

## **Master Packaging Scholarship Award 2024 – Louisa Mackula-Therault**

I want to start off by saying thank you to everyone for coming tonight, thank you to the event organizers, and thank you to all scholarship donors for helping us as students where we need it most. — As a recipient of the PEI Literacy Alliance Master Packing Award, I am honored to have been invited here today.

Tonight, I thought I would share a bit of my academic journey, how I got to where I am today, and what education means to me.

My situation growing up has not been the most normal with education, as I was homeschooled for my entire life. I may have had the high school equivalency level of education, but I did not have anything to prove these skills, so I simply got this minimum wage job at a grocery store once I was 18. In my mind, it was too late to fix this situation, and I thought I would just stay at this low wage job forever. But this thought terrified me. —You see, I've always been very curious, and my urge to learn and expand was not satisfied with a regular day to day job. I needed something that kept me always seeking new things. I needed to learn.

That is when I quit my job and decided to focus my time on getting my GED through the holland college adult education program. This was the first time I ever set foot in school. And about three years into being in school, with all the academic upgrading that followed, the rejection I faced to get into programs at holland college, and more academic upgrading, I finally got accepted into bioscience technology, a renowned science program at holland college.

I never gave up studying. Because I really wanted this. My ultimate purpose in life is to take in every bit of knowledge available to me. To learn. And with science, no matter how much time passes, it will remain new.

Science is endless knowledge, waiting to be discovered.

The opportunities and support that have been given to me through scholarships and awards allow me to pursue this passion. What I can do now to thank everyone that believed in me, is to pay it forward by staying true to my goals.

In the past, I would never have believed that I would be here today talking about this. But determination, and a strong desire for something will take you to unimaginable places. I'd like to share a quote by Steve Maraboli, who said: "Incredible change happens in your life when you decide to take control of what you do have power over, instead of craving control over what you don't."

My story goes to show that if you truly believe it, anything is possible.

Thank you.