

HEADLINES

SPRING 2007



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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday Workshops May 23 June 27

Brain Injury Basics I June 19

Brain Injury Basics II May 15

Check page 9 for more details on these events

Brain Injury Association of Minnesota helpline: 612-378-2742 800-669-6442

www.braininjurymn.org

RECYCLE NOW!

Do you have a friend, loved one or colleague who could benefit from this newsletter?

If so, pass it on or call the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota and have one mailed to them.



Homelessness and Traumatic Brain Injury

By Barb Danson

It's easy to judge the homeless in our community. If they can stand on the corner for hours every day begging for money, why can't they get a job?

"There's this kind of myth that's going around that a lot of homeless people choose to live on the street, that they choose not to utilize some of the services because they would rather drink and shirk the responsibilities of the common citizen," says Dr. Kristen Ryan, South Metro Human Services. "It is in people's interest to adapt to their environment, to keep their bodies and their minds going. If people are not doing that, there are pretty legitimate reasons why."

"It's not like someone said 'Hmmm, I want to be homeless today, so let me pack my bags,'" says Raye Black, multicultural outreach coordinator at the Brain



Eric laughs during a recent meeting with Association staff who are supporting his efforts to overcome the challenges, including homelessness, that he's facing as a result of brain injury.

Photo by Nissa French

Injury Association of Minnesota. "They're just lazy; they don't want to do anything," she says, are "unfortunate, common misconceptions."

The "Overview of Homelessness in Minnesota 2006" report from Wilder Research estimates there were about 9,200

Homelessness continues on page 6

Access to Brain Injury Supports Progresses

By Emily Doughty

On April 1, the Minnesota Department of Human Services renewed allocated funding and support to continue the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Waiver, a decision that does not weigh lightly on the 100,000 Minnesotans who live with a disability due to brain injury and their families.

When an individual affected by brain injury requires a hospital or nursing home level of care in Minnesota, there are two Waiver possibilities for them: the Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI) Waiver, and the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Waiver. While the Waivers are similar in many respects, the TBI Waiver is a funding source designed to meet the specific needs of individuals with brain injury who also have significant behavior and cognitive challenges. The TBI Waiver provides two specific programs, behavioral programming and structured day program, which can significantly improve the lives of individuals with brain injury and their families.

According to Maria Anderson

from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the TBI Waiver is important because it "provides more comprehensive services than what was occurring in a specialized nursing facility by allowing people to have community-based living options. And the TBI Waiver provides those services in a cost-effective manner."

The first portion of the current TBI Waiver, TBI NF, provides funding for individuals at a

nursing facility level of care and was approved in 1992. The second portion of the Waiver, TBI NB, followed in 1994 and provides funding for those who are at a neurobehavioral hospital level of care. Some of the most demanding needs for supporting an individual with a brain injury are those that are "invisible" to most; the cognitive and behavioral challenges. These needs were not attended to for many years.

Brain Injury Supports, continues on page 12



Brain Injury Association of Minnesota

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Every 23 seconds, one person in the United States sustains a traumatic brain injury. The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota is the only statewide nonprofit dedicated to helping people navigate life after brain injury.

Please join us to raise awareness and provide help, hope and a voice to the thousands of Minnesotans affected by brain injury.

Any commitment you can make – from volunteering to becoming a Citizen Advocate to sharing your story through the media – can help enhance the quality of life and bring the promise of a better tomorrow for all people affected by brain injury.

Simply fill out the section to the below and mail it to the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota at 34 13th Ave. NE, Suite B001, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413 to get started today!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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E-mail: _____

- Subscribe me to the bi-weekly *Headlines Online* e-newsletter, which is filled with up-to-date information of interest to the brain injury community (e-mail address required above)

Please send me information about:

- Membership
- Resource Facilitation program
- Case Management program
- Educational opportunities
- Public Policy opportunities
- Multicultural Support program
- Volunteering opportunities
- Peer/Mentor Support Connection program
- Public Awareness opportunities
- Donating, Planned Giving or Contributing
- Internships



**Brain Injury
Association
of Minnesota**

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Mission

The mission of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota is to enhance the quality of life and bring the promise of a better tomorrow for all people affected by brain injury.

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
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Editorial Policy

Headlines is published quarterly by the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota. The editor reserves the right to edit submitted materials for style and space. The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota does not endorse, support, or recommend any specific method, facility, treatment, program, or support group for persons with brain injury and their families. Please call for advertising rates.

Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the Editor should be limited to 300 words. Letters may be edited for spelling, grammar and length. In order for letters to be considered, please include your name, address and the daytime phone number of the author. The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota reserves the right to refuse letters for publication, and submission of material does not guarantee publication. Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are solely those of the author and do not represent the opinions or positions of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota.

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars now and join us for the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota's 6th Annual Walk for Thought!
 October 6 – Como Park, St. Paul
 Other Walks will be held in Blackduck, Winona and Duluth. Check our Web site for updates:
www.braininjurymn.org/walk.html





PERSPECTIVE



Change is Upon Us

It is an exciting and pivotal time for the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota. It is our goal to bring our mission, strategic plan and voice to all Minnesotans, sharing the impact that brain injury has on our state, our community and each individual – and we are changing our ways to effectively do this.

The conventional way of thinking about change is that of an instantaneous transformation – something we watch evolve right before our eyes. However, change that creates lasting results evolves throughout time, through a chain of actions. If these actions are carried out with a common goal in mind, they will emerge together to create effective change.

That is what is happening at the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota. Through the everyday efforts of our staff, volunteers, and Board of Directors, we are working on change to truly engage

all of you in building stronger relationships as constituents, partners, collaborators and friends.

Throughout 2006, we worked hard to define how we respond to the needs of the people we represent and support. Now more than ever we will strive to become stronger and faster in our efforts to advance our mission to enhance the quality of life and bring the promise of a better tomorrow for all people affected by brain injury.

So how are we changing to better engage, build stronger relationships and fulfill our mission? While we are continually examining our efforts, you will notice a few evident changes starting this month: a redesigned Web site and an official Membership Drive.

The Association's new Web site, still hosted at www.braininjurymn.org, allows for easier access to information about brain injury and the Association and reveals a bold new look for us. A clean design and more imagery promises to draw you in as a visitor, and more in-depth information offers you the opportunity to learn more about the support services we offer, and even

spread the word using the new "Tell a Friend" feature.

Most important, the new site offers access to underserved individuals in Minnesota; text size toggle buttons on every page make it easier for individuals with visual impairments to read the information and dedicated pages in Somali, Hmong and Spanish offer access to individuals with limited English language skills. While

kicking off through the mailing of a new membership brochure to past and current supporters with the simple ask of standing beside us as a visible supporter by becoming a member in the Association.

