



BRAIN INJURY SOCIETY OF TORONTO



EDUCATION



ADVOCACY



SUPPORT



AWARENESS

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR	3
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES REPORT	6
BIST FINANCIAL REPORT	9
BIST VOLUNTEERS	10
AWARENESS	11
BIST SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE	12
BIST/OBIA MIX & MINGLE	16
BIST/OBIA MIX & MINGLE SPONSORS	17
BIST 5K RUN, WALK & ROLL 2014	20
BIST 5K RUN, WALK & ROLL SPONSORS	21
BIST BOARD OF DIRECTORS	22
BIST STAFF	25
AWARDS RECEIVED BY BIST	26



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to contribute to the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015. Each year BIST continues to grow and expand the programs and services it offers, but I think this year is marked not only by the growth of our programs but also by the evolution of the organization itself and our ability to attend to the ALL aspects of our Vision and Mission in a new way.



When an organization is in its formative years, it appropriately must spend time on developing a foundation and infrastructure. A young organization asks itself – what is our core business? How can we provide value to our members? And where do we start?

The mission of BIST was established as enhancing 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. All of these are important (that is why they are articulated in our mission). In early days, when answering the question ‘where do we start’, BIST chose to start by building supports and resources for our core members.

Those core supports and programs are still our priority and we need to celebrate all the great things that happened this year. BIST offered an unparalleled number of community meetings, support groups, and workshops this year. One of the real highlights for me was the very successful workshop series that allowed us to reach new people, people who had not attended BIST events in the past. These opportunities will definitely continue.

Now that BIST has some years under its belt and has a good track record of attaining those first objectives, it is important to keep asking questions, to ensure that we are on the right track and to look for ways to stretch ourselves further. Questions such as:

- Are there other people we should be supporting?
- How do we shore up the foundation to ensure longevity of the organization?
- Can we/Should we be doing things differently to be more effective in reaching our objectives?
- Are there other parts of our mandate that we can focus on now?

And now we are in a position to ask ‘who else needs our help?’ and we have been answering that question by adding resources and support for families, youth, and people with mild brain injuries in a way that we haven’t before.

The Board has also been asking 'how we do things better?' "How do we govern better?" "How do we make the best use of our resources?" "How do we ensure our sustainability?" And as a result a number of fundamental things have changed this year.

The Board is working hard to move towards becoming more of a 'governance' board and less of a 'working board'. Michelle McDonald is BIST's first Executive Director (which comes with a new set of responsibilities and accountabilities), allowing the board to focus on its strategic planning governance.

We have substantially changed the committee structure to ensure that we are using our staff time and the time of valuable volunteers in the best possible way.

In addition to seeing the continued growth of the ever popular Mix and Mingle and BIST 5 KM Walk, Run, Roll fundraisers, we have added new fund raising opportunities – the Birdies for Brain Injury Golf Tournament and our newly launched Corporate Sponsorship Plan. This is essential if we want BIST to remain on solid footing.

And most exciting for me – we are looking for ways to expand our role in advocacy and awareness. Our areyouaware.ca campaign is gaining momentum and I see no limits to what that initiative could achieve. And we are becoming recognized as a leading voice for those with brain injury and their families. We have had many opportunities this year to advocate for change on behalf of our members and are also seeking ways to support provincial and national advocacy efforts. This is the torch that I would like to hand off to the incoming board because I think BIST is ideally positioned to do this very important work.

This is my last year as Chair of the Board of Directors and I want to take a moment to thank the members of BIST for giving me this opportunity. You are the reason we do what we do. I want to thank all the fellow board members I have had the privilege of serving with (past and present). I would like to especially acknowledge the following board members who have finished their term and are stepping down this year: Kate Moore, Anya Tamir, Stephen Gregory, and Riannon John.

Finally I want to acknowledge the incredible staff of BIST whom I have come to admire and I am so grateful that BIST has benefitted from your talents and energy. I have been very honoured to be a small part of this incredible organization – and I look forward to finding other ways to be a part of the BIST community.

Judy Moir, Chair—Board of Directors

BIST

Brain Injury Society of Toronto



CORPORATE SPONSORS

SINGER
KWINTER | Leaders
in
Personal Injury
Law



BAXTER
Structures



GLUCKSTEIN
PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS

McKellar STRUCTURED
SETTLEMENTS

MICHELLE COHEN
& ASSOCIATES

Speech-Language
Pathologists
416-444-6665



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES REPORT

Community Meetings

The monthly community meetings held at the Northern District Library continue to be a cornerstone program at BIST. These meetings were created to provide members with a consistent opportunity to meet, participate in leadership opportunities and to take part in information sessions provided by a variety of guest speakers.

