BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT

2017 Walk for Thought
Save the Date!
May 20, 2017

Summer 2016

Inside this Issue:

Annual Conference	1-4
Donations	5
WFT Save the Date	6
Vision—Concussions	7
Holiday Stress	8
Support Groups	9

Heads Up is a publication of the Brain Injury Association of Vermont which does not necessarily endorse treatments, individuals, or programs which appear herein.

The Help Line
(toll-free number)
877.856.1772

PO Box 482
92 South Main St
Waterbury, VT 05676

www.biavt.org
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HEADS UP

Surviving and Thriving

That was the title of the keynote address and it is also emblematic of the Vermont Annual Brain Injury Conference. It continues to be a venue for the entire brain injury community. The challenge of providing uplifting, challenging and entertaining material was met thanks to a wonderful group of presenters.

Hannah Deane Wood

"...thanks for an educational/inspiring day "

Unmasking Brain Injury was the theme of this year's Survivor Art Show. Individuals identified emotions and then decorated masks to reflect their emotions. The stories that accompany the masks are moving and inspiring. The display is available to be placed in public spaces. Contact Barb at braininfo1@biavt.org if you can help facilitate a location. The idea behind Unmasking Brain Injury is to help the public understand the invisible brain injury. Thank you to the VT Occupational Therapy Association for sponsoring the Art Show.

Thanks to the Conference Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor: Courtney & Victoria Buffum Family Foundation

Gold Sponsors: Choice Support Services, DAIL, Downs Rachlin Martin PLLC, Lenny Burke Farm, Inc, PRIDE Support Services, Inc., Riverview Life Skills Center, Inc, University of Vermont Medical Center, VRS Disability Management

28th Annual Brain Injury Conference

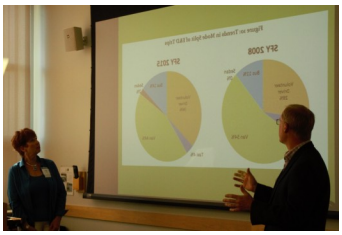
Lakshmi Boyle facilitated the Survivor Panel:

Bruce Fowler and Melissa Cronin

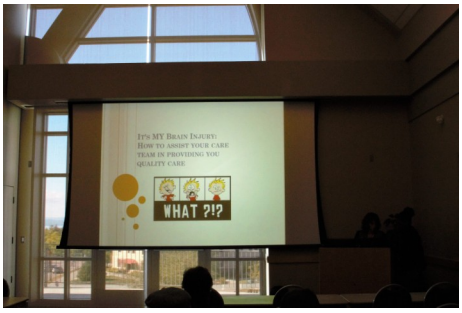
Hannah is a "Fantastic speaker, inspiring person ."
"Personal stories are always powerful" - Survivor Panel comment

Amazing Presentations

Therapeutic Drumming—Steve Ferrais

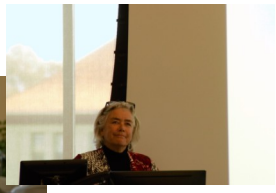


Transportation-Deb Sachs & Ross McDonald



Laura Basili

Carolyn Crotty



Marie Frohlich

Conference Planning Committee: THANKS!

Kevin Burke, MA, Lenny Burke's Farm; Brenda Buswell, Rutland Regional Medical Center; Michael G Denmeade BS, CTRS, CBIS, Director Therapeutic Recreation Department, Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center; Laura Flashman, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Neuropsychology Program at Dartmouth Medical School; Jane Hulstrunk, Herbalist and Brain Injury Survivor; Carole McCay, MSN, RN, CNS, Adjunct faculty UVM; Andre Courcelle ,TBI Grant Manager; Trevor Squirrell, MS, Executive Director BIAVT; Barb Winters, CBIST, BA, OTA/L, Outreach & Education Coordinator, BIAVT; Sue Zamecnik, MA, CBIST, **VR Counselor, VocRehab VT-**

The Annual Brain Injury Conference was lucky to have presentations by:

Maria Kajankova from Mount Sinai; Gillian Franks from CVOEO; Nathalie Kellie; Amber Fulcher, Tracy Roux and Benjamin Wimett from the Assistive Technology Project; Love Your Brain Yoga; Ross McDonald and Deb Sachs from GO!Vermont; Laura Basili from Middlebury College; Carolyn Crotty, Art Therapist; Kate Ross, Larry Becker and Sasha Ross-Becker; Chris Carter from Spaulding Rehab; Ashley Couture and Cheryl VanEpps; Jonathan Lichtenstein from DHMC; Marie Frohlich; and Steve Ferrais from the UVM Music Department.

