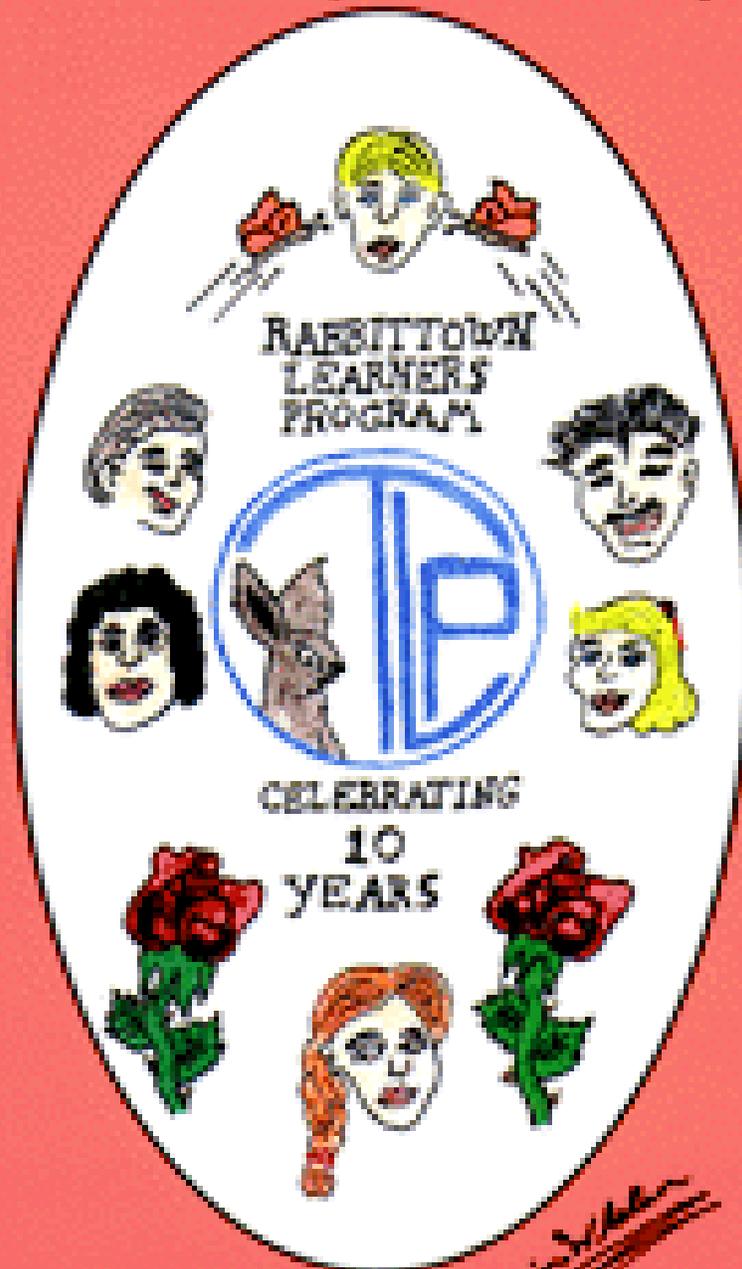


# *Faces of Literacy*



*Karina Schiller*

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## **Stories by participants from the Rabbittown Learners' Program**

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## *Foreword*

**T**his book was written to commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of the Rabbittown-Learners Program. These stories have been written by past and present learners and not only tell of their interests, but their life experiences and their struggles with trying to cope with little or no education. While some corrections have been made to grammar throughout the book, most words and grammar have been left unchanged, leaving you the reader with their real stories.

A special thank you to the Literacy Development Council who provided the financial support for this project. This was presented to the Rabbittown Learners Program during our Tenth Anniversary celebrations in May, 1998.

I would also like to pay tribute to the tutors whose hard work and dedication also played an important role in compiling these stories for your reading. I hope you enjoy *Faces of Literacy*.