Within this past year we have heard from professionals and personal experiences on topics such as:

- Variety Village
- Street Smarts
- Living with ABI: Exploring the Mind-Body Connection
- Beating the Winter Blues
- Eating Healthy on a Budget



Social/Recreation Events

Social and Recreation events provide great opportunities to bring BIST members together to explore new interests and the community around them.

The monthly Social Drop-In program at the Northern District Library is regularly attended by a core group of members, and also frequently draws in new faces. The mixture of craft activities, group games and board games has worked well. In addition, Social Bowling continues to be a popular monthly program, which draws several regular members each month.



We went on a variety of inner-city trips this year, which members reported were a big success. Trips included Centre Island (in partnership with CHIRS), ROM, Brickworks, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and Variety Village. The variety of excursions meant we had the pleasure of seeing different members come out to trips based on their interest.

Other special social events, which took place this year included the BIST 10th Anniversary Party (Summer Picnic), Annual Halloween Dance (in partnership with CHIRS) and our Annual Holiday Party. These were all well attended.



Peer Support Mentor Program

BIST continues to offer the Peer Support Mentoring Program in partnership with the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA).

Awareness about this program in our community grew this year. Currently, BIST is one of the two leading branches of this program with the number of active matches of both Mentors and Partners. This year we had 25 participants matched in the program (11 Mentors and 14 Partners). A Mentor training for both new mentors and current ones was held in December 2014.

The Peer Support Mentoring Support Program connects an individual who is a “veteran” in living with the effects of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) with a “partner” who is coping with a similar ABI-related situation and is in need of support from a knowledgeable friend. The program is available to survivors, family members or unpaid providers of care. Mentoring can be done over the telephone, email and/or Skype, making it accessible for people who otherwise would not attend our programs.

As the program is growing there is always a need for new Mentors in all of the categories (ABI survivors, parents and spouses). At the moment, we are targeting recruitments for family members who are spouses and parents.

Family Support Program

The Family Support Program completed its second year successfully with members from both the Young Adult Group and Parental Support Group participants wanting the program to continue.

Since the start of the second year in September, there has been an increase in inquiries about the program and participation in both groups. The Young Adult Group started with 9 participants and at the time of this report has 14 registered.

The programs are geared towards young adults between the ages of 18 – 26 and their parents. The program consists of two groups that meet concurrently once a month and are facilitated by BIST staff, rehabilitation support workers, social workers and a family member.

Young Adult Group

This group is a great way to socialize, improve relationships, learn new skills and get out in our community. The participants work together to identify topics that they would like to learn more about or discuss.

Parental Support Group

This group is facilitated by a social worker and a family member who has been living with ABI in their family for years and has valuable experience and knowledge to share. This year a behavioural therapist came in to speak with the group and this was well received. In the upcoming year, we will invite more guest speakers to come to the group.

Half Day Education Workshops

This year BIST started offering half day workshops to survivors, family members and professionals. The workshops were well attended, and participants reported they gained useful information and tools which will be helpful in the future.

Below is a brief summary of the workshops that were offered.

- **Family Workshop** - "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families: Strategies for Navigating the Journey after an Acquired Brain Injury"

Caron Gan, RN, MScN, AAMFT and a team of social workers and occupational therapists that work in the field delivered this workshop. Ms. Gan presented her "Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families" and led a discussion with the group. Participants then split into breakout groups of ABI survivors, spouses / partners, parents and children to discuss concerns or issues they are experiencing and identifying ways to work through them. After the workshop, participants reported feeling they had learned new tools to work with in their everyday life. The attendance at this workshop was excellent with 74 people present.

- **Family Member Workshop: Caring for the Caregiver – Enhancing Family Effectiveness after Brain Injury.**

The second workshop was delivered by Caron Gan and Dr. Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, Ph.D., ABPP on Saturday November 22nd, 2014. This workshop had a great turnout, with 76 in attendance. This workshop focused in on:

- What you should know about a Brain Injury and Recovery
- Seven Habbits of Highly Effective Families
- The greatest challenges faced by families after Brain Injury and how to overcome them
- Building family resilience
- Top tips for coping.

- **Family and Professional Workshop: Aging and Brain Injury**

The third workshop focused in on three points in the natural process of aging how an ABI can affect this process and what needs to be thought about as we get older Dr. Emily Nalder from the University of Toronto, Dianne Taylor and Alison Jardine of Dianne M. Taylor and Associates and Michael Hartt, FCS, CIM, PFP, FMA of Royal Bank Financial lead the presentations.. 65 people attended this workshop and the break-up of the group was fairly equal between survivors, spouses/parents and professionals.

Caring for the Caregiver
Enhancing Family Effectiveness after Brain Injury

FREE Workshop
FOR BRAIN INJURY CAREGIVERS

Saturday November 22, 2014
8:30 am – 3:30 pm
Bridgepoint Active Healthcare

This is a one-day workshop and practical guide offered at NO COST to families and caregivers of children, youth, and adults with a brain injury. In addition to the presented materials, all caregivers will also receive a complimentary guide, "Getting Better and Better after Brain Injury: A Practical Guide for Families and Caregivers".

