



# Campus Women



## Dual Role For Many Single Parents

Today in our society it has become compulsory to get a degree in order to get a job. We now see our university population growing by leaps and bounds and the statistics if that population changing. No more are the students roaming the grounds all under the tender age of 25 but more and more are they people of "mature" status and many of these have already started a family.

I speak of the many single parent students, both male and female, that bravely register on a beautiful fall day for the event of their lives. This is not the usual jitters of a new experience for the motivation for these students is far different. Whether you achieve your goal does not just determine your future but the future if your children. Without this degree (presently that is becoming degrees) the chance of gainful employment is next to nil, the opportunity to climb out of the poverty level, to get off the welfare roll, never happens.

For the next four, and sometimes more, years children and parent will sacrifice much. Time for each other and time for themselves is an issue that the little ones never understand. Many nights are spent reading Anthropology 101 aloud with a two year old on your lap. There is no time for sitting in a library to research a paper, instead all the books are carted home. After the French homework of your son, the math of your daughter, the bedtime stories and after the last one is tucked into bed, you read, research, do homework, and study. This, as you can imagine, is not before the hour of ten p.m.

The money issue is a big one. Government Student Loans have not kept up with inflation and taxes. Children wear a lot of hand-me-downs and mom shops at froggies a lot. We are lucky in Prince Edward Island as the Department of Health and Welfare allows, with permission and after one year on the system, a person to attend post-secondary institution.

They pay for the basic minimum requirements of living and student loans pays the tuition and books. Without this, many women could never afford to go to school. In many provinces it is an either/or situation. Many women though are not on welfare, they live at home with their parents and their child and this eliminates student loans to a great degree. Others set up their own household, working long hours to meet the difference that loans do not cover. The single parent working to put themselves through school cannot study those extra hours to achieve the high marks necessary to win a scholarship. They can't meet a class with others for class projects or just socialize after class.

A very big part of being successful at University is socializing. Whether you are with your classmates or your friends, a professor in the lounge or getting involved in extra-curricular activities on campus, a student needs to know people on campus to pass. homework or notes you missed, the upcoming test to study for, the idea exchange, all these and more are a large part of getting through the maze. Speaking of missed work, the single parent is guaranteed to miss classes throughout a semester. Children get sick, become involved in accidents at their school and Christmas concerts, all of which need to be attended to by the one and only parent.

The life of a single parent takes in three shifts, the working one, the one for classes, and the one for family. It was once stated to me by a professor that I could not expect to raise "good Kids" since I was a single mom. Well I have proved them wrong but I must say not with any great deal of help from the system as it is set up. University is geared for the single, young, and moneyed student. There are no family events on campus, the day care is in sad shape and there are few awards for those in real need. For single moms, there is no woman's centre for the problems that arise needing another woman to listen. There is very little campus housing for families. I do pay MAPUS for the inroads they have made with family events and a telephone for emergencies but me