And, Hannah Deene Wood, Bruce Fowler and Melissa Cronin.

Thank you all for sharing your expertise!

Some of the presentation materials are available for download at www.biavt.org under the conference

Governor's Awards

Employer of the Year– Fairbank Scales

Sue Delong, Trevor Squirrel, Judi Mcalenney

In the middle of July 2015 Fairbanks Scales had experienced loss of personnel that had left their Quality Management System (QMS) with many gaps. Then they were notified that the current employee responsible was resigning - just three months before their recertification audit .

A colleague who had worked with Sue Delong reached out to her for assistance. He was aware of her injuries and understood that she was very limited in her abilities. The knowledge base was still there, but learning new things was difficult. Fatigue, problems with vision, concentration, speech, motor function and headaches were issues for Sue now. Regardless, he made the recommendation to top management that she could help them gain the insight and direction they needed.

Sue was surprised at the attitude she met with at Fairbanks Scales. Words like "it doesn't matter how much you can do," "come in whenever you can," "this is our responsibility to make sure we recertify" and "we will take any measures we can to make this work." They gave her the only office with natural lighting and ability to turn off the fluorescent lights. Her supervisor is very aware of the signs of fatigue and encourages her to take breaks.

The audit was passed and the surprise for Sue was that they asked if she would like to continue to help them. Sue says, "The ability to feel productive, to be able to give and help others is a core part of who I am. Fairbanks Scales is allowing me to do this at my own pace, while greatly respecting my needs as a person living with the long-term effects of multiple TBIs."

Professional of the Year—Gary Wade

Gary Wade , Lorraine Wargo

You probably know Gary from his 6 years of providing the Music as Therapy Program at the Annual Brain Injury Conference. He is a graduate of the highly regarded Berklee School of Music and a prolific Vermont performer. These musical abilities are surpassed only by his wonderfully kind heart. He is a therapeutic case manager at Lenny Burke's Farm and is known for helping families, as well as the brain injury survivor, in the challenging rehab process. He tailors the music to help the survivors learn, while experiencing joy. He and his assistant, a survivor of brain injury, volunteer many hours together performing for those with challenges. He is a "go to" person in the field of brain injury rehabilitation and has lent his support to many. Thank you Gary Wade!

Survivor of the Year– Lisa Bernardin

Lisa with Lorraine Wargo

Lisa received her brain injury in a car accident in 1983. She had been a school based Speech Language Pathologist prior to the accident. She has been a member of the BIA, formerly known as the 'Head Injury and Stroke' group, as a survivor and briefly on the board of directors. For many years Lisa assisted other brain injury survivors, has worked at promoting community awareness and support for brain injury survivors, and has acted as a mentor for others.

She has led the Middlebury TBI support group since 2012; designing the program plus the meeting logistics, now in coordination with a co-leader. She brings in outside speakers, as well as presents herself and provides support and education to participants. In the fall of 1990 she created a fund raiser called Lisa's Run, where for three days she ran across Vermont from Grand Isle to Wells River, with support In 2016 she made a video of her accident and recovery which she shared with BIAVT.

She initiated the Vermont chapter of the Brain Bee in 2010 and 2011 in coordination with UVM, Middlebury College, and The Stern Center. She promotes and coordinates the Brain Bee in VT high schools, also coordinating college volunteers to work with high school students. She developed the Vermont Brain Bee website. The Vermont Brain Bee has a yearly competition every February at UVM for high school students who are interested in neuroscience and the functioning of the brain. Vermont participation has risen to 39 competitors from 8 high schools entered in 2016.

Thank you Lisa, for all you do to support the brain injury community and for increasing public awareness of brain injury!

