

How Far I Have Come

YEARBOOK 2011

A year of learning with...

HCLN 
Halifax Community Learning Network
"a bridge to a brighter future"

This story accompanies the artwork on the cover, a piece that Tammy worked on as part of the Art Attack program at the Captain William Spry Library.

How Far I Have Come

By Tammy Corbin

I went back to school when I was older. The colours that I picked are blue, yellow and gold. The blue symbolizes how I took the steps to start school. The yellow symbolizes how happy it made me that I was able to get the courage to believe in myself to go back to school. The gold symbolizes how far I have come with my success in going back to school.

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 (HCLN) is one of thirty-five community-based adult learning programs 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 and the Spring Garden Road Public Library.

If you know someone who needs help improving their literacy skills or are interested in volunteering, please contact us at:

(902) 422-7648

hcln@ns.sympatico.ca

www.hcln.ca

For information about other learning opportunities in Nova Scotia, check out the new Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning web site at:

www.goNSSAL.ca or call 1-877-466-7725

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Introduction

Denise Morley

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2011 edition of the Halifax Community Learning Network yearbook. The title *How Far I Have Come* is from a piece of writing by Tammy Corbin but could just as easily have been called *How Far We Have Come*, as this yearbook like everything at HCLN, represents the work of so many.



Spreading the word about HCLN on the Lachine Canal

From those who came to us for upgrading, to the many excellent volunteer tutors, Board Members, amazing staff and generous community partners, we have achieved much by working together.

This year, we served more than 175 adults whose goals ranged from writing their first letter to an elected official to learning computer skills to passing the GED exam and much more. Barb Pottier from the Captain William Spry Adult Learning Program delivered the workshop *Tools for Learners in Truro and Eskasoni*. Another student got a full time job (with benefits!) after working with HRM during the Canada Games. Several who study with us moved on to other programs such as the Cunard Learning Centre, FLECs and NSCC.

HCLN was busy in the community this year, participating in events such as International Literacy Day, Literacy Action Week, International Adult Learners Week and more. A grant through the Capital District Health Authority allowed us to develop a series of workshops for learners called *Healthy Choices* which were delivered by Avril Lewis,

with assistance from Jen Hill and tutor Janet Copeland, and very well-received. We also piloted the Active Readers series from Grassroots Press.

Our dedicated learners continued their excellent work writing for The Learning Beacon, National Adult Literacy Database and of course, for this year book. I know you will enjoy the many stories of challenge, triumph and whimsy within How Far I Have Come and wish you all a wonderful summer!

A Special Thank You

In addition to those listed in the acknowledgements, we would like to say a special thank you to Matt Likely and Wil Gamble, two excellent graphic artists and behind-the-scenes volunteers with the Halifax Community Learning Network.

I first met Matt and Wil through their employer, Minuteman Press many years ago when we needed help with a printing job that required some technical assistance. Little did I know, and I'm sure they never suspected, that they would become the go-to guys for design and computer jobs big and small. Since then, both have gone on to new employment: Wil runs his own business, Oatmeal Design and Matt works in film, including the recent success *Hobo With a Shotgun*, but somehow they always find time for HCLN.

Like many not-for-profits, HCLN has little or no budget for technical support and certainly can't afford the luxury of a professional designer, yet our materials, including this yearbook, look great thanks to Matt and Wil. They are always willing to respond to last minute requests and late-night desperate e-mails for computer help when something I'm working on goes awry and their creativity, ability and support is very much appreciated.

You are design heroes, dedicated volunteers and great friends of community literacy!

Acknowledgements

A sincere thank you to the following individuals and organizations. The list is long, and the contributions range from the support of invaluable community partners to the donation of free books from the Bookmark Book Store, technical support during HCLN workshops and free Oasis juice to keep us hydrated as we learn.

Each of you has played an important part in helping make HCLN programs a success!

Angela Penny

Ann Marie Downie

Association of Community Learning Organizations

Avril Lewis

Bedford-Sackville Learning Network

Black Educators Association

Bookmark Book Store

Carolyn Langlands

Cathy Campbell

Chebucto West & Halifax Community Health Board

Cunard Learning Centre

Darla Muzzerall

Dartmouth Learning Network

David Pilmer

Deaf Literacy Nova Scotia

Earl Letts

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Sunday Miller
Tom Margeson
Volunteer Canada
Wil Gamble
Western HRM Learning Network
Zoe Mitchell

Message from Angela Penney

Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education

As another school year draws to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the adult learners of the Halifax Community Learning Network. It is not an easy decision to return to learning, especially for adults who are faced with so many other responsibilities. Great job, and you should be very proud!

As well, with all the great work and dedication of the volunteer tutors, the learners of HCLN are very fortunate to have such devoted individuals. These volunteers are an intricate piece of your learning journey and should be commended for their hard work and dedication. A special “thank you” to all the volunteer tutors of HCLN, from the Department of Labour and Advanced Education!

Without saying, we all know the fuel that keeps everything running at HCLN, is the endless hours of time devoted by your Director, Denise Morley. Denise’s passion for her work clearly shows with her dedication to each and everyone involved with HCLN. You are a true inspiration Denise, thank you!

There are also many others that work behind the scenes to make this all possible. The supportive board, made up again of many devoted volunteers, and the Halifax Public Library that provides space for our learners and tutors to meet free of charge. Thank you for providing such a supportive learning environment!

Although I have only been in the role of Adult Education Coordinator for three months, it has been an absolute pleasure to be involved with such a successful and dedicated organization, as HCLN! I look forward to meeting more learners and staff from the organization in the months to come. For now, I wish you all the best for a safe and prosperous summer. Keep reading!!!

Message from Constance Glube, Honourary Chair

Many events have taken place over the past year, which I will leave to others to mention. I just want to say a heartfelt thank you and congratulations to every one involved with HCLN for completing another successful year in the world of literacy.

How can we say thank you enough to all those who have made HCLN a vibrant and energetic organization?

How can we say thank you to the more than 160 adult learners working towards their individual goals such as GED exams, entering a full time learning institution or just taking the first steps of learning how to read and write. For taking those first steps and the steps that follow to their final goals we applaud the learners achievements.

How can we say thank you enough to the HCLN tutors who contributed more than 8000 hours of their personal time as volunteers. Your

rewards and thank yous come from the many achievements, great and small, of your learners.

How can we say thank you enough to all those too numerous to mention who volunteer their time and expertise in making sure that HCLN functions effectively and efficiently behind the scenes throughout the year.

How can we say thank you enough to Denise Morley, our Network Director for her tireless dedication ensuring that everything necessary to be done to make HCLN an effective and efficient operation throughout the year is accomplished. She steers HCLN on a daily basis ensuring that it reaches the high standard of success that exists today.

