Degree means self-sufficiency for grad

Native Canadian and single mother, Mary Joy Elijah aims to be an educator in the area of native's problems and their relation with other Canadians.

By Ina Band

The London Free Press

The business will be set up in Elijah’s home at the Oneida reserve.

CUTBACKS: Elijah said she is worried about opportunities for other native Canadian students. She said recent government cuts in education for natives will prevent them from attaining the same self-sufficiency as she has.

I was sponsored in my education by the Department of Indian Affairs, with the same means test. I could not have done this without the same self-sufficiency, she said.

Tough Going: Elijah said waiting to get a degree was tougher. She had to work two jobs to make ends meet and put aside money for her children. She said she often wished she had a full-time job so she could work without keeping quiet while working.

So far, this degree is for child care, too.

Mary Joy Elijah shows her joy after receiving her bachelor of arts degree from King's College at the convocation of the University of Western Ontario on Friday at Alumni Hall.

Almost 4,900 students are eligible to graduate during convocation, which continues today and Monday.