Planning and implementing three walk events in the same month is no small undertaking! Awareness and fundraising is a group effort and due to the support from event participants, volunteers, donors, sponsors, staff, and committee members, the Walk & Roll for Brain Injury events were each a huge success. Over 790 participants raised $80,000 in support of brain injury survivors and their families!

The Western Regional Walk & Roll was held on the beautiful Ashuwillticook Trail in Cheshire, MA - 154 participants raised over $20,000! Special thanks go out to our lunch sponsor, Berkshire Mountain Bakery! Congratulations to our top fundraising individual and team: Individual - Karin O’Brien; Team - Team Aunty K (Kerry McMahon). Nestled in the Hoosic River Valley, between Mount Greylock and the Hoosic Mountains in Berkshire County, the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail offered gorgeous views of the mountains, lakes and river. For photos go to www.biama.org/walkwest.

The Central Regional Walk & Roll was held at Framingham State University’s Maple Field Track in Framingham, MA - 336 participants raised over $31,000!! Special thanks go out to our lunch sponsor, Framingham State Dining Services, and Community Sponsors: HealthSouth Braintree, HealthSouth Rehab of Western MA, and Community Rehab Care (CRC)! Congratulations to our top fundraising individual and team: Individual – Katie Atchue; Team – Team Stella (Vanessa Stella). The Walk & Roll was held in FSU’s AstroTurf infield, surrounded by a 1/4 mile track, providing easy access to all aspects of the event. Many people set up Team City on the infield for the day with their own tables, chairs, and yard games! For photos go to www.biama.org/walkcentral.

The Southeastern Regional Walk & Roll was held along the Cape Cod Canal at the Buzzard’s Bay Recreation Area - 300 participants raised over $18,000! Special thanks go out to our lunch sponsor, Trowbridge Tavern, and Community Sponsor: BAMSI! Congratulations to our top fundraising individual and team: Individual – Eva Lipton; Team – Team Eva (Eva Lipton). The Cape Cod Canal, opened in 1914 as a shortened trade route, now provides passage to cruise liners, cargo ships, carriers, tug boats, and luxury yachts. Along the shore Walk & Roll participants enjoyed the paved paths and scenic vistas. For photos go to www.biama.org/walksoutheast.

We hope to see all of you next year!

Walk photos on page 3

For more information about BIA-MA, call 1-800-242-0030 or visit www.biama.org
‘Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.’ -Margaret Mead

As my second term as President of BIA-MA’s Board of Directors comes to a close, I pause to reflect on how I got here. Like many who serve, I did not seek out this prestigious position nor was it on my list of goals in life; yet, four of my five years on the Board have been as the role of President. Throughout our lives we encounter occasions that have a need for service. For someone with passion, willing to dedicate themselves to a cause. Margaret Mead’s quote reminds me, inspires me, to serve. Positive change will not occur if no one is willing to commit attention and energy to it.

There are many highlights in my tenure as President. I hope you will join me in looking back. In 2013, BIA-MA celebrated its 30th anniversary. Thank you to Marilyn Spivak, Arlene Korab and Inta Hall for creating this wonderful organization that thrives over 30 years later. After 20 years as Executive Director, founding member Arlene Korab retired, and the Board was faced with identifying a new Executive Director to lead our organization and expand on the services we offer. We were fortunate to have identified Arlene’s successor from within the organization. Nicole Godaire had been working at BIA-MA for seven years and was engaged in every aspect of BIA-MA. Thanks to Nicole’s leadership and focus on our mission, the transition into Executive Director was smooth. In her first year she was named to the Worcester Business Journal’s “Top 40 under 40”.

Although the Board needed to focus on internal operations and personnel, we did not lose sight of serving the brain injury community. Our advocacy continues to increase funding for the Statewide Head Injury Program and includes monies for a day program and clubhouse to serve individuals with acquired brain injury. BIA-MA advocated for the passage of the Cognitive Rehabilitation bill, which will ensure that commercial health insurance plans include cognitive rehabilitation services for individuals with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). BIA-MA has also added programs for seniors. Falls are the leading cause of brain injury in persons over 65 years old. Prevention, at all ages, remains a hallmark of our services, but outreach to those who provide services to seniors is imperative. We continue to actively participate in the discussion regarding concussions, not just in sports, but in all aspects of life.