I wish you all many thanks and a wonderful summer.

Letter from Premier Darrell Dexter

(this is an excerpt from a letter written to HCLN by Premier Dexter on December 30, 2010)

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting adult Nova Scotians to improve their literacy and essential skills. In the past few weeks, I have received a number of letters from adult learners who are realizing their potential through the Halifax Community Learning Network. The province values the work of organizations that deliver adult learning programs. Again, please accept my sincere appreciation to you, your staff and volunteers for your time, dedication and commitment to the participants in your programs.

Message from Jayne Hunter, Literacy Nova Scotia

I was pleased to be asked to share my thoughts about the Nova Scotia Practitioner Training and Certification Program, which 13 practitioners from Halifax Community Learning Network are currently working on. These practitioners are instructors and tutors in the many programs offered by HCLN. All of them want the learners they work with to have the best learning experience possible.



This training is the foundation for all new practitioners in learning programs. Every good teacher believes in lifelong learning, not only for his or her learners but for themselves as well. The participants in the program tell us that they are learning a lot that will help them work with their learners. One participant has been teaching for over 30 years in adult literacy programs and said she can't get enough of the program.

Another participant recommends, "every instructor, no matter their credentials, should take this course. They would learn something new and add to their bag of tricks". Practitioners are always looking for new ways to be creative, to match their techniques with your learning style, and to meet your individual learning goals.

Literacy Nova Scotia is so pleased to receive such supportive comments. Our philosophy is that adults who come to a learning program have a right to be taught by highly skilled tutors and instructors who can help them learn and succeed. Literacy Nova Scotia supports practitioners and learners and their learning organizations.

Thank you, Denise for asking me to share.

Message from Jen Hill

It's amazing how fast another year has gone by!

The literacy programs at Spring Garden and Halifax North continue to grow. As usual, people are reading lots of books, writing fascinating stories and doing some very complicated math! Some special events this year have included computer skills workshops at Spring Garden and workshops on Health Eating and Stress at both libraries. It was fun to see people



get the chance to have a different type of learning experience. Thank very much to Kristina, Avril and Denise for making these possible!

As always, I am so impressed by the dedication of so many people to these programs. Seeing everyone work so hard and all that the learners have achieved this year make me so proud to be part of this program. Thank you and congratulations everyone!

I wish everyone a fantastic summer. For those of you who are moving on to other things, congratulations and good luck in the future. It's been a pleasure working with all of you.

Message from Pat Roberts

“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”
George Washington Carver



It’s hard to believe that another year of tutoring and learning is coming to an end. This was my third year as Coordinator at the Keshen Goodman Library

and I continue to be amazed by the dedication and enthusiasm that our tutors and learners bring to the program.

This year we helped over 35 people work towards their learning goals and have helped, on average, about 30 people per week. Our volunteer tutors have donated approximately 200 hours per week towards tutoring and have contributed close to 2 000 volunteer hours this year. All I can say is, wow! We are so lucky to have such an outstanding group of tutors and I can’t thank them enough for all that they do.

Once again our learners ranged from those seeking to improve their daily lives and basic abilities to those working towards high school or GED completion in order to pursue further studies or work opportunities. Our learners contributed to several publications this year, both in text format and on-line and it is very gratifying to see students producing material, whether it’s for their first time or their fiftieth time. The computer technology has continued to be a big success and the laptops are used in every tutoring session.

As always, the staff at the Keshen Goodman Library were fantastic and we are truly grateful for their knowledge and accommodation. Their friendliness and cheerful goodwill make us feel welcome and at home in the library. In addition, the resources have continued to improve

and the literacy section at the library is becoming truly impressive.

Thank you, as well, to my fellow Coordinators, Jen Hill and Noreen Battaglia. It has been great working with you this year. Even though we don't often get to meet face-to-face, I always appreciate your support and advice. And again, a special thank you to Denise Morley who is a constant source of inspiration and encouragement in the always challenging field of adult literacy.

Thank you for a fabulous year and I look forward to continuing the journey next year!

The River Hebert Coal Mine

By Larry Bird

I started working at the River Hebert Coal Mine at age 19. We worked on our hands and knees because the mine was low – it had a small coal seam. I saw a lot of people get badly hurt. I saw people get killed and die. I remember a stone fell on top of Hector McKeigan.



Larry and his tutor Sandy at Halifax North Library

We worked hard when putting timber down in the coal pans. They used to blow dynamite to loosen up the coal. It was really scary when we were blasting dynamite. Everybody worked real hard together. We helped each other stay alive.

All the miners worked together as brothers – just like the miners in Chile. After 69 days in the mine in Chile it is a miracle they all came out alive.

Back in River Hebert it was a dangerous mine to work in especially because it was so low. When I was 24 a fall of stone fell on top of me. I was buried. I wasn't buried very long before they got me out. I was praying to God that I would get out alive.

A Tale of Two Countries-The Old and the New

By Abeba Ayele

I want to tell you something about my country, Ethiopia, a beautiful country. We have a lot of rain and farms and fruits and oceans. Our

children play outside, swim in the ocean, and eat fruit from the trees. We have chicken for Christmas dinner. In Ethiopia all the people go outside for the New Year's celebrations. They enjoy being together, eating food and drinking. We have a special dinner with family and friends at the beach. We swim in the ocean, and eat food-chicken, vegetables and for dessert we have fruit, like strawberries and mango.

I was very sad to leave Ethiopia, but I had to leave with my family because of civil war, which had been going on for many years. We had to escape to Sudan. We were not able to take anything with us, just the clothes that we were wearing. The Mengistu government was very cruel; they took all males over the age of fourteen by force to be in the army. We had to leave our country to protect my husband and my three sons.

Life in Sudan was very difficult. We were refugees and were not treated fairly. There was no respect. We were told many times that we did not belong because we were not born there.

Now, I am very happy that I live in Canada with my family. My children are very happy to live in Canada, a free country, where they can go to school to get a good education. A good education gives them the freedom to choose what they want to do with their lives. My older daughter is studying to be a social worker because she likes to help people when they are having difficulty. My oldest son also likes to help people; he works at the QE II. My children and I know how important it is to live in a free country.

Reading to Hayden

By Cheryl Wood

One of my favorite things to do is read children's books to my son, Hayden. At night Hayden likes to start off by brushing his teeth and jumping into bed. Most of the time he likes to pick out his own two books and when he does they usually end up being the same two he always picks.

Hayden likes to snuggle up close to me as I read to him. He loves to look at all the pictures in the books and talk about them page after page. I enjoy this. He is very curious about everything but when it comes to his books, he has to know everything about what's going on. Hayden also likes to practice reading them. We go through all the words and sound them out.

