

## An Alumni Story: Lindsay Goodswimmer



"I probably went back to school too early, too soon after losing him," Lindsay says "but I was all my kids had. I knew I needed a career. Not just a job."

When Lindsay Goodswimmer's husband was suddenly killed in 2014, the young mother of three realized she'd have to make major changes to provide the kind of life she wanted to give her children.

It was important she remain in her hometown of Sturgeon Lake, a close-knit community offering support, friendship, and familiarity to the grieving family.

Fortunately, Lindsay learned of the Academic Upgrading program offered at Northern Lakes College's Valleyview campus, only a short distance from her home. Through this program, Lindsay achieved the pre-requisites required for most college or university study programs while maintaining a stable family life.

"It wasn't easy with three little kids, but the college's program schedule is pretty flexible," she says. "I did all my coursework at school so I didn't have to take anything home. It was really important to me to focus on my family after school hours. Twice a week I had full-day study blocks that allowed for a lot of assignment completion, and I studied in the computer lab every Friday, even when no one else was there."

Her determination paid off. In 2014 & 2015, Lindsay received numerous student awards including the Shell Canada Aboriginal Education Award and the Role Model Award, achievements that came with financial gifts, easing some of her household expenses. But perhaps the most obvious indication of Lindsay's academic success is found in the educational values she's passed on.

"My kids love that I'm in school. At first they were amazed that a grown-up could go to school!" She laughs. "But it's good for them to see that. They plan on going to college someday too. My eldest wants to be a pediatric surgeon when she grows up!"

Of her classes, Lindsay chalks a large part of her success up to NLC's innovative instructors. "I'd say math is my favorite class because my instructor is great. She makes everyone interact and she won't move on until everyone understands. No one gets left behind."

Lindsay, too, contributes to NLC's culture of inclusive learning through her work on the Student Council and the Community Enhancement Committee. She encourages other students to get involved on campus to really claim a full college experience. "Many people go to school just to go to school, and that's fine. But if you get involved, you get to meet so many people! The typical student on my campus is in his or her 20's or 30's, and I think everyone on my campus is a parent. It's a really supportive environment. Volunteerism takes up time, but it's worth it. This year we raised a lot of money for student trips and we're organizing a campus barbeque to celebrate the end of the year."

These skills will surely play a vital role in Lindsay's future as she enters into Northern Lakes College's Business Administration certificate program with plans to continue on, eventually earning a Diploma in Business Administration & Accounting. "I would like to open my own business in Sturgeon Lake," she says, "something that would better my community. I want to give back."

Lindsay has been selected by her peers to be the Valedictorian for the June 2016 Northern Lakes College Convocation ceremony. Lindsay's advice to other students facing unexpected struggles in their lives... "You can overcome anything. *Anything*," she repeats, "if you really want it."

Northern Lakes College is proud to have Lindsay participate in the 2016 Convocation ceremony as Valedictorian, an honor bestowed to her by her peers and wholeheartedly supported by NLC Faculty and Administration. Advice Lindsay is likely to offer other students facing unexpected struggles in their lives? "You can overcome anything. *Anything*," she repeats, "if you really want it."