

Going to school a way out of poverty

Story by Rob Rombouts

Photo by Blackbird Photography



Kate Robinson had “no car, no cable, no way out.”

At age 29, the Brantford resident left a bad marriage, and became the single-mother of a three year old. She left with nothing, and was living on social assistance. The cost of rent and medication for her son’s asthma ate into most of that support. Kate decided that to improve life for her and her son, she would have to make some changes.

Kate went to [CareerLink](#) to speak to a counsellor and credits that visit to starting her on the road to improving her education. She did an aptitude test and the results showed that she would do well in a lot of professions.

With that paper in hand, Kate decided to go back to school. Some people questioned her but for Kate her test results were proof she could succeed.

“I knew we could continue to eke out an existence,” she said. “Or I could go to school and we would have a few tight years and we would be OK.”

Doing part time studies, and often bringing her son to class, Kate completed her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Waterloo, and her Bachelor of Education from the University of Ottawa. Six years after starting, Kate graduated and the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board hired her. Kate is now a Kindergarten teacher with the Grand Erie District School Board.

With her experiences and her job, it’s no surprise Kate is an advocate for education. “There’s nothing like an education,” she said. “Once you get it, it’s always yours. No one can take that away from you. It opens more doors and gives you more choice.”

Kate now works to inspire her students and help inspire older students who are struggling. “I want them to finish their education, because I know what a roadblock it will be without it.”

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