

Rabbittown Learner's Program



Roses

I've

Read



Niki Power

*Roses
I've
Read*

Title by: Mary Kendall (a learner)

Cover By: Niki Power

Stories by participants from
Rabbittown Learner's Program

This publication was produced by learners and tutors
in the Rabbittown Learner's Program.

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Forward

This book is a collection of stories written by adult learners. Their stories will be used as reading material for learners in other Literacy Programs. We hope everyone who reads this book enjoys it.

Acknowledgements

This book is a result of hard work and a lot of vigor. Learners and tutors at Rabbittown, Many thanks.

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My Volunteer Job

My story starts off this way. On August 2, 1985 I joined the Longside Club where I met a woman, Miss Gloria Spry. She was in an electric wheelchair and I helped her put her coat on. Miss Spry told me about "Leading Hands" who do volunteer work the whole year round at the Longside Club.

I would have liked to become a leading hand but from 1985-1988 I lived here half the year and in Montreal the rest of the year. In 1989 my mother and I moved to Newfoundland. I was hoping to become a leading hand. For the rest of 1989 and most of 1990 I was unable to join Leading Hands. Then, on November 27, 1990, I got elected! I picked Wednesdays from 5:00 - 11:00 pm to do my volunteering. (I'm writing this in the craft room.)

My head Leading Hand is Gloria Spry. She instructs me on what my duties will be. My duties are as follows:

- ___ making sure the windows and doors are locked for the night
- ___ making sure everyone is out of the building at closing time
- ___ cleaning and tidying up the kitchen and lounge area
- ___ turning off all the lights and making sure everything is unplugged before I leave the building

I also have to help people when they are sick or need helping hands with things like cooking meals or answering questions or helping with problems. Helping Hands also help with things like dances or bakesales etc.

It's involvement in lots of things, but the most important thing is that it gets me involved with a lot of disabled people as well as other people.

Helping Hands helps me meet a lot of people. I enjoy what I do and learn a lot of different things. This is a very satisfying feeling, being a volunteer.

- Miss Marianna King

The Story Of My Life

My name is Clarence Fillier and I dropped out of school at the age of 16 years old. After I quit, all I did was work for a little while then draw unemployment. I decided to go back to school.

I went to school at the S.A.T.C. Centre for three months. When I finished my three months I was not satisfied so I decided to go back to school again. I asked my counsellor at the S.A.T.C. Centre, Kathy, for her help to get me back in school. Kathy placed me in the Rabbittown Learner's Program.

I have been here now for 4 weeks and Sandra, my tutor, is helping me with everything. I am learning something new everyday in math, reading and spelling. I am also making new friends.

When I leave here I am going to the Avalon Community College to get my grade 12. I am going to need it in the future.

- Clarence Fillier

Back To School

I returned to school to learn to read, write and spell. It is very hard to get back to learning when you have been out of school for so long. When I was out in the work field, I found it hard so I went to the Community College and the program was a bit difficult for me.

I have been coming to Rabbittown since October 5, 1990 and find it good because it is one-on-one tutoring. I like to use the computer. I would like to get my grade twelve.

- Robert Butt

Making Life Better

I was really interested in the topics the tutors were talking about. In my goal, the basic thing I would like is to find employment and better my future instead of living in poverty on Social Assistance and to come back here and say that I have gained something out of it. When you're out of school so many years, you just cannot remember a certain amount of things, such as math, and spelling. I know the tutors will really help me of what I want to know. After I leave this course, I would like to be employed right away and always have a job, so I can have things for myself and my daughter. If I can't get a job, then I would be probably going back to school, and getting some kind of course that I enjoy working with.

- Joan

Summer At Last

It's summer at last after waiting a long time for it to come. I can now go outdoors and go for walks which I couldn't do in the winter. I am hoping to go camping on the 24th of May but I don't know if I will be in hospital. I hope I am not then I could go fishing and camping and do other things.

In the summer there are nice flowers on the ground and people tend to have a lot of barbecues. People have more vacations in the summer and that is why they like the summer. Another thing I like about the summer is that it is warmer and your heating bills are not as high. When it's nice and warm you can also put your clothes on the line outdoors. In the summer the children find it nicer too because they can be outdoors all day long playing. I like the summer because that is when you get to taste the nice fresh fruits, you can get a suntan is another thing I like about summer. The only thing I can think about summer that I don't like would be the insects.

