

Grand Erie Learning Alternatives offers a second chance to be role-models

Story by Rob Rombouts

Photo by Blackbird Photography

Sometimes there are second chances in life.

For many of our champions, adult and continuing education programs gave them a second chance to complete their Secondary School diplomas and be better role models for their children. Their experience has set them on the path to more education or better paying jobs.



After being named a crown ward at the age of fourteen, **Ashley Osborne** said she “abused the freedom” she had, and “made a mess” of her life. She left high school having completed only seven credits. Years later, now with a three-year-old daughter, The Brantford resident decided she had to make something of herself. She completed her Grade 12, and the Personal Support Worker (PSW) prep program through [Grand Erie Learning Alternatives](#) (GELA). She is currently enrolled in the six-month PSW program.

Caring for her daughter motivated Ashley but it also represented her biggest hurdle. Ashley was reluctant to leave her daughter in care while she was in school, because she had rarely been apart from her.

Ashley was involved in the [LEAP \(Learning, Earning and Parenting\)](#) program, offered through Ontario Works, which requires participants to spend time in the classroom, volunteer or participate in co-op placements and parenting programs. The LEAP program also introduced Ashley to a

teacher mentor who helped keep her motivated through her studies.

“I have a lot of opportunities now that I wouldn’t have had if I just sat there and did nothing,” Ashley said.

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