



Central Vermont Adult Basic Education, Inc.

Local Partnerships in Learning

Serving Washington, Orange and Lamoille Counties

Wendy L Testimonial, 2/7/22

I chose to leave high school in December of my senior year. When I left school, I wasn't even missed. I had fallen through the cracks. I got married and had a daughter. In less than two years, I was divorced, a single mom, and back living with my parents on the family farm.

When my daughter was 4, I earned my GED, but I always wanted a high school diploma. I met my future husband when he installed a new milking system on the farm. When my dad retired from farming, my daughter and I moved, bringing along the cows to my new husband's home town in Vermont.

I enjoyed running my dairy farm. Farming was also all that I knew. But gradually 7 days a week farming became too much. I sold my cows and worked part-time for 4 different dairy farms. Becoming a full-time herd manager for a 1000-cow dairy farm was a dream job. Although I worked 70-plus-hour weeks, for the first time in my life I was able to enjoy 2 days off per week.

When I began feeling the effects of aging, I knew I needed a job that allowed me to work less and was easier on my body. My mother had been a nurse. I knew that I wanted a job that would give back, so I took the first step in nursing and became a licensed nursing assistant (LNA). The LNA was a start; however, I needed more financial independence. I wanted to go further in nursing, but I had no idea where to start.

One day, I was in the local bank and picked up a brochure. What jumped out at me were words about achieving your goals. The brochure was for Central Vermont Adult Basic Education. In CVABE's brochure, the section on college and career readiness really caught my attention, and I said to myself, "I need to talk to them. They can guide me on my nursing path." I left the bank and drove to the nearest CVABE learning center. I asked the teacher what I needed to do to become a registered nurse. She quickly responded, "Community College of Vermont." I also learned that I could get the high school diploma that I had been missing all those years.

I wanted to be a good role model for my new granddaughter. CVABE's program allowed me to earn a diploma from the same high school as my daughter. One of the most important classes I took was in computers. I learned to turn one on, to use a keyboard, write a document, and send e-mail messages! I also did English and Math reviews, which I really needed.



Dropping out of high school had always been my personal shameful secret. With the help of my teachers at CVABE, I was able to fulfill my dream of having a high school diploma, as well as get the resources to go into the Allied Health program at Community College of Vermont. I worked full time as an LNA while I earned my Allied Health certificate.

A year after I was accepted into the nursing program at Vermont Technical College (VTC), I was a licensed practical nurse (LPN). Within one more year, which included the challenging change to virtual education because of the pandemic, I became a registered nurse (RN). My first job as an RN is on the medical/surgical floor of Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury. I know that I can go further in my nursing education, and I look forward to where the future could take me.

Prior to discovering CVABE, I always tried to avoid the topic of high school graduations, because I hadn't actually graduated from mine. A teacher at CVABE gave me a motivational calendar, which I kept for encouragement. CVABE gave me tools, and I challenged myself. I really wanted the high school diploma and I made it happen. I didn't stop there. The high school diploma marked a stepping stone to becoming a LNA, then a LPN and now being a RN. I am proud to have become a registered nurse.