



## **STORY SUGGESTION**

**Nov. 9, 2011**

### **Finding intrigue in dementia at a young age**

#### **Anthony Kupferschmidt, Richmond**

From an early age, Anthony Kupferschmidt has been no stranger to health care facilities. Frequently visiting his mother who at the time was working as a nurse, a natural comfort for the environments surrounding health care developed. These visits created the opportunity for him to get involved in health care by first working at a care facility in his home town when he was 18 by doing maintenance work and then organizing recreational activities for persons with dementia at the facility. Anthony found enjoyment in working with people with dementia, and continued this work during the summer and over the Christmas holidays for the first few years of his undergraduate degree. That sparked an interest to study aging further through research and psychology.

He went on to study gerontology at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and to work as a neuropsychometrist in the Clinic for Alzheimer Disease and Related Disorders at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Hospital. There, he conducted and scored the tests that psychologists use to diagnose dementia. It was here where Anthony gained an open view educational experience through working with people at different stages of dementia. The science behind the aging brain of adults was intriguing enough to motivate him to learn as much as possible about the subject and to develop that intrigue into a career.

Prior to heading to B.C. to pursue his education further, Anthony spent some time serving on the Board of Directors at the Alzheimer's Society in Kingston, Ont. and has maintained a connection with the Society ever since.

"The non-profit sector has always been attractive to me," says Anthony, who is currently a regional Support and Education Coordinator for the Alzheimer Society of B.C. at the Richmond / South Delta Resource Centre. "One aspect certainly is that organizations of this nature can focus on their vision, mission and core values without also having to appease shareholders or worry about making a profit. This allows the Alzheimer Society of B.C. to do what is necessary to support families affected by dementia."

Anthony spends much of his time as a Support and Education Coordinator leading educational sessions for persons with dementia, their family members and friends, and the general public. He also leads support groups for caregivers and persons with dementia, and offers one-on-one support for those in his community touched by dementia. Formally educated and deeply

experienced with the functions of the aging brain, Anthony uses that education in his support for those living with dementia as well as their caretakers and on their journey.

Just recently his grandmother was diagnosed with dementia. “My grandmother’s diagnosis certainly came as a surprise, despite being immersed in the world of dementia on a daily basis. I certainly feel that my training and experience in this field has prepared me to support her and my family on this journey,” says Anthony.

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