induced by learning often last a lifetime.” (Wikipedia, 2019)

My future goal is to own my own business in 3D customized clothing. Selling jogging pants, t-shirts, and hoodies, how would you like me to put your design from font, color, and position. My ultimate passion is fashion and art. From little people to obese. Everyone can express their own creativity and to be who they want to be.
Learning Goals

Jessica Cuvelier  
Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre

My name is Jessica Cuvelier, I am 31 years old and I am a student at the Adult Learning Program at the Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I wanted to go back to school because I can’t work towards my goals without having an education. Without having my high school or G.E.D it limits the jobs I can get, and it stops me from being able to further my education.

Learning continues to change my life because the more I understand the things I didn’t before the closer I am to reaching my goals. Learning has always been hard for me, but I know now that it was because I just didn’t have the right tools or the confidence in myself to be able to make it through school. I feel that now I do and I’m working harder every day to reach my goals.

Some of my goals for the future would be to continue my schooling and take the Child and Youth Program at the NSCC. I want to get a job working in a group home helping at risk teens or work in a program where I can help kids in different difficult situations. Another goal of mine would be to be some kind of mentor so I can show people that it’s never too late to achieve their goals. It’s never too late to continue their education no matter how far behind you think you are and that it’s never too late to try and be a better person even if no one else believes in you. All you need is to believe in yourself which is something I’m learning to do every day.
Why I Stopped Going to School & Came Back to Learning

Alicia Goodman
Dartmouth Learning Network

First, I should tell my story.

I was in school up to 7th grade and then I dropped out because I was being picked on and the teachers and principal weren't doing anything about it so I would go home and take it out on my family and I didn't want to do that so I stopped going to school for a year and I ended up helping my mom with my sisters so I kept myself busy. Then in the new year I went back to school and I'm glad that I did because I met one of my best friends and I had the best time in school and learned a lot of things.

I stayed in school until grade 10 and then I dropped out again because the same person that was picking on me in grade 7 started to pick on me again then all the teachers were comparing me to my sister who wasn't that great in school, so they were thinking that I was going to be the same as her. There was one teacher in my school that would talk about me and my sister and how we are so alike and she started to talk bad about my family without knowing how my family acts so we got into an argument to the point that I didn't want to see her so I stopped going to school then my mom was in the hospital having my little sister so I had to take care of my sisters. This time I stayed out of school for 2 years then I want to Dartmouth Learning Network for about 6 months, but I stopped going to that to because I felt like I wasn't learning anything there this time I stayed out of school for 3 years and I learned a lot about myself in this time.

I learned that I'm dyslexic and that I needed to wear glasses so knowing this helped a lot when I want back to school. I'm in school now and learning everything that I'm learning now helps me when I have to help my sisters with their homework and with a lot of things that I do and this time I feel like I'm learning something every time I came here.

Before I came here I was scared of doing math because I couldn't do anything in math but now I really like math and I do math at my house with my sisters all the time and I help people in Dartmouth Learning Network all the time and I love doing it and I got back into reading again and I'm glad that I did I love coming here.

My goals for the future are to get my GED so I can show it to my uncle who wanted me to go back to school and to become a photographer and travel the world to see new places and take pictures.
It all started on January 23, 1961. It’s the beginning of a life full of ups and downs. Being born with cancer, I never gave much thought as to how my life would be. I had no interest in school, but I enjoyed sports very much. Not doing well in school, has affected me in my senior years where I was missing classes and getting involved with the wrong people.

Out of school and no plans of working, I quickly started breaking the law, which led to jail in 1986. I grew up a little bit but still had no purpose in life except having fun. I ended up in a rehab center for about 8 months. I can’t recall the benefits that came from that other than gaining 40lbs. and going on a shopping spree, life seemed good.

Moving to the city on January 23, 1987, I was attending adult vocational school taking retail market selling course. It didn’t last long because I didn’t feel like working. It seems it was in the blood. I didn’t let it bother me, so I just kept living my life one day at a time, not thinking of the future. Life didn’t look promising for me and I didn’t know where to turn. With me not willing to work, I started petty theft at first, then moved up to bigger crimes and went to jail on 3 different occasions.

