

I would like to thank READ Saskatoon for giving me this opportunity to be here today and share my learning path.

My journey has been challenging. I was kicked out of high school. I got sick of wandering around being a single mom, with no direction. It was not the life I wanted for me or Dane. After three years out of school, I made a decision to honour my family. I enrolled at SIIT and got my grade 12.

After SIIT, I found myself in a relationship where I got pregnant again and I decided to join READ Saskatoon's adult literacy program: Project Ready. The program gave me the opportunity to build a portfolio that including getting certificates in: first aid, family literacy, whimis, safe food handling and lots of work experience. I built my resume and found that I wanted a better life for me and my family. I made new friends and most importantly, I learned I wanted to continue my education and nothing was going to stop me.

The doors started to open. I got a job at Whitecap as an educational assistant. Then got my youth worker certificate but wait...there's more! I learned I could get a degree and today I'm in my second year of Indian Social work at FNUC.

So, what does literacy mean to me? It means a lifelong learning, the ability to listen to my children, the ability to reduce the struggles that are out there. It has opened the doors to summer employment, to being a better worker, and being a better mother. I know first hand the limitations that low literacy has on people – it means they can't read to loved ones, read bills, and it adds pressure on those around them to support their challenges and limitation.

I believe in a world where families don't have to struggle. Where systems support, not confine. Where families are strengthened, not broken. Where literacy is a part of life not just a word or a commercial or a billboard

In closing, I would like to thank the Kinsmen Club of Saskatoon for supporting this award.