On March 30th, over 750 people attended the 36th Annual Brain Injury Conference! Families, survivors, caregivers, and medical professionals selected from 28 workshops on such topics as Medications and Falls, The Stress of Caring for Others in Your Life, HCBS Waivers, Total Health for Chronic Brain Injury, This is Your Brain on Music, TBI and Dementia, Brain Injury and Substance Disorders, and Tai Chi. In addition, participants enjoyed over 47 exhibitor tables.

The conference began with a warm welcome from Executive Director Nicole M. Godaire, Board President David Dwork, Director of Programs & Services Cynthia Cardeli, and Manager of Education Beth Pusey. This dedicated group of professionals highlighted the history of BIA-MA, articulated current advocacy efforts, thanked conference committee members, and introduced the keynote speakers.

The keynote speech, “Courageous Inspiration through Brain Injury Education”, delivered jointly by Stacia Bissell, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) survivor and Katya Bowen, her Speech Language Pathologist. Said Stacia, “As a fairly high functioning brain injury survivor, my mission is to be a voice and advocate for other survivors.” Katya continued on this theme and pointed out that, “It is extremely important to have a collaborative re-entry team when returning to work.”

A very special thank you goes out to this year’s conference sponsors and exhibitors including: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission; HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospitals (Presenting Sponsor); Seven Hills (Lunch Sponsor); and Eliot Human Services and Mass Council of Adult Foster Care (Breakfast Sponsors). As always we would like to send a big thank you to our Gold Corporate Partners NeuroRestorative, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, and Vinfen.

This year’s conference received rave reviews, with the highest ratings in 36 years. Said one survivor, “This conference just keeps getting better and better!” The evaluation comments indicated that all aspects of this conference - keynote, workshops, and exhibitors - provided information that will enable the road to recovery from brain injury. We hope to see you next year!
It is with a great sense of pride and responsibility that I begin my tenure on the Board of BIA-MA, an organization that I have been involved with, and have deeply respected, for over 30 years.

My early recollections were during my days at Braintree Hospital as a conference exhibitor and volunteer, stuffing envelopes or event bags, and learning first-hand the impact of brain injury on a family. Back then, Arlene Korab, Marilyn Price Spivack, Inta Hall, and Rosalie Berquist were the group of grassroots moms and friends energized to do something in the way of advocating for their children with brain injuries when there was nothing readily available or organized. With few paid staff, and a group of volunteers in a cavernous office in Worcester, they created this vibrant and strong organization that now represents the education, training and advocacy needs of individual survivors, families, and professionals in what we now know as the brain injury community.

For the past 20 years as an owner of Community Rehab Care, I have had the pleasure of working with the organization’s leadership and staff on a wide variety of initiatives including serving on the Planning Committee for the Annual Conference. The conference has burgeoned over the years from a few hundred attendees to over 750 professionals and survivors and their families, along with 40+ vendors that provide services to the brain injury community. This is a vibrant and unique event where professionals and survivors have the opportunity to engage, connect and learn together. It has also proven to be an opportunity to encourage participation in the legislative process by communicating to attendees the current legislation relevant to the brain injury community, and providing a direct and easy way to facilitate their support and involvement.

Our own CRC staff, clients and families have both provided, as well as derived, a great deal of support to and from BIA-MA over the years. This complementary relationship has included our participation in such fun and engaging activities as the annual Walk & Roll, Brain Injury Awareness month, Advocacy Day at the Statehouse, and social and recreation groups. The relationships forged, and inspiring stories that have come about from these special events, keep us energized to push forward in working with the brain injury community. We also understand that the hard work and persistence in writing and calling our legislators, as well as providing written and oral testimony, has made a difference in the lives of survivors. These activities have helped to create and maintain funding for SHIP, support, and recreation groups; creation and funding for the ABI and MFP waivers; and hopefully in the future, will mandate the coverage of cognitive rehabilitation by commercial insurers.

In addition to providing rehabilitative treatment to people who are just out of acute care settings, I cannot stress enough how much the efforts

“Eileen Chernoff” continued on page 13
Adults with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI): Join us for a monthly social art experience at Worcester Art Museum, 55 Salisbury Street, Worcester!