Topics to be discussed:

- What you should know about brain injury and recovery
- Seven habits of highly effective families
- The greatest challenges faced by families after brain injury and how to overcome them
- Building family resilience and top tips for coping

Caron Gan, RN, MScN, AAMFT Clinical Fellow & Approved Supervisor, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Private Practitioner. Caron Gan is an RN, registered Marriage and Family Therapist, and Certified Clinical Traumatologist. For the past 22 years, she has worked with children with ABI providing psychotherapeutic intervention to youth, parents, adults, couples and families in both public and private sectors. Her primary research focuses on family interventions with adolescents after ABI.

Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, Ph.D., ABPP is a Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Neurosurgery, and Psychiatry at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), Medical College of Virginia Campus. Dr. Kreutzer serves as Director of the Virginia's federally designated Traumatic Brain Injury Model System and coordinates VCU Health System outpatient services for families and persons with brain injury. Dr. Kreutzer is a neuropsychologist and family therapist with more than two decades experience developing and implementing brain injury family support services.

Registration: connections@bist.ca or call 416-830-1485

OUR SPONSORS:
Legal Minds Caring Hearts, LERNERS Personal Injury Lawyers, SINGER KWINTER (Canadian Personal Injury Law), Cerebral Injury Management, Inc.

BIST Brain Injury Society of Toronto

Aging and Brain Injury

FREE BIST RETREAT
Saturday
February 21, 2015
Bridgepoint Active Healthcare
14 St. Matthews Road,
Toronto, Ontario
M4M 2B5

Registration:
8:30 am
Presentations:
9:00 am – 12:30 pm

There is the natural process of Aging, but how does it impact those with an Acquired Brain Injury?

Join us for this FREE informative session with presentations by:

- Dr. Emily Nalder, Rotman Research Institute
- Dianne Taylor & Alison Jardine
- Government of Canada

For: Survivors | Family Members | Caregivers | Health Care and Service Providers

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED!
Please Contact connections@bist.ca or call 416.830.1485

OUR SPONSORS:
Legal Minds Caring Hearts, LERNERS Personal Injury Lawyers, SINGER KWINTER (Canadian Personal Injury Law)

BIST Brain Injury Society of Toronto

BIST FINANCIAL REPORT

This year we said goodbye to Paul McCormack who stepped down as Vice-Chair and Treasurer to pursue a new adventure, he will be missed. I am excited to be joining the team here at BIST to continue to build on the work that has been so successful.

BIST continued to expand the programs and services we are offering. This growth in opportunities we are extending to our members was successfully achieved by increasing staffing commitments and moving to new premises resulting in an increase in current year expenses. We are also in the process of transforming our fundraising events and activities with the aim of enhancing revenue in future years, this has included introducing Annual Corporate Sponsorships effective January 1, 2015 and planning for the exciting Birdies for Brain Injuries event to be held on June 30, 2015 however the benefits of this transformation will only be truly realized in future years and we saw a slight decrease in revenue this year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our members, board members, community partners, sponsors including our new corporate sponsors, OBIA and our dedicated staff for all their work. Without these significant efforts BIST would not be the organization it is today.

CDN \$	Year ended March 31, 2015	Year ended March 31, 2014
Gross Revenue	156,271	159,424
Staff Wages	(19,458)	(79,560)
BIST Program and Trillium Expenses	(101,959)	(28,685)
Fundraising Event Expenses	(31,057)	(16,965)
Admin and Other Expenses	(34,750)	(29,012)
Surplus/(Deficit)	(30,953)	5,202

CDN\$	Year ended March 31, 2015	Year ended March 31, 2014
Cash	92,167	93,926
Accounts Receivable	6,255	-
Prepaid Expenses	5,835	-
Assets	104,257	93,924
Deferred Revenue	34,018	-
Accounts Payable	11,333	4,065
Retained Earnings	58,906	89,859
Liabilities and Equity	104,257	93,924

BIST VOLUNTEERS

BIST is fortunate to have so many hard-working and dedicated volunteers. Our volunteers sit on committees, help plan and lead our programs, plan our fundraising and social events and contribute to our blog. Our volunteers are survivors, family members, health care professionals, lawyers and individuals interested in giving back to their community and supporting the mission of BIST.

Our Volunteer Committee works hard to plan a Volunteer Recognition evening in April to celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Month. Our sincere thank you to the Volunteer Appreciation Committee.

Volunteer of the Year Award

BIST has introduced the Vetter Volunteer of the Year Award named for Esther and Alfred Vetter. They have an adult son who sustained a brain injury many years ago, and have been instrumental in brain injury awareness over the years. Esther was the founding Executive Director of the Head Injury Association of Toronto.

Congratulations to all of our deserving nominees!

