

BIST

Brain Injury Society of Toronto



Annual Report 2010 -2011



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OUR MISSION

The mission of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto is to enhance the quality of life for people in the City of Toronto, living with the effects of acquired brain injury through education, awareness, support and advocacy.

BIST was established in 2004 by a steering committee made up of stakeholders - including people with ABI, family members and people who work in ABI support and rehabilitation in collaboration with the Ontario Brain Injury Association. Today, BIST operates under the direction of a volunteer board of directors.

BIST is a grassroots, member driven organization.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST), it is my pleasure to report on the past fiscal year ending March 31, 2011. Fiscal 2010-2011 was a very successful transition year for BIST, and much of the work done before March 31, 2011 has already paid off in the months following. In November 2010, we hired Michelle McDonald as our Director of Programs and Development. Michelle has been a wonderful asset for BIST and has worked tirelessly to advance our key initiatives from day one.

Fiscal 2010-2011 was highlighted by the launch of our completely redesigned website (www.bist.ca). Our new site is an easy-to-use tool where our members and potential members can learn about ABI, check out updated listings of upcoming BIST events and donate to BIST through our simple online donation tool. Last year at this time, we identified fundraising as a key area where special attention would be paid. The 2010 Awareness Month event and Mix and Mingle event was a great success. It was topped by our incredible 2011 events which will be highlighted in our next Annual Report for fiscal 2011-2012. We had our most successful holiday fundraising drive in December 2010, which was promoted in conjunction with and was facilitated by the new website. The Board and its committees continue to look for new and exciting ways to raise funds for BIST, including the first ever BIST 5km Run/Walk event in September 2011. In addition, our new support program for caregivers that was launched last year has been a big success.

As we turn the page on fiscal 2010-2011, I want to express the Board's sincere gratitude to our staff, Michelle McDonald and Kat Powell, and to the many wonderful volunteers who have given their time and energy to support this incredibly important organization in the City of Toronto.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members and committee members, particularly those whose terms have come to an end, for all of your hard work and dedication. This organization could not run without your generosity. Finally, none of this would be possible without the support of our dedicated membership – Thank you for making BIST the BEST!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Burton', written in a cursive style.

Jonathan Burton, Chair

BIST Board of Directors

TREASURER'S REPORT

Income

BIST's 2010-2011 fundraising and fees from program totaled \$48,170.00 representing an increase of \$12,976 over the previous year, we saw an increase in donations and an increase return on the BIST/OBIA annual fund raiser.

INCOME STATEMENT

2010, 2011 Yearly Comparisons

	2010	2011
INCOME		
OBIA/Donations/Membership	13,746	21,164
Mix&Mingle - BIST/OBIA Event	19,218	23,406
Brain Injury Association Canada	2,500	3,600
Total Income	<u>\$35,194</u>	<u>\$48,170</u>

INCOME STATEMENT

EXPENSES

Communications	2,774	686
BIAM	6,733	8020
Programs & Services	22,765	17,870
Membership & Volunteers	751	451
Fund Raising	849	
General & Administrative	13,872	24,370
Total Operating Budget/Expenses	<u>\$47,744</u>	<u>\$51,397.00</u>
Surplus/Deficit	<u>\$(12,550)</u>	<u>\$(3,227)</u>

For the reporting period of April 1, 2010 through to March 31, 2011 our major fund raising event was the Spring Mix and Mingle, supplemented with requests for donations. In 2010 our partnership with OBIA hosting the Spring Mix and mingle contributed \$23,406. Details of the event's fundraising and expenses for last year and this year are presented below as well as a breakdown of the event for the current fiscal year.

