

# Cobblestones & Stepping Stones

**HCLN**



Halifax Community Learning Network

*"a bridge to a brighter future"*

**YEARBOOK 2015**

The Halifax Community Learning Network is a registered charity (# 85750 9335 RR0001) and donations can be made at:

**<http://www.canadahelps.org>**

The Halifax Community Learning Network gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Literacy Nova Scotia and Constance Glube towards the publication of Cobblestones and Stepping Stones.

## Dedication

Cobblestones and Stepping Stones is dedicated to longtime literacy advocate and volunteer Josh Judah, Board Chair of the Halifax Community Learning Network. A devoted family man and senior solicitor and manager with Legal Services for Halifax, Josh is a busy man indeed. Yet never too busy to offer his sage advice and considerable skills to HCLN and many other volunteer organizations and projects.

Josh has been involved with adult literacy for more than a decade; providing guidance, legal counsel and wisdom as required. His contributions range from participating in a panel on Literacy in the Courtroom for the Nova Scotia All Courts Seminar Judge's Conference to selling tickets for book baskets at Word on the Street Halifax- and much more.



*Josh Judah, 2013 National Debating  
Team Coach*

In addition to his volunteer work with HCLN, Josh is active with the Halifax Refugee Clinic, the National Debate Team and the Nova Scotia Debating Society, having coached high school debate for more than 25 years.

Thank you, Josh for all your community work and especially for being a friend to HCLN!

**The Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN)** is one of over thirty community-based adult learning organizations funded through the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education's Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning.

HCLN offers free programs for adults at the Captain William Spry Public Library, Halifax North Public Library, Keshen Goodman Public Library, the Spring Garden Road Public Library and elsewhere, from September to June.

If you know someone who needs help improving his or her literacy skills or are interested in volunteering as a tutor, please contact us at:

(902) 422-7648 or [info@hcln.ca](mailto:info@hcln.ca)

Check out our website at: [www.hcln.ca](http://www.hcln.ca)

Follow us on twitter @HalifaxHCLN  
<https://twitter.com/HalifaxHCLN>

For information about other learning opportunities in Nova Scotia and changes to the GED, check out the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning web site at: [www.goNSSAL.ca](http://www.goNSSAL.ca) or call 1-877-466-7725

A volunteer Board of Directors governs HCLN.

**Thank you to the 2014-15 Board Members for their support:**

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Constance Glube - Honourary Chair  
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Margaret Cameron – Member at Large



*The HCLN Board at the AGM with guest speaker, Gillian Zubizarreta*

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## Introduction & thanks from Denise Morley, Executive Director HCLN

I am pleased and proud to introduce the 2015 Halifax Community Learning Network yearbook, *Cobblestones and Stepping Stones*, and to mark another year of service to our community. The title comes from a piece written by Paula Sepp of the Spryfield GED class. Paula found her way to us during the long, cold winter but she didn't let the weather- or anything else- stand in the way of reaching her goals.

Paula passed the GED in March and graduated from the OWL (Older Wiser Labourforce) workshops at the end of May, all while running her own business, Out of the Broom Closet. I like to think that the HCLN Spryfield GED class was the 'stepping stone' Paula needed to obtain her high school equivalency and we wish her well on her learning journey. Paula's is one of many success stories shared in the yearbook. The highlight of my year is reading all the contributions from HCLN learners, staff, tutors and community partners and reflecting upon all we have achieved together. Well done, everyone!



*Denise at the new HCLN office*

As an organization, HCLN encountered many cobblestones and stepping stones this year. Despite much community support, uncertainty about funding is an ongoing concern and the amount of administration required to keep HCLN in business continues to grow.

We have much to celebrate. HCLN learners Samia Eldik and Rachael Teah won NSPGI Literacy Awards. In April, HCLN Board Member and Samia's tutor Margaret Cameron was honoured with an HRM Volunteer Award. The lovely new Central Library opened in December and has become a cultural hub for Halifax. Our favourite bookstore, the Bookmark, put up a display in their store to assist us with fundraising, and contributed a much-appreciated donation themselves!

The HCLN web-site was part way through a needed makeover when we lost our volunteer designer to a 'real' job, and as well as lost our host COPIAN to funding cuts. Once more, Wil Gamble of Oatmeal Design came to the rescue, taking over web-hosting services and in the process produced a stylish slick new look. Check it out at: [www.hcln.ca](http://www.hcln.ca)

Again, a special thank you to Wil Gamble and Matt Likely who provide amazing volunteer support to HCLN and assist with many, many design projects. Without Matt's help every year, we would not be able to produce our annual yearbook. Thank you both.

HCLN participated in Word on the Street, International Literacy Day, Adult Learners' Week, Volunteer Appreciation Week, the HRM Volunteer Conference, the Literacy Nova Scotia Supporting Learning Needs of

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Adults Conference and too many other events to list.

We have had some staff changes since last year, losing Linda Oakley and Jen Hill to other endeavours. Fortunately, we found two excellent replacements: Erica Butler returned from literacy 'retirement' to take the helm at the Central Library and Brendan Tarry became the go-to GED guy in Spryfield. Welcome to you both! Veteran staffers Pat Roberts and Rachel Lebowitz bring a wealth of experience to the challenging Coordinator roles at the Captain William Spry, Halifax North and Keshen Goodman Adult Learning Programs and continue to make wonderful things happen at each program.

As always, we are blessed with exceptional tutors; some who just started this year and many who have committed to adult learning for many years. Your dedication is inspirational and very much appreciated.

What follows is a long list of thanks to individuals and organizations who are vital to HCLN's success.

Have a wonderful summer of books, sunshine and adventure.

**Thanks to the following groups and individuals for being friends of the Halifax Community Learning Network:**

Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning  
Organizations

Bedford-Sackville Learning Network

Bookmark Book Store (& staff)

David Hansen

Delisca and the staff of the CWS Community Centre

Constance Glube

Cunard Learning Centre (especially Andre & Dale)

Dartmouth Learning Network (especially Lesley, Mary  
& Zoey)

David Pilmer

Elaine Frampton

Ewen Dickson

Halifax Public Libraries

Lindsay Raining Bird

Literacy Nova Scotia

Matthew McCarthy

Matt Likely (NS filmmaker / Shall we keep him here?)

Mike Hamm

Metro United Way

Metroworks Spryfield

Mike (the doctor) Dowd

Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning staff & Regional  
Planning Team

Paul MacNeil

Peter Gillis (and all the ANSCLO crowd)

Ray Fernandes (NS Provincial Library)

Volunteer Canada

Wil Gamble / Oatmeal Design

Word on the Street, Halifax

# **Cobblestones & Stepping Stones: HCLN yearbook 2015**

## **Cobblestones and Stepping Stones**

*By Paula Sepp*

I was once asked if I had any life regrets, and I answered “Not a one.”

Regrets are moments, those points in time, forever fixed with the wish to go back and turn left when you once turned right.

Some choices have brought about high moments, so high I wanted to sing loudly from a rooftop. Some choices brought about lows so deep they had me curled up on the couch, crying, wishing the world away. They all formed me. They all forged me. Like a sword, I am tempered steel covered in battle scars.



*Paula of the Spryfield GED class,  
graduated March 2015*

Every choice I've made has been a cobblestone in my life. These cobblestones wend their way along, not always straight and true, but continuous. Steady. Stepping

stone moments in time along the path that has brought me to where I am today. Without these cobblestones and stepping stones, I would be someone else, someone I'm not, and someone I wasn't meant to be.

Life isn't about the destination, but the journey of self-discovery.

## **Message from Honourable Kelly Regan, Minister**

*Department of Labour and Advanced Education*

Nova Scotia's future is bright. We are home to some of the brightest minds and most successful businesses. And there are more job opportunities than ever before. Our job is to make sure Nova Scotians are trained and ready to take advantage of those opportunities. That's why organizations like the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN) are so important.



*The Honourable Kelly Regan with Samantha Lundrigan of the Bedford-Sackville Learning Network*

We know there are many people who — with extra support and encouragement — can contribute to our workforce and our economy. That's where HCLN comes in. You help people gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to actively participate in further

learning, employment and their communities. You help people connect to the workforce.

The learning opportunities available through the HCLN are the result of the work of many dedicated individuals. From the volunteer board who provides strong guidance and support to staff to the volunteer tutors who work tirelessly to make every learner's experience rewarding.

Please accept my thanks and appreciation for the excellent services and supports you provide to Nova Scotians and for your dedication and commitment to improving lives through learning.

## **How Learning has Changed My Life**

*By Mike Yurczyszyn*

I hated school from day one. In fact, one of my mother's favorite stories to tell is about my first day at school. When she came to pick me up at the end of the day, I had all of my supplies with me, even the ones that were supposed to be left at school. When



*Mike and his tutor Gary at the Kesben  
Goodman Library*

she asked me why I had them, I told her "I tried it, mom, and I don't like it. So I quit." She later found out that I had told my teacher before I left that I quit. The rest of elementary school was no different. My problem was

large group settings, like a classroom, which made me feel very uneasy. Actually, all of my young life I kept to myself and was very shy.

My mind was never on school unless it interested me, like science and history. I was never any good at math. I found it hard and I quickly lost interest. I never paid attention in class. I was stubborn and if I found it confusing, I tuned it out. This caused a lot of problems with my parents and teachers and my grades started to suffer. I failed grade three. That just increased my hatred for school and it showed up again when I failed grade five. Other students picked on me for being stupid. I think it's also important to point out that all through this I was always suffering from migraines. Midway through my second year of grade five, my doctor prescribed a narcotic for the migraines I was having. This started a whole new battle in my life that affected me for the rest of my life: addiction.

