



Carers and Learning

*"It lifts your self-esteem.
It is very important
for carers to have
outside interests."*

Marcy Roffey

This is one of a series of small portraits of carers talking about the impact learning has on their lives. The carers featured face particular barriers to accessing learning; carers from minority ethnic groups; carers who are disabled; young adult carers (16–25) and carers who live in rural areas. Their stories highlight the importance of access to education for all. Under the Carers Equal Opportunities Act (2004) carers have a right to have their learning and work needs assessed as part of the carers' assessment procedure.

Marcy Roffey is sole carer for her son who has learning difficulties. She had always wanted to do a course but it was difficult to find one at a time that suited her.

She then heard about a part-time computer course for carers at a local day centre: *I like the pace of the course. The environment is not as busy as a college it is more tranquil. If you miss or are slow with things you can catch up.*

Marcy felt she was missing out on the computer revolution and is learning basic computer skills so she can use the Internet to keep in touch with her family who are not in this country. She also wants to be able to support her son who is learning computers at school and develop her computer literacy with a view to returning to work: *I find it so liberating to be able to do this course for a few hours. It gives me that sense of purpose and it gives social contact. Being a carer and not having extended family around you is tough. The toughest job I have done.*

For further information about access to learning and training for carers, visit www.niace.org.uk

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