- Ruby Tarrant

Going Back To School

My name is Doris and I would like to tell you how I got involved in the Rabbittown Learner's Program. I was over to New Beginnings and Ron, the man who runs the place, said I would have to go back to school for a few weeks. I did not like the idea of going back to school but I knew I had to. It was a little scary at first, but when I got there the tutors put us at ease. They said we could do our work at our own pace. They showed me how to do fractions, something I did not know. I think it was a great idea to have a learning program where people can come to, to get an education. If I had only known about this program sooner, I would have my education by now and maybe a good job. I would recommend this program to anyone.

Television

I like to watch television. We have two channels, six and eight. I would like to have cable.

I like entertaining shows. I like Full-House, Family Matters, Golden Girls and The Cosby Show because they are short half-hour shows.

I also like to watch movies. I like comedy because they are funny and they make me feel happy. I don't like movies with violence or cursing. I can't see how people can get any sense out of it.

Another reason I like television is you get information and news about things in the world. You would hear about people abusing young children. I think that is disgusting. It should not be allowed. You hear people are dying in the world and there are people hungry in the world.

You find out information about the weather. People want to know what's going on. You wouldn't know anything. I want to know when things are cancelled.

I like television for all kinds of reasons, like it tells you stuff you need to know.

- Marilyn Walsh

Mary's Story

We went over to Bell Island on the ferry and we stayed at Father Michael's rectory. Myself, Olive and Peppie were in one bed when Olive said, "Mary, what is that noise"? And I said, "I didn't hear a noise", so we listened again. I fell asleep. Olive woke me and said, "For God sake Mary, go down on the chesterfield, you're making too much noise".

The next morning Father Mike came down and asked me what I was doing downstairs. I told him. He said he would make a bed on the chesterfield for me that night. Five o'clock in the morning Olive woke me and said, "Christ sake Mary, nobody can sleep, even Father Mike is up in his bed and can't sleep. I told Olive she would have a good night's sleep because I will put a clothes pin on my nose.

A Day In The Country

Yesterday myself, my daughter and my husband decided we would go for a drive. Actually, it was my idea to go on the drive. It was a quiet family Sunday. We all got into the car and just started to drive around so I suggested that we go to Pouch Cove, which is one of my favourite places. We left at about 9 o'clock just as it started to get dark. The moon came up and there was a beautiful sky on the horizon and over the mountains there were white, fluffy clouds. The clouds were very colourful with pink on the bottom and all blue on the top. They made beautiful forms.

Sometimes we could see horses and cows grazing in the fields, which is always a pretty sight. We could also see all the lights from the houses and smell the smoke from their wood burning stoves. We stopped for a second or two to view the ocean with its high seas, brisk wind and ice packs.

By then it was getting cold and everyone was getting tired. It was time to head back home again. The day was complete.

- Joyce Ann

My Story

My name is Eileen and I came to the Rabbittown Learners Program to help me re-enter the school system. I don't feel ready to go to the Avalon Community College quite yet because I don't have much confidence in my abilities. I have not been in school for 18 years. As a girl in school I would study a little but I had trouble with it. I quit and went to work. I worked at different jobs up until about four years ago. I worked at seasonal jobs such as in fish plants, on LIP grants and babysitting, etc. These jobs didn't allow me to get ahead in life.

I lived on the Southern Shore. My rent was reasonable but when I moved to St. John's, to better my life, I found it cost much more to live in town. I was forced to seek help from the Dept. of Social Services in order to have a place to stay for myself and my two children. My children at that time were ages 8 and 10. I wanted Social Services to help me find a job but they couldn't help me very much. Eventually I was referred to the S.A.T.C. Centre to get counselling in how to upgrade myself so that I would have a better chance of getting a decent job. They sent me to Rabbittown to help me get ready for upgrading.

When I first went to the Rabbittown Learner's Program I was nervous; I didn't know anyone else there. I was also expecting a room with blackboards, teachers, desks, etc.

What I find is that I'm doing really good. I get along well with the people and I'm doing more work than I ever expected to do. Here I can sit down, relax and do my work without someone disturbing me. I can get all the help I need, not just from my tutor, but I can ask any tutor at any time and they will help me. If I'm having a bad day or just don't feel like doing something, for example, math, I can move onto something else. I work at my own pace and only have to please myself. I get a lot of encouragement and praise here. In any other school the teacher just doesn't have time for this.

I want to acquire grade 12 and then I want to take a course as a Nursing Assistant or a computer course. AND I WILL!!!