It occurred to me quickly that drugs made me feel cool. I gained respect from my peers and a lot of them began to fear me. I learned street smarts and I had money at a very young age. I moved into a van parked behind my friend's garage. I attended school until grade eight, when I failed again. This time I had had enough. I had a girlfriend; I got a job that paid \$4.50 an hour under the table. I thought I had it all. No school in my area would let me on their property. They knew who I was and what I was up to. I had a bit of money, I had friends and I felt safe around them. I quickly realized, though, that I couldn't trust anyone and I got very uncomfortable and paranoid. I wouldn't leave my house except to go to work, pick up drugs and go back home. By this time,



I was sixteen and living in a small hotel room which I paid for on a monthly basis. After being robbed several times by my friends, I decided to leave my small town and move to Halifax.

I checked into detox to get clean and then moved in with my uncle. I got a job with my cousin installing oil tanks. Due to my stubbornness, I didn't take any proper training and a co-worker pulled me aside to tell me to shape up and start learning. I was afraid of this man and I really needed the job so I started listening. It was really hard at first and I had to bite my tongue a lot. But I was listening and learning for the first time and liking it. I was finally able to answer customer questions and learned about all the details of furnace repairs. The more I learned, the better I felt.

Since then, I have been in several car accidents which meant that I can't do manual labour anymore. I am thirty-nine years old and feel that this is perfect time for me to get my GED and take oil burner mechanics at NSCC, the job I really love. I wish I had listened a long time ago to people trying to help me but I am very excited to continue my learning now with the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN). I have lots of support and feel certain that I can achieve my learning goals and pursue a successful career.

## **Message from Kacy Burn**

*HCLN Treasurer*

Cobblestones and Stepping Stones is a reflection of those who inspire us all through their work and volunteer efforts

in the field of literacy. These individuals, particularly Denise Morley, Pat Roberts, Rachel Lebowitz, Erica Butler and Brendan Tarry are the driving force behind Halifax Community Learning Network's commitment to learning.

Your boundless energy, your eagerness to support others and your unwavering sense of community is a motivation to us all to strive for better.

Thank you for your contributions for a brighter tomorrow to so many people that have graced the doors of HCLN. Here's to yesterday's successes, today's inspirations, and tomorrow's aspirations.

## **Volunteer Award and Rewards of Volunteering**

*By Margaret Cameron*

On the evening of April 8, 2015, the Ball Room of the Holiday Inn in Dartmouth was the setting for the Annual HRM Volunteer Awards Ceremony hosted by the Mayor and Council. It was a joyous occasion attended by a variety of people of all ages. I was both honoured and humbled to be one of the fifty-one individuals selected to receive an award, thanks to



*Margaret Cameron receiving her volunteer award from Mayor, Mike Savage and Councillor Linda Mosher*

the nomination of Denise Morley. While I was the personal recipient, the award recognized the importance of the Halifax Community Learning Network and the important role it plays in supporting adult literacy through its various programs.

Since my retirement in 2008 as a school principal and literacy educator, I have been involved as a literacy tutor at the North Branch Library where I have had the opportunity to support a number of adult learners in their struggle to become more fully part of a literate society. While some of these learners have come to Halifax as refugees, with little or no school experience, there are others, who as Nova Scotians, have passed through our schools without learning to read or write, a fact that I believe to be an indictment of our education system. I have had the opportunity to work with both kinds of learners.

Currently, I am blessed to have a learner, Samia Eldik, who continually inspires me with her dedication and determination to succeed. Samia, who came to Canada as a refugee from Sudan in 2003 had never attended school in her own country. She has made remarkable progress since beginning classes in 2013; she is well on her way towards her goal of achieving her GED so that she can enter community college to study Homecare. Samia's story "My Trip to Egypt", which is included in the 2015 Yearbook is bound to move any reader.

From my weekly sessions over the years, I have had the opportunity to observe the commitment of both the learners and the tutors. Their dedication is a tribute to HCLN and all that it stands for. As I said at the beginning, it is both an honour and a privilege to be associated with this vital association.

## Message from Brendan Tarry

*Spryfield GED Instructor*

I'd like to take a quick moment to thank each person I've come in contact with since beginning the upgrading class in Community Room #3 at the Captain William Spry Community Centre every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. It has truly been a pleasure.



*Brendan at the helm of the GED Spryfield program*

We were mostly strangers to each other at the beginning of September as well as mostly strangers to this world of Adult Education.

Understanding, empathy and a common drive to better ourselves were the catalysts that fused a bond between us all. Through focus, motivation and determination we've all found successes together this year.

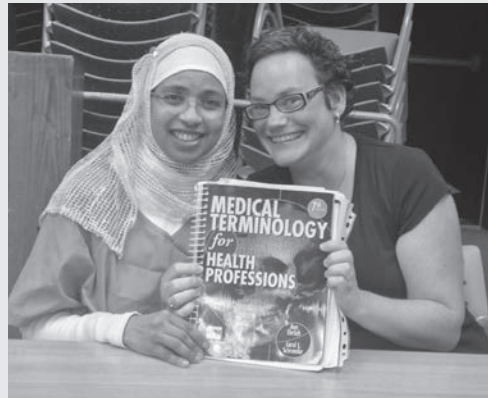
Remember that nothing is above you, or out of your reach, and as Mark Twain once said, "Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see."

All the best and I hope to see you all again in the fall. I wish you a safe, enjoyable and productive summer.

## Message from Rachel Lebowitz

*ALP Coordinator, Halifax North Library*

I was walking to Central Library the other day and someone called my name. I turned, and there was a learner who had left our program a few months earlier, taking a smoke break. He told me he'd fallen off the wagon but was back on again, and that he had a job now. He



*Rachel and Stella at Halifax North*

was going to drop by and see us all again, and maybe join up again in the fall. I told him he was always welcome, and that I was proud of him. And that I knew it wasn't easy.

And no, it's not. There are so many successes here. A learner who graduated from his welding course at NSCC last spring and is now working in Fort MacMurray. Another learner who passed all 5 GED tests on his first try. Another who graduated with her high school diploma in the spring and is now taking a Medical Transcriptionist course. Another who is completing his Academic Math 12 class and is set to start his I.T. program at NSCC in the fall. Another who graduated from the Transition Year Program this May and will be taking undergraduate classes at Dalhousie in September.

Then there are the other successes that aren't about diplomas or other programs. The learner who got a library card! The learner who tells us she can't read, and then proceeds to do

just that. The learner who, with the help of her tutor, wrote a book about her dearly loved and much missed dad. The learner who came back, after a long absence. The learner who came in and worked on her own, even when her tutor couldn't make it. Once, when I was sitting in the room, I heard one tutor explaining the Taliban to her learner, while another was explaining who Shakespeare was. And sometimes, when I'm sitting in the room, I'm hearing learners explain their lives and I know that the true learners in the room are the rest of us.

It isn't easy. This year, a returning learner from years back came to us after getting a very serious health diagnosis. He and his old tutor met up one evening and read through past yearbooks. I haven't seen him since, but I will hold on to that moment, to how well he read, and to how important this program was to him in years past, and now. And to that other man, puffing on his cigarette. "No," he said, "No, it's not easy, it really isn't." And then he went back to his work. And the next day, I went back to mine, proud to pieces of you all.

## **Message from Patricia Roberts**

*ALP Coordinator Keshen Goodman & Captain William Spry Library*

"Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel." Socrates (469-399 BC)

This was my seventh year as coordinator of the adult learning program at the Keshen Goodman Public Library and my second year as coordinator at the Captain William Spry Library. The staff at the public libraries are

second to none – they are truly remarkable individuals who go out of their way to make us feel welcome and appreciated. Thank you!



*Pat at the HCLN display, Word on the Street Halifax*

We had over 30 adults enter the each of the programs this year, with the majority of them working towards writing the GED test. Our extremely gifted volunteer tutors make the programs possible and they have volunteered thousands of hours, which is truly remarkable. Huge thanks goes to all of them!

I was also coordinator of the HCLN GED class at the Captain William Spry Community Centre in Spryfield for the fourth year. The CWS Community Centre was extremely accommodating, as usual, and we had a great classroom. We had 17 learners sign up for the class and several completed the GED and have moved on to other programs, thanks in large part to our instructor Brendan Tarry.

As always, enormous thanks go Denise Morley for all that she does – from support to professional development to the yearbook to new resources, Denise manages to do it all and then some! Thanks, too, to my fantastic colleagues who make working with HCLN such a joy. See you in September!

## **Message from Diane Gordon**

*Director, Adult Education*

*Labour and Advanced Education*

Congratulations to all of you on another successful year. Going back into a learning environment as an adult is never easy and for so many students it is an act of courage to take that first step into the classroom. But after that first step it takes determination and organization to continue to show up at class ready and willing to learn day after day. That determination is what will get you to your goals. You don't need to be the smartest or the fastest, you just need to take the next step and then the next, tackling each task until you arrive.

Along the route it is the coordinators, instructors and volunteers that help support the journey. I have heard many students attribute their success to an inspirational and caring instructor. Your staff and tutors make a positive difference in so many people's lives and should be proud of your work.

We at Adult Education appreciate what you do to improve lives and continue to be inspired by the accomplishments of your students.

Best of luck to all the students and may you be successful in your future endeavors.



## **Literacy and Me**

*By Kerry Fitzpatrick*

I have been at the literacy program for a few years and I have accomplished a lot. Since September, I completed my CPR course, got a job at the day care part-time working as a lunch monitor and I'm looking after 3 buildings (cleaning them). I am getting better at my reading and spelling and I am working hard. I have lots of home work to do at home. Sometimes I can't make it to tutoring on Fridays at the library because I am a single mom and things can get very busy at times.

