



Professional Computer Programmer And ECPI Graduate '76 Transformed Her Life

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Pregnant at 17 years old, Patti Hall-Johnson found herself facing some very big challenges. She dropped out of high school and soon after found herself raising a child alone. She worked double shifts at a restaurant, working in the kitchen and as a waitress to make ends meet.

“For me, it was life changing,” says Patti. “I was finally able to get health and life...”

As Patti considered her options, it became quickly apparent that her daughter's future rested not on her working around the clock, but rather resuming her education. After earning her GED, she was watching TV one day when she saw a commercial for ECPI College of Technology. This was 1976 and ECPI was still a relatively new school. In fact, it had not yet achieved university status. It did, however, provide skills-based education, much like it does today. Computers were still in their infancy and ECPI was exclusively focused on training computer programmers for an industry that could not get enough of them. Patti saw an opportunity.

"I look back when I was a young, struggling mother and I am just so grateful that I found ECPI. If not for my education, I do not know where I would be today. ECPI gave me the tools I needed to succeed. That's what education should do."

~Patti Hall-Johnson, Computer Programming Graduate

After passing an aptitude test, Patti began classes and quickly became proficient in three computer languages. With the help of her career service advisor, she was offered a position with *The Virginian-Pilot* as a computer operator. Over the next 22 years, she was promoted to programmer, then analyst, systems programmer, and network administrator. "For me, it was life changing," says Patti. "I was finally able to get health and life insurance, and really provide for my daughter."

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Patti is now a database administrator for *The New York Times*, and is the **founder of Shining Light Homes**, a not-for-profit organization that serves to assist struggling single mothers between the ages of 18 and 25. "I look back when I was a young, struggling mother and I am just so grateful that I found ECPI," she says. "If not for my education, I do not know where I would be today. ECPI gave me the tools I needed to succeed. That's what education should do."