Engage with the world of art through studio experiences led by knowledgeable art instructors. Discuss art throughout history from antiquity to contemporary. No previous art experience required and refreshments will be served.

Learn more at bit.ly/CreativeMindsABI or contact Krystal Carl at 774.272.0753 or kcarl@sevenhills.org.

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Funded in part by the MA Rehabilitation Commission; Brain Injury & Statewide Specialized Community Services Department; and Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Seven Hills NeuroCare (SHNC) supports people with brain injuries in their seamless transitions from clinical facilities to residential options that provide person-centered, community-based supports that include day habilitation, workforce readiness and employment, recreation through day and residential programs. SHNC helps identify each person’s life goals and the steps needed to achieve them. The SHNC interdisciplinary team includes:

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- Allied health professionals
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- Mental health counselors
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- Neurologists

Through a distinctive array of comprehensive supports, the experienced and dedicated Seven Hills NeuroCare team works to restore hope, independence, and dreams. To learn more, call 508.983.2976 or visit sevenhills.org.

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Strengthening Brain Injury Supports with a Continuum of Care

81 Hope Avenue, Worcester, MA 01603 • 508.983.2976 • sevenhills.org
A Big Thank You to Our Volunteers!

Did you know that April was National Volunteer Appreciation month? To show our appreciation for our volunteers, each of our regions held an appreciation luncheon. Over 60 volunteers contributed their time this past year helping BIA-MA with invaluable day to day work including: staffing events, database work, filing, mailings, and sorting. We simply could not help those affected by brain injury without their help, commitment and passion. Thank you for all that you do! If you would like to make a positive difference in the world of brain injury, come join us as a volunteer! Contact Laura Mason (lmason@biama.org).
9 Great Reasons to Contact HealthSouth
IN THE NEW ENGLAND AREA

HealthSouth Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital
250 Pond Street • Braintree, MA 02184 • 781 348-2500
healthsouthbraintree.com

HealthSouth New England Rehabilitation Hospital at Beverly
800 Cummings Center • Beverly, MA 01915 • 978 720-7260

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital- Concord, NH
254 Pleasant Street • Concord, NH 03301 • 603 226-9800
healthsouthconcord.com

Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital • A joint venture of UMass Memorial Health Care and HealthSouth Corporation
189 May Street • Worcester, MA 01602 • 508 791-6351 • fairlawnrehab.org

HealthSouth Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital at Framingham
125 Newbury Street • Framingham, MA 01701 • 508 532-9203

HealthSouth New England Rehabilitation Hospital at Lowell
1071 Varnum Avenue • Lowell, MA 01854 • 978 446-1662

New England Rehabilitation Hospital- Portland, ME
A joint venture of Maine Medical Center and HealthSouth
335 Brighton Avenue • Portland, ME 04102 • 207 775-4000 • nerhp.org

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Western Massachusetts
222 State Street • Ludlow, MA 01056 • 413 308-3300 • healthsouthrehab.org

HealthSouth New England Rehabilitation Hospital- Woburn
2 Rehabilitation Way • Woburn, MA 01801 • 781 935-5050
healthsouthnewengland.com

Contact Us
Contact the location nearest you to learn more or to make a referral.

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.

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

800-743-6802
NeuroRestorative.com
Registration is Open for the 2017 Annual Golf Classic

Attention golfers, golf enthusiasts, sponsors, and donors: You may now register for our annual golf tournament online at www.biama.org/golf. Gather your friends, family, and colleagues to register your foursome. Individual golfers are also welcome and will be assigned to a foursome. Inquiries about the golf tournament and in-kind auction donations should be directed to Anna Gordon, Development Coordinator, agordon@biama.org or 508-475-0032.

Exciting sponsorships are also available! Sponsorship inquiries should be directed to Chesa Conrad, Marketing & Development Manager, cconrad@biama.org or 508-475-0032.

SAVE THE DATE - Sunday, August 20, 2017

2017 FALMOUTH ROAD RACE

Team BIA-MA is a great opportunity to participate in one of the premier races in all of New England – AND raise important funds and awareness for a great cause! Learn more at: www.biama.org/falmouthroadrace

SAVE THE DATE!
JOIN US AT THE 2017 WALK & ROLL FOR BRAIN INJURY!

