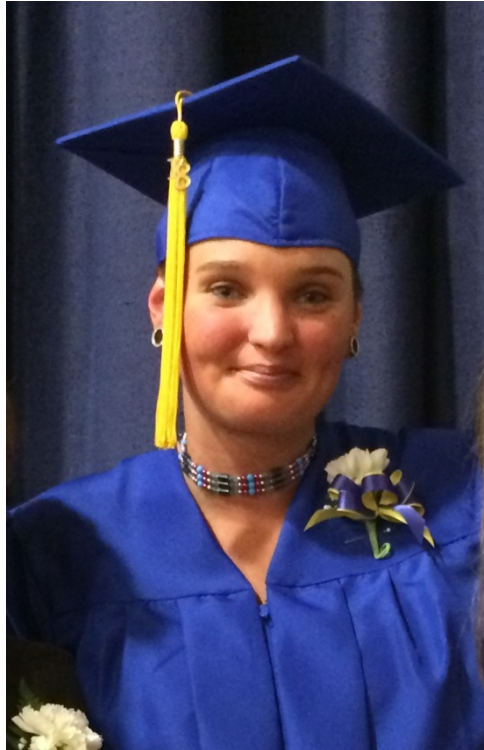


One Student's Journey at Belfast Adult Education



Belfast, Maine — If completing high school and getting ready for college are goals you would like to accomplish, read on. When Jamie Russell returned to Belfast Adult Education after a ten year stop out, she was on a path of self-improvement in all areas of her life. She was determined to take classes to fill in the gaps in her education and to earn the credits she needed to achieve her high school diploma. She had tried the high school equivalency pathway over ten years ago, but she decided this time she wanted to learn what she had missed instead of passing a test on what she knew.

When asked what motivated her to return to school, Jamie responded, “I realized my priorities were not where they needed to be. I didn’t know what I didn’t know, but I did know that my education was going to take me places, so I cleaned up my act and started again in school. I take pride in my school work, my mom life, and my physical fitness.”

In June just two years after coming back to school, Jamie achieved her high school diploma and was accepted at Eastern Maine Community College. She was also published in *The Change Agent* an adult education newspaper for social justice. She has a network of staff at Belfast Adult Education to turn to for encouragement and support as she starts her journey to college.

With guidance from Belfast Adult Education, Jamie thoughtfully planned her coursework to meet her goals. When asked what her plan involved, Jamie replied, “In my last year of high school diploma classes, I was careful to take prerequisites that would be beneficial to college. In my final semester at Belfast Adult Education in addition to finishing work for my high school diploma, I took the college transition program, College Connection, along with five courses toward my high school graduation. This was a heavy course load (as a single mom of three), but I was determined to do the best I could to be ready for college this fall.”

Jamie’s efforts have certainly paid off. In addition to her financial aid package, she has already been awarded two scholarships: The James and Marilyn Rockefeller Transition Scholarship Fund which is only for nontraditional students in Maine who complete a college transition program, and the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program which will provide financial support for expenses such as mileage and before and after school care for her three children. At the end of this month, Jamie will start the next stage of her journey. She will be a first time college student who is taking courses to prepare for Eastern Maine Community College’s nursing program.

When asked what has kept her motivated, Jamie responded, “ I’m working hard to clear the wreckage of the past that has shaped and changed me into the person I believe can accomplish her goals today. I need to continue to act my way into right thinking to grow and to go further than I ever dreamed possible, to discover and reach goals I never even knew I had.”

If you would like to start (or restart) your educational journey and work towards your goals with the support and guidance of a dedicated staff, take the next step and contact Carolyn Haskell at 338-3197 or collegeconnection@rsu71.org.