

Vera Blower Early Childhood Education, 1972

Reflecting on her college years, Vera Blower says that her two years at Loyalist College changed her life. “I established friendships that I have maintained over the years.” She was a part of the first graduating class in the Early Childhood Education program at Loyalist in 1972. Her career has since taken many paths. Vera worked in nursery schools, parent co-ops and child care centres, even owning her own centre for a while. After working as an educational assistant with developmentally challenged children, she set up a family resource centre in Port Hope. While employed as an early child care consultant with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, she was involved in the development of school-based child care and the licensing of child care centres. Vera also worked with First Nations child care and taught in the ECE program at Durham College for several years.

Vera moved on to policy work for the Ministry, developing policy for the Ontario Early Years Centres, the Multilateral Framework for Early Learning and Child Care as well as providing initial research on Best Start. She took a leave of absence from Queen’s Park to work in Cape Dorset on Baffin Island in 2003. There she taught the ECE certificate program at the Nunavut Arctic College to a group of 11 Inuit women. “This was the most wonderful experience of my life. I lived there for eight months and the memories stayed with me for a lifetime. It reminded me of the reasons that I entered the field. It was an opportunity not only to share what I had learned but to learn from an amazing array of people. I gained insights into life in the north and its very rich culture.” Vera was involved in sewing and beading circles and enjoyed taking part in community feasts.

Vera has since moved to Alberta where she had the opportunity to become a part of the province’s Accreditation Funding program and work on the development of new child care legislation.

She is currently the Family Child Care and Early Childhood Development Specialist for Calgary and Area Regional Authority. “It is a very exciting time and I am enjoying the opportunity to share my experiences and expertise with my colleagues out here.”

Vera has fond memories of working with Loyalist College alumni on the Memorial Grove. “We planted a tree as a tribute to a fallen friend who touched our lives and died too young. I am thrilled to see that the grove is so well kept.” She is grateful to Loyalist College for starting her out on a journey that continues in both her personal and professional life.