Learner Story: Bernie Chubb Walkinstown Communiversity

My name is Bernie (Bernadette) I’m 73 and a widow living on my own. I have four grown up children and 7 grandchildren. I have no formal education. I had a very mixed up childhood. My mother died with I was 9 so I had very little formal education. My mother was sick when I was young and I was sent to Goldenbridge school. I left school before my inter cert, I just couldn’t face it even though the nuns tried to encourage me to stay but I felt I wasn’t able for it. At that stage there was no part of formal education that had any interest for me, I didn’t even want to cover my books.

Even though I left school because I lived with my Granny afterwards and she was really big into education that became an inspiration for me to encourage my children to go on into further and higher education.

I was married at 19, had my first child at 20 and I suppose over the years that I did a few courses when I had the time. So I did beginners French and bookkeeping. This became important for me when I started back to work when my kids had grown. I worked as an estate agent and then in a company providing financial education in accounts.

So how I got involved in the Communiversity was that I saw an ad on Facebook from Asia in the South Dublin City Partnership that was asking for expressions of interest for a course running in the Walkinstown Library. So I gave it a like and I e-mailed Asia who came back to me. I didn’t even know what the modules would be but I was hoping there was going to be History as I have always loved history.

I arrived in the library on the first and Derek from Maynooth got us talking to one another, moved all the chairs so we could all see one another, and eased my nerves as I didn’t know what to expect. After that we got a taster presentation from each of the lecturers. So we did History first for 4 weeks, and this was followed by Politics. To be honest I thought we’d be talking about Trump but ended up talking about Socrates, Aristotle and Hobbes which is great for my Monday night Quiz nights on the telly. Then we did Psychology which was the last module to come up.

I loved the four weeks of History with Miriam. She started off telling us that she would cover 1000 years of history in just over an hour. What I learned from that class was how there ended up being so many tenements in Dublin. It was fascinating, to find out how this came about and then how the people lived in them and how they needed to be cleared after the people started burning the bannisters and other things just to stay warm.

With Politics we always spent the second half of the session having a debate which I loved. I always ended up getting put on the side of the debate I disagreed with but that’s all part of it.

The Psychology was interesting but it was History and Politics that did it for me.

What happened then was we came down to Maynooth University for the Celebration of Learning Day to receive our certs. and we had a great day getting a tour of the campus and the Chapel. I got talking to this woman Áine who was on the Adult Education Return to Learning certificate who gave a great talk about coming to university as an older learner, she is 76. That’s what inspired me to sign up for the Return to Learning course myself. All of this started from the Communiversity. My family are delighted for me as are my friends. My doctor was so delighted to hear that I was going to university as she thinks it is so important for my health. I would recommend it to everyone who has a chance to participate in the Communiversity.

Bernie.