Hayden doesn't normally fall asleep during our book reading time. He is always fully awake and alert and I don't mind at all. It is one of my many special times with my four year old. I know he will grow out of this phase of me reading him books. But hopefully he will never get bored of them all together. After I finish reading the books to Hayden I give him a little back rub and kiss him good night.

Kevin and Paul, a text message exchange

By Kevin MacDonald and Paul Chaddock

Paul: Kevin and I have been working together as a team since 2009.

Kevin: We have been doing a lot of fractions that I like doing.

Paul: It is truly inspirational to learn new things each week with Kevin and continue adding more and more integral building blocks to our learning journey.

Kevin: We have fun reading together, taking turns and trying to find new things to read about.

Paul: There have been stories about real life heroes and those of historical disasters, followed by exercises testing our reading comprehension.

Kevin: We believe there is life other than on Earth, like the U.F.O. that crashed in New Mexico.

Paul: Kevin and I both enjoy reading about scientific discoveries and we found an interesting website where we would open recently posted science-news articles and read them together.

Kevin: We read one about the space telescope that took pictures of Mars, which is a pretty nice planet.

Mars has mountain ranges and it looks like a red planet.

Paul: Journal writing has been a wonderful addition to our weekly homework exercises, as it has enabled me to learn more about Kevin's interests and in turn, for Kevin to hone his writing skills.

Kevin: By writing in my journal it improves my writing skills, I like to learn more about dinosaurs, mustang cars, history, science, video games and Paul likes playing the cello.

Paul: Kevin and I have made excellent progress this year and the possibilities continue to be endless as we set sights on our learning-filled future.

Kevin: I hope to get my G.E.D thanks to Paul's help and we have a great life with family and friends.



Kevin and Paul at the Captain William Spry Library.

My First Piece of Cherry Pie

By Jane Landry

I was born Oct. 30 1954. Fall is the season for cherries. When I was a little girl of about fourteen, I learned some wonderful things about cherries. I met Bernice Key my next door neighbour. First she taught me to make Fudge brownies. Then she took me to where she lived when she was a little girl at Heatherton in the county of Antigonish. There were many cherry trees and she showed me how to pick cherries. I picked hundreds of cherries, put them in a bucket and took them home to her place. She showed me how to clean the cherries for cherry pie and for my work, I had a piece of her cherry pie. It was the very first piece I had ever had. It was very good.

Being a Tutor

By Phoebe Owen

I first became involved with the Spring Garden Road Library Adult Learning Program as a literacy tutor a year and a half ago. I work part-time in the fall and winter and found myself looking for new things to get involved in locally. I had known about the program peripherally for a while, and so when a friend suggested I get involved with a volunteer activity, it was one of the first options that came to mind. I liked the idea of working one-on-one with someone, and I gravitated towards wanting to share reading and writing, since it is



Phoebe and others at Using Structure to Foster Creativity at the Keshen Goodman Library.

something that has been so rewarding and central in my own life.

The idea of spending more time at the public library and being involved in a capacity that contributes to the library community was also a large motivating factor. As the child of not one, but two librarians (!), a large portion of my childhood was spent in the Spring Garden Road library; many past and current staff members feel like family. Libraries are such wonderful, accessible, welcoming spaces, which play such an important role in creating a sense of community in our neighbourhoods.

In the Halifax Community Learning Network, from learners to coordinators to fellow tutors, I have discovered yet another library niche of profoundly generous, compassionate and supportive people. I am humbled and inspired by the people I have met and the stories I have heard. For me becoming a tutor has been one of the most challenging and rewarding risks I have undertaken. The experience continually provides me with new insights into myself, both as a learner and as a teacher, and it is so lovely to meet new people, and share the library and words with them.

Baking With Cashton

By Margaret Martin

My grandson and I started a tradition. Every Christmas and Easter we make holiday cookies. Cashton puts on his apron to start his baking. He likes to crack the eggs and help put in the ingredients in the mixer. When it is mixed, we make our shapes with the cookie cutters but he likes to eat the dough more than he makes the shapes. He likes to share his dough with Grampy. After they are cooked, we decorate them and then we share them with friends. He likes to share them with Uncle John. He calls Uncle John the cookie monster!

My Friend, Mrs. Lewis

By Kathy Borden

I go to Church on Wednesday evenings. The pastor gives a speech about “Acts” and we discuss it and people ask questions. I usually do not ask any questions. I just listen. My friend, Mrs. Lewis, goes with me. She has a car and drives us home and we discuss what happened. I go to my friend’s house almost every day. She lives a short walk away. She has a husband and two daughters. Her daughters have grown up and moved away. One of them lives in Ottawa; the other lives in Halifax.

When I go to visit her, we sometimes watch TV or do errands, like banking, or buying groceries. Sometimes we go to Halifax Shopping Centre.

Mrs. Lewis and I go to church together on Wednesday evenings and Sunday morning. She sings in the choir, and she teaches Sunday School.

I really like her and she is a nice influence in my life.

HRM Bucket Trucks

By Robert Lowe

Bucket trucks help people get their animals like cats from the tree.

I saw HRM Bucket Trucks cutting down trees.

I saw the HRM city bucket truck changing light bulbs.

HRM Power Company city trucks knock ice off power lines. This helps to keep power to people’s homes.

Telephone companies use bucket trucks for fixing telephone wires.

There is a bucket truck called the Bronto Skylift.

The truck will be very helpful for serious fires in tall high-rise apartment buildings. The bucket truck can reach up to 114 feet!

It is also compact and is able to go around telephone poles, wire and power lines and can drive even on narrow roads.

I am writing a story about HRM bucket trucks and it would help me with the story to know.

How many bucket trucks do you guys have?

How many drivers do they have?

Did you ever use the bucket truck to get a cat out of a tree?

What do you use the bucket trucks for?



Robert (far left) and friends enjoying a workshop on Healthy Eating at the Spring Garden Road Library

Freedom

By Melita Jackson

On May 2, 2011, I went up the street to Saint Paul's Church to vote. As I was walking up there a good feeling came over me. I felt so relaxed and free. I realized that I don't have to rush home any more to cook supper for my daughters or my husband. I just relaxed. Things feel different. I just hope my daughter will find the right job.

Now I have the choice to do what ever I want, spend some more time with my grandson and find a hobby. I am thinking about painting, or

rug hooking, or maybe even sewing lessons.

Christmas

By Heather Myatt

I have bought two Christmas presents so far and I need to buy three more. We are having a gift giving party at my house on 10th December. We will have snacks and we will give presents to the staff and to each other.

We will probably decorate the house this weekend but we need to take out the ornament boxes from the storage room. Gaz and Taz like to lay underneath the tree and they try to climb up the tree and play with the ornaments!