BIA-MA has become a lead resource for brain injury education and support. We host the largest brain injury conference in the Commonwealth (over 800 attendees in 2016), and focus on understanding brain injury, treatment options and resources for survivors, caregivers and professionals. Our support groups have expanded from 25 in 2012 to 53 in 2016 - from Pittsfield to Lynn to Cape Cod and in between.

I have been thanked for my service, but now it is my turn. Thank you to my fellow Board members for their time, talent and treasure. Thank you to BIA-MA staff and volunteers for your passion and hard work. Lastly, thank YOU! Please consider how you may be able to support the brain injury community.

We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations. -Charles R. Swindoll
Heads Up headlines - Fall 2016

walk & roll for brain injury
Helping Our Patients Live Life to the Fullest.

At Spaulding Rehabilitation Network (SRN), we help our patients rebuild their physical and cognitive function after traumatic brain injury. We focus on helping them find the emotional strength to thrive in the days to come.

Our brain injury clinical teams bring specialized experience and world-class expertise to the patients in their care. Our physician-led teams provide an unwavering commitment and the support to help patients and family members stay hopeful, determined and strong.

SRN provides patients and families access to an unmatched range of services and programs - from advanced evaluation technologies to evidence based rehabilitation programs to extensive family and community resources.

Patients in the BI Program at Spaulding consistently achieved higher rates of functional improvement than national averages (UDS & e-rehab database).

The TBI Program at Spaulding has been selected as a Model Systems site by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).

Rebuilding Lives After Brain Injury

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.

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BIA-MA Appoints David P. Dwork, Esq., President of the Board of Directors

BIA-MA is pleased to announce the appointment of David P. Dwork, Esq., as President of the Board of Directors. David has been on the Board of Directors since 1989, when BIA-MA was known as the Massachusetts Head Injury Association. Twenty seven years - and scores of Executive Committee meetings and Board meetings later, he has been appointed President.

For over 30 years David has helped survivors of brain injury and their families in their legal battles, guiding them through the legal system and providing the experience, skill and resources necessary for a successful trial or settlement. Welcome David!

Supportive Living, Inc. Celebrates 25 Years with BIA-MA

Peter Noonan, Executive Director of Supportive Living, Inc.

It was twenty-five years ago that Carrol and Doug Stephens, the parents of a young man who had suffered a brain injury, launched Supportive Living, Inc. (SLI), with the goal of creating appropriate and affordable housing for brain injury survivors. Prior to that time, residential options were extremely limited and most individuals with a brain injury were forced to live in some type of facility.

Since then SLI has developed multiple innovative models of supportive housing for survivors, providing a new home for individuals living with chronic brain injury. In 2012, SLI expanded its mission and opened the Brain Injury Wellness Center in Lexington and began providing a variety of physical, cognitive and social fitness programs for survivors.

SLI and BIA-MA have partnered over the years on multiple projects, including Brains at Risk and Community Support groups. Arlene Korab, former Executive Director and co-founder of BIA-MA, was a member of the original SLI Wellness Center advisory council from 2009 through 2011. Nicole Godaire, the present Executive Director of BIA-MA, has served on SLI’s Brain Injury Research Advisory Council since 2014. We look forward to continuing our partnership with BIA-MA into our next quarter-century.
Vin fen proudly supports the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts!

Thank you for serving the needs of people with brain injuries, their families, and their caregivers across Massachusetts.

Vin fen transforms lives by building the capacity of individuals, families, organizations, and communities to learn, thrive, and achieve their goals. Our services promote the recovery, resiliency, habilitation, and self-determination of the people we serve. As a human services leader, we strive to be the provider, employer, and partner of choice.

Advo cates

Brain Injury Services
Our Brain Injury Services offer personalized solutions in the heart of the community.

