These adult students know their goals

By Debra Van Breken
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Stella Johnson has little trouble finding her way through a maze of integrals, cubed roots and quadratic equations. She is at home in that world. She is an ideal candidate for the adult education program at London adult education Centre, which today celebrates its first birthday as London's adult education high school.

"Here" is the Centre, which is a place where students discuss every possible way to do something different. It's a place where seniors discuss English essays over a cup of coffee. It's a place where teachers wobble through the corridors on a daily basis to day care with up and down the steps of the Centre, there are no bells to signal the start or end of classes. Students are free to pursue their own education on their own terms, without the constraints of the standardized curriculums that are often the norm in traditional high schools. This is the Centre's secret to success and many of the Centre's students have families and jobs that they must complete for their employers before they can graduate. But most are determined to graduate.

"I've got goals," said Johnson, 26, who has been taking classes at the Centre for the past four years. "I'm here to work and that's a big difference. Even though I'll take a seven-year break, I'll go to Teacher's College and get my B.A. and M.A. and then go to teacher's college."

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Teacher Anne Dwyer helps Stella Johnson with her algebra before math class at the G.A. Wheatle Centre for adult education. The school is celebrating its first birthday today.

Johnson's mother enrolled her in school when she was seven years old, but missed the opportunity to graduate after Grade 9. She is now attending the Centre and working towards upgrading her high school math and English courses and getting her G.A. Wheatle Centre for adult education diploma. She started at Grade 12 in February and expects to be finished with her high school diploma within four years. She will then go on to Teacher's College and get her B.A. and M.A. and then go to teacher's college."

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