

September 29th, 2012

I would like to thank PIE for helping me complete my high school education in a fun, efficient, and effective way.

To the individuals who would like to tell us that a homeschooled education is inadequate, I would just like to point out that my siblings and I were homeschooled for an average of 11 out of 12 grades. I am now on the final stretch of a Bachelor's degree in Engineering at UBC, my next-eldest sister made the Dean's List for pre-veterinary medicine at UPEI, my other sister earned one of the 30 placements in a competitive H-Kin program, and my brother graduated high school a year ahead of schedule, and is now playing hockey (with college on the side). We could not have done so well without our Mom's incredible dedication to her kids and our education; but the teachers at PIE were the best resource she ever stumbled upon.

In 11 years, I was accountable to a lot of different long-distance-education teachers, and not all of them are good ones. In fact, right before I switched to what became the PIE program, I had one of the worst, least involved, most apathetic and most discouraging teachers ever. Every single report card he wrote me (even the final one) was the same: "I look forward to seeing Natasha complete Math 8." He never acknowledged that I HAD completed Math 8, so I thought that I had not....As an insecure math student, there was nothing more defeating than to feel like no matter how hard I worked, it was never good enough. Students don't realise that there is such a thing as a bad teacher; especially when it's a long-distance teacher whom they have never met (because he never bothered to take the time). I assumed that my teacher had looked at my work and had given my report card genuine consideration: therefore he must think my math was inadequate, so I must be bad at math. School became a miserable, defeating chore for me, and I hated math with a vengeance.

Working with Pat Lewis and Stephanie Hall put the joy back in learning again. Thank heavens I met them before I dropped out of math completely --- because now I am an engineer.

Pat was my first teacher with PIE. She helped my Mom save my math career, because of her earnest but not exaggerated encouragement and the genuine consideration she gave to every single one of her students. I didn't recognise the difference between her and my previous teacher at the time; but I am very grateful for it now.

Stephanie has succeeded Pat as not only an incredible person, but the best kind of teacher you could wish for. I still cannot believe the unsurpassable amount of energy she puts into following her students' progress and adapting our learning environment so that it is the best it can be for each of us to succeed. No one is ever overlooked by Stephanie. She would rewrite the entire curriculum for each of us in whatever way was easiest for us to understand, if only she had time.

As every good homeschooling parent can see, there is a lot of work involved in long-distance education. In spite of everything it takes to tend to a classroom that stretches for hundreds of kilometers, PIE teachers, like Stephanie and Pat, work wonders on a daily basis. They provide curriculum material, keep in touch with all their students, write report cards and handle paperwork, oversee exams and legitimize

our education, act as references and advisors, and – a phenomenon in itself – they diplomatically handle everyone’s issues, requests, preferences, complaints, and the inevitable (but hopefully rare!) demands to which one person seems to think they are entitled, but are ridiculous for any individual to ask.

I can only say that Stephanie and Pat are the best teachers a kid could have. For restoring the faith of struggling students, for tailoring the learning material within the confines of the BC curriculum to help students succeed, and for everything else PIE’s teachers do to help put the joy in learning, PIE is a truly wonderful program.

Thank you sincerely.

Natasha