New Start Brain Injury Community Center Opens in Worcester

On November 13, 2017, an open house was held at the New Start Brain Injury Community Center (BICC) in Worcester.

The Brain Injury Association of MA (BIA-MA) advocated for funding for BICC in the FY ’16 state budget with the assistance of Senate President Harriette Chandler.

“Community Center” continued on page 3
Executive Message - Shelly King

Shelly King is the most recent appointee to the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts. She is currently the Executive Director for NeuroRestorative’s Northeast Region.

Shelly has more than 20 years of leadership experience in the field of behavioral health and brain injury rehabilitation with expertise in progressive residential and behavioral health programming, operations management, strategic planning, quality/risk management systems, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and training/mentoring of new managers in leadership skills. She holds a Master’s Degree in Counseling Psychology from Assumption College and is a licensed mental health counselor.

Shelly’s focus on the BIA-MA Board will be two fold: to ensure the creation of highest quality programs and to increase brain injury awareness throughout the state.

Shelly beamed with pride when she was asked to be part of the BIA-MA board and commented that, “The greatest thing about being part of a team supporting brain injury survivors is that I learn something new every day. We learn from the individuals we serve, from their families, from our community and from each other. The quality of care we provide is something that I...”

“Shelly King” continued on page 10
"Community Center" continued from cover

President Harriette Chandler (D-Worcester) and Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden). The Community Center was one of the Brain Injury Commission's service recommendations in the 2011 report. The Brain Injury Commission was established from an outside section of the state budget. The Commission met to address the serious gaps in services for individuals with brain injury in the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) selected BAMSI’s adult service division to pilot BICC serving the Greater Worcester area. BICC is designed to serve adults (22+) who have been impacted by an acquired or traumatic brain injury. BICC provides members with a variety of supports which increase community integration through natural supports, building interpersonal relationships, and utilizing resources so members become more self-sufficient through education, employment and self-advocacy.

During the open house, Anthony Simonelli, President and CEO of BAMSI, welcomed visitors to explore the areas of the center. He enthusiastically explained the various activities that happen in each room. A spacious kitchen allows members to participate in menu planning, grocery shopping and meal preparation.

Eligibility for BICC includes: age eligibility, documentation of an Acquired Brain Injury, and a referral from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC). For those not referred by MRC, BAMSI will work to ensure there is verification of a brain injury and that the referral meets the general criteria of the Brain Injury Community Center and MRC.

Nicole Godaire, Executive Director of BIA-MA, Toni Wolf, Commissioner of MRC, Senate President Harriette Chandler, and Representative Kimberly Ferguson all spoke at the event. George Bond and Brian Murphrey, BICC members, explained how the Center addresses their needs and their enjoyment coming each day. George and Brian then unveiled a commemorative wall plaque.

Moving forward, Cynthia Cardeli, BIA-MA Director of Programs & Services, will be sitting on the Advisory Board for BICC. For more information on advocacy visit www.biama.org/advocacy
EDUCATION UPDATE

We have been very busy! In addition to preparing for the 37th Annual Conference on March 29th, we offered a 5-week online preparatory course for the Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) exam.

Our ABI Clinical Continuing Education Series offered 2 courses, “ABI Clinical Continuing Education Certificate” and “The Aphasia and Cognitive-Communicative Disorders Associated with ABI”. This series will continue on April 30, 2018 with “Problematic Sexual Behavior” by Dr. Laurie Guidry.

BIA-MA will also be offering another round of the “Thrivers Workshop: Practical Tips, Tools & Strategies for Brain Injury Survivors” in early April. For upcoming educational opportunities visit www.biama.org/education

ELDERS PROGRAM

Over the course of several months, BIA-MA’s Elders Information and Resource Specialist, Liz Harnois, has represented BIA-MA at many conferences focused on public health concerns.

At the Massachusetts Association for Councils on Aging’s conference held in Danvers, MA, Liz Harnois, and Gabriela Lawrence-Soto, from MRC presented a workshop on traumatic brain injury in older adults.

At the Massachusetts Public Health Association annual meeting, Liz spoke with hospital administrators and public health professionals who were working to promote health care equality for all. In the months ahead, BIA-MA hopes to connect to various populations such as those living with mental illness disorders, substance abuse disorders, and those facing homelessness to spread awareness about brain injury and the services that exist in Massachusetts and beyond!

