On March 20th, Kelly Buttiglieri, Public Policy Manager, and Helen Stewart, Outreach Coordinator, attended Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill hosted by the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA). The day included a whirlwind of events beginning with a Brain Injury Awareness Fair in the Rayburn House Office Building.

“National Awareness Day” continued on page 3
Board Highlight

Harold Wilkinson, MD, PhD

Dr. Harold Wilkinson is a long-standing member of the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts board of directors. Devastated by the loss of his son Ed to a traumatic brain injury, Harold joined the board in 2003 to lend his unique perspective – family member reeling from the loss of a child and neurosurgeon.

In December 2017, 55 years after the start of his neurosurgical residency, Dr. Wilkinson retired from Massachusetts General Hospital. Prior to MGH, Dr. Wilkinson served 20 years as Professor, Chief of Neurosurgery, Director of Residency Program and directed the neurotrauma program at University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester.

“Wilkinson” continued on page 6

In the late afternoon, a Brain Injury Congressional Briefing was focused on “Looking Ahead: Opportunities and Challenges in Brain Injury”. An audience member asked the panel a question about the frustration with lack of private health insurance coverage for cognitive rehabilitation and wondered what more could be done. Dr. Drew Nagele, Executive Director of Beechwood NeuroRehab in Pennsylvania, responded that he knew that the state of Texas had passed legislation requiring coverage and added that he understood that a similar bill was pending in Massachusetts. Ms. Buttiglieri then informed the panel and audience on the bill’s status. After the event, many wanted to know more details on the bill's specifics and history.

The day ended with a Congressional Reception celebrating Brain Injury Awareness month. BIAA honored Congressman Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) and Congressman Tom Rooney (R-FL) with awards recognizing their service and dedication to Americans living with brain injury. Rep. Pascrell founded the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force in 2001. The Task Force works to increase awareness of brain injury in the U.S., supports research initiatives for rehabilitation and potential cures, and strives to address the effects such injuries have on individuals.
37TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

It was a fantastic day for the 37th Annual Conference, held on Thursday March 29th, 2018 in Marlborough, MA. Commissioner Toni Wolf from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and Keynote Speaker Jordan Burnham kicked off the full day conference that hosted over 750 attendees and 45 exhibitors. Attendees began the day with breakfast and the chance to visit exhibitor tables, followed by the keynote address, and an afternoon of workshops presented by experts in the field of brain injury. Workshop topics ranged from “Top 10 Apps for College Students” to “Functional Neurology: Assessment and Treatment of Post-Concussion Syndrome”.

BIA-MA would like to thank all the presenters and exhibitors that participated at this year’s conference. We would also like to thank our Presenting Sponsor – Healthsouth Rehabilitation Hospitals, Lunch Sponsor – Seven Hills NeuroCare and Breakfast Sponsors – BAMSI and Massachusetts Council for Adult Foster Care. As always special thanks to our Gold Corporate Partners NeuroRestorative, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network and Vinfen.

We hope to see you in 2019!
BIA-MA thanks all who contributed to the success of the conference!
“Wilkinson” continued from page 2

“I am proud to say that in my time on the board I have seen the organization expand dramatically and effectively,” says Dr. Wilkinson. He mentions BIA-MA’s involvement in the Hutchinson case in 2008 that has brought about the expansion of services available to brain injury survivors, the work done to raise awareness about concussions in student and professional athletes and blast injuries among our veterans, and BIA-MA expansion of its education and prevention programs that provide continuing education for professionals as well as workshops for survivors and family members.

It is in this spirit that the Ed Wilkinson Memorial Fund was established in 2001 by the kind donations of Ed’s friends and loved ones. In memory of their son Ed, who passed away that year due to injuries sustained in a January 2000 accident, Dr. Wilkinson and his wife of 62 years, Alice, spearheaded a fund to help provide caregivers (like the dedicated nurses and physicians who cared for Ed) and loved ones (like Ed’s devoted family and many friends) with the support and tools they need to cope in the world of brain injury.

The first annual Ed Wilkinson Memorial Lecture will be held on Tuesday, June 26 at the Wellesley Free Library in Wellesley, MA, featuring Arthur E. Dell Orto, PhD, CRC. Dr. Dell Orto will be reviewing his book, “The Impact of Brain Injury on the Family: A life and Living Perspective.” For more information please visit www.give.classy.org/wilkinsonlecture.
WESTBOROUGH - WAM!

