



**For a student like Morgan, traditional high school just didn't fit.** A bright and motivated young woman who values education, Morgan knew to advocate for herself and asked her parents for the opportunity to try something different. She switched to online schooling for a year and a half, but her online program didn't have any college counselors and Morgan knew she wanted to go to college. In her search for more support, she discovered Vermont Adult Learning.

"The moment I walked into the Burlington Learning Center it was exactly what I was looking for. It was an amazing feeling," Morgan recalled. She spent her Senior year with VAL and fell in love with the independence it afforded and the community she found.

***"Everyone at VAL was so helpful. They wrote me recommendations, called colleges, and had meetings with admissions. Everyone at VAL went above and beyond to help me reach my goals and I saw that effort and energy for others, too."*** -Morgan, VAL Graduate

"Everyone at VAL was so helpful. They wrote me recommendations, called colleges, and had meetings with admissions. Everyone at VAL went above and beyond to help me reach my goals and I saw that effort and energy for others, too. It was a very helpful and supportive environment," she said of her experience.

"I remember science and anything to do with STEM had always been a struggle for me in traditional school," Morgan reflected. "I was just a slow learner of math and science and needed someone to walk me through it on an individual level. VAL was able to do that with me and it was a really good experience!"

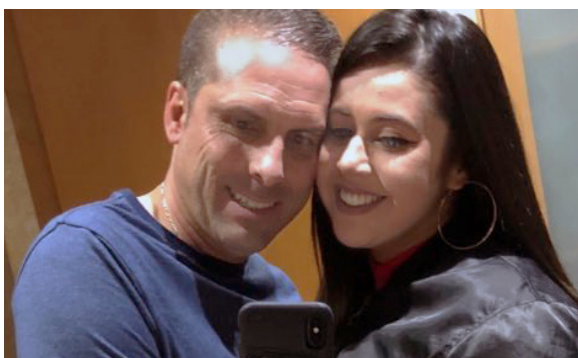
Thinking back on some of the individuals that made an impact, Morgan recalled, "There was a student teacher from UVM who was amazing and would stay late to help me out. My VAL math teacher was so nice and patient that it made me look forward to math class." When Morgan arrived at Emmanuel College in Boston she was nervous about college-level math. "I did pass and I really credit VAL for preparing me and establishing the basics of what I needed to know... Basically, when I got to college it felt like I'd already been taking college courses thanks to VAL."

Morgan graduated from Emmanuel in May 2022 and was accepted to grad school but is taking a breather to focus on writing and marketing work, which she loves. In addition to freelancing for an agency, Morgan founded her own business, Golden Copy, and works as a creative director with small businesses to help them develop, define, and maximize their online presence.

Even now, with her BA in hand and a business under her wing, Morgan's appreciation for VAL hasn't faded. When asked what she wishes people knew about VAL, she answered, "I wish more people knew they could go to VAL for the great resources and people!"

## *“I feel so much better about my English now..”*

-Maribel, VAL ELL Student



**Maribel’s story is a love story.** The Bogota, Colombia native met her partner, a Vermonter, online and discovered a match worth pursuing. After he traveled to Colombia to meet Maribel, they became engaged and Maribel returned with her now-husband to Georgia, VT in 2019.

Maribel’s husband helped her seek out opportunities to learn English and discovered VAL’s English Language Learning (ELL) program. “I feel so much better about my English now

than when I first got here,” Maribel shared.

Maribel’s increasing fluency with English is thanks, in no small part, to her VAL ELL teacher, Leigh.

“Leigh is so nice, patient, sweet - always so giving to the students,” Maribel beamed about her instructor. “She is always open and available if we need help. So supportive. Just a great human being - and so stylish! She has great energy and her personality is explosive!”

Now that Maribel has obtained her massage therapy certification in the US, she hopes to continue working towards a career as an esthetician. Her hope is to support her family back in Colombia and even get her brother to move to Vermont in the near future. Maribel encourages her brother to speak to her husband for fully-immersive learning, no doubt inspired by her own success in learning English.

## *“It was a journey I didn’t think I could ever finish, but I gave it my all..”*

-Laurentia, VAL Graduate



**For Laurentia, high school was literally a headache.** In the middle of tenth grade, she began suffering debilitating migraines that took a toll on her education. “I was trying ten times harder than anyone else and kept failing. Extra studying and tutors weren’t helping,” she explained. Despite her ongoing efforts, her father saw her struggling and suggested she drop out to tend to her health.

Some forty years later, Laurentia discovered Vermont Adult Learning and was inspired to resume her educational journey.

“It was a hard journey,” Laurentia shared. “It was a journey I didn’t think I could ever finish, but I gave it my all, 24/7. I lived, ate, and breathed school.”

When her VAL graduation ceremony came, Laurentia delivered a speech and was very thankful for the opportunity to tell everyone that her success was a team effort. “I had my husband, friends, family, all the VAL teachers I worked with, and God behind it all.”

When asked what she’d want people to know about VAL, Laurentia explained, “The teachers at VAL treat you as a whole person. Your body, your mind, and your soul.”

## From Our Executive Director



Dear Friends,

Spring is often a sign that the school year is ending, but at VAL, our work continues year-round. Whether inching closer to a high school diploma, sharpening up their English skills, or getting trained in the skills necessary for a well-paying new career, our students are committed to their educational goals, and our staff is committed to our students.

It is a pleasure to be able to support so many motivated and enthusiastic adult learners as they pursue their dreams. I hope you enjoy reading about some of their successes in this latest newsletter, knowing that your support is what helps make it happen.

Be well,

Hal Cohen, Executive Director  
hcohen@vtadulthoodlearning.org

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*Vermont Adult Learning (VAL) helps students 16 years and older build assets for success. We provide reading, writing, math, financial literacy, English Language Learning, academic & career advising, career and job development, and high school completion services... all FREE!*

*Learn more at [www.vtadulthoodlearning.org](http://www.vtadulthoodlearning.org)*

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**Vermont Adult Learning**  
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