The Prescott Adult Service Centre

By Sarah Holesworth

I worked in the Fireside Kitchen for 5 years and 2 months until I had an injury with my right arm. I was doing a lot of the same sort of work everyday and it caused a tear in the muscle in my right forearm. I was having too much pain to continue working in the bakery so I moved to the craft program. The craft program is one of the programs at Prescott Service Centre. I felt that choosing to work there would be better and more comfortable for my arm.



Sarah & Jane at the Healthy Choices workshop

In the craft program I work with a lot of great people and have a wonderful new instructor named Cathy. We do a bit of everything in there like: rug hooking cross-stitch, ornaments made out of beads, baby blankets and bibs, kitchen bag holders, and aprons. My friend Nicole makes the ornaments out of beads and is teaching me how to make them. I hope to soon learn how to do cross-stitch. My big project I'm working on now is a big Christmas hooked rug that you could hang on your door or put by your door. I really enjoy working with everyone in there because they make me feel at home and they are all very special to me.

The purpose for making these items is for raising money for the Prescott Centre to keep our programs running and for what ever is needed for the centre. Some of the items are sold at our tea and sales and auctions. We also started a walkathon and we raised \$1,000 and it became a success. During the walkathon We had a BBQ and had a wonderful time socializing and receiving little prizes for participating. My Supervisor Cathy mentioned to us in the craft program about starting to eat healthy and so we all decided to do it together. We go for a long walk everyday when the weather is good. When we go for those walks we meet up with our doggie friends. One of them is cute little CoCo - she's sweet as can be. We just adore CoCo and Mickey is the other dog we see. Now that it's spring we are starting to see flowers bloom. I really like how Cathy encourages us by taking us for these walks and helping us make good food choices. We really appreciate Cathy helping us because she cares about us and our health so much. We care about Cathy too!

I'm really glad to be able to work at the Prescott centre. Since the day I started it has helped build my self esteem because the people there understood me and how I felt. I feel at home at the Prescott centre and hope to be there for a long time.

Happy Thoughts

By Everol

I am better now.

I am able to read signs.

I am a reader!

My Favourite TV Show

By Irene-Anne Hinde

My favorite TV Show is Dr. Oz. It is on in the afternoon at 1:00 during the week. It is on for an hour.

Dr. Oz talks about all kinds of health issues, like Heart disease, cancer, weight problems and eating different kinds of food.

He makes his shows very interesting. Dr. Oz. picks a folder with a number and calls out a name. That person comes down to play the game. He demonstrates the body parts. Dr. Oz also had people exercising on the show.

He is hilarious and funny, and makes people laugh. Dr. Oz looks good and healthy. It makes me want to do the same thing. His website is www.DrOz.Com. You can find health information and nutrition on his Website.

I've Met My Son at Last!

By Dougie J.

I've met my son at last! I'm glad we are talking now. He comes to my house and we talk about father and son stuff, like TV and what he's doing that day. I tell him about Days of Our Lives and wrestling. We are going to go biking when I get my bike.

He's met his grandmother now, my mother. She gave him a little stuffed Piglet. We said we love her, and she loves us. He said he has a hard time getting a hold of her sometimes. I say, try a little bit harder, son.

I'm glad my son is in my life now.



Dougie and his tutor Sarah working together

My GED Dream

By Violet Drummond

My name is Violet and I am an adult learner. I am preparing to get my GED, which I was kind of nervous about doing at first. After I told some of my family members that I had been thinking about getting my GED, they were all happy for me. I felt more confident about myself and happy that I was finally going to follow my dream. I always wanted to do this, but I was kind of shy on how to get started.

One day I was reading the newspaper and I came across an article about getting your GED. I phoned the number to find out more about it and I set up an appointment to meet with someone. After that, I kept going back and forth to work, waiting for the phone call to go see someone to help me. I always wanted to get my GED but I had a family to look after. My family life was very demanding as I had two chronically ill children with Cystic Fibrosis.

When the time was right for me to try again, I took the step. I always wanted to get my GED just to be able to say that I finally got my grade 12. In the program I have learned new skills like putting words in sentences, reading a story and explaining what I have read. At

first I found this program a little easy for me because I had already done some of the work. This year I am doing even more work, plus homework and reading too. I am now into my second year and I am enjoying it!

My teacher really makes sure that I understand what I am learning and I have fun doing it too. I would like to thank two very good friends of mine who are teachers from the hospital because they

seem to help me along the way. They always tell me if I work very hard, I can get my GED. They both encourage me a lot, so it makes me feel special. Sometimes I think that without the support I get from everybody, I could not keep going.

When I get my GED I am going to have a big party and invite all my friends to celebrate. Then I am going to buy a nice frame and put my certificate in it. This will make me very proud of myself. Who knows what I will accomplish next, as I know now I can do anything I set my mind to. The sky's the limit.

Our Health

By Mary Thompson

This story is about diabetes. There are two kinds of diabetes. These are Type One and Type Two. In Type One, the body does not make any insulin. In Type Two the body does not make enough insulin or the insulin does not work right. People with Type One must take insulin



Violet working on her GED math skills

by needle every day. The people with Type Two usually are over forty. They must watch their diet and exercise more. Sometimes they take pills. Sometimes they take insulin. Insulin controls the sugar in the body.

If you have diabetes you may feel weak. You might have trouble with your eyes. Cuts take longer to heal. You are often thirsty. If you don't take care of your health you may have trouble with your blood circulation and this can lead to more serious things.

Here are some tips to prevent diabetes or control it better:

1. Eat a healthy diet.
2. Keep a healthy weight.
3. Don't smoke.
4. Reduce your stress.
5. Get exercise.

Learning to Use My E-mail

By Keith Finn

My goal was to learn how to use e-mail because I did not have a home phone. By learning e-mail I can get in touch with friends, and they can get in touch with me.

It is good to use e-mail to get in touch with other important people I have to get in touch with like my employer and my tutor. It is quicker to use email instead of writing letters by hand.



Keith and Julie taking a break from learning computer skills

I knew nothing about computers before I started. It was a really good feeling when I wrote my very first e-mail with help from my tutor on Oct 21, 2010. We were both very, very excited. It took me over 3 months of hard work to do my first e-mail on my own.

I wrote my first e-mail on my own on Jan 20, 2011. It was lots and lots of very hard work but it paid off very much in the long run, because it really built up my self-confidence.

To learn about using the computer first I had to learn how to use the monitor, keyboard, and mouse. After that I learned about web browsers, the World Wide Web, and websites.

I learned the web site for Google and then I learned how to get in to G-mail. Then I learned how to reply to an e-mail that was sent to me and to write an e-mail from scratch.

It really helped me to pick easy to remember usernames and passwords. I learned that it is very important to sign out when you are finished so people can not get into my e-mail.