Membership is not about what you get; it is about what you believe in and support. It is a way for you to support the estimated 100,000 Minnesotans living with a disability as a result of brain injury; it is a way to step forward and show your commitment to our mission; it is a way to provide

As we expand and grow to better support the Minnesotans affected by brain injury, we ask you to join us.

the basis of the new Web site is complete, additional features will be added in the coming months to enhance it even more, including the ability to donate and register for education classes online. You can read more about the new Web site on page 4 or simply hop online at www.braininjurymn.org.

Another evident change you will notice is our focus on membership. In connection with national Brain Injury Awareness Month in March, we are conducting a formal Membership Drive. The Membership Drive is

access to support services for those who need them. Turn to page 8 to read our article on membership or call us at 800-669-6442 to become a member.

As we expand and grow to better support the Minnesotans affected by brain injury, we ask you to join us. I challenge you to be a part of the changes we're making to ensure that all people affected by brain injury in Minnesota have an opportunity to enhance their quality of life and open the door to a better tomorrow.

Lack of Occurrence

Sometimes it's not that I forget, it's not that I thought incorrectly, it's not even that I wasn't thinking about something; sometimes it doesn't even occur to me.

Lack of occurrence is one of the most difficult things to explain to someone. How can you explain to someone that, while you could hear the dog barking at the door, it never occurred to you to go and let Fido in from the cold? As soon as the situation is pointed out to you it becomes clear and obvious, but you can't even begin to explain why or how you did not notice before. For some reason the connection was never made.

Yes, you know you have to leave in ten minutes, but it is not until you are about to walk out the door that it occurs to you that you need to spend some "face" time in the bathroom, that you were going to bag up the trash and take it out, and that you were going to wash up



the breakfast dishes before you left. In the final analysis, in spite of all the many benefits, brain injury just isn't a very efficient factor in implementing your day.

I have no handy solutions for this one. There is no "tie a string around your finger" strategy that I know of. This is just one of those things that you just have to accept as being a part of a brain injury. The best that you or anyone else can really do is to accept that this happens from time to time.

This may sound easy, but I still end up beating myself up over some bald faced lack of occurrence. It is as if I just wasn't paying attention. It is at base a lack of concentration and focus. If somebody without a brain injury

doesn't understand this, just tell them that it's the sort of thing that could happen to anyone if they were really really tired, only that with a brain injury it can happen any time.

It is difficult in personal relationships to suffer from lack of occurrence. Some of the most touching moments for couples are when someone does something totally unexpected, like

the garage, to even begin a task. Sometimes I have stared into the bathroom mirror as I held my toothbrush, not knowing where to begin brushing.

I now know how Buridan's ass must have felt. A medieval French philosopher, Buridan explored freewill issues and this refers to an Aristotelian argument against freewill that said an ass placed equidistant between two piles of

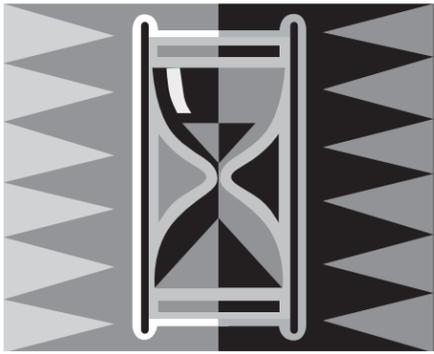
How can you explain to someone that, while you could hear the dog barking at the door, it never occurred to you to go and let Fido in from the cold?

remembering some detail about what a person likes, or doing something nice that isn't asked for: the sort of things that fall under the heading "thoughtful." Lack of occurrence and thoughtfulness are opposites. Brain injury in effect renders one thoughtless and this just makes relationships all the tougher.

Lack of occurrence also can affect you in another way. Sometimes there are too many choices, like when cleaning out

hay would starve to death since it would have no way of deciding which hay bale to go to. I say, if the ass had a brain injury, he might very well starve.

Mike Strand sustained a severe brain injury through a motor vehicle accident in 1989. He is a certified yoga instructor, ordained minister, and has published his best and most popular articles in a book "Meditations on Brain Injury." Mike has worked for the Andersen Corporation since 1986 and has served on the Board of Directors for the Association since 2002.



NEWS BRIEFS

What's new at the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota and in the brain injury community

Out & About

Brain Injury Association of Minnesota staff and volunteers have been busy in the community to improve the general public's knowledge about the organization and brain injury causes and symptoms.

On the Radio: In March the Association wrote and distributed Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to Minnesota radio stations to raise awareness about the number one cause of brain injury in Minnesota – falls. PSAs will air a few times a week on multiple radio stations throughout Minnesota including 102.9 KMFX (Rochester) and 104.1 FM (Fergus Falls).

At Events: Staff and volunteers exhibited at many events in Minnesota over the past few months, including the 2007 Winter Neighborhood Feast at One Stop Family Support Center, Kid's

Day Minnesota 2007, the 2nd Annual Hands On Twin Cities Volunteer Expo, the Minnesota Special Education Conference, and the Minnesota Cyclist Bicycling, Travel & Fitness Expo.

In Print: The Association was featured in numerous media outlets including two articles in the *West Central Tribune*; a January *Rochester-Post Bulletin* article; a column in the *Spokesman Recorder*; an article in the *Sauk Centre Herald*; features in the March issue of *Access Press*; an article in the March issue of *Minnesota Healthcare News*; programs on radio stations KFAI (FM 90.3 Minneapolis and FM 106.7 St. Paul), KMOJ (FM 89.9), and WJON (AM 1240); and the "Coffee with KARE" show on KARE 11. The Association also ran awareness advertisements on KTLK radio and CityPages.com.

2007 Family Retreat

Mark your calendars! A Family Retreat will be held the first weekend in May 2007 at Camp Courage. The Retreat is offered in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education's Minnesota Low Incidence Projects and is geared towards families who have a school-age child with brain injury. The Association is looking for individuals or families to volunteer at various times during the Retreat weekend in different capacities. For more information on attending or volunteering at the Retreat, contact Janis Carey Wack at 800-669-6442.

Save The Date: 2007 Walk for Thought

Mark your calendar today to join us on Saturday, October 6 for the 6th Annual Walk for Thought! The Twin Cities Walk will be held at Como Lake in St. Paul and planning is underway to schedule corresponding Walks in Blackduck, Duluth and Winona.

Coordinated by the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, the Walk for Thought is an event that raises awareness about brain injury and funds to support the Minnesotans affected by it. Stay tuned to the Web site (www.braininjurymn.org/walk.html) for updates on registration, fundraising, creating a team, the day-of logistics fundraising and more. If you have immediate questions, please call 800-669-6442.