I ended up with the wrong crowd and it began a 6-year cocaine addiction. I went to jail twice because of it. At the time, jail seemed to be the place for me. I was looked after, I had 3 meals a day. I was missing my freedom and I knew I had to smarten up. When I had enough of the world I was living and decided to try recovery. It was March the 2, 1994 was the beginning of a new life for me. I took full advantage of meeting people who care and want to see me do better. With this by my side and using the tools from recovery, I became a very caring person who likes to help others when in need. Life is looking very good spiritually I have a new network of friends, friends who want to see me do well. I’m so grateful.

Being on disability, didn’t give me much thought as to what I’d like to do to fill in my days. I had no idea as to what to do. One day, I kept an appointment with my therapist, and she suggested that I go back to school. My first thought was: “I’ve been away from school for 36 years”, what would it be like? I think I really needed a change in my life to make it a full life. Starting school was a blessing. I met some really nice people, people who want to see me succeed. This was very new to me and didn’t know to take it, I did know that I was going to be a student who wanted to learn. This is my way of showing my appreciation for what the school has done for me.

I enjoy getting up in the morning when it’s a school day. At times, it’s the highlight of my day.
Why I Returned to School

Marley Morris
Mi’kmaw Native Friendship Centre

My name is Marley Alicia Morris, I’m taking Adult Learning Program at the Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Center until June 27. The reason why I returned to school has lots of reasons, one is to learn and get educated, and to help me get a job so I can support my son and myself and learn new things and I will have something to do Monday to Thursday, we have school four times a week. I haven't been in school for so long I dropped out in grade seven and that was my second year in grade seven. First year I failed I was 13 now I'm 21 but I tried a little bit of grade eight but didn't really bother going just went few times and I was doing my GED here at the Mi’kmaq Native Friendship Center in Jan 2016 until I moved back home to Cape Breton and just moved back here three months ago. I have a son in Cape Breton he will be 2 on Feb 21st so I’m pretty much returning to school to learn and get educated.

Learning in the Adult Learning Program changed my life by having something to do during the week unlike having nothing to do like it always was before plus waking up early, Usually I sleep in. And having work to do when before I had nothing to do so it changed my life in those ways.

My goals in the future are to have care of my son and have a job, my own place nice and clean, and a car and to finish school and do my GED or go to college or university.
Kirk’s Future
Kirk Grady
Valley Community Learning Association

YouTube URL:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dlhqQmncGL8&t=4s

Ups and Downs of School
Brandon Bowlby
Valley Community Learning Association

YouTube URL:  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tav6FTGU0ms

Braving Learning
Paul Ochalla
Halifax Community Learning Network

YouTube URL:  https://youtu.be/DWEBpmxfvBc
My life is perfect - well almost. I never received my high school diploma. I had to quit school due to family illness. When I was young and in school, most subjects were difficult for me which frustrated me greatly. In the fall of 2011, I decided it was time for me to start working towards my GED at the Captain William Spry Community Library. I worked my way through a thick and sometimes confusing GED book. I learned about fractions, geometry, and the dreaded algebra and how to write an essay. For me there is still something missing: that piece of paper with my name on it. The first step to the rest of your life. The sense of pride and accomplishment from knowing that I graduated. I am determined. I have already passed the essay and grammar tests and I have 3 more to go. I have been working hard with my tutor. Now that my studies are well underway, I realize that this journey isn’t about me getting my GED. It shows that I have the ability to learn and I have not given up, now I’m looking forward and have many goals for myself. I may not be able to change the past, but I can certainly change my future. I can do it with time and patience. I will make my dream of obtaining my GED a reality.

A special thanks to all the people who helped me through this journey: Denise Morley, Pat Roberts, and my tutor Bryan. Also, the staff of the Captain William Spry Library. Thank you all for believing in me and pushing me to learn new concepts each and every week. It’s people like you who make a difference in my life and I greatly appreciate it.
Learning More About History

Clifford Penney  
Shelburne County Learning Network

I went back to school so that I could learn more about History. I wanted to learn about my family history: the Anderson's and the Penney's. I also wanted to learn more about the Titanic, Amelia Earhart, the Halifax Explosion and the Edmond Fitzgerald. I would like to learn as much history as I can.