SUPPORT GROUPS

Did you know that BIA-MA provides over 50 support groups across the Commonwealth to meet the needs of brain injury survivors and caregivers?

One of the more “unique” support groups is the monthly Westborough Brain Games group. Brain Games is a social recreation group that uses a variety of board and card games to work on various cognitive skills such as increasing sustained attention, sequencing, memory, new learning, audio & visual processing and reasoning & logic. The activities can also work on fine & gross motor skills as well as social & interactive skills all in a fun and laid-back environment. Members always leave with a smile on their face.

For Support Group Listings visit www.biama.org/groups
On Friday, December 8th, twelve brain injury survivors and caregivers met at BIA-MA for a bus trip to the Springfield Museum. With Larry as our entertaining driver, the drive went quickly, and we soon arrived at our destination. Thanks to the wonderful staff at the Springfield Museum, and especially to Betty, our Docent and Tour Guide. We viewed some Colonial-era paintings and furniture, whimsical sculpture, a modern art gallery, and more. Following a great lunch, we explored “The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss” which included life-size sculptures of Horton the Elephant, the Cat in the Hat, Thing One and Thing Two. A fabulous day! For upcoming events visit www.biama.org/centralregion

Yes, it does take a village to care for someone with a brain injury! From the beginning, there are the first responders, the acute care, the hospital emergency room, nurses and other clinical specialists. It takes the love of parents, spouses, sons, daughters, siblings, the extended family, and the entire community. This is an example of Art work created by a group of Brain Injury Survivors at the “Creative Corner”, which takes place at the BIA-MA Southeastern office every month. For upcoming events visit www.biama.org/southeasternregion

Happy survivors, caregivers, families and friends were as plentiful as the colorful Autumn leaves in the Western Region of BIA-MA. We celebrated our first Harvest Luncheon at the Delaney House in Holyoke with about 68 people enjoying the delicious food and inspiring conversations. It was wonderful to see so many different support groups represented and hearing folks from different areas sharing insights and inspirations about living life with brain injuries. For upcoming events visit www.biama.org/westernregion

Questions? Visit www.biama.org/brainsatrisk
On February 8, 2018, BIA-MA held its 3rd Annual Advocacy Day at the State House.

On Thursday, February 8, 2018, Senate President Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester) and Representative Kimberly Ferguson (R-Holden) sponsored the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts’ (BIA-MA) Third Annual Advocacy Day at the State House. Over one hundred survivors, family members and professionals attended along with numerous state representatives and senators.

Executive Director Nicole M. Godaire opened the ceremony with informing attendees about the exciting news on two legislative initiatives. On February 7th, both committees, Financial Services and Public Health, reported the Cognitive Rehabilitation bill (S.502/H.2166) and Resolve to Re-establish the Brain Injury Commission (S.1168/H.1956), favorably out of the respective committees. Prior to the Committees’ votes, BIA-MA members persuasively sent 334 emails to each member totaling 5,498 to the Financial Services Committee. As of the printing of the newsletter, the Senate and House clerks have not posted the next action for the bills.

Senate President Chandler spoke on her involvement starting the Brain Injury Commission in 2011. She explained that as per the recommendation of the Brain Injury Commission three years ago, an epidemiology study on acquired brain injury was completed and the legislature approved funding for a pilot community center in Worcester. The State is currently in the process of finalizing the Needs Assessment Report. By re-establishing the Brain Injury Commission, data concerning the epidemiology report and the needs of individuals with brain injury and their families will be further studied and recommendations made to improve services.

Commissioner of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, Toni Wolf, informed attendees about the Statewide Head Injury Program (SHIP). SHIP has
a network of community-based services and supports that assists individuals in maintaining or increasing their level of independence at home, work and in their communities. She emphasized the importance of the program to the brain injury community.

Helen Stewart, BIA-MA Information & Outreach Coordinator, spoke about her brain injury and recovery. Helen explained even with her experience in the medical field how little she felt she knew about both. Helen reached a point for the first time in her life where she did not know what to do with herself. Following the suggestion from her neurologist, Helen finally attended BIA-MA’s Tea and Talk support group. After several meetings, Helen connected with another member after hearing her speak of the common threads and challenges in recovery. Helen inspired the members of the crowd to share their personal stories when meeting with legislators.