There are 2 people that I have to thank. Pat who is the Coordinator and my wonderful tutor, Cindy, who is always happy and outgoing. I also have to thank myself a lot.

I am so proud of myself and what I have accomplished. I know we had a long winter and a lot of bad weather but I'm sitting here at my dining room table, writing the rest of my story for the yearbook. Knowing that the sun is shining and the birds are chirping and thank God for these days, for my son's health and my own health and strength and for what I accomplish through my life. I thank God for meeting my beautiful tutor and my lovely coordinator, Pat, who takes the time to volunteer to help people.

If it wasn't for Pat and her amazing personality, friendliness and support I wouldn't be here. Thank you again, Pat, and all the tutors. God bless you all.

## Message from Matthew McCarthy

*Branch Manager,*

*Halifax North Memorial Public Library*

I've been trying to think what to write about the literacy course here at Halifax North library. I'm finding it difficult what to write, and can't quite think of the words to put down, or what I want to say. If I'm finding it difficult, it makes me

think of the challenge that this must be for you in the classes, who work so hard week after week!

Your achievement in the course impresses me so much.

John Steinbeck is a writer whose books made a huge impact on me when I first read them (if you can, do give him a try, though the books might make you cry, or even change the world) and he said that "Learning to read is probably the most difficult and revolutionary thing that happens to the human brain". Enjoy your revolution.



*Matthew and Colin celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Week*

## The Spryfield GED Class

By *Cú Chulainn Flynn Robertson*

It's great to have a class like this (Spryfield GED) available to people like me who have been out of school for a few years. Working with Brendan, the teacher, has helped me transition back into a classroom setting. The positive reinforcement that he provided has helped motivate me to finish the GED and apply myself. Without classes like this many students quit before they even begin. This is a place where students have a chance to receive support while studying for the GED.

## Message from David Pilmer

*NSSAL Curriculum Consultant*

Congratulations to all the learners and tutors whose efforts are reflected in this yearbook. Keep up the good work!

*the logic of math  
it models our real world  
its' sense opens doors*



*math and baiku master, David Pilmer*

## **Message from Peter Gillis**

*Executive Director, Valley Community Learning Association*

I would like to bring greetings on behalf of the Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations (ANSCLO). ANSCLO is an umbrella organization composed of 28 community learning organizations from around Nova Scotia with a mission to promote community learning programs, share best practice, and advocate for policies and programs in the best interest of our learners.

Recently, the Skills and Learning Branch of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education conducted a survey of adult learners and asked them among other things, ‘what would they like in their programs that they don’t have now’; the leading response was “a tutor”. This was not particularly surprising to me; I have noted for years that many adults request to be matched with a tutor. In some cases, whether it is studying to write a test to get into the military, or write an air brake test for trucking, or getting help with trades-related math, what adults want to work on is so specific that it is hard to get a group of people around the same topic at the same time. However, many adults want one-to-one tutoring simply because they feel they learn better that way.

The Halifax County Learning Network has known this all along. HCLN is a recognized leader in the delivery of individualized instruction. Their excellent and committed staff and volunteers have organized a program that is entirely built around the key adult education principle

that learning should be focused on, and driven by, the learner.

Congratulations on your latest yearbook, and best wishes from your colleagues in learning throughout the province!

## **Message from Brendan Maguire, MLA Atlantic**

I want to thank the staff, volunteers and the clients of HCLN.

As the MLA for Halifax Atlantic, I have seen first hand the positive impact the Learning Network has had on our communities. To the staff and volunteers, you have opened doors and minds of many people, your tireless work is a shining example to all. To the clients of HCLN, I am proud of all your hard work and dedication. I wish you all success in your journey of life and remember no dream is too small!

## **Message from Erica Butler**

What a whirlwind! Working at the Central Library Literacy and Upgrading Program for the last few months has been a whirlwind for me. I want to thank all the learners and who made me welcome and helped show me the ropes. It's been a hectic few months, but I've really enjoyed working alongside you all.

Whether you're new to literacy and upgrading, or whether you are a seasoned veteran, I wish you a great summer. Don't forget to find a book or two at your independent reading level to read from over the break. Remember, the library is a cool place to spend a hot summer afternoon!

And most importantly, I hope to see you in September.



*Erica Butler and the Thursday night gang  
at the Central Library*

## **Message from Councillor Stephen Adams**

The basic knowledge and skills needed in today's ever-changing and increasingly technical world are the reasons why Literacy Programs, such as those offered by the HCLN, are so very important to all residents. Everyone has the right to access information and opportunities that will bring greater life-enjoyment to them and their families and ultimately create greater self-esteem. Continuous learning in all forms provides opportunities for everyone to participate more fully in the world around them. Thank you HCLN and all volunteers, supporters who ensure there is an opportunity for continuous learning.

## **Message from Heather MacKenzie** *Manager – Diversity and Accessibility - Halifax Public Libraries*

2014 saw many changes for the Adult Learning Program!

In December, the Spring Garden Road Library program moved to its new home at the Halifax Central Library. This was a big transition for our

learners and tutors, beyond just the physical move, and many thanks are due to ALP Coordinator, Jen Hill, and our Regional Coordinator, Sandy Crocker, for all of their work in ensuring a smooth move and making everyone feel comfortable in the new space. Thanks to excellent organization and the support of the Spring Garden / Central staff, we accomplished the move without losing a day of program time! The program is already expanding in the new location and it is so rewarding to see new learners coming our way.



*Coordinator Jen Hill with Margie at the year-end party at the old Spring Garden Road Library Best of luck, Jen!*

We also had a staff change this year as Jen Hill left her position as the Spring Garden ALP Coordinator. Erica Butler was the successful candidate for Jen's replacement and we welcomed her back.

As the manager responsible for Adult Literacy programming at Halifax Public Libraries, I continue

to be so proud of what we accomplish each year in our partnership with the Halifax Community Learning Network.

On the surface, our program is fairly basic – we help adult learners upgrade reading and math skills so that they may successfully complete educational or employment goals. However, the impact of these programs goes much deeper than getting a certificate or even a job.

What this program gives to so many of our learners is hope, dignity, and self-esteem – it is not overstating to say that lives have been changed. The human victories achieved every year are significant and moving – a grandparent able to send an e-mail to a grandchild for the first time, someone being able to read for enjoyment for the first time, writing one’s first story – the list can go on and on.

I would like to congratulate our committed program coordinators and tutors for their dedication to their learners, and also recognize the courage of our learners, for sticking with their programs and overcoming often challenging personal circumstances in order to succeed. Special thanks to those who have been willing to share their stories in the yearbook – they will definitely move and inspire you!



## **Mommy Medicine**

*By Sylvia (A.J.) White*

Mommy medicine is made  
with love and caring.  
Mommy medicine;  
there's always lot for sharing.

Doctors in the world can't match it.  
It's never for sale in a store.  
It's full of something wonderful,  
and yet so much more.

A kiss can mend a bump,  
a cut and even a broken heart.  
Mommy medicine is special;  
when you're falling apart.

It's the love she has for you  
all wrapped up with a hug,  
and placed upon the ache you feel.  
Remember Mommy medicine is special,  
and oh so very real!



*A.J. and Linda at the Captain William Spry Library*

## Message from Marie David

### *Literacy Nova Scotia*

It is my pleasure to send this message on behalf of Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS).

We are thrilled to have a strong partnership with HCLN, a true lifelong learning organization.

LNS is fortunate to be able to provide many services to organizations, practitioners and learners. HCLN promotes and participates in many of our offerings.

Many HCLN practitioners have completed or are completing the Practitioner Training program; participated in the LNS Professional Development Conference; accessed the Professional Development and the Assistive Technology funds, as well as the PGI and Raise a Reader Grants.

Lifelong learners encourage others and we applaud the encouragement you give your learners to apply for the scholarships, bursaries, achievement awards, and entering the Adult Learners Week contest.

Congratulations on another successful year of serving learners in HRM.



*Marie David of LNS with author Jenni Blackmore*

# **Mom**

*By Jean*

I am writing this story about the love of my life. It's my mother who I cherish dearly.

Years ago when my dad passed away, it was hard on us all. My mom, Catherine, had an in-law suite in the basement of the house. My youngest sister lived upstairs in the main house with three kids. The father, my brother-in-law, moved out and then they got separated. My mom moved from the house due to my sister selling the house. My sister moved to Ontario. My mom has had this apartment for eight years.

My mom and I would do a lot of things together. There was a time when we drove to Glace Bay to visit my relative on my father's side of the family. There was beautiful scenery all around. We would go to the flower gardens to pick up fresh new flowers for my dad's grave at the Fairview cemetery. This year I will ask mom if she would like to assist me.

Other times we would go for walks down at DeWolfe Park and then have lunch. It was the greatest of times being together.

Last October, in 2014, my mother had mini strokes in her brain causing memory loss. I love my mother so much and see her every Sunday. Maybe we will go for drives around town and have some lunch.

My husband wants me to move to Alberta where he

could find a truck driver job with great pay. My mom is very close to me and would be sad if I left. I am staying for a while.

## **The Story About My Therapy**

*By Ken McDow*

The doctor sent me to the Geriatric Day Hospital for therapy on my leg to help me walk better. I started therapy appointments on Friday August 22, 2014.

The staff help me with my therapy and help me stand better and not

fall down. I am still going to the Geriatric Day Hospital for my therapy program. They helped me to get my new walker.



*Ken and Cathy together at the Kesben Goodman Library*

There are good people that do their job at the hospital. They can help people with their therapy so they get better and then they can help their families around the house.

When I went to the Geriatric Day Hospital they had me do lots of exercises to get better.

