



I was born 33 years ago in the beautiful village of Wikwemikong. Under the Council of Three Fires I belong to the Potawatomi Peoples. School for me was very difficult and challenging. I did not do well in reading, writing and math. We all know the cruelty of children at young ages. Kids being kids, they were quick to point out my weaknesses. This caused a lot of unresolved issues. One of them was a low self esteem and I did not think that school was for me. I managed to make it to high school for two months, and then quit. It was not until my early twenties that life kicked me in the butt. A member of my community by the name of Derek Fisher suggested that I try adult education.

So, in 2007, my journey towards my educational goal began. It was a good program at that time but they ran out of funds. Adult education started up again at Wasse Abin High School. The first teacher we had in the program wasn't very helpful. I don't want to sound mean but we were glad to see him leave and when I say we, I mean my mother and I, both of us had struggled with school in our early days and we made a pack that, together, we would obtain our Grade 12 diplomas. Our new teacher on our adult education journey was Pete Charbonneau. He saw how much commitment we had for our education so he enrolled us in Independent Learning Courses so we could obtain our Grade 12 one credit at a time. We would never have completed any of these courses without his patience, good humour and teaching skills. My mother and I are also thankful to Mr. Charbonneau's assistant Ms. Angela Moggy for all her help. We are not talking about a little help. We are talking about four years of help.

For some school was easy, please understand that for us it was far from easy. My mother and I overcame our greatest challenges and walked into our weaknesses. I feel I bad for people who drop out of school. Yes, I dropped out, but always felt bad about it. As long as you have an adult education program near you there really is no reason that you should not finish your Grade 12. Whether it is by getting individual credits like my mom and I did, or preparing for the GED test if you need too many credits. Whichever you chose, choose one and get your educational goal started or finished. Trust me if my mom and I, could do it, so could you.

John Wemigwans

Wikwemikong