Caregiver of the Year-Chelsey Thompson

Chelsey was nominated by her boyfriend, Ben's, vocational rehabilitation counselor because the love and support that Chelsey gave him after his terrible car accident in 2014 was an important part of his recovery. Ben and his father talked to the VR Counselor about her understanding and dedication. It was a difficult time for Ben and she encouraged him to engage in services and the world. "She just loved me..being there for me..she could understand me when I couldn't talk" She helped Ben to communicate with his providers and with the scheduling of his many appointments. She continues to support Ben gaining more independence and has helped him to learn how to manage his medication, balance his budget and much more. Ben's father said, "She has always believed in Ben and his recover, and believed in their life together, even after the accident. Ben's recovery is so encouraging and her unconditional support is so appreciated. She is one of a kind."

There are so many deserving of these awards. Every year we highlight one in each category but we know that there are so many who deserve recognition. Please nominate them next year! Know that the work you do, either to heal yourself or to help others heal is important work.. Keep it up!

Honor Roll of Donors

2016 Donations

July 1— Nov 11

Michael Fanning
John Lynch
James Swift
Catherine Cooke –**in honor of James Premo**
Kathleen & Russell Hope– **in honor of Dylan Halpin**
Jessica Karlin —**in honor of Bob Luce's birthday**
UTC Aerospace Systems Employee Contribution
IBM Employee Charitable Contribution

If we missed you on this list, we apologize.
Please know that your contributions <u>are</u> appreciated.

Your gifts, no matter what the amount, *truly* make an impact.

Here are a few ways you can help support BIAVT

- **Become A Member:** membership applications can be downloaded from www.biavt.org or call for one.
- **Honor Someone:** Honor a special person in your life with a donation to BIAVT, or donate in memory of someone special you lost.
- **Leave a Bequest**: Talk with your tax advisor or attorney about how you can support BIAVT in your will.
- **Designate:** If your employer allows you to donate through employee contributions designate BIAVT as your pledge.
- **Donate:** Send BIAVT a check for any amount. Or you can donate with a credit card at www.biavt.org.

Save the Date

2017 Walk for Thought

Saturday, May 20, 2017

Oakledge Park

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Eye Test: A Tool for Concussion Screening?

Department of Defense Researchers Endorse Use of Eye Tests as an Effective Screening Tool for Acute Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (Concussion)

In prior posts on http://www.vermontbraininjury.com/ the growing recognition that one of the signature symptoms of concussion is a subtle change in visual processing has been discussed. Army researchers funded by the US Department of Defense have just published findings further supporting this understanding in the November 15, 2016 issue of the Journal of the Neurological Sciences.

In the published findings, the authors note that "mild" traumatic brain injury (mTBI) is sometimes difficult to diagnose because of the overlap of symptoms with other disorders such as PTSD. This has led to a quest for biomarkers or diagnostic tests (e.g. protein, imaging, cognitive, neurosensory.) This quest is especially significant for warfighters at risk for more severe "second-impact" concussions and whose lives and safety may be endangered by visual or cognitive compromises. The researchers chose to examine visual symptoms, recognizing that seven of the twelve cranial nerves, along with approximately 30% of the brain, are involved in visual processing. Their study examined the effectiveness as screening tools of an easy to administer eye movement test known as the King-Devick (KD) test and a visual symptom survey tool known as the Convergence Insufficiency Symptom Survey (CISS) The KD test has been used to assess dyslexia and other learning disabilities and, more recently, as a potential screening tool for sports concussions. The research study looked at active duty military personnel (87 men and 21 women) who suffered a medically documented concussion in the previous 72 hours. (None of the subjects suffered a blast-induced injury, so the mechanisms of injury were similar to civilian victims.) The control group was an aged matched group (79 men and 21 women) with no history of concussion. The results showed significant differences between the control and experimental groups, including a greater than one-third slower reading time in the mTBI group. Patients with mTBI had significantly higher near-point convergence scores than control subjects, longer times to complete the KD test, and more symptoms on "Convergence Insufficiency Symptom Survey" (CISS).

This study suggests that visual symptoms may be even more prevalent than previously suspected. The value of this testing, the researchers note, is that "we can get that individual into treatment as soon as possible, knowing this concussion is present, with all of the ways that it adversely affects the oculovisual system for the individual and their quality of life."

