Heads Up

Heads Up Headlines

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AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:
The Journey: Healing Through Self Expression

2021 Award of Excellence for BIA-MA Programs & Services

BIA-MA is proud to announce that at the 26th Annual Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) Affiliate Leadership Conference, BIA-MA was awarded the 2021 Award of Excellence for Programs and Services, specifically for “The Journey: Healing Through Self Expression”! This

“Award” continued on page 3
Executive Message
Nicole M. Godaire, CEO

Here at the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) we are excited because spring is around the corner - the birds are chirping, the days are lighter, and March is Brain Injury Awareness Month!

BIA-MA is ready to celebrate Brain Injury Awareness Month beginning March 1st. Please visit our website at www.biama.org to become a BIA-MA member, sign up for the Annual Brain Injury Conference, and download the #MoreThanMyBrainInjury awareness campaign materials.

This is the perfect time to become a BIA-MA member! Not only does your membership enable us to provide programs to support those affected by brain injury through prevention, education, advocacy and support programs, but also members get exclusive discounts to our Annual Brain Injury Conference, ABI Series, and other programs. It’s a win-win for all!

The 40th Annual Brain Injury Conference is being held VIRTUALLY on March 30-31! Now that we have gone virtual the opportunity to attend is even greater – so if you have always wanted to come to conference, now is the time! It is now easier than ever to register AND become a member all in one place.

In this issue of Heads Up Headlines we are proud to announce that at the 26th Annual Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) Affiliate Leadership Conference, BIA-MA was awarded the 2021 Award of Excellence for Programs and Services, specifically for “The Journey: Healing Through Self Expression”. This virtual program occurs every Monday morning and has allowed us to reach and welcome many new individuals into a place of comfort and belonging. And don’t miss the article, reprinted with permission of the Taunton Gazette, about Cathy Hutchinson’s Legacy to the brain injury community.

As always I would like to thank our staff, providers, caregivers, and brain injury survivors for your contributions towards our mission.

See you in the Spring!
“Award” continued from cover

award recognizes excellence in programs and services design, execution, and evaluation. Typical entries may include fundraising activities, public awareness campaigns, prevention programs, education initiatives, advocacy activities, and member services.

If you haven’t had the opportunity to experience our Journey presentations, we implore you to join us for a series of inspiring presentations designed to help you explore the many ways of sharing your lived experience with brain injury. Each week, you are invited to join fellow survivors who will share their personal experiences using many different forms of self-expression. We will explore using the arts, such as painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, pottery, music, the written word, hand crafting, sewing and more, to express our inner selves and support us on the journey toward living well.

**The Journey: Healing Through Self Expression became very meaningful to staff, presenters, and attendees and has been vital to help all during COVID-19.**

We hope to have this series ongoing well into 2022. We continue to encourage anyone who wants to present for the Journey to contact Cynthia Cardeli, our Director of Programs and Services, at ccardeli@biama.org.

Grab a cup of tea, coffee, or water, settle in for an enjoyable hour with kindred spirits and BE INSPIRED!

To learn more and participate in The Journey, please visit [www.biama.org](http://www.biama.org)
Paralyzed Taunton mom leaves ‘beautiful legacy’ of opportunities for the disabled

Chris Helms - Reprinted with permission of The Taunton Daily Gazette (November 19, 2021)

Holly Danca remembers how, before the stroke, her mom would hold the legs of the Thanksgiving turkey and make it dance before cooking it.

“She was the fun one in the neighborhood,” said Danca, now 42.

A catastrophic brain-stem stroke left her mom, Cathy Hutchinson, quadriplegic and unable to speak. But Hutchinson's spark never faded, according to those who knew her. Appalled by the conditions endured at nursing homes by people with brain injuries, Hutchinson became a passionate and effective advocate for change.

“After the stroke, oddly enough, she was a little bit more relaxed,” Danca said of her mother. “She didn't take herself so seriously. There was a shift in perspective on her life. Because she lost so much, she was more grateful, she lived more authentically.”

Hutchinson died last year, but a class action lawsuit bearing her name drove improvements for more than a thousand Bay State residents living with brain injuries — and counting.

