It was billed as “an event to raise awareness and much-needed resources to fund important programs aimed at creating a better future for brain injury survivors and their families. The Annual Walk & Roll offers individuals and teams a chance to honor and remember loved ones, connect with others interested in the brain injury cause, and helps to educate the local community on the diverse needs of survivors and their families.”

In the days following the event, our Development and Operations staff diligently tallied the figures for attendance and fundraising: over 430 men, women and children walked, rolled, volunteered, and staffed the event. Of the 430 in attendance, individuals walked and there were 42 teams comprised of survivors, caregivers, family members, friends, professionals, BIA-MA Board members (both active and retired), and our esteemed retired Executive Director, Arlene Korab.

This huge showing of teams was beyond our expectations and many of them came dressed to impress, including angels, ladybugs, and super heroes! There were creative and meaningful team names, such as Glo Forever Strong, Team CRC You at the Finish Line, Never Stop Believing in your Strength, Lovely Ladybugs, Katie’s Angels, Miracle Matt, Team Phoenix, The Elements of Harmony, The Amazing Framingham Survivors, #FightHardy, and many more.

Collectively, through tireless fundraising by individuals and teams, event registration fees, and generous in-kind donations offsetting our event costs, BIA-MA raised over $31,000.

Advocates, an event sponsor, showed up in force with one of the largest teams. 37 participants comprised of survivors and their Brain Injury Services team, who commented that, “The event was well organized, and survivors and staff enjoyed the event together. Doing a physical activity outdoors on such a beautiful day was great and a wonderful time was had by all. Count us in for next year!”

Matt Goddard, Team Captain of Miracle Matt, shared with me the very next day, “It was such a blessing to stand next to hundreds of people who understand each other, on a level which is rare in everyday life. It was a blessing for me, a survivor, but also my family to have the opportunity to speak with other families who have been in my opinion, the most miraculous teammates on Earth.”

“Walk & Roll” continued on page 3
On a Saturday morning in the spring of 1989 I walked down Main St. in Worcester to the Denholm Building. The neighborhood looked a little depressed and the ground floor of the building was partly vacant. I took a set of stairs up to the second floor and walked into a conference room. The room was well lit, decorated with posters on the walls, and had boxes and stacks of papers everywhere. There were about a dozen people in the room seated in rows of folding metal chairs facing the front of the room. The meeting was called to order and some ceremonial motions were made. An unassuming woman then stood up from her chair a couple of rows in front of me to address the group. The women proceeded to deliver one of the most spontaneous, impassioned, articulate, and eloquent statements I had ever heard from anyone on any subject. By the time she sat down I knew exactly why people with brain injuries—including her son—needed a greater voice to advocate for needed services and resources to live with dignity and as independently as possible.

That was my first meeting as a member of the Board of Directors of what was then known as the Massachusetts Head Injury Association. Twenty six years and scores of Executive Committee meetings and Board meetings later, I have been honored to be selected as Vice President of the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts.

The passion and commitment that was so palpable in that woman’s voice in 1989 has transformed this organization—and our understanding of brain injuries and the needs of survivors and family members—into what it is today. Brain injury is no longer the “silent epidemic.” To the contrary it is the subject of a national discussion about concussions and sport injuries, the needs of veterans returning from combat with traumatic brain injuries and posttraumatic stress, the need to prevent brain injuries with helmets, seatbelts, and fall prevention measures, and a host of other brain related topics that are in the national spotlight. Moreover our understanding of the brain has advanced exponentially over the past 33 years. Advances in neuroscience and neuroradiology have allowed us to diagnose and treat brain injuries that were previously deemed “invisible” or even worse nonexistent. Movies, TV, and social media all regularly feature stories about the human brain and the causes and impact of brain injuries.

