Coming this fall! First in-person Cere-Bration: Walk & Roll since 2019!

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) is extremely proud to announce that we will be hosting THREE regional IN-PERSON Cere-Brations in the FALL of 2022!

“Cere-Bration” continued on page 3
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) has officially entered fundraising season!

Summer is a fun, social season with our brain injury community wanting to enjoy outdoor events in their local communities. Through June and October, BIA-MA participates in three important community fundraising events: Golf Classic, ASICS Falmouth Road Race, and Cere-Bration: Walk & Roll. The support of sponsors and participants allows BIA-MA to continue to fulfill our mission of creating a better future for all affected by brain injury.

On June 19th, at The Haven Country Club in Boylston, BIA-MA hosted the 2022 Annual Golf Classic. The golfers had a picture perfect day that included 18 holes of golf, lunch, on-course contests, an après golf reception, and a raffle and silent auction. The “hot” items in the silent auction this year were the “Life is Good” and “Coca-Cola” retro coolers!

BIA-MA is proud to participate for the 10th time with the Numbers for Nonprofits Program at the 2022 ASICS Falmouth Road Race on August 21st. Thank you to our runners this year: Courtney Farrell (Team Captain - double thanks!), Sarah Clancy, Michelle Cole, Elizabeth Day, Karen Dmohowski, Katie Eressy, Carly Eressy, Meghan Irish, and Dawn LeBorgne. In 2021 the BIA-MA Running Team raised a remarkable $14,965 to support our mission. You can make a difference by supporting our runners as they take on the 2022 ASICS Falmouth Road Race.

And we are excited to announce that we will be holding the 2022 Cere-Bration: Walk & Roll in THREE regional IN-PERSON locations! These three events will bring together individuals and teams to support those affected by brain injury, brain injury survivors to connect with others in their community, and BIA-MA to provide local awareness on the diverse needs of 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.
The Cere-Bration: Walk & Roll is a statewide celebration and fundraiser that will bring together individuals and teams to support those affected by brain injury, brain injury survivors to connect with others in their community, and BIA-MA to provide local awareness on the diverse needs of the brain injury community. Funds raised at the event help to provide programs to survivors, caregivers, and professionals across the state in prevention, education, advocacy, and support.

Everyone is welcome to attend! Bring your friends, family, colleagues, and support group members. Join us as an individual, organize your own team, or fundraise! Event t-shirts, water, and snacks will be provided to all participants.

SAVE THE DATES!

September 10th  Cape Cod Canal, Bourne, MA
September 24th  Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, Cheshire, MA
October 2nd  NARA Park, Acton, MA

Visit [www.biama.org/cerebration](http://www.biama.org/cerebration) for more information or to register. If you have questions please email [events@biama.org](mailto:events@biama.org) or call 508-475-0032.
Support Groups

Support group meetings provide long-term consistent peer and professional support for brain injury survivors, and BIA-MA offers dozens of groups each month across the Commonwealth. Survivors, caregivers, family, and friends are welcome to join staff and professionals in moderated discussions. Several of BIA-MA’s support groups have existed for decades and include friends new and old. Other groups are newly forming, in response to feedback from the community about areas where support may still be needed.

In April 2022, two new BIA-MA support groups started virtually. Dual Recovery Virtual Brain Injury Support Group provides a safe space for learning about the intersection of brain injury and substance use in its many forms. Discussing the often overlapping challenges of brain injury and substance use can aid survivors in accessing the most effective and appropriate support in their recoveries. Veterans Virtual Brain Injury Support Group gathers each month to support Veterans and their experiences with brain injury. Moderated by BIA-MA staff along with professionals from the VA, BIA-MA offers facilitated discussion focused on supporting members of our military community. Both of these groups will remain virtual to reduce geographic barriers and to reach more survivors.