—Doris Hapgood  
Program Coordinator

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## *My Improvement*

**M**y name is Maurice Bailey and I would like to share my thoughts about my life, and the Rabbittown Learners Program.

I finished school in 1974 with a grade 8 education. After I finished school I worked at many different jobs, such as bartending, taxi driving, landscaping, and also as a laborer on construction jobs. I always felt that if I had my education there could be a better life for me and my family. That's when I decided I needed to go back to school.

I did not really know how to go about getting in school, or where any of the schools were located. I contacted my M.H.A. for Trinity North and asked him to find out some information for me. He gave me the number of a man I could call. He was a social worker. He arranged a meeting for me with a counsellor at the S.A.T. Centre. I went there, and was tested to see what grade level I was at. It was decided that I should try to get in to the Rabbittown Learners Program.

I was very lucky to be accepted into the Rabbittown Learners Program in July of 1996. My first day of school, I was very nervous because there were a lot of new people for me to meet. At that time there were twenty students in the program. When I first started here I could not read or spell. I was asked to spell the word "the", and I could not spell it.

There are currently three tutors and a coordinator, who are always there to help. They are excellent tutors to work with, and I owe them a lot for all of the help they have given me. Thanks to these people, I think my reading and spelling has improved a lot over the past year. I hope to move on and get my grade twelve in the near future. My dream is to become a Landscape Architect in the years to come.

—*Maurice Bailey*

## *When I Was A Kid*

**W**hen I was a kid, about seven or eight, I can remember being in my grandfather's stage as my grandfather, his brother, and my father would be doing their fish. I can still see the old men coming down the flake, waiting for the boat to come in from fishing. The older men were looking for a fresh fish. The men would pick through the fish for a big one. I remember listening to the men talk about when they were fishing and how big the fish were then. "There are some lovely fish there." my grandfather would say.

Grandfather and my brother would wash the fish and put it in the pound to be salted. I remember sometimes, when they were late getting in, there would be so much fish to do that mother would have to help with the catch. Me and my brother would have to get out of bed and go with mother to the stage. Mother would not leave us in the house by ourselves late in the night. They would have to get the fish done as fast as they could, so they could get some rest for the next day. Sometimes it would be so late, like twelve or one in the morning, before the fish would be done. Father would sleep until four o'clock and they would be fishing again.

I liked going to the stage. My friends and I would spend a lot of time there. We would catch Tom Cods on the stage head, and sometimes in the boat tied on to the stage head. We would play in the trap store. Grandfather had two big trap stores.

Some days, when it was nice, grandfather would let us have the rowboat to go for a row. We would row to Copper Island, and there would be gulls nesting there. We would pick up baby gulls, then we would row around the harbor. We would also row to Duck Island and to Everidge's Point to dig some cocks and hens, to see who would dig up the biggest one. By five o'clock we would have to be back. Grandmother had a good view of the harbor, and she would be watching us from the window in their house.

—*Colin Brett*

## *Ice Fishing*

**I** went off ice fishing last Saturday. I left the house at seven o'clock in the morning. I stopped at a store to buy some bait and then left to go to the Witless Bay Line.

It took me about five or ten minutes to get to Feather Bed Pond. When I got there, I asked the boys on the side of the pond, "Did you catch any fish yet?" They said they caught about twelve dozen fish. They asked me if I was going up to the next pond, and I said, "Yes". I was the first person up to Whale Back Pond. It took me about fifteen minutes to get there.

When I got up there, I started to look for a spot to put a hole in the ice. I put my first line down, and in a few minutes I had a bite. In fifteen minutes I had caught eight fish.

I saw two people on bikes coming toward me. They stopped and asked if I was getting any fish. I told them I caught eight fish. They went on. About fifteen minutes later I saw three people coming toward me on bikes. They stopped, and asked me how many fish I had caught. I said, "About eight". They told me they were fishery officers and said, "We are here to check the holes, and see how many fish you have." They asked for my name and which way I came up to the pond. I said, "I came up on the path." They said, "Good luck with your fishing", and left.

