

Master Packaging Scholarship Award 2021

Essay by scholarship recipient, Patrick Curtis

I use to think it was impossible for me to go back to school. I was the main provider, a father with a young child, and my age were all hindering excuses for me. After 13 years in the workforce and being unfulfilled with jobs/ the onset of the pandemic. I started to think long and hard about what I wanted from life. I wanted to be someone my son would be proud of someday. I also wanted to make a difference. I was always deeply passionate about recreational fishing. I then noticed a posting on Facebook for Essential skills for Atlantic Fisheries. I applied and was successful. It was exciting free laptop and a chance at employment when everyone was losing their jobs. 10 weeks (about 2 and a half months) online learning/8-week job placement. I successfully completed both.

The skills taught were LifeSkills/ basic employability skills. The biggest takeaway I have from the course is the use of a portfolio and goal setting. The instructor Phil was amazing he helped me to believe in myself when I did not. The support I received from Lily was exemplarily. With new aspirations I decided I wanted to be a fisheries officer. I competed for a seat in the Wildlife conservation technology course. 24 seats 130 applications I had an 18 percent chance of getting in.

There is an African proverb that reads: **“When there is no enemy within, the enemy outside can do you no harm.”** When you refuse to allow any doubts in your own mind, then no doubts from others will ever cloud your judgement. But I am here to tell you if you have a dream or a goal do not listen to anyone tell you that you that you cannot do it, especially if that person is yourself. You need to believe in yourself. March came and I was success in getting a seat in the course. If I at 32 years of age while working 55hrs a week/juggling a young baby and in night courses 4 nights a week. Can do it. You can do it. I am now on my way to becoming a fisheries officer and will help protect the future of Canada and its marine environment.

The support I will attain from this award will go a long way to providing for my family. To the Essential Skills Course I owe everything it motivated me to see my inner potential and help release it. Thank you to the donor. Thank you to Ginny. Especially thank you to Lily and Phil. I hope you both know how much of an impact you had on me. The person who has been my rock through all of this is my wife. She has been there for me and my son through this journey. It would not be possible without her. The struggle is normal to doubt yourself. Just do not listen to it. The day will come when I am sworn in as an officer. On that day I will look back to this. As Rocky Balboa said to his son in Rocky 6. “Until you start believing in yourself, you’re not going to have a life.”