Back to School

By Stella Hajinour

When I was young I didn't really like to go to school. My father and grandmother used to encourage me and as I grew up, I realized school and education is very important.

Now I enjoy learning. I owe this to my tutor, Sandy. She has been helping me with math and other school work. I hope that, in years to come, she continues to teach me. I am also thankful to Jen, who helped to find Sandy for me.

My Experience as a Volunteer Tutor

By Kristy LeBlanc

I started tutoring in November, 2010 with the Halifax Community Learning Network. I tutor at both the Spring Garden and North End Libraries, depending on where the need for a tutor is. I have had several learners over the past few months and have really enjoyed my time with them. It's really great helping people reach their goals and it's one of the most rewarding volunteer programs I've ever been involved with. Currently I am doing the online Literacy Practitioner Training Certification, which I am finding very interesting. I am learning a lot from the participants. We all have such diverse backgrounds and being fairly new to tutoring, I've found it very insightful and helpful to my own learning.

I've also had the opportunity to take a few workshops both through the Halifax and Dartmouth Community Learning Networks. It was wonderful to sit with other volunteer tutors and hear about their experiences.

I have a passion for all forms of learning and am happy to have finally found something I feel is what I'm meant to be doing. I am proud to be part of the Halifax Community Learning Network and I can't wait to see what next year brings.

Christmas Last Year

By Jane Landry

I went to Antigonish to my brother's house for Christmas last year. I arrived at the bus stop on the Acadian Lines in Antigonish on Christmas Eve. My brother Roderick was there to pick me up and take me to his apartment. I had some supper, unpacked my suitcase and got ready for church. We drove to St. Ninians Cathedral but it

was full so we went to St. Martha's Cathedral instead. After the service we brought my brother Joseph home. Roderick and I made our way back to his apartment and opened our gifts. After all of our gifts were opened we had a snack and went to bed.

The next morning was Christmas; we had a big delicious brunch. After we ate and cleaned the dishes we went to visit my cousins, Clair, Marian, and Abigail. They passed around chocolates and gave us ginger ale pop. We had a really nice time and looked at all the gifts that they had received.

We went back to Roderick's and had Christmas dinner with my sister, my brother-in-law, and my niece who had arrived from Cape Breton. What a meal! We had turkey, mashed potatoes, turnip, carrots, peas, squash, pickles, beets, and gravy. For dessert we had strawberry shortcake, and three kinds of pie (blueberry, cherry and apple). Needless to say we were all very tired after such a big meal. That evening we went to bed with full bellies and the next day we had more! Maybe next Christmas will be even better.

Why I Joined the Literacy Program

By Marjorie Wright

I joined the program at the library because I thought it would be good to get out of house two days a week. I would be doing something for myself, meeting people and socializing too. That was what I did.

Since we started about six month ago, we meet twice a week to read and learn about books, computer programs and the Internet.

We have covered more than six books already. We read in advance and sometimes we read together too. Often we discuss the books we read and find the meanings of words we are unsure of. We also write a bit

about what we read.

I have learned different things about computers and about the Internet too. We need to keep working at this.

I particularly enjoy this program because it is one on one. I have attended groups before and I found there were too many people in the classroom so I didn't get as much attention as I get in this program.

The Power Went Out

By Heather Kinkaid

My friend just ordered out a hamburger and onion rings. I had money out of my purse. Then we waited for my supper.

A few minutes later the power went out. My friend lit the candles. It was dim enough to eat supper and to see the house. Soon the guy came with our food. Then we ate our food. Later we got ready to go to my friend's house. We brought lots of stuff we needed. I brought my pajamas with me. We went by taxi. There was power at my friend's house.



Heather at a Creative Writing workshop

When we got home the power was on. We had a lot to put away. And not too long before we had to go to bed.

My Testimony

By April Sherman

When I thought of what to write for the yearbook, I thought about many things, but then last night I thought of my experience and relationship with my Lord.

It all began back when I was seventeen years old.
I was alone walking on Prince Albert Road – there
Were no cars or anyone around – and as I was walking,
I heard a voice as if someone was beside me.
It was male voice and he called me by my name. I turned
Around, but there was no one there, and I knew then it was
The Lord, for I was always God-minded.

On and off I was seeking the Lord, but to make this story short,
In 1990 I lived in Dartmouth on Windmill Rd.
One day I went to eat a restaurant near where I lived. There were
Only three other people there; two women besides me.
I looked over to where they were sitting. One of the women looked
over
To me and said “Praise the Lord”. I was startled and surprised, and
kind
Of glad as well, and I said it back to her.
I believe that the Lord worked it out that way that day.
At that time I had been attending another church. The woman asked
Me if I went to church. I said yes, then she invited me to her church.
I went on Thursday night – it was the best thing I ever did.
I now attend her church. The woman that brought me was my pastor.
I didn’t know back then she was until I went to school the following
day. I told a woman I went to school with me about it; she me
that the woman was a pastor. When I confronted the pastor when
I saw her again, she didn’t tell me for she wanted me to feel more

comfortable around her.

It was February of 1990 that I took on the name of Jesus. I was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of my sins, and I received the gift of the Holy Ghost which is the seal of promise.

I am so thankful that God called me out of a world of darkness and into His Marvelous light.

Swimming

By Kathy Borden

I swim four times every week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday are the days that I swim. In my classes, we do Aquacise. We have a Fitness Leader. Her name is Candace.

We do weights and use a noodle. The noodle is made out of Styrofoam.



*Kathy at the Healthy Choices workshop,
Halifax North Library*

My Tutor

By Kenneth McDow

There are people who need help for reading and writing and the tutor can help. The people cannot do reading and writing. There are tutors who are different and who like to help people. It is hard for the people to learn and it takes time.

It takes time for the people to get used to their own tutor. But in time the people can learn from the different tutors in my class.

When you get used to the tutor, you can make it work. The tutor knows best how to help other people. It takes time for the people to learn from different tutors. The tutor can teach history and reading books from the library in the class and can help with math, too.

The people want to make life better for the person in the work force and in the world and to make life better for their families.

After learning in the school, the people can help their children with their homework at night. This makes it better for them when they grow up and their own children go to school to learn.

About My Family

By Doug

Adam and Doug Junior are my sons. I do not know where they live. They were born in different places and put up for adoption. I do love them, they are my children. Their Grandmother is not doing too well. Adam is the oldest boy. He is 21 years old. His birthday is June the 23rd of 1989. My other son is 19 years old, Doug Junior. His birthday is July 15th of 1991.

I will be glad when I meet my son Adam. The family wants to meet Adam too. Adam and I are going to be driving bikes (when I get a bike). We are going to talk, like normal people, like Father to Son. Adam has a girlfriend, who will be my daughter-in-law if they get married. I am excited to finally meet my son.

