

## HECTOR-BESNER COLLEGIAL SCHOLARSHIP 2017

(by Patricia Besner)

For the brand new "Hector-Besner" scholarship, the Collège de Valleyfield Foundation received 16 applications. It was not easy for the selection committee to choose the best or the best candidate. The evaluation grid had five main themes: the rationale for the application, the maintenance of an optimal level of well-being (overcoming, determination, etc.), implications and achievements to date, career goals, quality of the file.

After a careful study of each file, a candidate stood out from his peers: **Alexis Dufresne-Diamond**.

Alexis is a young man of 28 and a brand new dad.

After starting studies in psychology at UQAM, he decided to completely change sector and started a computer science technique at the Collège de Valleyfield in 2015. He is aiming for a degree in software engineering from UQAM and, if possible, continue with a master's degree in order to specialize in the integration of intelligent systems.

As we already explained, the Hector-Besner scholarship is primarily intended to reward the perseverance of our students. Here's how Alexis, in connection with his life experiences, defines perseverance:

"I personally believe that school perseverance is accompanied by a passion for what we study. Applying our learning to the service of others is a great way to reinvest what we learn in our courses. Through the CARI (Information Resource Resource Center) that I managed for 3 sessions, I was able to use all my knowledge and perfect my learning. It was a rewarding experience that allowed me to realize how good I was in my job and my passions. Now, I pursue similar goals of sharing with other students by getting involved with CATI and mentoring with my peers.

Perseverance is also to continue despite the pitfalls that occur along the way. These pitfalls teach us to become better. With my particular academic background, I learned the importance of continuing, reaffirming and never giving up. Being a former dropout, I understand the benefit and relevance of education. During my university studies, I wanted to improve my way of studying and sharing it with others. This work led me to discover the computer since my project led to the creation of a software. This is how I discovered a new passion and wanted to persevere in this direction.

Perseverance is about accomplishing great things. It is to seize the opportunities that surround us, to maintain them and to lead them to success. I was fortunate to have people who accompanied me in some projects such as my restaurant or the customer loyalty system for the cafeterias of the Trois-Lacs School Board. I intend to seize other opportunities to create tools to help people in their daily lives.

Perseverance is also the desire to succeed. That's why I will get my degree in computer science and I would like to continue my studies at university while being a new dad. Above all, perseverance is to want to succeed and to put all the efforts possible and necessary in order to achieve it. "

A few days after sending her file to the director of the Collège de Valleyfield Foundation, she received an "additional information" from Alexis. I give you this additional information:

"As I completed my form before one of the most difficult and certainly the most incredible weekends of my life, I wanted to add some information: Thursday, February 16, 2017, I entered the hospital without knowing that I will stay there for five days. I was admitted because my kidneys were flinching. Saturday, February 18, it was my girlfriend's turn to go to the hospital. She was 39 weeks pregnant. 24 hours later, she gave birth to our first child, Charles-Loïc.

While I was confined to my bed for forced rest and a huge amount of solutes injected into my veins, I wondered how I could help the one I loved; during the short periods when I was allowed to visit her and she was in pain because of the contractions, I would have grown exhausted to help her. The adventure had a happy ending: we were able to leave the hospital together on Tuesday at the end of the day.

It is a very difficult experience to be helpless in a situation where one is, at the base, only a companion. Today, looking at this little being with a new look, I would like, if one asks my son what perseverance is, he answers "my father". "

With such a philosophy of thought, Alexis is certainly dedicated to a bright future and that is what we wish him.

The presentation of the various college scholarships was held on Wednesday, May 31, 2017 at noon. Alas, Alexis could not be present because he had started an internship the previous Monday and, you will agree with me, that for him, the moment was badly chosen to already ask for a leave. On the other hand, he had taken the trouble to write a thank you letter to express his gratitude to our Association for the scholarship he had received. Here is what he had to say to you:

" Hello everyone, I am Alexis Dufresne-Diamond, the recipient of this year's Hector Besner Award. I was selected for the perseverance that I demonstrated throughout the year, but also at various points in my school career. If you allow me, I will take a few minutes to talk to you about it.

First, I was a young school dropout. In the job market from the age of 17, I did not find a place that suited me. This time allowed me to think and choose the career that I would like. However, it was difficult to go back to school, initially because of lack of motivation and later for lack of money. Now, the scholarship you gave me helps me as I continue my studies in programming and have a child.

Unfortunately I cannot be here today due to my internship that started this week. However, I wanted to write you this letter in order to thank you for having offered this scholarship that helps students with an atypical career.

Cordially

**Alexis Dufresne-Diamond »**