



CONCORDIA
University College of Alberta

Keeping Concordia's Alumni & Friends Connected & Informed

Alumnus Profile: Christopher Ducharme



Some may remember Concordia alumnus and former CSA External VP Chris Ducharme as 'slipper guy' or as 'poetry guy'. As the nicknames imply, this former sociology student could often be found tirelessly working around campus in his slippers and capturing his passion for activism through his poetry. After graduating in 2003, Chris took that passion, energy and talent and brought his activism to another level.

Due in great part to a devastating and formative childhood event, Chris has dedicated most of his adult life to addressing the needs of those who have lost a loved one to homicide. In 1996 Chris' mother, Patricia Grace Ducharme was murdered in Campbell River, BC by her ex-boyfriend and former Vancouver City Police Officer, Brock Joseph William Graham. "I was 14 when I lost my mother and over the past 13 years my journey to recovery and healing has made me aware of the lack in systems and supports that must be in place in our community for victims of such traumatic events". According to this courageous alumnus, there are currently no formal support groups in British Columbia available exclusively for victims of homicide. This surprising fact however is something Chris hopes he can help change.

On April 15, 2009 Chris began a new position as the Director of Public Relations for the BC Bereavement Helpline. The BCBH is a non-profit charitable organization which provides bereavement support for those across the province who have lost loved ones. "I feel I have finally found a duty that compliments my passion for working with victims and the bereaved". In his new position, Chris is working to create a Survivors of Murder Support Group for Greater Vancouver. "This support group will offer those who have been affected by homicide an opportunity to share their story, honor their loved one, and receive ongoing, cost-free, support in a comfortable and safe environment. From my personal experience as a victim, the most beneficial step to healing in absence or in addition to family support is, quite simply, by sharing with those who can relate through similar experiences".

In addition to creating a support group Chris also hopes to diminish the stigma associated with the legal term "*Victim of Homicide*" by bringing to light the term: "*Survivors of Murder*". As Chris explains, "this term isn't necessarily wrong – it's just not moving ahead. The more I learn about the organizations available to victims of homicide the more I'm convinced there needs to be a greater focus on healing". According to Chris, many people who have lost a loved one to murder become stuck in a state of victimization. "If you want to be able to cope with the loss and move forward you have to make a choice to do just that—it's a decision. That may sound easy to say and hard to do, but as a survivor myself, I know it's possible".

Alumni & Friends Reception!

Don't miss this opportunity to reconnect with your Alma Mater!

Saturday, May 23rd
Marriott Hotel
7571 Westminster Hwy
Richmond, BC.
6:00—9:00 PM

RSVP @ 780-479-9232 or kate.ogorman@concordia.ab.ca

Kelowna Reception on May 24th CANCELLED

His approach to dealing with bereavement continues to find expression through his poetry. Chris shares his personal journey of healing through two self-published books of poetry: *Live like a Dream* and *The Truest Aspiration of a Poet*. The latter title is a compilation which Chris began writing while still a student at Concordia and can be found in Concordia's Library. The poems are in chronological order and span over five years documenting his experiences in coping with the loss of his mother. Chris hopes a third anthology entitled *Murder Moved Me* will become available for purchase in the near future, pending a publisher.

It is obvious that this alumnus is living proof that greatness can in fact come from great tragedy. "As a student at Concordia, I found I had a great support network of faith, friends and professors and they helped to provide me with the confidence and passion I needed to pursue my current career/life direction". We are proud to call Chris one of Concordia's own and we continue to encourage him in his activism.



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Volunteers Needed!



ARE YOU INVOLVED?

Concordia values alumni involvement. Your knowledge and expertise are tremendous assets that can benefit the University. Every alum who participates strengthens the Concordia community. No job is too big or too small, from stuffing envelopes to serving on council to connecting with alumni over the phone, we need your help! Join the many alumni who are volunteering their talents and building experiences that are meaningful, rewarding and fun.

GET STARTED

Begin your volunteer career at Concordia by submitting your Volunteer Application Form found on the Alumni website @ <http://alumni.concordia.ab.ca/>, or contact Kate O'Gorman, Development & Alumni Relations Officer directly to find opportunities that match your interests. You might volunteer to begin an alumni club, serve on a reunion committee, or help with an event.

VOLUNTEER ROLES FOR ALUMNI

- Alumni Association Executive Council
 - Current opening for Secretary/Treasurer
- Administrative Support
 - Envelope stuffing
 - Alumni Calling Program
- Event Support
 - Grande Masque Gala at The Fairmont MacDonald Hotel
 - Convocation
 - The Concordia Open Golf Tournament
 - Organize a reunion
- Concordia Where You Live Volunteer – Concordia Alumni Association
 - Begin a Concordia Branch and host events in your own city.

For more information, contact:

Kate O'Gorman, Development & Alumni Relations Officer

PH: 780-479-9232 or 780-554-0819

E-mail: kate.ogorman@concordia.ab.ca

Volunteering at Concordia benefits both you and the University.

The more you volunteer, the more opportunities you have to make an impact!

Our Concordia... Your Concordia

Golf with an Edmonton Eskimo Alumnus and support Concordia University College of Alberta

Wednesday, May 27th, 2009

Belvedere Golf & Country Club

Modified Stroke Play – play your own ball
8 a.m. Shotgun start

To register or make a donation to Concordia contact Katherine Hutton at: 780.479.9247 or
E-mail: katherine.hutton@concordia.ab.ca

Your support of Concordia helps develop the young leaders of tomorrow who create the strong, prosperous, caring communities we call home.

For more information visit:

<http://alumni.concordia.ab.ca/concordia-open-golf-tournament-2009/>

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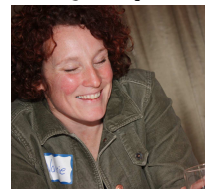
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REGINA

ALUMNI & FRIENDS RECEPTION



Laughter and memories abounded at Concordia's *Alumni & Friends Reception* in Regina this past Wednesday, April 29th. Dr. Gerald Krispin shared the future vision for Concordia while guests enjoyed an evening of good food and good company. As one alumnus commented, a good time was had by all! These receptions provide alumni living across Canada an opportunity to reconnect with their alma mater. Watch for an Alumni & Friends Reception coming to a city near you. You won't want to miss it!

