

Learners' Stories

A Good Education is Important

Since I grew up in Deaf School, the education system was not good because I did not learn anything. I felt frustration with myself because I could not understand hearing teachers because their ASL was poor. I am always thinking about school in the Deaf Upgrading Class where I am most happy. Why? Because there is a deaf teacher. I want to learn more and continue my education. I can learn to read and write better. This will give me a better promotion in my present employment.

Joy Philpott

Halifax Learning Network - Deaf Upgrading Academic

Mary Lou Caissie

Hello, my name is Mary Lou Caissie. I have a story to write about myself. I was born in Antigonish County, Nova Scotia. When I was born, I was totally deaf and went to different schools for the deaf. I did not graduate from the school at all. Later on in 1978 I became blind when I was 20 years old. I had been taking many courses for the blind

in Saint John, New Brunswick in 1979. I learned how to communicate with sign language and two hands manual. It took me about a month to learn, I also could print on my palm hands and used the fingerspellings. I learned how to use and type Braille, took grade one, two and two and a half. They taught me how to use a cane, bake, make crafts and do yoga. I studied all of those courses for about two months.

After I learned about being blind, I went to Amherst Vocational School for the Deaf in 1981. I took Secretary, Sewing and Upholstery courses. I stayed there for only three months because Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) only supports me to go there for three months. I was involved in two different camping trips. I went to Lake Joseph Camp for the Deaf/Blind in Ontario for one week then went to another camp for the Blind at Elms in northern New Brunswick. During the last four years I did not do anything but I have a teacher to come to my place to help me with the English like grammar, and vocabulary for two years.

In 1985, I was happy to hear the news when CNIB suggested I go and take a training job at Sir Fraser School doing kitchenette for one month. I did the dishes and cleaning the table. I also made Jell-O and set up cereal every morning for breakfast. I enjoyed working there and it was a good experience for me. Later on they decided to take me to another training job at the Killam Library at Dalhousie University for eight months. My job was to do repairing the damaged books and open the letters. When the training job was finished they decided to hire me and I was surprised and

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happy to hear it because they accepted me as Deaf/Blind. Guess what? I am still working there today as part time job.

I met a man who is also deaf and blind and we got married in 1987. We both are independent living in an apartment in Clayton Park. I have a telebraille TTY and vibration pager for the door, fire alarm and phone. We have an Intervenor. Intervenor helped us to take us to swimming, bowling, church, shopping, Deaf Adult Literacy Program and different activities. They also tell us what they see outside. At first I find it very frustrating because I didn't know what to do but until I learned about being Deaf/Blind and with having an Intervenor, job, husband and apartment in my life I feel much better and comfortable with myself. I feel like I am just a normal person like you.

Mary Lou Caissie

Halifax Literacy Network -Part time Deaf Literacy

July 6, 1954

I have been on the Government TAGS Program since 1994. I moved to Halifax and I joined the Deaf Literacy Upgrading School at N.S.C.C. last September.

Gwen Dominie is with me. I had a chance to live on Cowie Hill Road in Halifax. I learn to do math, vocabulary, reading, writing and computer. I really want to understand the subjects at the Deaf Literacy Upgrading School at N.S.C.C. Since I finished School for the Deaf in Amherst in 1970, I moved to

Newfoundland and I looked for a job at the fish plant, on a boat or just anything in Port au Basques. Before I worked with scallop and dog fish in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia for four and a half years. I then moved to Port aux Basques, Newfoundland for 17 years.

My grandson Nicholas and granddaughter Cheyenne live in Port aux Basque, Newfoundland. I can't wait to see them from December 15, 2000 until January 2, 2001. I start back to Deaf Upgrading School on January 3, 2001. I will miss my grandson, Nicholas and granddaughter, Cheyenne. My son Gar's girlfriend is Michelle. My two sisters names are Theona and Ann Marie. I know a deaf woman who lives in Grand Bay, Newfoundland.

My mom still lives in Sydney Mines, Cape Breton., She is 76 years old and she is a very strong woman. I miss my friends in Port aux Basques.

My son, Stephen Cox, lives in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. He works fishing lobster for four years. He lives with his girlfriend, Sadie Hamilton, in South Ohio near Yarmouth, Nova Scotia.

Love to my sons Stephen and Gary, my sisters and brother and my mom. I love Michelle Durnford and Sadie Hamilton and my grandson Nicholas and Granddaughter Cheyenne.

Raymond F. Cox

Halifax Literacy Network - Deaf Upgrading Literacy Program

Education

I started School for the Deaf in Amherst in 1972. My first day I felt weird and shy. I lived in the dorm with 24 girls. My class was really big because all the students were in one classroom. There were many different groups of students with only one teacher. I enjoyed school. I did not receive the education I needed so I moved back home. I began part time studies in literacy at Nova Scotia Community College in 1995, and am currently in the same program. I enjoy working with computers.

My tutors are Sarah and Karen Anne on Tuesdays, and Sam on Thursdays.

Debbie Melanson

Halifax Literacy Network - Deaf Part time Literacy