

A Second Chance At School

~Young Mother Fulfills Dream of Graduation~



Michelle Follett, a 33-year-old mother of two, recently completed Grade 12 at the Discovery Centre – a high school specially designed for adults.

For 10 years, Michelle had two goals: “to get my driver’s license and be a Grade 12 graduate”. She credits Sister Irene of St. Theresa’s Parish with helping her achieve her first goal and with helping raise her confidence level to a point where she could take the first step in achieving her second goal.

For some, taking that first step can be frightening, but Michelle and hundreds of others say that once you do make that first move, it will “be the beginning of a new life”.

Michelle needed 25 credits for graduation. It seemed to her as if it might take years to accomplish but, in fact, she successfully completed them all in just over 16 months. This, she reckons, was due in part to the welcoming atmosphere at the Discovery Centre, to the “wonderful instructors and staff” there, to the support of her husband Ken (also a Discovery Centre graduate), and to her “amazing” family.

Michelle’s dream of a Grade 12 graduation was made even sweeter because she was also chosen to lead her graduation ceremony. In her valedictory speech, she outlined for her classmates, their families and friends gathered at the ceremony, her version of the ABCs she’d learned during her time at the Discovery Centre.

This unique alphabet included: “A is for the ability to be here in front of you all today” “C is for the courage it takes to get help” “D is for determination, to never give up” and “Y is for Yessss I did it!”

Michelle says she knows “there are people out there in the same shoes that I was in”. She realizes now that the most difficult step was the one that took her over the threshold of the Discovery Centre. Even if you think you have no support before you enter, once you start, the environment created there and the “wonderful long term friends that I now call my family for life” will carry you through.

Michelle says she felt part of “a team” at the Discovery Centre. She is proud of her success – she says she “walks now with ease”, and welcomes the “opportunities I will have in the future”. Returning to school can be difficult, but for adults who want a second chance at school, the Discovery Centre is just a phone call away.