

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS

YEARBOOK 2014



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

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 Follow Your Dreams.

Dedication

Follow your Dreams is dedicated to everyone who volunteers or works in the field of literacy and especially to Denise Morley, Jen Hill, Linda Oakley, Pat Roberts and Rachel Lebowitz. The Halifax Community Learning Network is blessed to have the skills of these literacy superheroes at work.

Your patience with those we serve, your enthusiasm for learning and your ability to handle endless challenges is inspirational.

Thank you for sharing your expertise, wisdom and kindness with everyone who passes through HCLN. Here's to twenty more years of learning together.

~ Josh Judah, Halifax Community Learning Network

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

[**hcln.admin@gmail.com**](mailto:hcln.admin@gmail.com)

[**www.hcln.ca**](http://www.hcln.ca)

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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.

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Introduction & thanks from Denise Morley, Executive Director HCLN

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2014 Halifax Community Learning Network yearbook, *Follow Your Dreams*, and to mark our 20th anniversary of service. The title comes from a story written by Anne Elliot-Tomlinson of the Spring Garden Road Library Adult Learning Program. Anne is an excellent example of life-long learning in action. An active senior, she is always open to new experiences and opportunities to learn. In November, Anne travelled to Truro for an Adult Learner Retreat offered by Literacy Nova Scotia and as you will read in her story, this is just one of many things she was involved with this year.



Reading the signs on a walking trip in Ireland

It has been a year of challenge and change for HCLN and other community learning organizations. In December, HCLN received notice to relocate- which meant a search for a new office space as economical as the lovely old Roy Building. A reduction to our annual budget and uncertainty about future funding has resulted in HCLN and others offering

fewer literacy programs next year. Given all of the evidence that shows the link between low literacy and a long list of social problems including poverty, unemployment and poor health, this makes little sense, economic or otherwise. Twenty years ago, HCLN was created to help “build a bridge to a brighter future” for those who struggle with literacy issues in our community. Let’s hope we will receive the resources and support required to do so.

As you can see from the long list of thanks on the following pages, HCLN does have many friends who have helped in various ways this year. From the folks at Word on the Street Halifax who offered us a place to be rather than on the street to the volunteer tutors who assisted with the GED Spryfield Project to the HCLN office moving team (my heroes with half tons) to Chebucto Connections who recognized us with the first annual Marjorie Willison Literacy Award, your generosity and sense of community is very much appreciated. The staff who held it all together despite many challenges deserve special mention. Coordinators Jen Hill, Pat Roberts and Rachel Lebowitz and instructor Linda Oakley have done exceptional work this year and the stories of success in this book are a testament to their efforts. Thank you all.

Finally, and most importantly, thanks to those who come to HCLN to learn with us. The stories in *Follow Your Dreams* are truly inspirational and represent only some of the amazing learning journeys that have brought us together. Some of you have passed the GED, some have read their first novel, some have mastered Reading Horizons. Everyone has learned together. Literacy is your right and it is my privilege to be a part of the process. What fine writers you are. Thanks to Anne and everyone for sharing your stories with us-- the best anniversary gift of all!

**It takes many groups and individuals to help
make HCLN programs a success.**

**Thanks to the following groups and individuals
for being friends of HCLN:**

Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations
Bedford-Sackville Learning Network
Bookmark Book Store
Brian McNeil – volunteer webmaster, ARIOUS Media
Carolyn Langlands & staff of the CWS Community Centre.
CIBC
COPIAN
Cunard Learning Centre
Dartmouth Learning Network
Elaine Frampton
Ewen Dickson
Halifax Public Libraries
Katharine McCoubrey
Lesley Dunn
Karen Blair
Literacy Nova Scotia
Matt Likely
Metro United Way
Metroworks Spryfield
Mike Dowd
Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning
Oatmeal- Simple Graphic Design
Paul MacNeil
Peter Gillis
Ray Fernandes
Staff of the Captain William Spry Public Library
Staff of the Halifax North Public Library
Staff of the Keshen Goodman Public Library
Staff of the Spring Garden Road Public Library
Tim Delaney
Volunteer Canada
Wil Gamble
Word on the Street, Halifax

Message from Josh Judah, Chair of the HCLN Board

It is fitting that on our 20th anniversary we receive the Marjorie Willison Literacy Award from Chebucto Connections. The Award recognizes the hard work and courage of two decades of HCLN students. It also honours the amazing efforts of our volunteers and rewards the skill and determination of our Executive Director and Program Coordinators.

I continue to be inspired by the determination of our students. The education process can be hard and frustrating. In addition, you all have so many other daily demands on your time. Despite all of this, you have the strength of character to undertake this journey. Well done.

I am overjoyed to live in a community in which 150 tutors and Board Members are willing to volunteer so much of their time. Your efforts improve many lives.

Finally, I am extremely grateful we have such a wonderful staff. Pat Roberts, Rachel Lebowitz, Jen Hill and Linda Oakley go above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis and do an outstanding job. Director Denise Morley continues her amazing work at the helm of HCLN and for the cause of adult education.

Message from Megan Leslie, MP Halifax

Dear Clients, Staff and Volunteers of HCLN,

As Member of Parliament for Halifax, I am honoured to offer congratulations on your 20th Anniversary!

Literacy is an essential skill for all Canadians and helps to alleviate many obstacles for people in their daily life. The support that HCLN offers to community members to further their education and diminish the hardships brought on by low literacy cannot be overstated.

I have heard constituents describe the programs offered by HCLN as life-changing. And I have heard from volunteers that the work they have done as tutors or in other capacities have been the most rewarding of any kind of work they have ever done.

I offer my heartiest congratulations on your 20th Anniversary!

Message from Premier Stephen McNeil

As Premier of Nova Scotia, I want to thank you for providing me with the opportunity to acknowledge 20 years of dedicated service by the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN).

Government values the contributions of HCLN and over 30 other community learning organizations across the province that provide literacy and essential skill programs to adult Nova Scotians. HCLN's long standing service to the community of Halifax has resulted in hundreds of adults achieving their learning goals. This is made possible by the hard work and dedication of many individuals.

The volunteer board has a history of success at providing strong guidance and support to the director, program staff and volunteer tutors. In turn, the staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly so that every learner's experience with HCLN is a positive one. The adult participants are at the centre of HCLN's commitment to improve literacy and lives in Halifax. Without you, HCLN would not have purpose. Keep up the good work!