Events & Activities

Thanks to funding from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission’s (MRC) Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) along with other sources, BIA-MA is able to offer recreational activities to brain injury survivors to provide an opportunity to participate in group events, identify leisure interests, develop social connections, and improve the quality of their lives. Events offered virtually over winter and spring have covered a wide variety of interests and groups. Survivors participated in regular sessions of mindfulness meditation and chair yoga, to practice selfcare. Together we attended informative workshops on creating a brain healthy lifestyle and eating for each season’s produce. Survivors traveled virtually to the United States Olympic and Paralympic Museum in Colorado while athletes competed in Beijing, and the Glastonbury Planetarium to discover the wide reaches of our universe.
Other survivor events took place at various in-person locations to share experiences and learn about our communities. The 750 acre Hancock Shaker Village consists of 20 historic Shaker buildings, is the most comprehensively interpreted Shaker site in the world, and the oldest working farm in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts. The New Bedford Whaling Museum ignites learning through explorations of art, history, science and culture rooted in the stories of people, the region and an international seaport. BIA-MA looks forward to offering many more survivor adventures and workshops to come!

40th Annual Brain Injury Conference

BIA-MA is thrilled to report on the huge success of our 40th Annual Brain Injury Conference on March 30th and 31st. Similar to 2021, our two-day Conference was held virtually this year with a fantastic turnout of 488 registrants. Our keynote speaker - Dr. Molly Parker, a physical therapist, concussion survivor, and owner of Concussion Compass – shared her unique lived experience as both a healthcare provider and survivor, which provided a rich in-depth look into brain injury recovery. BIA-MA’s 40th Annual Brain Injury Conference hosted 25 thought-provoking workshops, networking sessions for both brain injury survivors and professionals, and over 20 exhibitors, sponsors, and poster presentations.

Our Annual Brain Injury Conference provides a platform for education, resources, and support, as well as a sense of the community for those affected by brain injury. Feedback collected from attendees allows BIA-MA to grow and improve this event as well as provide a space for attendees to share how important and meaningful our conference is to them. Over 95% of 2022 survey respondents would recommend this conference to others. Many participants strongly agreed that BIA-MA provided well organized workshops that facilitated knowledge sharing and would help professionals better perform their job. Brain Injury survivors in attendance agreed that workshops and networking sessions included content specific to them. They appreciated viewing workshop recordings to minimize computer time, which can exacerbate brain injury symptoms.

Read what participants have shared:

“As a survivor, and a psychologist, I can’t tell you just how much the Annual Conferences have been helpful to me. The many workshops identified the many questions I needed to ask that I was not even aware to ask.”

“This was great, I really enjoyed it! If it were not a virtual event, I could not have attended. I liked the relaxed (yet professional) atmosphere. There were no crowds, long lines, or loud noises that are common at conferences! I liked the personalized reminders I received in the hub. The website was very well organized and easy to navigate.”
Thrivers Workshops

Following formal rehabilitation after a brain injury, survivors often continue to face challenges in managing tasks of everyday life – from memory and fatigue, to managing time and organizing paperwork, running errands and cooking meals. For these reasons, BIA-MA developed the THRIVERS WORKSHOPS for brain injury survivors. Thrivers Workshops consist of a series of classes offering tips, tools and strategies to help manage these tasks.

In previous years, these workshops were offered as in-person trainings, meeting for several weeks in a row, a few times each year. Thanks to the accessibility of virtual gatherings, BIA-MA has transitioned its THRIVERS WORKSHOPS to ongoing meetings!

Twice per month, experienced staff meet with survivors over ZOOM to offer practical ways of managing life’s challenges after a brain injury. If you are feeling stuck or just looking for ideas about how to better manage a task, these interactive and informative workshops are for you! Please join us at the next series of Thrivers Workshops. Learn more at www.biama.org/eventsandactivities or email education@biama.org

ACBIS/CBIS Training

The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) recently offered a seven-week recorded test preparation course for the Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialist (ACBIS) Certified Brain Injury Specialist Certification (CBIS). ACBIS offers the CBIS certification for direct care staff and professionals working in brain injury services. The ACBIS CBIS certification has been widely recognized and respected for many years in the field of brain injury.

