

Adult Learner Stories of Success





A Message from the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick

The adult learners you are about to meet in the following pages show tremendous spirit, strength and determination. Through our partnerships and funds raised through the Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament for Literacy (PGI NB), the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick has connected them with tutors and programs throughout the province and they have shown exceptional progress in their learning journeys.

While their backgrounds, ages and reasons for being adult learners are varied, these individuals share a commitment to persevere in order to make a positive change in their lives. Whether their goal was to find a job, read a phone book, or set a good example for their children or grandchildren, they have all made learning a priority despite challenges and obstacles along the way. As a result, they share a sense of empowerment and a desire to reach out to others.

These are their stories. These are their words. Please join us in celebrating them.

Kirk Moss

2011 International Adult Learners Week Writing Contest Winner



Natasha Bozek and Kirk Moss

Gleaned from my own memory,
This is what learning means to me.
Doing things that I thought I would never do again,
To establish a successful life-long plan.
To better the future for my family and self,
Means dusting the cobwebs from the bookshelf.
Putting my brain into overdrive,
Finding in which, the subjects that I thrive.
Never knowing what is going to come my way,
Since I learn something new every day.
Language arts, social studies, science and math,
Are subjects that I have encountered on my path.
Nobody said they were going to be easy,
In fact at times, they have made me rather queasy.
But I refuse to quit, so I must press on,
To allow the beginning of new ideas to spawn.

Ideas that influence the younger generation,
So they may see the importance of higher education.
Having them abandon their cell phones, computers and video games,
Meeting people one on one,
Putting faces to their names.
Allowing youth to develop
The social skills they can.
We must wake up - ultimately
The future is in their hands.
They are the generation
Who will save us as a nation.
But how will they ever do that,
Without an education?
It's not just about homework,
Or going to school every day,
But it's about planning for the future,
And whatever comes your way.
However planning is not easy,
Without knowing what you want to do.
That is why education is so important,
For everyone, not just the few.
So challenge yourself, challenge your children, challenge a friend,
In New Brunswick, lifelong learning can become a trend.

Sandra Burke

2012 Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarship Award Recipient

“School was always a struggle for me as I am dyslexic. I failed twice but always worked hard to push through. I was forced to drop out of school to care for my child. My intention was always to go back to school to get my education. Little did I know that my twenty-year journey would lead me to the Community Adult Learning Centre program at the age of 38.

When my children were all in school I decided to go into the workforce. I obtained a job in the insurance industry. Much like school it was difficult for me. Even still I worked hard and enjoyed my job. Sadly, after nine years I was let go due to the fact I could not keep up to the constant changes in technology. But with that sadness great happiness was soon to follow as I realized this was my time to follow my dream and complete my education.

I had an amazing case worker who saw my potential and believed in me. She arranged an assessment and I was diagnosed with dyslexia and dyscalculia. Then shortly after I received a call that there was a first time summer program and that I was accepted to go. The first couple of days were overwhelming but after that I was given tools to help me learn. My teacher decided to read to us and I read along with a copy of the book. It was magical for me to realize I understood! And she helped me realize that this is how I learn! From that point on she helps me by reading my text books as I follow along. This has allowed me to no longer limit myself and now I am going to University or College.”



Deanna Allen, Charmaine Savoie, Clare Archibald, Sandra Burke and Sheree Fitch



Michelle Carinci, Kerry Babin and Sheree Fitch

Kerry Babin

2011 Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarship Award Recipient

“My name is Kerry Ann Babin. I am a wife and mother of six. I am originally from the states and was 18 when I first started to go for my GED. I moved to Quebec where my siblings and I lived on Listiguj First Nations Reserve with my mother and stepfather. There I joined in an Adult Education Program to continue my studies. At 21 I became pregnant and had to stop classes to care for my son. At 26 I met my future husband and his two sons and we made a family. With my son, I moved across the Restigouche River to live with them in Campbellton, NB.

With my husband’s encouragement, I joined what at the time was known as CASP (Community Academic Studies Program). From the time I was 18, I had one goal in mind and that was to get my GED. Dropping out of school at 16 was a bad idea and my greatest regret. I adored going to class and my teacher, Ruth Mather, was wonderful and very understanding. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I have been in and out of class over the years. However, I keep returning... determined to get my diploma. When I was finally ready for my first GED test, I passed four of the five tests. Since Math is my most difficult subject, I know I would have to study more. I have been for the exam four times. Each time I have increased my score. This shows me that my Math is getting better thanks to the help of my teacher.

