

Abegweit First Nation Adult Education celebrates achievements

by Stella Shepard



“He’s the reason I came back to school,” says Sarah Bernard, with her five-month-old son Marcus.

Sarah Bernard of Scotchfort delivered an inspiring and heartfelt speech at the recent **Abegweit First Nation Adult Education** celebration held in Scotchfort. Sarah earned a GED certificate and is planning a career in healthcare.

“In April of last year, I learned that I was pregnant,” she says. “With limited education and no job, I knew I would have to change things to support myself and my child.

“I enrolled in the adult education program in October 2009. I was eager and determined to earn my GED certificate.

“I worked hard and spent as much time as I could on my studies before my son Marcus was born in December. I returned to the classroom in January and wrote my GED tests in March.

“My baby’s father is very supportive and helped me make time to finish my studies and write the GED tests. All my hard work paid off as I passed all five tests the first time I wrote them.

“Now that I have my GED certificate, I plan to further my education. When my son is a little older, I plan to apply to the Resident Care Worker program and fulfill my educational goals.

“I always thought school was not for me, but now I know I can do it. If I work hard at my studies, I can achieve anything I set my mind to.”

The program

“Ten students enrolled in the program and three earned GED certificates,” says **Linda Campbell**, Instructor. “The other students are very close to earning their certificates.

“The program is successful because the students attend class in their own community. Abegweit First Nation is a very community-oriented society and students feel more comfortable attending the program here.

“This year after accomplishing their goals here, students plan to enroll in a trades program, the RCW program, and the Youth Worker program.”

Encouragement from Chief Brian Francis

“This is a special celebration of personal accomplishments,” says **Chief Brian Francis** of Abegweit First Nation. “You took advantage of a quality program to use education to open doors that might not have been opened in the past. Education is an opportunity to expand your mind and your horizons.

“This is one of my proudest moments as your chief. You have become role models in this community and have encouraged others to follow your lead.”

For more information about the **Abegweit First Nation Adult Education** program, contact **Faye MacLean**, Employment Services, Mi’kmaq Confederacy at **676-2352 ext. 102**.



Adult Education Souris program celebrates success

by Stella Shepard



Garth Carter and his mother Joyce Holland were both enrolled in the GED program. “My son inspired me to enroll,” says Joyce. “I will have better job options after I have earned my GED.”

Garth Carter was the student speaker at the closing celebration of the **Hollad College Adult Education** program in Souris.

Garth, who grew up in Souris, left his Island home at a young age to work in western Canada.

“I left school about 20 years ago,” says Garth. “Working and making money were more important than going to school at that time in my life. Six months after leaving school, I moved to Calgary, Alberta. I worked in the oil patch for 13 years.

“After I quit working in the oil patch, I starting doing odd jobs. After six years of stripping cars in a junk yard, I decided that I wanted better employment opportunities. Eventually I decided to return home to Souris.

“Although I have previous work experience in the automotive industry, I lacked training and certification. I knew the first step to a well-paying, year-round job is to get an education. In 2009, I enrolled in the Adult Education program.

“I recently wrote my GED tests and I am waiting to learn if I passed. I’ve already applied for the Automotive Technician program.”

Garth recently received a **\$500 PEI Literacy Alliance bursary**, which he will use to help fund his post-secondary education.

Mother was inspired to follow son’s footsteps

Garth’s decision to pursue better employment opportunities inspired his mother **Joyce Holland** of Souris to also enroll in the Adult Education program. She is now working toward earning a GED certificate.

“Garth talked a lot about the GED program,” says Joyce. “He encouraged me to enroll. I was uncertain and nervous, but Garth continued to encourage me. I’ve only been in the program for a month and I am enjoying the experience. The instructors are wonderful and go that extra mile for you.

“I applied for an entry-level position at a long-term care facility but was told that I had to have my grade 12 or GED certificate,” says Joyce. “I’ve been promised employment at the facility after I’ve passed the GED tests.”

The program

“It’s been a busy year,” says **Susan Cheverie**, Instructor. “This year we had **25** registered learners. Those students who completed their goals in the program plan to continue with their education. They are taking control of their future in challenging new careers in bioscience, paramedicine, engineering at UNB, trades, nursing, and working with youth.”

For more information about **Adult Education**, contact the central office at **566-9628** or call toll free **1-800-446-5265**

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