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Greetings from the Chair

This fall, BIST completed a review of its work to date, with input from the board, community partners, volunteers and our members – many of you responded to the survey that we sent out. We are proud of the hard work and determination of our members, families, volunteers and the Board of Directors, that have enabled BIST to realize many achievements in its short life so far.

To further our work, the Board of Directors, in cooperation with community stakeholders, is undertaking a long-term strategic planning initiative. The plan will span across all functions of BIST including Membership, Programs and Services, Communication, Awareness and Volunteers.

We invite you, our membership, to volunteer any advice you may have with respect to your vision for the future of BIST as we continue to strive and enhance the lives of Brain Injury survivors and their families while augmenting awareness, support and advocacy. We welcome your feedback and suggestions. You can share your views by emailing us at info@bist.ca, or calling us at 416.830.1485.

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the following new Directors to the Board:

- Jane Conte – Jane is a personal injury lawyer with Conte and Associates
- Todd Gotlieb – Todd is the Director, Wealth Management with FSB Group
- Greg Noack – Rehabilitation Therapist, ABI Program, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute (TRI).

We are confident that their backgrounds and experience will be an asset to BIST as we continue to grow and expand our reach.

Best Wishes,

Jane Conte and Nick Gurevich
Co-Chairs

May 5, 2009

Brain Injury Association
of Peer Halton hosts

Un Affair de Chocolat

Learning to Live Again: Finding Support after AVM

Submitted by Mike Archer

I still don't remember much about the day my head exploded in the blinding pain of an aneurysm leaking blood into my brain. After surgery to clip it, I started to recover physically, but was devastated psychologically and emotionally. I struggled to make sense of everything without ready answers or peer advice, with no empathetic support.

Then, I was invited to join a fledgling Support Group at Toronto Western Hospital, specifically designed for those who had been diagnosed with a cerebral aneurysm or arterio-venous malformation (AVM) and their caregivers. There, I quickly learned my fears were common; my symptoms the norm; that adjusting to life as a new person often brings depression and anxiety. Like others who joined, I discovered how these things could be conquered and drew comfort and strength from the group as I healed.

Years later, the group still thrives and to it, a mentoring function has now been added to help those who would do better with individual counseling. It comprises AVM and aneurysm survivors, all of us very familiar with the symptoms and feelings around the conditions, and specifically trained to work one-on-one with individual patients for closer support.

Want more information on us and our activities? You can find us at: brainavm.oci.utoronto.ca/for_patients.htm

BIST Welcomes Kat Powell as Programs and Service Facilitator

BIST is pleased to announce that Kat Powell has joined the association in this new role. As Programs and Services Facilitator, Kat will be planning and coordinating our monthly Community Speakers, and working with participants to identify topics and speakers of interest. She will also work with the Social Committee to organize events in the Community. In addition, Kat will be helping create and plan new activities, such as the upcoming Baking Class.

Kat brings a wealth of experience from her international work with Right to Play, along with lots of energy and enthusiasm. To talk to Kat about upcoming events, or to share your ideas and suggestions, you can reach her at 647.990.1485 or connections@bist.ca.

BIST and the Blue Jays

April Event: BLUE JAYS GAME- Blue Jays vs. Texas Rangers
When: Tuesday April 21, 2009
Between 6:30-6:45 p.m. (meeting time)
GAME TIME: 7:07 p.m.
Where: Rogers Centre (formerly Skydome)
Meeting Place: In front of GATE 7
Cost: \$5.00 (pay in advance to Kat Powell to reserve a seat)

*****We have a limited number of tickets. They will be reserved on a first come-first serve basis. Please email your request to connections@bist.ca or call 647-990-1485. We will contact you to confirm your request. *****

**12 tickets available in accessible seating area!
Let us know if you require wheelchair seating**

Holiday Party 2008

The Brain Injury Society of Toronto had a wonderful holiday party in December; the weather was cold and windy, but inside all was warm. We sang karaoke and played pin-the-bow-on-the-tree. A fun time was had by all.





Hold On To Your Dreams

Submitted by BIST member Margaret E. Green

One broken dream is not the end of dreaming
One shattered hope is not the end of all.
Behind the tempest stars are gleaming
Still build your castles, though your castles fall.

Though many dreams come tumbling in disaster

And pain and heartache meet you down the years
Still keep your dreams and hopes to master
And seek to find the lesson of your tears.

Upcoming Community Events

March Community Meeting: March 23, 6:30 – 8:00 pm

Focus: Anger & Frustration Management

Facilitator: Brigitt Degues, M.S.W., R.S.W, Community Solutions Ltd.

