

Nursing grad mom credits kids, husband



BETH MacNAUGHTON: congratulates her mom

By Kim Honey
London Free Press

Janet MacNaughton says her nursing certificate from Fanshawe College is "nothing special."

The 33-year-old mother has five daughters under the age of 11. She's studied every weekend for two years, while the kids and her husband, George, played together.

"If you have something to do, you get it done. It's taken all seven of us to get it done."

She was one of 191 nurses and nursing assistants receiving diplomas at Fanshawe's afternoon convocation ceremony Friday.

At times she has risen early to get her children to a babysitter by 6:30 a.m. where the older ones were left to catch a school bus. The youngest child, Beth, only goes two days a

week to school.

Janet said she couldn't have gone back to school before her children were in school. Even though she has wanted to study nursing since she left school for marriage, she said staying at home with the children while they were young was important to her.

Her graduation is "a family achievement."

The children pitch in and do the housework, from vacuuming to the dishes. She conceded they do more chores than other children their age, but said they're used to it. "You have to place your priorities and to me housework is not a priority."

That means some days she comes home from school and the house is messy, but she shrugs it off. Time with the children is hard to get, especially now that she is working

at Woodstock General Hospital on 12-hour shifts.

"It's a little tougher to adjust to," she said of the shift work. "It's harder than the rest of the year."

Having a mother in school is a bit of a novelty for Sarah, Amy, Laura, Katie and Beth. They've been telling their school chums how their mother is going to be a nurse.

But she's doing it for herself, as much as for the security of her family. "I enjoy it. I enjoy people and I enjoy the challenge ... it's something new every day."

Her maturity has been a bonus rather than a disadvantage. "I'm able to relate to people a lot better. You've gone through these life experiences and you know how it feels."

To be a nurse after two years of hard work is thrilling. "It gives you a good feeling to be called 'nurse.'"

Horizons suddenly widen for adult grads

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By Anne Murphy
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CLINTON — As an adult, Wilma Tuck knows the importance of a high school diploma.

But as a teenager in the 1970s, Tuck dropped out of school twice without completing Grade 12.

Today she'll pick up her high school diploma from Central Huron Secondary School in Clinton. She's one of 17 adults eligible to graduate.

The Grade 12 diploma is only the first step. She plans to take part-time courses so she can become an accountant.

Tuck, 32, first dropped out when she was 16 and then returned after a serious car accident.

She left a second time with some Grade 11 credits. Marriage, two children and a job as a cashier kept her busy until a second car accident in 1987 curtailed her activities.

Without a high school diploma, Tuck found many options closed to her. She decided to return to high school. Although it meant balancing housework with homework, she found school much easier the second time around because "there's nothing to distract you ... You're here

after something. If you play around, you don't do it. So I don't play around."

Linda Van Belle, 39, of Exeter, managed to cram courses from Grade 10, 11 and 12 into eight months. Like the other 44 adult students, Van Belle works at her own pace using materials from the ministry of education.

She decided to return to school after a 21-year hiatus because she was tired of low-paying service jobs. With a Grade 12 diploma under her arm, Van Belle is thinking of a secretarial career, possibly in law.

While Van Belle always knew she'd make it through because "I was determined," she praises the six part-time teachers in the adult program for their support.

Alec MacLellan was one of the first to enrol when the program started in March, 1987. After temporary jobs in construction, MacLellan, 31, returned to school to complete his Grade 12.

He's not sure what he wants to do — apprenticeship is a possibility — but the diploma will help open doors once closed to him.

When Donna Costello dropped out of school 11 years ago, jobs weren't that hard to come by. But after the shoe factory where she had been

working closed, Costello, 27, found she could not go anywhere without a high school diploma.

While her first goal was to get her Grade 12 diploma, Costello found she liked school so much she's continuing her studies in office administration in the fall at Lambton College in Clearwater.

Shotgun pointed at beer store clerk

A man dressed for winter robbed a beer store clerk at gunpoint in north London Friday night.

Police said the robber, wearing a balaclava, black leather trenchcoat and black gloves, entered the Brewers' Retail at 1080 Adelaide St. N. about 10:15 p.m., aimed a sawed-off shotgun at the male clerk and demanded money.

The robber, described as being in his early 30s, six feet and 180-200 pounds with long red hair in a pony tail, fled on foot.