Around three o'clock I had caught twelve and a half dozen fish. I left the pond to go back down. When I got to the first pond, I went looking to see if there were any holes around. I took one of the lines out of my napsack. I put my line in the hole and got a fish right away.

When I got back to my truck the boys asked me how many fish I got. I had just over twelve and a half dozen. At the end of the day my legs were very tired. The next day they were still tired.

—*Boyd Coffin*

## *I Went Back To School To Upgrade*

**L**ast June, I decided to go back to school to upgrade. I went to my financial assistance officer and asked him to help me. I had to write tests at the S.A.T. Center for three days to see what grade level I was at.

On June 26th, 1998, I started school at the Rabbittown Learners Program. I met new teachers and new friends, and it's a nice place to come and learn to read, write, and spell. It is very hard to get back to learning because I've been out of school since I was sixteen.

I was nervous at first, meeting new people. Instead of teachers, we have tutors, who put our hearts and minds at ease. It is very nice to have Rabbittown to come to and upgrade the education that I have.

My mind takes me back to when I was in grade one. We would have to walk to school in snow or rain, then go home and do our homework under a lamp. There were no lights back then. We had to light a fire in the morning to warm up the house because there were no furnaces. We put our boots on back of the stove, and hung our snow pants and mittens on nails. There were no washers, only wash tubs.

—*Doris Combden*

## *My Achievements At Rabbittown*

**I** have been a learner at the Rabbittown Learners Program since May 26, 1997. In that time I have improved my reading and writing skills.

First, I am going to talk about the people I've met since being there. They are very nice and they accept me for who I am. You don't have to be someone you're not. We feel like a big family down here. You get used to all the different learners.

I know I am getting something from the Rabbittown Learners Program because people have been telling me that I'm doing much better, and I read so good. That proves I am learning what the tutors teach me. I think I'm doing pretty good.

My family is so supportive of me. Sometimes I can't explain what I feel, but it's a good feeling.

I would tell anyone who wants to learn about this program, that it's a good place to learn. It's not all work, we have fun too. We have dress up day, outings, barbeques, etc., which are great times for all of us.

This program has taught me a lot about myself. When I started here there was one book that I couldn't understand, and that was the bible. I learned how to read it, and when I read in church now people can't believe what I have done with my life.

I really enjoy it here. It is something to look forward to every day. There are four of us sitting at the table, and we help each other. When I started here I only had grade five, but I've learned a lot since then. I'm looking forward to the future now.

—*Barb Cumden*

## *What Literacy Means to Me*

**T**oday I'm going to talk about Literacy because I think there is a lot of illiteracy on the go. Only now, people don't feel bad about coming out and going back to school to upgrade their education. I know what it's like because I went through it, and I'm still going through it. The worst part about it, is when your children come to you with a book to read to them, and you can't. It doesn't feel very good.

Another thing is trying to play word games, and you always have a reason not to play, because you don't want to be embarrassed. So you go and you hide away somewhere. It's not a good feeling when you feel like you don't know what's wrong with you, but you know that you didn't finish school. Most of the time you feel down on yourself. I know this because, I felt like it for fifteen years, and I knew I could learn, but didn't know what to do about it. I lost a lot of things because I have no education. I used to sit down and think what would it be like to sit down and have a conversation with a group of people, and know what they were talking about. It's like you feel you're not what you should be. There is something missing in your life and you have to complete it.

—*Eric A. Dawe*

## *My Life*

**M**y name is Danny and I am 24 years old. When I was eight, I was sent to a foster home in central Newfoundland. I lived there for three years, away from my parents, not knowing when I would see them again, or if we would be a family again. The people I lived with made me feel safe, and helped me to not worry about things.

I went to live with my mom again in 1986, when I was twelve. When I was fourteen years old I made big mistakes, like quitting school. I really don't know why I did it, or how I got away with it.

