



# HONORING COMMUNITY SUCCESS:

## *Overcoming Burnout, Embracing Purpose*

***"It's scary to take that first step, but there's something beautiful about stepping into the unknown."***



*Before joining the Apatisiwin program, Paige Sedore spent seven years working as a housekeeper at the Holiday Inn. While she was committed to her work, the demands of the job left her feeling burned out and stuck. "I was struggling with my mental health, had just gotten out of a toxic relationship, and was barely getting by financially," Paige recalled. The stress had taken a toll, and she knew something needed to change.*

That change came when a team member at the Niagara Regional Native Centre introduced her to the Apatisiwin program. It was a pivotal moment. "I realized I could go back to school and build a career," Paige said. After connecting with a program worker and learning more about the supports available, she enrolled in the Social Service Worker program at Niagara College—and never looked back.

"My experience with Apatisiwin was incredible," Paige shared. "The staff truly cared about my success and supported me through every concern." What stood out most was how the program uplifted Indigenous individuals and gave them the tools to pursue post-secondary education. "Apatisiwin empowers people to overcome barriers that we, as Indigenous individuals, face every day in the education system."

One unforgettable moment for Paige was being chosen by Niagara College faculty to receive the Jacqueline P. Roberts Award. "It meant the world to me. I felt like my academic accomplishments were not just recognized, but deeply appreciated." Her dedication paid off—she graduated on the President's Honour Roll with an outstanding 97% average.

But for Paige, success wasn't just about grades—it was about transformation. "Before Apatisiwin, I didn't think I was intelligent or capable. My confidence was low. But with their support and my hard work, I realized I was more than capable."

Throughout her time in school, she gained an array of practical and emotional tools that have helped prepare her for the future. "In the Social Service Worker program, we talk about adding tools to your toolbox. By the end, mine was overflowing. I learned de-escalation, facilitation, assessing mental health—skills I use every day in the field."

NRNC played a major role in her growth, both academically and personally. "Everyone welcomed me with open arms, even though I didn't know anyone. I felt seen and supported from the start. That gave me the confidence I needed to succeed."

Today, Paige is living proof that change is possible. A 2024 graduate, she now works as the Transitional Support Worker at Abbey House, part of the NRNC team. "I'm still learning—about the job, about others, and about myself. I hope to give back by supporting other women through their own healing journeys, just as I was supported through mine."

Her advice to others considering the Apatisiwin program is simple but powerful: "Do it. It's scary to take that first step, but there's something beautiful about stepping into the unknown." She hopes her story reminds others that growth often begins when we confront our fears. "Indigenous people are intelligent, we are capable, and we deserve the lives we strive for. Sometimes the biggest challenge is believing that."

Outside of her work, Paige finds joy in painting and drawing, hiking in nature, and exploring her unique hobbies—like insect pinning and collecting vinyl records. She brings creativity and heart into everything she does.

From burnout to honour roll, Paige Sedore is proof that with the right support, healing, and hard work, anything is possible.

