

# I'll Prove You WRONG



Stephen Pokocky, a 21-year-old child and youth work student at Loyalist, has autism and is often stereotyped for it. He says the most common stereotype he receives is that he is "incapable" of completing various tasks in his life. People tell him he's unable to complete tasks that people without autism complete regularly. He proves his stereotype wrong every day by attending college and studying regularly.



Dylan Geerts, a second-year animation student at Loyalist receives a lot of flack for his facial hair. His most common stereotype is that "guys with facial hair are creepy." In reality, his friends Mike Mastroianni and Teo Borza describe him as the friendliest guy they know.

The Oxford dictionary describes stereotypes as a widely held and oversimplified idea of a type of person. Stereotypes are assumptions that often hold no truth and are used to make uneducated judgments. What's the worst part of these stereotypes? We're guilty of using them every single day.

There are subjective beliefs right here at Loyalist. Students are being affected by the biases and stereotypes made by their peers and teachers. These stereotypes affect student's success as well as their ability to form new bonds and relationships. When other people reinforce the stereotypes, they become harder to break.

Stephen Pokocky, a child and youth work student with autism, says he's been stereotyped his entire life.

He says since coming to Loyalist, stereotypes regarding his autism have intensified.

Because autism is a learning disability, teachers and students alike assume that Pokocky will struggle more than other students.

Despite his stereotype, Pokocky is a successful student with a busy social calendar.

"Because I'm autistic, people assume I can't do things. I am a high functioning person with autism. People hear autism and think 'incapable,'" says Pokocky.

"To me, stereotypes are things that hold you back. It's based around a lie so people who don't know you can judge you. Friends don't stereotype friends."

Dylan Geerts, a Loyalist animation student agrees with Pokocky that stereotypes always lead to character misjudgments.

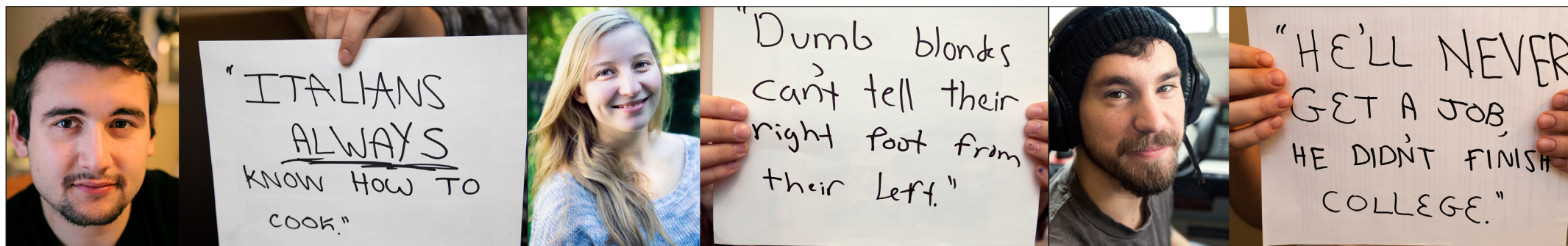
Geerts says he's constantly stereotyped and misjudged for having facial hair.

"The fact that I have a beard really turns some people off. They associate me with men who rob, mug, and threaten people, just because of my facial hair. None of it is true at all," says Geerts.

Despite his stereotype, Geerts is a popular person with many friends. Geerts says once people look past their "shallow judgments," they can have healthy relationships with any type of person. Friends of Geerts Teo Borza and Mike Mastroianni describe him as "the friendliest guy we [they] know."

Many other students face similar stereotypes. Everyone is affected by these stereotypes and are taught to confront them in different ways. As judgment is part of human nature, stereotyping will remain an intricate part of daily human interaction.

"Stereotypes hold you back. They're based on a lie so people who don't know you can judge you."



Tom Aceti, a 23-year-old Italian, is frequently stereotyped for being Italian. The most stereotypical misconception he receives is that he can cook. In reality, he relies on instant foods and microwave dinners to get by.

Jaclyn Rice, an 18-year-old child and youth work student, is often stereotyped as being a "dumb blonde." She proves her stereotype wrong by being an award-winning student throughout her academic career.

James Huot, a 23-year-old college dropout, is frequently stereotyped as a loser. People assume he is unsuccessful because he did not complete his post-secondary education. Huot proves his stereotype wrong by having a successful career as Senior Covert Operations for Geek Squad Canada.