The 12 Days of Christmas at the Spring Garden Library

Adapted By Jane Burchell & Paul Dawson

On the first day of Christmas
the Librarian sent to me...

a Library Card and it's free.

On the second day of Christmas
the Librarian sent to me...

Christmas books to read.

On the third day of Christmas
the Librarian sent to me...

Music, Art and Films.

On the fourth day of Christmas
the Librarian sent to me...

Book Clubs, Conversation.

On the fifth day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Lit---er---acy.

On the sixth day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Crafts and Local History.

On the seventh day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Readings by an author.

On the eighth day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Lots of Holiday Specials.

On the ninth day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Charming Decorated Trees.

On the tenth day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me....

Elegant Christmas Socials.

On the eleventh day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Holiday Sing-a-longs.

On the twelfth day of Christmas the Librarian sent to me...

Lovely Christmas Creations.



Jane and her tutor Paul celebrate at the Spring Garden Road Library Christmas do

The Spot Review

By Dustin Cole

My name is Dustin and I'm a student at Halifax Community Learning Network. One day at New Beginnings in Dartmouth and I saw a pamphlet about a place called The Spot. I read it and it said that it was a music program for people 35 or younger. It is held at every Thursday at 5:30PM-7:30PM at Connections Clubhouse in Halifax. I was interested because of the picture of headphones on the front of the pamphlet, which to me meant that it was about music, compilation and re-mixing. I love music and I'm fascinated with the process of making music.

My interest in music led me to Halifax into the Connections Clubhouse. When I started going there I was a little bit nervous about making the bus connections on time. When I got there, I asked around how to get to The Spot. When I got there, I met some people who I didn't know, yet I got to know quite well! Also I met some people I already knew. We listened to some people playing music then, I played the "catpaws", that are like two wooden spoons which are moulded together at one end.

We the listeners/players were told to try not to overpower each other. The second time I went to the spot, there were some new people. The whole group went to the state of the art recording studio upstairs. We listened to two music tracks one I knew, one I hadn't heard of before. As we listened we were encouraged to make notes on one giant sticky note pad, at the same time, when there was room. If not you would have to wait until there was enough room to write down what you thought about the music when it played. You would make note of how the music made you feel, what you thought of what kind of beat or what kind of style the tunes were played like what type of singing was being played (theory in music).

After we finished listening to the songs we split up into three groups: vocals, recording, and jamming session. I went to the jamming one, what fun! I got to play the Tonga drum, but I had trouble keeping time to the beat. I really liked the recording studio, there is a big mixing board hooked up to a computer, it can have about ten or so inputs, cool huh? I think I will go back if there is another whole session there, I want to go back to learn and interact with my peers. When I was there I was comfortable being with other people with mental illnesses, and learning from them. I would recommend this experience (The Spot) to anyone who plays an instrument, sings, or likes to write poetry that can be made into music, or just likes making music and the technology behind music.

Thanksgiving

By Heather Myatt

On Friday I went home. My aunt and uncle were there. We talked and I went to bed early.

On Saturday afternoon I looked after Alexander, Jonah and Skye with my aunt and uncle.

On Sunday morning Heather started preparing the dinner while I watched. She cooked turkey with squash, potatoes, carrots, stuffing and gravy. It was good!

It was nice to see my family!

The Playoff Game

By Darlene Coulstring

The playoff hockey game was between the Detroit Red Wings and Phoenix Coyotes on April 13, 2011. In a hockey game there are three 20-minute periods. The first period ended with the score three nothing for Detroit.

In the second period Detroit scored another goal by 96 Tomas Holmstrom, which was assisted by number 13 Pavel Datsyuk and 51 Valtteri Filppula. Phoenix scored their first goal of the game in the second period. Number 17 Radim Vrbata scored this goal. Now the score was four to one for Detroit.

In the third period Phoenix scored their second goal. This goal was scored by number 19 Shane Doan unassisted. The third goal was also scored by number 19, Shane Doan with assists by number 3 Keith Yandle and number 17 Radim Vrbata.



Darlene takes a break from the hockey playoffs at the Healthy Eating workshop

The final score was four for Detroit and three for Phoenix. The three stars of the game were: number 13 Pavel Datsyuk from Detroit, number 19 Shane Doan from Phoenix, and number 96 Tomas Holmstrom from Detroit.

My favorite team is the Detroit Red Wings and they won the game! I hope they win the Stanley Cup!

From Fear to Joy and a Love of Learning

By Barb Pottier

It is late February. It's been one of the coldest winters I can remember. The snow came down and it's still here. It takes me back to when I was young, when winter was winter. Ice-skating on the lakes, tobogganing

down snow and ice covered hills. These are the good memories I have not visited in a long time. Now sitting here by the crackling fire, the flames reflecting on the snow, I am able to put my thoughts to paper. Now that I have gone back, I also remember how I struggled to learn how to read, and how on these long winter nights I have travelled to Angel Bay with Barbara Freethy, to dream about angels, or have gone back in time with Sandra Brown.



Barb and others from HCLN celebrate their success at the Community Learning Awards, Wolfville

In 1977, with a four year old soon going to start school, I heard about a day care that would come pick her up, for a few dollars a day, so that I could take a class. As the smoke curls around my head, and the sudden crack of the fire brings me back. I try hard to recall those days. I know it was in a church, in the basement with a very nice teacher. What happened? Why can't I clear the smoke from my head? A bad place in time.

In 1979 I went to the coldest place on earth for a year, Winnipeg. I was thinking tonight was cold, Ha! It was the coldest year in my heart as well, with my now five year old still here in Halifax.

Home again by the sea feeling free. Back to school, different time, different building. How long was I there? When did it end? What did I learn? Prefixes, suffixes come to mind. I enjoyed the short stories in the phonics box.

In 1981, it came to an end, with a new baby and an eight year old. I was at home again, a mommy and wife.

Where has time gone, where have I been? Four grandchildren, and

soon to be fifty. What should I do? Twenty years in a job with no name. I hide from books. I hide in the background. Soft little tears and a man who cared.

Late winter or early spring 2006, I walked through the doors of a new beginning, taking down the walls, opening my ears, trusting in a friend, and believing in myself, allowing myself to dream.

2007 - What a year! I became a learner in a big way. Lights were coming on, bulb by bulb. With passion and hunger, I climbed mountains. Sometimes when I ended up back in the valley, there was always a caring tutor and friend to pick me back up. She celebrated my success, hurt when I hurt, cried when I cried, When I set goals, but did not quite get there, she would just turn me around and set me off again, on another adventure.

