BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF VERMONT

SAVE THE DATE
May 19 2018
Walk for Thought

Mo

HEADS UP

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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

www.biavt.org
@BrainInjuryVT
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Oct 10, 2017
Sheraton Conference Center
Burlington

Keynote Presentation by
Carole Starr, M.S.
Weasilience: Handling Life's Wild Moments

Carole shared her story of coming to grips with the reality of having a brain injury and her path to acceptance. The message that was beautifully illustrated in her presentation was to never give up on making progress, learning or believing in yourself. Her book, "To Root & To Rise: Accepting Brain Injury" is her story and a workbook with strategies. The BIAVT Lending Library now has a copy you can borrow.

The move back to the Sheraton was generally approved of by the 270 attendees. The presentations were very well received, whether it was Guido Mase talking about herbal and nutritional support for recovery from brain injury or Matt Gammons talking about the current science of concussions or Gina England sharing her expertise on compensatory memory strategies. Kirsten Wiley and Cheryl VanEpps were "inspiring survivors" on the Survivor Panel one observer noted.

Governor's Awards

2017 Survivor of the Year
Nathalie Kellie

Nathalie's life changed dramatically in 2010 due to a sailing accident. She went from having a successful practice working with respected medical professionals in an Integrative Medicine clinic, to barely being able to open her eyes or get off her couch. Nathalie didn't know much about TBI at that point but that didn't last long. She began the search to find answers that would help her get her life back. She sought out healers across countless disciplines. She began recording her journey to help others, because that is what Nathalie does—help others. As one she has helped says, "*With an admirable attitude, insight, and humor, she has been my best mentor and gives me inspiration. She has run TBI support groups and offers coaching in individual and group settings. She can be found @ The TBI Coach (website) and on You Tube".*

"She can be found at The TBI Coach (website) and on You Tube"

Another says, *"The information that is provided is so helpful. The fact she has been able to help herself recover through her perseverance is the greatest gift of hope she gives to others."*

Nathalie has participated in many BIAVT activities and has been on the State TBI Advisory Board. She will continue to ask the 'how' questions and share the answers with us all. Thank you Nathalie.

2017 Employer of the Year
Northwest Medical Center

The Human Resources Team at Northwest Medical (NMC) Center worked with Vocational Rehab office in St. Albans to find an opportunity for Alicia, a physician with MS and brain injuries, to utilize her skills. NMC had no problem carving out a schedule as a patient access representative that would work for Alicia. The Human Resources team at NMC has been so generous with their time, never hesitating to meet with potential employees who sometimes have a range of employment barriers.

Pictured left to right are Fred O'Neill (Patient Access Manager), Naomi Wright (Physician Recruiter – formerly Human Resources Advisor), Trevor Squirrel (BIAVT ED) Jill Berry Bowen (CEO) and Lorraine Wargo

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MOVEMENT IS MEDICINE…
Save the Date: November 9, 2018
a dynamic fundraiser promoting JOY in movement!

Governor's Awards

2017 Caregiver of the Year
Lee Goldstein

Lee Goldstein wasn't there to accept her award be cause she was working. Michele Corrow, of PRIDE Support & Services, accepted it for Lee and spoke of Lee's dedication to her husband's care, an example being not taking off from work for something for her.. Another member of the brain injury community stated that "*her commitment to her husband, Anthony, is unwavering. The love that she has demonstrated for him and her commitment to his continual pro gress and growth as he recovers from his brain injury is enviable. She has modified her entire life to ensure that all opportunities are available to him with no consideration of her own needs. She is amazing!* "

2017 Professional of the Year
Cheryl Beaulieu, SLP
Mt Ascutney Health and Rehab

Cheryl Beaulieu has been a speech and language pathologist for 23 years. She acquired her bachelors at Perdue University in 1991 and her masters at Texas Christian University in 1994. She has worked with ABI at Sundance Rehab in Massachusetts, St. Joseph's hospital in Nashua, NH and for the last 19 years at Mt. Ascutney Hospital in Windsor, Vermont. She is a CBIS and has chosen to specialize in working with neuro patients, both in and out patient focusing on the continuum of care. He co-workers and patients describe her as kind, gentle, pragmatic and consistent in working with people living with brain injuries. She is skillful at helping confused, disoriented and unaware patients cope with their brain injuries and to develop compensatory skills for memory, orientation, attention/concentration, problem solving, sequencing, math skills, and the list goes on. She is patient, creative and consistent so the patients at the early stage of their recovery know what to expect. As hard as it is for patients to work on cognitive skills, they often look forward to working with her because she provides a safe, validating, and therapeutic environment. She is also an incredible support and resource for family members and caregivers.