OBIA - BIST Event

Income	2009/10 Actual	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Actual
Ticket Sales	8,855.00	12,460.00	18,090.00
Donation			500.00
Sponsorship	27,900.00	32,300.00	75,000.00
Auction Items	2,690.00	6,616.00	5,830.00
Total Income	39,445.00	51,376.00	99,420.00
Expenditures			
Venue & Food	6,440.46	9,286.76	24,587.18
Entertainment	500.00	1,419.76	1,221.66
Office Supplies	1,075.80	1,127.37	1,390.40
Total Expenditure	8,016.26	11,833.89	27,199.24
Net Income	31,428.74	39,542.11	72,220.76
BIST Share			
50% 25,000	12,500.00	12,500.00	12,500.00
75% >25,000	4,821.56	10,906.58	35,415.57
	17,321.56	23,406.58	47,915.57
OBIA Share			
50% 25,000	12,500.00	12,500.00	12,500.00
25% >25,000	1,607.19	3,635.53	11,805.19
	14,107.19	16,135.53	24,305.19

In addition to the Spring Mix and Mingle, BIST partners with OBIA on membership (through our dual membership approach), Peer Support programs, OBIA's Brain Basics training program, activities promoting the Provincial Conference and OBIA's On-line directory.

Disbursement Activities

We completed the year with a small deficit, this is primarily a result of the work we did to revitalize the web site, other expenses were similar to the previous year.

Our balance sheet as of March 31, 2011 indicates that we continue to have a positive cash balance.

BALANCE SHEET

(as at March 31, 2011)

ASSETS		LIABILITIES	
Cash	\$21,806.06	Accounts Payable	\$2,893.06
		EQUITY	
		Opening Equity	\$22,140.91
		Add: Net Proceeds for Period	(\$3,227.66)
			<hr/>
		Ending Equity at Mar 31, 2010	\$18,913.25
			<hr/>
Total Assets	\$21,806.06	Total Assets & Liabilities	\$21,806.31

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

BIST's membership grew in the past 12 months, with a particular increase in survivor members and professional members. BIST continues to sign up new members at every Community Meeting and through our on-line membership.

Member Role	
Survivor	245
Family/Caregiver	30
Friend/Supporter	46
Professional	148
Total	469

We are excited by every single new member; however we know that there are still thousands of people impacted by acquired brain injury in the City of Toronto who have never even heard of BIST. We continue to work with other committees in hopes of increasing our membership base. In addition, we have been working with our partners to increase awareness about BIST. We hope to see an increase in our Family/Caregiver membership through the implementation of programming geared specifically to that group, such as expanded support groups, personal development and educational workshops, and on-line support forums.

We are in the process of refining our membership database and consolidating our list with OBIA's. This will make sure that all of our current members are receiving BIST information and updates.

As much as the membership committee is devoted to increasing the membership, we rely on our current members to spread the BIST message as well.

As a reminder, the dual BIST/OBIA membership allows individuals to join both organizations for \$30/year. Family memberships (two or more people in a household) are available for \$50/year. For ABI survivors, the membership fee can be subsidized to just \$5/year.

2011 Membership Committee Members: Megan Patterson (Chair), Greg Noack, Paul McCormack, Phil Warder, Julie Ly, Michelle McDonald.

AWARENESS COMMITTEE

The vision of the Awareness Event has always been to promote public awareness, as well as, celebrate our extraordinary survivors. This past year the Awareness Committee has continued its hard work to expand its focus to increase our awareness initiatives throughout the year in addition to providing another successful June Awareness event. As usual, the Awareness Committee worked closely with other BIST committees to ensure the success of this event.

Our Annual Brain Injury Event was once again held at Nathan Philips Square. The Vaudevillian theme and the Jerry Stiff Band were able to engage the audience and everyone in attendance had a fantastic time. Although it has been said before, this was our **most** successful event to date!!! The weather cooperated, the entertainment was superb, and it was amazing watching the survivors and attendees dance the afternoon away.

Survivor Artists exhibited their amazing collection of unique and creative pieces. All those who attended the event were able to peruse and enjoy the artistry that was displayed.

Once again we had our “Feature Speakers” series. The Awareness Committee had a difficult job selecting two applicants to share their stories. Tammy Kirkwood and Rob Ashe did a fantastic job, inspiring all who heard their speeches in the VIP Survivor Tent.

We continue our efforts on the school outreach program; with the BIST Board of Directors to coordinate the best way to reach the schools. This exciting venture continues to be explored.