At the age of eighteen I left the province, hoping to make something out of my life, without an education. The way I did it was wrong. I was living in Ontario, trying to find work. I did find jobs, and stuck with them for a while, but I knew, deep down, that the way I got the job was wrong. I lied on my application. I did this for three years off and on.

At the age of twenty-one, I gave up trying to be somebody with an education. I just wanted to be myself, and tell the people around me who I really was. I did, and now I'm back in Newfoundland attending the Rabbittown Learners Program. I am enjoying it very much.

The day I complete my grade twelve education I will thank myself and all the people who helped me. I will be the person I've always wanted to be.

—*Danny Dwyer*

## *Betty's Christmas Mug*

**B**etty is a tutor at the Rabbittown Learners Program, and she is the proud owner of a green, red and blue Christmas mug. It was last December that Betty's little ones went to the Avalon Mall with their dad, and the money they had saved from chores over the past few months.

Hanna, and her younger brother Joshua, didn't know what to get their mom. All they knew was that it had to be something really nice. Hanna went from store to store and finally her dad said, "Walmart is the last store, I hope you'll have better luck finding something here for your mom."

While going through the knick-knack area, Hanna came to a large selection of drinking mugs. There were mugs with "Merry Christmas" on them, and some with "Noel".

It was then that a colorful mug caught her eye. It had all kinds of toys on it. A rocking horse was next to a Christmas tree. There were also teddy bears and candy canes, and even dolls. Hanna thought to herself that it was the perfect gift for her mom.

Sure enough, Christmas Day came and Betty was handed her present. Hanna said, "This is from me and Joshua, I hope you like it". Betty replied, "I'm sure what ever it is, I'll love it." "Well mom, open it!" With that Betty tore off the wrapping paper and said, "Isn't that beautiful! I love it Hanna. Thank you Joshua," and she gave them a big hug and kiss.

After the Christmas dinner was completely consumed, everyone helped with the dishes and Betty sat back on the couch drinking coffee from her pretty mug.

Afterward, the mug was washed and put up into the cupboard for safe keeping.

That was a year ago this December, and faithfully Betty brings her Christmas mug to school. You often see Betty walking back and forth the room holding that mug and sipping her coffee, as she stops occasionally at a table to help one of us learners.

At the end of the day Betty washes her mug and puts it in her coat and brings it back home.

The next day it starts all over again. She places her mug on the kitchen table and pours herself another cup of coffee.

—Gladys Farrell

## *Canadians in the Olympics, 1998*

**I**n 1998 general manager, Bobby Clarke put together a team of N.H.L. Players to represent Canada in the Olympics. Canada put together a good team that would make Canadians very proud to see our team win a gold medal in hockey, but that wasn't the case. The team went into the second round undefeated, and the medal's round was about to start in a couple of days. They beat the first team, but the second team they played was not so easy, they lost. Canada with all the talent they had, couldn't get past the Czechs. It was very disappointing for me to see this team go down so fast, and yet I'm very proud of what they did.

—*John Glasco*

## *My Family*

**T**his is a story about my family who died from Von-Hippellinah Disease.

My father died on June 12, 1966, because of a tumor in his head. Fifteen years later my sister Annie went into a coma after she had a baby. On September 21, 1981, she had a seizure and died.

Four or five months later, my other sister got checked for Von-Hippellinah Disease and they found a tumor in the back of her head. She had an operation to remove the tumor. During the operation the doctor hit a nerve in the back of her head, which caused her mind to tell her bladder not to work. She had a catheter put in her side and it brought on an infection. She was taking pills to stop the infection from spreading.

When she was in the hospital, they found a bug in her kidney. They had to give her medication to fight the bug for seven days, but she died a couple of days later. The infection spread to her heart, and she died on June 13, 1987. She died twenty-one years and one day after my father.

—Pearcey Lane

## **WINTER**

It is snowing,  
Quite a lot,  
Covered the roads,  
And the rest of the block.

The children built a snowman,  
And the snowmobile killed him.