TBI Corrections Grant Work Progresses

As announced in the summer 2006 edition of *Headlines*, Minnesota was awarded a three-year federal grant from the Health Resources and Service Administration for its Traumatic Brain Injury in Correctional Facilities project. As part of the grant activities, Brain Injury Association of Minnesota staff has been collaborating with the Minnesota Departments of Human Services, Health, and Corrections to define and understand the scope of traumatic brain injury (TBI) in Minnesota's correctional system and document possible interventions and strategies to improve outcomes for offenders.

Over the past few months, Association staff have toured various correctional facilities to gain an understanding of the environment that offenders experience, consulted with offenders who have sustained a TBI and are in the process of

developing a brain injury training curriculum for correctional staff at multiple levels and from various correctional entities, including Local, County, State, Federal, and Tribal.

Association staff have also started providing a preliminary brain injury training curriculum to correctional staff, including professionals at the Minnesota Community Corrections Association, Hennepin County Sheriff's Department and Hennepin County Jail. Staff will continue to provide trainings across Minnesota, as well as informational presentations at related professional conferences, that are tailored to the specific audience.

For information about brain injury trainings available for correctional staff, please contact Janis Carey Wack at 800-669-6442. For more information on the grant activities, please contact Ken Carlson at 651-361-7286 or Ardis Sandstrom at 800-669-6442.

Association Earns Recognition From Charities Review Council

The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota has been awarded the Charities Review Council's "Meets Standards" seal, indicating that the organization meets all 16 of the Council's Accountability standards. Nonprofit organizations can earn the seal by voluntarily participating in the Council's online Accountability Wizard that addresses a nonprofit organization's performance in public disclosure, governance, financial activity and fundraising. Earning the "Meets Standards" seal helps demonstrate the Association's dedication to responsibility, integrity and transparency.

Board Members Re-Elected

Congratulations to those re-elected to our Board of Directors! A ballot was sent to all Brain Injury Association of Minnesota members in February and members cast their nomination ballot for individuals seeking first and second-term election to the Board. All candidates were elected for a three year term, including:

First Term Election:

- Sandy Kasprzak
- Andrew Kiragu, M.D.
- Mohsin Zafar

Second Consecutive Term Re-Election:

- Kate Shannon
- Dave Scott

For a complete list of the Association Board members, please see page 2.



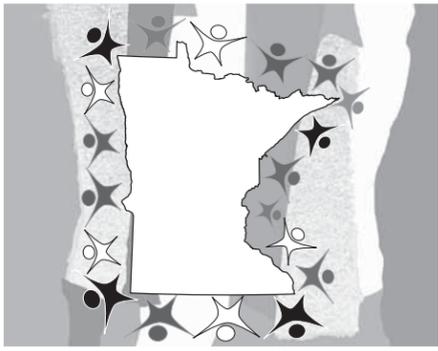
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Multicultural Corner

Building the Bridge Together



By Raye Black

Henry Ford once said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." That couldn't ring more true for how we work to bridge individuals in communities of color who are affected by brain injury to a better quality of life.

In 2006 alone, the Multicultural Outreach program worked with more than 125 community partners to reach individuals in Minnesota's African American, Somali, Native American and Hmong communities with information about brain injury. By partnering with community organizations throughout Minnesota, we were able to reach more than 2,950 individuals, family members and professionals and refer 77

individuals to the Association's Resource Facilitation program for ongoing support.

That's 77 individuals who are now receiving supports to bridge to a better quality of life. Much of the credit is due to amazing community partners, like One Stop Family Support Center in Minneapolis, who have welcomed the opportunity to learn about brain injury and work with the Association to better serve the needs of their constituents and their organization.

The partnership began in 2005 with initial staff training on the basics of brain injury and then slowly evolved into a partnership, with Association staff at One Stop's facility every other Monday to answer questions from staff and meet with participants. This visibility at One Stop has led to an average of one to two individuals seeking support from the Association each week!

For Cynthia Fernandez,

outreach coordinator at One Stop Family Support Center, the partnership is a no-brainer, "The relationship has assisted both organizations involved in establishing a level of trust that is sometimes lacking in our communities. The service that our clients receive due to the relationship is immediate and personal."

Today, more than half of the Multicultural Outreach program's referrals come from One Stop! My goal is to develop partnerships like this with organizations of all sizes throughout Minnesota to provide a support network for individuals in our communities of color who are affected by brain injury and the professionals who support them.



Raye Black (Association), Julie Leerssen (Director, One Stop Family Support Center) and Cynthia Fernandez (Outreach Coordinator, One Stop) partner through trainings and one-on-one support to better serve community members.

Photo by Nissa French

Partnerships take time to form into the best relationship possible, but in the end it's worth the work; especially if the partnership helps bridge individuals to a better quality of life. If your organization is interested in forming a partnership with the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota to better support individuals affected by brain injury, please contact Raye Black at 800-669-6442 or rayeb@braininjurymn.org.



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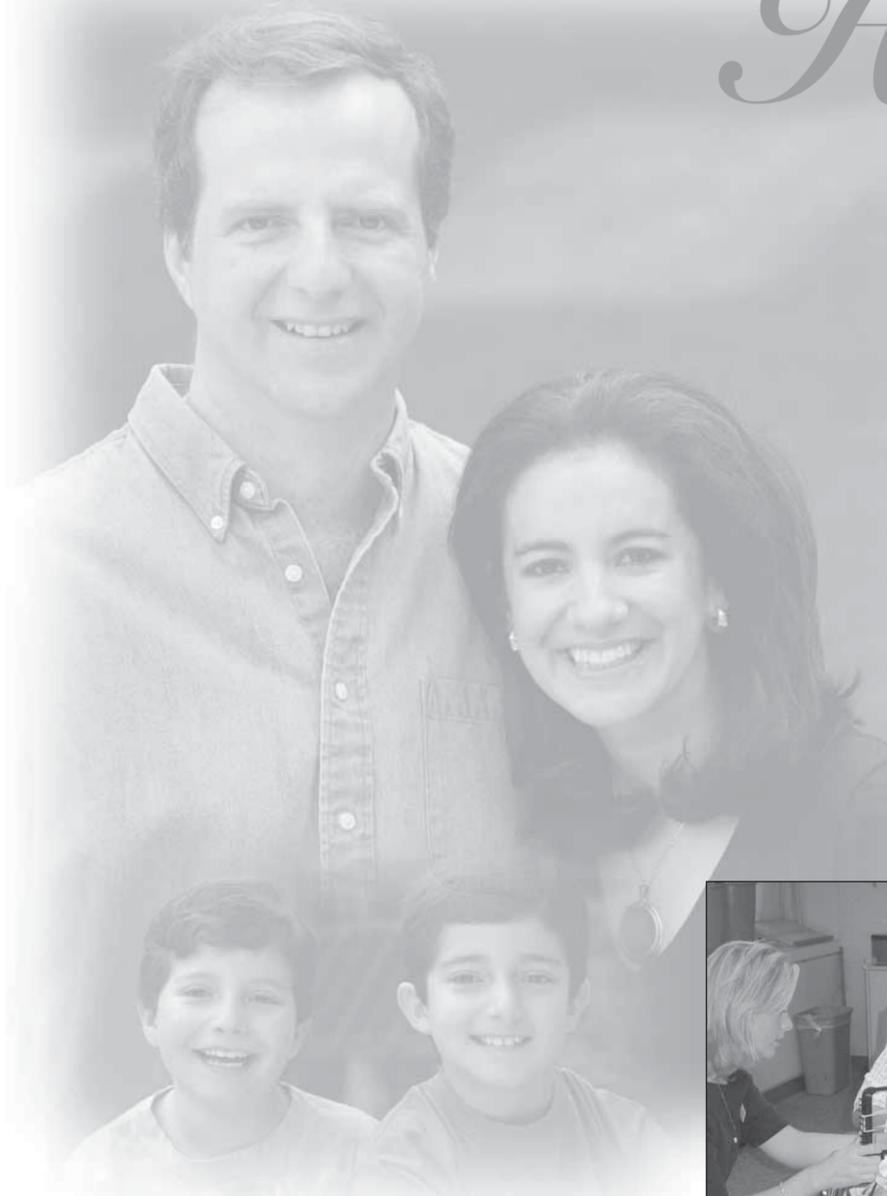
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*National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research



