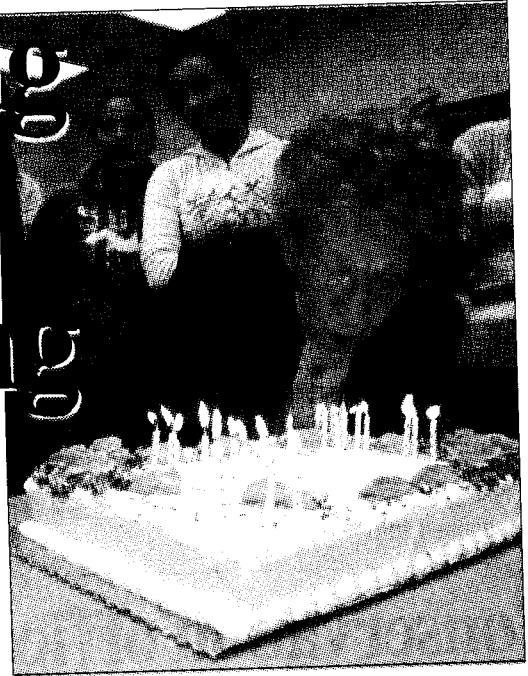


# Celebrating 21 at 88 years young

By **HEATHER MACBEATH**  
Special to The Daily Courier

A1



CHRIS STANFORD/The Daily Courier

"I'm dumbfounded. I'm so blessed," Catherine Dyson confessed to a class full of students and fellow instructors at Okanagan College on Thursday.

The students and instructors of the adult academic and career preparation program threw Dyson a birthday party celebrating her 88th birthday and honouring her 21 years as a literacy tutor.

"I trained her in her first time. She was in the first training when I was hired at the college," said Maureen Stephens, instructor at the literacy centre. "Her impact has been really great. She is very positive. She reinforces skills that are taught in the classroom, reinforces the skills that the student has. She's that person that works with the student one on one and gives the student extra support, extra praise."

"The marvelous thing is I think is watching them improve and even grater is watching their self-esteem rise as they get better with the English language," said Dyson. "It's a really satisfying thing to be doing."

**Okanagan College tutor Catherine Dyson blows out the candles on her 88th birthday cake Thursday as some of her students look on.**

Silvia Leska, one of Dyson's students echoes this sentiment. "She's just so patient. I know in high school, teachers got impatient with people and just left them, but I see her actually putting her effort into teaching people. It means a lot to her to see people succeed."

Most of Dyson's students who get help with spelling and reading know that is not all that Dyson is there for.

"You can talk to her about anything," said student Regina Teichroeb.

**Continued on page A4**

## Tutor

**Continued from page A1**

"She's a very lovely lady. I really enjoy talking to her," agreed Barbara Dumbovic, another of Dyson's students.

During the past two decades, adult academic and career preparation program provides a resource for students to come get help on a variety of academic and personal issues from reading and spelling to math and help with driver's licences or citizenship papers.

"Literacy tutoring can be a whole range depending on the needs of the student," said Stephens. "Dyson is easy to work with and adaptive. She can rise to that occasion; she has a very good background in English."

Dyson, who began her tutoring career after retiring as a nurse in 1986, has also volunteered in many other ways throughout the community over the years.

"I've always volunteered for something or other. I started a Girl Guide group many years ago. Then in the days when you used to go house to house to collect for the Heart Foundation, I did that. I did Meals on Wheels for quite a few years," said Dyson.

"You've got to give something back to the community, that's why I do it. I love it."