

Samia Eldik

2014 Nova Scotia Business Inc. Learner Achievement Award Recipient

In October 2003, I arrived in Canada with my husband and four children to start a new life in a safe country. We were refugees, escaping war in Sudan, where we were born.

Attending school had not been part of my life growing up in Sudan. Since my husband and I could speak only Arabic and Moro, we knew that we needed to learn English in order to survive. Not long after we arrived, we enrolled in ESL classes through ISIS and slowly began to learn our new language.

In December, 2005, a short time after our fifth child was born, tragedy struck. My husband was killed in a car accident. Suddenly I was left alone to care for five children, was now more important than ever, not just to learn English, but for learning all kinds of things. I knew that for the sake of my children, I had to gain the skills and knowledge that would lead to a job.

When I began attending school, first with ISIS, then at the Quinpool Education Centre, and finally at the Cunard Learning Centre, where I am now in Level 3, my busy life as a mother of five became even busier. My days began very early in the morning and ended late at night. I was often very tired, but I would not give up.

Since attending school was a brand new experience, I found it very hard at first. I had no idea what was required or what to expect. There were so many things to learn. I was often very scared because I didn't know what to do. Sometimes I cried because I didn't understand, but I would not give up. I knew I had to keep on trying.

The challenges continue, but I know that I can learn. I have learned that I don't have to do it all on my own, that I can ask for help when I don't understand something. I have found the library tutoring for math and literacy very helpful. I know that all my teachers believe in me. School is no longer a place that makes me feel scared.

I can now read information that my children bring home from school and I can write notes and fill in forms for their teachers. I now enjoy reading to and with my children, especially my younger ones. I am growing and learning along with my children, who are all doing well in school. My eldest son is now in college and my older daughter is in her first year at Dalhousie. I know that I am helping myself, as well as my children. I am confident that I will achieve my goal which is to get my grade 12 and then go on to Community College to study to become a homecare worker. I know that I will be successful as long as I keep on trying.