First they make you sit straight in a chair and you turn your head to the side and then back to the center. Stop for 5 seconds then turn to the other side and repeat this

five times on each side. Next lift your hands above your head and make an O shape with your arms and repeat this five times. For the third exercise you put an elastic band around the calves of your legs while sitting down, then push your legs out to stretch the band. Repeat this ten times. Next stretch your leg forward at the knee ten times against the band. Now put the elastic band above your knees still while sitting and push you knees out to stretch the band. Take the band off and while sitting raise the front of your foot while keeping your heel on the floor. Repeat this 10 times. Using parallel bars, walk the length heel to toe 10 times. Lean on the bars with both arms and stretch your legs out behind you as far as you can. Finally lean on the bars and lean forward and back as far as you can.

If you have trouble with your legs you should try going to the Geriatric Day Hospital for help so you can get better and have a good life with your family. I still do my exercises at home twice a week.

## **My Hero**

*By Gary Mullins*

In a world of superheroes, my hero is physically much weaker. As a tutor trainer, she stressed the importance of patience with adult learners, allowing for all that life throws at them. Before I make a critical decision concerning a learner I think 'what would Avril do'. It is safe to say that if not for her, I would not still be a tutor today. To quit would have been a tragedy for both my learners and myself. Most of my learners have gone on to change their lives through the power of learning.

As for me, my early dream was a teaching career, but I chose a different path. This left me with an itch I couldn't scratch, until now.

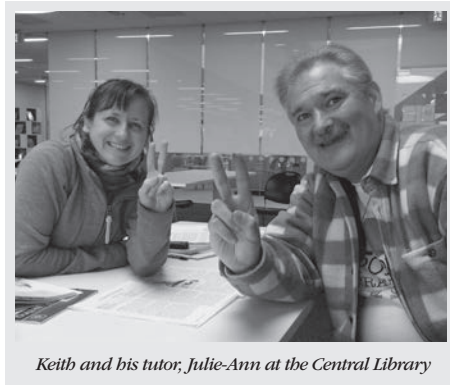
You may not know her, or even if you do, in several years you may forget her. I will always remember Avril Lewis.

## **My Dream Come True**

*By Keith Finn*

Yippy! I got it!  
 I got my black belt!  
 I love Chowi Kwon Do.  
 The speed, it's fast  
 Something like flying  
 Like a bird flying  
 So fluid and beautiful.  
 It makes me feel confident  
 Especially when breaking  
 boards.

It makes me feel so strong  
 So free and focused  
 Like a bird flying high in the sky.



*Keith and his tutor, Julie-Ann at the Central Library*

## **Man Dressed in Black**

*By Anonymous*

A long time ago when I was around 8 years old and my sister was 10 years old, we went to visit our aunt and uncle who lived not far from our house on St. Margaret's Bay Road. It was around late summer as we

both wore short sleeve dresses. After having a delightful visit along with a light snack, our Uncle Harold asked us to go to the store for him to purchase some Zig Zag tobacco. So my sister and I went to the store just walking, laughing and talking all the way.

When we walked up the road towards home for supper, we couldn't help look at the old abandoned shingled one room schoolhouse like we did every day, which was across the road from our house. It was around dusk this early evening when we saw a large tall man standing in the doorway of the school, who was completely dressed in black including his top hat, and there was a large brown and white dog standing beside him. Neither moved as we walked by. We were so scared that we ran home crying, shaking and were very traumatized by the event.

When we reached home, I told my mother what my sister and I just saw and my mother and siblings only half believed our story. From that point on, every time we went down the driveway I would glance at the old school house but I never ever saw that man or his dog again. Even to this day, I always glance towards the spot where the schoolhouse used to be. We never ever forgot what we saw that day.

## Volunteer Adult Literacy Tutor

*By Kent Speiran*

It was part of my retirement plan.

I had worked for nearly four decades as a public servant in a technical and managerial environment, and now was retiring. During evening trips to the Keshen Goodman Library I often saw



*Chris Penn and Dabira. Congratulations to Chris and Kent for completing the LNS Tutor & Practitioner Training Program in April!*

people working together, not just students, but people as tutors and learners. I wanted to do what they, the tutors, were doing. I wanted to help.

But how was the question. I was not a trained teacher. Rather, my experiences included those of mentor, coach and life long learner. I understood the value of an education. I had a desire to help.

All I had to do was ask.

My journey started with an enquiry at the Circulation Desk in the Keshen Goodman Library. The staff answered my questions about the program, application process and next steps. And then I was introduced to the folks from the Halifax Community Learning Network.

They have been like a beacon, ever guiding my journey



with seminars for new tutors, adult literacy workshops and roundtable discussions. With their support I recently completed the Literacy Practitioner Training and Certification Program offered through Literacy Nova Scotia.

I have been a volunteer with the Keshen Goodman Library Adult Literacy Program for almost three years. What I receive from volunteering far surpasses what I have been able to give. Along the way I have met new people, both learners and the learned. What intrigues me is learning who they are, what learners want and how I can help. What excites me is seeing their desire and what they can accomplish with some assistance.

## **Some Thoughts on Racism**

*By Josie Smith*

As a child, I had no idea what the words “racism” or “racist” meant. It was only when I was about twenty-seven, and noticed that my brother was dating a white girl, that I learned what it meant to be racist.



*Josie and Krista learning together*

I remember the day perfectly. Kelly, my brother’s girlfriend, came to our house with a ring to return. It had been a gift from my brother, but she was giving it

back and saying she couldn't go out with him anymore. Her mother had said she would disown her if she were to date a black guy.

It was sad for me, because I really liked her, and my whole family did as well.

I saw her years later, and learned she had married a black man and had children with him. She had been officially written off and disowned by her mother. I felt genuine compassion for her, and still hope that she has found peace and happiness. I hope she is free from the racist poison that had hurt her for so long.

Growing up, I noticed racism was very obvious at school. There was always tension between the white and black students. For most students, their parents were the problem because they were usually were racist themselves, and brought their kids up to be like them. Racism has been a problem for a long time.

I have experienced a lot of racism throughout my life. For example, one day at a bus stop, I was having a conversation with a white lady. A third lady approached and asked a question. We both responded with an answer, but I was ignored. The woman didn't even look at me, as if I wasn't there. I am sure this was because of the colour of my skin. When she left, the lady I had initially been speaking with expressed her shock. "Wow -- she didn't even acknowledge you!" She had never witnessed racism like that. This is just one of many examples of racism I have experienced in my life.

For all the racism I have experienced, it has never stolen

my joy in life or my ability to see everybody as equal. God has given me this strength and I believe He can help others who are dealing with racism. God has a plan for everyone.

## **Thank You**

*by Melvin Neil*

I can first remember going to the North Branch Library and talking to Jen about seeing a tutor. Then Jen told me about Cunard Learning Centre. It's been four years since then and I have had 5 tutors, and each one of them contributed to me achieving my high school diploma. So thank you to each one of them.

I have come a long way since I first met Jen. I am looking forward to attending NSCC to take the gas technician course in September 2015 at Akerley Campus in Dartmouth. Thank you.

## **It's Never Too Late to Learn**

*By Frank*

I had to leave a lot of jobs because I couldn't read and write. When you can't read and write you don't realize what you're missing. There's so much more out there but you don't realize it. You're



*Frank and Emily at the Central Library*

empty. There's something missing in your life but you can't do anything about it because you can't read and write. I realize now what I missed. People that can read and write live differently than I did. I missed an awful lot. I brought my son up by myself and I couldn't help him with his school work. That's what made me want to learn.

The reason why I never came to the library program is because I thought it was like a school classroom where I would be in front of a lot of people. I came in one day and talked to Jen and she told me it was one-on-one tutoring. She said I should have come a few years ago but I said I would have come 50 years ago if I knew it was one-on-one! When I learned it was one-on-one tutoring I said, "Sign me up!"

Now it's my third term. What helped me was my tutor. I did three terms with Shannon, and if I had the chance I would do three more! She has so much patience and I learned so much. It means a lot to have someone to believe in you enough that they are so dedicated. In three terms she never missed a day! I thank her so much for that. It's hard to believe that she did that even though we had some really bad weather. She believed in me more than I believed in myself.

You never stop learning. If more people knew that it was one-on-one tutoring, I think more people would want to learn. I would recommend this program to anyone who can't read and write. Thank you for reading my story.

## My Baseball Story

*By: Darlene Coulstring*

The Blue Jays play baseball almost every day from April until the playoffs. There are 30 teams in baseball and they play against all the teams, they win some and lose some. The pitchers on each team try to get the players on the other team out. There are nine batters on every team and nine innings in every game. They play against each other on TV.



*Darlene at the Central Library*

The games start at around 8:00pm and run until it's over. There are three bases and a home plate.

When I was younger I went to the baseball diamond behind the high school one or two nights a week to watch the games. I saw the Halifax team play against the Dartmouth team. I always liked going to the games, and I took my dad. When I took my dad to the games he enjoyed himself and always wanted to go with me. And when it was raining we watched the games on TV. Dad and I watched the games on TV four nights a week, I always liked the Toronto Blue Jays games. I have a lot of nice memories of me and dad watching baseball.

## **Returning to School**

*By Rachel Teah*

People return to school to improve or complete their educational level. I chose to go to school to finish high school and go further with my education. There have been some difficulties that I have faced in my life. I have not yet finished high school, so finding a job has been a challenge. It has also been very hard to take care of my children and go to school.

My learning goals are to go to the Nova Scotia Community College (IT campus) and finish the required level of courses that will enable me to start a career. To accomplish this goal, I need to find enough time for studying. In addition, I also need a tutor to help me with difficult school work. My career goal is to work in the field of accounting and to move up within this field.

