

## Gerontology scholarship is awarded

For most people, the prospect of growing old can be frightening.

Many questions and concerns can arise along the way. Often one might feel overwhelmed or even lost.

"Aging is something that we all do everyday but don't really give it a lot of thought until we hit a mile marker of a birthday," says Ryan Tichener of Sparta, director of day services and marketing at Handishop Industries, Inc. "Most of us have seen the process of a person age either in our parents or grandparents and understand the process from a biased point of view from where we knew the person to where they are now."

Gerontology, the study of how to cope with aging and problems of the aged, has become an essential focus for many who not only desire to understand the aging journey, but would also like to work with elderly. Because of his interest in gerontology, Tichener was awarded a \$250 scholarship from the Gerontology Certificate Program Planning Committee in February, 2009. Tichener then enrolled in the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse Gerontology program, and in November, 2010, acquired his Certification.

"I really wanted to understand the process of aging. I really wanted to explore aging from the other side and really know what that person is experiencing," said Tichener, when asked why he had chosen Gerontology. "I think that this experience will help me to bridge the gap with the participants that may be a generation or two ahead of me and my staff and help us to understand their current experiences and enable us to give them the best service possible."

The UW-L Gerontology Certificate program included 60 hours of classes that covered several different topics on aging. Class topics were Essentials of Gerontology, Social Issues of Aging, Psychology of Aging, Drugs and Aging, Physiology of Aging, Quality Dementia Care Practices: Wondering, Falls and Physical Restraint Free Care, and End of Life Care.

Tichener intends on using his certification in gerontology to help better the services and opportunities offered to aged citizens through the Handishop Day Centers. The good news is that there is help for those who find themselves in the scary predicament of old age.