Use of the Captain William Spry, Halifax North, Keshen Goodman, and Spring Garden Road Halifax Public Library branches is a testament to community collaboration. Please accept my sincere congratulations, everyone, for your dedication and commitment to improving lives through learning.

Message from HRM Mayor Mike Savage

On behalf of Regional Council, it is my distinct pleasure to extend congratulations and sincere best wishes to the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN) in celebration of twenty years of learning here in Halifax

Regional Municipality.

Anniversaries are a time of reflection, a time to look back on the history of HCLN and remember your successes and accomplishments with great pride. For twenty years the Network has significantly enhanced literacy skills and the quality of life of adult learners here in Halifax.

I want to acknowledge, with gratitude, the commitment and dedication of the Halifax Community Learning Network, the Community Board of Directors, Volunteers and supporters, past and present, for their valuable contributions and success of the Network.

All the best as you commemorate twenty years of making a difference.

Message from Linda Mosher, HRM Council & Halifax Regional Library Board Member

Congratulations to the Halifax Community Learning Network for 20 years of service! As a member of the Halifax Regional Library Board and a Halifax Regional Councillor, I wish to thank the staff and volunteers for their important work. In a city such as ours with many universities and colleges, we often forget that more than 1/3 of Canadians have low levels of literacy. This not only affects an individual's ability to find meaningful work but also to engage fully in their community. Halifax Regional Library Board is proud of its strong

partnership HCLN and looks forward to another 20 years of collaboration.

I also extend my best wishes to determined HCLN students working towards their GED. Keep up the good work!

Message from Jennifer Watts, HRM Council & Halifax Regional Library Board

Thanks for all the fantastic work HCLN does in our community in promoting literacy and making learning accessible for many adults. We are a stronger community because of you – have a great 20th anniversary!

Message from Patricia Roberts, Coordinator Keshen Goodman & Captain William Spry Public Libraries

“What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals.”

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1872)

This was my sixth year as coordinator of the adult literacy program at the Keshen Goodman Public Library and my first year as coordinator at the Captain William Spry Library. Everyone at CWS welcomed me with

open arms and I have really enjoyed getting to know the community better. The staff at the public libraries are truly remarkable individuals who go out of their way to make us feel welcome and appreciated. Thank you!



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 this year, which is truly remarkable. Huge thanks goes to all of them!

The learners at Keshen Goodman and Captain William Spry continue to be a major source of inspiration and we had several success stories this year. A number of learners passed the GED and several more plan to write the test by the end of the year. GED learners were by the far the largest group of learners at both branches this year. The GED is converting to an electronic version at some point in the near future and we anticipate receiving many more GED applicants next year. Several learners wrote wonderful submissions for this yearbook, some for the first time. We also had learners and tutors use the Publish It! Program to create stories, complete with colour pictures. Two learners (one from each library) made formal submissions to the LNS Adult Learners'

Week writing completion this winter and, although they didn't win, the experience of entering a formal writing competition was invaluable. We also had apprentices in trade programs succeed with tutoring, and who are now scheduled to write the Red Seal exams. Some learners who have successfully completed the GED have gone on to NSCC, the Centre for Health Studies, Eastern College and other training facilities. Still others have found gainful employment and immense personal satisfaction. I also worked with the HCLN GED classes at the Captain William Spry Community Centre in Spryfield for the third year. We offered two classes this year, with individuals writing the tests in December, January, February and March. More than half of those enrolled passed the GED test and several passed all but 1 section, which they plan to write in May. Linda Oakley was the instructor once again and several tutors did double duty volunteering with the GED class as well as their usual work in the one-to-one program. The staff at the CWS Community Centre were extremely accommodating, as usual. Those who were unable to write the GED test plan to come in for one-on-one tutoring this fall. We hope to offer more

It has been a challenging year for the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN), as our funding has been somewhat tenuous. This seems particularly poignant at this time, as it is the 20th anniversary of HCLN. Such a great milestone, deserving of celebration – congratulations HCLN! Despite the uncertainty, it has been a wonderful year for HCLN, as our learners and tutors constantly remind us. It was particularly fitting that HCLN received the first annual Marjorie Willison Literacy Award in March, a sure sign of how much the work of HCLN is appreciated in the community.

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, Jen and Rachel, who make working with HCLN such a joy.

Happy reading and have a wonderful summer!

Message from Jen Hill Spring Garden Road Library ALP Coordinator

It is hard to believe that another year has gone by!

Congratulations to all our learners who have taken big steps this year – starting a new job, starting at NSCC, finishing “Reading Horizons” and many other things. Best of luck to those who are moving on! We will miss you, but are happy for you and happy that we had the chance to get to know



you.

It is also hard to believe that this will be our last year-end celebration at Spring Garden Library. Next fall we take a big step across the road to Central. We will say good-bye to a lot of good memories, but make many exciting new ones there! (I'm looking forward to some roof-top reading!)

Thank you everyone for all your hard work this year. It is such a pleasure to be coordinator of this program, and to work with all of you.

Have a wonderful summer everyone!

Message from Rachel Lebowitz, Halifax North ALP Coordinator

I have worked in the adult education field for over a decade and as an adult literacy coordinator in particular for 5 of those years, but I don't think I've ever seen such a dedicated group of learners and tutors than I did for most of



this year. Some matches have had perfect attendance since September! Even with the five (!!) snowstorms we had on Wednesdays, our Wednesday night crew was determined to persevere, including during the evening of our Volunteer

Appreciation party, when five matches spent most of the night working in the back room. Our Friday morning session in particular was extremely well attended and hard-working. I couldn't make the coffee fast enough (yes, I'm looking at you, Larry and Gerry!) I love walking into the program room and seeing eight or nine matches busily working: the hum in the room, the laughter, the heads bent over a book.

I recognize that sometimes life is hard. It's hard for people to attend sessions sometimes: for new learners who are just starting out, it can be hard to commit. It might not work at first. There might be too many challenges in your life. But I want you to know that there's no judgment here and that the coordinators will do their best to provide a space for you, if you return. I've seen people who left the program two, four, five times, come back, and succeed. John Cromwell, whose essay is included in this yearbook, had been in the program off and on for over a decade, without being able to commit to it long enough to have a regular tutor. This year, he attended 24 sessions, only missing a few due to his tutor's schedule. Moreover, after he submitted an essay for a Literacy Nova Scotia contest, he (and I) were asked to participate in a panel discussion at the Literacy Nova Scotia Professional Development Conference for Practitioners in Truro, about learners dealing with mental health and addiction issues. He did a wonderful job and made us all proud.