2011 Awareness Committee Members: Tonya Flaming (Chair), Chris Brown, Colleen Boyce, Darcy Merkur, Edward Shaul, Gary Otsu, Joe Pileggi, Julie Osbelt, Laurie DeOliveira, Vivian Ng, Marnie Russell



PROGRAMS & SERVICES COMMITTEE

Community Meetings

The monthly community meetings have continued to be a great success over the past year at the Northern District Library (Yonge & Eglinton) in Room 200. These meetings were created to provide members with a consistent opportunity to meet with other members, participate in leadership opportunities and to take part in information sessions provided by a variety of guest speakers. This past year we have heard from experts on topics such as Brain Fitness, Laughter Yoga, Emotional Well Being, Diet and Exercise in Disease Prevention, Music Therapy, How to Look for Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities and most recently Toastmasters – Public Speaking. We have also had the distinct honour of hearing some moving and compelling survivor stories at our community meetings.



Social/Recreation Events

Social events are a great opportunity to meet fellow BIST members, explore new interests and have fun. This year BIST has been able to continue and expand the opportunities being offered.

The social events that took place this year included a Halloween Dance (in partnership with CHIRS), bi-monthly bowling, our Annual Holiday Party, and our Annual Summer Picnic was a great success. We are already planning another Halloween Dance in collaboration with CHIRS (Oct. 2011), another round of bowling, our Annual Holiday Party and of course, our Annual Summer Picnic!



OBIA Shared Activities

Peer Support Mentoring Program

In collaboration with OBIA we have continued to facilitate the Peer Support Mentoring Program. The Peer Support Mentoring Program is a program that connects individuals (survivor/family member/unpaid caregiver) who are considered 'veterans' of a life experience involving Acquired Brain Injury (the Mentor) with a 'partner' (survivor/family member/unpaid caregiver) who is coping with a similar ABI-related situation and is in need of support from someone who is understanding, knowledgeable and empathetic. We encourage our members who are survivors, family members or unpaid caregivers to consider participating in this program.

Brain Basics Training Program

This past year we have continued to support the Brain Basics courses being offered by OBIA in the GTA by arranging the Survivor/Family Member Panels that are an integral part of this course. We have received excellent feedback from participants of this course indicating how truly moving and valuable this part of the course is in their understanding of brain injury and its impact. We have two Brain Basics coming up this Fall/Winter, one of which will be co-hosted by BIST and the Toronto ABI Network.

Support Groups

In collaboration with the Sunnybrook Health Sciences TBI team The Meet and Learn program was offered last spring. This program is specifically designed for individuals who sustained a mild brain injury more than 12 months ago. This program provides a series of information/education sessions about Mild Brain Injury offered weekly over a 6 week period. We are, once again, offering the Meet and Learn program (in collaboration with Sunnybrook) starting in November 2011.

We were very excited to launch our very first Family/Caregiver Support Group Program that was offered this past winter and spring. The group met once a month, facilitated by two very skilled Social Workers. Preparations for our next Caregiver Family Support Group Program are already underway. Please stay tuned for more information!

Program Development

As you may be aware, over the past year we began the process of developing workshops for both ABI Survivors and Family Members. The focus of these workshops is being developed based on the results of the surveys members and community stakeholders completed last year and also based on direct feedback received from members. We are looking forward to providing our BIST members, with these workshops in the year ahead.

2011 Programs & Services Committee Members: Denise McRiner (Chair), Kat Powell, Alison Jardine, Brenda Scott, Gail Prentice, Colleen Worsley.

2011 Special Events Committee Members: Colleen Worsley, Michael “Pinky” – Cluthier, Sarah Cluthier, Bill Gilkinson, Kevin Browne, Frank Bruno,



COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Communications Committee continues to create and refine communications materials.

We did a lot of work on the website this year, and have produced a new format and “look” to the group. We also developed new promotional materials, such as posters, bookmarks and pamphlets



The *BIST Beacon* continued as a regular communication tool created by the committee with the assistance of BIST staff. However, this year we introduced the online blog (<http://torontobraininjuryblog.wordpress.com/>) to compliment the Beacon and provide up-to-date information. Our readers and members often provide us with submissions of both articles and photographs, and we look forward to publishing more incredible member stories in the coming year!

