



## HOW DID WE DO IT?

**W**e've encountered this question a hundred times, accompanied by the gasps, wide-eyes, and looks of disbelief, wonder and amazement. "You are both in Teacher's College?"

How can you do it together?" Husband and wife with four children at home, and both of us heading in a new direction for our careers, requiring a two-year university program for retraining. Even now we admit it sounds a little crazy.

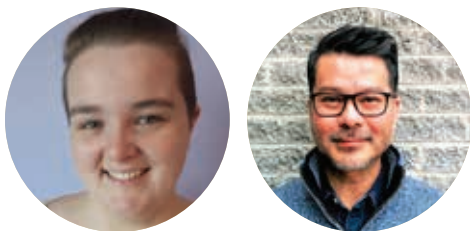
We are just about to graduate from the new two-year Bachelor of Education program at Wilfrid Laurier University. But our journey started more than 15 years ago when we met at university the first time around. James started the Filmmaking program at Ryerson University two years before Terri-Ann, but due to a fortuitous break between third and fourth year, we landed in the same screenwriting class and within two years we were married and starting a life together.

Neither of us had planned a career in the public school system back then, but we have always had a love of children and a passion for

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 12**

## FINDING SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS WHILE YOU ARE IN SCHOOL

### SECRETS YOU WERE NEVER TOLD



**BY SARAH LANE (B.A.) WITH SONNY WONG (M.ED., RP)**

**I**n a few months, we will celebrate fall by watching a new cohort of students start their schooling. These students will venture onto campus curious, bright-eyed, and eager to achieve academic and career success. If you watch their behaviour closely, it may resemble what they did as youngsters, engaging in imaginary role-play, trying on who they may want to be. Do you remember doing that? They may have changed their minds a million times, but we just smiled, watching their exploratory activities as they discovered themselves. So, what's different now?

This article is written with consultation from a licensed career counsellor who I know well. As a former undergraduate Psychology student, now working in the technology services field, I can recall observing how my peers struggled and strived to be who they ought to be rather than who they really are. It's a development stage where these students (young or mature) feel that they must affirm their educational path and solidify their career identity. Where did they get the idea that they

cannot change their minds and continue with purposive exploration? Certainly, as experienced adults, we remember that our own quests for meaningful work and identity were filled with ups, downs, and changes in direction. Yet, for some students, they feel like changing their minds would be a sign of failure. They may even continue down a path they do not enjoy and in which they are underperforming or failing to meet their own potential. Why?

Educational Choice as Self-Identity Expression. As adults we go to a party and we are identified by our career status. No one ever asks: "how satisfied are you with your work?" or "does it give you meaning?" For young people, they're categorized by their "major", the discipline they're studying. And let's be frank, there are certain programs which are perceived by some as more "prestigious" or more "financially promising". Often, educational institutions boast about the employment successes of their alumni. Many programs offer direct experience to help young students shape their self-concept and career identity

development. But is this experience helpful or does it just restrict their self-exploration? For some students to divert from the prescribed path can cause a sense of failure to emerge, as some compare themselves with their peers. However, it is suggested that students continue exploring with curiosity, even though it may be scary to do so. Rather than thinking about themselves as a student, they should ask: what are my natural strengths and how can I develop them further? It is our strengths which fuel our educational and career successes.

Rationale for Choice. Many people make their educational decisions focusing on their weaknesses, rather than their strengths. For example, how many times have you heard students in liberal arts explain their rationale for program choice? "I am not good at math, science, or business so what is left? General Arts." How come they do not see their own positives? They could choose liberal arts because they want to help people,

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**



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## INSIDE:

- LOOKING FOR FREE EDUCATION?
- A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG
- EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENTS FROM 4 MAJOR PARTIES
- SUMMER ART INSTITUTE AT SHERIDAN COLLEGE

- REDEFINING BOUNDARIES: A STUDENT'S JOURNEY
- SUCCESS STORY AT HUMBER COLLEGE
- BECOMING DIGITALLY LITERATE
- SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIVERSITIES
- DEAR ELCEE

# ARE YOU LOOKING FOR FREE EDUCATION?

BY LISA TRUDEL

If the title of this article grabbed your attention, read on! If you are an unemployed resident of Toronto, you might qualify for some of the excellent free training programs that are offered by some of our local resources including Employment Ontario, Ontario WORKS, and the Toronto District School Board.

All of the programs have different criteria but all are great examples of two of my favorite Benjamin Franklin quotes:

“Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I will learn.”

“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”

For example, if you are unemployed and currently in receipt of Ontario WORKS, you might want to talk with your Caseworker about participating in a program titled “Bridges to Employment”.

This is an intensive 11-week training program facilitated by Wendolyne Vazquez of the Centre for Education and Training, at their location on Don Mills Road near Lawrence. There is a program starting on

July 16th and on October 8th this year.

This program covers standard employment preparation topics such as resumes and cover letters, and also offers different topics including “Extreme Couponing” and how to use social media for your job search. For some lucky participants depending on their career focus, there are even certification credentials in areas including Smart Serve, Tax Training, Food Handler and a Canadian Securities Course.

Wendolyne, the Program Facilitator, is a creative and innovative Life Skills Coach, Personality Dimensions Facilitator and George Brown College graduate. She is dedicated to improving the lives of others, so her program is guaranteed to be bursting with new ideas about career exploration and planning.

Another excellent free program is “NPower Canada”. This program is specifically for youth, ages 18 to 29 years of age, who have completed High School, can demonstrate financial need, have strong English Proficiency and who are experiencing barriers to pursuing post-secondary education and employment.

NPower Canada provides job seekers

with in-demand digital and professional skills training, and provides employers with access to a pipeline of eager and job-ready young talent. So if you are a youth who fits NPower’s criteria and who wants a career in the Information and Communication Technology field, this could be the best educational program for you. According to their website, 80% of program alumni are now employed or pursuing higher education within 6 months of graduation.

Another source of free education for eligible learners is through the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and funded by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. TDSB offers a multitude of free English classes for Canadian newcomers and the Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) Assessment. Obtaining your CLB Level is often requested for other programs including the TDSB’s Enhanced Language Training (ELT) Programs. This is a 14-week labour market access program for Internationally Trained Professionals that includes a 8-week in-class portion and a 6-week work placement.

Benjamin Franklin’s belief that involving the learner is essential for education success, is

certainly true for many programs in Toronto. For example, there is an abundance of training programs for Ontario WORKS recipients to help prepare for employment or career advancement that include on-the-job training. In addition to the Centre for Education and Training which offers “Bridges to Employment”, there is also Working Skills Centre, St. Stephens Community House, and Opportunity for Advancement that offer terrific training programs.