Some learners have completed their high school requirements and others are working hard at getting their GED. One learner wrote the GED in December and passed 4 out of 5 tests on her first try! Another is completing his NSCC welding program. This is all amazing! But it's important to remember too that sometimes the successes aren't found in tests and courses but in something that's often harder to see. It's in

the confidence with which you walk into a room. It's in you getting a library card for the first time, in checking books out, and reading them on your own. It's in sharing a book with your daughter. It's in reading – or writing – a grocery list. It's in walking into the library and asking about our programs. It's in staying, or leaving, and coming back again. Mary Thompson used to read with her daughter under the covers, with a flashlight. Her daughter, Rhonda, recently got into the Bachelor of Engineering program at Saint Mary's. This is due in large part to her own hard work, but Mary's influence should not go unacknowledged. Congratulations to you both – and to you all, for your hard work and many successes. It is a privilege to be part of this.

Message from Joe Burke, former HCLN Board Chair

As a past board member and chair, I am delighted to extend congratulations to HCLN on its 20th anniversary. HCLN - like many literacy organizations – often tends to fly “under the radar”. However, it does extremely important work, especially in an age when knowledge is power. I have so many fond memories of all of the wonderful people involved in HCLN, and in particular the many success stories shared by learners at our annual meetings and in our yearbook. I hope that many more learners can reap the benefits of HCLN's programming and “build a bridge to a brighter future”.

A New Life in Canada: Opportunities to Learn

By Samia Eldik

In October, 2003, I arrived in Halifax with my family. We were escaping war in the country where I was born. We came to Canada to find a new home where we would be safe and have new opportunities to learn.



Samia and her tutor Margaret at Halifax North Library

Within three months, my husband and I had jobs as cleaners. We also attended ESL classes and I had the responsibility for looking after our children aged, 12, 9, 4 and 1.

On Nov. 21, 2005, our fifth child, a son was born. We were a happy family, happy to be living in a free country without fear of war. Then without warning, tragedy struck. My husband was killed in a car accident. Suddenly I was left alone with five children to care for, and one of them was only three weeks old. Without my husband beside me, I had to be strong and take charge for the sake of my children. I knew I had to go school, first to learn English, and second to learn, so that I could improve my knowledge and understanding of people and the world around me.

I had never been to school as a child because I had

no opportunity. My family lived on a farm and I began looking after my siblings when I was nine years old. My parents were busy looking after the farm. I had three sisters and six brothers and only the two youngest went to school. There was no time for school; everyone had a job to do and mine was caring for my two youngest brothers.

Although I knew what I had to do-attend school- I had to be patient and wait for two years until my baby turned two and was able to attend daycare. During those two years, I was lucky to have a lady from my church come and help me learn English.

When I began to attend school, my busy life became even busier. My days began very early in the morning and ended late at night. I was often very tired, but I could not give up. I had to keep on going to school. I have now been going for five years.

I am in Level II at the Cunard Learning Centre. My goal is to get my GED so that I can continue my studies in Community College. I want to study Homecare and become a certified Homecare worker.

Without literacy classes, which help me learn and understand, I would have no hope of achieving my goal. I am so happy to have the opportunity to go to school, something that I would never have been able to do if I had not come to Canada. I thank Canada for giving me the chance to learn and develop and become a stronger person and a strong mother. I have discovered how much I enjoy learning new things. The more I learn, the more I want to learn. I know that I will continue

learning long after I have finished going to school. Literacy classes have helped me to realize that learning is a very important part of my life.

How the Halifax Community Learning Network Helped Me

By Phillip Webber

Preparing for my GED was not easy for me. When I was a few years younger I thought about writing my GED a lot but didn't go through with it. I was unaware of the program and services that the Halifax Community



Phillip and his tutor Pat at the Keshen Goodman Library

Learning Network provided. I had no idea that there were people who were willing to take time out of their lives to help people get their GED among other things. I have the utmost respect for all the tutors and Pat Roberts, the Coordinator, who all put in so much work just to help others. Before I used this program I didn't have the confidence to try and write my GED test.

My tutor, Pat Robinson, helped me so much and I can't thank her enough for giving me the confidence I needed to put in the effort to write the GED. My girlfriend, Laura, was also a big help. It is a big advantage to have a girlfriend in university with so much experience in

math, English and many other subjects. I learned that if I apply myself, focus and study I can do pretty much anything. Pat taught me a lot in math and helped me remember things I already knew from when I was in high school. She has a way of teaching me things and getting me to understand. Pat Roberts was also a very big help for me. She took the time to set me up with a tutor who was flexible and who could work with my work schedule.

Volunteers are great people for the community. The work they do doesn't get enough recognition. People who volunteer in this service are very patient and care about people succeeding in reading, writing or getting their GED certificate. They don't turn away anyone who is looking for help and they make everyone feel welcome and comfortable. Without the work of these volunteers, this program wouldn't be possible so I really appreciate what they do.

The Halifax Community Learning Network is a great service. I would recommend it to anyone who is trying to make their life better. When I obtain my GED certificate, I plan to attend NSCC and get a trade so I can get a good job that I enjoy doing while earning a good salary. I hope that the Halifax Community Learning Network continues for many years as it has helped me greatly. I can't say enough thanks to my tutor, Pat, for getting me to believe I could do this.

Passing the GED Test

By Justin Comeau

This winter, I did something I should have done a long time ago: I went back to school to study toward the GED exam. I called Denise at HCLN and found out about a class at the Captain William Spry Community Centre. At first, I thought it might not work out since my job as a cleaner kept me busy from 9 to 2 and I am a single father of three children, ages 4, 6 and 16.

After some juggling to rearrange my work schedule and get help with childcare, I started the class and also worked with a tutor to get ready for the test. Linda is a good teacher and between her and my tutor Laura, I had lots of help with my studies. My math skills are pretty good but I was a little worried about the essay writing part of the test. I registered to write at the end of February and though I felt ready, I was still a little nervous sitting down to write for two days. Then came the wait for the test results. Finally, the phone rang and I got the good news: I had passed all 5 sections of the test! I had my High School Diploma! Now I am spending time at Job Junction and exploring different options including NSCC. I want to keep learning.

Attending the class definitely helped me to prepare for and pass the GED. Thanks very much to Linda, Pat and Laura for all their support.

Reaching My Goals

By Genelle Carvery

After being out of school for four years, I decided it was time to go back to get my GED. I started with the HCLN GED class at the Captain William Spry Centre in the fall. Linda Oakley was the teacher and she helped me a lot, especially with math.



