

Learner's Story

How and Why I Returned to School

I believe the most important thing I have learned since I left school with a grade nine education is how important my education should have been to me. I should have taken my education more seriously and completed school.

After leaving school I was fortunate to find various jobs in retail. I worked in retail for 29 years and then was laid off due to a shortage of hours. I was sick over my situation. Being a single parent of two children, I didn't know what I would do. My lack of education was my stumbling block. I felt that my options were narrowed down to retail because that was where my experience was.

After filing for EI, I went with a resume in hand to seek new employment. I would ask to speak to the manager so I could make a good impression and sell myself. I was taken by surprise more than once when asked not about my work history but my education. I realized it was education I needed, not a job.

EI directed me to Holland College where I planned to apply for a GED Preparation Course. I was time to tell my children the real truth about my education. They both assumed that I had graduated from Colonel Gray as I spoke of it on various occasions. Even though I was not in school I was always involved and continued to follow all the sports teams.

Before filling out my GED application I sat and spoke with my children. They said they were shocked that I hadn't graduated but both had wondered why they never saw my graduate picture on the wall at the Gray.

At the time they were just OK that I hadn't finished high school but were behind me 100% and proud of me for wanting to pursue it now. They both felt that this was an opportunity of a lifetime and they would be there to help me in any way.

I went ahead and completed the forms and took them to the College. I was accepted into the course full-time and EI would help me out while I was fulfilling my dream. My grad picture may never be in the hallways at Colonel Gray but I can picture it hanging proudly between my children's graduation pictures at our home.

I am so happy now that things turned out the way they did. My children now know my little secret and I am finally pursuing my education -- a dream of a long time.

As one says, "Things happen for a reason". But truly, I never did understand that quote until now.

Lisa MacLean

Lisa is a recent winner of the PEI Literacy Alliance \$500 bursary. She is continuing her studies at Holland College in Adult and Community Education.