Free education is available to those who ask. Seek it out and discover if there are programs that you can participate in. Become involved and increase your knowledge so you can become all you want to be.

*This article was submitted by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training. She works at their Parliament Employment Services location in the historic Cabbagetown district of downtown Toronto and can be contacted at: [ltrudel@tcet.com](mailto:ltrudel@tcet.com)*



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# FINDING SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS WHILE YOU ARE IN SCHOOL

## SECRETS YOU WERE NEVER TOLD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

are passionate about writing, or have other valuable strengths in that area. Why do they overlook the fact that their strengths are with the social sciences and humanities and worthy of continuous exploration? When we delegitimize our own preferences, it can be difficult to engage in the strength training that school is all about. As you re-connect with your strengths, you can leverage your coursework to develop your personal interests into an academic and professional specialty.

Ownership of Strengths. So, if you want academic/career successes you must pay attention to what makes you happy. Researchers have long proven that happiness increases one's success level rather than the vice versa. If you find that you effortlessly get good grades in particular courses, rather than say it is because of an easy professor or a bell curve, take ownership for it. Take time to figure out what specifically you did to earn those successes. What is easy for you is due to your strengths and your natural talents. And it is within those courses where you'll find clues to your vocational calling. If the courses you are good at are more elective than required courses, it may be a sign that you have more than one interest. Everyone individual is multi-dimensional. Your activities outside of school are just as important clues to focus on to shine light on your path. In today's world of

work, successful individuals can do more than one thing or think in more than one way. If you ask any successful person about how they became successful, they will say: find your joys rather than finding one thing to rely on for your happiness. This concept is not new. You did it as a child. So, release your inner-child, follow your heart, and invest in the things that make you happy. Another way to think about this concept is to remember a time when you woke up and you thought things were great. What were you doing and what made it great?

These techniques were what I learned in my undergraduate years. They helped to free me from my degree identity, find who I am, and figure out how I want to contribute to society. I used my degree for myself and my degree will not define me. My final advice is to take full advantage of school resources and engage with licensed career counsellors. Sometimes, you need the support of a professional to hear your career thoughts and work with you to re-capture your hopes, dreams and aspirations.

*Sarah Lane (B.A) graduated from Ryerson University's Psychology program. Sonny Wong (M.Ed, PR) is a Registered Psychotherapist who specializes in healthy career identity development.*

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# HOW AN ERITREAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL TOOK UP SOCIOLOGY

A short story by Mina Wong

Joseph Woldu was a student in my Sociology class many summers ago. A gentleman in every sense, Joseph was one of the best students a teacher could ever ask for.

Starting with respectfully calling me “Madam”, Joseph was always early for class and reading. When asked what book he had, Joseph would show me a paperback about philosophy or African politics. When we got to know each other, Joseph told me he was actually an assistant deputy minister from Eritrea’s Ministry of Agriculture.

“My government sent me to study in Canada, so that I can help with food security in my country,” Joseph explained, not knowing I was in awe of having a minister of any rank in my class.

Joseph was a food management diploma student at our college, and Sociology was a mandatory course for his program.

Carefully turning the pages of our textbook, Joseph seemed surprised that we studied something much broader than the social sciences back in Eritrea. “There is so much about modern society aside from Marx and capitalism”, he seemed fascinated by even conventional thinkers whom he had barely heard of.

Joseph soon read everything he could in first year Sociology, so that he could better understand social relationships in different countries, including his native land of Eritrea.

“Madam, I find feminism and post-modernism very hard,” Joseph told me a week before our mid-term test. When asked where he had difficulties, he paused before commenting, “These two theories are only about very industrialized countries, like Canada.”

When whole chapters on feminism and post-modernism were still several weeks away, I assured Joseph that there were actually no test questions on those two theories. However, his hesitation told me he wanted to discuss something else.

“Madam, I want to know why Canadian women are unhappy when they already have equality,” Joseph posed the question carefully, as if he worried I might misunderstand such a direct query.

My response was equally cautious. “It’s true that women in Canada have gained a lot of gender equality over the last 100 years, but in many professions, things can still be unequal. For instance, we have only had one female Prime Minister and only for a short time. Other women politicians also find it hard to compete with men in an environment built largely by men.”

“In my country, my wife and daughters are well-educated, but they don’t fight with men for jobs. They can stay home

and do work suitable to women a few hours a week,” Joseph shared with me the privilege his family members enjoyed because of his social position in Eritrea.

Joseph also admitted that not only had he never heard of post-modernism, he was completely lost when studying it as a theory.

Not wanting to overload Joseph ahead of time, I assured him that we would have a thorough discussion on post-modern, post-literate, and post-industrial societies just several weeks away.

Joseph surprised himself by earning almost 80% on the midterm test. Although he had not done as well on multiple-choice questions, earning 9 out of 10 marks for short answers meant overall, a respectable 79%.

Encouraged by a good mark, Joseph became more involved with class discussions, and informed me that for his research project, he would interview a nutrition professor at our college who had previously worked in Ethiopia.

“I want to ask her some important questions about the impact of a high protein diet,” Joseph’s research proposal was clearly and directly focused on Eritrea’s agricultural challenges.

Just as our course was going smoothly, Joseph was an hour late for class one day. “A friend of mine from Eritrea filed for refugee status. Canadian officials found my name in his wallet. They asked me a few questions,” came Joseph’s explanation for his lateness.

Having known all along that sooner or later, Joseph might touch on the subject of Eritreans as new Canadians, I simply waited for him to tell me more.

“I told the truth. I wasn’t filing for anything with my friend. We only talked about it once or twice,” Joseph said.

“I must go back. I have a duty to my country. Also, if I don’t return, my wife and daughters might get arrested,” came Joseph’s honest evaluation of his situation.

That was such a sobering day for me about Joseph and his Eritrean friend that “Well, I truly wish you and your friend all the best” was all I could manage to express.

After that semester, Joseph Woldu and I lost contact with each other. But other professors who remembered him told me he successfully graduated from our college in food management. Now whenever I hear about Eritrea, I will remember the assistant deputy minister of Agriculture who was once in my class, and who would have made Eritrea proud by loyally helping his country to overcome challenges in food security.

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*



# ADULT EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENTS FROM OUR LEADING POLITICAL PARTIES

## STATEMENT FROM THE NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY:

Ontario's educated workforce is one of our greatest advantages in a global economy. But with that economy changing rapidly and constantly, people need the tools for lifelong learning to succeed. And businesses across Ontario need those people to be able to quickly develop new skills and hone current ones.

Unfortunately, consecutive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to adequately respond to the needs of adults seeking new learning and training opportunities. According to a 2016 report by the Auditor General, most of Employment Ontario's clients are unsuccessful in finding full-time employment in their chosen career. And when it comes to post-secondary education, Ontario has ranked last on per student funding in Canada for six consecutive years.

