

# MAEA MEDIA



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Special Edition**

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## **SPECIAL COLLEGE TRANSITION SUPPLEMENT FROM THE MAINE ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

### **SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT**

This special edition of the MAEA Media was developed to honor the adult students who continue to make Maine's College Transition programs successful. Their inspirational stories of academic and vocational success fill the pages of this very unique issue. I am certain that you will come away from this issue feeling proud of the profound work you do each day. How rewarding it is to read about student successes across the State of Maine - all as a result of their College Transition commitment!

This edition also provides adult educators with vital information regarding the history of Maine's College Transition Program. Cathy Newell details the long and passionate road that resulted in the implementation of the Maine College Transition program with the passage of bill LD1785 in 2006.

# COLLEGE

Enjoy reading about all facets of the Transition Initiative and thank you for all that you do!

**Maine Adult Education  
Association  
PO Box 187  
Greenwood, ME 04255  
207.875.2722  
[maea@megalink.net](mailto:maea@megalink.net)  
[www.maineadulted.org](http://www.maineadulted.org)**

**The Maine Adult Education Association is a professional organization that advocates for adult education locally, statewide, and nationally and supports its members in order to meet the educational needs of Maine's adults.**

## COLLEGE TRANSITION -Working for Maine-

**Judy Ruszczk enrolled in the Rockland College Transition program in fall of 2004** after 25 years out of school. She wanted to return to the nursing profession but had no idea how to even gather her transcripts to begin the application process. In addition, she had low self-esteem and needed a support network in order to help her overcome her self doubt. Judy enrolled in our program and was a very dedicated and strong student. She was a peer leader and an incredible inspiration to other students.



Judy had been a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) for over 20 years. But after suffering intense personal and family tragedies, Judy began to drink. After losing her job, the most beloved part of her life, she moved to Maine and embarked on a sobering journey. Sober for nine months, Judy enrolled in College Transition to ultimately fulfill her goal to become a Registered Nurse. Upon successful completion of the Transition program, Judy spent the following spring and summer semesters working to complete her Nursing Program pre-requisites. She took Anatomy & Physiology, Public Speaking, Chemistry, Algebra, Micro Biology and an LPN to RN Transitions course - all in the span of two semesters! Judy was fast-tracked into the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the Nursing Program due to her intense commitment to the program and because of her former work as an LPN. She earned a 3.4 GPA and graduated from the school of nursing. She is now employed as an RN in Maine.

### **Patty Provost of Sumner College Transition Project, Summer 2003**

Patty was 38-years-old and a single parent because her husband was in federal prison out of state. She attended the Transitions Project during the summer of 2003. For the first five or six weeks of class, Patty was convinced that college could never happen for her and she was shocked to be accepted, stunned to receive adequate financial aid, and inspired after talking with her prospective advisor. Starting her AS in Criminal Justice at University College at Bangor (UCB) that fall, Patty is now earning her BS, with consistently strong grades. She started a legal research business with a professor and, developed a lending library program at the Penobscot County Jail. Her family is back together and Patty continues to actively contribute to her family, her school, and her community. Patty is quite the inspiration and has a bright future!



### **How My Life Has Changed because of the College Transition Program:**

I no longer have to work two minimum wage jobs.

I now have the ability to choose the work I wish to pursue.

I no longer receive food stamps.

I can purchase my own food without help from the state, local or federal government.

Because of this I can shop without the stigma of people thinking I'm a lazy, no good bum.

I no longer receive fuel assistance. I choose and purchase my own energy source.

I no longer have to hide disconnection notices from my children because I am able to pay my bills on time.

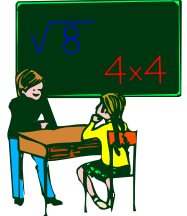
My children see a mother who works hard and comes home at the end of the day happy instead of a mother who works hard and comes home at the end of the day worried, frustrated and crying all the time.

*Submitted by Ronda Alley, College Transitions student & college graduate*

## SHARED STORIES of SUCCESS

### College Transition Students throughout Maine

- **Tina, a 42-year-old single parent, had just left an abusive relationship** when she started our Transition Project in the spring of 2002. She worked as a private housekeeper, cleaning several homes to support herself and her school-aged daughter. Shy, yet determined, Tina completed the Project and started University of Maine in Augusta part-time that fall. Tina is now a full time Ed Tech for her local school with benefits and a full sense of pride in her accomplishments!
- **Lynn, 35, completed the Transitions Project in the Summer of 2000.** Overcoming early academic challenges, Lynn developed a kind of savvy that allowed her to progress onto the eligibility list for a restricted AS/BS at UC-Bangor. Lynn had to stop-out for a year to wait for her degree slot, but graduated in 2005. Lynn is now a Dental Hygienist in the Ellsworth area.
- **Yvonne, 47, a single mother and laborer** joined the College Transition program in Rockland and gained up enough confidence to take the ParaPro assessment and pursue her dream of becoming an educator. She passed the test and worked as a special and regular education substitute in the mid-coast. She will start college in the fall of 2007 along with her full-time EdTech position.
- **Johnny, a 32-year-old Navy veteran,** had been working at the Winter Harbor Navy Base, when it closed and he became a dislocated worker. Johnny received release time in the spring of 2002 to attend the Transition Project, and then started at Eastern Maine Community College. Johnny completed his A.A. in Liberal Studies and transferred it into University of Maine Augusta's B.A. in Social Sciences with a psychology focus at University College-Bangor. Johnny graduated with his B.A. in 2006.
- **Angela, 31, a young mom and wife from Harrington, completed the Transition Project during the summer of 2001.** Determined to become a nurse after her best friend died of breast cancer, Angela started at UMaine Machias in the fall of 2001 in Liberal Arts with a focus on pre-nursing. She also worked on the Beth C. Wright, Cancer Resource Center project in Ellsworth and as a CNA at a local nursing home. Angela graduated in May 2005 and is a practicing Registered Nurse in Washington County.
- **Cheryl, 42 and newly divorced, needed to make a living to support her ever-growing family.** The State of Maine permanently placed her twin infant grandchildren in her care due to drug-abuse issues of an older son. She did not allow these additional physical or emotional demands to keep her from continuing with her degree. Needing to relocate her family to Florida to escape on-going abuse issues, Cheryl is currently pursuing her degree to become an Elementary Teacher at Central Florida University.