Homelessness, continued from page 1 to 9,300 homeless Minnesotans on any given night in 2006. Of those surveyed, “30% reported having received a blow to the head hard enough to knock them out or make them see stars, followed by problems with headache, concentration or memory, understanding, excessive worry, sleeping or getting along with people (an indication of possible traumatic brain injury).” By comparison, about 2% of the U.S. population has traumatic brain injury (TBI) that requires lifelong assistance.

Why is the rate of possible brain injury so high for the homeless? Almost half of the homeless population reported serious problems with alcohol and drugs, and more than half reported a recent diagnosis or treatment for a serious mental illness. Violence is a daily concern. All these factors make life in shelters and on the streets rife with possibilities for damaging blows to the head. When someone has a brain injury and doesn’t know it, Raye says “it spiders out to nothing else working for [them] and contributes to the cycle of homelessness.”

Effects of brain injury may

include decreased ability to switch attention and inability to resume a sequence if interrupted. “On the surface these are not complex intellectual skills,” says Dr. Ryan, “but they are things the brain is required to filter very, very quickly.” With brain injury, the processing is slower and skills required for even basic entry-level jobs diminish. Many of Minnesota’s homeless, as a result of brain injury, do not have the skills required to hold down a job.

so they can refer people with brain injury to the Association. The Association helps people navigate life after brain injury by providing on-going support and education and by connecting individuals with the most appropriate available resources that can best serve their needs.

With homeless individuals, a top priority is stable housing. Many with brain injury do not have medical records proving their disability. Without documented evidence of disability, they cannot

Ryan for cognitive testing. When test results prove a person has significant cognitive impairments that are hampering their ability to get and hold down a job, Dr. Ryan coordinates the social security application process with outreach workers. Even a small social security benefit of \$203 per month may qualify someone for housing.

An Outreach Success Story

Eric grew up on the west side of Chicago, belonged to gangs, and began selling drugs when he was thirteen. His mother died from violence on his sixteenth birthday. “I’m twenty-seven years old,” Eric says. “I feel like I’m one hundred.”

On July 4, 2006, Eric was hit on the head with a bottle and hospitalized for brain injury. One month later, a staffer from Hennepin County African American Men’s Project put Eric in contact with the Association. Eric is now supported by a team of outreach professionals. His brain injury has been documented with cognitive testing, and his social security application is in progress. He is one step closer to his first goal: getting his own apartment. Next, as Eric receives vocational

Homelessness continues on page 16

The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota’s Multicultural Outreach program reaches out to communities of color, where, incidentally, a high incidence rate of both homelessness and brain injury exists.

How the Association Helps

The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota’s Multicultural Outreach program reaches out to communities of color, where, incidentally, a high incidence rate of both homelessness and brain injury exists. Funded by the Medtronic Foundation, this program educates service providers at homeless shelters, family violence shelters, and day drop centers, teaching providers to recognize signs of brain injury

qualify for social security benefits. Without any income, they are not eligible for subsidized housing. The cycle of homelessness continues.

“There is a common misconception that it would cost too much to house all the individuals experiencing homelessness,” Dr. Ryan says, “but it’s actually costing a lot more to not house these people.” To help stop the cycle, the Association refers people with brain injury to clinical psychologists like Dr.



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The Importance of Citizen Advocacy

By Kitty Merrill, 2006 Minnesota Advocacy Graduate

Dawn, my sister, was only 14 years old when she passed out during a family dinner. We later learned that she had a ruptured cerebral aneurysm. The only way to reduce the pressure on her brain was to partially tie off her carotid artery, which caused further injury. Back in January 1961 when this happened, there weren't services or understanding of brain injury. It was a traumatic time for her and our family.

Nevertheless, Dawn struggled to "fit in" with her peers and to keep up with her school work. When Dawn was 16 years old, she was placed in St. Peter State Hospital because she threatened our mother with a knife. Dawn did manage, however, to find love and was married in 1968 to a man she met while in Anoka Regional Treatment Center.

Life remained difficult for Dawn and she was in and out of state hospitals over 100 times until 1995. That was the year I became her legal guardian and I stepped in when Dawn locked herself in her apartment. She was delusional, would not eat, and her husband had left her because they were about to be evicted from their apartment. After this episode, she went to Willmar Regional Treatment Center and was later released into managed care.

We are still working to make life better for Dawn. She has been able to quit smoking and is managing her diabetes. Her dream is to move back to live with her husband, who visits her faithfully twice a week.

I decided to apply for the 2006 Minnesota Advocacy class because I wanted to meet others who had similar experiences and wanted to learn more about how I could improve my sister's life, as well as the lives of other people with brain injury. While I found all the classes informative, my favorite was the last session at the State Capitol.

In this session we worked as a small group to prepare a bill and then presented our bill in a mock committee hearing. Senator Scott Dibble (Minneapolis) chaired the committee and gave us a lot of helpful "insider" tips. There's nothing like actually experiencing something as close as possible to the real thing. It helps you get organized and boosts your confidence.

My future plans are to connect with other legal guardians with the goal of sharing experiences and determining ways we can work together to improve the lives of our loved ones with brain injury. I would love to hear from other legal guardians and can be contacted via e-mail at kitty@integraonline.com or by phone at 952-447-5676.