It shouldn't be this way. Ontarians deserve a government that ensures everyone is benefiting from Ontario's prosperity. We will work with businesses and post-secondary institutions to increase opportunities for lifelong training to ensure that people and businesses can keep pace with industrial and technological changes.

We are committed to putting the resources

into lifelong learning that will ensure that adults in Ontario always have access to options and opportunity. We will create a fund within the Jobs and Prosperity Fund to create opportunities for mid-career education, offering training for people who are working and those who are between employment. We will bring together labour unions, employers, the Ontario College of Trades, and individual tradespeople to ensure that college programs are funded; to identify and develop new opportunities for apprenticeship; and to ensure people know the opportunities that can come from a skilled trade. We will continue to support Second Career and we will enhance Essential Skills Ontario by maintaining the program's recent increase to funding. Finally, we will review and reform Employment Ontario programs so that they work for the modern economy.

## STATEMENT FROM THE GREEN PARTY:

The Green Party of Ontario recognizes that education doesn't stop at 18 or 25. We want an education system that promotes equity and creates opportunities for students and learners of all ages. Our plan fosters education for life

because we know the changing nature of work will require many of us to upgrade our skills or learn new ones throughout our lives.

We believe the province has a responsibility to help adult learners by funding programs for continuing education. Adult education should be accessible to all Ontarians, regardless of their ability to pay and so we would support enhanced financial support tools to ensure everyone can build their skills. We also support adult education programs provided by local and non-profit organizations that seek to address a skill gap present in the local community; that assist individuals in kick starting their own small enterprises; and that help people transition between jobs and careers. We know that many seniors crave opportunities for new learning and we would explore avenues to enable them to participate in post-secondary education at a reduced cost.

The Green Party has announced a historic plan to roll out a Basic Income Guarantee for Ontarians that would help people to adjust through the transitions in their lives, including between careers or through changes to living circumstances. With precarious labour and the contract economy becoming more common, a guaranteed minimum income will ensure Ontarians don't have to choose between learning new skills and putting food on the table for themselves and their family. The Basic Income Guarantee will provide a safety net to give everyone the flexibility to pursue lifelong learning.

a new mandate, we will look to extend this success to even more workers and adult learners.

In Budget 2018, we created the Ontario Training Bank to ensure employers have access to the talent they need to grow and compete. The bank will also provide workers and job seekers the opportunity to upgrade their skills to start a new career or advanced to a new job along their career path. The Training Bank includes an enhanced set of services and programs, including Second Career, SkillsAdvance Ontario, and the Employer Partnership Training Fund. Each program will now be even more responsive to employer demand and the training needs of workers.

## STATEMENT FROM THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

In the PC Party of Ontario, we recognize that adult education is an important way to help sustain and improve the lives of individuals, their families and society as whole. It is relatively low cost and can easily be justified by its many benefits. Whether it's those seeking to upgrade skills and education or a return to learning, when people grow, we all gain.

I have walked this path myself and benefitted from it. I grew up in a single-family home, moving from one low income housing location to another. Through hard work, some luck, and access to programs I have been able to succeed and thrive, ending up as a university professor after retiring as a police Superintendent in Toronto.

Adult education is important but is just one component of a series of measures needed to ensure that everyone in Ontario has an equal opportunity to get ahead. In the end the best path forward is to ensure that everyone who wants and needs it has access to all the tools necessary to help them find and keep meaningful work; work that allows them to pay their bills and take care of themselves and their families.

We will help fill the skills gap by increasing access to apprenticeships and reforming the foreign credential recognition process to help qualified new Canadians come to Ontario and contribute to the economy to their fullest potential immediately.

And when folks are working there is no excuse for continuing to tax low-income Ontario workers who are making minimum wage. We're going to make Ontario's tax system fairer for low-income households by making sure that minimum wage workers pay no income tax.

It is time government worked for the people not against them as it has for the last 15 years. It is that positive approach to helping everyone get ahead that I, Doug Ford and a PC Party government will follow.

*Gary Ellis Conservative Candidate  
Scarborough South West*

## Adult Continuing Education Programs for the



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## STATEMENT FROM THE LIBERAL PARTY

Ontario's economy is booming- the province is currently enjoying the lowest unemployment rate in 20 years, and has one of the fastest growing economies in the G20. But the economy is also changing, with new ways of working and technological disruption posing challenges to many workers. The Ontario Liberal Party took strong action to make sure Ontario's residents are able to access the right training when they need it to adapt to a dynamic workforce.

In Budget 2017, we announced the Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan, which included an \$185 million investment in literacy and basic skills training for adults, doubling our support by 2021. This will provide an additional 80,000 people with the essential literacy, math, and digital skills to succeed in the changing economy.

As part of our historic transformation of OSAP, we have made financial assistance more accessible for adult learners. In 2017-18, nearly 200,000 mature students accessed the OSAP program, a 33 per cent increase over the previous year. Of those students, 71 percent received free tuition (OSAP non-repayable grants met or exceeded tuition fees in their program).

We've taken strong action that is helping to prepare hundreds of thousands of adult learners for the challenges of the new economy. With



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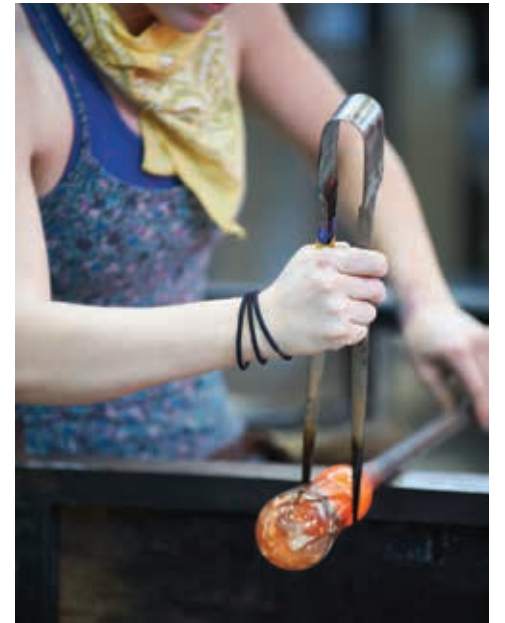
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# THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF A UNIVERSITY

BY JOANNE MACKAY-BENNETT

**R**ecently, the University of Toronto announced the inauguration of its new, globally-connected research centre, the School of Cities ([schoolofcities.com](http://schoolofcities.com)).

Given estimates that by the year 2050, two-thirds of the world's population will live in urban areas, one of the centre's most urgent tasks will be to answer this question: how can a city recognize and value the experience of its *citizens*? (I am using the definition of citizen to mean "the inhabitant of a particular town or city.")