Genelle & friends at the GED class Festive Celebration

My tutor Graham also helped me to gain confidence. I was in the class until March and then kept working with Graham until I had my test dates. I was nervous about writing the tests but everyone told me I was ready.

I wrote all the tests in April and May and passed 4 out of the 5 tests! Now I have to work on Language Arts with my tutor so I can pass that test hopefully in June.

My mother has been a good role model because she attends tutoring in the Captain William Spry Library and encouraged me to try the class.

Thanks to Linda and Graham and everyone else for helping me to reach my goal, if it wasn't for them I probably wouldn't have the courage to write my GED. The HCLN GED classes are very great for people who need to make a change in their lives.

Believe in Yourself

By: RJ

This program has been extremely helpful to me. I have struggled with my reading and writing since leaving school and this has held me back to focusing on my education.

I believed that because I had a learning disability I could not do much in life. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn, something I had to choose to better myself, and this program made possible.

It is important for me to remain teachable. I need to get myself out of my own way, by allowing myself to make mistakes and understanding that that is ok, that is how I will learn. I know where I have been in life and likely only God knows where I am going. I just need to believe in myself and have faith that God will do the rest.

I am reading more and more and starting to improve my grammar, my spelling, and my understanding of English. I have dreams and goals and this program is allowing me to work for them. I will never give up, never stop fighting to improve learn and to grow into the person God wants me to be, and to me that's freedom. Everything happens for a reason; I must accept where I am and focus on what I have, not what I don't have. I am proud of the person I am today and know I am not yet the man I want to be.

Thanks to this program I have a better chance of getting there.

Adult Learner

by *Anne Elliott-Tomlinson*

(This piece was written for the LNS Adult Learners' Week writing contest)

Today I feel like a new woman, born again after three years of studying English at the Spring Garden



Anne & her tutor Caroline at the Spring Garden Road Library ALP

Library. What was important to me, was to learn to speak English well. What a gratifying experience I had! Not only did I improve my English, but gained a desire to share my skills and writing through my renewed confidence. Thus, I now share my story with Literacy Nova Scotia.

My story telling has mainly been about the many adventures in my life. My accomplishments make me feel happy and free! One accomplishment is my many years of volunteer service as a senior in the community of Halifax. Seniors have much to say and lots to tell. My volunteer work has provided me the opportunity to share with my community, and was a wonderful experience!

It's a great time to be alive, surrounded with new technology and the skills to march forward! It's never

too late – you have years to follow your dreams! When I leave my home early in the morning, I look directly across to the magnificent structure of the new library. To me on a wet and foggy day, it looks like a large seagull trying to land. With all of its pages of books and knowledge, it hopes to spread its wings into the community.

My English has improved, allowing me to be cast in a lead role in the play “Working Up A Lather” by Two Houses Theatre Company. Two Houses is a new Company formed last year by Spencer House and Laing House. Our aim is to entertain our community, while developing talent, and help youth and seniors fulfill their dreams. The play will take place in Halifax on March 7th at Spencer House. I’d love to see your face in the crowd!

Thank you Literacy Nova Scotia for enabling me to tell my story!

Message from Helen Desmond-Morris, Nova Scotia Department of Labour & Advanced Education

Congratulations to the Halifax Community Learning Network as you celebrate your 20th Anniversary. This accomplishment could not have been achieved without its very dedicated staff, numerous volunteers and all the learners who participate in your programs. Your commitment to learning continues to positively impact all those who walk through your doors. Keep up the good work!

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

As the manager responsible for Adult Literacy programming at Halifax Public Libraries, I could not be more proud of what we have accomplished in the past 20 years in our partnership with the Halifax Community Learning Network. On the surface, the program we offer at our four library locations (Spring Garden Road, Halifax North, Captain William Spry, and Keshen Goodman) is fairly basic – we help adult learners upgrade reading and math skills so that they may successfully complete educational goals such as passing the GED, acquire employment or pass trade certification exams. 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 this Yearbook – they will definitely move and inspire you!

It is a privilege to be associated with this program and I hope we are going strong for the next 20 years!

Message from the Bookmark, Halifax (HCLN's favourite book store!)

Hearty congratulations and a huge hug to the people at HCLN on this 20th anniversary.

As lovers of books, how could we not respect and admire your efforts to introduce reading and learning to those hungry and curious minds. What many of us take for granted is often challenging and intimidating to some. Without organizations like HCLN, the doors to knowledge may remain closed for too many. Again, many thanks and it's always an extreme honour for Bookmark to help in any small way.

Making Better Decisions

By John Cromwell

This is a story about my experience attending a conference in Truro on mental health and addiction issues for adult literacy. My day started when I met Lindell at Memorial North Library. Lindell gave me a ride to the bus station.

Once I arrived in Truro, Rachel, Pat and Denise picked me up and drove me to the hotel where the conference was being held. After lunch I sat on a panel discussion about people's needs who have mental health and addiction issues.



John enjoying himself at the LNS conference in Truro

I talked a bit about my life as a homeless person on the street. When I was drug-free I was able to stay in a church shelter where I had a place to sleep, hot meals and clothes. When I wasn't drug-free I was sleeping outdoors for up to 3 or 4 days and eat whatever I could get from friends or strangers.

Many homeless people lack a basic education, life skills and the self-confidence to make necessary changes. The first thing a person needs is a desire to change their situation. You have to be concerned about your future, you need to get real! Now you have to be strong and to say this is what I need to make these changes. People need a decent place to live, access to affordable food and clothing and help with handling money.

To create a better future for yourself and your family you need to take responsibility for yourself and believe in yourself.

Message from Paul MacNeil, Bedford-Sackville Learning Network

I want to congratulate the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN) on your 20th anniversary of operations. I have had the great pleasure of having a close working relationship with HCLN for the past eight years and know firsthand the amazing work your network does and the vast number of people that have had their lives changed as a result of participating in your adult education programs. Through the hard work of a professional and dedicated staff HCLN has always been a leader in adult education in Halifax and the surrounding area.

To the HCLN Board, Staff, and Volunteers I wish you all the best in the future and know with certainty that your Network will continue to make a positive difference in the lives of adult learners.

I'm Still Learning

By Percy Oliver

When I was in an accident, I had to start my life over again, so I started at the Literacy Program for Adults, for reading and some math. When I do this, I can see the difference, with the help I am getting from Don, Travis and Atal. I am happy that the people have patience with me. I am picking up my reading, I can see it, but I have a long ways to go.