Learning has changed my life because I like to talk about history, and I am happy to talk to other people about what I learned in school. It makes me feel proud.

My goal for the future is to keep learning as much as I can about history and also to work with computers.
How Learning Changed My Life

Christy Thibodeau
NSCC Burridge Campus

When my dad passed away in 1996, things started to go downhill for me in my personal life and my education. I was half-way through grade six and my grades started to plummet. I couldn’t concentrate and lost focus in my learning, which led to developing anxiety (something that has become a life-long issue for me). With a lot of help, I passed grade six and went into junior high. That’s when my real struggle began.

Math was my biggest downfall. I just couldn’t grasp it, no matter what I did or tried. In grade seven I just made a passing mark, in grade eight I ended up having to go to summer school, and in grade nine I had to retake my exams. Then came high school. My priorities were set on everything else but school and in December of that year, I became pregnant with my first child. By March I had missed so much time from skipping off that I finally decided to just drop out.

Nineteen years later, after a couple of failed attempts, here I am back in school in the Adult Learning Program at NSCC, Burridge Campus, and I absolutely love it! With my children now in school, I figured it was now or never. I wasn’t exactly sure how it was all going to work out for me. I was very nervous at first. In my mind, I was scared I was going to let my family and (especially) myself down again because I really didn’t think I had what it took to complete the program and finally get my grade twelve.

I’ve been here now for five months. My grades are great, and the teachers are wonderful and explain things very thoroughly. In addition, one of the best things about it is that I haven’t once thought that I’m not smart enough to accomplish something, like I did back in high school. Basically, my self-esteem has increased a lot since I’ve been here, and I even find I’m handling my anxiety a lot better. I said to my husband that I feel so much smarter now than when I was back in high school, even though I realize it’s because my priorities are much different now. I absolutely love waking up every morning knowing that I’m getting a second chance at the one thing my mom and dad always wanted for me, which is finally receiving my grade twelve diploma.

I’m not quite sure where I’ll go from here, but I do have a couple of different options in mind. However, I still have plenty of time to figure that out. My goal right now is to graduate in June of 2020 and to see the smile on my mom’s, step-dad’s, husband’s and children’s faces as I finally make my way across that stage and to know in my heart that my dad will be looking down on me, proud of everything I have accomplished and that I have finally made it back on the path I need to be on.
My Back to School Experience

Phillip Jones
Shelburne County Learning Network

The idea of going back to school started when I received a call from a job recruiter in August of 2018. As we were discussing the job requirements and skills needed, I had scored high in many areas, but fell short on the years of management they were looking for. He said he would keep me in mind for other jobs that I would be better qualified for and that I should think about doing something to better my computer skills.

My inquiries led me to the Shelburne County Learning Network. My contact was made with Tammy Ross. Tammy brought to my attention some available online courses that offered certification in many computer and managerial related subjects. I was able to begin attending night classes that evening. The atmosphere was one of total relaxation, so it was very welcoming. Instructors, Tammy Ross, Abby White and Darren Stoddard were able to get me started right away. They have all been very helpful to me; especially in offering advice on the best courses to take and in troubleshooting any problems I ran into.

This learning experience changed my life in a positive way. I enjoyed meeting people that were my age and older doing what I am doing. I have always been one to keep learning, mainly on my own, reading books and keeping up with current events. This life change came unknown to me by the recruiter’s call on that summer’s day, which brought me to this point. The job that I did not get did not damage my outlook in any way; but, inspired me to do better and to learn more. I shared my experience with my co-workers at my job; they were inquisitive as to what I was doing. They are proud of my achievements.

This experience has motivated me to set many more goals to work towards. I arise each day with confidence, knowing that I can do better. My goal in the future is to continue to keep learning. This experience has given me more determination and pushed me to better my future. I close with a quote that comes to mind for others like myself; “Don’t wait for the door to open, kick it down”.
My Learning Story

Jessica Coiffi
Halifax Community Learning Network

After entering my third year of recovery from addiction, I felt ready to take on another challenge. I enrolled into an education for high school equivalency. Support from family and friends helped me to do just that. My aunt and uncle have always played important roles in my life. They always encouraged me to go to school.