The BIA-MA has been a leading—if not the leading—organization in this transformative movement. Whether fighting for greater public funding for survivors of brain injury, advocating for expanded insurance coverage for cognitive rehabilitation services, educating providers and the public about brain injuries and rehabilitation, providing information and resources to survivors and their families, bringing a lawsuit to allow survivors to live in the community rather than in nursing homes, supporting the Boston Marathon bombing survivors on their road to recovery, or the myriad of other things that the organization does each day, the BIA-MA has been in the forefront. It is a privilege to work with Teresa Hayes who has tirelessly and successfully lead the organization these past four years and Nicole Godaire and the entire BIA-MA staff to continue to advance the message that was so clearly expressed at that Board meeting twenty six years ago.

David Dwork, Esq., Vice President of BIA-MA Board of Directors
One Small Step for Man, One Giant Leap for TBI Survivors
By Jeff Sebell - Reproduced with permission from Jeff Sebell and TBI Hope & Inspiration.

A glorious Sunday in September, September 27 to be exact, was marked by thousands of small steps and rolls, made by hundreds of brain injury survivors.

The occasion was the first annual Walk and Roll for Brain Injury, put on by the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, on a track around a football field in Framingham, Massachusetts, a stone’s throw from where the National Head Injury Foundation began.

For that lap or two or three, we were all in motion as one; united by the common language of brain injury. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it didn’t matter how we actually made our way around that track; as we sang and walked that first lap, we were all floating on air. There was an energy and a spirit that levitated us, almost as if we were hovercraft, gliding seamlessly around that 1/4 mile track. For those moments together, not one of us was disabled. We were all doing the best we could with the tools we had, yelling, “This is who we are,” being proud of what we could do; as individuals and together, as a group.

In a way we were going back to our roots, back to the beginning, as Marilyn Spivack eloquently reminded us. She brought with her the same good-hearted spirit, energy and determination she brought when she founded the NHIF, and made Brain Injury a national issue.

Being there with all my people – all the survivors – was moving and empowering, and struck by the spirit, I reminisced on how things had been, way back when. Back then, 35 years ago, I was the only one that the National Head Injury Foundation (NHIF) had to call for peer support.

The newly opened office was small but busy. Marilyn reminded me I was the first visitor in that first office. Look at where we are now
As much as we feel the need now to educate other people about TBI, at least Brain Injury is in our current vocabulary. Thirty five years ago we called it Head Injury, and it was a new frontier in medicine that not many people were aware of.

Walking around this track with all these brave survivors also brought me back to my own journey around a track, forty years ago.

Back then, when I was in the rehabilitation hospital, they would let me go home on weekends so I could spend the time with my family and get some understanding of what the transition to home would be like. Although I was in a wheelchair in the hospital, they would send me home with a cane so I could learn how to walk.

Learning to walk was challenging, and I was discouraged at the stop/start, uneven movement of my attempts. I came up with a theory: if I moved as though I was running, I would have some fluidity to what I was doing. That meant being in motion, pumping my arms and constantly moving forward. My thought was that being fluid would allow my instincts to take over and stop me from thinking and analyzing every little thing I tried to do. Following my instincts would allow my natural balance to take over and take me where I wanted to go: I was sure of it.

My eight year old brother and my father and I went to the high school track, where I ceremoniously threw down my cane and, with my head down and my arms chugging, I began my lap. I felt as though I was running at breakneck speed, but in reality I was only taking baby steps. I did finish, and only fell once.

The pieces that made the walk so special this year was that the lap was done not only with all my fellow survivors and their supporters/caregivers, but also with my now eighty-five year old father, my brother, and my daughter.

We re-enacted that lap made forty years ago.

“Although I was in a wheelchair in the hospital, they would send me home with a cane so I could learn how to walk.”