A judge recently approved dismissal of Hutchinson v. Patrick, citing the significant reforms put in place as a result of the 2007 suit. All sides supported the judge’s decision.

“She was focused on love and making the world a better place,” Danca said. “I'm just so proud of her. I miss her so much. It's a beautiful legacy.”

As a result of Hutchinson's activism, the state created a community-based services program that has allowed people with brain injuries to move from isolation in nursing homes to richer lives in community-based settings, according to Nicole Godaire, CEO of the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts.

“The system reforms achieved by this lawsuit have been nothing short of remarkable,” Godaire said in a press release. “The impact of our collective work extends well beyond the 1,187 people who transitioned to community services in recent years to the many more individuals trying to rebuild their lives after a brain injury who have and will follow them.”
A home on Precinct Street

Kathy Whipple is one of those individuals. Whipple met Hutchinson at a since-closed rehab facility in Middleboro before both of them moved to the bright, cheery group home on South Precinct Street in Taunton where Whipple still lives.

“I’m able to live in this house,” Whipple said in a recent interview in the home's drawing room. “Living here I get to go out in the community. Living there I did not get to go out in the community.”

Whipple, a 72-year-old Plymouth native who suffered a brain hemorrhage and a stroke in 2007, shares the home with four other people. They each have their own room and have licensed practical nurses on duty around the clock. There's transportation available for going shopping or visiting family. Whipple, for instance, gets to see her grandchildren in Mattapoisett.

Whipple and Hutchinson both enjoyed the raised garden outside the front door, where they grew tomatoes, cucumbers and zucchini. She remembers Hutchinson as intelligent, strong-minded, strong-willed and with a great sense of humor.

“When she had her mind on something,” Whipple said, “stay out of her way.”

Whipple recalls a time when Hutchinson tried to get her to print out and sign a document pretending to be Hutchinson's doctor. Whipple didn't do it, but she smiled broadly remembering how her friend fought for herself and others.

Stephanie Burnham, a program manager at the Precinct Street group home run by Brockton Area Multi-Services Inc., has been helping residents there since 2012, including Whipple and Hutchinson.

Hutchinson could move only her neck. That limitation did not stop her from communicating.

Burnham recalls two methods they used. One was a pair of glasses with a dot in the center that allowed Hutchinson to control a mouse with her head. Another was a clear sheet of Plexiglas with alphabet stickers on it. Burnham would be on one side of the glass and follow Hutchinson's eyes as she spelled out words with them.

“Before this lawsuit there was no place like this for people who experienced those types of injuries,” Burnham said. “It would be a nursing home. She was incredible in the situation she was in. It improved people’s quality of life. She was a very inspiring woman.”

Hutchinson forged several connections to Taunton in the years she lived here, her daughter said. She was active in St. Thomas Episcopal Church, where she had her own spot set aside each week. She also took classes at Bristol Community College.

New opportunities for the disabled

Hutchinson raised her daughter and son in Attleboro. Danca, Hutchinson's daughter, was a month from high school graduation and a week past her prom when her mom had her stroke. Hutchinson was 43.

“Our lives changed immediately,” said Danca.

Danca's older brother, Brian, remembers how their mom had been sick in the weeks before the stroke. Her equilibrium was off, giving her trouble with movements like walking around the car.

“It was pretty traumatizing,” said Hutchinson's son, who now lives in Plainville.

Brian Hutchinson also said he's proud of what his mom accomplished.

“They kept telling her no, no, no,” he said. “There’s a lot of people that she impacted directly and people she impacted indirectly.”

Danca choke up a little as she thinks about her mom's legacy, which included being honored by the White House as a “Champion of Change” and being featured on the CBS news magazine “60 Minutes.”

“I feel in awe of all the things she's done,” Danca said. “The world needs to know about the opportunities that are coming for the disabled.”
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) continues to provide exceptional and intriguing virtual programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual Support Groups & Events

BIA-MA support groups have continued to flourish virtually throughout 2022. Each week, BIA-MA staff, brain injury survivors, and caregivers gather virtually using phones and computers to share their stories and fears, their celebrations, and their questions. One silver lining of meeting virtually has been the connections being made between people who are geographically separated, who would otherwise not have met to support each other.

