Grandmother’s dementia inspires Fixer to raise understanding of its effects.

Friday 8 March, 2013

A Lincoln Fixer whose grandmother suffers from dementia is campaigning to change attitudes towards the condition.

Kayleigh Duddin, 22, wants dementia patients to be treated with respect and more support for families who have a loved one suffering from the condition.

Kayleigh’s grandmother has suffered from vascular dementia for three years, and she says the illness has had a profound effect on her family.

Now with support from Fixers, the national movement of young people fixing the future, Kayleigh is going to start work on a short film aimed at raising awareness of the condition.

She hopes the film will highlight key aspects of dementia, the impact it has on sufferers and to encourage people not to ‘write off’ those with the condition.

“My nana is an enormous part of my life, she has always been there. From when I was born, right up until I went to university, she has been there for me,” Kayleigh says.

“Since being diagnosed with dementia, she’s not, and it’s hard, because she hasn’t died, but it’s not her, she’s not the person I knew.”

A report about Kayleigh’s campaign will feature on ITV News Yorkshire on Tuesday 12 March from 6pm.

Being so close to her grandmother, Kayleigh was surprised at how quickly the condition affected her.

As a result, Kayleigh took the decision to become a carer at Eastholme Nursing Home, inspired by the work of those looking after her grandmother.

“My nana was diagnosed with dementia three and half years ago and she went really rapidly. One day she knew who I was and the next she didn’t,” Kayleigh says.

“She’s being looked after in a care home and I think this is why I chose to work where I work in Lincoln, because someone is out there looking after my grandmother and I can give something back and look after somebody else’s.”

Having studied ‘drama in the community’ while at university, Kayleigh finds using music as a way of helping those in care remember things, a positive tool.

“I’ve learned that music helps people with dementia a lot. They may not be able to remember what they had for breakfast but they’ll always remember old songs.
I think it’s just magical.”

Kayleigh feels the way people suffering from dementia are perceived is wrong and that more needs to be done by people and professional to change perceptions.

“In this nursing home, we try to treat people with dementia with dignity and respect.
They’re human beings at the end of the day.

“We need to treat them with respect. If we can treat them like the person they once were, then we’re likely to get something back from them. I know I do.”

Robbie Lane from the Alzheimer’s Society agrees that generalisations are made towards people with dementia and that rising numbers of suffers requires better understanding.

“I think a lot of people are fearful of dementia, because they don’t know anything about it,” he says.

“It is something which is now affecting 800,000 people in the UK and that number is continuing to grow. It is really important that there is no stigma and more understanding of dementia.”

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Kayleigh hopes her film can help remove the stigma associated with dementia and more importantly, help people to see past the condition.

“I am going to work with Fixers to make a film to try and change people’s attitudes,” Kayleigh says.

“It was great that someone was willing to listen to my story and give me the opportunity to provide dementia the voice that it needs.

“My nana would be really proud of me doing this project. I think that’s why I am doing it.”

Fixers is a movement of thousands of 16 to 25-year-olds across the UK who are supported to take action and change things for the better, addressing any issue they feel strongly about.

How each Fixer tackles an issue is up to them – as long as they benefit someone else.

The award-winning Fixers project has already supported almost 7,000 young people across the UK to have an authentic voice in their community.

Now, thanks to a £7.2 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers will work with a further 20,000 young people over the next three years.

Each Fixer is supported to create the resources they need to make their chosen project a success, with creative help from media professionals to make their own promotional material, such as films, websites or print work.

Fixers is a trademark of the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT), a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.

“Fixers started in 2008 as just an idea… an idea given a voice by some 7,000 young people over the past five years,” says Margo Horsley, Chief Executive of PSBT.
“They have reached thousands of people with their work, on a national stage as well as in and around where they live. They choose the full array of social and health issues facing society today and set about making their mark. Fixers are always courageous and their ideas can be challenging and life-changing, not just for themselves but across communities.”
Peter Ainsworth, Big Lottery Fund UK Chair, said: “The Big Lottery Fund is extremely happy to be supporting Fixers to engage with more young people to change things for the better. Thousands of public-spirited young people across the UK are campaigning to make improvements in their own communities. By providing a platform to highlight their voluntary work and many achievements, Fixers demonstrates the positive contribution thousands of committed young people are making at a local level and challenges negative stereotypes.”

Two photos attached. Captions:
1. Kayleigh Duddin with residents of Eastholme Nursing Home
2. Kayleigh Duddin, 22, from Lincoln

For images, interviews or more information, please contact Sarah Jones in the Fixers Communications Team by email sarahj@fixers.org.uk or phone 01962 810970.

There are lots more stories about young people doing great things on the Fixers website, Twitter and Facebook pages:
www.fixers.org.uk
www.twitter.com/FixersUK
www.facebook.com/FixersUK

Notes to editors:

• Since 2008 some 7,000 young people in England have become Fixers and created 800 projects. Now with a £7.2 million grant from the Big Lottery Fund, Fixers is extending into Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.
• The Public Service Broadcasting Trust is a charity that brings together mainstream broadcasters, public and voluntary sector services, and viewers.
• The Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the largest distributor of National Lottery good cause funding, is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised for good causes by the National Lottery.
• BIG is committed to bringing real improvements to communities and the lives of people most in need and has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK

since June 2004. The Fund was formally established by Parliament on 1 December 2006.

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