For a city to flourish, experts agree, it must discover a way for *all* of its residents to thrive. As noted by U of T president, Meric Gertler, solutions will start by being inclusive: "Perhaps Toronto's biggest challenge is to ensure that it finds a way to engage all members of its population effectively, and to create opportunities for everyone to succeed." ([www.utoronto.ca/news/there-no-prosperity-without-inclusivity-urban-scholars-say-first-event-u-t-s-school-cities](http://www.utoronto.ca/news/there-no-prosperity-without-inclusivity-urban-scholars-say-first-event-u-t-s-school-cities)).

Our city has much to celebrate. It is North America's fourth largest city, has a growing, diverse and multicultural population and is recognized as a centre of finance and technological innovation.

Its GDP is in the range of \$304 billion.

But we also need to talk about the flip side of Toronto's soaring success: the growing numbers of people who are living in this city in poverty.

At University in the Community (UitC), a free-of-charge, adult education program for students of all ages, we have talked to scholars, researchers, practitioners, artists, advocates and ordinary citizens whose life work is dedicated to reducing poverty.

Dr. Kwame McKenzie (CEO of the Wellesley Institute), Dr. Gary Bloch (founder of Health Providers Against Poverty), the work at the STAR Learning Centre at Regent Park, Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux and Charles Officer told us that poverty is not just about income, it is multi-dimensional. It erupts as segregation, as physical and mental illness, as addiction, as homelessness, as malnutrition, as loneliness, as a barrier to lifelong learning... and as the loss of citizenship.

There are many others whose work has influenced our UitC program. Let me mention just a few that stand out: the Samuels' Family Foundation ([www.socialconnectedness.org](http://www.socialconnectedness.org)), the University of Chicago's Civic Knowledge Project ([www.civicknowledge.org](http://www.civicknowledge.org)),

the University of Chicago's Poverty and Human Development Initiative ([www.ophi.org.uk](http://www.ophi.org.uk)) and the programs of the Samara Foundation, ([www.samaracanada.com](http://www.samaracanada.com)) two of which are now located at Ryerson University ([www.ryerson.ca](http://www.ryerson.ca)) as part of their "Democratic Engagement Exchange."

Universities can transform the lives of the students and families they serve. And equally importantly, students and families can transform the university they attend. *Together*, they can learn more about their city, the issues it faces and the opportunities for *citizens* to make their city a better place to live. *Together* they can "advance the forms of civic friendship that matter most." ([civicknowledge.uchicago.edu](http://civicknowledge.uchicago.edu))

More and more, universities are integrating social responsibility in their mission statements arguing that when institutes of higher education work collaboratively with everyone who is responsible for funding it, everyone benefits.

By supporting a program like UitC, a program that cannot be evaluated by its "cost effectiveness," U of T, Senior College and Innis College have committed to providing learning opportunities that benefit the community

at large. We call it "citizenship education."

U of T's School of Cities understands that to be "successful," a city must ensure that all voices be heard. To do so, it must actively reach out to communities that are both inside and outside the university.

"These are not the usual communities that are brought to the table," Professor Marieme Lo notes, "but they have a lot at stake and are usually the ones that deal the most with some of the questions of inequality, segregation and the effects of gentrification."

There is much to learn.

What do you think? What is the social responsibility of a college or university? What kinds of programs would it offer? Send an email to the editor of *Learning Curves* and let us know!

*Joanne Mackay-Bennett is the coordinator of University in the Community*

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*



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# REDEFINING BOUNDARIES: ONE STUDENT'S JOURNEY

BY YVONNE VOULGARIS



Life is rarely a linear journey. We live in a time when reinventing ourselves is becoming the norm. As we evolve, we learn more about our strengths, and suddenly our possibilities expand beyond limits we previously imagined. With reinvention sometimes comes a new stream of education or training.

## Enter PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs.

Sometimes people don't know exactly which direction they want their lives to travel in, or they feel overwhelmed by what they believe their own obstacles and limitations are. And sometimes the idea of asking for help

or starting over is too daunting to tackle. PTP offers a multitude of programs to help take those next steps with a bit more ease and with a fantastic support system.

Nova Amoy Vaughn-Burnett walked through the doors of PTP after learning of its existence while attending "10 weeks of intensive work training" at the YWCA's Employment Focus Program. "This is where I learned about PTP, and I'm pleased to have made the decision to enrol." She started in the day program at PTP with a focus on math. Having worked as an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) for 12 years in her previous life, she had a keen awareness of not only the importance a good education, but also

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 12**

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5353 Dundas Street West  
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# DIGITAL LITERACY DAY MAY 31, 2018 BECOMING DIGITALLY LITERATE

BY WENDY TERRY

May 31 was Toronto's First Digital Literacy Day. The City and the Public Library collaborated with 25 local companies and organizations to host and produce events for all ages.

When I helped start the Ontario Literacy Coalition as President of the Ontario Association of Continuing Education in the mid 1980's, literacy referred to the ability to read and write, then being able to do math was added and now twenty some years after computers started to take over, we need to be digitally literate.

There were 27 events listed to choose from. One event put on by RBC in the Golden Mile was titled "Identify Your Tech Personality- Are you a Hipster, Hacker or Hustler?". Alas it was for 18-29 year olds. Being 70, moved on.

I attended one offered by Northeastern University at First Canadian place on Cyber Security. This field is growing as we daily hear stories about our online privacy being hacked. This event was listed as "Trending Topics In Cyber Security" and the intriguing part for this 70 year old was this "This workshop provides an introduction to email protection for those with a non-technical background..."

Professor Jose Sierra opened my eyes. I thought encryption of your text (apparently videos and audios too) was different every time but this is not so. There are standard codes like AES, RC6, TwoFish, Serpent, Des (one of the older ones) So if anyone can use these code systems, what protects your data? Well passwords that are over 200 digits long. I will never complain about coming up with a seven digit password again. Mind these 200 word ones are created for you. And there is Freeware Encryption Tools on the net. So you do not need to buy encryption codes. You put your text in the tool, tell it to encrypt and it does. You need a password to do this, slightly less than 200 words. If you receive an encrypted message, you tell it to decrypt, use another 200 word password and it does.