Another way our support groups have grown this past season is by encouraging participation by those who may have been kept away from in-person meetings due to transportation challenges or work/family conflicts. The ability to establish and maintain peer connections from anywhere while virtual has allowed BIA-MA to reach so many new voices and faces.

In addition to support group meetings, BIA-MA has been able to host many virtual special events for survivors. Thanks to funding in part by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s (MRC) Statewide Head Injury Program, survivors logged on for a bird’s eye view of Fenway Park thru a drone tour; practiced chair yoga; learned about whales and white sharks in the waters off our coastlines; and created beautiful paintings and succulent gardens. Survivors also shared their own talents and experiences thru workshops on self-publishing, discussing the Law of Attraction, and even virtual caroling to welcome the holiday season! Support groups and recreational activities have provided many reasons to be thankful in 2022.
Educational Programs

Acquired Brain Injury Clinical Continuing Education Series

BIA-MA is excited to continue offering the Acquired Brain Injury Clinical Continuing Education Series virtually in 2022! The goal of this series is to promote the development of clinically informed programs and services, which will in turn, enhance positive outcomes and the quality of life for persons living with an acquired brain injury.

The Acquired Brain Injury Clinical Continuing Education Series was developed in collaboration with experts in the field and includes a certificate training and advanced topics seminars. The Series is designed to enhance the knowledge, expertise, and skills of clinicians, program administrators, case managers, rehabilitation and other professionals providing supports and services to individuals with ABI and their families.

Who should attend? Audiologists, Case Managers, Certified Brain Injury Specialists, Family Counselors, Mental Health Clinicians, Neuropsychologists, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Psychologists, Rehabilitation Counselors, Social Workers, Speech/Language Pathologists, or Program Directors/Managers of residential, day and other programs that serve persons with ABI.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABI CLINICAL CONTINUING EDUCATION SERIES – 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seizure Disorders: Classification, Treatment and Neurobehavioral Aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 16, 2022; 9:00am-1:15pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquired Brain Injury and the Family: A Biopsychosocial Perspective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6, 2022, 1:00pm–4:15pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Covid-19: Neurocognitive and Psychological Effects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 26, 2022, 1:00pm-4:00pm</td>
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</tbody>
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SAVE THE DATES!! - MARCH 30 & 31, 2022

40th ANNUAL BIA-MA BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE

For more than 40 years, the Annual Brain Injury Conference has provided a platform for education, resources, and support, as well as a sense of community for those affected by brain injury. Everyone in the brain injury community benefits from this conference! Sponsors provide financial support for key components of the conference and exhibitors and vendors offer healthcare options and solutions for those in the community.

Our 1st ever virtual conference was a tremendous success last year. We have some truly exciting and intriguing workshops in store, as well as a keynote by nationally recognized Co-Founder of Concussion Compass, Molly Parker (pictured on the right)! To learn more please visit: www.biama.org
MASSACHUSETTS REHABILITATION COMMISSION QUARTERLY FORUM

MRC is offering a quarterly virtual forum for the disability community and family allies to learn more about the agency. This is a space for our agency to learn from you about how we can better serve you and your loved ones! We're very excited to share our forum schedule and topics for 2022!

On Tuesday, April 12th from 4:30pm-6:30pm, we will discuss services tailored to survivors of brain injury and their families including:

- MRC Brain Injury Focused Services and how they support survivors and their family allies
- Brain Injury Clubhouses
- Brain Injury Waiver services
- Stories from brain injury survivors and allies
- Feedback from the community on what YOU need to live the life you want

REGISTER AT: https://massrehabcommission.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ghWSiTSeQ1-Qb7K8jEfDZA

ADMINISTRATION FOR COMMUNITY LIVING (ACL) UPDATE

In August, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) awarded a 5-year federal grant to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in partnership with the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), and the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (MDMH), to fund Beyond Bridges. This grant will strengthen Massachusetts’ ability to provide comprehensive, integrated care for individuals with co-occurring traumatic brain injury (TBI), and behavioral health (BH) (includes substance use disorder and mental health conditions).

