

By Matthew Capowski, NABIS Information Coordinator

WOWSA 2008! A new year, the excitement of a full twelve months of potential ahead. After a brain injury returning to one's previous job may not be an option and it might take a long time before any paid employment can be resumed. Not being able to work is not the end of the world. There are other ways to get the involvement and satisfaction work provided. **However, all the other ways require motivation.**

A good way to tell how well someone is going to do after a serious injury is to look at how motivated they are. People with goals, dreams, ambitions, projects, social and community connections, interests or hobbies, will do well. People who have given up and think they cannot do much or that there is nothing out there for them, will do poorly. No matter what has happened your attitude can help or harm you. Have a good attitude, find and discover things to be motivated about, and try your best. In this issue of NABIS News we've tried to bring you stories of marvelously motivated people - highly motivated after a brain injury.

## Gabi Approaches her Employment Goal

by Tamina Selig,  
*EmployAbilities*

Gabi Meyer has a smile that lights up a room when she talks about the Yukon, where she came from. Her roots are in Whitehorse, but she moved to Edmonton with her family because there are more career opportunities in a city this size for a person with a brain injury. Gabi was fourteen, at a friend's birthday party when she got a severe headache and had to sit down. Within moments she had passed out and remembered nothing until she awoke in the hospital. Fortunately one of the moms attending the party was a nurse and she recognized the need for professional help fast. It was a long time before Gabi understood what had happened. She had a brain hemorrhage and after successful surgery her life took a twist that left her with a new set of challenges.

"My life was changed in a moment," Gabi says, "I had to re-learn how to walk, talk, feed and dress myself." With help from the Glenrose Hospital's Rehabilitation Program and the Northern Alberta Brain Injury Society (NABIS) Gabi has learned how to use tools like a day timer and palm pilot to cope with her permanent short term memory loss.

Gabi has had various jobs in the food services industry along with a job in interior decorating and at a



wood and sign shop in Whitehorse. "I disclose to employers at the interview that it takes me a little longer to remember procedures and I ask for patience," says Gabi. Unfortunately without an advocate it has not worked as successfully as hoped.

It was Michael Pyska at NABIS that put Gabi in touch with EmployAbilities and introduced the **integrated training program for the hospitality industry**. "It's been very useful" says Gabi. "I have been trained in five different areas of the tourism industry, everything from accommodations to food and customer service." Gabi is in the process of finishing the course and deciding on which of those areas to seek employment. People are her love and her goal is to become self sufficient and participate in society through work.

EmployAbilities clients may have more than one disability or health condition. These may range from physical, learning, developmental, mental health, or sensory conditions. It is estimated that about one in seven Albertans have some type of disability, and the incidence and severity of the disability increases with age. If you know someone who could use help finding a job or the training to find employment call:

**EMPLOY**  
*Abilities*

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