All of a sudden the fears were gone. My confidence was high; I believed that I could do anything I put my mind to. I trusted in my newfound skills and myself. As doors opened I just walked in. First I accepted an opportunity to learn how to use the computer. I learned to use software to help with my spelling and writing. The software gave me skills to write in a way that I would never have imagined was possible. I entered the story "My Dark Secret" to the Peter Gzowski Achievement Award and I won.

Along with winning came the reality that I would not once but twice have to stand up front and centre to read my essay out loud. At first my ghosts came back to haunt me. Once I confronted them and stood up in front of all the people at the Reception, and the Peter Gzowski golf tournament, there were so many people looking at me, I felt so little. But once I started to speak it was like I wasn't just speaking for myself but I was speaking for all learners. I had the chance to say that we all have the right to learn and since that day I have not stopped speaking out.

With all this I was still missing something. I was frustrated that when I was trying to read, I still struggled with decoding words, which slowed me down. I discussed this with my tutor, she went on-line and found a free trial of phonics software. With this trial it gave me the missing pieces I was looking for. It took me several months of hard work and going back over and over again, and many hours practice on my own at home also at work in my spare time. My biggest challenge was the vowels and the different sounds they make.

It was the key to opening the secret part of my brain that I could not access before. It is like the lights came on. I pick up a book now and cannot put it down. I crave books of any kind, to be transported away wherever the authors take me. I enjoy novels, short stories and even the electronic manuals at work that help my skills on the new products. My world has no doors. I grab any opportunity that comes my way, to step out of the box I used to hide in, like opportunities to travel, learning workshops and to share my experience with others. Also with my family: my daughters are proud of my accomplishments. I work hard to keep my granddaughter interested in her education and tell her there is always help out there. I read to my grandsons with confidence and joy without fear. My happiest moment is reading a bedtime story and hearing them laugh.

I am in my fifth year of tutoring and my 54th birthday is close at hand. My new goals of freedom 55, freedom from paid work will take me to the world of full time study. I know this is going to be one of my hardest challenges yet. I would hope this takes me to the next level of learning. I am looking for the fulfilment of being able to take my new skills out in the world to help others know it is never too late and it takes time and persistence in the face of all obstacles. In the book *Life Is Good*, George Dawson at 96 never stopped making up for the education he never received as a child. I hope to be like him in my golden years, still taking in the wonder of the world and better

understanding how it works.

So I am sitting here on this rainy night by the fire once again, counting my blessings, and very thankful for have a wonderful tutor and friend. She turned my darkness in to light, my fears in to joy. Thank you. You have given me the gift of reading.

Christmas Story

By Irene-Ann Hinde

This year I am going to buy my mother a Christmas tree. I would like to surprise her on the holiday. I'm hoping to have the Christmas tree up before Christmas Eve, so we don't have to rush.

I will be in charge of the cooking and baking. I will be cooking a turkey, homemade stuffing, cranberry sauce and turnip. And for dessert we are having plum pudding with homemade sauce.

We hope to sing Christmas carols and have Eggnog with rum in it. And later on we will watch a "Scrooge" movie and have popcorn.

Christmas Eve we will go to church and I will be serving Holy Communion. After church we will come home and relax. I hope to have some snow for Christmas.

Taz

By Heather Myatt

Loving, kind, happy
Pet that is glad to see me.
Lover of food and play
Who sometimes feels hurt and lonely.
Who fears the vacuum

Who would like to see Disneyland
Who would like to kiss Gaz
Who catches catnip mice
Who spins around
Because Taz is my cat.
Flawless.

The Story of Books and Tutors

By Kenneth McDow

The books I like to read are about history and math. Learning more from books and understanding what I read makes me feel good.

When people come to the library for help, they get a tutor who helps them to read and write better. These classes make life better for them, and their families. They can get

books at the library to read to their children at bedtime too.

When people go to school to learn more reading and writing they can get a better education which helps their family and their children will stay in school to get a good education for their family too.

There are people who do not like to read books, and there are people who can't read and write. They need help to read and write, to make things better for their family. Going to the library and getting a tutor can help them get a better education and make their life better.



Ken and his tutor Cathy at the Keshen Goodman Library

Autumn Song

By Lesley Boutilier

Fall is coming
Leaves, green and red...
Orange... yellow and brown...
Soon, grey.

Next long weekend
Thanksgiving.
Eat turkey.
in Birthday is coming too
On next Wednesday October 13
I am going to be 25 years old.

Book Report

By Heather Rumsey

I would like to present this book report on the novel *The Thirteenth Princess* by Diane Zahler. I chose this book because it seemed interesting and I liked the title because it helped me guess what the story was about. I found it interesting because I think she will find a prince.

The story takes place in a faraway kingdom. Near the kingdom lived a servant who was actually the King's daughter Zita. Only she did not know she was a princess. She found out from another servant named Cook who looked after her. Cook told Zita that the Queen was her mother, who had died during childbirth. The King had turned away Zita at childbirth because the Queen died and the King blamed Zita for the Queen's death. But, Cook knew it wasn't the child's fault.

When Zita became older she got to know her sisters. Zita was still a

servant even though she knew her sisters. She still had all her chores such as making pastries with Cook, hunting mushrooms in the woods, and looking after the chickens. On a Spring day, Zita was on the far side of the woods gathering strawberries when she looked up at the palace daydreaming and marvelling at its beauty. Then she met Breckin. Zita and Breckin became good friends. They meet a witch along the way and it seems they might fall in love.

My thoughts about the books are as follows: it is entertaining and you never know what Zita will do next, or if she will marry a prince and become a princess. I liked the story because it was interesting when Cook told Zita that the King was her father and her mother was the Queen. When it comes to the end I wonder if she is going to find her king in Breckin and become Queen.

I like princess stories because I would love to live as a wealthy person and have all the nice things a princess doesn't have to worry about like a nice place to live, clothes and delicious food. If I were a princess, I would enjoy all the attention from the staff and not worry about money or clothes. I would be able to go to the finest restaurants and do all the things that come with being a princess.

Muslims and Eid

By Madina Uwizeyimana

November 16, 2010 was Eid for all Muslims in the world. On this festival we say a prayer, after the prayer we eat and drink all kinds of food and drink.

Muslims have two types of Eid, one called "Eid al-Fitr". It's the feast marking the end of the fast of Ramadan, also called "Lesser Bairam". The other one is called "Eid al-Adha". It's the festival marking the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca and commemorating the sacrifice

of Abraham. Also called the Greater Bairam.

When Muslim sacrifice an animal, usually all meat is given to poor people. Muslims who did not get a chance to go to Mecca during Eid stayed home and fasted for one day and a half.

CBM Story

By Ronnie Holesworth

My new job is with Custom Building Maintenance. This company is the best company to work for. They interview new people for new jobs. I am working for them as well.

