

Matthew Capowski joins NABIS as Information Coordinator



I have enjoyed living in the Edmonton area most my life, except for a brief stint in Calgary. I studied at the University of Alberta and graduated with a degree in Psychology.

My previous employment includes youth crisis intervention and casework at a day centre for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental illness and brain injury. My interests include

computing, hiking, graphic design, transpersonal psychology and recreational vehicles.

The multidisciplinary nature of the Information Coordination position immediately attracted me. The most important part of the position is the opportunity to participate with extraordinary individuals as they adapt to the circumstances that their brain injury has created. My self acquired information technology skills are proving useful and I am comfortable work-

ing within the NABIS infrastructure. I hope to offer valuable operational feedback.

The sincerity and dedication of the NABIS staff and volunteers impresses me, and I aim to meet the high standard of meaningful contributions set forth.

I wish to thank **Capital Regional Health Authority** for funding my position and **James H. Brown** for funding the NABIS display at the University of Alberta Hospital Neurology Unit, which I attend twice a week.

I look forward to hearing from you and providing brain injury information and referrals that make a difference.

The Information Coordinator provides information and referral to survivors, family, caregivers, professionals, and the public. Tailored educational sessions and displays are provided to interested groups and during Brain Injury Awareness Week. A lending library with extensive information on brain injury is maintained. Administrative, information technology, and staff support is provided whenever possible.

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that's what four such people received last week, courtesy of Tony Gellings of Adventure Alberta Ltd. and Big Lake Country Tourism.

Four men from Edmonton who suffer the effects of brain injury, plus supervisor, George Kapetanakis, of Networks Activity Centre of Alberta, went out on the lake on the evening of July 25 and again all day on the 26th. The Leader was there at the launch, and spoke to George Majeed. "We lost our lifestyle," he said. "We have no opportunities. Thank God for Tony and Tanya Samizadeh (former manager of Big Lake Country Tourism) for opening this door. It's not about disability. It's about ability...what we can do." Equally thrilled about the trip were Cliff Metz, Richard Hanes and Rob McKay. Supervisor, George K. explained that brain injury victims usually retain all their knowledge, but have problems with short-term memory and organization of tasks, which often makes them unemployable and can be quite frustrating for a variety of reasons. They subsist on AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped), which is barely enough to live on. The Networks group organizes social and recreational activities for them, and contributions like that of Gellings sure do help, Kapetanakis said. Highlight of the trip - Rob McKay caught a 14 lb. jackfish!

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On June 27, myself, Ginny, and two board members, Bruce Hirsche and Lydia Kawun were able to meet with the minister of Alberta's Seniors and Community Supports, the Honourable Greg Melchin. We were able to discuss many of the challenges of people faced by people with brain injuries and their caregivers. As well, we outlined some of the issues facing service providers in the Alberta human services climate. Mr. Melchin had many excellent questions, and seemed genuinely interested in what we had to say in our one hour meeting.

Finally, I had the opportunity to go to Montreal from July 12 to 15 to attend and present at the annual conference of the Brain Injury Association of Canada. I was the guest of the Brain Injury Association of Alberta; thank you to BIAA's President, Meloni Lyon. I was able to meet and network with a great number of very dedicated and interesting people from all across Canada. I look forward to an ongoing relationship with Brain Injury Association of Canada.

In closing, I am looking forward to the coming year on the NABIS Board of Directors and I hope everyone had a good summer and had some fun.