Since entering the literacy program, so much has improved in me. Over time my confidence level has boosted impressively. I feel like I’m finally doing something with my life. Within the past 7-8 months, I have read 7 books which is very good considering I was never much of a reader.

Not having a full education can be difficult in so many ways. I only have Grade 9. I have a hard time entering conversations because of my limited vocabulary. Meeting new friends is another hard task, since I’m not in an actual school and I’m unemployed. I struggle with math and English when it comes to comprehending, but I am making progress and will never give up the practice of learning.

My goals are to read as much as I can to help improve my comprehension. Keep practicing my studies and aim to learn something new every day. I plan to use the tools and knowledge that I gained from the program to the best of my ability to succeed in passing the G.E.D. test. This will steer me over towards entering a community college. I hope to graduate with a diploma in Addiction Counselling. I want to be able to share my story with others who are struggling with addictions.
My Learning Experience at the Library

Robert Fullerton
Halifax Community Learning Network

Teamwork’s staff told me that the library had computers with assistive technology programs. It helps me to learn basic computer skills and how to use different programs, including NVDA (Non-Visual Desktop Access), email, and Word to improve my job skills.

The literacy program helped me with keyboarding, spelling, sentences and grammar. I met different people and special guests (Ken Dryden who gave me an autograph!) My goals are to continue to learn the NVDA keystrokes and quick commands, send and read emails, and use the Internet. It’s a lot to remember!
Paul's Learning Story

Paul Whynacht
Halifax Community Learning Network

I am not trying to go to college or get my GED, but I want to be able to read as a normal person would – like reading signs, the newspaper, being able to do applications, and go to write a test for different licenses. I want to be able to read and write to make life better.

Life and life's terms, when I first came to the city, I wasn’t working, and I decided to go back to school. I went to Dartmouth Learning Network in the mornings, and in the afternoon, I went to a school in Halifax. It was my full-time job going to school. I started at the bottom of the class and worked my way up to the top of the class. In the schools, they both said, “it’s too bad you can’t read as well as you do math!” With the jobs I had, I could still make it to tutoring class once a week. I knew I couldn’t go to school forever as I had to go back to work. Everybody needs money!

The jobs I had I could usually get off a little bit early on Thursdays to get to my tutoring class. I am at my 4th year of tutoring class, and I have been really enjoying it. I know I have been getting better at my reading and writing. But I am not going to apply to go to college next year. First, I tried to get a government loan to start my own business. My tutor and I worked on all the paperwork for 4 weeks, but I sort of hit a dead end. Then, I heard that they were hiring at the shipyard, so I am trying to get on there in the painting crew. I have been trying to get this job for 8 months, and I did a bunch of government forms to apply. I would have to have different certification cards for the job. I am not giving up, and hopefully it will work out because it gets me closer to my hobby farm. And that’s the truth! With this job, I can move forward in life better than what I am doing now, and I can even afford to date.

People do not realize how lucky they are when they can read and write easily. I am not trying to do this to win a prize. I am hoping that my story can reach somebody to give them the strength to walk in the doors and try to do what I am doing.
From the Darkness into The Light

Soo Kyeong Lee
Antigonish County Adult Learning Association

I started learning at ACALA (Antigonish County Adult Learning Association) in October of 2018. My reason for attending, however, is different than others. I am an immigrant from South Korea, and I am married to a Canadian from Nova Scotia. When I moved to Canada, I lost my confidence in everything because of my English abilities. I didn’t know what to do because I had no friends or a job here. Honestly, I was so depressed, and I didn’t like Canada at all. Then, after all this dark time passed, I decided to find somewhere to study in the town of Antigonish. Luckily, I found ACALA and finally became a student there.

At the beginning of the program, I was nervous, because I was the only foreigner in the class. However, the adjustment went better than I expected. Now, I am learning employment skills, technological skills, American Sign Language (ASL) and English. Also, we have participated in many different types of workshops and I been trained in many certification programs. The biggest challenge for me was having all of my courses taught in English. However, I have received six different certifications and I am doing well in all of my classes. All my teachers have encouraged me to become involved in many different programs or projects. Frankly, I am so lucky to have so many good teachers who have helped me grow in so many areas.

