

2009 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipient

Blaise Sullivan – Nova Scotia

Blaise Sullivan is a successful business man who preferred to keep his struggles with literacy secret. In January 2006 when he walked through the doors of his local community literacy organization, Antigonish County Adult Learning Association (ACALA), he asked that his attendance be kept confidential. Mr. Sullivan always struggled at school. Years later he learned he had dyslexia. After leaving school at the age of 15 to work, he was often under qualified for jobs: "There were many jobs I would have liked to apply for but for the fear I would have to read something...It made me feel stupid and embarrassed." The past coordinator for ACALA remembers Blaise starting out with sessions once a week, but then coming three times a week, his one-on-one sessions becoming adult learning group programs, and privacy turning into Blaise championing the literacy cause through public presentations. He is also working diligently towards completing his GED.

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Harris J. Hayne, Guysborough, Nova Scotia

After more than 20 years, Harris J. Hayne's decision to return to learning was not an easy one. He dreamed of becoming a power engineer but learned from the Antigonish County Adult Learning Association (ACALA) that he read at a seventh-grade level. By studying on his own throughout the summer, he was able to improve his reading to a tenth-grade level. He continued to work with the ACALA and, in June 2007, acquired his Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. Harris showed determination, a strong work ethic, and provided leadership to his fellow students. He took time out of his schedule to talk to and motivate those around him.

One year after his decision to return to learning, Harris is on the honour roll as a power engineering student at Nova Scotia Community College.

2007 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipient

Julie Champagne, Pictou, Nova Scotia

Julie Champagne returned to learning after 19 years. She left high school after grade 10 to join the military, and later suffered a debilitating personal loss. Following confidence-building experiences volunteering at her children's school (grade 2 Reading Program coordinator and girls' basketball coach), Julie returned to school to be a better role model and provider for her two girls.

In June 2007, she received her high school diploma and was the valedictorian of her graduating class at New Glasgow Adult High School. Julie has achieved her goals: she is a positive role model for her children, and she is a high school graduate.

2006 Council of the Federation Literacy Award Recipient

Jason Dykens, Waterville, Nova Scotia

Jason Dykens was diagnosed with ADHD and left school after eleventh grade. In May 2003, Flowercart, an agency that facilitates training and employment opportunities for people who are considered to have a learning or cognitive disability, hired Jason and he began working at Michelin. Realizing that he required his GED in order to obtain a higher paying job to support his family, Jason enrolled at the Kings County Learning Association (KCLA) with a view to improving his literacy and numeracy skills.

As a result of his work commitments, he was required to meet with his tutor or attend classes after work in the evenings and on weekends. Jason wrote and passed his GED in May 2006. In addition to working and studying full-time, he volunteered to help repair a local church and plans to volunteer with the VON. Jason hopes to give back to his community the same support that he received from the KCLA.



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Award Recipient

Crystal Simmons, Lantz, Nova Scotia

Crystal Simmons is a single mother of two who left school in grade 9, and has gone on to become a successful adult learner and literacy advocate. In 2002, she enrolled at the Elmsdale Adult High School with the Chignecto Central Regional School Board. Crystal was successful in acquiring her high school diploma in 2004, was Valedictorian of her class and the recipient of the Staff Award.

After receiving her high school diploma, Crystal went on to graduate from the Nova Scotia Community College Medical Office Assistant Program in June 2005 and is now employed. Throughout her studies, Crystal contributed to her community by holding several positions on boards of community literacy organizations such as the Hants Learning Network Association and East Hants Adult Learning Association.