Senator Scott Dibble (Minneapolis) chairs the mock committee along with committee members Pat Winick (2005 Minnesota Advocacy Graduate), Tim Rundall (2005 Minnesota Advocacy Graduate), Jeff Nachbar (Association), and Todd Kimlinger (2005 Minnesota Advocacy Graduate).

Photo by Jeff Nachbar



Recent MAP Class graduates from left to right: Julia Washenberger, Adauto Mourao, Vicki McKinney, Brigid Alseth, Kitty Merrill, Patty Green, and Dana Magnusson.

Photo by Jeff Nachbar

The Association Introduces a New Web site!

For better accessibility to information about brain injury and support services, the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota has launched a new Web site. Hosted at the same Web domain, www.braininjurymn.org, the redesigned Web site provides tailored information to its diverse visitors, including individuals and loved ones affected by brain injury, professionals, advocates, sponsors, members, volunteers and more. In addition to the updated look and content, the new Web site also features:

- Keyword search capability
- Opportunity to e-mail information to others directly from the site.
- Ability to easily increase or decrease text size using the toggle buttons on every page
- Dedicated Web pages providing information in Spanish, Somali and Hmong

Visit the new Web site today at www.braininjurymn.org to explore the new capabilities. The Web site will be updated frequently with fresh content and new features, so be sure to visit often!

We are currently taking applications for the 2007 Class

The Minnesota Advocacy Project

A Leadership Training Program for Persons Affected by Brain Injury

Paving the way to a better future for persons with brain injury in Minnesota through

- * Education *
- * Activism *
- * Dedication *
- * Inclusion *
- * Empowerment *

The Minnesota Advocacy Project is a joint venture of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota and the Mayo TBI Model Systems to provide advocacy training for persons with brain injury and their family members. This one-year, comprehensive program involves four Saturday workshops as well as field assignments designed to teach advocates how to navigate public policy and advocacy specific to brain injury. Advocates will gain the necessary skills to maximize personal access to quality services, increase public awareness of brain injury issues and solutions, and affect change within their community and state. There is no participation fee.

We invite you to put your passion and dedication into action and become a change-agent and community leader.

For more information or for application materials, please contact Kim Kang at 612-378-2742 or 800-669-6442 or kimk@braininjurymn.org. Visit our Web site at www.braininjurymn.org/map.html to download an application.

Join a Community of People who Make a Difference

By Andie Maier

A brain injury can happen to anyone, anywhere, anytime. Every 23 seconds, one person in the United States sustains a brain injury. Every brain injury is unique and can cause a wide range of functional challenges with thinking, sensation, language, emotions and/or physical abilities.

When brain injury hits, it can be difficult to know how to cross the chasm of life before to life after. The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota is the only statewide nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the quality of life and bringing the promise of a better tomorrow for all people affected by brain injury. If your personal mission aligns with our mission, please join us by sending in the membership cutout and your payment today. It can cost as little as \$5.00.

By becoming a member of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, you are providing help, hope and a voice. Your membership will provide the thousands of Minnesotans affected by brain injury the support they need, the hope for a better quality of life and the voice to be heard. You

will also be a part of a community dedicated to providing support to individuals with brain injury and their families, advocating for brain injury support services and education about the only cure for a brain injury-prevention.

Not only will your membership make a difference for thousands of Minnesotans, it will also provide you with discounts to Association events, an opportunity to vote

for the Board of Directors, and inclusion in a community that's making a difference.

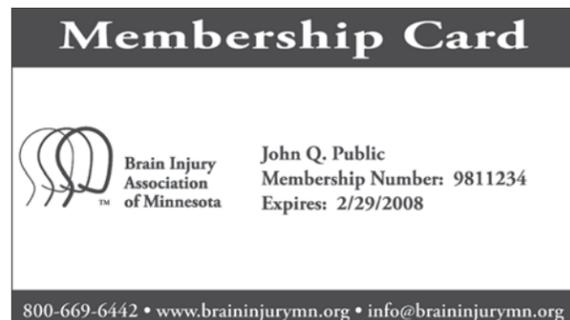
Through your donation, the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota will be able to continue its work to provide Minnesotans with the tools they need to live fulfilling lives after brain injury. Help strengthen the voice of the brain injury community and become a member today.

Already a Member?

Membership in the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota is renewed every year. If you have not paid your dues in the last 12 months, your membership has expired. To find out if your membership is current, call the Association at 612-378-2742 or 800-669-6442 and ask.

Membership Card

The Association has introduced a new membership card! Send in the attached cut out with your membership payment to get your new card today.



Yes! I want to become a member of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota and show my support for the thousands of Minnesotans affected by brain injury.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 E-mail: _____

Membership Type:

- Individual (\$35)
- Limited Income (\$5-15, amount is your choice)
- Household (\$100, 2 adults and all children under 18 in the same household)
- Professionals (\$50)
- Corporations (\$500)
- Lifetime (\$1,000)

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Education Corner

Education Needs? Look No Further!



By Janis Carey Wack

We have many educational offerings for individuals affected by

brain injury and the professionals who support them

Annual Conference for Professionals

If you're a professional supporting individuals with brain injury, plan on attending the 22nd Annual Conference for Professionals in Brain Injury "Creating Collaborative Models" on April 19 and 20, 2007 at the St. Cloud Civic Center. Held in scenic St. Cloud, this conference will be different than the Annual Conferences of the past as it is two full days devoted to professional development.

Serving a wider variety of professionals and now offering credits for CME, this conference will benefit all who attend. Thirty-six breakout sessions are planned on a wide variety of topics specific to the field of brain injury. Check out our Web site at www.braininjurymn.org to find out all the details and to see the lineup of wonderful sessions and speakers.

We are especially excited by our two keynote speakers who have innovative and interesting topics to present. Drawing from his 40-plus years of experience, Yehuda Ben-Yishay, Ph.D., Director of the Brain Injury Day Treatment Program of Rehabilitation at the

New York University Medical Center, is presenting on a holistic approach to neuropsychological rehabilitation. Marty McMorro, M.S., a respected practitioner in the field of behavior intervention and originator of the PEARL Interactive Model, is presenting on the delivery of human services and how to evaluate treatment options for people needing services regarding behavioral issues after TBI.

Call for Volunteers

The Education program is looking for volunteers who would be interested in teaching our Brain Injury Basics courses in the Metro Area and greater Minnesota. People who enjoy presenting before small groups, who have an interest in or experience with brain injury and are comfortable using PowerPoint would use the established curriculum to educate consumers, family and friends and professionals. If you have interest in this valuable role please contact Janis at the Association at janiscw@braininjurymn.org or 800-669-6442.

