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Local brain injury survivor presents to high school students in Acton

Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts Enables Individuals Affected by Brain Injury to Share their Stories

(Westborough, Mass, March 16, 2017) It was over fifteen years ago that the course of Waltham resident Alex Niederhauser's life would be forever altered. Thanks to the [Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts \(BIA-MA\)](#) programs, Niederhauser has the opportunity to share his story with his local community.

Then a seventeen-year-old student at Acton Boxborough Regional High School, Niederhauser suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) when the left side of his car struck a tree. After being airlifted to Boston Medical Center, Niederhauser was in a coma for two weeks. When he was discharged to Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, Niederhauser was faced with a tremendous challenge: relearning nearly all activities and knowledge, from the alphabet to learning how to walk again.

Niederhauser has since made dramatic strides, including obtaining his Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Boston and participating as a member of the BIA-MA Speakers Bureau. His current role brought him back to Acton Boxborough Regional High School in late February, where he shared his story as part of BIA-MA's Think A-Head program alongside Dana Harthorne, BIA-MA Prevention Coordinator.

"I loved putting my heart into the [Think A-Head] presentation. It was very emotional for me – in a good way," Niederhauser said. "There are choices you make in your teenage years that affect your future life, and I seek to give students a warning on the impact of their choices and to motivate them."

Think A-Head is a school-based program that has been teaching students to avoid risk-taking behavior for nearly 20 years. Think A-Head programs typically include an individual from our Speakers Bureau, which allows individuals affected by brain injury to tell their story on how they sustained their injuries or how brain injury has impacted their lives.

“At [BIA-MA], there are many ways the community can get involved,” BIA-MA Executive Director Nicole Godaire said. “However, particularly for survivors, our Speakers Bureau presents an invaluable opportunity for survivors to really share how brain injury has affected their lives and how we can all work together to raise awareness and prevent further injuries,”

BIA-MA is the first and oldest organization in the state to offer support and resources to brain injury survivors and their families. This, in addition to providing prevention programs, educational trainings, and legislative advocacy. Throughout the month, BIA-MA will be joining the Brain Injury Association of America to promote Brain Injury Awareness Month with their #NotAloneInBrainInjury campaign.

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The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) is dedicated to improving the lives of those affected by brain injury while reducing its incidence and impact through prevention programs, education and training and legislative advocacy. Founded in 1982, the BIA-MA is the primary conduit between survivors and an extensive network of facilities, programs and professionals including 40 statewide support groups. The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts is a chartered affiliate of the Brain Injury Association of America. For more information, visit www.biama.org or call (800) 242-0030.