“One Small Step” continued on page 14
Cognitive Rehabilitation Bill Hearing
Kelly Buttiglieri, BIA-MA Advocacy Associate

On November 5, 2015, the Joint Committee on Financial Services held a hearing on S.485/H.843 an Act Relative to Cognitive Rehabilitation. This bill will ensure that commercial health insurance plans include cognitive rehabilitation services related to the treatment for brain injuries. The hearing room was packed with over fifty supporters, all dressed in blue, to show their support for the bill and brain injury awareness. “I’m proud to sponsor the cognitive rehabilitation bill,” said Senate Majority Leader Harriette L. Chandler. “I was impressed to see how many survivors and advocates came to testify and believe that we are doing solid work to make sure that citizens have full access to affordable post-acute cognitive rehabilitation.”

A panel of doctors testified and reinforced the need for cognitive rehabilitation during the course of treatment for survivors of brain injury. Dr. Victoria Harding, a speech language pathologist and neuroscience researcher from NeuroReStorative, has worked as a cognitive therapist with individuals recovering from brain injury for the past 23 years. Dr. Harding explained to the Committee that with cognitive rehabilitation, a practitioner creates a structured environment and opportunity for an individual to repeatedly and correctly practice a skill or activity so that new neuropathways in the brain are generated.

Dr. Douglas Katz, a neurologist at Boston Medical Center and Medical Director of the Acquired Brain Injury Program at Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital, expressed his frustration with the current state of medical coverage for cognitive rehabilitation in the state. “Throughout my career it has been perplexing and troubling that in a state with some of the best medical treatment for cognitive dysfunction, I have had patients with severe brain injury who have easily obtained weeks and months of physical rehabilitation covered by their payer if they have an injured shoulder or spine but have NOT been able to obtain ‘cognitive rehabilitation’ because of lack of this coverage by the same payer.”

Dr. Ariel Savitz, a neurologist at New England Rehabilitation Hospital, who first practiced in Texas, explained to the Committee that Massachusetts is ten years behind Texas. She put forth a hypothetical scenario “Jane Doe, a 55 year old ER hemorrhaging in the brain near a coma and beats the odds of death through an aneurysm clipping. But Jane not only had the misfortune of her ailing an aneurysm, she had the misfortune of having an aneurysm in Massachusetts. Had Jane had it Texas, their cognitive rehabilitation law would have covered her for up to six months of post-acute care.” Dr. Savitz attempted to help obtain acute rehabilitation services covered insurance but was forced to send her to a skilled nursing facility with no cognitive rehabilitation.

BJ Williams Testifies for Primary Seat Belt Enforcement Law
Kelly Buttiglieri, BIA-MA Advocacy Associate

On November 18, 2015, the Judiciary Committee held a hearing on a primary seat belt enforcement bill sponsored by Rep. Garrett Bradley. Massachusetts is well behind the national trend for a primary seat belt law. Thirty-four states already have primary enforcement of seat belt laws. Seat belt usage in Massachusetts is 76 percent well below the national average of 87 percent and the state ranks 46th in the nation for seat belt use. Massachusetts now has a secondary enforcement seat belt law where a police officer can only issue a ticket for a seat belt violation if they pull the driver over for another offense.

The bill would increase the fines for seat belt infractions and would make the violation a primary offense. The bill would fine drivers and passengers over the age of 16, $50 for not wearing seat belts. The driver would be charged an additional $50 for each passenger between the ages of 12 and 16 who were not wearing belts. Under the bill, seat belt violations would not “result in surcharges on motor vehicle insurance premiums,” and police officer cannot search the car or its occupants solely because of the seat belt violation.

Many doctors and accident survivors testified in support of the bill. BJ Williams, Manager of Prevention and Court Related Programs at the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA) told the Committee his life would now be different had he been stopped by a police officer for not wearing his seat belt the day he was in an accident on the Massachusetts Turnpike. Williams was a passenger in a car travelling 75 miles per hour, and suffered his brain injury when he was ejected 160 feet down the highway. He also highlighted that BIA-MA works with many brain injury survivors who were permanently injured because of lack of wearing a seat belt. Williams felt that by changing the current law from secondary to primary, it could keep individuals from dying, families from years of grief and wondering “what if only?”