This test prep course consists of 7 recorded sessions, that are convenient for professionals to participate in this course at their own pace. This course is helpful to a range of learners allowing them to rewatch a recording and participate in live Question and Answer meetings with our ACBIS Prep Trainer. BIA-MA will also aid in administrative help with submitting your online application to sit for the ACBIS Certified Brain Injury Specialist certification (CBIS) exam.

BIA-MA will offer this prep course at certain times throughout the year. Learn more at www.biama.org/acbis or for questions contact acbis@biama.org.
2022 Golf Classic

It was a picture perfect day at the BIA-MA Golf Classic at The Haven Country Club! As you can see by the smiles in the pictures above, we all had a great time! Of note were the battles for the “retro coolers” (winners “OB” Robert O’Brien and James Rucki) and “Pot of Gold & scratch tickets” (winner NeuroRestorative)!

With the help of the sponsors and golfers BIA-MA raised funds for all those affected by brain injury. Thank you to Golf Sponsors: Insurance Marketing Agency, Spinal Technology, Inc., Cooney Health, Norfolk & Dedham Group, and Arbella Insurance Group. Thank you to our Mission partners for your continued support: NeuroRestorative, Encompass, Vinfen, Seven Hills Foundation, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, CareOne Neurobehavioral Rehabilitation, Community Rehab Care, May Institute, Advocates, and Supportive Living, Inc. **We hope to see you on June 19, 2023!**
TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH SOMEONE WITH APHASIA

Taryn Barlow, M.S., CCC-SLP; CBIS; Owner/CEO: The Well Brain; BIA-MA Support Group Facilitator

1. Let the person try! Provide the LEAST assistance necessary. Knowing that this may change day to day.

2. Be patient and attentive by providing body language that is supportive and comforting (eye contact, body position toward the speaker, gentle facial expression).

3. Resist the urge to fill-in/correct words or finish sentences.

4. Before speaking make sure you have their attention.

5. Eliminate or reduce background noises (TV, Radio, other people).

6. Keep your voice at a normal level (unless asked to speak louder).

7. Keep the language simple, refrain from “talking down” to the person. Short sentences with clear language and repetition of the key information can be helpful.

8. Be mindful of your rate of speech.

9. Have other communication supporting aids available. This can include something to write on/with, gestures, facial expressions, pictures/images, other items specific to the person, etc. Use these both during your communication, as well as encouraging the person to use them if they are having trouble.

10. Encourage and celebrate independence and engage in typical activities while supporting the communication needs in a variety of environments. This may include educating family and friends about how best to support communication prior to events/activities.

11. “Yes” and “No” questions can be helpful to confirm that communication was successful.

12. Try not to compare their communication to anyone else’s. “Oh I forget my words sometimes too.” “Well you speak better than my uncle did.”

If you, or someone you love is experiencing Aphasia making it harder for them to understand, speak, read or write, then early assessment and treatment by a skilled speech-language pathologist is recommended. It is encouraged that you seek support for all communication partners involved.
In 2018, Tim Sweeney was working at home facilitating an early morning conference call, when he was suddenly unable to finish a sentence that he had started. He knew what he wanted to say but could not verbalize the words. Luckily, he was at home, quickly excused himself from the call, and had his wife drive him to a nearby hospital. After an MRI, Tim was diagnosed with a stroke due to a blood clot (infarction) in the basal ganglia area of his brain.

Unfortunately, upon release from the hospital he was not given any idea of what the next steps might be and was told he could return to work in 3 days!!! Tim was unable to go back to work and spent the next 6 and 12 months respectively in occupational therapy and speech therapy at Whittier Hospital (a fabulous experience!).

Fortunately, Tim had a great support system. His wife and daughter were both nurses and it was through their networking that he found the Milford Stroke Group run by Taryn Barlow and was introduced to the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts. Says Tim, “The individuals in the support groups were extremely helpful and they were exactly where I was and able to help me. Mornings are my best time for exertion and that due to mental fatigue, I initially had to nap several times a day and now it is down to only in the afternoon. Word recall issues are still frustrating.” Tim has Aphasia and it restricts some activities he is involved with, but he has learned to adapt through some learned tools. It has been 3 plus years now since the stroke, and due to Tim’s hard work, he is speaking very well!

