

## Nothing can stop this ‘vintage student’

Story by Rob Rombouts

Photo by Blackbird Photography



**Lonna Booker** calls herself a “vintage student.” She dropped out of school in Grade 10 due to family circumstances, and returned more than 40 years later.

After bouncing around from one job to another for many years, keeping her head above water and raising children, the Waterford resident was working as a payroll administrator for construction companies. When construction jobs in the area dried up, Lonna decided it was time to go back to school.

She knew her lack of Grade 12 was a barrier to getting a job so she decided “it was time to do something I wanted to do, not just something I had to.”

Lonna qualified for [Second Career](#) funding, and after passing her GED she started an accelerated Developmental Service Worker program at [Fanshawe College’s Simcoe](#) campus. The program compresses two years of material into one year of class-time, and the workload is heavy, but Lonna is working hard to succeed, and has had a lot of support from the staff and teachers at the school.

“This has been the biggest accomplishment in my life. It’s not just about finding a new career. It started that way, but I have grown as a person,” she said. “It nice when there is something you’ve always wanted to do and now you have the chance. It’s been a long road.”

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*Education Works Alliance is a community group dedicated to building prosperity through training, education and lifelong learning. The group’s mandate is to raise the education, literacy and skill levels of Grand Erie residents, in order to broaden opportunities for employments and economic development. For more information visit [www.educationworks.ca](http://www.educationworks.ca)*