

# Roxanne's Story

## The WCB Helped Cabinetmaker with an Occupational Disease Retrain to Work in Technical Drafting

For many years, Roxanne Gerardy worked in cabinetmaking. She worked in the finishing room and on the shop floor, using saws and power tools to build office furnishings and cabinets. Roxanne also helped with assembly and installations – whatever was needed.

"I liked the hands-on nature of my work," recalls Roxanne. "At the end of the day, I could turn around and say, 'I made that.'"

However, the enjoyment of her work came to a screeching halt a few years ago. "I worked for a while in the morning and all of a sudden, I couldn't breathe," says Roxanne.

Her family doctor diagnosed Roxanne with asthma and prescribed an inhaler. She rested and went back to work the next day. But when she got to the shop floor, the breathing problems persisted.

After going on sick leave, filing a WCB claim and having her breathing problem diagnosed, Roxanne learned she had developed an occupational disease. She could no longer work with isocyanates (chemicals used in the manufacturing process).

Because working in cabinetmaking was no longer an option, Roxanne met Joe Distasio, a WCB vocational rehabilitation consultant. "He was a pleasure to work with from day one," remembers Roxanne. "Joe cared about my health and wanted to help me get back to work."

Together, Joe and Roxanne analyzed her transferable skills and career options. As a result, the WCB recommended that Roxanne enroll in a technical drafting program at Winnipeg Technical College. She graduated in the fall of 2008.

"Throughout the retraining process, Joe was my go to guy," says Roxanne. "He also helped me with my drafting studies by arranging for a loaner computer, so I could do my homework. The computer was a great asset and I graduated a straight 'A' student."

"Throughout the process, it was really encouraging to work with Joe and the WCB. I felt like someone truly cared."

Roxanne looks forward to putting her newly acquired architectural drafting and 3-D imaging skills to good use in her new career.



**"Joe cared about my health and wanted to help me get back to work."**