## The Transition Program – A Template Overview

The Transition Program Template is a set of recommendations based on national college transitions experiences and the input of all seven currently operating Maine ABE-to-College programs funded by New England Literacy Resource Center Nellie Mae Grants.

### 1. What makes a good College Transitions program?



Program Identity: A significant factor in program success and continuation is an identifiable program name or service in the community that sets it apart from the regular adult education offerings. This could take the form of a location for services, a separate flyer or specific advertising and/or specific staff identified as working with transitions.

### 2. What should be the first priority of any College Transition Program?

#### Accurate Identification of Student Needs:

This statement encompasses academics, building (student) relationships, identifying strengths and weakness of students, career goal setting, rigorous academics and developing personal responsibility and should be viewed as an overriding priority for the application of any counseling or academic program to follow. Individual portfolios and accurate tracking and record keeping are essential elements.



### 3. What best practice needs to be promoted and implemented in any new College Transitions program?

A “defined process” needs to include elements of program design to include:

- a) A formal process for intake, orientation and graduation
- b) Accuplacer testing on site
- c) A formal process for portfolio development
- d) A defined data collection process, include documentation of assessment and follow up
- e) A staff development component for teachers and counselors

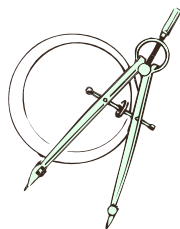


In summary, the best practice would be a defined, replicable design that could be implemented at local programs in varying levels of intensity dependent on regional needs.

### 4. Based on your experience, what advice would you give to someone starting a College Transitions program?

Individual Program Staff Responses:

- f) Spend time on planning
- g) Review existing research on Transitions
- h) Visit existing projects
- i) View Transitions as part of a continuum
- j) Build linkages with colleges
- k) Establish a local identity
- l) Be flexible, be patient
- m) Celebrate success



*This Template is the summary result of a Meeting of the Nellie Mae Maine ABE-to-College Transition Programs, Lewiston, Maine, January 26, 2006. In Attendance: Roger Dyer, Gloria Berube, Ann Marie Villote, Rob Wood, Connie Patton, Sally Daniels, Darrell Gilman, Shannon Parker, Deepa Rao and Patrick O'Regan.*



## The Road to LD 1785

**1989 – Advent of University of Maine’s ITV system** with high school sites often managed by adult education in local high schools. Use of Perkins funds for a small number of courses and college counseling on a limited scale.

**1990’s – Attempts at collaborative agreement** with University of Maine System and adult education. This was never completed due to personnel changes

**1999 – “Outreach Proposal” by King administration.** Never really developed into a bill, but would have funded a few programs.

**2001 – Nellie Mae Foundation** came on scene with ABE-to-College Grants, eventually expanding to seven sites with the goal of developing a model over five years with \$40,000 per program per year.



**2002 – Collaborative Agreement signed** with Maine Community College System and Maine Adult Education Association. Similar agreement with UMS was in development but, again, personnel changes prevented completion.



**2002 and 2004 – The Betterment Fund** provided small grants to fund a conference in both years to educate adult education programs and post-secondary partners on College Transitions.

**2003 – Maine Compact for Higher Education** identified Adult Education College Transition as one of five key strategies to increase the number of adults with college degrees in Maine. The goal of 40,000 new degrees cannot be reached without adults.

**2005 – Lumina Foundation** provided funding for leadership in moving to a state-wide program. Curriculum development, assessment of program readiness, coordination with community colleges, and MOU’s between CC campuses and adult education programs.

**2005 – Governor’s PreK-16 Committee** identifies adult education as a key link.

**2005 – MELMAC Education Foundation** added adult education to their grant program. 24 programs are involved with exploring specific aspects of the MELMAC model with relation to adults. \$4,000 per program per year for 2 years.

**2006 – Senator Libby Mitchell** identified Adult Education College Transition as a critical strategy for education and economic development in light of plant closings and the changing nature of the Maine economy and agreed to sponsor it. Legislative Council accepted the bill for the 2005 session.

**2006 – The Education Committee voted Unanimous Ought to Pass for LD 1785** and \$200,000 was appropriated for the initial six sites, with funding for a 7th secured from the Betterment Fund, and a grant from the Nellie Mae Foundation for program leadership.

Get  
Ready  
for  
College

**2007 – Maine College Transition was begun** with strong legislative support with a \$200,000 appropriation and the passage of LD 1785 outlining the plan to expand the program in the future.

**2007 – In his budget, Governor Baldacci moves to accelerate** the Maine College Transition program to full implementation of 30 sites. Pilot sites substantially exceed enrollment projections for the first semester.