I know that if I do not do it, it just will not get done and

that will not be right. So I will keep on doing what I am doing, I will get there. All the places where I go to learn how to do this, if something happens that if the funding runs out, I know that in my life I have to keep going with it. Learning is important because I feel good about myself, and I have to know what I am doing with it. I am learning because it will help me with my goal of getting a trucking license and I could help other people out just like how my friends are helping me out doing this. This is why learning is so important to me, and this is why I work hard at learning every week.

Message from Pat Campbell, Grassroots Press

Over the past twenty years, the Halifax Community Learning Network (HCLN) has provided students with access to volunteers, resources, and space. Through the support of HCLN, students realize that others believe in their potential to learn and grow and succeed. Success comes in many shapes and forms. While students enter a program wanting to improve their literacy skills, they experience other successes. As students gain power over text, they also begin to gain power over their lives, power over their learning, and power over their voice.

Grass Roots Press has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Halifax Community Learning Network. The staff and volunteers with HCLN helps Grass Roots Press make decisions about the books we publish. The staff, volunteers, and students pilot our materials before we sent them off to the printers. And once the books come

off the press, students use our books to improve their literacy skills.

Twenty years is a long time – it's a generation! On behalf of Grass Roots Press, I would like to congratulate the HCLN staff and volunteers for their dedication to literacy. And I would like to congratulate the HCLN students for taking the risk to learn. Often, taking a risk is the first step towards achieving your dream.

Kidnapped (Book Report)

By Mary Thompson

My book report is about the book *Kidnapped*, by Robert Louis Stevenson. The book was written in 1886.

The story takes place in Scotland and is about a boy named David Balfour.

David's father was a teacher. His father died in 1751. Now the teacher's house belongs to the new teacher so David leaves to find his Uncle Ebenezer.

Before he died, David's father gave him a letter to bring to his Uncle Ebenezer.

His uncle was not a nice man. His uncle had money and a big house but it really belonged to David's father and now it was David's. The uncle didn't want David to get the money or the house, so he tried to kill him. This didn't work, so his uncle had David kidnapped by a ship's Captain.

David met Alan Beck on the ship. Alan was trying to get to France. David and Alan were shipwrecked but they lived and had many adventures.

David meets the chief of the Campbells. He is shot dead and it looks like Alan shot him so David and Alan go on the run.

David meets a lawyer who helps him to get the house and his money. David lets his uncle stay at the house until he dies.

Alan escapes to France but David still has many adventures.

It was a good story!

Operation

By Julie Lynn Stanhope

In March I had an operation. Dr Hoogerbord took my gallstone and gallbladder out. I had felt like I was dying in bed. My stomach was growling. The hospital didn't serve me any food because the nurse made me fast. I had nothing to drink either. I did have a drink for my medication. I was there March 3-5, 2014. I was staying at QEII and then the next day transferred to the VG. Dr. Mark Walsh was on call for emergency. So I had to get another doctor, Dr. Hoogerbord.

It was my first time in an ambulance. It was scary. There

were nice beautiful nurses and there were good-looking drivers and then doctors.

My life-style has to change. I am not allowed to do any lifting over 10 lbs. I have to change my diet.



Julie and her tutor Shannon at Halifax North

The doctor was very tall, handsome, good looking, a hottie, and cute. There was one beautiful intern from Sydney, Cape Breton.

I definitely missed my coworkers and then the managers when I was on sick leave. I was thinking of them all the time.

Now I feel good and look better. At my follow-up they told me and my mom that my gallstone and gallbladder were inflamed.

I feel a lot better now.

My Adult Literacy Program

By Stephanie Langford

Since I have decided to upgrade my English and Math skills, I have decided to try my luck at the North End Library. When I got there, I was introduced to a lady

named Rachel who is the head of the Adult Literacy program at the library. I ended up telling her what subjects that I would need a lot of help in so that I can write my GED.

Within two weeks, Rachel found me a very nice lady named Gemma who is a university student. Since we met up, she has been helping me with my English by reading and trying to write about what I have read. My other subject is math and we are working on adding and subtracting negative and positives. I am having a lot of fun learning and I would recommend the program to anyone that would want to improve their English and Math.

Thank you for the Literacy Program

By Kerry Fitzpatrick

I have to thank Pat, who takes her time three times a week to come in to the library to help with literacy upgrading.

Also, I have to thank the tutors who take their time for the volunteer work that

supports the literacy program. We wouldn't be able to do it without their support.



Kerry and her tutor Cindy at the Kesben Goodman Library

I have to thank my tutor, Cindy, who helps me with my reading. She comes in every Friday to work with me and she helps me with my upgrading.

Thank you again and thank you for your support.

My Mother

By Cindy Gaudet (Keshen Goodman tutor)

As Mother's Day approaches, I can't help but think about what an inspiration my mother has been for me all my life. Raising six children with my father, I realize as an adult how much she must have sacrificed to assure that we didn't go without – even though times were tough financially.

Now that she has dementia and no longer recognizes us, I hope as we hold her hand she still feels an abundance of love.

Message from Jim Sharpe, Nova Scotia Lifelong Learning Committee

Congratulations to the Halifax Community Literacy Network (HCLN) for serving the community for twenty years. With rapid changes in information technology the need for literacy is greater now than ever. Through working in partnership with community organizations such as the Halifax Public Library and social agencies, HCLN has improved social integration, assisted international immigrants and provided instruction on reading and media literacy. As Chair of the Nova Scotia

Lifelong Learning Committee I want to thank HCLN for their important contributions and encourage them to continue to partner and promote lifelong learning.

My Martial Arts Dream Come True

By Keith Finn

Something that I'm really proud of is getting my brown belt senior in Choi Kwang-Do. I had to train very hard for my brown belt senior test. I really enjoy breaking boards but it is very hard. My grandmother really inspired me to get into martial arts. She encouraged me to get into Karate when I was a child. Also, my mother helped me train. She would hold the pads for me when I practiced my sparring.

I am getting ready to be tested for my black belt. When I go for my black belt I will have to learn lots of katas and speed drills. My future goal is to open up a gym to teach martial arts.



Keith in front of the Spring Garden Road Library

Ron and his Roommates

By Ronald Oxner

I have two roommates. Their names are RJ and Dan. We watch TV together. When I go to the store I get pop and chips to share with RJ and Dan. I go to the store on the way home from the library. John takes me to the store.



