

use the library. I would like to do projects with the other students to learn about things. I would want to learn about geography — about countries and how to use a map. I would like to learn spelling. I would like to learn other languages, especially Italian. I would like to learn math. I did like gym but would have liked to do team sports like basketball. I would like to have had recess so I could meet friends. I would have liked to get to know other students and to do things with them.

I wish I could have given my opinion about what I wanted to learn. I would have liked to have choices. I would want respect and to feel important. I would want to go to school with my brothers and sisters and to learn interesting things.

INTO THE WORKFORCE

Two and a half years after I graduated from Vincent Massey, I was hired as an Educational Assistant at the Separate School Board. There were many good things and there were some problems. The teachers would get upset with me because I did the wrong thing. I didn't know that it was wrong. I could not read the list of duties that the teachers gave me. I was embarrassed to tell them that I couldn't read. When they found out that I couldn't read they said I should not have my job. I did not feel good about myself. I felt that I was different from the other staff. People didn't always want to help me.

My sister and I talked about the situation. She asked me if I wanted to learn. I said I definitely wanted to learn. My parents, my brothers and my other sister weren't sure that it was necessary. Maybe it wasn't a good idea, they thought. They said if I needed reading skills for my job maybe I should quit my job. I thought, "No way!" We looked for a course but everyone said they didn't have a program for "special needs" students. Finally, the adult program at the Separate School Board said OK. I went to the adult literacy program sponsored by the Hamilton Catholic School Board Adult Education Program. I started in 1986 and continue to go for two half-days