Tim has a great group of friends, a supportive family that includes his wife, three children and their spouses, and a grandson. He is and has been a nature lover and true outdoorsman his whole life! He enjoys ice fishing, hiking mountains (including the 48 4000+-footers in New Hampshire the highest peaks) and ran a few Boston Marathons! And as Tim points out “Life isn’t waiting for the storm to pass, it’s about learning to dance in the rain.” Best of luck, Tim!
BIA-MA is thrilled to announce that for the FY ’23 budget, we advocated and secured an additional $1,504,781, a total of $24,888,784, for the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) under the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). The added money will fund services for survivors as well as SHIP’s Brain Injury Community Centers.

The formal legislative session for FY ’21-22 ended on July 31st, requiring state lawmakers to finish major business for the year. Faced with a sizable to-do list, the calendar did not allow the legislature to pass S.629, Improving Lives by Ensuring Access to Brain Injury Treatment (Cognitive Rehabilitation bill). This bill would require commercial health insurance plans to cover cognitive rehabilitation for a person that suffered an acquired brain injury. The Joint Committees of Financial Services and Health Care Financing voted favorably on the bills. The Senate and House version of the bills were joined and ended in Senate Ways and Means Committee.

BIA-MA persuasively advocated for this bill along with brain injury survivors, family members and professionals. It is with heartfelt appreciation that we acknowledge Senate President Emerita Harriett Chandler (D-Worcester) and Representative Kimberly Ferguson’s (R-Holden) leadership for the bill’s passage. We also recognize and thank the bi-partisan support for the bill. BIA-MA will continue to advocate for this bill when it is re-filed for the ’23-24 session.
Dear Laura,

All of us at BIA-MA would all like to congratulate you on your retirement at the end of August! While you will be missed, we are very happy for you - you certainly deserve your retirement!

Do you remember the TV show “This is Your Life”? Well, “This is Your Career at BIA-MA”... You began as a part-time bookeeper in 1995 (working at home) and on to a full-time employee in 2006 when we had 4 employees and a $200K budget! As the Director of Operations your hard work and diligence in accounting, operations, and information technology has helped to attain our current budget of $2.1m. Your contributions to strategy and daily operations have helped us achieve our mission over the last 27 years.

Your culinary expertise and party planning will be missed - especially the great employee appreciation cookouts at your house. And around the holidays you made the best potato latkes and peanut butter balls!

Just as one chapter of your life is closing, another is beginning. BIA-MA hopes that new adventures are waiting for you and your family. And with your newfound freedom, you can move wherever you want, be it Maine, North Carolina, or anywhere in between. And of course grandkids??!! Or you might end up consulting with BIA-MA!

You will always be a part of the BIA-MA team. Best wishes for the future!
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between January 1, 2022 and April 30, 2022

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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.

**NeuroRestorative** is a leading provider of post-acute and subacute rehabilitation and support services for adults and children with brain and spinal cord injuries and other neurological challenges. In a variety of locations and settings, we offer a continuum of care and community-based programs, including specialized pediatric and adolescent services as well as programs for Veterans.

For more information or to make a referral:

📞 800-743-6802
✉️ neuroinfo@neurorestorative.com
🌐 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:**

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[vinfen.org/bicc]  [617- 616-2422]

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[encompasshealth.com/marehab]
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Do you know someone who would flourish in a more independent living environment?

**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.

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- Visit our website: www.care-one.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Denise Finnegan 978-935-3525
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Upcoming BIA-MA Events

2022 CERE-BRATION: WALK & ROLL
Cape Cod Canal, Bourne, MA                       September 10
Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, Cheshire, MA          September 24
Nara Park, Acton, MA                             October 2

ABI CERTIFICATE TRAINING                          October 19 & 26

40th ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE
March 29 & 30, 2023

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

YOUR SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!