On Friday, April 13th, a group of brain injury survivors were treated to a delightful tour of the Worcester Art Museum. Our tour guide was fun, animated, and brought history to life! After the tour, we enjoyed soups, salad and great sandwiches from the museum cafe, and topped off the day by browsing the gift shop. For upcoming events visit www.biama.org/centralregion

EAST WAREHAM - ART EQUALS SELF

Each month brain injury survivors participate in an art class at the BIA-MA East Wareham office. This program offers survivors a chance to create art to aid in healing, recovery, confidence building, relaxation, and emotional expression. Art also opens them to a new way of looking at themselves and their accomplishments! For upcoming events visit www.biama.org/southeasternregion

PITTSFIELD - SWING INTO SPRING

As winter lingered, the Pittsfield Office was busy with some great SHIP events. In February we had a Valentine Creative Corner, and celebrated the Year of the Dog at Panda House. For March, we celebrated and honored our survivors and Brain Injury Awareness Month with our Annual Gala. Our theme was “Swing into Spring”, and swing we did! Later in the month we had drumming and Creative Corner. In April we were fortunate to have our friend Wendy back for three Mindful Meditation classes. For upcoming events visit www.biama.org/westernregion
BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH FUN & EVENTS

In addition to sending two BIA-MA employees to participate in the National Brain Injury Awareness Day activities on March 20th at Capitol Hill, other awareness activities in March included a social media campaign, partner collaboration, open houses, and radio appearances.

We encouraged the use of the “Change Your Mind” stamp and sharing informational articles on brain injury, “Did You Know?” fact flyers, and pictures with the new BIA-MA photo frames.

Each of BIA-MA’s three office locations held open houses - Westborough, Wareham, and Pittsfield. Folks were encouraged to drop in, speak to the staff, and have refreshments. Many of whom posted survivor stories on social media and reposted BIA-MA’s posts (and vice versa!).

Cynthia Cardeli, BIA-MA Director of Programs & Services, and Helen Stewart, BIA-MA Outreach Coordinator, also took the time to talk about brain injury with State Representative Smitty Pignatelli on his WSBS March broadcast.

THANK YOU, BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE!

Thank you to Berkshire Community College’s Physical Therapy Program for supporting BIA-MA with their annual Wellness Day! The event included fun activities like yoga, massage and more for over 150 attendees. The activities raised $1,600 which will be split between Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts and All Out Adventures. Thank you again to Berkshire Community College! If you are interested in hosting a fundraiser to benefit BIA-MA please visit www.biama.org/fundraising
Kelly Buttiglieri, Esq., BIA-MA Public Policy Manager, is responsible for advocating for all legislative actions that will benefit individuals with brain injury and their families. She is currently focused on the FY’19 Massachusetts Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP) Budget (Line Item 4120-6000), the Cognitive Rehabilitation Bill, and the re-establishment of the Brain Injury Commission.

Prior to her current position as Public Policy Manager, Kelly was the Program Coordinator at BIA-MA for 12 years. She worked with civic groups to educate them about brain injuries and prevention. These programs were conducted with an impactful talk by brain injury survivors.

Kelly is also a survivor. At twenty-four years of age, only three months away from graduating from law school, her life radically changed due to a car driven by a drugged driver. Striking her head on the car windshield, Kelly suffered a traumatic brain injury. After spending an arduous two and half months in the hospital and rehabilitation hospital, she began the journey home and the long road to recovery.

Kevin Weldon suffered an anoxic brain injury on January 23, 2017. However, he has been an active participant in his rehabilitation program at Wingate at Worcester. “To see Kevin work so hard to improve in all areas and start to establish a meaningful, happy life, is just inspiring,” says Helaine Rubin-Green, Kevin’s Speech-Language Pathologist. “He is a true testament that with strong determination and a wonderful support system, people with brain injury can move mountains!”

Kevin and his family were active participants in the Walk and Roll for Brain Injury in September 2017. This was the first time Kevin was able to attend a community event since his injury. He walked a short distance on the track, and Team Kevin raised almost $3,000 in support of the work at the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts.

“Lots of prayers and outstanding support from friends and family have helped Kevin exceed his medical prognosis,” explains Don, Kevin’s father. “With his own will to succeed, we are confident that Kevin will continue to beat the odds and will again play his guitar and cast a lure.”

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Kelly graduated from Boston College with a BA, cum laude, in political science. She also has her Juris Doctor, cum laude, from Suffolk University Law School. Kelly has lived in Stow, Massachusetts for the last 19 years. She and her husband, Rich, have two children, 18 year old, Matt, and 13 year old, Allison. She enjoys flower gardening and is an avid reader of all types of books. She is a political junkie and loves to discuss politics.

Her article in “Chicken Soup for the Soul, Recovering from Traumatic Brain Injuries”, emphasizes the need to adjust one’s personal goals after suffering a TBI.
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between January 1, 2018 and March 31, 2018

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YOUR BIA-MA SPRING 2018 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!