Her great sense of humor is often a therapeutic tool. Here are a few words shared by one of her patients: "*...I am still amazed with her patience and determination to return me to as close to normal as possible. I am so fortunate to have had the opportunity to have such a caring and persistent Therapist guide me through it all; place me back into the world as a functioning person able once again to carry on in a "normal" way. I have delivered Health care for over 45 years and never met anyone that was as compassionate and caring as her. I owe my independence and where I am today to her persistence, patience and knowledge. She is a blessing to her profession …*"

Thanks to All

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- University of Vermont Medical Center
- Rutland Regional Medical Center

Presentiers
Laura Basili, PhD
Jim Caffry, Esq,
Christopher Carter, PsyD
Noelle DeGeus PT, DPT
Jennifer DeBedout, MM, MT-BC
Gina England, SLP
Matt Gammons, M.D.
Marcie Hernandez, MT-BC
Grace Johnstone
Guido Masé
David O'Leary, B.A.
Bryn Perkins
Amy Pruzenski, O.D., F.V.O.V.D
Luanne Sberna, MA, LCMHC, LADC
Carole Starr, M.S.
Cheryl VanEpps
Kristen Wiley
Therese Zocchi

Christopher Carter– Behavior

Amy Pruzenski—Vision Rehab

David O'Leary—Hoarding

Jim Caffry—Special Needs Trusts

Therese Zocchi—Pain Management

Bryn Perkins, Brainwave Optimization

Laura Basili talking Hope

Luanne Sberna—Healing Dance

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; Jess Leal, BIAVT I&A, Andre Courcelle ,TBI Program 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

More Thanks

Volunteers

Marsha Bancroft
Jodi Casarico
Leigh Clark
Pete Daigle
Michael Denmeade
MaryJane Dieter
Don Dresser
Donna Hayes
Jane Hulstrunk
Steve Kuhn
Sara Lane
Bob Luce
Kate Ross
Lorraine Wargo
Sue Zamecnik

Unmasking Brain Injury Mask Display

As you can see, it takes a lot of people to do a conference. Thanks to all involved and thanks to those who support the effort by attending.

Next year will be the **30th Annual Brain Injury Conference!**

If you have ideas about topics, theme, sessions or how we can make the 30th really special, please contact Barb at braininfo1@biavt.org.

Honor Roll of Donors—June 16-December 15, 2017

IBM Employee Campaign

Michael E. Fanning

Lorraine Wargo

Heidi Passalacqua

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

There are so many wonderful, worthwhile causes and we all have limits on what we can give. When you are considering your donations, please think about the importance of having an organization that speaks for the brain injury population. The BIAVT receives no federal or state funding at this time and is struggling like all non-profit organizations. Your gifts, no matter what the amount, truly make an impact and allow the BIAVT to offer the services listed on page 8. Thank you for considering supporting the BIAVT.

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.

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

Letter from the Executive Director

The 29th Annual Brain injury Conference was a huge success. I want to thank everyone who had a part in making this important annual event a great experience for all who attended. Special thanks need to go to those who volunteered their time and energy; the Conference Planning Committee made up of a fantastic cross section of professionals and survivors, all the volunteers that provided the workforce the day of the conference, and the presenters who willingly gave their time and the benefit of their expertise at no cost to the Conference.

Vermont's 2018 Annual Conference will be our 30th (Tuesday, October 9th). If you have thoughts/ideas about how we can make this a truly celebratory occasion please let us know.

The BIAVT has a small staff that accomplishes much but I would like to stress that our success is very dependent on professionals, survivors, family members and caregivers that give their time and energy to the committees related to the programs and activities that the BIAVT is able to provide. THANK YOU!

Members of the BIAVT's board of directors are another group of important volunteers that help guide the BIAVT and have been instrumental as the BIAVT has navigated both good and challenging times over the past years. I am really appreciative of their guidance. You can see the names of our board directors on page 11. Interested in serving in a more formal capacity on a committee or the board? Please be in touch.

Wishing you Happy Holidays and a wonderful 2018!

Fall Prevention

Department of Health statistics from 2011-2014 show that 31% of all causes of death by injury in Vermont were from falls.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) statistics show that the # 1 cause of brain injuries is falls.