This year's winner was Bev Melamed. Bev has demonstrated true commitment and passion as a volunteer. As Co-Chair of the Volunteer Committee she has, on many occasions, gone "over and above" the call of duty, has taken the initiative to keep the ball rolling, and has never come to a meeting unprepared. She attends every meeting with focus and works tirelessly to see that the committee's commitments are carried out. She also makes a personal investment in each committee member. She offered her time to her new Co-Chair to go over our roles and expectations. When a former survivor on the Volunteer committee became ill, it was Bev who continued to check in with her and report back to the committee. Bev encapsulates the vision of a volunteer.



AWARENESS

One of the focus areas of our mission is to create awareness of the prevalence of brain injury and what it is like for those individuals and families that live with it every day. This year we changed our awareness campaign strategy from an event to a true awareness campaign.

We create a website called www.areyouaware.ca. The site is separate from the BIST website and features, Brain Injury 101, Stats and Facts, Frequently Ask Questions and Faces of Brain Injury. This section profiles the stories of some of our members and we would like to thank them for sharing their courageous stories.

We were also given permission to go into the TTC to hand out our awareness materials. Teams of volunteers went to Bloor/Yonge, Finch and Yorkdale stations during rush hour to spread the awareness message. We had over 2000 hits to www.awreyouaware.ca in the month of June alone.

We continued to build on this campaign in February with “I ♥ Your Brain”. The brain-ograms could be sent from the website and we had a great response.

The success of this campaign did not go unnoticed. We received a Communication Award from Brain Injury Canada and received calls of support from across Canada. We will continue to build on this campaign in 2015-2016.



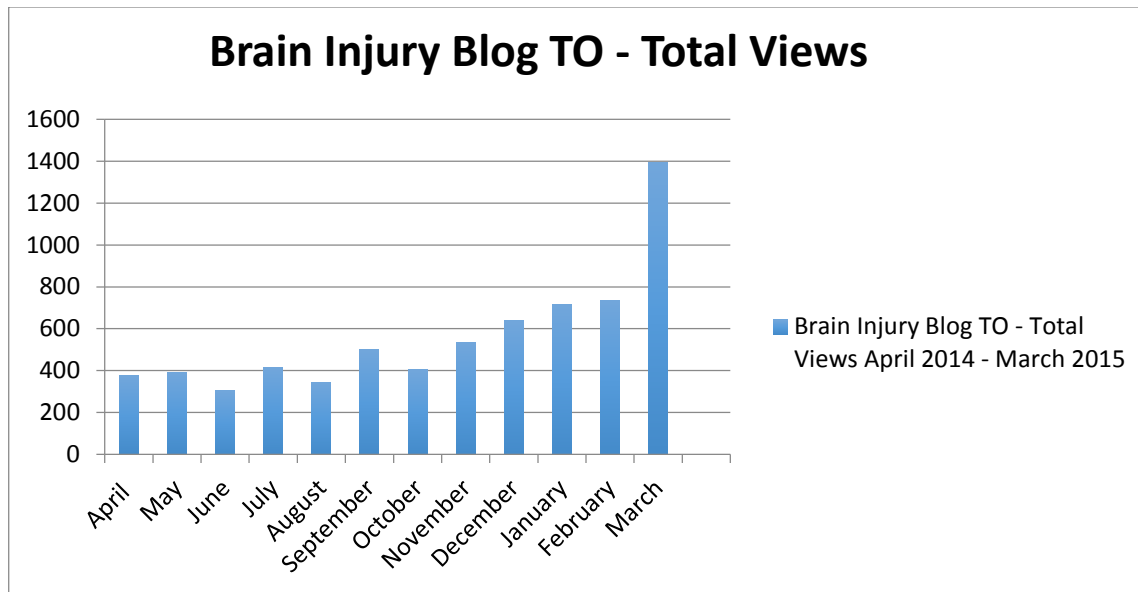
BIST SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE

Blog - Brain Injury Blog TO

The BIST blog continues to grow each year in terms of views and visitors. From April 2014 to March 31, 2015, the blog received **6,760 total views**. The most popular post was on March 26, 2015 - *Is it the right time for a hidden disability symbol?* by Richard Haskell with 586 views.