## **THE CHOICE**

He drove into town,  
In his vehicle.  
A corvette it was,  
What a vehicle.

I had to choose between the two,  
I chose the corvette,  
Because he was an idiot.

—*Joanne Lewis*

## *A Day In School*

**I** was born in Frenchman's Cove, on the south coast of Newfoundland, in 1942. I went to Burin, when I was seven, and started my second year of school. It was called Doller Hill Anglican School. It was one room. Grades one to eleven went there. I went with my two sisters and two brothers.

The school was big inside. Our seats were up and down each side of the room, with the teacher's desk in the middle. We would go in, when the bell rang, and sit down. The teacher would mark the register. She would call out our names one by one, and we would say "present." After roll call it was prayer time. Then we would be told to open our books and start work.

We had recess in the morning and in the afternoon. We played ball and hopscotch. I really enjoyed intermission, or recess, as I called it. We got a break from work. Dinner time, some children went home, and those who had something to eat stayed. The teacher always stayed in school for dinner.

There were good times and bad. We all had our turn lighting the fire in the morning. We had to bring our own splits to keep the coals going. Then we would shovel it until we had a good heat. Sometimes I would turn the old pot belly red in the cold weather. We had no bathroom, just an outhouse. Believe me, it was cold out there. There was no bathroom tissue so we had to bring some from home. We had to drink cod oil every day. It was yellow, in a clear bottle, and it tasted awful.

Sometimes I would write a note to someone, and pass it to them when no one was watching. The teacher would be really busy, and wasn't aware of what we were at. We would flick paper balls at each other with our rulers. We were unaware that some of the students who were watching would sometimes tell on us, and we would have to stay in recess time. Never the less, we would end up doing it again when ever we got the chance. Although we would throw things, it never affected our work. We tried our best and finished whatever we had to do.

When I went to school we never had any programs. Sometimes we had a concert at Christmas.

Once, I had to go down into the coal locker to bring up a bucket of coal because it was my turn. Someone barred the hatch on me and I was some scared. I didn't like to go down very often after that.

After school I would go home, do my homework, and then put the radio on the right channel to listen to Perry Mason. It was a good story that came on five days a week, at six o'clock in the evening.

—*Bridget Lundrigan*

## *Margie's Story*

**W**hen I was a little girl (8 years old) I went to Belvedere Orphanage because my father was killed in a car accident, and my mother died. I was in the orphanage about fifty years. My sister Mary came with me to Belvedere. My other sisters and brothers went to live with relatives.

In the orphanage I went to school. I passed my grades, up to grade five. I never liked school. I had scarlet fever that year and I was very sick. I never went back to school. After that I wanted to work, so the sisters let me work in the laundry and the kitchen at the orphanage. I loved working. When I was old enough I used to help with the smaller children and I would wash and hang their clothes on the clothes line. We had lots of good times at the orphanage and lots of friends. We used to go on lots of picnics and parties and shopping trips. The sisters were so good to me and my sister Mary. Of course the orphanage was our home.

When the orphanage closed, Mary and myself stayed on and helped the sisters, and in 1992 we both went to St. Patrick's Mercy Home. We have our own private room and we are happy there. We see lots of entertainment at St. Patrick's Mercy Home and we both love music.

About two years ago Ms. Turner, the administrator at the home, arranged for me to attend the Rabbittown Learner's Program. My friend, Regina Andrews, comes with me, stays with me, and helps me with my work. Since coming to this school I think I have learned a lot. I can now spell lots of words. I know how to add and subtract small numbers. I also work on the computer and type small stories.

My friend Regina helped me write this story by writing down all the things I told her. It was too long and there were too many different words for me to write out by myself.

—*Margie Mahoney*

## *My New Family*

**J**une, 1996, was the first time in eight years that I got to see my cousins Shane, April, Carl, and Carl's wife Yvonne. Seeing them was really nice. I couldn't believe how much they had changed.