Yet, if you do a search for pictures of people falling you will find that most of them are meant to be humorous. Old film clips of Laurel & Hardy, Buster Keaton or Jerry Lewis will have you laughing at them falling.

But falling is not funny if someone gets hurt, which happens all too often.

Although most of the fall prevention literature is for the aging population, falls happen to all ages. Falling down stairs, for example, can happen to anyone.

What can you do to prevent yourself or a loved one from falling?

As we approach the winter months, you need to make sure that your walkways are kept clear, and that you wear footwear that will help you keep upright.

Nordic walking sticks are great for walking on uneven ground or when balance is an issue.

Exercise is really important, especially core exercises (see page 7) that will help you right yourself as you start to fall.

Straker (right) fell down stairs and now proudly wears a PHAT (Protect your Head At all Times) sticker on his helmet!

Exercises

You can do some balance exercises during everyday activities.

- While waiting in line at the store, try balancing on 1 foot.
- Try sitting down and standing up without using your hands.

To make your calves and ankle muscles stronger:

- Hold on to a solid support for balance, like the back of a chair.
- Stand with your back straight and slightly bend both knees.
- Push up onto your tiptoes as high as possible.
- Slowly lower your heels to the floor.
- Repeat 10 to 15 times

To make your buttocks and lower back muscles stronger:

- Hold on to a solid support for balance, like the back of a chair.
- Stand with your back straight, feet shoulder width apart, and slightly bend both knees.
- Lift 1 leg straight back behind you, then bend your knee and bring your heel toward your buttock.
- Slowly lower your leg back to a standing position.
- Repeat 10 to 15 times with each leg.

To make your thigh muscles stronger and possibly decrease knee pain:

- Sit in a straight-back chair with your feet on the floor.
- Straighten 1 leg out in front of you as much as possible.
- Slowly lower your leg back down.
- Repeat 10 to 15 times with each leg.

Exercise reduces your risk of falls by improving your strength, balance, coordination and flexibility.

To make it easier for you to move around:

- Sit in a straight-back chair.
- Put 1 foot on a low stool in front of you.
- Straighten your leg that is on the stool and reach your hand toward this foot.
- Hold for 10 to 20 seconds. Then sit back up.
- Repeat 5 times with each leg.

-www.medlineplus.gov

Note: These exercises can be a starting point. What is important is that you work on your balance. Tai-Chi is a proven form of exercise to improve balance. Yoga can be very beneficial as well. Always listen to your body and don't hurt yourself.

Get moving and keep moving. Movement truly is medicine!

BIAVT Services Offered

People often call the HelpLine and ask just what the BIAVT can do for them. That is usually after it is clarified that BIAVT is a statewide non-profit organization and not part of the State of VT TBI Program.

Referrals & Resources

This is the primary function of the BIAVT. The **HelpLine** is staffed weekdays 9am-4pm to try to help callers find resources that meets their needs. Please leave a message if staff is not available when you call or after hours. Toll free HelpLine 877-856-1772

Walk for Thought

This fundraising event for the BIAVT is a chance to socialize in a beautiful outdoor setting with food and prizes.

The Brain Injury Association of Vermont is an affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America and was founded by Chris Pratt in 1999.

Support Groups Go to www.biavt.org to find the one closest to you.

Annual Brain Injury Conference

Education and networking opportunity for the brain injury community: survivors, families and professionals. 300-400 people attend each year.

Outreach & Education

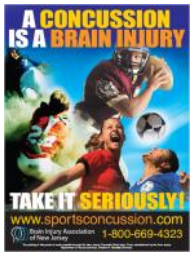
BIAVT staff work to increase awareness and understanding of brain injury and prevention through schools, business and community presentations. Contact the HelpLine to arrange for a presentation for your organization.

Community Brain Injury Consultant Program

The purpose of the CBIC Program is to increase the independence and quality of life of Vermonters living with brain injuries. CBIC staff assists individuals with an acquired or traumatic brain injury. We work with you and your 'Provider' in setting goals and making informed choices for services and supports that may be helpful in meeting your individual needs. Your 'Provider' may be a VocRehab or VABIR Counselor, a school team AT or nurse, a housing agency, a healthcare provider, etc. What the staff person will provide is consulting with you and your Provider. Any contact after the initial consultation can be done by phone as part of our Helpline service. **Very Important: we do NOT provide (or fund) direct services to individuals with brain injuries.** We work collaboratively with any service providers or case managers who are already providing services to you, as well as family members and other support persons who you wish to be involved.