To add to the above, my life has changed since I returned to school. When I started in level II at The Cunard Learning Centre, it was very difficult to understand what I was learning. Writing a simple letter used to be a huge challenge for me, but after a few months of studying, it became much easier. I am improving my reading comprehension, solving math problems, and giving help to others.

In conclusion, I am starting school in September at NSCC. This will enable me reach my career goals and find a job. Therefore, I feel proud about this opportunity

## Ron's Story

*By Ron Oxner*

I come to the library every Thursday. While I'm at the library I play bingo. I like to play bingo.

I work with numbers and I count. Sometimes I add and subtract things. I pick out pictures of things that are the same and things that are different.

Every week I choose a book to read. Then my tutor, Janet, and I read the book together.

I work hard at the library and I have fun at the library.



*Madina at the Central Library*

## **A New Start**

*By Anonymous*

My life is far from perfect. A few years ago I was in high school. I was doing all right in grade 10 but when it came to grade 11, that's when I started slipping. I met the wrong group of friends who introduced me to drugs. Shortly after grade 11 started I started to skip classes to hang out with my friends to smoke. I started skipping so many classes that I thought there was not hope for me to catch up on any of my work. I dropped out. I then started doing more drugs, which eventually led to me getting kicked out of my house.

For almost 3 years I was moving from couch to couch, making horrible mistakes. I had lost hope in everything because of the choices I made and the drugs I had done. After almost 3 years of drug abuse, fighting, having many suicidal thoughts and much more, I met my current boyfriend and he changed my life. He told me that if I keep living like this, I'll end up somewhere I don't want to be.

So for our relationship and the sake of my life I told my mom that I wanted to come home and that I would stop doing the drugs I was doing. That was the best decision of my life because I got clean on my own and I started to smarten up.

Not long after I moved back home I was thinking about my education. I knew I couldn't go back to high school because I didn't want to follow the same road I used to be on. So I made an appointment with a social worker



and she told me about the GED program and I loved the idea of having one-on-one tutoring sessions! It did take a while for me to start the program but once I went to my first session I loved it. The fact that I can learn new things and do the work on my own makes me really happy. I now believe I can get my GED and start focusing on the career I want, which is hairdressing.

## **Funny Baby Boy**

*By Nakisha Wesley*

I am writing about my son. He is a funny little boy to me. You guys would love him if you saw him. He is funny to his Mommy Nakisha. He smiles and has a cute laugh. He makes funny faces. He has cute chubby legs and a cute face. He is gorgeous!

## **My Dad: John George Stanhope**

*By Julie Stanhope*

My Dad, John George Stanhope, was born in Halifax on January 29, 1943.

When he was seven years old, his parents divorced and he was sent to live with his grandparents in Petit De Grat. His grandparents had some animals. His grandfather, Albany, was a fisherman and a barber. His grandmother,



*Julie and Susan at the Halifax North Festive Potluck*

Martha, was a great cook and sewer.

My Dad had two sisters who lived with his father.

As his grandparents were getting older, Dad moved back to Halifax N.S. to live with his Mom when he was 14 years old. He went to Saint Pat's High School and he was in a rock in roll band called the Flamingos. He was the lead singer in the band.

After he graduated from Saint Pat's, he went to Saint Mary's University and then to Dalhousie University; he studied Business and Commerce.

He worked on a train serving food to people, and he worked at Ashburn Golf Course to help pay for university.

My Dad met my Mom when he was at university. My Mom was studying to be a nurse. They went on a date and then they fell in love and got married. They went on their honeymoon to New York City, then they went to Niagara Falls, then they went to Virginia. After that, they got the news that they were expecting a baby. They were waiting lots of months for it. The baby was me, born on December 30, 1969, there I was. Princess Julie was my nickname.

My brother Derek was born on March 19, 1971, and my brother Peter was born November 8, 1972.

After he graduated from University, Dad worked at the Ford Motor car dealership in Halifax for several years. Following that, my Dad worked for a lottery ticket company. He also worked at Toyota, Canada, for lots of

years. He went on trips to Newfoundland, New Glasgow and Cape Breton. With his company, he also got to see San Francisco, California, Tokyo, Japan and Nashville, Tennessee. His company sent Dad and Mom to Mexico on a trip. In all his jobs, Dad was a sales manager and a business man. He was on the road a lot of the time.

My Dad was a religious man and he was a Knight of Columbus.

My Dad had many passions in his life. He had a passion for cars and cooking. He also liked hunting and then fishing and then gardening and, most of all, spending summer months in Hubbards with his family. My family went camping a lot when we were young.

One of my Dad's best qualities was his concern and willingness to help others, including caring and looking after his dear mother and me, his daughter, his little princess Julie Lynn Stanhope. After he retired, my Dad used to take me out for lunch almost every day and to visit my grandmother.

My Dad had a double bypass surgery a number of years ago. Me and Dad got very close together after that. And then he got sick again. He was diagnosed with Leukemia in June 2014. I had to go and visit with him in the hospital and to say goodbye.

My Dad died on June 15, 2014. I will not be the same without him. I do miss him a lot. I did tell him I will try to enjoy my townhouse. I do talk to him and I do go to Church services.

## **The Coffee Shop**

*By Lorraine Jones*

In the morning I go across the street to The Coffee Shop. About 10-11 o'clock Feed Nova Scotia comes, they bring donuts and sometimes fruits. There's a lot of nice people that I talk to. Sometimes they have a nurse there. We have cooking class, choir singing, they give medication, and have different people there that help you out with things (like psychiatrists and social workers). In the

summer they take us to Clam Harbour. We eat, we play games and, talk. At 5 o'clock we go home. They have bus tickets if you need them. If you have an appointment they will give you a taxi chit to help you get there and back. I help them once in a while in the office to straighten away things. I like it there because the people are nice and I can talk to them.



*Lorraine and Maureen at the Festive potluck*

## **Our Hockey Team**

*By Mary Thompson*

April is hockey season. It is time for the playoffs. People go crazy. They put make up on their faces for their team's colors. Some people never miss a game on TV. Some bet on hockey pools. Some enjoy going out to watch the

game with their friends at the bars.

Boys and men have played hockey for many years. Hockey used to be known as “Ice Hurley”. Hurley is the name of a game played in Ireland. The game was played with a ball and sticks but in Nova Scotia the fields were too rocky so they played it on the ice. The first game was played in 1788 by the boys at King’s College in Windsor, NS. They played on Long Pond.



*Mary and her tutor Kay Ann reading from the 2014 Yearbook*

The name changed to “hockey” between 1800 and 1850 according to newspaper stories.

In the book called *The Clockmaker*, which was written by a Nova Scotian in 1836, it talks about boys playing ball on ice.

These facts help to prove that Windsor is the “birthplace of Hockey”.

This information is from a book called *Our Ocean*

Playground.

## **My Favourite Sport**

*By Colin Henderson*

My favourite team in sports was the Montreal Canadiens, because my dad and brother watched them in Toronto growing up. Their logo means Habs in French. CH are my initials and that's their logo.

But now I have to say basketball is my favourite sport. Since 2006 I got tickets to the Halifax Rainmen for Christmas and my birthday because they're so close together. My favourite team is the Halifax Rainmen. They are like every other team they changed their players over the year. This season they had a good team but traded players at the end of the season to make a strong team to make it to the finals which they did. This year they could win the finals at home if they play as a team which they are doing. They are up two to one at home with two more games at home.

It was the best season since 2006. Now it's 2015. It will be nine years since they began. They made it into the finals in 2012 but lost to London by three points.

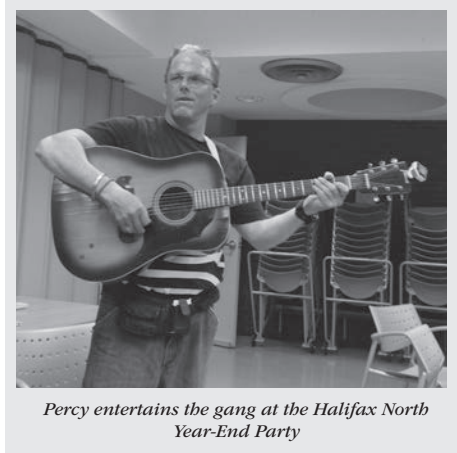


*Colin celebrates Volunteer Appreciation Week  
with Matthew and Rachel*

## A Little Time

*By Percy Oliver*

I used to go bottle hunting just about every day, if it was a nice day out. I start at home and go on to Cunard Street and come back on Maynard Street. It takes me to Almon Street where a construction crew is putting up a tall building.



*Percy entertains the gang at the Halifax North Year-End Party*

One day, there was a nice woman standing there, looking at it. So I stopped to have a talk with her. We went to Tim Horton's for some coffee. After, we went on a walk along Gottingen Street and talked. So then we started to talk more about her, about what would she like in life. She said, "I would like to have a family". She asked me if I had any family, and I said yes, two sons and a daughter who are all grown up.

I then took her back to where I had met her. I gave her my phone number and I told her, "You can contact me whenever you want." Then I went my way, she went her way. But the funniest thing is, I had forgot her name, so when I called up my son about her, he was laughing about it.

She called me up and I got her number on my phone

screen but there was no name. I waited for two days before I called her up to see how she was doing. When I got done talking to her I knew that was it. I would not see her or talk to her again. Easy come, easy go. You hope for some time when the right person will come to you, for who you are. But, a little time is better than no time. It sounded like one or maybe both of us could be lost. I never knew her name.

## **Dreams Really Do Come True**

*By B. MacKenzie*

I cannot express how important the tutoring that I am receiving is to the overall success of me completing my application for the LPN course in September. I applied last year to the LPN course knowing that I had three courses to complete to qualify for the application.