Meeting Location: Anne Johnson Health Station, 2398 Yonge Street, 2nd Floor (North West Corner of Yonge and Montgomery).

The Anne Johnson Health Station is located just a few blocks north of the Eglinton Subway station, on the west side of Yonge Street. The rear door, which is located just off of Montgomery St., is the door to enter the Anne Johnston Health Station. Parking is available on Montgomery Street, or other streets around.

Please note that this meeting is back at the Anne Johnston Health Station, 2398 Yonge St.

Baking Class (Registration)

Registration for this 7 week baking class that will be starting in April is now taking place. Please look for flyers and registration forms for this class at community meetings and on the BIST website.

If you are interested in participating in this class, please speak with Kat Powell, at 647.990.1485..

April Community Meeting, Monday April 27

Focus – Post Injury Relationships

Dr. Vandursen, a Psychologist who has worked in this area of focus for a number of years, is going to facilitate a discussion focusing on relationships post injury.

“Un Affair de Chocolat”

The Brain Injury Association of Peel Halton will be hosting “Un Affair de Chocolat” on **May 5** at 6:00 pm, at the Henstock Gallery, Oakville.

Call BIAPH at 905.823.2221 for more info.

Brain Injury Awareness Month Event

The event will be held on June 18, 12 pm 2 pm, at Nathan Philips Square

5th Annual Mix and Mingle

The 5th Annual Mix and Mingle will be held on **June 18** at the Hard Rock Café, Yonge and Dundas. Call OBIA for more information or to purchase your tickets, (800)263-5404.

Please contact Kat Powell, BIST Program and Support Facilitator, if you would like more information about the above at: connections@bist.ca or 647-990-1485.

Across the Province:

Report from OAC, January 24, 2009

At the recent meeting of the OAC, representatives had the opportunity to learn about the many income support programs that are often used by people with ABI. Francine Diodati of the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute shared information about how to apply for programs including;

- ✓ Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- ✓ Ontario Works (OW, commonly known as welfare)
- ✓ Employment Insurance (EI, formerly Unemployment Insurance, or UI)
- ✓ Canada Pension Plan, Disability benefits (CPP)
- ✓ Short, or Long Term Disability (STD, or LTD)

She outlined eligibility requirements and estimated wait times. Many benefits depend on the work status of the applicant prior to the injury. The applicant's age can also be a factor in determining the right program. And, some programs review the applicant's assets as part of the determination of eligibility. If you have any questions about your eligibility for income support, you can contact your local brain injury association, or OBIA for information.

Provincial Conference

Ruth Wilcock presented an update on the work towards the Provincial Conference, scheduled for October, 2009. The Conference Committee has issued a call for abstracts and will be accepting submissions until February 27th. The registration packages will be available in the late spring. The conference will include a "Creative Energy Exhibit" with displays of the talents of members of associations across Ontario. The exhibit will include paintings, drawing, poetry, photography, sculpture, or other visual art that can be displayed. If you are interested in presenting some of your work, please contact your local association for more information.

Brain Basics

In his report on OBIA's activities, John Kumpf reported that he will be teaching the Brain Basics course in 9 cities in Ontario over the next 5 months. Brain Basics is an introductory course on brain injury and its consequences. Originally designed for Personal Support Workers, it has attracted participation from nurses, OT's, physiotherapist, lawyers, ABI survivors and family members. To find out if Brain Basics will be in your community, contact your local association, or OBIA.

Chair

The OAC will sorely miss the leadership of Chair, Marg Malloy, who has resigned her position with the Four Counties Brain Injury Association. Marg has served in a leadership role with OAC for the past 4 years and has been a tremendous supporter of efforts to create a stronger, unified provincial voice for ABI.

The next OAC meeting will be held on March 21.

**Coming together is a beginning * Keeping together is progress
Working together is success

We invite you to come celebrate the
5th Annual
Ontario Brain Injury Association
&
Brain Injury Society of Toronto

Mix & Mingle

Where: Hard Rock Café, Yonge and Dundas
When: Thursday, June 18

***For information about sponsorship and tickets
please contact Terry Wilcox at 905-641-8877***

We are excited about the new date and venue which coincides with the Brain Injury Awareness Month event being held at Nathan Phillips Square from 12:00 until 2:00.

The ninth annual Brain Injury Awareness Event is set to take stage at Nathan Phillips Square on Thursday, June 18th from noon till 2 PM. This event helps raise public awareness of Acquired Brain Injury.

There will be musical entertainment and a Survivors VIP Area where Brain Injury Survivors and their families are invited to meet and greet other survivors.

Calling all authors and photographers!

If you have stories, articles or photos that you would like to submit to the BIST Beacon – please forward them to our new address at newsletter@bist.ca

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