The committee completed our Media Guide: a document that is intended for those who represent BIST in talking to television and newspaper reporters. It compliments our core messages and branding by giving some instruction to individuals before interviews.

We established our first venture into social media with a page on Facebook (Brain Injury Society of Toronto) and Twitter (@BrainInjuryTO). We are hoping to utilize these as tools to further reach out to our members.

In the coming year, we will continue to produce new materials to reflect the new look to the group. Our intent is to update the BIST PowerPoint presentation to make it more consistent and appealing. We will continue to update the website and maintain the blog. We will also explore the possibility of having a stronger presence on social media sites. This committee is also working in conjunction with the BIST staff on communication with physicians in the GTA to enable them to diagnose brain injuries, in particular concussions. A bookmark and posters are available for easy access for physicians.

2011 Communications Committee Members: Ian Bowles (chair), Joseph Campisi, Jack Shapiro, Colleen Boyce, Michelle McDonald, Jeff Shinehoft, Matthew Chung,

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

Mix and Mingle 2010 (actual revenue included in this year's annual report). Note this was the event that took place in JUNE 2010 (approximately 16 months ago):

- Gross Revenue: \$51,376
- Expenses: \$11,833
- *Net Revenue made in June 2010 event: \$39,542 of which BIST portion was \$23,406 or 59%

Mix and Mingle held June 2011 (revenue will be included in next year's annual report, but this is an update for our members in September 2011):

- Gross Revenue: \$99,420
- Expenses (includes venue rental, food, drink, administration, signage for sponsors, entertainment): \$27,200
- *Net Revenue: \$72,220 of which BIST portion is \$47,000 or 65%
- 51% or \$24,000 more in net revenue than the 2010 event. I think this is big news and something that we should definitely share with our members
- Increase in revenue driven by:
 - Introduction of a Lead Sponsor (\$10,000)
 - Increase in Sponsor levels (Gold sponsors at \$2,500, silver
 - Increase in number of participants purchasing tickets (note this is the reason for the increase in expenses as well).

*Note: The agreement that BIST has with OBIA for the Mix and Mingle is as follows: Up to the first \$25,000 made, BIST and OBIA will split the revenue 50/50. After the first \$25,000, BIST will take 75% and OBIA will take 25%. Therefore, the more revenue generated, the higher the percentage of revenue that BIST is able to generate.

Online Donations:

- 84% of online revenue came in through the month of December. Total online revenue received in F2011: \$3,280.00

Fundraising Plan for 2011 – 2012 Fiscal Year

- **Priorities for the Year are:**
 1. **Data:** Refine our current database to determine who our members are (survivors, family members, industry contacts).
 - This will allow us to understand prospects for partnership and fundraising.
 2. **Refine fundraising initiatives that have worked in the past:**
 - Mix and Mingle (see 2011 revenue above), Build on the Success of the BIST run, online fundraising goal of \$4K (vs. \$3200 in 2010 – 2011 year)

3. **Develop Key resources and fundraising processes including;**
 - BIST Case for Support in the event of requests from the public who want to support BIST Financially
 - Development of Marketing/Communications Calendar including e-mail schedule
 - Development of testing and tracking capabilities for marketing to understand what works from a fundraising perspective
4. **Refine Corporate Partnership Strategy to create strong relationships with industry**
 - Corporate Matching programs (target companies based in the GTA that are healthcare focused)
 - Corporate Sponsorship of BIST educational resources (distributed across healthcare institutions in the GTA)
 - Philanthropic giving asks strategically placed with key industry and influencers.
5. **Build the BIST Brand and awareness of the cause (brain injury in the GTA)**
 - Via social media, online and in person at healthcare facilities
 - Working with other committees including: Awareness, Communications