Mary Maguire of AAA Northeast testified that a primary seat belt enforcement law would save 18 lives each year and would prevent more than 650 traumatic injuries per year, including life altering spinal and brain injuries. Maguire also emphasized the societal costs associated with motor vehicle crashes. She explained that if Massachusetts adopted a primary enforcement law, the state would save nearly $1 BILLION in four years.

BIA-MA will keep its members up to date on how the bill progresses through the legislature. The bill has been proposed multiple times in the past but faced obstacles because of privacy and the potential for overzealous enforcement or racial profiling.

“Cog Rehab” continued on page 7

In October, business and insurance groups, including the Massachusetts Association of Health Plans, sent a letter to the Committee urging them not to approve any mandated benefit bills, including the cognitive rehabilitation bill, this session. If passed, this would be a mandated benefit because it would be legally required under state law. The letter noted that because many large companies self-insure and therefore are not subject to mandates, state laws requiring certain benefits and services disproportionately affect small and medium sized companies.

BIA-MA has not seen an advocacy effort as powerful as this one in recent memory. Over 7,000 Action Alerts were submitted to the Committee and with a little over 400 to each member. Nearly 200 people submitted personal stories that BIA-MA will use when meeting individually with the legislators. Representative Chris Walsh commented during the hearing that his email box was full all week and this was the best advocacy campaign he had seen in a long time. BIA-MA will keep its members up to date on the status of the bill as it moves through the legislature.
Together, we provide affordable, accessible housing with individualized supports so that survivors of brain injury can achieve their highest level of independence in the community. Each of our residences provides a barrier-free, homelike atmosphere with individualized supports provided in accordance with residents’ needs and preferences.

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www.AdvocatesInc.org/Services-BrainInjury

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**Brains At Risk - Continues to Partner With Law Endorsement**

B.J. Williams, Manager of Prevention and Court Related Programs

Brains At Risk is a Victim Impact awareness and prevention program that was developed over twenty-five years ago by the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts (BIA-MA). Judges, clerk magistrates, lawyers, and other public officials use theBrains at Risk Program as a condition of probation and/or as an alternative to formal sentencing. The program links dangerous driving behaviors to the devastating effects of traumatic brain injury. The curriculum combines videos, beneficial graphics, and group discussion to demonstrate the importance of choice made behind the wheel.

The most impactful part of Brains At Risk is when the attendees get to hear two personal stories of those whose lives have been permanently affected by an impaired driver. The mission of Brains At Risk is to promote responsible driving and raise awareness about traumatic brain injury (TBI) in order to prevent fatalities and serious injuries in Massachusetts. Every year over 3,000 people in Massachusetts will attend this three hour program in hopes of changing their future behavior and becoming a safe driver.

In May 2015 a Brains At Risk evaluation project was initiated by BIA-MA, that was designed to gather the attitudes and opinions of attendees regarding the effectiveness of their BAR session. Over 900 individuals, scheduled for Brains At Risk between May 2015 and November 2015, were asked (anonymously) to complete surveys both before and after their scheduled BAR program.

The survey questions were developed by BJ Williams, Manager of Prevention and Court-related Programs. The pre-survey included questions on topics such as: basic Massachusetts driving laws (alcohol limits, seat belts, etc), knowledge about brain injuries, and attendee driving behavior. The post-survey included questions on topics such as: basic demographics; satisfaction with their BAR session; effectiveness of the their BAR session, and intention to change their own behavior after attending the program.