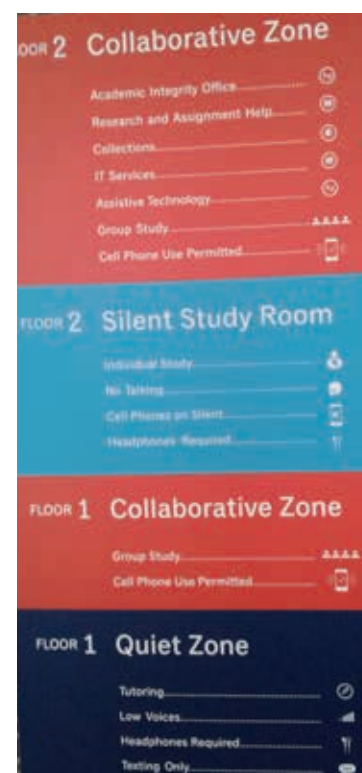
Like building a web page, you do not have to know Java, or HTML coding, you use a program like Wordpress. This I learned as well as some HTML coding in a DSB Learn4Life course called Web Design for Small Business. Mind I took the course twice as the first time I felt overwhelmed. Second time I was okay.

Of course there were professional people attending the Northeastern workshop, but their questions were beyond me as were the answers. But I can say that I am more digitally literate having attended the Northeastern as I now better understand how encryption works.

Northeastern University is for those wanting to add to their professional skills. It is unique in Toronto and Canada, as it offers a Masters Program in Cyber Security. See [www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca) Spring 2018 issue for a profile of Northeastern and other programs they offer.

I became aware of Northeastern in Toronto when Rue Quizon, their Campus Operations Manager, phoned Learning Curves. She had picked up a copy at city hall and was interested in this community publication for adults going back to school. Rue has also been involved in the planning of Toronto's first Digital Literacy Day. She is special, not many institutions based in another city, Boston in this case, doing distance ed (and in classroom) take such note of the community their students come from and further help to develop community events.

Like Rues, taking note of the community is a habit of mine, as I consider my volunteer job delivering Learning Curves a research project, and one day a couple of months ago I increased my digital literacy when looking around I found this sign hanging in the Sheridan College campus in Mississauga. The campus is now divided into communications zones. Fascinated, I took a picture with my cell.



Sounds digitally literate but the first time I saw it, I had not taken the cell with me. I had started to write down the Communication Zones when my pen ran out of ink. I looked around for someone to borrow a pen from. Then I had a digital awakening, all those students with cells and tablets would have a story to tell if I asked them for a pen.: "Guess what happened today, an older woman asked me for a pen to write down the communication zones. She did not have a cell to take a picture!" I left and came back with the cell the next round of delivery.

A few weeks later I read that Bic (you know Bic pens, at one time the new communication tool) was being "disrupted" as they say by the take a picture with your cell world.

Libraries, collaborators in the development of the Digital Literacy Day are key sites for upgrading your skills as they run free computer workshops. Go to the TPL website and choose Programs, Classes and Exhibits, then Computer and Literacy Training. One of the best is Basic Computer Skills for those with "little or no computer skills. Then there is one titled E-mails and Social Networking. (I need to learn to text and tweet, better look into this one) As you learn you can move up to Word, Excel and Powerpoint (all of which I know how to use).

You can Book A Librarian see upper right corner of this page- one on one free tutoring.

Are you scared of trying, are you embarrassed to admit you don't know. Librarians are some of the most helpful people. Book one. You can even sign up for TPL's e-newsletter.

Becoming digitally literate is an ongoing process, that's why we use the term continuing education. Don't be ashamed. Go for it.

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*



# SUCCESS AT HUMBER COLLEGE



For years, Michael Mullet had the goal of securing employment in the industry of Municipal Bylaw. But, he soon learned, that this profession was extremely competitive. He needed an education and skill set that would make him stand out in the crowd of potential applicants. That's why Michael decided to enroll in the Municipal Bylaw Certificate at Humber's School of Social and Community Services. Here, Michael learned essential bylaw enforcement skills and received support and mentorship from Humber faculty and staff members.

"I am very proud of my Humber Certificate," says Michael. "It hangs proudly on my wall, and I truly feel a sense of accomplishment when I look at it. Since completing my Municipal Bylaw studies at Humber I have secured a full-time position at Metrolinx where I am enjoying a career as a Transit Fare Inspector with GO Transit."

At the School of Social and Community Services, we love hearing success stories like this. We take pride in showing our students how to achieve their career goals. Are you looking to expand your skill set, or, perhaps, considering another career path? You too can achieve your goals by applying for a Continuing Education course or program at the School of Social and Community Services. For years, we've helped people further their careers and help their community. Our campus is equipped with state-of-the-art labs and equipment and our classes are instructed by industry experienced professors. You'll have the benefit of learning new skills through lectures, readings, and online modules, as well as through hands-on, practical training.

We offer courses, certificates, and specializations in a wide variety of community-based professions, including Criminal Intelligence Analysis, Private Investigation,

Mindfulness Studies, Gerontology, Children's Mental Health, Advanced Crisis Intervention & Counselling, and much, much more.

Simmi Santha came to Humber with a Masters in Psychology and a job in the field of Autism Spectrum Disorders. Despite an already established career, Simmi wanted to go further with her career and education, especially in the field of behavioural science. She enrolled in our Behavioural Science certificate program and had an amazing experience. The highlight, she says, was the one-on-one mentorship she received from her professors.

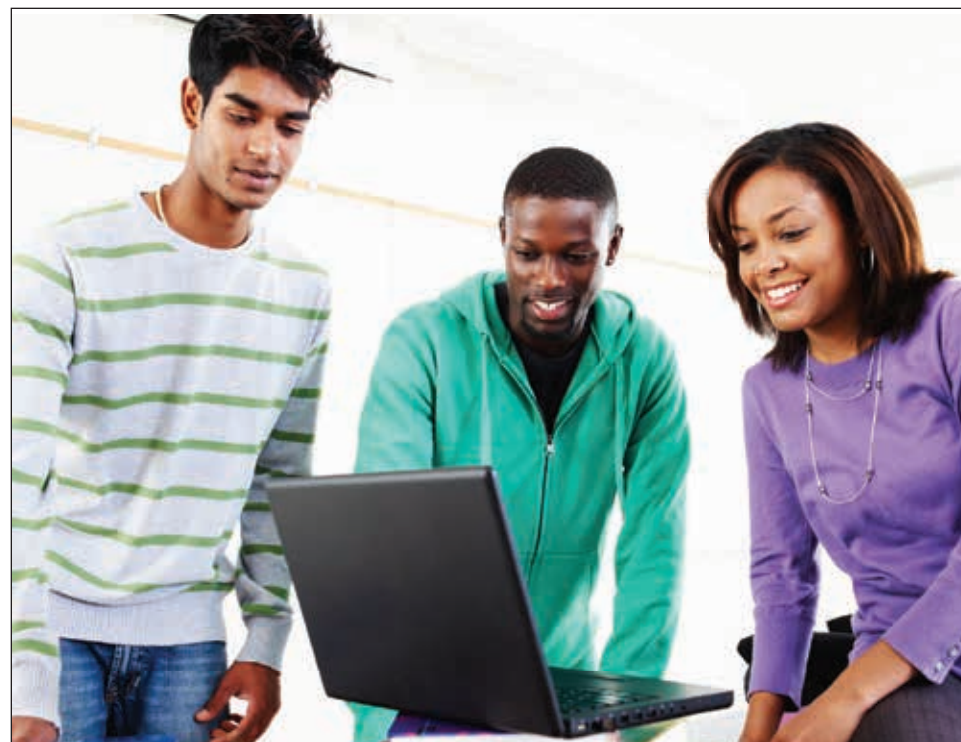
"All the professors who taught us were not only knowledgeable but also highly experienced in the field of behavioural science. Every one of them was dedicated to the profession and highly inspiring as well," says Simmi. Best of all, the flexible evening course times worked perfectly with her fulltime career schedule.