- Eileen

Fishing

This is my story about fishing. Back in 1974 I started fishing with friends of mine. Their names were Billy and Nicky. We started fishing in June. We would leave the harbour to go out to sea at about 4 o'clock in the morning, but first we got our gear ready. We made lunches and bailed out the boat, then we headed out to the first trap. We hauled the first trap, then we headed up across the Bay. We started cooking up a meal and by the time we got there it was cooked. We started eating it before we started hauling the next two traps. By the time we hauled the next two traps we had a boat load. We headed back to the fish plant and we threw all the fish up on the wharf. Sometimes we didn't sell them so we split and salted them for the winter. Then we headed back for another load. We got back at about 7 or 8 o'clock. By the time we were finished everybody was tired and went to bed. We would do the same thing every day except Sunday, then we only haul the salmon nets. It was really hard work but I enjoyed it.

- D. F.

Montreal Canadians

The Montreal Canadians are very hot in the playoffs. I do think they will win their series with Boston. They will have to watch Cam Neely and Ray Bourque on Boston and always keep the puck away from them. They are Boston's two main players.

The Montreal Canadians have to get the puck out of their area and get Russ Courtnall, Stephan Richer and Guy Carboneau to play their best to win. I know when they beat Boston, the Montreal Canadians will play Edmonton for the Stanley Cup.

The Montreal Canadians will win the Stanley Cup.

- Tom Hennessey

My Grandfather



I love my grandfather a lot. His name was Roy Noftall. He died March 7, 1990. My grandparents had 11 children, my mother is the second youngest. Pop loved all his children and grandchildren.

He worked on the boats and there he learned how to make cabbage soup. My grandfather also played the bagpipes on his job.

In Pop's spare time he loved to play cards. My grandfather was the best rummy 500 card player in the whole world. He taught me how to play rummy 500. Pop loved to go for long walks by himself or with one of his grandchildren. I always looked forward to walking with my grandfather. Almost every time he went for a walk. Pop brought back some junk, that's what my grandmother called it. My family called him a scavenger.

Pop was very giving. If anyone wanted something, he would give it to you. My grandfather was short, bald, very strong and he was a nice person. Pop and Nan loved each other. Even though they fought sometimes, they still loved each other. When they got old, Pop got sick with Alzheimers Disease.

Pop used to call me his little chickadee. My grandfather is the only one who could call me by that name.

When my grandfather passed away, I was very sad. I always thought of him as my father. When he died, it was like I lost my father and grandfather too. Pop was the best grandfather in the whole world.

- Christine Thelma Snow

The Saddest Time Of My Life

When I was a very small child, my mother became very ill and had to go to the hospital. While she was there, the doctors found out she had MS - Multiple Sclerosis. My mom had to stay in hospital for four months. When she came home she was still unable to look after us. In the winter of 1963 my brother Robert and I were sent to a Foster home. I remember it was December, almost Christmas time. I was feeling very sad because my brother and I would be spending Christmas away from our family. That year was the saddest time of my life. I didn't get very much for Christmas. I guess Santa couldn't find us.

We stayed at the foster home for one year. My sister and brother were in another foster home. We didn't see each other for a long time. I was glad to get back home with my mom and my sisters and brothers.

- Donald

My Dog Precious

I had a dog named Precious. She had all brown fur and had blue eyes. She was a little Mexican Chihuahua pup. She was so tiny she could fit in your pocket.

Precious liked to go for walks and she liked people. Anyone could pick her up and cuddle her. I had a crippled friend and Precious really took to him.

She ate everything we liked to eat. She would not eat dog food. She loved weiners and minced meat.

I treated her like a baby. I put her in the bathtub to bath her. I even used pampers when she was very small.

I had Precious for three or four years, then she got sick. She had cataracts and went blind. I lost her when she had a heart attack and died. I was really upset and cried a lot because I missed her.

I buried her in a box. She had get own little grave and I even had flowers. I wouldn't want another dog because It is too hard when you get attached to them

- Remona Somerton

Frank's Story

My name is Frank. I was born and raised on a small Island in Placentia Bay known as Red Island. I have five brothers and one sister. My father was a fisherman but times were bad and he couldn't make enough to support his family so he had to go to the mainland to find work.