• Community Supports
• Day Services
• Recreation
• Residential Service

BrainInjury@Advocates.org   www.Advocates.org
Think A-Head - Another Year of Brain Injury Awareness Underway

Think A-Head (TAH) has been overwhelmingly successful over the past three years and continues to grow. The Think A-Head program is a school-based program that promotes brain injury awareness and prevention among students Grades 1-12. This fun and educational program provides students with information they need to make healthy choices to minimize their risk for brain injury. All students learn the benefits of wearing their seat belts and helmets, as well as the information they need to be safe on the playground. For older students, concussion awareness is a hot topic this year, considering teen sports-related concussions have reached an all-time high.

Since 2013, the Think A-Head interactive brain injury prevention program has reached over 18,000 students! And we see this number only growing. For example, in past years, most of the TAH programs were held in the second half of the school year. But this year, we are seeing an upsurge in programs requested in the first half of the school year. We attribute this increase in program requests due in large part to the success of past programs, as well as our recent Think A-Head giveaway promotion. This promotion offers the first 15 school districts in Massachusetts to sign up for TAH with a Program.

We are projected to reach over 8,000 students this school year! Think A-Head has already booked numerous programs for this school year; hopefully your school is one of them! Don’t let your school miss out on a great opportunity to educate your students on brain injury prevention and awareness. Call to inquire about a program for your school today by contacting thinkahead@biama.org or by visiting our website www.biama.org/thinkahead. Stay Safe and Think A-Head!

BIA-MA Announces Upcoming Education Opportunities

ABI CLINICAL CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM – Francesca LaVecchia, Ph.D.

This two-day Continuing Education Certificate program provides participants with a comprehensive overview of ABI, its potential long-term consequences, and recommended interventions. This training provides a foundation for further ABI advanced topics, that will be offered throughout 2017. This professional-level workshop is led by Dr. LaVecchia, a senior level clinician with over 40 years’ experience in clinical neuropsychology, rehabilitation, and neurobehavioral treatment. Continuing Education credit will be offered in a number of professional clinical fields. Registration fee includes lunch. To register, please visit our website at www.biama.org/ABItraining

DATES: January 26 – 27, 2017 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
LOCATION: UMass Medical School, 333 South Street, Shrewsbury, MA
COST: $500 for BIA-MA members $550 for Non-Members

36th ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE - SAVE THE DATE!

BIA-MA’s Annual Conference Committee invites you to join with sponsors, exhibitors and multiple educational speakers for a day of learning and networking. For over 30 years, this statewide conference has provided opportunities for professionals, survivors of brain injury, families and caregivers to gather together in one place and discuss challenges faced by the brain injury community.

DATE: Thursday, March 30, 2017
LOCATION: Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA

Visit our website at www.biama.org/annualconference in late January to register and to obtain more information about workshop topics, pricing, etc. Financial need-based scholarships are available for survivors and families of brain injury. We look forward to seeing you at the conference!
Traumatic Brain Injury in Seniors

Each year in Massachusetts, close to 16,000 older adults sustain a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Falls, which are a recognized public health concern at both the state and national level, represent the leading cause of TBI in people over 60 in our state. Older adults may be affected by brain injury differently than those who are in younger age groups. For example, older adults are more likely to take multiple prescription and over-the-counter medications, more likely to be living with other medical conditions such as heart disease or diabetes, and are affected differently by alcohol and illicit drug use.

An epidemiology report published in 2014 found that in the Commonwealth, people over 60 in the Northeast and Metrowest regions sustained the highest rate of brain injury. In 2014, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) was awarded a four year, $1 million federal grant, which is managed by the Administration for Community Living and entitled “Improving the Massachusetts Systems of Care for Elders Sustaining a Traumatic Brain Injury”. The goal of the grant is to maximize the existing resources for brain injury survivors and elders. To accomplish this challenging goal, MRC has partnered with the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA).

Over the past two years, Gabriela Lawrence-Soto, MRC Program Coordinator for the grant, has focused on training professionals at the elder service agencies: Aging Service Access Points (ASAPs) and Independent Living Centers (ILCs). These two agencies service people of all ages and disabilities. The four-hour, clinical training, “TBI in Older Adults” was developed and delivered to approximately 600 professionals through October 2016. It is estimated that over 1,000 professionals will participate in this trainings by year end.