Saturday, September 9, 2017
Ashuwillticook Rail Trail
Farnams Road, Cheshire, MA 01225

Saturday, September 16, 2017
Buzzard’s Bay Recreation Area
Cape Cod Canal
110 Main Street, Bourne, MA 02532

Sunday, September 24, 2017
Maple Street Field Track
220 Maple Street, Framingham, MA 01702
Framingham State University (FSU)
Vinfen 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.
Central Region News
Tress Ricker, LSW, Central Regional Manager

Paint Night on the First Day of Spring!

It was a fun night on the first day of spring in the Central Region. We celebrated the season by hosting a Paint Night for brain injury survivors at our Westborough office. Some of the participants were from our bi-weekly Arts Group, but some had never created a painting before this. Nevertheless, all who came channeled their inner artist and rose to the challenge. An artist from Jubilee Painting skillfully directed us in creating a scene with rolling hills and a tree against a blue sky.

Each person gave their creation different and unique elements so that every painting was reflective of the person who painted it. We learned some new painting techniques, sampled some healthy snacks and a mocktail punch, and enjoyed each other’s company. Everyone was encouraging and complimentary to their fellow artists, which made for a very pleasant evening.

Upcoming Central Region Events

- **Music Therapy**: Four week series on Fridays, May 12 through June 2, 10:00 - 11:00 a.m., at the Central Regional Office, 30 Lyman St., Suite 10, Westborough. Experience how music helps with neurorehabilitation. Space is limited and reservations are required. Cost is $3 per workshop.

- **Northeast Survivor Picnic**: Wednesday, June 7, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., at Salem Willows Park on the North Shore. Meet up with other brain injury survivors for lunch, camaraderie, and fun. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and a lawn game or musical instrument if you like. Lunch is free. (Rain date June 9th).

- **Art Therapy**: Five week series on Tuesdays, July 18 through August 15, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., at the Central Regional Office, 30 Lyman St., Suite 10, Westborough. Volunteer art therapist and TBI survivor Sonja Boodajee returns for the third year in a row. No art experience needed.

For more information or to make reservations contact Laura MacFeeley or Tress Ricker at 508-475-0032 or visit [www.biama.org/centralregion](http://www.biama.org/centralregion)

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission*
“Soaring Without Limits, Healing Through the Arts”

Showcasing artwork from artists throughout the state, the Southeastern Regional Office held Soaring Without Limits; Healing Through the Arts, an ekphrastic (fancy name for a scene or picture described in a poem) art & poetry exhibit at the Driscoll Gallery, Brockton Public Library. The event featured artwork created by brain injury survivors and their caregivers in art classes run by art therapist Anne Hitch. The artwork was paired with poems written by poets who chose the piece that inspired them. Over 25 poets participated and 95 pieces of art were on display.

The event featured an Artists’ and Poets’ Reception. In many cases this was the first time many of the poets and artists had met. It was an emotional experience for both artist and poet as they experienced the way each other’s vision and inspiration were interpreted by the other. Art therapy helps survivors express their emotions and overcome feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and stress, giving them a voice through paint, pictures, objects, color, and personal processing on whatever media they choose. They were extremely proud to see their artwork displayed and appreciated.

Special thanks goes out to poet and Brockton resident Philip Hasouris for his help in producing the event. This program was supported in part by a grant from the Wareham Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Upcoming Southeastern Region Events

• Trip to Provincetown*: Saturday, June 3, Bus pick up leaves from 3 locations starting at 9:00 a.m. with a 3:30 p.m. return. Space is limited and reservations are required. This event is free! Bring or buy your own lunch there.

• 8th Annual Bourne Picnic Hawaiian Theme*: Tuesday, June 27, 12:00 - 3:00 p.m. Registration checks must be in by noon June 23. Make checks out to BIA-MA and send them to: BIA-MA, 3119 Cranberry Hwy., Suite 5F, Wareham, MA 02538. Cost is $5 for survivors (includes one free caregiver) and $10 for others.