Month	Views	Number of posts	Theme	Top post	Top post - total views	Date of top post
April 2014	377	2	None	<i>Brain dancing with Annemarie Cabri</i>	103	04/04/14
May 2014	390	2	None	<i>#areyouaware – Brain Injury Awareness Month</i>	58	05/29/14
June 2014	304	5	None	<i>10th Annual Mix and Mingle – a big thank you to our sponsors</i>	28	06/18/14
July 2014	417	6	None	<i>Pic from the BIST/OBIA 10th annual Mix and Mingle</i>	102	07/15/14
Aug. 2014	346	4	None	<i>How Western University aims to reduce sports-related concussions</i>	34	08/14/14
Sept. 2014	500	7	BIST Run	<i>Why I'm walking the BIST 5K: Vanessa Giles</i>	76	09/04/14
Oct. 2014	404	6	Pet Month	<i>How to have a pet on a budget – useful resources</i>	78	10/16/14
Nov. 2014	537	5	Veterans	<i>BIST remembers Paula Cassin</i>	129	11/24/14
Dec. 2014	639	5	Holiday survival	<i>Will Tracy Morgan's TBI lead to more brain injury awareness?</i>	53	12/11/14
Jan. 2015	716	4	Winter survival	<i>Exploring the mind-body connection and ABI</i>	84	01/30/15
Feb. 2015	737	6	Love and relationships	<i>The Pinky and Sarah love story</i>	129	02/26/15
March 2015	1393	5	Women and ABI	<i>Is it the right time for a hidden disability symbol?</i>	586	03/26/15

TOTAL VIEWS – 6760



Most of the blog readers are from Canada, though there are significant readers from the U.S. Brazil and Australia are the next two top countries for viewers.

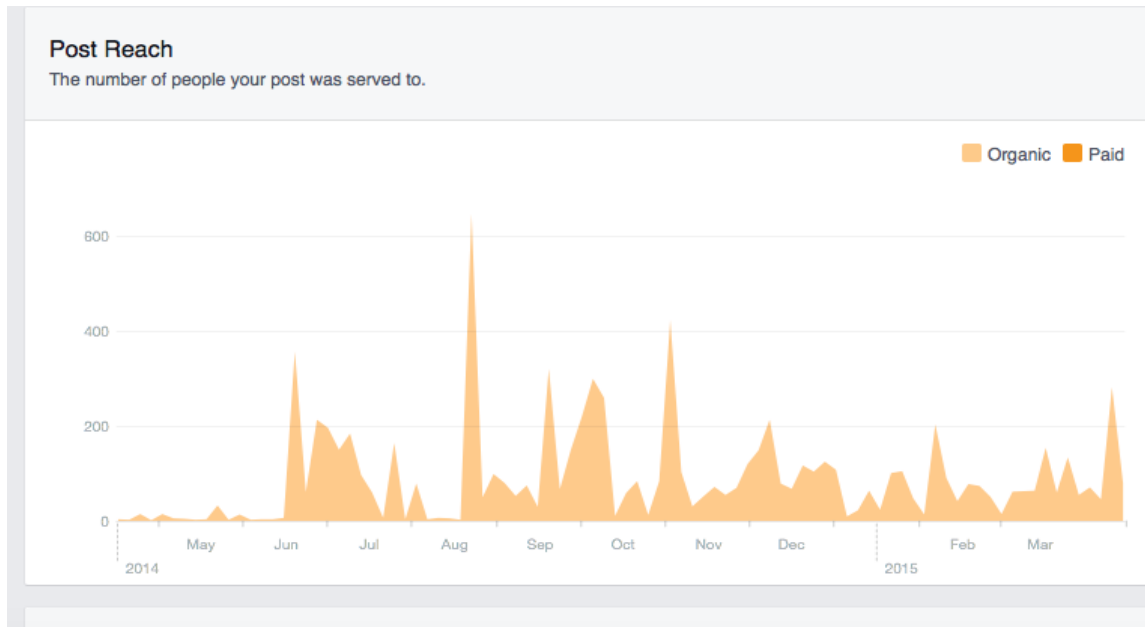
Country	Total Views (Jan. 1 – June 14, 2015)
Canada	3030
United States	1242
Brazil	41
Australia	19

There is every indication the blog will continue its growth throughout 2015. Halfway through 2015, the blog has surpassed 2014 numbers in terms of views and likes.

Year	Views	Visitors	Total Likes	Total Posts
2014	4995	3267	33	53
2015 (to June 14, 2015)	5507	3255	41	27

Facebook – Brain Injury Society of Toronto

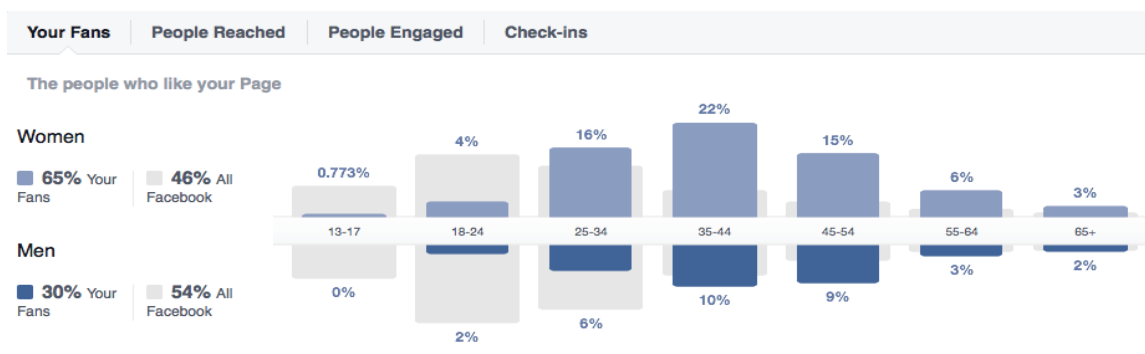
The BIST Facebook does well on a consistent basis. The following graph, copied from Facebook shows spikes on the page's post reach from April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015.