The grant will ensure the presence of a strong and engaged state Brain Injury Council to guide the Beyond Bridges project through collaborative leadership between partnering state agencies and providers. The Brain Injury Council will update the strategic plan for services and supports for individuals to be reflective of the identified needs of the diverse brain injury population. Under the grant, the state will improve TBI resource facilitation systems to focus on behavioral health services through workforce development, professional education, community awareness and enhanced peer groups.
Betsy has experienced 3 TBIs and multiple concussions in her life. But it wasn’t until the COVID pandemic that she was made aware of BIA-MA. She first joined us for a presentation of The Journey in October 2020 and from there began attending several support groups.

Betsy attends The Journey on a weekly basis and everyone that interacts with her, whether it be at support groups, events, or The Journey, considers Betsy to be a kind-hearted, giving, and adventurous individual who believes in the healing joy of nature. Says Betsy of her experience with BIA-MA, “I recognize that I receive gifts from each speaker, that I benefit from them having shared their stories. I appreciate them helping me and know they’re helping others in our BIA-MA community.”

Betsy believes in the value of every support group she attends. Each person contributes to the shared goal of healing, expressing support in their unique way, without judgments. There are some, who for the moment, are quiet listeners. Their presence is their participation. Says Bizarro, “We are all witnesses to mutual suffering, joy, and healing. Supporting one another provides purpose and gives special meaning to our lives. It is a privilege to be a member of the BIA-MA, where I have met so many amazing, compassionate, and brilliant human beings.” Thank you, Betsy for all your support!

In 2020, Krishna joined BIA-MA just one month before the staff was sent to work from home due to COVID. Although remote, she was able to quickly learn the Resource and Support role and immediately became a valuable member of the team.

As a Resource and Support Liaison Krishna helps individuals understand community resources available to them such as brain injury services, support groups, recreational events, and state programs. She is kind, patient, and empathetic in all her interactions. Krishna is also a brain injury survivor herself.

Krishna's previous employment at BAMSI for 8+ years involved her in the design and launch of the New Start Brain Injury Community Center. As a Case Manager, she helped individuals with brain injury become more self-sufficient and achieve goals set up by their caregiver team (health care providers, SHIP, and ABI Waiver staff). These goals were primarily focused on clerical tasks and socialization skills such as planning outings, meetings, grocery lists, paying bills, job skills, and filling out applications.

Krishna is passionate about giving back to the community and helping others. She loves that what she does and makes a difference. She is an artist, an avid reader, and enjoys outdoor activities with her family and four-year-old granddaughter. Thank you Krishna for all you do!
Late summer and fall always bring two of our very favorite fundraising events – The Falmouth Road Race and Cere-Bration Walk & Roll 5K. Each event provides opportunities for the brain injury community and friends not only to get together, both physically (which is hard to do these days) and in spirit, but also raise important awareness and funds for BIA-MA.

The Falmouth Road Race is famous for its demanding but picturesque course and has become a favorite among our staff and fundraisers. Each year 10 individuals join Team BIA-MA and along with their friends and family raise over $1,000 each, for a chance to run 7 miles from Falmouth to Woods Hole. And each year they continue to meet and then exceed their goals, even in these unprecedented times. 2021 allowed runners an opportunity to run in-person and the team came prepared with new ways to fundraise and raise awareness for brain injury in their communities, raising over $15,000 in total!

We are so thankful for our 2021 Team BIA-MA and all their hard work and determination! Courtney Farrell, Katie Eressy, Megan Irish, Kiley Krafve, Sue Fleuette, Lisa Gonzalez, Robin Farrington, Jeff Kaplan, and Diane Machado.

Want to join us for the 40th Anniversary Falmouth Road Race in August 2022? Planning is already underway – email development@biama.org for more information!

Cere-Bration has always been one of our most uplifting events. It is a place where survivors, family members, friends, professionals, and providers come together to celebrate themselves! We fretted for naught when moving this event virtual in 2020, fearing we would lose that “je ne se qua”. But September 2021 has shown us just what the event means to all of you with participation from all over the country, even Canada and Germany! It goes to show how far-reaching brain injury can truly be – and how it affects everyone involved.