Legislative Advocacy

BIAVT staff work to improve the quality of life for people living with brain injury while supporting initiatives that help prevent brain injuries.



Concussions

BIAVT staff work with the Concussion Task Force, a committee of the Vermont State TBI Advisory Board, to maintain and update the Concussion Toolkit for schools that is housed on the BIAVT website, www.biavt.org.

Caregiver's Corner

Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask First

by Marci Drimmer, Caregiver of Adult Survivor in Colorado

I recently returned from a six day trip with my 18 year old son who is about to attend college. We drove over 2000 miles and hiked ... We stayed in five different hotels and visited seven different cities. We laughed and sang with the music blasting. I enjoyed every second of it. For six days I got a break from living with TBI. This may sound mean or insensitive to many people, but it is the most loving thing I can do for myself. TBI affects the entire family on a daily basis. Caregivers often find themselves in the position of holding it all together. We become the rock for our families and forget that we have been injured as well...Our life has been forever changed and we are working hard to adapt to all the changes. ... It takes tremendous energy to manage our own feelings while providing care for others. You may find yourself saying, "How can I be upset when they have a TBI." We often put our needs at the bottom of the bucket. We deplete our physical and emotional energy "for the sake of the family." We feel compelled to give away everything we have.

We all have cars that are a necessary part of daily life. We accept the fact that our car requires gas and maintenance. We can wait until the tank is empty to refill, but that causes actual damage to the vehicle. You wouldn't expect your car to run without gas, yet we expect ourselves to run on fumes. When you board an airplane with children they always say, "put on your own oxygen mask first." We desperately need time to refuel and replenish ourselves physically, emotionally and spiritually. You may feel angry that I even suggest you should take time for yourself. You may not even know what it means to replenish... Our partners and families rely on us. When we leave ourselves empty it makes it impossible to relate to our partners with love and compassion. We may find ourselves getting irritable and withdrawn. When was the last time you took time for yourself?

My husband and I have learned that TBI is an injury of energy. Everything begins and ends with managing his energy. It has taken him a year to really understand this idea. If he depletes his energy it leads to head pain. Head pain leads to emotional outbursts. Emotional outbursts lead to disconnection in our marriage. He has learned to plan his days while being cognizant of his energy consumption. This often means he cannot do many things in the same day. This has allowed him to play more with our 8 year old daughter and connect more with me. Connection and bonding create healing opportunities for everyone. Increasing the moments of connection helps the TBI survivor and the entire family... I have learned that nothing is impossible if your partner manages their energy level. This sometimes requires help from us and reminders about their energy expectations. We have learned to plan ahead for times when he will need a lot of energy. When my daughter gets home from school she needs and wants her dad's attention. He makes sure to take a nap during the day and protect his energy. We have a date every week on Saturday afternoon. That is our time to connect. I have asked him to refrain from doing any activities that morning that would deplete his energy level. We have learned all of this from trial and error. I realize that not everyone has the luxury of leaving for six days. However, we all have the ability to plan some time for ourselves. It can be as small as leaving to have a cup of coffee or as large as taking a trip to the Grand Canyon. I beg you to carve out one small space for yourself this week. It is the most loving thing you can do for your family. - adapted from the BIA-CO newsletter

BIAVT Support Groups

Questions? Call the BIAVT HelpLine 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 15), Colchester**	**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	**Third Tuesday of every month 5:00—6:30 PM No meetings May—Sept.**	**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 5:30—6:45 PM**	**Waterbury Library 28 North Main St**	**Maggie Allen**

Thank you to all of the volunteer Support Group Facilitators for giving their time and caring to help individuals cope with brain injury.

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 Lebanon & Littleton NH that Vermonters can and do attend. More details on www.bianh.org (the Brain Injury Association of NH)

"It is so helpful to be in a space with others who understand what it feels like to have a brain injury. Knowing that 'what is said in the group-stays in the group' is important to feel comfortable. I often learn from others in the group." - survivor

Concussion Corner

Clipboards for Coaches

In Vermont, there are thousands of school age amateur athletes who play a myriad of sports on recreation fields around the state. There are also hikes, bike trips and other activities led by volunteer coaches. Although many of the larger communities provide first aid training for their coaches, there is a need for them to know how to identify a potential concussion. The BIAVT will provide clipboards with a Concussion Recognition Tool 5 sticker on the back. Thanks to a foundation grant, they can be provided at no charge.

If you are a volunteer coach, please contact Barb Winters at braininfo1@biavt to get a clipboard.

The Brain Injury Association of Vermont

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