I am now 40 years old and have six children. I am still in class which is now known as CALP (Community Adult Learning Program) with the same wonderful teacher guiding me. Without this program and the support of the teacher, I would not be so close to achieving the first part of my dream- to get my GED diploma.

The second part of my dream is to work professionally with children. I volunteer a lot at the local elementary school. I love working with young children. They are our future so we need to care for and guide them to the best of our abilities. The past two years I have been an ELF (Elementary Literacy Friend) tutor. ELF tutors help second grade students who are struggling with their reading. We work one on one with them until they get to the level they should be. It is a miracle to see how well the program works.

My future goal, the one all of this has been moving me toward, is to get my Early Childhood Education Certificate so that I’m able to work professionally with children. I adore working with children; they teach us as much as we teach them. Whether I will be in the school system or a daycare or some other setting, this work will fill the great need I have to guide and support our future.

Education is the key to survival... for without it, life goes nowhere. At whatever age you are there is always something new to learn. CALP and my teacher will always have my deepest gratitude for all they have helped me achieve.”



Bill Stirling, Judy Cairns, Wen You Hu and Sheree Fitch

Wen You Hu

2012 Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarship Award Recipient

“My name is Wen You. I live in Dieppe, New Brunswick with my husband and son. We have been living here for one year. I had a retail business for 6 years before I came to Canada. Everything is new and challenging for me. The big issue is learning a new language.

I am very smart when I use my native language. But, you cannot imagine how silly I feel when I want to say something and the word does not sound appropriate. When I talk to people they do not always understand me, and when I want to write something, there is always something wrong.

I need help so badly. I need to find someone, somehow, to help me get through this language barrier, if I am to find a job and make a living. I learned some English at MAGMA for 2 months, then took a GED course at the New Brunswick Community College in Moncton, and it worked!! I feel so good and I am so proud because I received my GED certificate this month! I met many people there and started to talk with more confidence.

I also borrow books from the library and keep reading with my son every night; it helps our reading comprehension and pronunciation. But I want to go further. I am so grateful because I found the right people to assist me in learning English as a Second Language. I googled Literacy Programs online and I found Maureen at the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick, Janette from Frontier College, and my wonderful tutor Judy. I want to thank all of you. I appreciate all the help you have given me.

This literacy program and a tutor is what I need. It is so important in my life right now. I believe I can overcome the language barrier soon and find a good job. Also, I want to be a writer to use this beautiful English language naturally, to express what I think and feel. I am so excited to be here to receive this literacy award. Someday I hope I have the opportunity to tutor people who need literacy assistance, especially when they are learning a second language.”

Joan Doucette

2011 Goguen Champlain Adult Learner Achievement Award Recipient

“Hi. My name is Joan Doucette and I am 55 years old. I am a mother of three grown children and three grandchildren. I left school at the age of 16 as I was going to have my first child. My intention was to go back to school after I had my child but didn't go back. I was in grade seven when I left. I stayed home to bring up my children and moved many times in many places in New Brunswick.

The new part of my journey started back in January 2011 when I decided to take a program called Power Up and then went to another one where I was taught to set goals and try to carry them out. I always wanted to go back to school, so I picked up the phone and called the Saint John Learning Exchange to see if I could get in there to study for my GED. I am now in the Basic Education & Skills Training (B.E.S.T.) program and am learning many new things like how to write in complete sentences and how to use proper punctuation. People can notice the changes in my speaking and how different it looks when I send an e-mail and everything is in the right place.

In math I learned about fractions, decimals, the metric system, algebra, and geometry. I also learned how to add tax on things I buy or how much of a tip I should leave. I am getting better in other subjects like science, social studies, and reading too. I have always liked to read, but I find that since I started at the Saint John Learning Exchange, I can read books with bigger words in them, as I can now sound them out.

Besides my GED studies, I am also working on empowering myself as a woman. I was chosen to be a mentor to the women who are currently in the Power-UP program. I was required to do a week-long mentor training program and was paired up with my mentee. She comes from Korea and is trying to learn English. I am taking the lessons that I'm learning in the B.E.S.T. program and helping my mentee with her English skills too. My facilitator allows me to attend mentor related events while still attending the B.E.S.T. program and this is boosting my confidence in so many ways. I have come out of my shell and am more comfortable speaking in public.