Liz Harnois, BIA-MA Elders Information & Resource Specialist, has focused on outreach and has provided information and training to many including the Councils on Aging, skilled nursing facilities, community health centers, hospital staff, conferences, and health fairs. In addition, Liz founded, and continues to facilitate, three new support groups geared toward adult/older adult survivors and caregivers. These outreach efforts, combined with the creation of informational materials and the operation of a toll-free elders line, will lead more people to call BIA-MA for questions pertaining to older adults with or without a brain injury. BIA-MA believes that these efforts will also increase awareness of the Statewide Head Injury Program and provide a better understanding of the needs of seniors. For more information, please call Liz Harnois at (844)839-7154, email Liz at lharnois@biama.org, or visit www.biama.org/elders.
BIA-MA Western Regional News
Jennifer Summers, Western Regional Manager

2016 ANNUAL BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP PICNIC*

Heat, humidity and soaring temperatures were no deterrent for our determined brain injury support groups. A grand time was had by all at Saint Helena’s Chapel in Lenox on August 11th. This year we celebrated with an international theme. Many survivors came ready to share their costumes and information about their favorite country. We provided food from such countries as Greece, Japan, China, Mexico and Spain, as well as the good old American hamburger and hotdog. We would like to thank Les and Lori, along with Jennifer for being the judges for the Interesting International Competition. Many prizes were awarded for categories such as most historical, accurate, zany, and flamboyant. Everyone who participated definitely used their imaginations and it created an atmosphere of amusement. Thank you to all of our 32 participants. Hope to see you again next year!

Upcoming Western Region Events

• **Card-A-Rama:** November 30, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Western Regional Office, Pittsfield.

• **Berkshire Regional Transportation Authority Training Program (BRTA):** December 8, 10:30-11:30 a.m., Western Regional Office, Pittsfield.

• **Support Group Holiday Gatherings***: December 2016 - All Support Groups.

• **Advocacy Workshop:** January 9, 2017, 1:00 p.m., Western Regional Office, Pittsfield.

• **Creative Corner (A Carolina Star):** January 19, 2017, 1:00-3:00 p.m., Western Regional Office, Pittsfield.

• **Ken’s Bowl:** January 20, 2017, 1:00-3:00 p.m., 495 Dalton Ave, Pittsfield.

For more information or to make reservations contact the Western Regional Office at 413-443-0200 or visit www.biama.org/westernregion

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission*
A day in the life of Survivors and caregivers at Healing through the Equine and Art experience at Smithfield Farm in Falmouth*

The beautiful Paint horses were kind, gentle, and well-behaved with our group. Everyone enjoyed grooming, petting, and feeding them. We also all learned their characteristics and names. Some of the attendees, who had not been around horses before, said that the experience was fantastic. After the “horsing around” all participated in a delicious lunch and an art therapy class.

Research has shown the effectiveness of equine therapy, including: lowers blood pressure and heart rate, alleviates stress, and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Upcoming Southeastern Region Events

- **Annual Thanksgiving Feast Dinner**: Monday, November 21, 5:30-8:00 p.m., Trowbridge Tavern, Bourne.
- **Wild & Free An Exploration of the Animal Kingdom**: November 9-20; artists’ reception November 11, 5:00-7:00 p.m., Cape Cod Cultural Center, 307 Main Street, South Yarmouth. An art exhibit, sponsored by CapeCodCAN!, of works done by the Soaring Without Limits: Healing Through Arts class.
- **Soaring Without Limits: Healing Through Arts**: December 15, 1:00-3:00 p.m. and January 17, 2017, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Southeastern Regional Office, East Wareham.
- **Advocacy Workshop**: January 12, 12:00 p.m., Southeastern Regional Office, East Wareham.

For more information or to make reservations contact the Southeastern Regional Office at 508-743-0333 or visit www.biama.org/southeasternregion

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission
Central Region Picnic*

Survivors, family members, support group leaders, and BIA-MA staff gathered this August in Northborough for the Central Region picnic. It was a gorgeous, bright summer day, but we were chillin’ under the pavilion at Ellsworth-Macfee Park. Two talented survivors entertained us with guitar playing and singing while others listened and mingled. We feasted on wraps, salads, and yummy cookies. Several BIA-MA support groups were represented. It was great to see old friends, meet new ones, and celebrate summer.

