## Personal Growth Through Community Education By: Juliana TEON (julianateon@yahoo.com)

After graduating with a Marketing degree, I exclaimed to myself, "Woohoo! Time to put on my big girl pants and explore the world." Eager to embrace the professional realm, I was fuelled by ambition and dreams. Unfortunately, I found myself in a toxic, competitive environment that drained my enthusiasm. Each trip to the office became a source of dread, steeped in office politics, transforming happiness into a distant memory.

In search of fulfillment, I came across a job advertisement for a preschool teacher. The idea of working with children sparked a sense of joy within me. I applied on a whim, and to my delight, received an offer. The moment I stepped into the classroom, surrounded by the laughter and curiosity of young minds, I felt a profound sense of purpose. I realized I could make a positive impact in their lives, which became one of the happiest moments of my life.

My life took another turn when my family decided to migrate to Australia. Starting fresh in a new country with three young children felt daunting and required immense courage. I stepped back from my professional life to embrace motherhood, cherishing these invaluable moments with my kids. Yet, the desire for personal growth lingered. Pursuing a qualification in Early Childhood Education had always been on my list, and I knew I had to make it a reality for my own sense of achievement.

As I approached my 40th birthday this October, the urge to revisit my dreams intensified. I explored online educational opportunities and stumbled upon the MCC website offering a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education. Excitement bubbled within me as I realized I could complete the course just before my birthday. It felt like the universe was conspiring in my favour, encouraging me to take the plunge.

I contacted MCC, feeling both nervous and exhilarated. They invited me for an assessment, and to my delight, the process was seamless. I was accepted on the spot, and my journey began. My trainer, Magdalena Rosandi, became a guiding light, providing support and encouragement throughout the process. The classroom transformed into a space of collaboration and inspiration, allowing my passion for education to flourish. Now, with just two weeks remaining in my course and a forthcoming work placement, I stand at a pivotal moment in my life. I am incredibly grateful to MCC for providing this opportunity. This journey is more than just a qualification; it represents my commitment to personal growth and the positive influence I can have on the children I will teach.

As I celebrate my 40th birthday this year, I reflect on this incredible journey and the lessons learned along the way. I thank MCC for helping to make my dream come true. I am excited for the path ahead, filled with laughter, learning, and the joy of nurturing young minds. Here's to new beginnings, rekindled dreams, and the endless possibilities that lie ahead! The sky's the limit!