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Weatherization Crew Member

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Thank you for having me here to talk about my experiences with Vermont Adult Learning.

My first encounter with adult education was back in 2009. I was a father of three, working back-breaking jobs for low pay. I quickly realized I needed a high school diploma in order to find a better paying job. I reached out to Vermont Adult Learning in Colchester to find out my options. Working with VAL, they suggested I take a practice test to see if taking the General Education Development Test would be my best option, considering I had dropped out of high school ten years prior.

The wonderful people at VAL helped guide me through the testing process, from practice test to actual test, and were as excited as I was while they were sharing the news of me getting my GED. I will never forget that day or how proud of myself they made me feel.

Fast forward to last year. After working all different kinds of jobs, including construction, I got a call from my daughter and son-in-law, asking if I could help them remodel their kitchen. After discovering all the damage the family of mice living up in their attic had done to the wiring and batts of insulation, I began to spend a lot of time up there and doing a lot of research online to make sure I was doing the job right. Even though I spent a couple weeks up in that attic, I learned something very important when it was done. I actually liked doing the work up there. The next day, an ad appeared on my social media informing me that Vermont Adult Learning was holding their Weatherization class in my area real soon. It didn't take long at all for me to decide to sign up for the class.

The two week Energy Works program was an experience that helped to set me up for success. The Workforce readiness portion of the program was instrumental in helping me to update my resume and to prepare me for the interview process with potential employers. Had it not been for Haley's tips, I would not of known to regularly pester Dwight about wanting to work for him and his company. First aid and CPR training was also an invaluable resource, especially when doing a job that sometimes results in injuries. Having that training makes me confident that I can help out a fellow crew member medically, should the need arise.

Although I am very handy with power tools, I did learn a few new tricks during the day long power tool training. It was nice having an instructor with many years of experience working with power tools every day.

The actual weatherization portion of the program is where I had the most fun. Junio was very good with balancing classroom time with hands on time. Learning why we are doing some of the measures that we do in the classroom and then going out and doing them helped me learn much more quickly. While applying for jobs in weatherization, it was beneficial for me to be able to tell potential employers that I actually know how to use the equipment they have, so training on said equipment would be quicker compared to a hire without training.

After the Energy Works program concluded, Haley from VAL helped set up a job shadow with a for-profit company. Shortly after realizing that the company wasn't going to be a good fit for

me, I reached out once again to Haley. That's when she asked me if I had heard about CVOEO.

After researching the company and immediately appreciating their mission, I had Haley reach out to Dwight to set up a job shadow. I got along with everyone on the site immediately, and enjoyed every part of the work they had me do. On day one, I knew I had to work for this company.

Without Vermont Adult Learning, I would have never been lucky enough to find the career of my dreams. From getting my GED all the way to learning how to stand on 2x6s while blowing 16 inches of cellulose in an attic, I owe it all to them.

Thank you to everyone here for supporting adult education in Vermont, which gives people like me a second chance to find a career they love, and as a result, a second chance to live to the life we deserve.