April was only six years old (the last time I saw her) with light blonde hair down to her waist. The next time I saw her she was thirteen and all grown up. Shane was nine and a half years old the last time I saw him. He loved playing with his robots and cars. He is now eighteen years old, and he graduated grade twelve with honors.

Every weekend, since 1996, they would pack their suitcases and drive out to my house in Spaniard's Bay and spend the weekend. Sundays were sad for me. After supper they would have to leave and drive back to their house in Goulds. Boy, did I cry when it came time to say good-bye. My cousin Carl would comfort me by saying, "Elizabeth, I promise you, we will be out again next Friday night." Sure enough, every Friday night I would sit and wait for the van to pull into our driveway. My face would light up. We would hug and kiss just as soon as they entered the house. Carl would bring out his music, and we would have a few drinks and a few dances.

As the weekends came and went, I became more attached to all four of them. Summer came and went also. The next thing I knew, it was late fall. They could not make as many trips out now because Carl is a D.J., and his bookings had started for Christmas dances. I thought to myself, "what am I going to do?" The next thing I knew, I started spending some weekdays and weekends at their house.

In August, 1996, I had to make a lot of trips to St. John's for appointments, due to my upcoming surgery. On August 8, 1996, I had my jaw surgery done. It was a six hour procedure, and I almost didn't make it. I stopped breathing and I lost a lot of blood. On Saturday, August 10, I could go home. I spent two whole days at my cousin's house. On Monday, they drove me home.

Weeks after that they still came out to see me, and they would call to see how I was. My cousin April spent a week with me. When she returned home I had to go with her. It was my weekly check-up at Dr. Cardinal's office.

On October 5, 1996, my cousins had a surprise birthday party for me. It was my twenty-first birthday, and Carl brought out his stereo system and played it. His wife had taken me out for supper. When we got back to the house, everyone was there. That night, I enjoyed myself. When everyone started singing Happy Birthday to me, I turned to my cousin Shane and cried on his shoulder. That was the Hart time I was with them on my birthday.

On November 24, 1996, I had a family problem. I couldn't get along with my mom and my brother. My brother started saying stuff to me, and I just couldn't stay there. I phoned my cousin's house but both of them were out playing darts. I told their daughter April to have them call me right away. About ten thirty that same night, my cousin Carl called me. I was crying on the phone and I wanted them to come and get me, but it was late. I had everything packed up and I was ready to move out.

On Monday, November 25, 1996, I moved into my cousin's house. I had a wonderful Christmas with them, the best one I ever had. As time went on I was finally happy.

On June 16, 1997, I started school at Rabbittown. It was a big change in my life. I was getting a second chance to return to school, and a lot of thanks goes to Carl and his family for helping me do that. I hope to get my grade twelve and find a job.

On Friday, October 10, we had a Thanksgiving Day dinner at school, and we had to write a speech on what we were thankful for. I have a new family, one who loves me and cares for me. I didn't know what that was until I moved in to their home. I feel a whole lot happier than before. By living with them, I know what love is. They show me what it's all about.

On October 6, 1997, they started me out with my hope chest. I have a changed life since I moved in with my new family. I also know what it's like to have some money. This November, it will be one year. It seems like I have been living with them for years. I feel really happy to have them back in my life.

I wouldn't be as far as I am today, if I didn't get a second chance to know them. I feel more wanted. I have a lot of new things now, and I'm glad to have them. This is all possible because of the love and support of my new family.

—*Elizabeth Morgan*

## ***In My School***

**M**y daughter found out about the Rabbittown Learners Program. I wanted to come and try this for a while. I was very nervous at first. I found it hard and I still do. My reading has gotten better, but it is very slow going.

I am very glad that I came and started this. I thank the Rabbittown Learners Program for helping me.

—*Eric Noseworthy*

## *A Christmas Wish*

**I** wish that my mom would get better so she could enjoy her Christmas. That's all I ask for Christmas. I pray to god every night that her health will improve, so she could live a perfect long life.