By March 31, 2015 the BIST Facebook page had 335 Facebook likes. Our top posts were on the following dates:

Total post reach	Date
643	08/08/14
420	10/18/14
354	09/20/14

Most of our Facebook “fans” are women, in the 35-44-age bracket, as the following graph copied from Facebook indicates:



Twitter – @BrainInjuryTO

The BIST Twitter account has grown consistently throughout the year. By June 2014 we had acquired 1,000 followers. The following are the insights provided by Twitter, showing that February 2015 was our strongest month for daily impressions. The definitions of the categories are below, copied from the Twitter help site.

Month	Impressions / day	Link Clicks	Re-Tweets	Favourites	Replies	Engagement Rate
April 2014	0	0	11	0	0	0%
May 2014	0	0	7	1	0	0%
June 2014	0	0	127	64	33	0%
July 2014	0	0	29	8	4	0%
Aug. 2014	326	42	78	29	9	0.6%
Sept. 2014	720	86	110	54	21	2%
Oct. 2014	512	77	89	27	12	1.7%
Nov. 2014	529	53	105	68	23	2.5%
Dec. 2014	499	89	90	43	35	2.3%
Jan. 2015	536	95	116	42	15	1.9%
Feb. 2015	842	87	131	56	25	2%
March 2015	680	96	143	66	22	1.8%

Impressions: The times a user is served a Tweet in a timeline or search results.

Link clicks: Clicks on a URL or Card in the Tweet

Re-tweets: Times a user re-tweeted the Tweet

Favorites: Times a user favorite the Tweet

Engagements: Times users engage with a Tweet

Engagement rate: Number of engagements divided by impressions

TOTAL FOLLOWERS AS OF JUNE 14, 2015 - 1457

BIST/OBIA MIX & MINGLE

2014 marked the 10th Anniversary of the BIST/OBIA Mix & Mingle. The focus of this year's event is "Celebrating Partnerships". BIST values the collaboration and relationships we have developed over the last decade enabling us to reach more individuals and families living with the effects of brain injury and to deliver more programs and services to meet their needs.

This event started with less than 100 people and we are thrilled to have evolved into the "must attend" ABI networking event of the year, drawing over 600 attendees and raising almost \$150,000 to support BIST and OBIA. Thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout the years and we are looking forward to another decade of working together.

presented by McKellar

BIST OBIA

10
MIX &
MINGLE

10th ANNIVERSARY



BIST/OBIA MIX & MINGLE SPONSORS



Thank you for your generous support.

Lead Sponsor



Platinum Sponsors



Gold Sponsors



BIST/OBIA MIX & MINGLE 2014 SPONSORS

Thank you for your generous support.

Food Station Sponsors



Slider Station

Legal Minds.
Caring Hearts.

LERNERS

Personal Injury Lawyers

Harvest Station

BOGOROCH
& ASSOCIATES LLP
LAWYERS

Taco Station

SINGER Leaders
KWINTER in
Personal Injury
Law

Oyster Bar Station

Beverage Sponsors



Music Sponsor



Videographer



Photographer

damien d photography

Thank you for your generous support.

Silver Sponsors

Access Rehab. Inc.	Innovative Case Management
Adesse Legal Services PC	Kerr Lawyers
AgTa Home Health Care Services	Lawlor Therapy Support Services
ARCG Rehab	Lee & Associates Personal Injury
Balance Physiotherapy	Lawyers
Bartimaeus Inc.	Linden & Associates
Baxter Structures	Lawlor Therapy Support Services Inc.
Beverlee C. Melamed & Associates Inc.	Lofranco Corriero Personal Injury
Bialkowski Leone LLP	Lawyers
Bluepoint Valuation	Mazin & Associates
Carol Bierbrier & Associates	Michelle Cohen & Associates
Catastrophic Injury Management Inc.	Miller Thomson LLP
Centre for Educational Development	Network Reporting & Mediation
Colangelo Greenhow Inc.	Neurocore Physiotherapy & Pilates
Community Solutions Ltd.	Centre Inc.
Desai Law Personal Injury Firm PC	Omega Medical Associates
Diamond & Diamond Personal Injury	Patey Law Group
Lawyers	The Social Work Consulting Group
FunctionAbility Rehabilitation	Torkin Manes LLP
Services	Vertex Solutions Corporation
Galit Liffshiz & Associates	Wolf Kimelman LLP
Hanson Duby Lawyers	YorkStreet Dispute Resolutions
Henderson Structured Settlements LP	Group Inc.