Ron and his tutor Janet at the Keshen Goodman Library

Sometimes we go to parties together. We get dressed up for the parties. At the parties we have pizza to eat. I dance at the parties. I have a good time at the parties.

The Library

By Paul Ochalla

I think libraries are good places to be if you want to learn. The library is a place where anybody can go. At the library you will meet people. I have been coming to the library since 2005.



Paul and his tutor Patricia at the Spring Garden Road Library

The tutors have helped

me a lot with some of the things I have problems with. Now I can read a book without a problem. This is a good place for people who need to learn. I told my friend, if you need help, go to the library, it is a good place for you. There are good people at the library that can help with English as a Second Language and reading. You don't even need to pay anything!

The Meeting

By Marjorie

Mr. Peter Green is a 45 year old corporate lawyer who is a partner in a very prominent law firm. He has a meeting with a very important client at a local coffee shop, where he is enjoying a cup of his favorite coffee while gazing through the window at the scenery in front of him. He is very excited about his meeting with Mr. Kline as, if the meeting goes well, according to plan, he will be able to take his wife Ruth and children Max and Ruby on a wonderful vacation to Disneyland.

Mr. Fred Kline is a very happy, well-dressed gentleman in his early 80's. He is a property developer and part owner of McFetridge & Kline Inc., that is one of the largest top ten companies in Canada. After attending an important meeting to hand over his share of the partnership, there was a small gathering to celebrate the occasion where he was presented with a lovely bouquet of balloons. He noticed that someone had taken his picture as he was leaving the building with his balloons.

Fred wants to put his affairs in order to make things easier for his children and has made important decisions

about what he wants done with his investments and having money to provide for his children and charities of choice.

He goes to the café to meet with his lawyer, Mr. Peter Green, and asks him to assist him in preparing a will. It will give him a sense of relief knowing that he has taken care of this important matter. After taking care of business, Peter told him that he has young children and that he hoped to take them to Disneyland one day. Mr. Kline then gave his balloon bouquet to Peter to take home to his children.

The Cat and the Mouse

by Margaret Kelbrat

Bucky is a white and gray cat. He goes outside to see his neighbourhood cool cats. They like to scratch on the trees and climb the fence. They are the coolest cats in the area.

One day, Bucky sees a mouse scratching on the trees. Bucky is confused. "What are you doing?". "I am being a cool cat, just like you, Bucky". The cool cats come over to see what's going on. Bucky doesn't want to have a mouse for a friend. Bucky chases the mouse outside in the yard. The other cats watch, laughing at the little mouse. "Can't we be friends?" said the mouse. The cats laugh again, and Bucky tosses the mouse away.

The next day, the mouse comes back to see the cool cats. Bucky was surprised to see the mouse. "I could eat you up!", said Bucky. But the mouse said, "I want to be

friends with the cool cat, Bucky!”. Bucky is embarrassed by the mouse, and so he hissed and threw the mouse away.

On the third day, the mouse came back. Bucky can’t believe the mouse is back. “Can you teach me to climb the fence?”, asked the mouse. The cool cats all laughed at them. But this time, Bucky did not care. The mouse was brave, and Bucky liked that. “Good-bye cool cats!”, said Bucky. “This mouse is cooler than you!”. Then Bucky and the mouse went off to start their friendship!

The Literacy Program

By Christine Hayward

This program taught me so much about spelling. I had a great time learning things that I could not understand in school. My teacher was so good and helped me to understand everything. I am very blessed that I had her for a tutor.



*Christene and her tutor Maureen at the
Kesben Goodman Library*

Thank you all!

Why I Want the GED

By Brendan Brown

I'm writing this paragraph to explain why I'm interested in the GED. I didn't get to finish high school because of personal matters, and I'm looking forward to making a career out of this. I have a few things in mind I might like to do, like culinary arts, carpentry, etc.

Stray Cats

By Jean Huxter

This is the story about two stray cats that live at Point Pleasant Park. They live under the rocks by the harbour in the south end of Halifax.



Jean and her tutor Anne working together at the Kesben Goodman Library

One day I decided to drive down to the park to take

pictures with my new camera. I stopped at the lower part of the park, close to where the ships dock.

When I got out of the car, I noticed a woman kneeling down by the bushes and noticed she was feeding some stray cats. I was interested in knowing who she was and why she comes everyday to feed them. She has black,

curly, shoulder length hair and is close to my height. She told me she volunteers herself everyday by feeding stray animals in need of food, water, plus comfort.

The two black cats, one had a white goatee on its chin and was black all over. The other cat had longer hair, but wasn't there while feeding.

She gave out wet and dry food plus fresh water in each bowl. Then she laid them down on a board under the bushes away from the prying eyes of seagulls.

After a while, the cat finished and walked away. The woman walked down to the rocks edge to a hidden spot. The box had a hinged wooden door and she placed extra food there for another time.

I hope the cats are well and live a little longer. Cats live for about twenty years and one of them is now ten years old. I love this story because I, too, love all animals.

I'm Still Learning

By Melita Carvery

It is a joy to me that I am able to learn and the older I get the more positive I am. I think the reason why is that I feel blessed by God for giving me the strength to keep going with my everyday activities despite struggles in my life. I think the reason why I want to do this is that it is important for my grandson to grow up and be a strong and respectful young man and become somebody with a good career and education. I want to be a good role model for him. I want to accomplish something before

I leave this world. I didn't have the education I thought I would have but that doesn't stop me from doing what I always wanted to do - to one day get my GED. It will be a struggle for me but it doesn't matter how long. I'm not going to give up no matter how long it takes. I will always want to learn.



Melita, Pat and Sandra enjoying the Festive Potluck at the Captain William Spry Library

I like fixing stuff and would like to be able to fix computers and electronic stuff someday. I used to watch my dad fix things around the house and I learned a lot from him by watching him. Education is so important today but back then it didn't matter. People like my dad and grandmother had skills around the house but didn't have a lot of education. My dad had grade 9 but my grandmother couldn't read or write but she was a very strong woman. She had a lot of grandchildren and family was very important to her. She kept everyone together and every Sunday we had a family day. We had lots of fun and lots of good food. I was a very negative person growing up after my grandmother passed away and I used to be scared to try different things. Things are way different now. I read the bible and go to church and it makes me a stronger person. I try to live each day to the fullest and keep on keeping on. I also want to write children's books some day and paint. God has put us here to help each other with different situations and I

would like to be able to do that by reading and keep on learning. I have enjoyed reading history especially black history and I want to learn more about my family tree so I can tell my younger relatives where they came from so they know who they are. I am so glad to have this adult learning program. I don't know what I would be doing if it wasn't available to the community. I hope that it keeps going because it helps a lot of people succeed to improve their life.