Here are highlights from the survey:

- The pre-survey results indicated that over:
  - 65% of the attendees were referred to the program because of being arrested for a DUI or OUI
  - 60% of the attendees do not know the current BAC legal limits
  - 85% did not know the current Massachusetts seatbelt law

- The post-survey results indicated:
  - Over 78% of attendees indicate that the program will frequently or very frequently be successful in encouraging them to change their driving behaviors
  - Over 98% of attendees were either satisfied or very satisfied with their Brains At Risk program experience
  - The most popular components of the BAR program were: Survivor stories, Crash photos, Survivor Speakers
  - The Brains At Risk program, through the judicial system in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, continues to educate high-risk offender populations:77% males; 15% (20 and under); 52% (21-34); 23% (35-49); and 10% (50+)
  - For more information on Brains At Risk, please contact B.J. Williams at 508-475-0032 or bwilliams@biama.org
**Upcoming Central Region Events**

**Problem Behaviors Following Brain Injury**
Takes place on Wednesday, March 2, 2016, from 6:00pm – 7:30pm at the BIA-MA office in Westborough. Tom Hall, the Assistant Vice President for Clinical Services within Riverside Community Care’s Developmental & Cognitive Services Division, will talk about how to address unwanted behaviors with brain injury survivors. Tom has many years’ experience as a clinician working with survivors. This workshop is geared toward caregivers and family members. Cost = $5 per person.

**Tips & Treats** – January 13, 2016, 6:30 – 8:00 pm, BIA-MA office in Westborough.
Takes place on Wednesday, January 13, 2016, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m at the BIA-MA office in Westborough. BIA-MA’s Information and Resources staff will review community resources for brain injury survivors and caregivers. Come learn what types of resources are available, where, and who is eligible. “Mocktails” and hors d’oeuvres will be served and participants will have time to mingle and connect.

**Brain Games**
This ongoing, free, social recreation group for brain injury survivors, takes place on the THIRD WEDNESDAY of every month (Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 16, Apr 20, May 18, June 15) from 1:00pm - 3:00 pm at the BIA-MA office in Westborough, MA. Free for survivors; pre-registration is required. Space is limited please pre-register at www.biama.org or call 508-475-0032. “Brain Games” is sponsored by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.

**“Creative Minds” Craft Group**
This ongoing, free, social recreation group for brain injury survivors takes place on the SECOND THURSDAY of every month from 1:00pm - 3:00pm at the BIA-MA office in Westborough, MA. This program is for survivors who enjoy crafting with a wide range of art materials. Space is limited to 10 participants. There is no charge for this program, however, donations will be accepted on the day of craft program to offset the cost of materials. Here are the craft themes for the upcoming months:

- January 14, 2016: Zen Gardens
- February 11, 2016: Flower pens in holder
- March 10, 2016: Shamrock T-shirts

**Important to remember**
Space is limited in all these events, so please pre-register at www.biama.org or call 508-475-0032.

- Weather Policy: In the event of stormy weather, please call the office to confirm whether or not we are meeting. Regardless, please do not travel if you feel it is not safe for you to do so.

*Sponsored by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission **Sponsored by Spaulding Rehabilitation Network

For more information about these events, call the Central Regional Office at 508-475-0032.

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**Upcoming Southeastern Region Events**

**Art and Poetry Exhibit** - The month of April, Brockton Public Library. Artists’ reception: April 6, 2016, 3-5pm.

**Spring Fling Ball** - April 25, 2016, 5:30 - 8:00pm, Trowbridge Tavern, Bourne.

**Caregiver Advocacy Workshop** - June 22, 2016, 5:30-8:00pm, Marilyn Price-Spivack, Founder of BIAA

Everyone had great fun at the snow person workshop*

Rep. David Vieira, Falmouth, presenting the new web site of the Cape Cod Military, Veteran, and Family Collaborative at Cape Cod Community College. BIA-MA is a charter member of the group.

Sam Holmstock, founding member of Entrain, leading our group in a lively and healing drum circle**.

Amy Symonds enjoying the “Healing Through the Equine Experience” afternoon at Smithfield Farm in Falmouth.*

“*The Egg*. Art project interpreting the egg as birth. The pieces done by the group will be on display at the Brockton Public Library in April. Distinguished poets will write poems to accompany each piece.

