Living with an ‘invisible disability’

Brain injury survivors seek support, attempt to raise awareness of their struggles

RAYVENA AULKHAR WINDSOR

Carolyn Matthews would be stuck in traffic if she wasn’t always this forgetful.

The 43-year-old needs reminders on appointments, the time to drop off and pick up her son and which stores to stop at when shopping.

Matthews has to scribble down everything — everything — or risk forgetting it.

She wasn’t always this forgetful. But she still hadn’t come to terms with her brain injuries a few times a year.

Matthews is the perfect example. She was driving home on Dec. 29, 2006 when she was in a three-vehicle crash on Highway 12, just north of Sunderland. It took emergency crews an hour to extricate her from the crumpled vehicle. She couldn’t speak, prehended the extent of the injuries said. But she still hadn’t come to terms with her brain injuries.

“Everything was okay. But it’s not,” Matthews says. “I look normal so people think everything is okay. But it’s not — I can’t sit, I can’t write in to do an extended time.”

Matthews has made extensive changes because she has no support. She is not in a wheelchair and her needs are not automatically reasonable.”

Chandler said Matthews is the perfect example.

The report also calls on the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to mandate the establishment of Acquired Brain Injury Networks in cities.

“Brain injury survivors are mostly invisible and forgotten in our society yet are one of the most vulnerable populations,” she told a conference.

“Earlier this year, we had a similar request in several municipalities who have added such positions,” Love said.

“I’d like to help them and have them work with others who are in similar positions.”

Love says, “An invisible disability”

Ontario cities are appointing lead- ers to work on conserving electricity, but now it’s time for corpora- tions, hospitals and schools to ap- point their own energy conserva- tion “champions” to advance the movement, says the province’s chief energy conservation officer.

In her annual report, to be re- leased today at Queen’s Park, Peter Love says the municipal conserva- tion programs he recommended last year have worked and new posi- tions were added in 12 cities.

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