At the end of the program, Ms. Godaire outlined BIA-MA’s 3 current legislative initiatives:
1. Increase the funding for SHIP by $2 million dollars to fund Community Based Services, Transitional Support Services, Support Services and a Multi-Service Center.
2. Advocate for the passage of the “Cognitive Rehabilitation Bill”.
3. Support the “Resolve to Re-establish the Brain Injury Commission”.

BIA-MA also sponsored the “Imagine Brain Injury” exhibit for the week of February 5th at the State House. This exhibit was designed to show viewers the affect that a TBI has on a person’s activities of daily life. Posters carried messages such as “Imagine needing Post-it notes to get through your day”.

For more information about Advocacy at BIA-MA, contact Kelly Buttiglieri at 508-475-0032 or kbuttiglieri@biama.org
We asked our supporters to spread joy for Giving Tuesday and you responded generously raising more than $800!

A special thanks to the many donors and partners who contributed items like hats, mittens, blankets, personal items and puzzle books to the #BIAMAGivingTree. Due to their generosity, we were able to provide over 90 wellness bags to survivors all over the state!

The residential facilities that we spread joy to brain injury survivors were: CO-OP headquartered in North Dighton, BAMS|l’s New Start Brain Injury Community Center in Worcester, and Timberlyn Heights in Great Barrington.

Thank you again for your generosity!

SAVE THE DATE!

BIA-MA GOLF CLASSIC
Monday, June 18, 2018
www.biama.org/golf

For sponsor or attendee information please contact agordon@biama.org.

JOHN’S SEA OF GREEN 5K MEMORIAL RACE

Inspired to commemorate the memory of her husband John Deane who passed away in December of 2016 after a tragic fall, Meg Deane and her friend Amy Peterson created a 5k in his name.

John’s Sea of Green 5k was held on October 1, 2017 and with over 149 participants and several donors, raised more than $5,200 to benefit the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts. Along with raising funds for our organization, Meg and Amy were keen on educating the public through social media to explain the many lasting effects of traumatic brain injury.

You can learn more about this event on the group’s Facebook page: https://m.facebook.com/johnsseaofgreen/
LAURA MASON

Laura Mason is our Director of Operations. She is responsible for BIA-MA’s Operations, Human Resources and Accounting functions.

Laura received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing from North Adams State College in 1978. After many years in corporate retail management, Laura became associated with BIA-MA. She started off as a bookkeeper on a part-time basis out of her home in 1995. She became an official employee in October of 2006.

On a lighter side, Laura’s culinary expertise and party planning is much appreciated by BIA-MA staff and volunteers during the holidays!!! Thank you for all you do, Laura!

Lauren Fender is a brain injury survivor, BIA-MA Survivor Speaker, support group leader, athlete and now fundraiser.

Along with South Shore Race Management, Lauren held the first ever Rise and Adapt 5k on October 21, 2017. There were over 80 runners who completed the race for which the $3,750 raised benefited the Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts. Thank you Lauren, for being such an inspiration and for your hardwork organizing the race!
“Shelly King” continued from page 2

feel passionate about and am proud of. Every day we are making strides in improving the lives of people who have been impacted by brain injury.”

NeuroRestorative is a national leader in post-acute rehabilitation services for people with brain and spinal cord injuries. In Massachusetts, they currently provide services in 15 community based locations for adults with ABI.

In the coming year, they plan to open 8 additional locations to support individuals who, under the Hutchinson waiver, will have the opportunity to leave a nursing home and live in a community-based setting. NeuroRestorative is a corporate partner of BIA-MA.

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**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
The Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts gratefully acknowledges the following gifts from our generous contributors received between October 1, 2017 and December 31, 2017

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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 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:

- Certified brain injury specialists
- Certified co-occurring treatment specialists
- Clinical behavior specialists
- Medical doctors
- Allied health professionals
- Psychiatrists
- Mental health counselors
- Neuropsychologists
- 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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Vinfen transforms lives together

Vinfen 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.

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.
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.
Upcoming BIA-MA Events

BIA-MA Annual Conference  March 29, 2018
ABI Continuing Education Series
   Problematic Sexual Behavior  April 30, 2018
   Neuroanatomy  May 30, 2018
2018 Golf Classic  June 18, 2018
Walk & Roll for Brain Injury
   Ashuwillticook Trail - Cheshire  September 15, 2018
   Framingham State University  September 23, 2018
   Cape Cod Canal  September 29, 2018

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

YOUR BIA-MA WINTER 2018 NEWSLETTER HAS ARRIVED!!