

HOW I BECAME AN OPTICIAN...

A COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES

By Jessica, Optician

As I wavered in my decision about post-secondary education, I worked as a waitress. I soon realized my love for working in customer service; dealing with regular customers, making sure every one of them left the restaurant satisfied with their experience made me happy. I researched different courses available at community colleges and learned about and became interested in the Optician program.

I applied to the program, but had not saved enough money to cover my tuition fees. I had to postpone my application and was devastated! A few weeks after declining enrollment in the program, a customer I saw and served on a regular basis opened a path for me.

This individual customer came in at lunch hour and only had 30-40 minutes for his lunch break. He always made sure to sit in my section of tables because I always made sure his meal was served quickly. One day, this customer left after his lunch break and forgot a book on the table. On the cover of the book was the picture of an eye. The book seemed to be a textbook.

That same night, I ran into this customer downtown and told him he had forgotten his book. When he came to the restaurant the next day to pick up his book, I asked him if he was an eye specialist. He confirmed that he was an Ophthalmologist working at a clinic close to the restaurant. I mentioned that I was interested in pursuing a career as an Optician and wanted to start a training program the following year.

The next day when this customer came into the restaurant, he pulled me to the side and explained that he knew the owner of an optical business who was looking for a technician. He gave me the owners name and phone number; I called and met the owner that same week. When we met, the owner told me that if I worked with her business for a year and was still interested in eyecare, she would pay for my enrollment in the NAIT Optical training program. I accepted her offer!

During that year, there was a change of ownership with the business. Although the agreement to pay my tuition fees was with the previous owner, the new owner graciously offered to honour the agreement and payed for my training program with NAIT!

I have now been a Licensed Optician for 2 years. Knowing that I play a roll in making patients happy makes me so proud! I love what I do!