New Support Groups

Support Groups are valuable tools in our arsenal of learning to adjust to life with a brain injury and in developing productive coping skills. Two new groups have formed in greater Minnesota: A Family & Friends of Persons Living with TBI, Stroke or Parkinson's group now meets the last Thursday of each month from 4-5:30 p.m. at the Polinsky Medical Rehabilitation Center in

the first floor conference room (530 E Second St, Duluth MN). The new West Central Minnesota Brain Injury Support Group for persons with brain injury and their caregivers, family and friends meets the last Monday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. They meet at West Central Industries, 1300 22nd St SW, Willmar, MN. Call 800-669-6442 for more information on support groups.

On-Site Trainings

Education has been busy providing training to various groups in the community, including: Long-Term Care," "Brain Injury Basics for Professionals," and "Aging and Brain Injury" for residential providers; "Brain Injury Basics: Students with Brain Injury" for educators; and "Supported Employment and Brain Injury" presentations to correctional staff and vocational services providers. The Education program will travel to your location and provide tailored training to meet your needs. Give Janis a call at 800-669-6442 and schedule today! Maximize your staff development dollars by having the training come to you.

Presentations have also been provided in the community on "Shaken Baby Syndrome/iTBI," which was hosted by the Willmar area Community Committee on Brain Injury and through the education department of the Hutchinson Area Medical Center on "Mild Brain Injury: Concussions." Community-based presentations are also provided through the Education program

and are a wonderful way to build awareness in a community about brain injury. We are also looking for hosts for such community-based presentations especially in out state Minnesota. The next scheduled community-based presentation of "Brain Injury Basics: An Introduction" will be in Duluth at the SMDC Auditorium on April 9, from 6-8:30 p.m. You can register by calling the Association office at 800-669-6442.

Consumer/Family Conferences Across the State

The Consumer/Family Conferences planned for 2007 are gaining momentum. To-date the plans are:

- Mankato conference to be on Friday, June 8 at the Holiday Inn in downtown Mankato
- Brainerd area conference will be on Saturday, September 15 at the Central Lakes College in Brainerd
- Buffalo area conference is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 13. With the location to be decided.

These conferences will offer a full day consisting of a keynote speaker and breakout sessions. Lunch will be included in the registration fee of \$35 (Association member) or \$40 (nonmember). An opportunity for networking with others in the community who share the experience of life with a brain injury will wrap-up each day. Look for more information about these one day conferences on our Web site and in your mailboxes as registration materials are sent out.

Education Calendar

Save the Date – Upcoming Education Opportunities! Registration is required for all education opportunities.

Call 612-378-2742 or 800-669-6442, or visit our Web site at www.braininjurymn.org to register or for more information.

Wednesday Workshops

May 23 – Compensatory Strategies: Why, What and When, presented by Sue Newman, occupational therapist, will discuss the benefits from learning various compensatory strategies to assist with activities of daily living. Professionals can support people with brain injury by understanding existing compensatory strategies and how to develop new strategies as the need arises

June 27 – Explore the Human Brain, presented by Carrie MacNabb, will lead a hands-on

workshop where participants will have the opportunity to see and handle actual slices of brain tissue and learn what is meant when the term "thick jello" is used to describe the consistency of the brain. Participants will also learn more about the functions of the different parts of the brain and how brain injury affects the actual tissue of the brain.

Brain Injury Basics

Admission for Brain Injury Basics classes is free for persons with brain injury and their family members. The fee for professionals is \$20.

Brain Injury Basics I: An Introduction

An introductory class that defines what a brain injury is and what side effects are related to brain injury. The class also teaches various skills such as how to relate to persons with brain injury and compensation strategies. This class will be offered on June 19 at the Association's office in Minneapolis from 6-8:30 p.m.

Brain Injury Basics II: Adjustment to Disability

This class addresses the various adjustments and life changes that

individuals face after a brain injury. The major stages of adjustment along with the emotional aspects of change and the difficulties that go along with those will be discussed. Class will be held on May 15 at the Association's office in Minneapolis from 6-8:30 p.m.





Volunteer Corner

The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota is the only nonprofit organization in the state dedicated solely to serving the needs of the 100,000 Minnesotans who live with a disability due to brain injury. Our mission is enhance the quality of life and bring the promise of a better tomorrow for all people affected by brain injury. In order to fulfill its mission, the Association relies on a great group of volunteers who work in a variety of roles, from translators to receptionists, public speakers to data entry. Volunteers contributed **more than 9,200 hours in 2006!**

The following people have warmly contributed their time and talent to support persons with brain injury and their families in 2006. For their continued support, the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota sincerely thanks ALL of them: *Our sincerest apologies to anyone whose name we inadvertently omitted.*

| | | | | | |
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| Fong Chang | Mallory Hall | Bud Lord | Michelle Ottan | Dan Stores | Mohsin Zafar |
| Joel Christian | Jesse Harriss | Laree Lothar | Jessica Patton | Mike Strand | |

Volunteer Honored with "Be the Change" Award

One of the Association's many dedicated and involved volunteers, Mike Strand, was recognized for his contributions by Hands On Twin Cities at the Volunteer Expo on February 10. Mike was awarded the "Be the Change" award in the "Health Places" category, which honors one volunteer each year who has shown exemplary service and commitment to bettering the health for others, and \$250 was donated to the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota in his name.

Having sustained a brain injury in 1989, Mike knows first hand the struggles of living with a brain injury and is highly dedicated to helping people cope with life after a brain injury. Mike is known by the Association as a volunteer of all trades; ready to step forward when needed. In 2006, he helped the Association live out its mission to improve the quality of life and bring the promise of a better tomorrow for all people affected by brain injury by volunteering to author a column in the Association's newsletter, being a Mentor, fundraising, representing the Association at events, lending a hand with administrative duties, chairing the Association's Board of Director's Governance Committee and more.

Volunteers bring a wonderful dynamic to the Association, offering new perspectives, strengths, and skills; we thank Mike and the many dedicated volunteers like him who help us support the Minnesotans affected by brain injury.



Awareness Month Sets the Stage for Year-Long Awareness Campaign

By Nissa French

Every 23 seconds, someone in the United States will sustain a traumatic brain injury. To raise awareness about the silent health epidemic of brain injury and to support the estimated 100,000 Minnesotans living with a disability as a result of brain injury, Governor Tim Pawlenty proclaimed March 2007 as "Brain Injury Awareness Month" in Minnesota.

In conjunction with this proclamation, the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota participated in many activities to raise awareness and build a supportive community for the thousands of Minnesotans affected by brain injury. Many of the activities transpired in March from the beginnings of long-term efforts, while some activities are in the works to offer great awareness-building opportunities during the months to come.