Expected Net Income: 2012

Fundraising Channel	Original Budget (April 2011)	Latest Estimate (Sept 1,2011)
Website Donations (includes donations made via email for general, tribute, etc.)	\$6,000	\$5,000 REVISED ESTIMATE
Event: Mix and Mingle	\$38,500 (10% increase vya)	\$47,000 ACTUAL
Event: BIST Run	\$4,000 (100% increase vya)	\$10,000 REVISED ESTIMATE
OBIA Memberships	\$1,500	\$1,500
Mailed Donations	\$500	\$500
TOTAL	\$50,500	\$64,000

2011 Fundraising Committee Members: Stefanie Linton (Chair), Angelica Velman, Danielle Berehowsky, Greg Neinstein, Shane Henry, Nick Gurevich

VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE

The mandate of the Volunteer Committee is to recruit and interview volunteers and help them find the right opportunities to best use their skills and meet their needs.

This year the committee interviewed a number of interested volunteers and placed people with the Communications Committee, the Awareness Committee, and the Membership Committee. In addition, BIST has recruited a number of volunteers to support the first annual 5 KM Walk/Run on Saturday September 24th, 2011.

In addition, the committee has worked on standardizing the process of orientation for new members, has explored new avenues for recruitment (e.g., the University of Toronto OS & OT Community Involvement Club and high school students needing volunteer hours) and supported BIST with the submission of a grant proposal to the Trillium Foundation.

In the spring the committee planned and hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Night to acknowledge and thank all the incredible work of our many volunteers. In addition, we have developed another way to acknowledge the great work of our volunteers by creating a regular Volunteer Spotlight which will be published in the Beacon. The first 'Spotlight' highlighted the tireless and enthusiastic commitment of Colleen Boyce demonstrated to BIST since its inception.

Volunteers are not paid. This is NOT because they are worthless. It is because they are PRICELESS!

2011 Volunteer Committee Members: Judy Moir and Beverley Melamed (co-chairs), Colleen Boyce, Dr. Peter Rumney, Helen Barnsby, Troy Lehman, and Kat Powell



BIST PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS FOR F2012

BIST Trillium Proposal

On July 1st, 2011 BIST submitted a proposal to the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). Support from OTF will be used by BIST in two ways:

- 1) Expand and enhance BIST's current programming to enable the organization to reach a larger audience;
- 2) Hire a part-time Social Worker to facilitate the development and delivery of support groups, workshops, and the creation of on-line forums and resources.

OTF Requested Amount - \$72,300

Funding term – 2 years starting December 1, 2011

Year 1

- Hire a part-time Social Worker to plan, implement and facilitate support groups and workshops
- Monthly Community Meetings - continue with current community meeting and investigate and plan for implementation of a second meeting in another location in Year 2
- Implementation of a Survivor support group – 3 meetings/month, 8 month/year
- Implementation of a Caregiver/family support Group - 1 /month, 10 month/year
- Personal Development and Education Workshops – 4 survivor and 4 caregiver/family workshops per year
- Purchase two laptops and one LCD projector to support programming needs

Year 2

- Maintain part-time Social Worker to plan, implement and facilitate support groups and workshops
- Monthly Community Meetings - continue with current community meeting and implementation of a second meeting in another location
- Continue Survivor support group - 3 meetings/month, 8 month/year
- Implementation of a second survivor support group - 3 meetings/month, 8 month/year
- Continue Caregiver/family support Group - 1 /month, 10 month/year
- Implementation of a second Caregiver/family support Group - 1 /month, 10 month/year
- Personal Development and Education Workshops – 4 survivor and 4 caregiver/family workshops per year

By expanding the scope our programs and services, BIST will be well positioned to more effectively meet the variety of needs of all people affected by ABI in Toronto. We are in a good position to grow as an organization and are very enthusiastic about the potential that funding could bring to BIST.

First Annual 5K Run, Walk & Roll

BIST is hosting its First Annual 5km Run Walk and Roll on Saturday September 24th in Sunnybrook Park. To ensure the capacity and success of the race, registration was limited to 250 runners/walkers and the race was sold out. The run has two Gold Level sponsors, seven Silver Level sponsors and six Bronze Levels Sponsors. For 2012 we are anticipating the addition of a 10 km race and higher participant capacity.

