



Crystal Roulette

Sagkeeng First Nation

It's never too late to go after your dreams. Crystal Roulette lives and breathes by these words. After 15 years in the workforce since the age of 16, Crystal decided it was time to make a major shift in life. She had worked for a social service agency for over 11 years and she decided that her interest in Pharmacy needed her focused attention. A Pharmacy Technician course was being offered by Robertson College so she set her sights on applying for it. "I had received help before from the ASETS funding through Employment & Training from Sagkeeng First Nation, my band," she recalls. "They initially supported me in obtaining my Life Skills Certificate. So

I went back to them and asked if they would help me once again to obtain the Pharmacy Technician training. They said that if I was able to find another funding partner then they would match it. So I got myself a student loan and it all took off from there."

But getting the money for the course wasn't even half the battle for Crystal. She struggled with having to return to "school mode" after being in the workforce for so many years. Making that shift back to being a student wasn't easy. The cost of living allowance provided support for her as an individual but she also had a son and a husband on disability to consider. "Yeah it was tough getting by on \$600 per month," she said. "It wasn't quite enough for rent and utilities plus we had our car expenses because I wasn't going back to riding a bus. We made up our minds that we were going to make this work no matter what."

And stick with it is exactly what Crystal did to complete the Pharmacy Technician course in the fall of 2015. A big motivator for her was knowing how the people she worked with in the community felt when they walked into a pharmacy. She knew their concerns and how to answer their questions because she had worked to help these clients in her past employment positions. She understood them and took great satisfaction in being able to serve them once again as an employee of a Pharmacy. After initially landing a position with a major central pharmacy outfit upon her graduation from Robertson College, Crystal moved on to work at White Cross Pharmacy where she remains today.

"Looking back, I'd tell others to make more time to do your studying," she advises. "Going back to school after many years away from it is difficult so I'd also say to others to be more prepared if you are returning to school or training. Get your childcare set up and make sure they are reliable and will be there for you. That will surely save you a lot of headache. And finally, make sure what are pursuing is what you really want to do." Great advise from experience.

Crystal's greatest satisfaction was landing a job after she finished her studies. She also has the privilege of telling her son that "you are never too old to go back to school." Thanks to the

Employment and Training staff at Sagkeeng First Nation, Crystal Roulette's path in life was changed drastically. She found her career of choice and is working to make a difference in the lives of people in her neighborhood.