Last night when we sat down to dinner mom had to get up and get sick. Mom gets sick like this all the time. I wish mom could eat something and keep it down. It really upsets me because I don't know how much longer mom is going to be around. That is why I pray to god that mom is here for a long time.

All I want for Christmas is my prayer to be answered—that mom lives a long, perfect, healthy life.

—*Paul Reddy*

## *Wake-a-Thon*

*I*t's October 16, 1997, and we are getting ready for the wake-a-thon. We are excited about tonight. There will be all kinds of activities like bingo, darts, and crib, and there will be lots of prizes too. I like doing this kind of fundraiser because it helps me get to know people better.

We are raising money for Christmas hampers for people who can't afford things for Christmas. I can't wait! I like being around people. Some of the students can't be here because of other commitments.

It's time to leave school and be back at 8:00 p.m. We are all getting foolish now, but that's the way it's going to be all night. We are also having music that I can listen to all night. It's getting more and more exciting, and the closer it gets, the more we are getting foolish.

At 8:00 p.m. our wake-a-thon had started. There were three people dressed in their pajamas. Their names were Cecil, Lori and Doris. They all looked funny, especially Doris. Everybody said that she looked like nanny Heinz. The first thing we did was break balloons. We had to act out what was on the paper inside the balloons. It was a ball of fun. Bridget had to act like a monkey. That was priceless. Steven had to act like a dog, so he put up his leg, and that was funny. They were all a laugh.

After all that acting we sat down and played bingo and crib. That was fun too, and people were winning prizes. Every time someone called out a number, Barb had a funny comment to make about the number. It was hilarious.

It was about 1:30 - 1:45 a.m. We all went downstairs to play darts. We had a great time. We all had teams and played against one another. One of the teams (my team) played only one game. It took us over an hour to finish. Doris was especially funny when she got into the coffin that the people had made downstairs. When we finished, we all went upstairs to play bingo.

I didn't play because I went to play with the Nintendo game. I played a few games and then I went back to play more bingo. We acted even more foolish because everybody was tired.

The end was near. We all went for breakfast at Burger King. Then we all went our separate ways. This was the night of our wake-a-thon.

—*Alicia Saunders*

## *Feeling Satisfied*

**M**y name is Marjorie, and I came to the Rabbittown Learners Program to help me learn to read and write. I don't feel ready to go to the Avalon Community College quite yet because I don't have much confidence in my abilities. I have not been in school for twenty-five years.

As a girl in school I would study a little, but I had trouble with it. I quit and went to work. I worked at different jobs, such as housekeeping in a nursing home. These jobs didn't allow me to get ahead in life.

Now, I go to school at the Rabbittown Learners Program. I meet new people, and the teachers are very nice to me. I am learning a lot.

I like to knit and crochet. I would like to learn how to go by a book, but it is very hard to do by myself. Right now, I am doing a blanket for a bed. I like to sell the crafts I make.

I am a volunteer with Helping Hands, a group that helps other people in need. I enjoy what I do, and learn a lot of different things. Being a volunteer is a very satisfying feeling.

—*Marjorie Short*

## *My Life*

**I** have been out of school for about twenty-five years. The last grade I was in was a grade six special education program.

I found school very hard, back when I was in school, because the teacher didn't have time to spend with me because there were about thirty or forty kids in my classroom.

I was in class for four days and I worked outside for one day. It was called on the job work experience.

After about four months I started to work weekends for some money of my own. After school was finished I started to work full time so I decided to drop out of school. I was working for different companies off and on for about nine years before I started to work for an electrical company.

I worked for the electrical company for about fourteen years. I was laid off last year, so I decided to look for work, and realized that I needed grade twelve for all the jobs that are out there today.

I decided to go back to school on May 23rd, 1997. The first couple of weeks I found it hard. It was like starting school for the first time.

I have been in school for three months. I didn't realize how poorly my education was. Since I've been in school I feel good about myself and my family. My family is happy that I went back to school. I feel that I can take a book or paper and read it and understand what I am reading. I'm very glad that I went back to school because it is good to know how to read and write.