Gilles LeBlanc, Honorable Graydon Nicholas and Joan Doucette

I write my G.E.D. in September 2011 and it is my goal to have my GED by the time I turn 56 in November. My future plans are to continue to mentor other women in the Power-Up program and to also help individuals who want to improve their English or math skills. I also like the thought of working with elderly people or those with disabilities. I have a big heart for those less fortunate.

I feel that you should learn something new every day and you are never too old to learn and make a difference in the lives of others.”



*Paula Ross, Jared Sacobie
and Jeremy Robinson*

Jared Sacobie

2012 International Adult Learners Week Writing Contest Winner

“My name is Jared Sacobie, I am an Aboriginal male 21 years of age. I am currently enrolled in an adult learning program here in Saint John, New Brunswick and this is my story of how continuous learning is making a difference in my life.

This is my aspect of how continuous learning is making a difference in my life from a jail setting. To date I have participated in a few adult learning programs one of which I’m in now, and also another was the W.E.S (Workplace Essential Skills) program, which I completed October 14, 2011. Through-out the duration of W.E.S program I was able to obtain my T.C.P. and W.H.I.M.I.S. certificates and also the confidence to pursue farther up-grading. Being incarcerated is a very un-fortunate situation in a lot of ways. Briefly, being away from love ones friends and family and also being taking away from society; these are some of the hardest things I have ever had to deal with.

However the institution here in Saint John has, in the past, offered similar programs, with no prevail. Before taking place, the W.E.S program put on an information session. What has caught my attention at that session was the fact that W.E.S was partnered up with Apprentice New Brunswick to help individuals find careers. After completing the program this lead me to the realization of needing to get my G.E.D in life, and think about my life very thoroughly and what options were available to me. If I can work through the proper channels to achieve my desired aim before my release, I am at an advantage and not a disadvantage. From my experience, that’s what continuous learning is all about. Whether it’s from an un-fortunate situation or what not, the purpose of continuous learning is to help people to gain the advantage when up-grading for school or improving work skills. Benefits and possibilities of continuous learning can be endless, depending on the motivation, want, and the need to rise above what’s already been done, and accomplish what hasn’t been done.”

Peter Creamer

2012 Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarship Award Recipient

“My name is Peter Ryan Creamer and I am attending an Adult Learning Program at the Quispamsis Arena called Youth Choices. I was attending the Saint John Kings Adult Learning Program at the Saint John Regional Correctional Center. I attended that program for nearly two months and was afforded the opportunity to write the GED exams at the New Brunswick Community College in Saint John. I managed to pass four of the five exams. I am now at the Youth Choices Program in order to study Math for the November GED writing.

What has brought me to the Adult Learning Programs is the need to make a positive change in my life and further my education. In my past I have made a lot of poor choices and these choices have really led me down a rough road. The worst choice I made by far is dropping out of school while in grade eight. Dropping out of school has made it very hard to find good steady employment and this is a huge obstacle that I want to overcome.

I am a thirty one year old father of three and by achieving my educational goals I will be setting a good example and ensuring my path to good employment so I am able to provide for them. For a great deal of my life I have been a slave to addiction and this program is really helping me to make the positive changes that will send me down the path to a better and more stable future.

The Adult Learning Programs have really given me structure in my life which is aiding me in my transition to a whole new lifestyle. These Programs have helped to boost my self-esteem, better my self-confidence, and have given me better communication and social skills. I am very grateful to have Programs such as this to turn to for my educational needs.

Once I reach my educational goals in the Youth Choices Program I would like to attend Community College in order to obtain a trade. The two trades I would like to acquire are bricklaying or Automotive Technician. I have done work in both of these fields and enjoyed it a great deal. I am really looking forward to what doors will open up for me once I've met my educational goals.”



Larry Nelson, Jeremy Robinson,
Peter Ryan Creamer and Sheree Fitch



Dr. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, Judy Lunn and Luc Caissie

Judy Lunn

2012 Goguen Champlain Adult Learner Achievement Award Recipient

Back in the summer of 2011, Judy Lunn found herself at a turning point in life. She knew she needed to make changes to her situation and decided to enroll at the Perth-Andover Adult Learning Centre. Twenty five years after leaving high school without graduating, her goal is to get her GED.

