

My name is Julie and I am writing to update Graduate Women Victoria (GWV) and their supporters. In 2013 I was awarded the GWV Yvonne Atkin Bursary. This bursary was used to help obtain the materials required for the Master of Speech Pathology and a rental bond. At the 2014 GWV awards ceremony I talked about the benefits of moving closer to campus (ie. less caffeine, less time travelling, more time studying, more time with my son). The bursary allowed me to make changes to be a more effective mom and student, but the networking opportunities within GWV proved invaluable.

In early 2015 I was walking to class and I felt an overwhelming feeling of despair. I remember thinking, "I can't do this. I am a full time single parent raising a toddler, a full time university student, and I am working part time. I'm not performing optimally as a mom/student/project manager." What kept me going to class? I recalled a luncheon when a GWV member looked me in the eye and proclaimed "You have inner strength". It was exactly what I needed to hear, and their conviction is what GWV represents to me. Needless to say, I did keep going to class. I am still a full time single mom but my son has grown into an inquisitive and opinionated kindergartener. However I am no longer a student because I have graduated! I am now working part-time in my chosen profession (speech pathology). I find it very rewarding to work with an outstanding multidisciplinary team and support our amazing clients.

I first became aware of GWV through their scholarships. During the information session and awards ceremony GWV members welcomed all the young women and highlighted the social opportunities within GWV. I believe the contributions of GWV – financial, social, biographical, empowerment, advocacy – are invaluable.

Reminiscent of the GWV logo of the lamp and flame, GWV fuelled my education and made the days brighter.

Thank you.