March kicked-off a year-long radio and Web site advertising campaign through Clear Channel radio, which included advertisements on KTLK radio. Radio personality, Dan Conry, supported our efforts to raise awareness about brain injury by

encouraging listeners of his morning show to visit the Association's Web site and providing an advertisement and link to the Association from his Web page. Once at the Web site, individuals could take a brain injury quiz for a chance to win one of 20 \$50 gift certificates from sponsor, Chili's Restaurant.

The basis of the advertisement campaign is featured at right, which illustrates that brain injury can cause lasting effects. The campaign will be used for the rest of the 2007 on KOOL 108 and KFAN. If you know of an organizational newsletter, Web site or bulletin board that would feature the advertisement as a Public Service Announcement at no cost, please contact the Association's public awareness director at 800-669-6442.

The Association was also featured in numerous media stories, highlighted on page 4 in the "News Briefs" section, and will be part of media coverage across the state throughout the year. Stay tuned to the Association's E-Newsletter for updates! If you'd like to subscribe to the E-Newsletter, send an e-mail with the subject line "Subscribe" to enews@braininjurymn.org.

Ever used an egg to get to work?



For more information about how to prevent brain injury, visit www.braininjurymn.org.

Of course not!
But one unintentional fall, injury or accident could leave you struggling to make simple, everyday decisions like this.

Brain injury could happen to you.

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(612) 873-3284

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accreditation for:
Brain Injury Inpatient Rehabilitation Programs - Adults and Adolescents

– www.hcmc.org –

Brain Injury Supports, continued from page 1
Independence for Individuals with Brain Injury

Brain injury can cause a myriad of behavioral struggles, depending on the area affected and severity of the injury. Behavioral challenges can include inappropriate sexual, verbal and physical acts, manipulative behavior, property destruction, impulsivity, difficulty problem solving and legal altercations.

Most Waivers, including the CADI Waiver, grant individuals funding based on physical abilities, such as mobility and independent living skills. Anne Harnack, associate director of services at the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota, explains that “many of the people we work with are physically fine. It’s the challenges with behavior that are inhibiting their ability to maintain stability and independence. They need the funding from the TBI Waiver to help them identify supports and achieve their goals.”

For example, the TBI Waiver provides necessary funding for individuals, which isn’t available under other Waivers, to spend time in neurobehavioral facilities after the injury. Once in the community,

the TBI Waiver provides the behavioral supports needed for individuals, which can include a professional behavior management plan, one-on-one staffing, or a structured day program with a behavior management component.

“The goal of the TBI Waiver is to give individuals with brain injury as independent living situation as possible,” explains Anne. “Behaviors can affect an individual’s ability to live independently in the community.

Some of the most demanding needs for supporting an individual with a brain injury are those that are “invisible” to most; the cognitive and behavioral challenges.

Without the Waiver, many individuals with brain injury would be restricted to a nursing home, when in fact they can thrive in the community with the right supports.”

Accessing Services through Case Management

The Case Management program at the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota assists individuals with a brain injury diagnosis who are also on a TBI or CADI Waiver by connecting them to the resources provided by

the Waiver they are on. The Case Management program is designed to facilitate access to services, such as day programs and independent living skills. Of the more than 250 individuals in the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota’s Case Management program who receive funds from Waivers, 64 percent of them receive funds from the TBI Waiver.

The role of Case Management, explains Anne, is to provide individualized services for each

person. “For each individual on the TBI Waiver, a case manager sets up services and ensures that health and safety needs are being met. Additionally, the case manager will address any issues that may arise, monitor each individual for changes in health and safety, and add or remove services where appropriate. At the time a service agreement is ending, the case manager will perform a reassessment to ensure that each individual is receiving the appropriate services to meet their individualized goals.”

Minnesota Leads the Way

The TBI Waiver represents important progress for providing supports to persons with disabilities in Minnesota, as it demonstrates that Minnesota has made a commitment to understanding the complex nature of brain injury and advocating for effective supports for individuals affected by brain injury. According to the Minnesota Department of Human Services, there are approximately 1,009 Minnesotans receiving support funds through the TBI NF Waiver, and 373 Minnesotans receiving support funds through the TBI NB Waiver. As one of the 25 states that implement the Waiver, Minnesota is a leader in this field.

The major portion of the TBI Waiver is renewed until 2011, and Anderson does not believe that it will be at risk for not being renewed again at that point. With 150 new allocations per year, the TBI Waiver will continue to give Minnesotans with brain injury the best resources to obtain their level of independence.

R e i n v e n t i n g L i v e s

A concussion can leave you feeling out of

focus.

At Bethesda Hospital’s Concussion Clinic we can help.

A blow or jolt to the head can cause a type of mild brain injury called a concussion. Concussions can occur from a sports injury, car accident, fall, collision or any blow to the head.

If you are experiencing irritability, headaches, depression, insomnia, poor concentration, getting lost or becoming easily confused, or a loss of sense of taste or smell you could be suffering from effects of a concussion.

At the Bethesda Concussion Clinic you’ll be seen by our specialized physicians, neuropsychologists and therapists who will create an individual treatment plan for you. If you want help putting your life back in focus call us at **651-326-4323** or visit **www.bethesdahospital.org/concussion**.

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Legislative Corner

Keeping up to date with public policy

Action Heating Up at the Capitol

By Jeff Nachbar



As the 2007 legislative session reaches its halfway point, the Brain Injury Association

of Minnesota's key priorities are starting to see some action. Legislators are now getting down to the hard work of sorting through policy and spending ideas, casting their votes on different bills and shaping the framework for the state's budget. March and April are the most important months for citizens to make sure their voices are heard because the decisions made now will impact services for Minnesotans with brain injury for the next two years, at least.

So what can you do?

Become a member of the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota – Our political power at the Capitol, hence our ability to get things done, is directly related to the number of people who are active in our Association. The more members we have, the more political clout we hold. By becoming a member you are sending a message that you agree with thousands of other Minnesotans who share our policy priorities, and that you plan to hold your elected officials accountable. Call us at 800-669-6442 to become a member or fill out and return the slip on page 8 of this newsletter issue.

newsletter, on our Web site and in our e-mails.

Participate in the political process – There are many ways for you to participate. Attend forums, rallies and other events at the Capitol and in your community. Pick up the phone and call your elected officials, write a letter, send an e-mail or make an appointment to visit them in person. It's vital that each of us contact our own elected representatives and let them know how we feel about these issues. Then we need to ask them to support our legislative priorities. Let us know if you need help.

Become a Citizen Advocate – Citizen Advocates are our most involved members. These are people who want to do all they can to ensure our legislative priorities get passed into law. Each person decides what is most important to them and what they are willing to do to help out. We provide the information and training to help Citizen Advocates succeed. To become a Citizen Advocate or to sign up for our informational alerts, please visit www.capwiz.com/braininjurymn and click on "sign up here".

