

## Student Profiles

### Suzanne Barton

Suzanne is a single mother who was looking to better her life by returning to school. She recalls very clearly the first day she walked through Kwantlen's doors. "I sat outside in the parking lot and cried for about 45 minutes, before getting my nerve up," she remembers. On welfare, with a series of dead-end jobs behind her and three children to support, she knew she had to make a change.

Suzanne became a student in 2000, taking qualifying studies in math, English, career exploration and study skills. At 40, her math skills were at a Grade 4 level. "I would shake when I got to the grocery store and they would count my change out," she laughs. She credits Kwantlen's instructors and accessibility programs for her success. In 2008, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, having successfully navigated courses in developmental psychopathology, technical report writing and even statistics (she earned a B minus in Stats). She now works as a Program Assistant at Surrey Memorial Hospital, helping nurses and nurse educators.

The chance to succeed at getting an education, she says, "particularly if you have marginal math or English skills, opens up a whole new avenue for many people." For Suzanne, her early academic shortcomings were only part of the problem. She also was challenged by a visual impairment that meant her learning materials had to be delivered in audio format as well. "But if I won the lottery tomorrow, I'd go back to school," she says.

The Employment and Education Access program is one of the types of programs that the \$2.5 million endowment announced today will support.

Suzanne is available for interview, and is articulate and passionate about learning. Follow the link below to view Suzanne:

[http://www.kwantlen.ca/testimonials/alumni/suzanne\\_barton.html](http://www.kwantlen.ca/testimonials/alumni/suzanne_barton.html)

### Niloufar Saffari

Nilou was new to Canada with language barriers that made success at the post-secondary level in this country unlikely, although she had earned a degree in computer engineering in Iran. "When we came to Canada nine years ago, I couldn't speak English at all – not one sentence," she says. However, she has not only learned to speak, read and write English, she is four courses away from earning a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Psychology, and is determined to pursue a PhD.

Upon first arriving in Canada, Niloufar, her husband and five-year-old daughter rented an apartment across the street from Kwantlen's Richmond campus. "I went over and asked for an English placement test, and was placed in the lowest level," she recalls. After three courses, she managed to get to a Grade 12 equivalency and could begin taking academic courses. Nilou was an A+ student in psychology, according to a Kwantlen instructor in the Faculty of Academic and Career Advancement who continues to keep in touch with her, but struggled with English. Her perseverance was tested as she repeated an English language course twice before achieving an A minus in English 1100 – English upgrading. Niloufar worked as a research assistant at Kwantlen, and is now, at 38, working toward being accepted to grad school, with encouragement from her instructors at Kwantlen and a GPA of 4.06.

Niloufar is happy to speak about her student experiences at Kwantlen.

To arrange interviews with either of these students, contact:

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