I have been working for them for a while now. I like working for them and they put people on sites like Sackville, Halifax,

Tantallon and Elmsdale. I love the job I am doing for the company.

I do the cleaning out at Mill Cove every morning I clean the parking lot and I do garbage. I also clean out back of the stores. The job I do is great. I start work at 7 o'clock in the morning. I work until 10 o'clock in the morning then I go home. My boss is great to me to. She puts me at places that need cleaning done. So they call me some times on a weekend when they need me to help them out with parking lots that may need some work done. I do the work because I like working for CBM. They are the best company to ever work for. I am hoping for people to try to get a job with CBM as they are so nice to me and every one that works for this company. So if any one is looking for a job or is interested in working for this company, get in touch with CBM they will help you with the work you are looking for.



Ronnie at the Healthy Eating workshop

My Cat, Bucky

By Margaret Kelbrat

My mother wanted a cat. She saw an ad in the newspaper. She called the owner who brought the cat to our house. The cat's name is Bucky. He is grey and white. Bucky eats dry food and wet food every day. My cat is fat.



Bucky the cat in his new home

Bucky is a neighbourhood cat. He goes around the neighbourhood looking for his friends. He likes to chase and catch mice. Bucky is a lovely cat and my mother my brother and I love him very much.

A New Life Today

By Anne Elliot-Tomlinson

What I would like to do is to write, learn and smile at the end of the day. We are all living longer lives and it can be fun. Retiring from your job at the age of 65 can be the start of a new life.

People want new careers or adventures after the age of 65. We want to have fun and be competitive too. This is not a lecture, just do it! Jump out of bed and do your exercise. Walk one hour and avoid negative thoughts. Follow the Canadian Food Guide and drink seven glasses of water a day. We have so many more opportunities in this changing world.

When walking down the street you will see a man talking on his cell

phone. This is not unusual now. I have one too and it is connected at all times. If you really want to be connected to the world buy a computer. It will take a few months to familiarize yourself with this system. Then the computer will become indispensable.

You can use your computer skills to job search and send resumes. Whether you are 65 or older, continuing to work is important. As seniors, our volunteer days are over. We have done our share. We want continuing paid employment. We want a pay cheque and also respect. So look out kids! Here we come!

Eastern Passage Fishing Boats

By Robert Lowe

The men go out to fish lobsters. They make their own lobsters traps to catch lobsters. They buy their license for fishing.

When they come home they sell, their fish and lobsters. They take extra people help them. They pull their boats up for the winter.

Working with Sharon

By L. M.

Three years ago I met Sharon and we talked about what I wanted to learn. I said mainly writing and reading, and we set our goals for the year. It was hard to keep up because I brought lots of extra stuff for her to help me with, such as manuals, forms to fill out, etc. She sometimes brought along extras too. The second year we got going with my goals and did fine, although we still had quite a lot of extra stuff taking some of our time, but we allowed for it better the second year. That year we talked about my trying computers, and I ended up getting one! I had no interest in computers at all the first year, but that gradually changed.

Now, in my third year I have gotten my reading up to where I like it. When I come to see Sharon with my homework, it feels pretty good to know I can do quite a lot on my own at home. But sometimes I had gotten so far in my workbook that it seemed like it would take more time to check over than we wanted to spend! But that was just a few times, and there is usually still lots of time left for other things, especially when I get the answers right!

Sharon and my friends at library workshops have helped me with the computer, and now I can hardly believe how much progress I've made on that too!

Transformation Through Tutoring

By Kimberly Berry

While addressing the First World Congress of the Swedish Writer's Union in 2008, author Henning Mankell said, "... the most important tools that human beings can have [are] the tools of reading and writing." Mankell might as easily have said that reading and writing are among the most powerful tools that human beings can have. Whether the words on the page build a picture in the reader's mind or conjure an emotion in the reader's heart, words have the power to create. Conversely, people have long employed the language of hate and propaganda



Tammy & Kim celebrating success at the Captain William Spry Adult Learning Program

to extinguish good will between “enemies”, to eliminate empathy and compassion for others, and to oppress and exploit the marginalized. Clearly, words have the power to destroy. Most importantly for many of us, the tools of reading and writing promise the power to transform. By strengthening our literacy skills we are empowered to change our understanding, our lives, and our communities.

Even as a tutor, I use the word “we” when referring to the learning process because I believe that teaching is learning. In my role as a tutor, I continue to develop my reading and writing skills and enjoy the many opportunities for learning and professional development that are offered to tutors in the Halifax Community Learning Network. This year, I was very happy to be among the participants at the Tutor Basics training with Avril Lewis and Jennifer Hill and a Math Disabilities workshop with David Pilmer. These sessions offered several practical strategies and techniques to strengthen tutoring skills as well as an opportunity to connect with other members of the literacy community. For these same reasons, I was also delighted with the opportunity to register for the Literacy Nova Scotia Practitioner Training and Certification Program. This on-line program includes several modules lasting approximately four weeks each and allows practitioners more time to consider and discuss the principles, practices and participants involved in adult literacy.

In addition to these more formal training opportunities, I also enjoyed the smaller Tutor Exchange session at Captain William Spry. It was a very welcome opportunity to connect with the tutors and resources in our program. However, the most engaging and rewarding experiences have been the moments of discovery and empowerment that I have shared with Tammy, the learner who I have worked with for more than two years. The learning that we do together is perhaps the purest expression of the importance and the power of literacy. With each reading and writing exercise we increase our understanding of the world, enrich the meaning of our lives, and strengthen the fabric of

our community.

As we strengthen our literacy skills we change ourselves. I believe it is this power of transformation that makes reading and writing such important tools for human beings. Moreover, it is my work as a tutor that provides me the opportunity to participate in this process of empowerment and transformation.

Learning Together

This year, the Halifax Community Learning Network offered many opportunities for students, staff and tutors to learn together and also took advantage of training elsewhere such as at the Dartmouth Learning Network.

A series of workshops called Healthy Choices were made possible through funding from the Capital District Health Authority and delivered by Avril Lewis. We all learned useful tips on making healthy lifestyle choices while living on a budget.

Other training included Tutor Basics, the on-line Tutor Training course offered by Literacy Nova Scotia, which includes 13 participants from HCLN and workshops on Math Disabilities and Using Structure to Foster Creativity in those with Learning Disabilities. A special thanks to Sharon Scott and David Pilmer of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning for sharing their expertise with us at HCLN. And the biggest thanks of all to the volunteer tutors whose commitment to lifelong learning is truly inspirational!



Sharon Scott introducing new LD resources



*David Pilmer teaching about Math Disabilities at
Keshen Goodman*



Working hard at Tutor Basics



Healthy Choices workshop, Spring Garden Road Library

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<http://www.canadahelps.org>

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