

20<sup>th</sup> February 2013



Dear Supporters of TAFE,

I'm sorry I couldn't be there today to deliver this but we are short staffed at work and I couldn't get time off.

I completed Certificate 2 in Skills for Work & Training – the focus was for women interested in working in the child care industry. When I started the course I was 27, depressed and lonely, being a single mother of two children, the youngest just under 2 years old.

At the time I thought that my future was very bleak. All I knew was that I did not want to be on Centrelink payments for the rest of my life. The only jobs I could expect to get were in low paid factory work and I did not want that.

On my first day in the course in 2011 I was so nervous. I had not been in a classroom since 2002. When I walked in I noticed I was the only person who had an Australian background. There were Korean, Thai, Chinese, Turkish, Egyptian and Lebanese women in my class. Most of these women had poor English, wanted a job, were shy and quiet just like me, but this class changed all of us. We all formed great friendships and supported and helped one another.

If it was not for this course, the excellent teachers and the great women I met, I would not be where I am today. I have goals, I have ambitions and most of all I

have self-confidence. I now believe in myself, something I have NEVER experienced before.

It is a great course for women with children at school and only runs 2 days a week.

I believe this type of course is what all mothers should do once their children start school, if they cannot find work that fits in with school hours. A lot of young mothers or older ones who have not worked for a long time often give up the hope of finding a good job because all they know is how to look after their children. This course opens up our eyes and gives us hope. I know it has done this to me. My goal is to be a teacher. I finished the course and enrolled in the Tertiary Preparation course at TAFE. I plan to go on to university to study to become an Early Childhood Teacher.

If funding disappears for courses such as the Certificate II and the TPC, people like me will never have the chance to overcome barriers to education and training and will never have the chance to change their lives as I did.

In Solidarity,

Renee Harrison