According to Judy's teacher, her presence in the classroom has been nothing short of inspiring. Due to the many barriers to education that Judy has faced in her lifetime, to the personal struggles of being a single parent after losing her husband in a tragic accident, most wouldn't blame Judy if she had given up entirely on her education. But despite all of these things, Judy had remained an extremely dedicated student. When Judy first began in the classroom she was not academically ready to do GED level work, but this did not discourage her. Judy progressed so quickly in her first year of class that she is now doing GED courses and will write the GED tests in June of 2013.

Her good nature, generosity and willingness to help fellow students makes her a pleasure to have in the classroom her teacher says. On top of her GED courses, Judy has improved her Literacy and Essential Skills by enrolling and completing the Digital Literacy Program, Safety Start, Canadian Red Cross Standard First Aid & CPR, and the National Food and Safety Training Program. Her actions have encouraged other students to follow her steps. Judy's exceptional progress and positive attitude has made her a more confident woman with better self-esteem, but it's her determination and the goal of continuing her learning that makes her an excellent choice for the Goguen Champlain Adult Learner Achievement Awards.

Paul Morris

2012 Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarship Award Recipient

“My name is Paul. I decided to go to class to learn how to read. I could not read or write. I could not read the paper to look for a job or to fill out forms. When I went to open a claim, I asked where to go to learn how to read. I was sent to a counselor’s office. They told me what to do. First, I was to get a test to see what grade level I was at. I took the test. It showed I needed a tutor. Then I went to a tutor. Now I am learning to read. It was hard. The words looked like letters that made no sense. After a few lessons, I started to learn. Now I read small stories. I also read some of the local newspapers with help. I go to see the tutor two times a week. For an hour and a half, I spell, read and write. I look forward to learning new things every time.

I am starting to make grocery lists, recognize signs and read subtitles on TV. For the first time, I was able to look for a number in the phonebook. I am surprised I learned so much in a short time. I thought it was a mistake to go back to school because I thought I could not learn. I’m happy I am learning to read. I look forward to my next book like a kid in a candy store.

I want to learn to read well enough to take a course and get a better job. I always wanted to travel across Canada to find work. It may take awhile but now my dream to travel may come true. I was working with English-speaking men in the woods this summer. They said I pronounce my words better now. This makes me feel really good. I met a nice lady. We speak English together and she doesn’t have any problem understanding me. This really makes me happy. I can’t wait to start my second year with Pamela.



*Maureen Hughes,
Paul Morris and
Sheree Fitch*

*Pat Standing,
Edna Amos and
Steve Ranni*



Edna Amos

2012 International Adult Learners Week Writing Contest Winner

“One day Elizabeth told me about the program. She asked me if she could call around to find out where to go. She got the number for Maureen at the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick. Maureen called me almost one year ago to tell me about Virginia at Laubach Literacy. I now meet with Pat at the Lincoln Baptist Church.

When I started I could make out some words. Now I can read sentences and stories. I like to challenge myself by doing word puzzles. I can read directions on the back of the box to cook the food. I can tell who calls me so I can call them back.

I have met great new people at the church. I watch the way people say words with their lips and that helps me to sound the word. I would like to be a tutor some day. I want to help someone else. Some day I hope this person will be a hero with me. I like to take on more challenges at work. When I see some new names on doors, I figure them out. Some machines have words on them and the chemicals I use I try to read.

At church I can follow words for songs on the screen. At home when I watch TV game shows, I learn new words too. More doors are opening for me. Don't give in and don't give up!”



Sheree Fitch

Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarship Awards

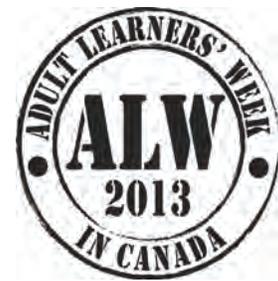
The Sheree Fitch Adult Learner Scholarships were initiated by the Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick (LCNB) in honour of Sheree Fitch, LCNB's Honorary Patron and one of Canada's strongest literacy advocates. Each year, the Literacy Coalition awards 10 outstanding New Brunswick adult learners for their hard work and dedication to improving their literacy and essential skills. Each learner receives a certificate of recognition, a signed copy of one of Sheree's books and a \$100 scholarship.

Adult Learner Achievement Awards

The Adult Learner Achievement Awards are presented to outstanding Adult Basic Education learners, as part of the annual Peter Gzowski Invitational (PGI) Golf Tournament for Literacy activities. Learners are recommended to receive this award by a teacher or tutor for their exceptional progress in their learning program. Award recipients are invited to attend the PGI VIP Reception and Eveningside Show at the Capitol Theatre in Moncton and are presented with a certificate and a \$100 scholarship.

