

Christine Cummins

Blue Mountain Community College Les Lyle Scholarship

I am a woman in my mid-50s and I was laid off from productive employment for a large electrical contractor almost five years ago. Since that layoff I have worked a variety of jobs; working as a pantry chef, a cashier, a dishwasher and a day care attendant. After being laid off from a seasonal position the day after Christmas, I realized that in order to obtain gainful employment I needed to make myself a more valuable and marketable person.

In the past 30 years I have put time into raising my two children and a couple of marriages. Reflecting back, I have always worked -- whether as a cabinet builder or payroll clerk for ski resorts. At one time while I was a single mother I had nine part-time jobs including my own bookkeeping business. During those years I have taken a few on campus college courses to enhance my current job position. One year while planning a career change I enrolled in a science class through the mail; unfortunately part way through the course the cost was the difference between groceries at home for my children. I have put both of my children through college and they currently have successful professions and families of their own. Now it is my turn.

I am currently enrolled at Blue Mountain Community in Pendleton, Oregon, working toward two associate of science degrees: civil engineering technology and the drafting technology degree. I am currently a sophomore and hold a 3.72 grade point average.

I am extremely excited about my future as I am not afraid of hard work. The prospect of obtaining long-term employment with a challenging environment fuels my passion to continue being an excellent, dedicated and committed student. The dream of finally becoming a home owner and the ability to give back to my community are reachable goals. While I strive to be a productive member of society I also desire to make a difference somewhere, to leave a footprint. If nothing else but to show women that your past is part of your story and it is never too late to go back to school. Life begins again after 50!

My choice of professions has a lot to do with past work history and the fact that my father and I would build projects together when I was a young girl. I remember the satisfaction of transforming pieces of lumber into a structure, a rabbit hutch to be specific. I enjoy the smell of wood and blossomed as a cabinet maker, my first job as a single mother in the late '70s. Throughout my work history I have always enjoyed working in and around the construction trades and have work experience in the office and out in the field. Knowing that it is important to like what you are doing, that is where I can see myself by the summer of 2011. And..... quite possibly it was the Tonka earthmover truck I received for Christmas at age 5 that planted the seed.

Thank you Oregon Chapter APWA for believing in me.



Christine B. Cummins