

Welland teen looks to brighter future

After living through more than her fair share of struggles over the past number of years, 17-year old Christa of Welland is now thriving and couldn't be happier.

Faced with a tough family situation and the loss of her mother last year, it was becoming more difficult for Christa to stay in school – attending some days and eventually avoiding school altogether, missing nearly a year of classes.

With the assistance of HNHB CCAC's Mental Health and Addiction nursing (MHAN) program and the support of her grandparents, Christa is doing much better.



The MHAN program helps teenagers thrive at school, stay in school or get back to school after a hospital stay.

Christa has developed a strong bond of trust with CCAC MHAN Nurse Joanne Wunderlich. Through advocacy work and support, Joanne has helped Christa push aside barriers to her success at school.

“Joanne helped me cope with depression and anxiety which was a big thing for me last year,” said Christa. “She helped me try to deal with it and thanks to the support from Joanne, my attendance record is now the highest it's been during my past four years at school,” said Christa. “Joanne has always been there when I needed her.”

Joanne is proud of how far Christa has gone to overcome the challenges life has put before her. “I'm amazed by her strength and her courage.” Joanne has assisted Christa in finding support at school and together they've mapped out a plan to make sure Christa is successful in keeping her life on track. That includes time for volunteering with the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at school and playing video games in her spare time.

After missing months of school, Christa expects to graduate next year. She's enjoying her studies and is looking forward to pursuing a post-secondary education.

“I want to go to Brock University and maybe become a high school teacher in social sciences.”

Christa is hoping Joanne will be able to attend her graduation ceremony, a milestone she's looking forward to.

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