"The solid foundation that I received in this field at Humber College inspired me to further my career in behaviour science. I am happy to say that I am now a Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst. I highly recommend Humber College's exceptionally well-organized Behaviour Science program to all aspirants."

We've seen and heard many stories like Simmi's and Michael's – people whose careers and lives greatly benefitted from the knowledge, skills, and mentorship they gained with one of our Continuing Education courses or programs. You could be next.

Whether you are looking to upgrade your skillset or are looking to test drive a new career, you will find a course or certificate suited to your needs.

Achieve your career goals with The School of Social and Community Services – and never stop going above and beyond.



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- Explore various careers and postsecondary programs
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\* additional assessments may be required

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Youth to Postsecondary is supported by The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation and Emma-Christina Michael and Daniel Michael.

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# HOW DID WE DO IT?

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

teaching. Terri-Ann started teaching private music lessons as a teenager. James volunteered as a cub scout leader for his sons' troupe. Both of us volunteered as Sunday school teachers at church. James organized youth talent shows and Terri-Ann volunteered in our kids' school. While James started and ran a successful moving company with his father and Terri-Ann stayed home to raise our four children, we continually found ourselves working with and inspiring children and teenagers.

As our youngest child neared the age to start kindergarten, Terri-Ann began to think about formalizing her teaching experience by getting a Bachelor of Education. While she had been at home raising her four children, she had been devouring books on education, homeschooling, learning methods, and the history of schooling. A unique educational experience during her own childhood helped her decide that she wanted to get into the school system to inspire, and maybe revolutionize, some of the current teaching methods.

At the same time, the family business experienced a tragedy. James' father passed away suddenly, leaving James with a critical decision: to keep the business open on his own, or pursue a new career path. We sat down together to consider all the options before us and how they would affect James, the family, and what we wanted for our lives. After considering a few options, the clouds parted and the answer became clear: James would also enter the teaching profession.

Applying to university the second time around was completely different. Having a family of six to care for and support meant that there were new considerations to take into account. Should we take the program simultaneously? How far can we reasonably travel to a campus? What about child care? Can we get a school placement close to home? Will the hours allow us to balance home and school life? Are international universities an option? Can we stay where we live or do we

need to relocate? How will these changes affect our children? Will we need to work part time? How will we cover the cost of tuition, home, and family expenses for two years?

We researched universities and programs, sent a chain of emails, met with faculty in person, and tried to sell our story to everyone we met. We knew that we might need some special considerations if we were going to make this work. We would need a faculty that saw what we had to offer and would be flexible where possible to help us achieve our goals. In the end one program emerged as a clear answer: Wilfrid Laurier University.

The program is small; only 25 people would be accepted to that year's program. But we felt the compassion and awe from the professors regarding our situation. While they couldn't make any promises, we felt a personal touch that those in charge would do what they could to help make it work for us. They were the only university who offered placements in our local school board. And more than 60% of our required attendance would be at that local school instead of on campus, which was situated more than an hour away.

When the letters offering a spot arrived for both of us, we stared at the words in amazement. We had been granted 2 of those 25 spots, beating incredible odds. And we both received entrance grants. As we sent off our acceptance, we both agreed that we were already feeling a part of the Laurier family.

I wish we could say that our years of maturity and experience eased the path to the point that we sailed through the next two years. The truth of it is, the first semester nearly broke both of us. Requiring an extra course in teaching French meant adding Saturdays to a schedule that already required attendance 8am-4pm Monday to Friday. That first semester we averaged over 100 hours of courses, placement, and homework every week. The list of assignments due during the first 10 weeks reached over 30. As

we stared at the list on a white board in our bedroom, we felt discouragement, defeat, and completely overwhelmed. While we never truly considered leaving the program, we weren't sure how we could get it all done.

Amid the pressure of school our family responsibilities mounted. Meal preparation, laundry, shopping, kids' homework, soccer carpooling, parenting issues – while our children were understanding they still needed our attention. We pulled back from all extra activities and volunteer work as we tried to clear the schedule as much as we could. We reached out to our support system: our oldest boys helped with chores and entertaining the younger two, James' mother helped with the cleaning and babysitting, friends offered to pick up the carpooling load. More than this, the emotional support from friends and family constantly buoyed us up. Terri-Ann's mother, a retired teacher, offered advice and expertise from halfway around the world in Australia. Our friends who were already teachers offered ideas for lesson planning. And through it all, we clung to one mantra: time will pass no matter what we do. Each week brought us closer to the end of another assignment, another course, another placement.

We received the promised help from Laurier. They reached out to the school at the end of our street to see if they would host a student teacher for the year. Terri-Ann was placed there during year one, and James was placed there during year two. This allowed us to get the kids on the school bus in the morning before having to get to our placement, and then be home before the kids got off the bus in the afternoon. That meant that more than half of the days one parent was home when the kids were home. Word started to get around in the faculty that a husband and wife were in the program together and that we were coming from such a great distance away. We received understanding from professors when we had to deal with commuting during terrible snowstorms. We received encouragement from

professors that our years of experience were an asset to our training. We felt lifted up by peers as we came together to struggle through the demanding program. During those two years, we came to have a second family at Laurier.

As we eased into year two of the program, we finally found our groove. The high quality program at Laurier was shaping us into educators truly ready to enter the education system. The fog lifted and we began to thrive in both our course work and our practicum placements. We were even able to mentor new first year students in similar situations, coming to teaching as a second career and trying to balance a family at home.

As our two years come to a close, we can hardly believe that this stage of our life is ending. We still get the question "how did you do it together?" This is our standard reply: "We see these two years as a blessing and a gift to our relationship. At a time when many marriages struggle due to the demands of careers and child-rearing, when husbands and wives drift apart, pulled away by separate responsibilities, attending university together created a long, intense opportunity to spend time together again. We passed hours together driving back and forth to Laurier. We had the same assignments, which allowed us someone close to help clarify things or be a sounding board for lesson ideas. We debated educational theories and kept each other challenged and current on school issues. We cried together over the lows. We celebrated the jobs well done. We often balanced each other out – when one of us was giving up the other pulled them along. We had a true understanding of what the other was going through; there was no jealousy of the time or work demands. We were each other's biggest cheerleader and champion."