Resources

How to get through the Holidays

Flashing lights. Crowded stores. Loud family gatherings. The holiday season should be joyful, but it can often be overwhelming to someone who is living with traumatic brain injury.

If you are living with TBI, share these tips with your friends and family. If someone you love is living with TBI, the tips below can help you plan in advance to make the holiday season happier and more relaxed for all of your friends and family.

These great ideas came from members of BrainLine's wonderful online community.

- Identify — in advance, if possible — a quiet place to go at gatherings if you are feeling overwhelmed. This gives you a chance to take a break, and lets your loved ones stay involved in the festivities.
- Avoid crowded stores and order gifts online instead.
- If you are shopping in stores, remember to make a list in advance and plan your trips on week days — either early in the morning or late at night when there are fewer crowds.
- Wear a cap with a brim or lightly tinted sunglasses to minimize the glare of bright lights in stores or flashing lights on a tree.
- Wear noise-reducing headphones or ear buds. These are also great gift ideas for loved ones with TBI if they don't already have them.
- Ask a friend to go with you to stores or holiday parties. They can help you navigate crowds and anxiety-producing situations.
- Plan in advance as much as possible. And ask your hosts what their plans are so you aren't surprised by anything.
- Volunteer to help with the holiday activities that you enjoy the most and are least stressful for you.

The Brain Injury Association of Vermont

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Barb Winters~ Outreach & Education Coordinator NRF/OC Program Coordinator, I&R Specialist

- Remember to ask for help and accept help if it is offered to you.
- Ask someone you trust to help you with a budget to avoid overspending on gifts.
- Take a nap if you need a break.
- Remember that it's okay to skip the big parties and plan to celebrate in a way that makes you comfortable and happy.
- Check in advance to see if fireworks are part of outdoor celebrations — and skip them if they make you uncomfortable.
- If flashing lights bother you, ask your friends and family to turn off the flashing feature on Christmas tree lights or other decorations when you visit their homes.
- You can let your host know in advance that you may need to leave early. It will help you feel comfortable if you need to get home or to a quiet place and it can also help avoid any hurt feelings.

BIAVT Support Groups

Questions about the groups? Call the BIAVT Help Line at **877.856.1772**

Location	When	Where	Facilitators
Burlington Area Evening	**First Wednesday of every month 5:30—7:30 PM**	**Fanny Allen Campus/Hospital Board Room-follow the signs 790 College Parkway (Rte**	**Diane Wheaton Barb Winters**
Burlington Area Daytime	**Last Friday of the month Noon—1**	**Dept of Labor, Conference Room A 63 Pearl St, Burlington**	**Courtney Blasius Jodie Casarico**
Middlebury Area Evening No meetings during summer months	**Second Tuesday of every month 6:00—7:30 PM**	**Isley Library 75 Main St , Middlebury Conference Room Entrance in back**	**Lisa Bernardin Debbie Tracht**
Montpelier Area Daytime	**Third Thursday of the month 1:30—2:30 PM**	**Unitarian Church Ramp Entrance 130 Main St, Montpelier**	**Kathy Grange Marsha Bancroft**
St Johnsbury Area Daytime VCIL/BIAVT group	**Third Wednesday of every month 1:00—2:30 PM**	**Grace Methodist Church 36 Central St St Johnsbury**	**Tom Younkman**
Rutland Area Daytime Lenny Burke Farm	**First Saturday of the month 2:00—4:00 PM**	**Emmie's Place 212 Main St, Wallingford**	**Emmie Burke**
Waterbury Evening	**Second Wednesday of every month 6:15—7:30 PM**	**Waterbury Library 28 North Main St**	**Maggie Allen**

We would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to *Dawn Chattin* and ***Erin Ward,*** who facilitated for many years. Dawn attempted to fill a need in the Brattleboro area and Erin coordinated the WRJ Support Group. Both groups have been cancelled due to lack of attendance. Dawn and Erin, thank you!

If anyone is interested in facilitating a support group in your area and can identify a co-facilitator, please contact Barb Winters at the BIAVT office.braininfo1@biavt.org

Note: There are support groups in Keene, Lebanon & Littleton NH that Vermonters can and do attend. More details on www.bianh.org (the Brain Injury Association of NH)