First Annual 5K Run, Walk & Roll



September 24, 2011

GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS

Elements Support Services

FunctionAbility Rehabilitation Services

Howie Sacks & Henry LLP

Shekter Dychtenberg LLP

Catastrophic Injury Mangement Inc.

Medisys Corporate Health LLP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jonathan Burton – Chair

Jonathan is a lawyer at Gluckstein & Associates LLP in Toronto. He received his Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Western Ontario in June 2006, and was called to the Ontario Bar in June 2007. Jonathan restricts his practice to insurance litigation including personal injury, disability matters, occupier's liability issues and product liability. Jonathan has always been driven by a passion to help those in need, which fuelled his decision to pursue a legal career representing injured persons and their families. Prior to commencing his legal studies, in 2003 Jonathan attained a Bachelor of Administrative and Commercial Studies degree in Organizational and Human Resources, also at the University of Western Ontario. He has an outstanding ability to communicate with people and is dedicated to his clients and to BIST.

In addition to sitting on the Board of Directors of BIST, Jonathan is also an active member of the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association, the Advocates' Society, Toronto Lawyers Association and the Ontario Bar Association.

Judy Moir – Vice Chair

Judy is the Assistant Executive Director of the Toronto ABI Network and a project manager for the GTA Rehab Network. As a collaborative, membership-based organization, The Toronto ABI Network provides leadership to engage clinicians, health administrators and government stakeholders in working to enhance the coordination of and access to acquired brain injury services. Her current position provides Judy with the opportunity to look at the provision of ABI services at a system level and advocate for needed change.

Judy completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Manitoba and obtained a Masters of Public Administration from Queen's University.

Paul McCormack – Treasurer

Paul is a Senior Manager at Delisle Youth Services and has worked with people with multiple complex special needs for the past 25 years. He has specialized in community based services for people with mental health, cognitive and developmental issues for the majority of his career. In 2008, Paul was recognized by the United Way through the Bhayana Professional Dedication Award for his efforts in working with the 'hard to serve'. This past year Paul was honoured to receive the Ontario Brain Injury Association's Professional Award. In addition, Paul has worked in the private sector, he is the owner/operator of Elements Support Services – a community based rehabilitation support service, has been a lecturer at George Brown College, sat on numerous advisory committees and presented at conferences throughout Canada. He is a past board member of the Ontario Brain Injury Association and a founding board member of the Toronto Brain Injury Society.

Dr. Gary Gerber – Secretary

Gary Gerber is the Clinical Director of the Acquired Brain Injury Behaviour Services at West Park Healthcare Centre in Toronto. The program provides both inpatient and outreach behavioural rehabilitation to persons with acquired brain injury and challenging behaviours. His research interests include evaluating the effectiveness of services for persons living in community settings.

Gary joined the BIST board in the spring of 2008.

Danielle Berehowsky

Danielle has had 15 years of experience in the marketing and sales fields within the Consumer Packaged Goods industry. In these roles, she has led projects, managed budgets and worked with cross functional teams to achieve and exceed corporate objectives. She has a drive and passion to achieve success in all that she takes on. Three years ago, her brother suffered a traumatic brain injury. As a result of that experience, she has gained a solid understanding of the resources that are available for victims and their caregivers.

Danielle believes there is an opportunity to not only create more awareness around brain injury but to improve the quality of care for those people that are affected and those that work in the field.

Joseph Campisi

Joseph Campisi graduated from the University of Toronto with an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Political Science. Joseph continued his historical research and subsequently graduated from York University with a Master of Arts degree in History.

Joseph completed his LL.B. degree in 2002 and his Master of Laws degree in Civil Litigation and Alternative Dispute Resolution in 2004. Joseph decided to continue his graduate studies and he received his Ph.D. degree in 2009. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at Osgoode Hall Law School teaching Insurance Law. Joseph is a personal injury lawyer at Carranza LLP in Toronto.