*Sponsored by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission **Sponsored by Spaulding Rehabilitation Network

For more information about these events, call the Southeastern Regional Office at 508-743-0333.

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*BIA-MA Central Region News

Tress Ricker, LSW, Central Regional Manager

**Adult Survivor Recreation Group**

The first meeting of the Young Adult Survivor Recreation Group was held in October. This group is especially for survivors aged 18-30 and is recreation-based. The group met at Tougas Farm in Northborough and enjoyed exploring the fields, picking apples, and getting to know each other. We’ll be providing more events in the spring, but we’d like to hear ideas from young adult survivors or their caretakers of when and where we should get together. What kinds of activities would you like to see offered? What do you do for fun that you think others your age would enjoy? Share your thoughts with us at 508-475-0032 or email us at info@biama.org.

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*BIA-MA Southeastern Region News

Sandy Topalian, Ph.D., BIA-MA Southeastern Regional Manager

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What a year it’s been! I am most appreciative of the many experiences this year has afforded me professionally. With the help and support of a fantastic team, we have…

- Grown the Western Region newsletter mailing from less than 200 to over 800
- Started three new support groups
- Increased the number of volunteers and volunteer opportunities
- Collaborated with organizations we hadn’t previously worked with
- Increased the reach of our recreational activities to include Greenfield, Northampton and Hadley
- Provided numerous outreach meetings and networking opportunities

As we move into 2016, the Western Regional Office goals are to:

- Add 3-4 new support groups in our region
- Provide more outreach to schools, medical professionals, legislators and community contacts
- Increase volunteer opportunities
- Increase social and recreational activities
- Introduce the Think A-Head program into area schools
- Increase awareness of brain injury and what BIA-MA has to offer

As always, I am eager to hear from and meet with many more survivors, caregivers and professionals to learn about the needs of those in our region and how we can best meet those needs.

--BIA-MA Western Region Manager

Cynthia Costello

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**Upcoming Western Region Events**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>January</th>
<th>Bowling at Ken’s Bowl Pittsfield*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January, February</td>
<td>CATA Visual Art classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Chinese New Year*</td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>Brain Injury Awareness Gala, Crown Plaza, Pittsfield*</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Quarters of Hadley*</td>
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<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Alzheimer’s Association Caregiver Support Series</td>
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*Sponsored by the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

For more information about these events, call the Western Regional Office at 413-443-0200

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“I Walk & Roll” continued from page 3

that 1/4 mile track. For those moments together, not one of us was disabled. We were all doing the best we could with the tools we had, yelling, “This is who we are,” being proud of what we could do; as individuals and together, as a group.”

I can proudly say that we met and exceeded all of our goals on that track on the Framingham State University campus—raising awareness and resources, honoring and remembering loved ones, connecting, and educating. And in meeting and exceeding these goals, we all became one big support group family, knowing in the end that all of us, in this community of brain injury, are not alone.

On behalf of the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts, I would like to thank so many involved in the success of the event: Marilyn Price Spivack; Sally Johnson; our Sponsors including Framingham State University (Athletics Department, Dining Services, and WDUM RAM Radio), Advocates, Vinfen Corporation, Insurance Marketing Agencies, and HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Western Massachusetts; our Exhibitors including Boston Acquired Brain Injury Support Group (BABIS), Community Rehab Care (CRC), Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), May Center School for Brain Injury and Related Disorders, MetroWest ADRC, and Nizhoni Health Systems; our Walk & Roll Committee, in-kind donors from our community, Maeve Hughes who sang our National Anthem so beautifully, Audrey Zaferos, PT, DPT who led the stretching, and BIA-MA staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly before, during and after the event. Thank you!
survivor’s corner

