

## **Ann Bevins**

Nominated by *Alex Pacific*  
St. Lawrence Lewis BOCES

I have worked with Ann Bevins at the Canton Learning Center as her Basic Skills instructor and then her External Diploma Program Advisor/Assessor since January of 2009. From early on, Ann demonstrated a high degree of professional attention to detail in her work, a high drive to succeed, and a deep sense of caring and volunteerism for her community.

Ann was the type of student every teacher dreams of. Not only did she complete all assignments early or on time, she did them with a thoroughness not often found in students with learning disabilities. She reported early on that although never diagnosed formally, she knew she had dealt with dyslexia most of her life and had learned to compensate well. Her attention to detail grew out of that and served her well in a career for some time until she hurt her back and was physically unable to do the work. This skill carried into her diploma work and helped her progress very quickly from a middle school level to high school skills in a matter of a couple months. Her perfect attendance in labs and her large amount of time spent working on assignments at home paid off and she was able, with VESID's financial help, to enter the External Diploma program.

Ann had previously tried for the GED twice with no success. She had stopped working at Ogdensburg High School due to a lack of help for her suspected but never diagnosed dyslexia. She is a hands-on learner and felt that despite her high drive to succeed and determination she was often banging her head against a wall and felt there must be a better way. She found it in the External Diploma Program which gave her chance to finally shine. She was able to put her drive to work completing the tasks with high quality and only minor corrections. She finished the program including her Basic Computer Skills Interview in only a few short weeks and now plans to continue what she learned in a BOCES Computer class and then a Financial Clerical class where she can begin to craft a new career for herself to put her skills to work.

I find it very fitting to recognize and support Ann in her efforts to start a new career. She has given so much to her fellow students and community. I would like to see some of that support returned to her. She told me early on about her love for working in the prison system for many years volunteering to give Positive Thinking Classes and of the joy she got from helping others. It didn't take long for me to notice that she was indeed a woman of her word. Ann was the "go to" person at our center for many students. She quietly offers support to all in whatever way they seem to need it most without ever asking for anything in return. She is the person who will give you a ride on that bad weather day (routinely if you wish) with no expectation of anything back. She is the woman who when noticed our sad and drooping leftover flower arrangements at the center quietly undertook the task of creating two boxes of dried flower arrangements for all seasons which we could display. She is the one who volunteered when her binder was out being reviewed to file six boxes of extra copies that had sat undone since October, and did it in less than two days perfectly. She is the one who when notices you are struggling with a concept will quietly lean over or come sit next to you and help you out until Alex can get to you. The list goes on and on, but to suffice it to say, she has earned the respect and gratitude of us all.

It takes courage to start a new career in the middle part of your life; but when Ann's employment at a local computer chip board factory ended due to a back injury, she found herself faced with the choice of collecting disability for the rest of her life or beginning again. She chose to begin again, and now is using her diploma skills to complete a battery of classes in Microsoft Office and computer applications which she hopes to put to use in an office setting.

Ann is an example to all of us of what can be accomplished with determination and the drive to make your life as you see it in your mind.