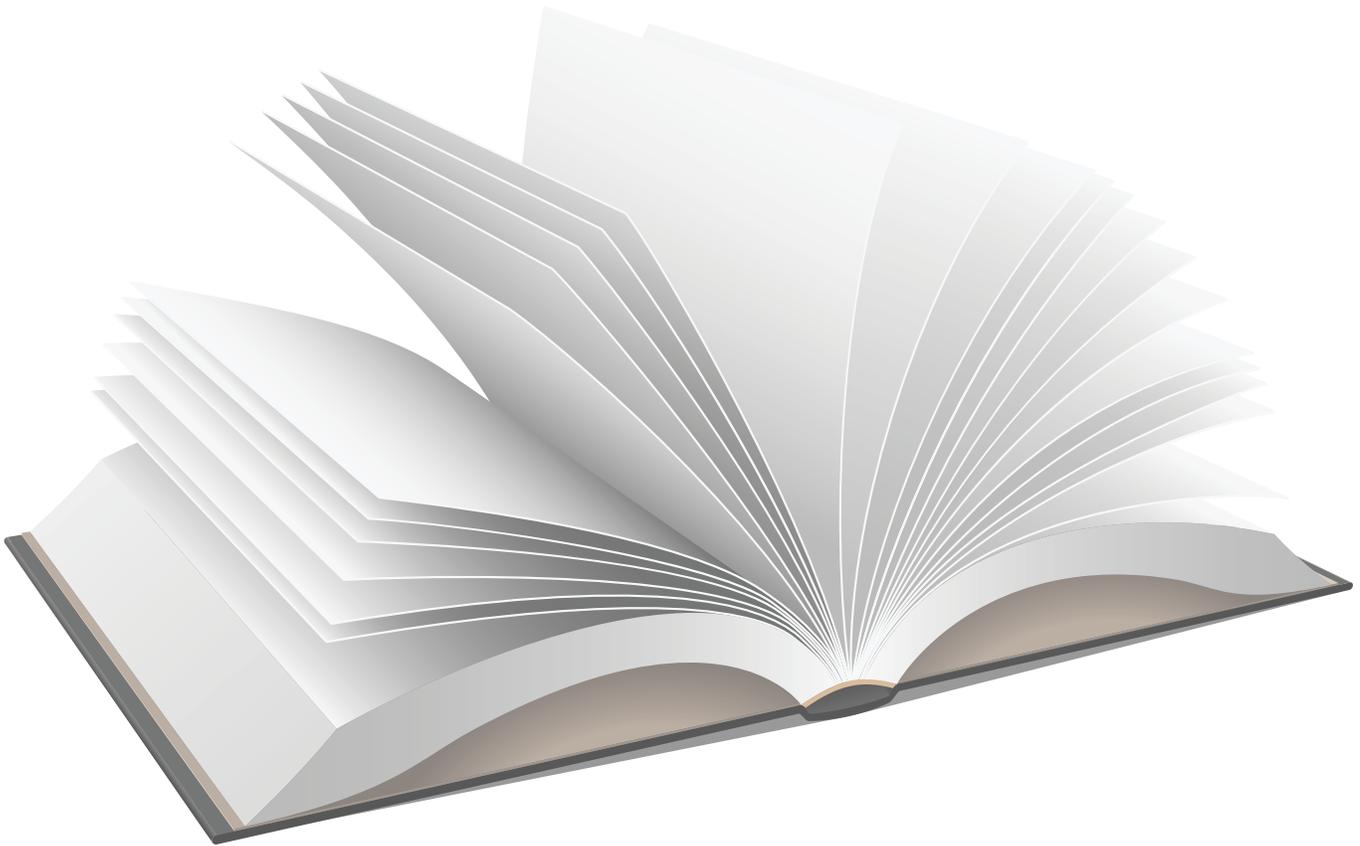
Adult Learners' Week in Canada Writing Contest

Each year to celebrate Adult Learners' Week in Canada, the Literacy Coalition hosts a writing contest for adult learners who are currently attending an adult learning program in New Brunswick. Each year a different topic is chosen that provides adult learners the opportunity to share their courageous learning stories and encourage others to improve their literacy and essential skills. Five winners are chosen each year; each winner receives \$100, a certificate of congratulations, a book and an on-site visit from LCNB staff.





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