BIST 5K RUN, WALK & ROLL 2014

We had another successful event! The sun was out and we had over 400 participants out on the course.

Top Male Finishers

1. Mark Brophy
2. Carlo Smith
3. Braydon Trowbridge

Top Female Finishers

1. Sarah Turner
2. Blanca Bourne
3. Emma Tse

We would like to thank all of our sponsors, our volunteers and all the participants for making this such a great event!

We would also like to extend a sincere thank you to our top individual fundraisers Ryan Murray and Ellie and Mark Lapowich. Those funds raised will go a long way in supporting our programs and services.



BIST 5K RUN, WALK & ROLL SPONSORS

GOLD SPONSORS



SAL GUZZO, LL.B.
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS

SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS

FUNCTIONABILITY REHABILITATION SERVICES INC.

HENDERSON STRUCTURED SETTLEMENTS

INNOVATIVE CASE MANAGEMENT INC.

VOCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES INC.

SINGER KWINTER PERSONAL INJURY LAWYERS LLP

TCL ECONOMIC VALUATION EXPERTS

BIST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Judy Moir, Chair

Judy is the Manager of Community Support Services at CHIRS which is a community based agency that provides support to people to reintegrate to their communities following a brain injury. Judy completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Manitoba and obtained a Masters of Public Administration from Queen's University.

She has been working with people with complex needs (including brain injury) for over 20 years. Through her current and previous roles, Judy has had the opportunity to look at the provision of ABI services at a system level and advocate for change. Much of her current focus is on enhancing capacity for people with brain injury through the development of partnerships with organizations in other sectors (e.g., Addictions and Mental Health).

Michelle Diamond, Vice Chair

Michelle Diamond currently works with Functionability Rehabilitation Services as the Director of Case Management and Client Services. She has worked in the field of Brain Injury for over 12 years. She graduated with her Master's Degree of Social Work, from the University of Toronto, in 2000 and began working at Toronto Rehab on the ABI service in 2001. Michelle was with Toronto Rehab for over 10 years in the capacity of Social worker, Service Coordinator and was seconded for one year to the Toronto ABI Network as Project and Referral Coordinator. Michelle continues to work directly with clients and families living with the effects of brain injury. Michelle has been involved with BIST for two years as a volunteer on two committees; the BIAM Committee, and was a founding member of the Run Committee.

Susie Cooke - Treasurer

Susie is a Senior Manager at Deloitte with over 9 years of experience in accounting. Originally from the UK Susie completed her undergraduate degree at Durham University and obtained her accountancy qualification from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales before moving to Toronto in 2008.

Susie's work with the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation and United Way has led her to want to further expand her work in the community. Although Susie does not work in the field of Acquired Brain Injury she has direct experience supporting family members who have been effected by Brain Injury. In addition to this she has very close links with some of the research that is being undertaken at the University of Toronto in the area of Brain Injury. These two areas of experience and knowledge have resulted in Susie's desire to work further in this area to support and raise awareness of ABI.

Susie is hoping to bring her in-depth knowledge and expertise in the area of finance and accounting to the role of Treasurer to assist BIST in meeting its strategic priorities and ensure the success and sustainability of BIST's operations.

Kate Moore - Secretary

Kate Moore is a manager of ABI Services at COTA Health, which offers a variety of services to individuals with ABI such as supportive housing programs, a case management program and an adult day services program. Kate has worked in the field of ABI for the past 11 years in various roles, such as rehabilitation therapist (Toronto Rehabilitation Institute), behaviour therapist (Dale Brain Injury Services, London) and manager (COTA Health). She is dedicated to the field of ABI and in serving the community in a volunteer capacity.

Jordan Assaraf

Jordan Assaraf is a lawyer at Gluckstein Personal Injury Lawyers. By being involved in contact sports his entire life, Jordan has seen how traumatic brain injuries can occur and affect not only those who have suffered the injury, but also those that are surrounded by the injury. This has led Jordan be the personal injury lawyer he is today, but has also led him to volunteer his time and raise awareness about brain injuries by joining BIST. Jordan's other volunteer experience includes leading his law firm's team in the annual Wheelchair Relay Race and supporting the charitable organization THREE TO BE in their efforts to assist children with neurological disorders. Jordan is committed to raising public awareness about the effects of brain injuries on victims, their families and the broader public.

Kerry Foschia

Kerry Foschia has been working with adults with acquired brain injury for over 15 years. She is a Service Coordinator at CHIRS, managing the Aging at Home Program which provides home and community support to clients and their caregivers. Kerry also has a background in addictions as a counsellor and outreach worker. Outside of her work with ABI, Kerry is a member of the parent council at her children's school and enjoys pursuing her two other passions: painting and running.