**education**

**Brain Games**

**WORDSEARCH**

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**SUDOKU**

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Things to Sit On

- Bed
- Futon
- Rocker
- Bench
- Hammock
- Saddle
- Box
- Hassock
- Seat
- Chair
- Log
- Settee
- Chaise
- Lounge
- Sofa
- Chesterfield
- Love Seat
- Steps
- Couch
- Ottoman
- Stool
- Crate
- Perch
- Stoop
- Davenport
- Pew
- Throne
- Divan
- Pillow
- Tree Stump

“Brain Game” answers on page 18

**Educational Update**

Laura MacFeeley, BIA-MA Educational Coordinator

**ABI Clinical Continuing Education Program - Begins February 22-23, 2016**

The ABI Clinical Continuing Education Program has been brought back by popular demand! This continuing education program was developed in collaboration with experts in the field of brain injury to enhance the knowledge, expertise, and skills of providers working with brain injury survivors. Continuing Education Credits are available for professionals in certain fields. Learn more at www.biama.org/ABITraining.

Here is a list of the ABI Clinical Continuing Education series trainings:

- **session 1: ABI Basic Certificate**
  - February 22-23, 2016

- **session 2: Overview of Neurodiagnostic Procedures and Neurological Effects of ABI**
  - Half Day - Sheldon Benjamin, M.D.

- **session 3: The Aphasiass and Cognitive-Communicative Disorders Associated with ABI**
  - Half Day - Therese O’Neil-Piacci, Sc.D.

- **session 4: Substance Abuse and ABI**
  - Full Day - Francis R. Sparadeo, Ph.D.

- **session 5: Problematic Sexual Behavior**
  - Half Day - Laurie L. Guidry, Psy.D.

**Dates and Times:** For dates and times for sessions 2 through 5, please go to www.biama.org/ABITraining.

**Venue:** The trainings will be held in the UMASS Medical School Campus, Amphitheater - 2nd Floor, 333 South Street, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Lunch will be provided at all full day classes.

**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, Program Directors/Managers of residential, day and other programs that serve persons with ABI.

**Registration:** Online registration will begin in the mid-January timeframe.

**35th Annual BIA-MA Brain Injury Conference - March 24, 2016**

The BIA-MA Annual Brain Injury Conference provides a forum for the brain injury community (brain injury survivors, caregivers, and professionals) to gather, obtain a better understanding of brain injury, and become up-to-date on supports and services. The 2016 conference will offer 29 workshops, 40+ exhibitor tables, and a keynote from Joanne Susi, motivational speaker, life coach, and stroke survivor. Continuing Education Credits are available for professionals in certain fields. Learn more at www.biama.org/annumconference.

**Date and Time:** Thursday, March 24, 2016, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**The Venue:** Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough, MA 01752. Continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks are included in the registration fee.

**Registration:** Online registration will begin in mid-January 2016.

**Important Dates:**

- January 15, 2016: Participant Registration OPENS
- February 1, 2016: Discounted Sponsor & Exhibitor Registration ENDS
- February 1, 2016: Program Ads and logos (jpg 300dpi or .pdf; correct ad size) DUE

**About Jeff Sebell**

A long-time survivor, Jeff is the author of “Learning to Live with Yourself after Brain Injury.” You can read more about Jeff and his journey on his blog at www.TBI Survivor.com. This article was reproduced with permission from Jeff Sebell and TBII Hope & Inspiration.

**Laura MacFeeley, BIA-MA Educational Coordinator**

**EDUCATIONAL UPDATE**

**ABI Clinical Continuing Education Program - Begins February 22-23, 2016**

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Here is a list of the ABI Clinical Continuing Education series trainings:

- **Session 1: ABI Basic Certificate**
  - 2 Full Days - Francesca LaVecchia, Ph.D.
  - February 22-23, 2016

- **Session 2: Overview of Neurodiagnostic Procedures and Neurological Effects of ABI**
  - Half Day - Sheldon Benjamin, M.D.

- **Session 3: The Aphasiass and Cognitive-Communicative Disorders Associated with ABI**
  - Half Day - Therese O’Neil-Piacci, Sc.D.