So when people ask us "How could you do this together?" the answer is simple: "How could we have done it apart?"

## REDEFINING BOUNDARIES: ONE STUDENT'S JOURNEY

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8**

of the delivery of quality programming. One of the aspects that led her away from her ECE career was because she "was opposed to changes in the early learning curriculum that fostered less minds and promoted more paper work to satisfy unrealistic criteria for developing minds."

Often the students and clients of PTP find themselves at a crossroads. Sometimes being out of school for a long time, the confidence people need to seek out education or assistance weighs heavily on them. One of PTP's mandates is to be a safe zone for people so they can come to ask questions and to learn whether what PTP has to offer is in line with what they want to achieve.

At its core is Literacy and Basic Skills programming. While it is a full time program, its flexibility allows for students to take part in a portion of the day programs depending on their goals and other commitments, whether that means only taking math upgrading, or being a part of one of the other programs offered through various partnerships. "Once I attended PTP to upgrade my math skills,

my brain experienced an awakening. It was a strange, exciting sensation like going on a road trip and seeing life in new ways. Math wasn't frightening or complicated. It was a map, and every direction was a problem to solve. At times, my pace concerned me because it took three days to a week to solve the first few assignments, but I soon found my rhythm and my mind has since been ignited."

On this path of self-discovery, Nova took every advantage offered by PTP, regardless of whether it was something she knew for sure that it would assist her in a new career. This is because, as an avid student and previous educator, she knows how important expanding your arsenal of knowledge is, regardless of whether you see it as required for a degree. Nova knows that any learning is an opportunity for growth and can never be time wasted. She took advantage of every learning opportunity she could, including receiving her Food Handler and WHMIS certifications, while attending the day program at PTP.

With hard work, dedication, and determination, Nova was now ready for her next stepping stone. Her math skills now improved and her momentum in full speed, she tested and qualified to enrol in the Adult Upgrading program offered in the evenings through PTP in partnership with Seneca College. Both English and math are offered, and they are in preparation for entrance into any Ontario college.

Knowing that adult learning can be a difficult road for someone to undertake, PTP is happy to assist by whatever means they have at their disposal. Not only do they teach essential skills like literacy, numeracy, critical thinking, and oral communication, but they also lean strongly into employability skills because they know that things like adaptability and time management are crucial to ongoing success. PTP also understands that sometimes everyone's individual life stories can lead to stumbling backwards before continuing forward, and that things beyond our control

can affect our paths. Whether learners are in need of the basic skills, employment, or they're on a path towards higher education, there are opportunities for moving forward.

PTP operates year-round with continual intake, which suits Nova's needs since she has no intention of slowing down. Taking the night program allows her to also be enrolled in an office administration program during the day at another organization. Her long term plans include becoming a Human Resources Specialist, focussing on health and safety.

"Though this will require further training beyond PTP, I now have the resources, support, and drive to pursue my career goal. I can't thank the educators and the administrative team at PTP enough for the tools and encouragement to dream big and apply the best of myself. I look forward to a long, productive relationship with education thanks to accessible programs like PTP and YWCA that were instrumental as partners in assisting me on this critical path to selfimprovement."



# DON'T WAIT TILL AFTER LABOUR DAY TO REGISTER FOR THE FALL TERM CLASSES.

If you wait, the class may be full or cancelled for the lack of a few more registrations.

**Registrations for the Fall Term 2017** start in July and some in August

Information Sessions for the 2017-2018 year are held in August

**Call to find out dates now!**



# SUMMER IS NOT A DOWN TIME FOR LEARNING

The spring term for colleges and university open access (continuing education and part time evening) have start dates that run into June, July and August.

The schools( adult day schools) run on four quads ( fall, winter, spring, summer)

English language programs have continuous intake.

Community based programs for the most part have continuous intake year round.

Career Colleges have continuous intake. year round.

Phone and ask what's on, don't miss out.