Another benefit of joining ACALA is meeting different people from different cultures. I started to meet people and made many friends here and learned that "I can do it" if I try hard. With this new mindset, I am full of confidence in my daily life. Even a school board in Alberta is interested in me about teaching ASL at one of their schools. Now, I love Antigonish and Canada very much. This means learning at ACALA has provided me with a happy life in Canada and has completely brought my life from darkness into the light.

In the future, I want to become an ASL teacher at a public school in Canada. I found out I must attend university or college for two years to further study ASL if I want to become an ASL teacher. Therefore, my short-term goal is to go to college and get a diploma in ASL. My long-term goal is to become an ASL teacher at a public school. Also, I will continue to improve my English proficiency while I am living in Canada. I know that I will have many challenges in the future to achieve my goals, but I also know challenges give me strength and confidence. Most importantly, learning new skills will provide me with a better life and more opportunity to succeed.
Never Stop Learning

Marilyn Omazic
Hants Learning Network Association

Recently I have made a change of lifestyle by moving from my home of seventy years and all things familiar. I am now a resident of a senior’s community where there is a plethora of things to do and see. These senior people are senior in years only but young of mind and spirit, which I find encouraging and invigorating.

I have enjoyed the renewed interest in such activities as walking with a buddy, bowling, live theater, afternoon teas and general socializing with new friends, however there is one aspect of this new life in which I am sadly lacking and that is my ability to communicate via on line messaging. Every one of my new friends seem to be on line and I realize I've missed out several times simply because I'm not on line.

Although my family have tried over the years to educate me to this technology, I have stubbornly resisted their efforts. I now realize my mistake. I carry a smart phone which is defiantly smarter than I am as it is capable of doing things I don't understand. When I discovered a senior’s free of charge computer course at the learning center, I realized this was my chance to perhaps acquire a little knowledge worth the investment of my time.

After a couple of classes I realized how easy it was to step into the world of computer life. I could see myself being more comfortable as well as more accessible in my new life. I could be able to keep in touch with old friends across the country and especially with my teenage grandsons. No more sitting on the sidelines.

I have also learned how to create an on line file which would certainly eliminate the amount of paper I am currently struggling to keep under control and the fact that I would also be able to receive and pay bills without leaving home would eliminate the unpleasant walk to the mail box in inclement weather or relying on someone else to transport me to and from my bank. This seems like a form of independence to me. There are social aspects to on line access as well as practical uses. I might benefit by exploring new recipes when planning gluten-free family dinners or finding a list of easy attractive things to make for my group of crafters.

Learning to create a photo album is something I'd enjoy doing also being able to share them with others. I feel like a school girl again enjoying the classroom, and the knowledge that I have thus far learned what is still to gain, carry with me thanks to easily understood instruction from a man named Mike, a very patient gentleman. His
way of explaining and showing me how to use and understand computers and not be afraid to mess up as everything is fixable. All I need now is an iPad of my very own so I can practice the things I have learned in class. I feel more confident and ready for a future with computers and maybe I may be able to explore on my own.
Once Fear, Now Love

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Before I decided to go back to school for my GED diploma, I knew nothing about the internet or computers. Furthermore, I wanted nothing to do with any of them. All I could see was the bad and the evil in them, but I decided to make a compromise. I would use them for my immediate needs and avoid them once I no longer needed them.

Initially my intention was to use them for my exams, then figuring to go back to looking at them like a hen looks at a fox! But since I started using the computer for writing, I've surprisingly reached the point where I find myself in need of them. My fear of them created my hatred for them. By facing my fears, my fear has become my need and to my amazement, it has even created an almost love for them as well.

I believe it's the same for all flesh and blood (people) as well. By facing our fears and insecurities, we can turn our hatred of other people into love for them. “Love thine enemy.” It surly is a good thought, and thought is the first step in compromising.

I fulfilled my needs with a thought to compromise, and then the compromise turned hatred to love, and then love eliminated my fear. Thus, creating in me a new person, with a new confidence, and a new outlook on life. Thank you for teaching me how to think positively again.