The bottom line is that nobody can do this important political work alone. We all need each other to contribute our unique skills and perspectives in order to be successful at creating long lasting solutions to the complex problem associated with brain injury. I'll

2007 Legislative Update

The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota has set three top legislative priorities for the 2007 session. Below is a status report on each of these issues that is current as of early March 2007.

1. Medicaid Income and Asset Standards (HF784 / SF695) -- This bill will increase income and asset standards for the Medical Assistance (MA) program, allowing people to keep more of their income and savings and still qualify for MA to pay their health care bills. Hearings have been held in the House and Senate. It is not included in the current Senate Omnibus Health Bill, but is still under consideration in the House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division. Right now it's looking like a long-shot because of so many competing priorities and limited resources.
2. Primary and Universal Seatbelt (HF106 / SF16) – This bill will toughen Minnesota's seatbelt law by applying it to every seat, every body, every time. It will also change the seatbelt law from secondary to primary, which will allow law enforcement officers to pull someone over for a violation. The bill was heard early on in the Senate Transportation and Judiciary Committees and is currently sitting in the Senate Finance Committee. In the House the bill passed the Transportation Finance Division and is currently sitting in the Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee.
3. Funding for Special Education. (HF1084 / SF652) – This bill increases funding for special education by removing the cap on the growth factor that was put in place in 2003. It's time to pay back the money that was borrowed from education to balance the state budget in 2003 and 2005. The bill has been heard by the Senate E-12 Education Budget Division and by the House K-12 Finance Division. We are optimistic that we'll get something this session but the needs are very high and funding is scarce.

There is still a long way to go for each of these bills and things can change fast so please call Jeff Nachbar or Kim Kang at 800-669-6442 if you have any questions and be sure to let your legislators know that you want them to support these priorities.

March and April are the most important months for citizens to make sure their voices are heard because the decisions made now will impact services for Minnesotans with brain injury for the next two years, at least.

Keep informed on issues that affect people with brain injury – An informed citizenry is best equipped to create the needed political change to improve supports and services for people with brain injury. You don't need to be a political expert or "policy wonk" to be effective, you just need to be aware of what is happening and become an expert on your own life and how the policies under consideration will impact you, your family members and loved ones. Read the legislative updates in our

do my best to keep you informed on the issues, let you know about opportunities to participate and teach you about the process.

I need your real life stories and willingness to share them in order to do my job effectively at the Capitol. It is the stories about the day-to-day lives that each of you lead that give us our political power and it is these stories that have the biggest impact on these policy debates. I look forward to working with all of you over these next critical months as we shape Minnesota's future.

Visit our Advocacy Action Center today at www.braininjurymn.org/advocacy.html

to take action on:

- Increasing the Medical Assistance Income and Asset Standards
- Toughening Minnesota's seatbelt law
- Incoming Funding for Special Education



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Member Spotlight

By Emily Doughty

The Brain Injury Association of Minnesota would like to recognize Billie Kindt for her outstanding and continuous support and membership. Billie describes her life in Jasper, Minnesota up until 1987 as “typical of small town, rural living.” In August of 1987, Billie’s life and the lives of her family were changed forever when her son Keith sustained a brain injury.

Head of cardiopulmonary at Center Plains Clinic in Sioux Falls South Dakota, Keith was at a church-league baseball game when he was struck in the head with a flyaway bat. “Keith’s wife and his two sons had just left the field; Keith had wanted his wife to take the boys home,” Billie remembers. “The last thing he had said was ‘Go ahead and I’ll be home soon,

the game is almost over.’” When his family entered their home, the phone was ringing with the news about Keith’s accident. The injury left Keith in a coma for four and a half months, with a steep climb ahead when he awoke.

One of the struggles Billie faced was the lack of resources available in her small town of 750 people. Billie is sadly surprised at the public’s widespread lack of knowledge about brain injury, and has taken an aggressive approach to change it. “I do everything I can to gain knowledge and share it!”

Education is not a passive activity for Billie. The ways in which she shares information with others spans from mailings to speaking engagements, videos to personal conversation. Billie has strongly advocated over the years for increased training requirements for direct care staff, which she

did her best to provide in Keith’s case. “Every time I gained any piece of information, I shared it with Keith’s caregivers.”

Though Billie and her family were exasperated by the initial lack of resources, she found support from the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota. “Someone told me about them in the hospital, so I just called them up,” recalls Billie. “They were able to provide information to us and helped me locate the services we needed.”

Billie is a long-time member



Membership gives Billie, pictured at left with her son Keith, a network of resources regarding brain injury, which she quickly shares with everyone around her.

Photo provided by Billie Kindt

of the Association and a dedicated advocate for helping people who sustain brain injury reach their highest level of independence. “I love to help people help the people they love.” Keith presently lives in an apartment near Billie in their hometown of Jasper, where Billie continues her mission to educate the world about brain injury.



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For more than 35 years, the law firm of Schwebel, Goetz & Sieben has represented the victims of traumatic brain injury and their families.

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Homelessness, continued from page 6 assistance and learns new ways to overcome his brain injury and learning disabilities, he hopes to earn his GED and get a job.

Eric has lived in homeless shelters and at present lives with family members in Minneapolis. To improve the stability of his current living arrangement, Raye has educated Eric's family

and the outreach support he receives, he is no longer involved with gangs or selling drugs.

"I deal with the most exceptional people," Eric says. What would he be doing without this support? "Probably selling drugs. They stopped me from doing a lot of things," Eric says, referring to Raye and other supporters.

To provide meaningful assistance for a large percentage of people in the homeless community, society and outreach service providers must acknowledge and address a significant contributor to the cycle of homelessness: brain injury.

Eric is one encouraging example that outreach, brain injury education and on-going support can make a difference. "It's been a breakthrough for me," Eric says. "It's always good to have help."

Interested in learning more about brain injury and homelessness? Visit the following Web sites:

- www.wilder.org
- www.mnfa.state.mn.us

To provide meaningful assistance for a large percentage of people in the homeless community, society and outreach service providers must acknowledge and address a significant contributor to the cycle of homelessness: brain injury.

to help them understand that his impulsiveness, emotional outbursts, and short-term memory issues are effects from his brain injury. Life is hard for Eric, but with his persistence, his conviction that "number one is the Almighty,"

Looking Ahead

Statistics on homelessness are depressing, but the high occurrence of brain injury in this population provides valuable insight into reasons why some people who are homeless can't simply "get a job."



Certified, on-site Shaken Baby Syndrome/inflicted Traumatic Brain Injury training is available!

Contact the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota at 612-378-2742, 800-669-6442 or visit www.braininjurymn.org.



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