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
2017 Gala: An Afternoon in Paris

An Afternoon in Paris was the theme of the Western Region’s Third Annual Brain Injury Awareness Gala and it was an afternoon that was thoroughly enjoyed by over 65 survivors, family members, friends and professionals. Our “Paris street musician”, Mitch Zimmer, a senior at Monument Mountain High School, played soft jazz on the acoustic guitar as we greeted and gathered for lively conversation and a delicious meal. Many entered the spirit of the afternoon and dressed as French artists, mimes, museumgoers and café dwellers. The beret was the “hat de jour”!

Upcoming Western Region Events

• **Container Gardening with the Growing Healthy Gardens Program**: Monday, June 5, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. BIA-MA Western Regional Office, 180 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA. Cost is $2 per survivor per class. Space is limited. All participants will leave with a small container of planted seeds.

• **Drum Class ~ World Music / West African & Caribbean Drumming and Singing**: Tuesday, June 6 and June 13, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., BIA-MA Western Regional Office, 180 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA. Cost is $2 per survivor. Space is limited.

• **Smith College Museum of Art and Lunch**: Thursday, June 22, 12:30 – 4:00 p.m., 20 Elm Street, Northampton, MA. Cost is $5 per survivor. Space is limited. You will enjoy a Chinese lunch followed by the tour of the exhibits at the Art Museum.

• **Mt. Tom Hike and Picnic**: Thursday, June 29, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Mt. Tom State Reservation, 125 Reservation Road, Holyoke. Parking at Mt. Tom is $5 per car. Space is limited. We will hike/walk a paved half mile trail, followed by a picnic lunch.

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

*Sponsored in part by the Statewide Head Injury Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission*
Advocates champions people who face developmental, mental health, or other life challenges. We partner with individuals and families to shape creative solutions to even the greatest obstacles.

First, we listen. Then, together, we do what it takes to help people thrive.

www.Advocates.org

Brain Injury Services

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

- Community Supports
- Day Services
- Recreation
- Residential Services

For questions or more information contact BrainInjury@Advocates.org.
Meet Alex Niederhauser - BIA-MA Survivor Speaker!

It was over fifteen years ago that the course of Alex Niederhauser’s life would be forever altered. Thanks to BIA-MA, Alex has had the opportunity return to share his story at his high school.

Then a seventeen-year-old student at Acton Boxborough Regional High School, Alex 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.

Since his accident, Alex has 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.

As part of BIA-MA’s Think A-Head program, Alex spoke at the Think A-Head programs that were held at Acton Boxborough Regional High School in late February. “I loved putting my heart into the 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.” We thank you for your help, Alex!

“Eileen Chernoff” continued from page 2

of BIA-MA and the State agencies involved to develop and support the waiver programs has impacted our own practice, and the lives of individuals who have moved out into the community as a result of the waivers. We have seen tremendous functional gains in clients who had been in nursing facilities for months or even many years, even though the gains may take a bit longer to achieve. And, we have seen these individuals really develop their sense of self once again, and for some, an opportunity to become a spokesperson and advocate for the cause of brain injury awareness and advocacy. It has been truly inspiring for us to see the success of this program.

I believe that this is a critical time for the organization to continue its growth, its presence and its mission “to create a better future for brain injury survivors through prevention, education, advocacy and support.” Those of us who are providers are finding it increasingly difficult to treat and provide services to those with brain injury. Many of our patients face large deductibles and copayments which make it difficult for them to access the amount of treatment in the identified plan of care. And/or, they may face stringent prior authorization rules that often hold up treatment in the approval and appeal process, or, may deny further and continued treatment. The paper chase has become daunting, and it is concerning to many of us that these issues will further shrink the number of providers that focus on ABI services.

Whether survivor/family, provider, payer, or legislator, we all need to collaborate and identify a system of care provision, payment, and support that will mutually work for all parties involved. Training and education for the next generation of providers is also high on the list of goals. I so look forward to working with the BIA-MA Board, Executive Director Nicole Godaire, and her wonderful staff to help in some small way to achieve our goal of creating a better future for survivors and those affected by brain injury.
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between January 1, 2017 and March 31, 2017

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## Upcoming BIA-MA Events

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YOUR BIA-MA SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!