Teachers who make a difference

Jo Anne MacDonald

*NSTU president Shelley Morse presented Community College faculty member Jo Anne MacDonald with her **Teachers Make A Difference** Award at the Strait Area Campus on April 1. They are shown with Community College Local executive member Julie Marchand (Business Faculty member), NSTU Campus rep Carroll MacIsaac (Carpentry Faculty member), and Strait Area Campus Business Academic Chair Christena Goyetche.*

As a faculty member instructing in NSCC's Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) program, Jo Anne MacDonald teaches her students to become competent and compassionate care workers, so they can enhance the lives of the people and communities they serve. In turn, Jo Anne MacDonald enhances her students' lives and she has been recognized for that as this year's Community College recipient for NSTU's *Teachers Make A Difference* program.

"I was very surprised to be nominated, but I was also very honoured," she says. "I was excited to be recognized by a student."

It's evident in the nomination from one of her students that she is worthy of the recognition. *"I am nominating my instructor—teacher Jo Anne MacDonald. She has been an amazing instructor for my fellow classmates and me. I have very high anxiety and going back to college at 38 was so scary for me. She made me feel so calm and relaxed and made feel that no matter what, I can do this! She gave me confidence to succeed. She makes our course so realistic that you can not help but enjoy and learn, she always puts us first and will help us no matter what!"*

As a Registered Nurse of 40 years, MacDonald is able to relate and connect her experience for the benefit of her students. "I started my teaching career as a casual Nursing Faculty at Strait Area Campus in October 2000, assisting the core faculty in the Skills Lab," she says. "As an RN I did teaching every day with patients and other nursing staff, and this helped me tremendously to adjust to teaching in front of a class of eager students."

She began teaching in the CCA program but also worked with the Practical Nursing Program at the Pictou Campus for several months before getting a full time job with the CCA Program at the Strait Area Campus in 2002, where she currently teaches. "I teach all the subjects for the CCA Program, she says. MacDonald has also taught for the Practical Nursing Program and is a facilitator for the Alzheimer's Course and Palliative Care Course.

MacDonald says it's nice to be recognized through the *Teachers Make A Difference* program. "It just adds a little more meaning to the hard work a teacher does," she says. "The entire campus celebrated my win. It was exciting. It was so nice to hear congratulations so many times."

"But I certainly do not teach with the thought of getting a reward," she continues. "My reward is watching the students walk across the stage at graduation. So many of the students have many challenges they have to deal with while taking the course— family life, raising children, being a single parent, working part time. I am so proud to be a part of their successful journey."

Her passion for her students, teaching and her program has clearly made an impact for her students, campus and community.

"I was very humbled that a student took the time to nominate me. I tend to expect a lot from my students and I want them to be the best caregiver they can be. It certainly makes a person feel good to be told they are doing a good job. I feel so blessed to work at a job that I truly love and to be recognized for my dedication is rewarding."