

## 2022 Learner Achievement Award – Matt Perry

Since leaving school in 11th grade at 15 years old; I had lived with a big regret of not completing my education. As my children grew it became a very important priority for me to finish school. I wanted to encourage them and show them how important education is, and that it is never too late to correct mistakes or regrets.

In the fall of 2010, at the age of 29, I chose to return to school and work towards achieving my grade 12 equivalency at Holland College Montgomery Hall. I quickly obtained my GED and upgraded some academic classes. At this time, I was accepted into a full-time program at Holland College. Unfortunately, due to an illness, I was unable to take part in the program.

I returned to the workforce and put my education goals on hold.

Three years ago, I was without work, trying to decide what to do. I had watched over the prior few years my partner achieve her GED, upgrade her academic courses, and go on to complete her diploma at Holland College.

Her determination and perseverance motivated me to decide it was time to once again, prove to myself, her, and my children that it is never too late to return to school and obtain a post-secondary education and create a better life for myself, and them and be able to make a difference in society.

To ease my way back into school mode and explore my options, I chose to enroll in Part-Time Open Academic Studies at Holland College and take a few courses.

I knew I wanted a career in healthcare, but with no experience or education in the field, I was unsure of how to get a start. I saw an advertisement online for the Essential Employability Skills Health Sector course and decided to apply. I was pleased to be selected.

The program's classroom work involved studying essential skills and getting training in areas specific to a job in the health-care sector, including training in CPR and dementia education, among others. We also had guest speakers on subjects such as resume writing. It was all very interesting and useful for moving forward in my career. After the classroom work, I participated in a placement at a long-term care facility for the summer.

The facilitators for the program were some of the most positive and encouraging people I have met. They helped me to be successful in the program and were very supportive of me through some personal challenges at the time.

Taking this program helped solidify my decision to continue my education and enrol in the RCW program at Marguerite Connolly Training and pursue a career in healthcare.

I graduated this past spring with my RCW Diploma, having achieved the awards for highest grade and commitment to attendance and studies.

I have been working as a Resident / Patient Care Worker with Health PEI since graduating. In September I accepted a permanent position with the Mental Health and Addictions division.

I have now decided to enrol in academic upgrading again in January to obtain the academic requirements to apply for the practical nursing program.

I wouldn't be where I am without PEI literacy Alliance and the Essentials course. I hope to see this type of course continue so that others can be motivated to fulfill their education & learning goals.