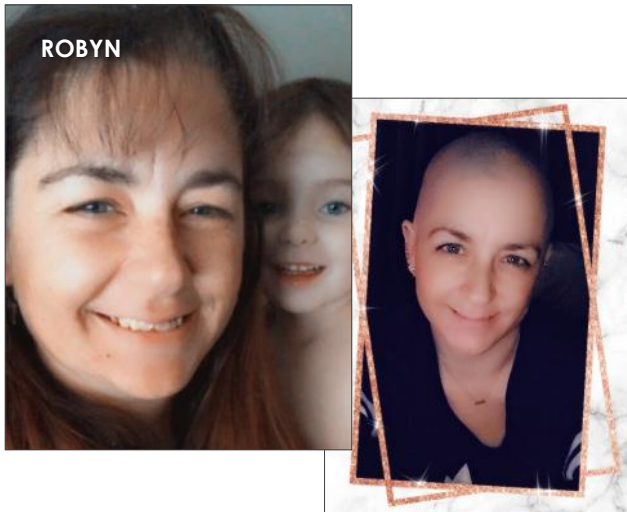


“They know how to help people get where they dream to be.”



“I have always enjoyed helping others in any way I could,” says Robyn, a Georgian College Academic Upgrading graduate.

A mother of five, Robyn’s passion for nursing was ignited when she had her first son. After high school, she worked full-time in a retirement home while she earned her Personal Support Worker certificate.

When she decided to enrol in the Georgian College Practical Nursing program, she discovered that, despite her experience as a PSW, she needed to earn some credits to qualify. So Robyn joined the Academic and Career Preparation (Academic Upgrading) program at Georgian. Not long after classes started, she received devastating news.

“I started off with cancer of the ovaries, cervix, and uterus,” Robyn shares. “Over time, it has metastasized up into my chest area.”

“With small children at home and a husband with some physical disabilities, finding the strength and time to do all that is needed of me can be very hard,” she says. “Treatment makes you very tired and radiation is painful. Trying to do everything and attend class was a huge challenge.”

Robyn took a year off to convalesce and returned to Georgian’s upgrading program — first to in-person classes, then shifting to online as the pandemic hit. “Since then,” she says, “I have had many rounds of chemo, radiation and surgeries.”

Online learning posed a new set of challenges for Robyn. “Online, you can lose the connection with the teacher and class,” she shares. “Plus, I had poor Internet service and children trying to learn online at the same time. But having online classes was a gift for me at times as I could lay in bed recovering and still attend class.”

Robyn’s instructors were supportive and considerate of her needs. “The support I received from my teachers was amazing,” she says. “I will never forget their kindness, not just to me but to all my classmates.”

Making the decision to go back to school can be tough, especially for people juggling work, family obligations and personal health. But flexible, supportive providers and programming can help make it possible.

“Any time someone expresses to me that they would like to go back to school but they don’t know if they can do it, or lack the previous education to do it,” Robyn says, “I always recommend Academic Upgrading. They know how to help people get where they dream to be.”

—submitted by Gregory Shanahan, Georgian College