While we hope to see you all in person again real soon – this event has shown us that we can do great things, even from the comfort of our own homes, neighborhoods, trails, beaches, golf courses, and so on. As an organization it has been refreshing to see you all behind the scenes and in your own element. We cannot thank you enough for your continued support of BIA-MA through events such as this. Whether you are an individual walking, running, or rolling; a captain overseeing your team; a fundraiser or donor; or simply wearing the t-shirt around town – no participation is too small, and we look forward to planning 2022!!
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between August 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021

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Christine Weintraub
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Lisa Yauch-Cadden
Tamara Zeimer

* Falmouth Road Race runners

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Building bridges between Substance Use Disorder and the Traumatic Brain Injury Communities in MA

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH), Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) and the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts have received a federal grant for three years to implement “Bridges Between”.

The project will build connections between the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment communities, strengthen services for families and individuals living with TBI and SUD and conduct statewide trainings for professionals in both fields.
After brain injury, rehabilitation is one of the most important steps in the recovery process. Our hospitals offer innovative therapies, a specialized team and advanced technologies to give patients the confidence and strength they need to return to their community.

Learn more at ehc.rehab/bima20

NeuroRestorative Massachusetts is a leading provider of post-acute rehabilitation and support services for individuals with brain injuries and other neurological challenges. In a variety of locations and settings, we offer a continuum of care through our community-based programs.

- Neurorehabilitation
- Neurobehavioral
- Supported Living
- Transitional Living
- Host-Home
- Day Treatment
- Outpatient
- Respite
- Neurofunctional Home & Community

800-743-6802
neurorestorative.com
Vinfen provides a comprehensive set of services for individuals living with brain injuries, including our person-centered, community-based Brain Injury Community Center (BICC). Our goal is to assist members in increasing community integration and building interpersonal relationships and meaningful work. Members and staff work together in all areas of Center operations with a shared focus on developing or refining key life skills.

**THE CENTER SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS TO DEVELOP OR ATTAIN:**

- Self-Advocacy
- Community Connections
- Educational Goals
- Financial Counseling & Housing Opportunities
- Personal & Life Skills
- Employment Options
- Mindfulness
- Social Connections
- Other supports on an as-needed or individual basis

**Personalized solutions at home and in the heart of the community.**

**Do you know someone who would flourish in a more independent living environment?**

Together, Advocates and Supportive Living, Inc. partner to provide the highest quality of housing, services, and programs to meet the challenges of brain injury survivors. Our goal is to ensure people live their lives to the fullest.

**How We Help**

- Affordable, Supportive Residential Programs
- Community Supports
- Day Services

**Eligibility for Our Supportive Living Program**

- Potential to achieve greater independence
- Must qualify for subsidized housing
- Must be eligible for MassHealth
- Over 18 years of age

**Learn More**

(781) 937-3199
Info@supportivelivinginc.org
www.supportivelivinginc.org

BrainInjury@Advocates.org
www.Advocates.org/BrainInjury
Seven Hills NeuroCare (SHNC) provides post-acute brain injury rehabilitation to survivors of acquired brain injuries and people with neurodevelopmental disorders.

SHNC’s multidisciplinary team of licensed and certified professionals offers individualized services to fit within people’s home- and community-based routines. These services include cognitive rehabilitation, rehabilitation counseling, behavior analysis, psychology, speech language therapy, nursing, assistive technology, and coaching/aid with daily living skills.

People supported also have access to day programming, and workforce readiness and employment with Seven Hills ASPIRE!, and individual psychotherapy and psychiatry through Seven Hills Behavioral Health.

At SHNC, our goal is to help people reclaim their lives, and maximize their independence and recovery in the community. To learn more, contact: Dr. Jonathan Worcester, Vice President of Seven Hills NeuroCare, at 508.320.4991, or jworcester@sevenhills.org.
Upcoming BIA-MA Events

2022 ABI CLINICAL EDUCATION SERIES:
• Seizure Disorders: Classification, Treatment and Neurobehavioral Aspects  March 16, 2022
• ABI and the Family: A Biopsychosocial Perspective  April 6, 2022
• COVID-19: Neurocognitive and Psychological Effects  April 26, 2022

40th ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE  March 30&31, 2022

Learn more at www.biama.org or call 508-475-0032

YOUR WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!