*Ainslie and Brenda working together at  
Halifax North*

In February of this year I received an acceptance letter from NSCC. With such little time left until September my options available to access these courses while working full time were limited. So the only thing that seemed to fit was correspondence courses. Not having taken biology and chemistry in 11 or 12 this work was overwhelming on my own. In not having access to a classroom or instructor, the goal of completing my



prerequisites seemed impossible!

One day I just googled “adult learning” and that search led me to where I needed to be, the Halifax Community Learning Network at Halifax North Library. A huge thank you to HCLN and my tutors who have helped me continue my education and realize my dream because without your help and support this would not have happened!

## **Stepping in the Right Direction**

*By April Sherman*

On Monday, April 27th, I went to an orientation that will set me up for a course. I’ve chosen one of the options from the list that was provided.

I have chosen a course that is called Step Ahead. It is a 14-week program that will teach me about

retail. I will probably be trained in skills that I need for work. The field that I’ve chosen is working in retail. I’m hoping to get hired in either Wal-Mart or Sears.

I will be getting a training allowance of \$150.00 bi-weekly. I’m excited to get the ball rolling in the right direction.



*April receiving her Learner Participation Award*

## What the World Needs

*By John Cromwell*

more understanding  
between each other  
more pride in being a  
good learner  
more building each  
other up in the  
community  
more respect for each  
other  
more support for  
people who want to make positive changes in their life  
more support from family in good times and bad times



*John reading his story from the 2014 Yearbook*

We need more people who will let the positive shine through.  
We need more love.

## The Fisherman

*By Philip Simmonds*

So I was out fishing down at Point Pleasant Park.  
I cast the line out and waited for about ten minutes.  
Then I got a bite! He was pulling hard.  
I was fighting with him.

I had no idea what he was.

I got him almost to the shore, go to string him up and he just flies off!

Jumps back in the sea.

I think it was trout but it looked an awful lot like a shark.

Next time I'm bringing a heavier line!



*Gemma and Peter studying at Halifax North. Peter recently passed his Red Seal exam as a Sheet Metal Worker. Congratulations, Peter!*

## **Seasons**

*By Mona S.*

I've always wondered how all four seasons could reshape their beauty over time. Their abrupt adaptations and transformations from January through December are remarkably unique and lighten our moods. The seasons

roll into one another. Every time we adjust to one season, we are entering another. It is as if they're interrelated or someone is aware when it is time to change.

Spring has sprung  
But it isn't very real.  
All the snow banks corrupt  
the excitement that I feel.  
The days are longer  
The sun is stronger  
The sidewalks are still a sliding path.  
If I fall I'm sure to get an icy bath.  
I'm certain in the long run  
I will enjoy whatever comes.

## **My Trip to Egypt**

*By Samia Eldik*

In August, 2014, I traveled to Egypt to visit my family. It was a very long trip; it took me one day to get there. I traveled on two different airplanes. I took one plane from Halifax to Germany and from Germany I



*Samia and her tutor Margaret at the Halifax North Library*

took another plane to Egypt. Although it was long, the trip was not as difficult as I thought it was going to be. I did not have a hard time finding my way. The signs and

arrows at the airport were clear; you can easily follow them all the way to your gate.

When the plane landed at the Egyptian airport I couldn't believe that I had reached Egypt. When I got off the plane, I went to an office to get my visa and then I went to get my suitcases. After I got them, I started to walk outside to meet my brother. Before I reached outside, I saw my brother and his two friends. They were waiting outside the door because security would not let them inside the gate. WOW! I couldn't believe it; it was my brother! I screamed loudly and ran to him. We hugged each other and began to cry.

We took a taxi and we went to the building where our mother and my brother's family lived. When we were in the taxi, I asked my brother, "Is it really you?" My brother gave me a hug and said, "Yes, it's me." He wiped the tears off my face, because I couldn't control it. When we got to his house, I found my mother, my brother's family and some of my friends waiting for me. Everyone was crying, happy crying, although sad crying too because I had not seen my family since I lost my husband. We had not seen one another for thirteen years, since the day I had left for Canada with my husband and children. We were all so happy to see each other. It was crazy that day. We were up until midnight, but I wasn't feeling tired at all because I was filled with joy and happiness.

I spent most of the time with my mother, nephew and nieces inside because it is not safe to go outside by yourself. You might get beaten up, kidnapped by Egyptian people or hit by a car. If someone gets hit by a car, nobody cares. The person who hits you will leave

you lying on the street. It doesn't matter if you are dead or not. They just leave you on the street. That is true. There were some people I know who had been killed by cars and left on the street. And three others I know were injured and left on the street. One of them was my nephew. He was hit by a motorcycle, but he was lucky because the person who hit him took him to a clinic. Then he was sent home by himself with stitches on his forehead and inside his cheek. And nobody knows up to now who hit him. Imagine, he was just six years old! It happened just three days before I arrived in Egypt. That's what made me afraid to go outside by myself. I would either wait for my brother or my friends to take me to visit other friends, or to go shopping.

Even though I didn't go outside a lot, I really enjoyed being with my family. Every night my sister-in-law cooked a delicious meal for us. After supper my mother told us stories and sang some songs that she used to sing for me when I was a young girl. She asked me how I am able to live in Canada without any relatives, besides my children. She was so surprised because I used to be afraid when I was a child. I couldn't go anywhere without my sisters or brothers, especially in the dark. When I told my mother that I was not afraid anymore, she was so surprised, but at the same time, she was very proud of me.

Soon the time came for me to return home to Canada. I had been away for a month and was looking forward to seeing my children. However, I felt sad that I was leaving my family behind. Once again there were tears as we hugged and said goodbye. We all hoped that someday we would see one another again.

## **A Day in the Life**

*By Don Murphy*

There's quite a few nice people in at the building and the area. They are kindhearted. Today I went to the archives looking for a map of Dartmouth, with buildings on it. I had some luck, not the right map. Then it was the Public Gardens, after walking through a graveyard which would be more quiet than the traffic. It was too warm to wear a light jacket. People were out sitting on the grass and all over the place. Then I spent two hours at Soul Harbour. I walked to MacDonalld building on Gottingen Street. Then I walked back up to Soul Harbour for half an hour, then called into the Food Bank and got two items, 2 lbs diced vegetables and a can of cranberries. That was it until the library happen. Coming to the English program has been really helpful. Working with my tutor is wonderful.

## **Passing the GED**

*By Tara*

My name is Tara. I decided to write my GED and gave myself one year to achieve my goal. After picking up the GED book several times and thinking to myself I will never be able to get through this very large book- it was time to really try. It was overwhelming to say the least. I knew my weakness



*Tara and friends check out trades at NSCC*

was math so I decided reach out to the adult learning program at the library.

I met with a lady named Pat who I instantly felt comfortable with. I was given an assessment and thought Wow I'm really in trouble! I forgot everything I learned when I attended school.... which was a long time ago, by the way.

In September, I started getting tutored for math at the library on Fridays. My tutor was great and I learned a lot from him. The Halifax Community Learning Network offered a GED classroom program at another location that met 3 days a week and I was invited to participate. It covered all subjects in the GED. I started going in October and it was the best thing I did. The teacher Brendan was so helpful! I attended 3 days a week and still went for tutoring on Fridays for math. I wrote my first GED test in Dec and passed. Once I had passed the first test, I was on a mission to pass the other four.

There was a Women Unlimited program starting in April at the Nova Scotia Community College that I really wanted to attend but I would not be considered if I didn't have my GED. I had to complete all subjects of the GED before March 27, 2014 to be accepted. I wrote the GED math my last test on March 26, 2014 and passed!! I walked out thinking, Did I really just pass??? Without the support of the adult learning program it would have been very challenging to achieve my goals on my own. To everyone involved with the Halifax Community Learning Network, I can't thank you enough. So many new doors have opened up for my son and I. Thanks for all you help!!



## **How Learning Feeds My Family and I**

*By Sylvia (A.J) White*

I live in the part of my city where stigma points its accusing fingers at those who rely on a government system to survive. The mocking of things I can't obtain for myself or my children eat at me and I feel weak from the constant struggle to offer the necessary items my family needs to survive because that archaic system I rely on only provides enough so that I don't actually die, but if I did; I'd just be one less problem for the system to worry about.

The only way out is an education. I can honestly say I have one; it just wasn't enough. Grade twelve won't get you the job you need to actually survive these days. It's a gateway to mediocre pay rates and hell in childcare costs, a constant struggle of which bill to rob to make ends meet each month. I needed more; in my life to prove I was worthy, just to keep both "Peter and Paul" both happy.

So I embarked on a journey to improve my chances in getting away from the one thing I hated the most. The stares, the accusations and the common thought that I **MUST** be bad or done something stupid in order to end up on income assistance. I made poor choices in life, but not having an education to meet my needs wasn't one of them. Upgrading to get my GED will improve my chances of escaping the nightmare I was thrown into head first with my kids hanging onto me for dear life praying we wouldn't get sucked in and forgotten.

I want to be a plumber. A job that has more than just a fantastic pay rate. It has meaning to me. I was told “Well; if I was selfish too; I’d go back to school and get a better education. Then I could gain a better job as well.” This came from a man who claimed he loved me; who had a job and lost it because he said I stressed him out. He blamed me for his work ethics. I’m on income assistance because the man who mentally abused me finally left. To him I say, “Thank you.” You set me free.

Learning; getting my GED has given me a new outlook on the prospective things I can be. I will be able to provide for my children. I will have pride in my accomplishments once I achieve each small goal. Those will bring me closer to my larger goal soon enough. I will have obtained a goal that so very few people get a chance to do.

If learning is so selfish; I want to be greedy and gobble down as much knowledge as I can; like a starving man who’s only goal is to obtain that round comfortable semblance of being full. Learning will be my food, it will feed me and in turn I shall feed my children and build a better home a life for us.