- **Session 4: Substance Abuse and ABI**
  - Full Day - Francis R. Sparadeo, Ph.D.

- **Session 5: Problematic Sexual Behavior**
  - Half Day - Laurie L. Guidry, Psy.D.

**Dates and Times:** For dates and times for sessions 2 through 5, please go to www.biama.org/ABITraining.

**Venue:** The trainings will be held in the UMASS Medical School Campus, Amphitheater - 2nd Floor, 333 South Street, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. Lunch will be provided at all full day classes.

**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, Program Directors/Managers of residential, day and other programs that serve persons with ABI.

**Registration:** Online registration will begin in the mid-January timeframe.

**35th Annual BIA-MA Brain Injury Conference - March 24, 2016**

The BIA-MA Annual Brain Injury Conference provides a forum for the brain injury community (brain injury survivors, caregivers, and professionals) to gather, obtain a better understanding of brain injury, and become up-to-date on supports and services. The 2016 conference will offer 29 workshops, 40+ exhibitor tables, and a keynote from Joanne Susi, motivational speaker, life coach, and stroke survivor. Continuing Education Credits are available for professionals in certain fields. Learn more at www.biama.org/annumconference.

**Date and Time:** Thursday, March 24, 2016, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**The Venue:** Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road West, Marlborough, MA 01752. Continental breakfast, lunch, and snacks are included in the registration fee.

**Registration:** Online registration will begin in mid-January 2016.

**Important Dates:**

- January 15, 2016: Participant Registration OPENS
- February 1, 2016: Discounted Sponsor & Exhibitor Registration ENDS
- February 1, 2016: Program Ads and logos (jpg 300dpi or .pdf; correct ad size) DUE

**About Jeff Sebell**

A long-time survivor, Jeff is the author of “Learning to Live with Yourself after Brain Injury.” You can read more about Jeff and his journey on his blog at www.TBI Survivor.com. This article was reproduced with permission from Jeff Sebell and TBII Hope & Inspiration.
BIA-MA Launches “Find Your Voice” - 2015 Annual Appeal
Chesa Conrad, BIA-MA Development Manager

November marked the kick off for our newly branded end of year campaign “Find Your Voice.” Our success relies solely on the generosity of our friends. This year we shared Danielle Wohl’s heartfelt story.

Danielle has been a volunteer speaker for the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts for 19 years and is the best spokesperson we can think of to help promote “Find Your Voice.”

Here is a snippet from Danielle’s story:

At 17, if you’d asked me, I had the world at my fingertips. As a young aspiring model, I knew what I wanted and where I was going. What I didn’t know, was how quickly that could all be taken away. In 1988 I was traveling in a car with friends, when a drunk driver ran a red light and hit us head on. I was not wearing a seatbelt, and was thrown through the windshield, landing on my face on the pavement. To learn more about Danielle, visit www.biama.org/findyourvoice.

Danielle doesn’t share her story for sympathy. She shares her story to educate others on how your decisions not only affect you, but everyone around you.

BIA-MA ensures Danielle’s message, and the messages of many others, are heard by advocating for better safety legislation and providing programs that educate the public. We want to give survivors of brain injury, their families, and their caregivers a voice!

To find your voice make a gift today:
A donation of any size will help BIA-MA offer top notch prevention and awareness programming, important educational opportunities, practical legislative advocacy, and helpful resources, information and support to donate:  
• Send your check to BIAMA, 30 Lyman Street, Suite 10, Westborough, MA 01581
• Make your gift online at www.biama.org/findyourvoice

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Answers to Brain Games from page 13

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18
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19
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Upcoming BIA-MA Events

Advocacy Day at the State House  February 3, 2016
ABI Continuing Education Series - Basic Cert  February 22-23, 2016
35th Annual Brain Injury Conference  March 24, 2016
2016 Annual Golf Classic  June 20, 2016

For more information visit biama.org/newsandevents or call 508-475-0032