Why I love cooking

Manavi Atiwoto

I love cooking because it reminds me of my previous experiences when I was in my home country of Togo. Since I was ten years old, I have been cooking. One of my favourite memories from childhood is about cooking.



Manavi and her tutor Katelynn at the Spring Garden Road Library

One day my mom went to the market and by the time she returned, I had cooked a full meal with groceries she had left at home. My mom had been in a hurry to come back home to cook us supper. She was very surprised when she came in and saw everything was already cooked. She tasted everything and said it was all perfect. My mom was so proud of me. From that time she left all the cooking to me because she trusted me.

I have always enjoyed cooking and still do today. I cook for my children and they love it. I want to teach them how to cook one day.

A Story About Libraries

By Kenneth McDow

The first libraries were only for rich or powerful people. Eventually there were public libraries and all people could go to the library and look at books and learn more. The people could learn history, math and writing and lots more in books and teach their families more about the world.

In the 1920's, Andrew Carnegie built 125 public libraries in Canada. He gave money for buildings

and the community had to provide the money for the books and furniture. People still go to the library today and learn more from books and on computers.



Ken and his tutor Cathy at the Kesben Goodman Library

Early in my life I did not know how to read and write very well. Now I can read and write very well because I've been coming to my classes in the library. Now I can read books and newspapers and I can fill out applications and do my groceries and pay bills and do my banking. I've also learned more about history and geography and math at the library.

My life is better since I can read anything I want! There are lots of people who can't read or write very well. They should go to a library program so they can learn more and help themselves to live a better life.

Why I love Dolphins

By Lesley Boutilier

I love dolphins because they are friendly.

I like that they are trained to do tricks.

I enjoy watching them on TV.

I like how they make their own bubbles.

I have a movie on dolphins.

I wish I could go for a swim with the dolphins in Florida.



Lesley and her tutor Teresa at the Kesben Goodman Library

Message from Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Canada is proud to count Halifax Community Learning Network as one of its members for the past 8 years.

Thanks to countless volunteer tutors and community board members, HCLN does incredible work in improving literacy and lives in Halifax. With 52% of Atlantic Canadians having problems with everyday reading and writing, HCLN is making great strides by making adult education programs in reading, writing and math more accessible. They are strengthening the Atlantic community and fostering a more vibrant Canada. Adult literacy and learning help individuals reach their full potential as community members, and ensure that future generations are in a better position.

Congratulations on 20 successful years of building a bridge to a brighter future!

Remaking Me

By Tracy Wright

School was stressful and home was challenging but I kept in touch with my family and friends. I would have done better, but I had a hard time staying focused.

As I entered the work force, my life was a busy routine, and I looked forward to my days off.

As time went by, I was laid off of work, but more doors opened for me. I came across a flyer at a local employment centre, where I found that I could use upgrading on my math and English.

I want to apply my English to my resume, cover letters and in my everyday life. I want to apply my math in shopping, sales and for job requirements. You have to be quick and on your feet with math.



Tracy and her tutor Ginny at the Captain William Spry Library

I have an interest in working as a flight attendant, cruise ship or train employee. I do have hotel and customer relations experience. I look forward to my new future ahead.

My Experience with HCLN

By Mike True

I was working in the retail business and decided to make a career change. I had not received my grade 12 and therefore needed to get tutoring to accomplish my GED. I went through HCLN one-on-one tutoring for Math and English and after successfully receiving my GED, I enrolled at NSCC for the Office Administration program. I graduated in June 2013. Since then I have worked in several small contracts until recently. I now work

fulltime with a company called Aviva. Even though the job I am currently in is not an administrative position I do find I am using some of the skills and education from my recent education. My goal is still to be successful at obtaining an administration position. I want to personally thank all those that have helped me achieve my GED and NSCC Certificate, without their help I would not be where I am today.

A New World Can Open Up.... At Any Age!!

*By Sandra McNeil , Captain William Spry Library
ALP tutor*

My 86 year old neighbour is someone who embraces life in everything that she does. She is truly an amazing individual. She is up every morning at 7 and goes to bed at 11 after the news and doesn't stop for too long in between. She has a wonderful, positive attitude and a great sense of humour, and even if she is nervous and stressed with changes that come into her life, she faces them head on and puts them behind her in short order.

And so imagine her nervousness and stress level when, at 86, she was presented with a new flat screen tv to replace her very old, floor model tv. For some people that would have been the end of the discussion, but that wasn't the case for her. Receipt of that present opened up the discussion with her children as to whether or not she should get a Bell Aliant bundle that included "internet" ...and therefore a computer...for the first time

in her life. After much thought, discussion and some sleepless nights thinking about it and asking many more questions, she agreed and the call was made to have 'fibre-op' installed.

During the past month, at a pace comfortable for her, she has learned the process for turning the computer on and off correctly; she is still getting comfortable using the mouse (even if it takes two hands sometimes; one to hold the mouse in place and some fingers on the second hand to 'left-click' when necessary). Everyday she learns something new and she has now successfully sent emails to her kids, grandchildren and other family members all over Canada and to her delight, received many responses; and she can search the internet for new recipes and other topics of interest. She is thrilled with all she has achieved to date, by taking it a step at a time.

It wasn't all easy for sure. There were times when she was very frustrated and impatient and in the early stages, I even heard her say that she was never going to be able to use it and was wondering if the store would take it back because it was just too much to learn at her age, but she stuck with it and each day is a little more comfortable with it.

It takes courage to take on a new challenge that seems so scary; it takes commitment to working at it; it takes perseverance to get over the obstacles that you come across, but in the end it is all worth it. Just like my neighbour's computer challenge, taking on the challenge of improving literacy skills is the same idea.....a whole new world is opened up to those who take up the

challenge and commit to it.

So my neighbour's experience has taught me to never let age stop me from doing something I want to do. You never know, finding the courage to take on a new challenge might open up a whole new world for all of us...you too!

Gazzy

By Heather Myatt

I am Gazzy's mum!
Gazzy is my pet cat.
She can be very happy
or she can be very
moody!
The things that make
her happy are:
Seeing me, being
petted and eating
seafood treats!
The things that make
her moody are:

When I say "No treats!" or when she smells another cat on me!