## **My Learning Journey**

*By Paula Sepp*

I was asked to contribute a bit about my learning journey. I like that phrase, learning journey. It truly has been one...

I was that weird kid in the class who actually liked school. Not that learning came easy to me - at least I don’t think

it did. I worked for my grades. And because my family moved a lot, I had to deal with more than my share of challenges, teachers, kids, and bullies. But the chance to learn something new? That was constant.

For personal reasons, I had to drop out of high school with only three Grade 10 credits. I had

to work one dead end job after another to keep a roof over my head. I tried repeatedly to go back to school, but life kept getting in the way. My last attempt was made when I was 20 years old, because after one reaches 21 years of age one has to pay for the privilege of finishing high school. Life once again got in the way, and I was forced once again to drop out of school.

While my formal learning career may have been put on pause, my informal one continued on. I studied any subject that interested me. I developed my hobbies, learned new ones, and turned them into an entrepreneurial opportunity. As computers became more mainstream, I familiarized myself with both the hardware and software aspects of the ever changing technology. But without a high school degree, I felt... inadequate. It didn't matter how eloquently I could speak, or how well I could read and write. I hadn't acquired that one piece of paper that held so much power over how a life could unfold.



*Paula graduating from the OWL program*

Twenty-two years after my last attempt, I decided to stop thinking about getting my G.E.D. and finally put the thought in to action. I put my fears and insecurities aside and made a phone call, and I'm so very glad I did. I spoke with Denise at the Halifax Community Learning Network, met with Pat, and was able to join a class that was already in progress at the Captain William Spry Community Centre. The teacher Brendan, was approachable and had great energy. He took the time to answer my questions. He recognized my desire to learn and my need to be challenged. And he reminded me to breathe before taking each test...

Since writing my final test, I have gained confidence in myself. Where once I was embarrassed to tell people I hadn't finished high school, I'm now telling everyone I've gotten my G.E.D., and have encouraged others who have been thinking of doing so as well. I'm still trying to figure out who/what I want to be when I grow up, and now I have more options available to me.

## **Rachel's Recipe for Success**

*By Rachel Lebowitz*

How to help a learner succeed (especially at Level 1) from "What I've learned from fumbling in the field of adult literacy"

Preparation time: varies,

Cook time: god knows

Serves: us all

## Ingredients:

- 2 cups of humour
- 2 cups of honesty about own failings and life
- 6 heaping tablespoons of constructive criticism (avoid patronizing empty compliments)
- 2 cups of reassessing goals and re-creating new ones, or as needed
- 6 cups of non-judgement (this is vital)



## Directions

In a heavy-bottomed pot, add all the ingredients, in whatever order you deem fit (measurements also approximate: some learners may need more humour, some may need no reassessment of goals at all). Stir continually until the sauce forms a skin on the spoon.

1. Humour: Learners are often coming nervous to the program -- they feel young, stupid, scared. Humour is an extremely important way to build rapport: let's not take ourselves so seriously. This is not a top-down program and humour helps emphasize that.

2. Honesty: Learners often feel like you know everything and they know nothing. Find out what you can learn from them and use that to plan your lessons. Is your learner a reluctant writer? What are some of her life stories? Have her dictate one to you and write it down

and use it for future lessons (ie: spelling, vocabulary, cloze exercises). Though keep in mind: learners are not necessarily going to want to share information with you if you haven't shared anything with them. Share something from your life, even if they haven't asked. Be honest about what you find difficult in your life. Many learners know about the time I hugged my math teacher when he gave me a pity pass. Talk about times you felt stupid. Talk about times you've read about a chapter without once taking in what the author was saying. At the same time, don't negate the very real struggles the learners face. There are many aspects of their lives that are probably more difficult than yours: listen with compassion. Remember though that you are there to help them work on literacy skills. If they are spending all their time talking, move it back onto the page: either do a written conversation about the issues, pen a letter, help them use a journal, or have them dictate, so that you are still helping them gain some skills. I'm often blunt about this: "I really care about what you're saying, but I'm concerned that us just talking about it isn't going to help you. How can we work this into something that you write?"

3. Constructive Criticism/Avoid patronizing: Adult learners are very sensitive to being patronized. Don't tell them that everything they wrote was wonderful. It probably wasn't. If it was, why would they be there? Use constructive criticism. Say things like, "This is a great first draft. I like the way you brought in details here. I'm a bit confused here" just as you would for anyone else. Don't use children's fiction books (especially with cartoony illustrations), unless they've mentioned this as a goal (ie: to read to their children). I personally am very

fond of using children's non-fiction books (ie: sports, history, geography, science -- ones with photographs) but I'm aware that learners may not want to go past the giant stuffed panda to pick up books, so I'll often go get them myself beforehand.

4. Re-Assessing goals: Learners may be 1B learners and all they can talk about are getting their GED or high school diploma. This may never happen. If it does happen, it might come to pass 7 years from now. If all they can focus on is that, then all they will see is how they are failures. Work at coming up with concrete goals that are realizable in a one month or three month period. Help them come up with goals like setting up an email account, learning how to estimate in a grocery store, writing a letter to their grandchild.

5. Non-Judgement: Don't judge the learners for being late or quitting the program. These people have hard lives and you have a right to be frustrated if they don't show (and you don't have to continue working with them: the coordinator will re-match you after a few such missed sessions, if you'd like), but try not to let that frustration show. Many learners need to quit and re-start a program like this 2-5 times before they can commit. Their courage just walking through the door is astounding. Keep that in mind, even if they don't stay around long and even if you never work with them again. Try to continue to be compassionate so that they'll remember the program as being a safe and welcoming space -- and perhaps that will help them come back in the future. John Cromwell is one of the greatest success stories in my program right now. In the past, he was impossible to match with a tutor.

## Variations

1. Some learners, especially those studying for the GED, will not need any of this: they don't want to hear your stories, they don't want to talk about themselves, they don't need to bond, they don't need to reassess goals. They just need someone patient and knowledgeable. That's great. Just work through good resources and ask the coordinator if you need other books, etc.

## Volunteering

*By Bryan Garnet-Doucette*

When I retired, I was determined that I would not sit at home and vegetate. I decided to check out what volunteer activities were available and I picked tutoring.

I enjoy tutoring. You meet interesting people

and get satisfaction helping people achieve their goals. Also, it is a commitment which gets me out of the house and gives me exercise going back and forth to the library.

Besides helping people, I also help myself by keeping my mind active and re-introducing myself to subjects that I have long ago learned in school but have slipped to the far recesses of my mind.



*Graham and Bryan consider new math concepts*



All in all, I believe being a volunteer has enriched my life and made me a better person.

## **My Adult Learning Goals 2014-2015**

*By Heather Myatt*

At the beginning of the term, my tutor and I made a list of goals for me.

This is the list:

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Money Management (Math)
4. Email
5. Learning about Cats



*Heather and Aileen*

Although the term is not over, I feel that I have done quite well with my list. I feel more confident reading aloud with my tutor. I am working my way through the top three hundred most commonly used words of the English Language. I am now in the second one hundred today.

I also feel more at ease with my writing as my tutor and I start each session with “written conversation”. I get to tell my tutor what I have been doing on the weekends during this work. This is how she gets my latest news! I do not have perfect spelling - but I am now not afraid to try!

I am learning to manage money and when my tutor told me “math is money” I became more interested!

This year I got my own email address and started to use email! I really love emailing my brother and hearing all his news. I love to be able to keep in touch with my family.

As I am a huge cat lover, I enjoy when my tutor and I read about cats. We finish each session with a bit of reading about cat facts or cat stories. I find that really entertaining and a good ways to finish our tutoring session.

I enjoy my Adult Literacy experience because I get to get out, see people and learn new things. I like my tutor and the program coordinator. I feel more confident trying new things and I feel like I have been making good progress with the goals we set in the beginning of the term.

## **It's Never Too Late to Learn**

*By Grateful*

With a grade seven education, going back to school much later in life was a hard decision to make but a necessary one. When I decided to leave school back in the seventies, cashier jobs were plentiful. Just about on every other block there was a video store or corner store or even a handy grocery store. My first job was as a cashier in a local corner store near my home, where

I worked for seven years before I started with Sobeys in 1985. I stayed with Sobeys as a cashier until 1990. After that, I baby sat for a year until I became bored and decided to go back to school two nights a week for upgrading in math and English.

At that time I got into caring for the elderly for a year, which I enjoyed but found it difficult to travel to various locations without a vehicle. I could be in Sackville or Beaverbank in any given day. I took a job as a bakery clerk at the Superstore in Spyfield for six years. Still feeling unsatisfied, I went back to Sobeys in 1995 where I am currently employed. I have worked in every department of the store over the past nineteen years. The deli department is where I currently work thirty hours a week.

Visiting the Captain William Spry Library one day I noticed a man sitting with a young woman helping her with the GED. I circled around the room and went back to the table and inquired about the GED tutoring. The tutor introduced me to Pat Roberts who set up a date and time with a tutor to start my GED preparation.

I started to feel excited and anxious and I am looking forward to start a beginning of lifelong learning. Where I stand now with continuing education is working towards my English and writing skills exams this June.

## My Big Decision

*By LeighAnne Kenney*

In the summer of 2005, I made one of the most important decisions of my life. Try keeping the bills paid and groceries in the cupboard after being off for one week with no pay. Weary of jobs that were at the bottom of the dead-end list, I believed I deserved better.