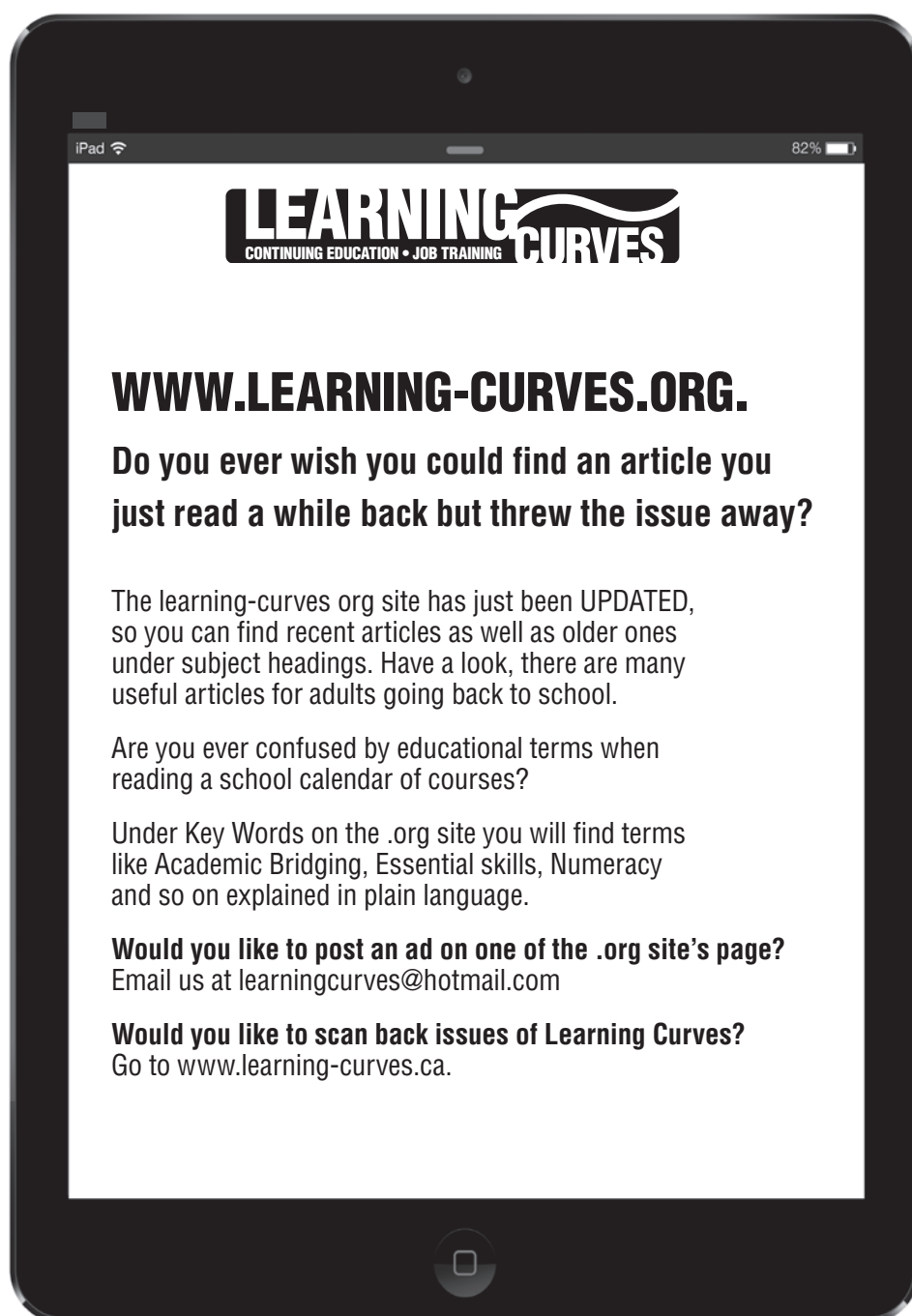


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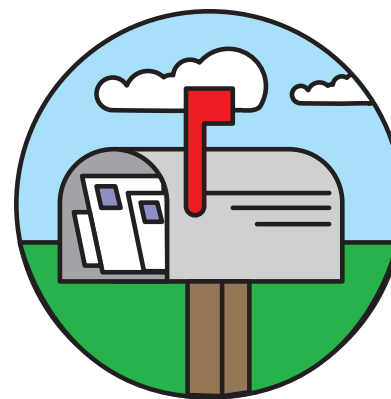
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# Dear Elcee

Dear Elcee is a feature in every issue of Learning Curves.  
Send your questions about education, training, careers, jobs to:

**Elcee – The WEA of Canada  
157 Carlton Street, Suite 205  
Toronto, On M5A 2K2**

*Dear Elcee:*

*Please help! I am 35 years old and am so tired of going from one job to another. I had dreams of graduating college after studying computer programming and settling into a job. My parents, and grandparents, graduated from school and stayed with the same employer until they retired. I know they look at me and wonder "why can't she settle down?" but it seems that every job advertised is either temporary or contract. Although I do my best to stay updated with my skills and can offer excellent references, I have worked for 6 different employers in the past 6 years. Is this normal?*

*Restless*

Dear Restless,

Welcome to the new norm. The "old norm" for both our parents and possibly our grandparents life was climbing the vertical work ladder. A person entered the workplace at the bottom of the tier and gradually climbed upwards with the same employer throughout their career. The "new norm" for many younger baby boomers and millennials tends to look like a highway with up hills, down hills and a lot of exit ramps. Oh, and let's not forget the potholes. Many people are now graduating into a changing work environment that involves working in a variety of situations for short periods of time. This may take the form of temporary employment, contract and freelance. Currently it is estimated that over 30 per cent of our workforce are working in what is coined as "precarious" or "unstable" employment. Those numbers are only expected to rise. It is expected that over the next twenty years the majority of the population will be working in this manner. How then, do you (and others) ask do we adapt and thrive in this new work world? I have some tips and guidelines for you.

1. Become the master of your finances. It is possible that your income will fluctuate and you may experience feast or famine times. Ensure that while you are at your higher income levels set money aside to draw on during the lower income period times.
2. Be your own Boss: Working in a permanent job situation can appear on the outside to be an ideal situation. Guaranteed pay, consistency and security. There is, however, no such thing as a "for sure". Companies fold, new owners come on board and, even without that happening, one can become very stagnant doing the same job over and over. Treat yourself as your own employer. Take control over your skill set and your own path.
3. Stay updated with your skills and add others when you can. As you said in your letter, you are staying updated. That is a very good strategy. Ensure that you are current with your skill set and take every opportunity that you can to broaden your skills when possible.

In this environment, the more skills you have the more opportunities will be open to you.

4. Don't burn your bridges. You mentioned that you have had 6 employers over the past 6 years. Leave your employers on good terms. Try to stay connected (through Facebook, LinkedIn or other social media). They can serve as valuable references and networking contacts for you.
5. Stay connected! Join professional organisations. Volunteer with the community. You are not the only one out there experiencing this unstable work environment. Networking with others not only aids your mental health, it provides professional support, networking leads and training opportunities.
6. Know your rights. While we may assume that working temporary or contract leaves us with very little protection, that is not entirely true. Laws have been adapted and changed over the past twenty years to ensure that temporary, freelance and contract employees are protected under Labour Laws. Make efforts to know what labour laws are relevant for your type of employment. Canadianlabour.ca is an excellent source of information to gain information on your employment rights.

So, put on your seatbelt. Show this letter to your parents supplemented by your own research on the IT industry. Even though this new world of work may seem negative right now there are a lot of positives also. Many people enjoy the constant variety in their work, the chance to meet new people and utilise skills they may not have had the opportunity to put into practice. While it takes discipline and organisational skills, being your own employer can also reap great rewards. Good luck to you.

*Dear ELCEE is written by Deborah Noel,  
[deborahjnoel@gmail.com](mailto:deborahjnoel@gmail.com)  
Send her your questions.*

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*



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**Monday - Friday  
9 am - 5 pm**

- One-on-one job search assistance and career advising
- Career planning and exploration
- Workshops on job-search specific topics
- Resume review and interview preparation
- Exclusive Hiring Events/Job Fairs, job postings and other resources
- Job development and placement support
- Up to \$500 in Training Supports (if eligible)
- + **NEW Youth Job Link:** Career exploration and support for youth / students (up to age 29)

- **Win-win strategies for Employers:**  
FREE recruitment and job matching services  
+ Qualified candidate pool  
+ Financial incentives (if eligible)

### + **Canada-Ontario Job Grant**

- ✓ Provides eligible employers with up to \$10,000 in government support per employee (current or new hire) for training costs.

**EMPLOYMENT  
ONTARIO**



**Canada**

Funding provided by the Government of Canada through the Canada Job Grant  
Programs delivered by the Government of Ontario.

**For more information, contact a Next-Steps Employment Centre near you:**

**Don Mills**  
416-395-5101

**Downsview**  
416-395-9559

**Riverdale**  
416-396-2313

**Scarborough**  
416-396-8110

**Dundas-Dixie**  
905-896-2233

**Mississauga  
Meadowvale**  
905-814-8406

**Vaughan**  
905-851-6551

**www.next-steps.ca**

NextStepsEmploymentCentres

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