I am very pleased with Rabbittown Learners Program. I found the school a good place to go and start my education. I find the tutors are very good because they take time to help you with your work. I find the co-ordinator of the school a very good person to get along with. I hope that the government will keep funding Rabbittown Learners Program for a long time. There are a lot of people out there that need a place like Rabbittown to go to and learn.

I know that I made a mistake by not staying in school. When I talk to kids today I tell them to stay in school and get their education because they need it if they want a good future and a good life.

I only wish that I had to stay in school myself because I wouldn't be struggling to finish school today. Maybe things would be better for me and my family today if I stayed in school back then. The important thing is that I'm here now, and one of my goals is to get my grade twelve.

—*Danny Stokes*

## *My Life*

**I**n 1980, when I was in junior high school, we had to take part in gym class. We had to do gymnastics. I did not want to do it, but we had to. When it came to my turn, I told the gym teacher I did not want to do it, but the gym teacher said, "if you don't I will give you a hundred lines to write." Instead of writing the lines, I did what she said. The teacher said, "wait until I tell you what to do before you get hurt". It was my turn, I was doing what the teacher told me, how to jump on the trampoline. When I jumped, I jerked the wrong way and hurt my neck.

After school I was complaining about my neck, so my father took me to the hospital. The doctor said that I only pulled a muscle, and gave me a collar. This did not work and I was still in pain. Then my father took me to the Janeway, and the doctor down there said that I had two bones out of place. The doctor said to my father, "you are a lucky man to have your daughter alive today." He said if I had to cough or sneeze I would have died on the couch. He was really glad that I was brought down to see him. I had to stay in and be placed in a halo for two and a half months.

Each time I think about this I get sad, because it brings back painful memories which I am trying to forget.

—*Peggy Tizzard*

## *A Visit*

**M**y friend invited me to her house for a visit, and I am very excited to see my friend. I am going to enjoy my visit with her. We are going to be talking about Christmas trees and other things, like how nice her tree is decorated and if she is looking forward to Christmas this year in her own place. I am going to enjoy Christmas this year. I hope everyone enjoys their Christmas too.

—*Marilyn Walsh*

## *When I Started School*

**I** started school in 1983. My first day in kindergarten, I was scared. There were a lot of scared kids there. At the end of the school year we had to read a speech. The last day of school my teacher told me that I would have to stay back in kindergarten for another year. The second year in kindergarten was easy, but at the end of the year I had to read the speech again. The teacher told mom that I didn't have to spend another year in kindergarten.

In grade one, I found it was hard to read. The other kids in my class teased me about reading. One day I told the teacher I found it hard to read. The teacher called my mom and asked her if I had had any testing done over at the university or the Janeway.

In grade seven, I started to hate school. Everybody in school picked on me because of my reading. The last week in school the teacher told me that she was going to put me ahead to grade nine. In grade nine I was put in "work experience". I still found it hard to read, so the teacher sent me to the Janeway for work experience three days a week.

My last year in high school, I was very mad because I wasn't getting the education I needed.

When I started at Rabbittown in December, 1996, I was happy because I was finally going to have another chance at an education. I have been here almost a year now. Since I've been here, I know how to read and write better.

—*Kevin Whelan*

**E**very morning when I wake up I look out my window. I see the same thing every day. I feel that there is too much of the same thing, and it would be nice to go somewhere and see new sights.

Once, I went on a trip. I was gone for two weeks. I saw things that I couldn't imagine. You don't know what you're missing unless you go and explore different lifestyles and places.

Anyway, back to my trip. I went to one place where everyone had to wear a hat. I thought that was strange, because they only wore hats inside and not outside. I went to another place and people only wore mittens in the summer time. I thought that wearing mittens in the summer would be very uncomfortable, but that's what the people did there.

It's all strange to you and I, but not to them.

—*Stephen Yetman*