*LeighAnne and Miriam learning math tips*

I left school in the fall of 1979 because bullies tormented me for reasons I still cannot understand. Not fitting in with the crowd, I heard the cruel epithets of “Hayseed” and “Hillbilly” being tossed my way every day. I skipped school, darting into the woods and hiding in the logging camp cabins, often accompanied by my siblings. Teachers turned a deaf ear to my pleas for help. I kept both them and my parents off my trail by writing my own notes and doctoring my report cards. One day, I exploded, fought back and ended up expelled from school. The likelihood of reform school loomed over my head, and maybe hanging that annoying bully out the third floor window wasn’t such a great idea after all.

My parents and the Education Board decided it best I be home schooled. That made me happy because I no longer had to face the bullies anymore. Eventually, I

wrote provincial exams. At 14, I started tenth grade in another school district, and I didn't mind traveling 40 miles each way. I found the environment at the high school welcoming, and made new friends. Not once did I hear anyone say "Hayseed" or "Hillbilly." The kids there accepted me. In time, I fell in with mischief makers who enjoyed skipping class and my interest in school vanished into thin air. I didn't tell my parents for months because I knew my mother would be fit to be tied if she found out.

In June of 2010, I graduated from the Adult Learning Program at NSCC Leeds Street. I put my nose to the grindstone, working hard to finish my education. In my free time, I enjoyed helping others in the Compass Room as they worked on their projects. A sense of fulfillment came over me whenever I helped them with research papers or computer work. That triggered my interest in becoming a literacy tutor because seeing someone succeed is the best feeling ever.

## **The Central Library**

*By Maria Terrio*

You don't know anybody that loves to go to the library? Wow! Here I can tell you how much I enjoy going there. When I go to the library I always enjoy spending many hours there, practicing my writing



*Maria and Princesa learning together*

and reading skills. I especially like the new library. I love the location, the atmosphere and the fact that it is always full of people. It is full of energy.

The library is located in downtown Halifax. It is on the most popular street in the city, Spring Garden Road. The library stands out from every angle on the street. It reminds me of stacked cubes. The exterior is covered with reflective glass. Some of the glass has a pattern on it. When I look in, I can see rows of lime green couches. It is modern furniture. Everything is new, bigger and brighter.

It's the perfect location for me. I can come anytime, just a few minutes' walk from my house to there. Everything is near to the library. After I visit the library, I could walk on the way home to get some stuff that I need. As a matter of fact, in winter, I don't worry about getting home late. There is always a bus running and there are lots of cabs around. You don't have to worry about people being on the street, because this is downtown Halifax. It is a busy area.

## **Learning at the Library**

*By Tim Lake*

The adult learning program at the Keshen Goodman Library has helped me a lot. I really enjoyed going each week because the coordinator and tutor were really helpful and understanding. I am trying to get my GED and get a better job, and this program is helping to make that possible.

## How HCLN Has Helped Me

*By Keith Crawford*

Hello my name is Keith and I'd like to share with you my story as to how the HCLN has helped me along my journey.

As a new immigrant I found myself submersed in a new culture on a new continent with



*Keith and his tutor Malcolm*

existing qualifications that were of little use to me due to differences in the education system.

Like many others, I had to start all over again and take the GED examination in order to be a fair competitor in the job market. Now I was faced with this new terminology "GED" not knowing what this meant I found myself at the library researching this foreign term. Not only did the Halifax library explain what the GED entailed but it also put me in contact with a member of the HCLN. This was the start of my new relationship with the HCLN.

A member would sit down with me and explain in depth the best material available for conquering the GED test. The HCLN is a great starting point with lots of resourceful material to help one with the GED, furthermore; they offer one on one lessons to meet the individual's needs. I did not take advantage of this great offer at this time due to time restraints.

I passed the GED exam respectively which leads me to my next story two years later. With my GED certificate and Canadian citizenship in my hand, I am now looking to join the Canadian Forces or the RCMP as this is the career path I have always dreamt of doing. Now I have to overcome the next hurdle, namely, entrance exams. Knowing that math is one of my weaker subjects and that it makes up an important portion of the examination, I have decided to return to the HCLN seeking advice to help me with my quest. They immediately advised me on the right learning material to use and paired me with an instructor best suited to my learning abilities. This was difficult at first due to me working out of province three weeks at a time, however; they worked with me accommodating my needs.

I am currently attending weekly lessons with my instructor which has helped me immensely. I was extremely lucky to find an instructor who is an ex-military member to teach me. I am still flabbergasted when I think on my first lesson and asking, how much do I owe you? Only to hear the reply “it’s all done on a voluntary basis my dear” It is amazing to have such a program offered in my city, especially in a time when not much is for free.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank HCLN and its team for helping me on my journey.

## **My Escape from the City**

*By Don Murphy*

The Western novel I am picking at is about the sheriff is being framed by a crooked Judge. Sheriff Burke shot off



Hogg's big toe in a draw. Hogg is a murderer. Burke's deputy Jack got hit on his head from behind, but he'll be OK. Melanie stole Jack, she took him to her bed in her saloon upstairs. The book is well-written. It's good for my escape.



*Alexandria and Catby learning together at the Central Library*

## **How I Stopped Smoking**

*By Alexandria Marsman*

How I accomplished my goal to quit smoking. Well, it wasn't easy but with the help of Nicorette gum, a lot of exercise, and a lot of walking yes, I did it.

And why did I quit? Because smoking cigarettes causes lung disease, heart disease, cancer, and it's very bad for your health. It's expensive also. Yes, my husband is finally slowing down smoking cigarettes too. I was born in Africville, Nova Scotia. I am 51 years of age and now that I finally quit smoking I feel a whole lot better. I'm now in school getting my GED and I am so proud of myself.

It has been two months since I stopped smoking. I don't feel nauseous to my stomach and I don't feel weak anymore. I feel a lot stronger now. My teeth are white again and I have a lot more energy.

Smoking cigarettes is one of the worst addictions in the world. Yes, through the grace of God and my Nicorette gum I finally quit that nasty, bad habit.

## **My Job**

*by Raymond Drake*

I called my friend in Ontario and I gave my e-mail and I am going to reply.

We are having our annual BBQ on May 30th, hosted by Sam.

Work is going good. I am cleaning and raking lawns.

## **My Family Physician**

*By Carolyn Goyetche*

I've had the same doctor for 10 years, since 2002, and I've never had a problem getting an appointment with him. He was patient and caring and took the time to answer my questions that I did not understand. He would make an appointment with a specialist if he was not sure about something. He was like an old fashioned country doctor and he went over and above his work load for his patients.

Often, if you had had to have paperwork filled out and if he did not get to it by the end of the day he would come in on his weekends off to make sure that you had your paperwork done by Monday. Now, he has to move his practice to St. Margaret's Bay Road because he is ill and his new office is closer to his home instead of him making the long trip in town every day.

I found that there was a family doctor in the same practice who was taking on new patients. At least he went through each file and accepted the patients who did not have chronic illnesses. It is like he was going cherry picking as he chose the patients who did not have a lot of issues with their health. When I went to see the doctor who was on call I was told from my doctor's receptionist that I had one month to find a new family physician.



*Carolyn and her tutor LeighAnne at the Central Library.*

I made many phone calls and I found myself running into a lot of road blocks, mainly because there is a shortage of family physicians in Nova Scotia. Either the doctor is retiring or he has his quota of patients that he can handle.

So off I went and found a family physician who is in Scotia Square Medical Centre in March, 2012. I was there a little over a year when that doctor mentioned that he was moving his practice to Bedford. Because

of transportation issues, I could not go with him and then I had the dreaded task of looking for a new family physician. When I was at Scotia Square Medical Centre on occasion I would use the doctor in the walk-in clinic, so to this day I will keep him as my back up doctor when my family physician is not available.

But I need a family physician so after six months of waiting for a doctor I found one. I was there just over a year when she mentioned to me that she was moving her practice to Bedford and again I would have to find a new family physician, due to transportation issues. This time I had two months to find a new family physician.

When I was talking to my first doctor's receptionist she mentioned because of my COPD I have to find a family physician and I should try Quinpool Road so that evening I was on the phone again and I remembered that there was a doctor's office that was next to the Wendy's restaurant. I called that number and I asked the man that answered if he was taking on new patients because my previous doctor was moving her practice and because of transportation I could not go with her. So he told me to call the same number that I called at 9 am and he would be happy to take me on as a patient. So as of March 5th 2015, I found looking for a new family physician to be very stressful and challenging because there is a shortage of doctors in Nova Scotia. Some of the physicians are almost at retirement age or they have their quota of patients and some places I called will not consider taking you on as a patient if you have chronic health conditions.

## **My Name is Kitty**

*By Kit Chow*

“Hello, my name is Kitty. Hello Kitty.” This is the usual way I introduce myself.

Forty years ago I came to Canada and was married. My sister-in-law is a Caucasian. She asked me how I would like to be called. I told her my Chinese name – Kit Kwan. She tried very hard. “Kit” is the only word that sounded perfect to my name. So everyone started to call me “Kit”. Then I learned that Canadians usually call their children “kids” so I hesitated.

I watched an old Western cowboy serialized drama called “Gun Smoke.” There was a “Miss Kitty” in the show. So I changed my introduction from “Kit” to “Kitty” but I didn’t realize that I had married into the Chow family. So other strangers remember my name as “Kitten Chow” cat food. I was hesitant again ...

I found out that there was a “Hello Kitty” cartoon character who is very famous around the world. Now I am happy to introduce myself as “Hello Kitty.” After these stories, you can probably guess what kind of personality I have.

I joined the HCLN as a student at the Keshen Goodman library. I got help from Pat Roberts and tutors Wayne and Patrick for preparing me to write the GED math section. For the last three months they kept telling me to write the test. Of course I always hesitated, but they encouraged me saying, “You don’t need a perfect mark to pass it!” So I took the test as they suggested and I passed it. Thanks a lot to the HCLN!

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**<http://www.canadahelps.org>**

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