I had to walk a mile and a half to get to school. It was difficult with snow up to your waist. I was shy and didn't seem to be able to learn in school and my mother couldn't help me because she had no education herself, so I would just throw my books under the bed and not bother with them. In the evening I would have to go to the woods to get firewood for my mother. There were days when I didn't go to school at all. I had to spend my time cutting and bringing home wood. I didn't have time to play or go places with other kids my own age because my mother needed my help at home. I was far behind in school and had so much to do I just had to give up. The only thing I learned was to write my name. The principal of the school said one thing I had to know to get along in the world was how to write my name. He asked my mother to take me to his home in the evening and he would write my name down and make me copy it until I got it right.

When I was fifteen, I found a job trap-fishing for the summer season. Then I got a job at a fish plant where the pay was \$0.10/hour. When payday would come, I would not get a cheque because I used to get flour, sugar and coal on credit from this man and he would take it out of my earnings which left me with nothing.

When I was eighteen, my father passed away so I had to take care of my mother and younger brothers and my sister. Since I couldn't save any money to get anywhere, I did odd jobs on a boat going to Grand Bank in exchange for my fare. When I got to Grand Bank, I got a job at the plant. After a couple of years I went to Trepassey and from there I then moved on to Toronto. In Toronto I got a job with General Motors making car parts. When I got laid off, I went to Salisbury, Maryland - U.S.A. There was no work there so I went to Charleston, South Carolina. I worked there for a couple of years and then moved on to New Jersey. I stayed there for a couple of years and then moved on to North Folk, Virginia. I then moved on to New Jersey. I stayed there for a couple of years, then decided to come home for a holiday. With all the travelling to different places and different jobs I didn't see the need for an education until I got this job with Public Works. For fourteen years things went well until the government decided to contract out.

The cleaners on this job had to take upgrading in school so they could be put into another line of work.

I started out with a private tutor at home a couple of days a week. I didn't feel I was getting anywhere with the studies so I lost interest in it. A co-worker at my job told me about the community centre at Rabbittown. I decided to give it a try. The teachers there were very helpful and friendly. I also met some people my own age, who were also learning to read and write. After about three months at school I can read books on my own. I also have learned to write real good. I am thankful to the person who recommended this school and also to my tutor for her patience and the confidence she gave me. Without her help I would not be able to write this story today. It's only now I realize how important it is to have an education.

- Frank

Changes

I was married February 6, 1981. I had a boy and a girl. Their names are Lisa and John. Lisa is my oldest. She had dark hair and blue eyes. People says she looks like me. My son has light hair and blue eyes and looks like my father.

In 1985 my marriage broke up and when it did, I got really depressed. I thought I was going to take an overdose. At that time my children were small and I thought that I wouldn't be able to take care of them. I didn't want them to be taken from me and given to foster parents.

During and even after our marriage break-up, my husband hit me. I was sent to a home for battered women. My children were taken by the police to my mother and father-in-law. The children were there for two years. When I left home, I got my children again.

We then moved to Chester. There the trouble started again. My husband and mother-in-law accused a friend of mine for sexually abusing my daughter and blamed me too. They blamed me for having this person in my home alone with my children. But this person was never handy to my children or home.

My nerves were really bad and my husband accused me of abusing my children. He brought this to court and he lost this case at that time.

After this I was feeling really upset and I let my husband take the children. I went to a boarding house in Chester. And for all these years my children were with their father because I didn't feel I could cope with things because I was sick myself.

Things started looking up when I came to St. John's this year. I went to the Access House and there I met a lot of people. Ellen, my counsellor, and Karen, my instructor of the house have both been a great help to me. They got me involved with the Rabbittown Learner's Program. Here I am learning to read and write more. I am doing some math and history. After awhile the Access House is hoping to get me in a program that will train me for a job out in an office probably answering phones. I would like to go back to Chester to work because I would be close to my family. I have a good friend there. I could board with her. Her name is Rose.

When everything settles down, I hope to get regular visiting rights to the children. I miss them very much. That would be the best kind of change in my life right now.

- Roxanne

The Past

I have read the book "VOICES OF LEARNERS" and found it most interesting. There was one story I really felt uncomfortable with. It reminded me of my past. When I was sixteen I dropped out of school and got in trouble with the law. At twenty-two I did time in prison. I didn't want to go back there anymore so I decided to straighten out my life, because there's more to life than getting in trouble. I still have a long way to go. I am now twenty six and I am going to school at the Rabbittown Learners Program. The reason I went back to school was to get my grade 12. I am going to need it in the future.

- Clarence Fillier