Upcoming Central Region Events

- **Brain Games in Boston:** Wednesday, 11/30/16, 6:00-7:30 p.m. at Boston University, Sargent College, 635 Commonwealth Ave., Rm 610, Boston - We’ll have fun with games that help develop fine motor, cognitive, and social skills. Call Tress to sign up: 800-242-0030, ext. 13.

- **Winter Luau***: Tuesday, 1/31/17, 3:00-5:00 p.m., at the Central Regional Office, Westborough. Come to a Hawaiian themed party for survivors and chase away the winter blues. $2 per person. Call Tress or Beth to sign up at 508-475-0032.

- **Advocacy Workshop:** January 17, 2017, 10:30 a.m., St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 3 Maple Street, Framingham.

For more information or to make reservations contact the
Central Regional Office at 508-475-0032 or visit www.biama.org/centralregion

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission*
Strategies for Surviving Social Minefields
Author: John Byler, BIA-MA Board of Directors. Reprinted from TBI Hope & Inspiration November 2015

John’s Holiday Survival Strategies…

Agree on a coping signal with your spouse or partner
Use a word or phrase to signal a spouse or friend that you are finding it impossible to cope in a social situation. Whisper the signal and leave the room. He or she will provide you cover. My own signal is simple: I say to Lynne, “I can’t do this.”

Don’t do “the linger!”
“I can’t do ‘the linger’” sounds like a line from a Seinfeld script, but it’s a tactic that works. After an event that requires your attendance, avoid the schmoozing that generally follows. Even before you begin to sag cognitively, flee.

Manage yourself at family and friend gatherings
It’s usually easier to go into the kitchen before dessert and do all the pots and pans – with earplugs – than continue in conversation around the table. If someone comes out to help you, thank them and say that it’s easier for you than talking. Your guest will probably understand.

Recognize what kind of day it is, and act accordingly
One day I wrote in my journal, “Told Lynne I felt handicapped today. Everything is hard.” Both she and I knew I’d be keeping a very low profile all day.

Leave at the height of the party, when you’re feeling good
Lynne and I went to a party with some close friends. Michael and Nancy Jane sang professionally early in their careers, and out came the show tunes on their grand piano. At one point, Michael and I launched into “My Funny Valentine,” one part Sinatra (him) and one part Elvis Costello (me). When we nailed the ending we all laughed, Michael and I hugged, and I was happy.

I immediately retreated upstairs and stretched out on a couch, not sleeping, just closing my eyes and enjoying the sounds of my dear friends laughing. I liked to think that they would be laughing harder had I been my old self, but that was okay. We’d had our moment.

Say no to cruel traps!
Bumper stickers reduce complicated issues to a few words. Here in Massachusetts, one bumper sticker promoted a ban on certain animal traps and the catchy phrase turned out to be a valuable tool for me. If I’m confronted with the possibility of a cognitively draining experience I think, “Say no to cruel traps!” In a room where, say, multiple conversations are taking place, if somebody strikes up a conversation with you, Say no to cruel traps and excuse yourself.

Keep track of the time
Lynne asked if I wanted to go with her and Will someplace and I said sure. Then I counted how long it had been since I’d rested and it had been 5½ hours. I was due to crash and they went without me. I slept for two hours and was okay for the rest of the evening.

Have a friend keep an eye on the clock for you
Forty minutes into lunch with my friend Ted, I began slurring my words and it was getting harder for me to put my thoughts together. Like a good friend, Ted took the initiative and said we should probably wrap up. I saw that was a great strategy.

I have understood each tip they have given me, but I have also ignored or underestimated their importance. Remembering to follow survival tips is probably the most important thing you can do to live better with even a mild brain injury.

Many of them might not feel natural, so you have to consciously remember to put them into practice.
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between July 1, 2016 and September 30, 2016

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ABI Certification Training  January 26-27, 2017
State House Advocacy Day  February 1, 2017
BIA-MA Annual Conference  March 30, 2017
BIA-MA Annual Golf Classic  June 19, 2017

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