Steve Gregory

Steve never intended to be a brain injury survivor – it just has worked out that way. Steve started his career coming off a Masters in Engineering and worked at a variety of engineering jobs for 11 years before finding himself in a coma. During rehabilitation Steve excelled at some things, however, his vision was affected in the accident and this hampered his attempts to rejoin his career path. Steve now spends his time involved in exercise and service on advisory organizations.

Ryan Murray

Ryan is a partner at Oatley, Vigmond Personal Injury Lawyers LLP. Ryan has been representing people with traumatic brain injuries for nearly a decade. That experience has taught Ryan that a brain injury often has a lifelong impact on both the injured person and their family. Raising awareness about brain injury and promoting injury prevention are two of the reasons that Ryan volunteers with BIST. Ryan holds a Bachelor of Laws degree (LL.B.) and a Master of Laws degree (LL.M. – Civil Litigation and Dispute Resolution) from Osgoode Hall Law School. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from York University. Ryan is a member of the Law Society of Upper Canada, Ontario Trial Lawyers Association, the Advocates Society and the American Association for Justice (formerly American Trial Lawyers Association).

Anya Tamir

Anya Tamir is a lawyer practicing personal injury and disability law in Barrie and Toronto at Andrew R. Kerr Professional Corporation.

Anya's involvement in the area of brain injury and brain disorders began a decade ago when she was an undergraduate student majoring in psychology, with the focus on neuro and clinical psychology. In the last year of her undergraduate studies Anya completed an internship at the department of psychiatry of the Free Clinic of Greater Cleveland (Ohio, USA) where she worked with individuals suffering from a variety of psychiatric ailments, including acquired brain injury, DSM-IV organic brain disorders and drug dependency.

Anya graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School and became a persuasive and passionate advocate on behalf of her clients. She appeared at all levels of Ontario Court and is an active member of Ontario Trial Lawyers Association. She is also a member of Advocates Society and Simcoe County Law Association. As a lawyer litigating on behalf of persons with traumatic brain injury Anya works on ensuring that her clients have access to all the necessary resources. As such, Anya is committed to expanding services provided by BIST and increasing awareness of brain injury in the community and among the medico-legal profession.

Colleen Worsley

Colleen is dedicated to raising awareness and building support systems for individuals living with acquired brain injury. (ABI) Colleen is currently working with Delisle Youth Services as a Community Resource Consultant as well as continuing to work on fund raising projects in the ABI community. She has more than 15 years of experience in the social services field. She graduated from York University with a Specialized Honours Degree in Psychology, has a certificate in Nutrition and training in Behaviour Therapy techniques. Her continuing education involves conferences, seminars, and courses focusing on advances in the understanding and treatment of ABI and spinal cord injury.

BIST STAFF

Michelle McDonald - Executive Director

Michelle started with BIST in November 2010 and works closely with the Board of Directors, Committees and staff to develop new opportunities for the growth and reach of BIST's programs and services. She sits on a number of BIST Committees, including the Awareness, Mix & Mingle and Run Committees. She also sits on the OBIA Advisory Council, the Toronto ABI Network Advisory Committee and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Toronto District School Board.

Since starting with BIST Michelle's says "I am in constant awe of the many volunteers that enable BIST to reach its mission. We would be nowhere without the dedication and commitment of these individuals".

In addition to her experience as a Marketing Consultant, Michelle has worked in the non-profit sector for many years, including the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario and Toronto Preschool Autism Service.

Outside of work, Michelle loves to ski, run and spend time with her two young children and husband.

Kat Powell - Programs and Services Coordinator

Kat has been working with BIST since the fall of 2008. Kat joined BIST with 10 years' 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 Kat 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 Kat 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.

Meri Perra - Communications and Support Coordinator

Meri Perra is excited to be the new Communications and Support Coordinator at BIST. She has several years' experience connecting people to resources, through her former position at Find Help Information Services. Since leaving Findhelp, she earned a diploma in journalism and has been blogging and writing for an online parenting magazine.

"The Brain Injury 101 training was really eye opening for me," she says. "I am amazed at the strength and resilience of so many survivors."

Meri lives downtown with her partner, two kids, tiny cat and massive cargo bike.

AWARDS RECEIVED BY BIST



2014 WINNER
BRAIN INJURY SOCIETY OF TORONTO
COMMUNITY BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF THE YEAR
Presented by the ONTARIO BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION



Communication Award

This award is granted to the individual, group or organization for their outstanding efforts in promoting, advertising or communicating to advance the cause of brain injury in Canada

Brain Injury Society of Toronto

Areyouaware.ca



40 St. Clair Avenue East

Suite 205

Toronto, Ontario

M4T 1M9

416-830-1485

info@bist.ca

www.bist.ca