He is a member of the Ontario Bar Association, the Ontario Trial Lawyers Association and the Hamilton Law Association

Todd Gotlieb

Before entering the field of finance services, Todd practiced law in downtown Toronto for over 8 years. He's licensed in both life insurance and mutual funds, and has an extensive business background. In addition, Todd has served on several boards in both the private and charitable sectors. Todd is happily married, and the father of two wonderful boys.

Todd joined the board in the spring of 2008.

Stefanie Linton

Stefanie is a fundraising and communications professional with experience in for profit and nonprofit organizations including the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Sears Canada and the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA). Currently, she is the Director of Alumni Relations at George Brown and is responsible for the initiation and implementation of strategic plans for the Alumni Relations office including the development of activities designed to inform and engage graduates of George Brown College.

Stefanie's husband is a brain injury survivor following an accident that occurred in 2009. She is dedicated to promoting the mission of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto: to enhance the quality of life for persons in the City of Toronto; who are living with the effects of acquired brain injury, through education, awareness, support and advocacy.

Denise McRiner

Denise is a Coordinator of Rehabilitation Services for Bartimaeus Inc. in the GTA. Denise has 20 years of experience supporting individuals living with the effects of acquired brain injury. Denise became involved in the area of brain injury when a close family member sustained a brain injury. Over the years Denise has worked in a variety of capacities in the field of brain injury rehabilitation including rehabilitation therapist, program director, service coordinator and executive director. Denise joined the BIST Board of Directors in October of 2007 and is currently the Chair of the Programs and Services Committee. She is also the BIST representative for the OAC (OBIA Advisory Council) as well as the Chair of OAC Awareness Committee. Previously Denise volunteered extensively with the Niagara Brain Injury Awareness Committee.

Greg Noack

Greg is entering his third year on the board at BIST and serves on the membership committee. He is a brain injury survivor from an assault that took place in November 1996. He has been volunteering and working with fellow survivors in some capacity since 6 months after his injury.

Currently he works at Toronto Rehabilitation Institute Neuro program as a rehabilitation therapist. He has written a book on his own rehabilitation from brain injury "My Invisible Disability" published in February 2006. In his spare time he likes to remain physically active and enjoys running and has completed 4 marathons. Greg joined BIST in the hope that through our experiences we can make others aware of brain injury and look forward to making our voice louder.

Marnie Russell

Marnie Russell has been a BIST Board member since 2007 and a member of the BIST Awareness Committee since 2005. Marnie is a Service Coordinator at CHIRS which offers a broad range of services including supportive housing, community support, adult day services and employment services to adults living with the effects of an acquired brain injury.

Marnie started the CHIRS Mentorship program which empowers clients to help run programs and take on a greater leadership role. She has been working with adults with acquired brain injury since 1997.

Out-going Board Members

Dr. Gary Gerber
Todd Gotlieb
Greg Noack
Joseph Campisi

BIST STAFF

Michelle McDonald

Director of Programs and Development

Michelle joined BIST in November 2010 and works closely with the Board of Directors, Committees and Programs and Services Coordinator to develop new opportunities for the growth and reach of BIST's programs and services.

Previously, Michelle worked at the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario Health Information/Health Promotion, where she managed the Community Presentation Program and coordinated health information product development (brochures, pamphlets, print resources).

Katharine "Kat" Powell

Programs and Services Coordinator

Katharine Powell, the Programs and Services Coordinator of BIST, has been working with BIST since the fall of 2008. Katharine joined BIST with 10 years of experience working both here in Canada and overseas in Australia, Asia and East Africa with Non-Profit and Non-Governmental organizations that focus on community inclusion, training of trainers, health promotion and sport for development.

Since Katharine started working she has always said "I love working and volunteering with organizations that work towards helping people with special needs improve their quality of life and maximize their potential". Outside of work Katharine enjoys volunteering in the winters with Track 3 as a Ski instructor for children/youth with physical and cognitive needs and in the summer with Camp Oochigeaus – a camp for kids with cancer. When she has the time she enjoys participating in musicals and choirs.