I know she is happy when she purrs!

I know she is moody when she growls, hisses or bats me with her claws!

Cats can be very much like us – sometimes they are up and sometimes they are down!



Heather and her tutor Aileen at the Kesben Goodman Library

Push Your Limits!

*By Gary Mullins, HCLN Board / Kesben Goodman
ALP tutor*

Do we really know what our limits are until we push ourselves to discover them? This past weekend I entered the E2C race. This is the annual Search and Rescue Race and stands for Eco - Endurance Challenge. This is a 24 hour race through the woods using map and compass to find multiple geocaches.

We covered about 20 kilometers bushwhacking through the woods, which is equivalent to about triple that on a hiking trail. Not to downplay the physical component of the race, but I feel the most important component is the mental side. There are many reasons/excuses for not finishing or even entering a race like this. So you need some inspiration.

My minor inspiration came from not wanting to let my race partner down since you both must finish as a team. My major inspiration was my 5 year old granddaughter who is physically challenged. She is a 'little person' who must face challenges not just for 24 hours but 24/7 for the rest of her life.

So dig deep and push your limits to reach your goals.

Why I Want My GED

By Carolyn Goyetche

My life is perfect, well almost. I never received my high school diploma.

I had to quit school forty years ago due to family illness. My mother had a stroke; we needed to look after her.

When I was in school most subjects were difficult for me to understand, including math which frustrated me greatly. The school system told my parents they figured that I had a learning disability and they recommended for me to go to Special Education classes and Work Study programs.

In the fall of 2011, I went to the GED class at the Captain William Spry Community Centre where I worked my way through a thick and sometimes confusing GED book. I learned about grammar, fractions, geometry, the dreaded algebra, and how to write an essay. I have already passed the essay and grammar test and have 3 more to go. I have been working hard with my tutor. My oldest brother has been negative saying things like he could not understand the algebra so how could I. On the other hand, his wife is behind me 100%; she tells me she is proud of me.



Carolyn and her tutor Linda at the Captain William Spry Library

Now that my studies are well underway, I realize that this journey isn't about getting my GED – it shows me that I have the ability to learn. So now I have 2 goals. I may not be able to change the past, but I can certainly change my future. I can do it. I will prove it.

A special thanks to all the people that helped me: Linda Oakley, Linda Stewart, Denise Morley and Pat Roberts.

My Best Decision

By Rick Fry

My name is Ricky Fry. When I enrolled in the GED preparation course with HCLN at the Spryfield wave pool in 2013 it was the greatest decision I have ever made.



Rick celebrates his success with instructor Linda Oakley and tutor, Don

I just want everyone who reads this to know that Linda Oakley is a wonderful teacher who can help you succeed in accomplishing your high school education. I also want to thank the tutors and everyone else who made this GED prep course happen in the Spryfield community. You guys have done a fantastic job. Thank you all very much again for your time and dedication to helping people like myself go after their goals in

life. I am working out west now and am thinking about options for the fall. Thanks for your help.

It is important for our community to have education facilities available for those who, for various reasons, were unable to complete High School. The GED program not only provides the necessary 'papers', it enhances the individuals confidence and self-respect. At a time when government and business are promoting Trades, they seem to forget that a Grade 12 or GED is necessary before anyone can apply to obtain a Trade.

-CWS GED tutor

Learning at the Library

By Dabira Sheikh

I was born in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Due to the civil war all my high school and all other training documentation were left behind in Somalia. When the civil war broke out it was a matter of life and death for my entire family. Therefore my safety and the safety of my family was my priority. For this reason all my documents were forever lost.

When I was in Somalia I was a doctor's assistant in the maternity clinic.

I started learning English when I came to Canada in

2004. I have been a life-long learner and I am continuing to develop my English Language skills. I have a passion to become a dietician. I want to continue with ESL level 8 so I can reach my career goal.

Since I came to Canada I have taken many programs and I have gained a lot of knowledge. I am still working very hard to acquire the new language, English, even though it has taken a

long time to learn. Now I am so motivated that I would like to continue taking the English program in the Spring Garden library. I have been taking the program at the Spring Garden Library this year and improved many things such as my writing, spelling, also reading and listening.



Dabira at the Spring Garden Road Library

Message from Lori Haines, former HCLN Treasurer

Congratulations on 20 incredible years! I can only imagine the countless number of people HCLN has impacted over the last 2 decades and given a new outlook on their lives. Here's to another 20 years!

Our Library – Something for Everyone

By Christene Penn

I moved from Ottawa to Halifax two years ago and I'm so glad I did. It's a beautiful, walkable, friendly city, and it's wonderful to live so close to the ocean. But the best part of living here is having such a great library.

My "home" library is the Spring Garden Road branch, where I've been a literacy tutor for the past six months, and I'm gradually getting to know the other branches in my area.

As well as a large, varied and up-to-date collection of books and videos for loan, there's so much more to enjoy. Where else can you watch a movie, listen to live music or to authors reading from their latest books, learn computer, language and other skills, or relax with a craft project or playing a board game? The range of activities for all ages from babies onwards is truly amazing – just take a look at the bi-monthly Library Guide and you'll see what I mean!

A library is democracy in action, where everyone can share the benefits, and as such is tax dollars well spent. The Halifax library is a great example of this. I can't wait to see what's in store at the new Central Library when it opens this Fall.

How Learning Leads to a Wonderful Life

By John Cromwell

Learning gives me a sense of hope in life. It provides me with a belief in myself. I am better at coping with difficulties in life. I cope better with others because I understand myself and the way others behave. Learning has given me a greater sense of self-esteem so I am less reactive to others' behaviour. I am more clear thinking. I have a greater sense of independence and am able to make better choices for myself and others.

For almost 25 years I struggled with mental illness and addictions to alcohol and drugs. My addictions hurt myself and others, especially my family. At my lowest point I was homeless and didn't care what happened to me. The turning point for me was to see others in my family follow me down these paths of addiction. To find myself I had to leave my family to get stronger and make changes to my life. I needed to help myself before I could help them.

I overcame my addictions but it was difficult. Once I overcame these addictions I found people willing to help me set down a new path. This new path gave me a belief in myself, it led me to care for myself and others who I cared for. As I have grown stronger and more capable this new path has become easier. Now I have more self control and a clearer, more sensible view of the present. I have learned to be more open with others and to make better choices. I hope my new path will be an inspiration to others, especially my family. I hope they find the strength from my example to choose a less destructive path and overcome their addictions.

Thank you to:

