



UNITED STATES  
**Brain Injury  
Alliance**

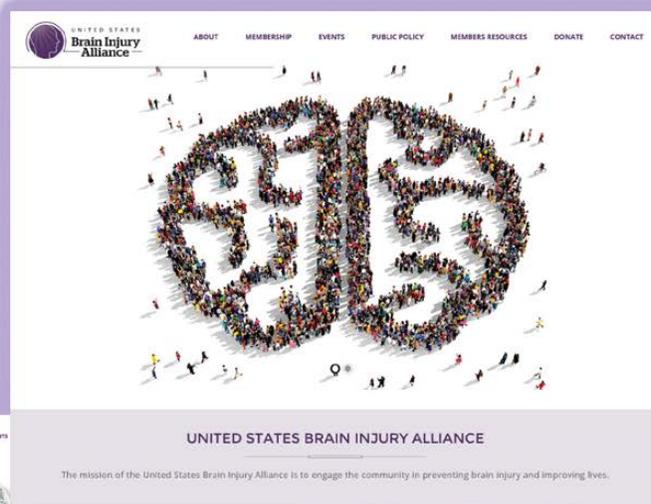
USBIA Administrative Office  
PO Box 1804  
Alexandria, VA 22313  
info@usbia.org  
usbia.org  
703-960-6500

USBIA NEWS Vol. 3 Issue 2

## USBIA Launches New Website!

USBIA is pleased to announce the launch of our new, redeveloped website! The new site is designed to be a go-to resource for members of the Alliance seeking sample documents and other resources to help them meet the needs of the brain injury community in their state.

The site is bright and fresh, but more importantly contains over 150 documents in the member resource library that can be downloaded and modified as needed. The new site also serves as a conduit for brain injury news, public policy updates and USBIA's annual brain injury awareness materials. Check it out and let us know what you think!



[www.usbia.org](http://www.usbia.org)

## USBIA Welcomes Nebraska to the Alliance!



The leadership of USBIA is thrilled to welcome the State of Nebraska as the newest member of the Alliance! The Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE) is devoted to creating a better future for all Nebraskans through brain injury prevention, education, support, and advocacy. BIA-NE was established in 2008 when the Nebraska Traumatic Brain Injury Council, a state advisory board, helped form the volunteer-supported Brain Injury Group of Nebraska, which was then incorporated with the State of Nebraska. In 2009, the group was reorganized and re-energized as a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation. This year the organization has entered a new and exciting chapter, and is now officially known as the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska! For more information on BIA-NE, please visit their website: [www.biane.org](http://www.biane.org).

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## Membership and Development Committee Update

The Membership and Development Committee continues to focus on our priorities identified in the USBIA strategic plan. Our work with Harmony Design to update the USBIA website is complete and we are very pleased with the finished product! We are also pleased to announce that Nebraska has joined the United States Brain Injury Alliance and know that they will make a great addition to our organization. We are in the process of completing our new membership agreements and hope to have that wrapped up in the next month. Glenn Lanham, the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Utah, is the newest member of the Membership and Development Committee and brings a wealth of experience with him.

## Finance and Audit Committee Update

The finances of the USBIA have been successfully transferred from the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance (our temporary fiscal agent) to our management group, MCC, in Alexandria, Virginia. With that task completed, the Finance and Audit Committee has been busy at work establishing our fiscal policies, procedures and practices. One of the new line items in the 2016 budget is for scholarships. Our hope is to provide some financial assistance and incentives for member state executives to attend the NASHIA conference in Columbus, Ohio in September. Stay tuned for more information!

## Public Policy Committee Update

Since last reporting in January 2016, the PPC advocated passage of the following House Resolutions:

- House Resolution No. 667: Expressing support for designation of September as “National Brain Aneurysm Awareness Month”.
- House Resolution No. 679: Expressing support for designation of May 2016 as “National Brain Tumor Awareness Month”.

The PPC also advocated passage of Youth Sports Concussion Act (House Resolution No. 4460 and Senate Bill No. 2508) by having the United States Brain Injury Alliance sign-on to two letters; both of which advocated passage of these bills. One letter was addressed the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Congressman Fred Upton and Congressman Frank Pallone respectively. Another letter was sent to Senator John Thune and Senator Bill Nelson, Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation respectively. Both bills make it unlawful to sell or offer for sale in interstate commerce, or import into the United States for such purposes, athletic sporting equipment for which the seller or importer makes any deceptive claim with respect to the safety benefits of such an item. The Youth Sports Concussion Act is an important piece of legislation because it will protect our nation’s youth who participate in sports related activities from concussions and other injuries by discouraging false advertising claims regarding protective equipment used in competitive sports.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee voted favorably on Senate Bill No. 2508 on April 27, 2016. House Resolution No. 4660 is pending action by the Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Further, members of the PPC represented the United States Brain Injury Alliance at the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force’s awareness day at the Capitol on March 16, 2016.

The PPC is also a collaborative effort with affiliates. It hopes you will provide input as to what subjects you would like to learn about via a webinar; compile self- and systems-advocacy documents, information, and resources that can be stationed in one central location for the benefit of all USBIA affiliates and those they serve; and, offer your respective alliance’s views on legislation and issues that are National in scope.

Connecting with members of Congress is an integral part of the PPC’s work. Again, this is a collaborative effort with affiliates. To that end, please contact Gavin Attwood and/or Tom Grady (co-chairs of the PPC) with any relationships you plus your respective organization’s board, staff, and associates may have with members of Congress. PPC and the USBIA seek to build relationships with those members of Congress who may champion disability issues and brain injury issues in particular.

Please contact Gavin and/or Tom with any questions, suggestions etc., or if interested in serving on the PPC, have any ideas for a webinar plus have any ideas for legislation to create, support, or oppose. Contact information is, respectively, [gavin@biacolorado.org](mailto:gavin@biacolorado.org) or 303.355.9969; [tgrady@bianj.org](mailto:tgrady@bianj.org) or 732.745.0200.

## News from the States

### The Brain injury Alliance of Arizona



We completed our May Survivor and Caregiver Conference featuring TBI survivor and Jamaican model Kay

Stephens and author of *A Warrior's Faith*, Robert Vera.

We've formed a six person Survivor Advisory Council. And launched an e-Zine highlighting brain injury survivors called *The Noggin*. BIAAZ kicked off Brain Injury Awareness month with a purple ribbon cutting with the Phoenix mayor, Miss Arizona and the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce on March 1st.

### Brain injury Alliance of Connecticut



The Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut is getting ready for two of their annual social events:

BIAC Golf for Thought, June 17th, 2016 and BIAC Project Genesis Fun in the Sun Picnic, June 23, 2016. Both of these events bring survivors, families, caregivers, staff and volunteers together for great fun and opportunities to see old friends, make new friends and offer support to a great cause.

### Brain injury Alliance of Idaho



BIAID had a successful experience during a silent art auction fundraiser in March and raised over \$5,000 and

involved several hundred people from the community to help educate Idaho about the BIAID. Caffee Carpi, a coffee shop in Boise agreed to help BIAID in the future with fund raising and integrating information from BIAID to the Idaho community. We thank the owners David and Terry Becker. The Beckers will support BIAID

by providing bike helmets for those who cannot afford them. The Beckers will conduct fund-raisers at their coffee shop. The Beckers will continue to help with fund-raising and integrating information from BIAID. They will set-up the BIAID display board and have both BIAID's brochures available.

BIAID is in the process of redesigning its website to look similar to the USBIA's website. BIAID is using the same company as USBIA to re-design its website and make it more accessible to people with BI.

### Brain injury Alliance of Iowa



"God what an outfield," he says. "What a left field." He looks up at me, and I look down at him. "This must be heaven," he says. No. It's Iowa," I reply automatically.

— *W.P. Kinsella, Shoeless Joe*

We are moving from spring to summer in the heartland. Blue-sky days. Afternoon rumbles of thunder reminding us that we have basements for a reason here. Cool evenings. Lightning bugs but no gnats and mosquitoes – yet. It is a time of transitions, of implied bounty, of green and growth.

The Brain Injury Alliance of Iowa, its support groups, volunteers, staff, and board have been sowing seeds of education, awareness, advocacy, and prevention. Here are a few bits 'n pieces from the past few months.

- In May our State legislature concluded their 2015-2016 session. Much of what we hope to report awaits our Governor's signature. On the short list of our legislative accomplishments we can report that our constituents succeeded in getting:
  - \$2 million dollars to reduce the waiting list for Iowa Medicaid

Waiver Services.

- \$150,000 increase for the Iowa Department of Public Health's brain injury program for brain injury resource facilitator services. (total \$1.04 million).
- \$1 million to increase HCBS provider rates by 1%, and \$1 million to increase home health agency rates by 1%.
- \$200,000 for a new contract with the College of Direct Support to provide internet-based training for mental health and disability services providers (including brain injury).
- \$300,000 for the development of children's mental health crisis services, and establishment of "learning labs" to review emerging collaborative efforts that improve the well-being of children with complex needs and their families.
- The launch of the Iowa Concussion Consortium (ICC). This program of BIA-Iowa includes a multi-partner collaboration of medical, education, athletic, and family advocacy organizations across the state to provide more rapid, reliable and consistent information on concussion, its identification and coordinated response among these groups. We are customizing the REAP program for Iowa in this effort.
- Expanded work with Community Corrections Programs in the area of law enforcement Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). Two of our staff travelled to San Antonio, Texas with an Iowa delegation to observe one of the national models for this training. BIA-Iowa has been asked to develop a brain injury model for an Iowa version of CIT. We are also working with community partners to develop alternatives to jail (or prison) and with emergency rooms for individuals with emotional or behavioral challenges

from brain injury, developmental disabilities or mental health conditions.

### The Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance



The Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance has been celebrating the success of its latest campaign “Unmasking Brain Injury in Minnesota.” Inspired by the Brain Injury Association of North Carolina’s public awareness project, “Unmasking Brain Injury in Minnesota” is a community-based project that combines therapy, art and advocacy and promotes awareness about brain injury through mask displays made by people affected by brain injury. Each mask presents an entirely unique perspective on life with brain injury and gives survivors, care givers and professionals a means to educate others on what it is like to live with brain injury.

Since January 1, the Alliance has hosted over 40 mask-making events at hospitals, support groups, businesses, art studios and even in their own offices. On March 12, the Alliance held an Unmasking gallery event at the Earle Brown Heritage Center, with a display of over 300 masks and the premier of the “Unmasking Brain Injury in Minnesota” documentary, a short film created by local filmmaker Jed Schlegelmilch. The Unmasking project will continue through next March, culminating in a final display of the entire year’s masks.

In April of 2016, the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance held its 2016 Conference for Professionals in Brain Injury. Clinical Psychologist Dr. Kim Gorgens delivered the opening keynote on the “Short and Long-term Management of TBI-related Symptoms.” Dr. Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, Ph.D., ABPP, presented on “Resilience: Bouncing Back after Brain Injury.”

The conference hosted a wide array of breakout session topics including: criminal justice and brain injury; college for high

functioning survivors; lessons from the VA; the burden of care following hospitalized TBI; aging with TBI; brain injury and homelessness; concussion and “return to learn”; and an amazing personal story of courage, hope and a miracle with survivor Duke Pieper.

The closing plenaries were by Audrey Nelson: “If I Ran This Place ....Would I Want to Live Here: A Survivor’s Perspective on Residential Care” about the company she founded 20 years ago that provides residential care for individuals with brain injury and “Living Through the Unthinkable Every Day: The Differing Perspective of a Mother and Father,” presented by parents Brandon and Tiffany Verzal, whose vivacious daughter Alexis was the victim of abusive head trauma in day care at the age of 14 months.

Thanks to the continued support of hundreds of brain injury professionals, our Annual Conference continues to be a major source of information and inspiration in the local and national brain injury community.

### The Brain Injury Alliance of Montana



Early spring found the Brain Injury Alliance of Montana continuing to monitor the work of the Montana legislative interim committee. The Education and Local Government Interim Committee reviewed HJR26 “Study of Youth Concussion Protection Laws” and then in April, proceeded to vote (7 to 3) to do nothing. The committee’s failure to amend the current legislation means that almost one-third of Montana’s youth athletes may be in danger of repetitive brain injury by not receiving an initial proper assessment and treatment in the event they sustain a brain injury. A recent study determined one-third of youth athletes play outside of school related athletics.

After having closely followed the actions of the interim committee and the study, the BIAMT was extremely disappointed that the legislative committee didn’t move forward to add verbiage that would protect all of our youth athletes. In a public response the BIAMT wrote an open letter regarding the failure to amend current legislation and sent it to both the legislators and media, and it was picked up by several major news publications throughout the state. Since then, several state senators and representatives have expressed interest in bringing this issue back to the 2017 legislative session.

As you know, March was Brain Injury Awareness Month and it was a busy month for Outreach here in Montana! We received a \$6,000 grant from a TBI fund overseen by the Governor’s Advisory Council on TBI to air public service announcements on broadcast television stations. The ads ran throughout the state in March and the direct result has been a significant increase in calls to the BIAMT for information as well as requests for participation in community events.

We also held our third annual Bowl for Brain Strong Fun(!)Raiser in Missoula. This was our most successful fundraiser yet to date-the monies came from a combination of pre-selling lanes for the bowling event and silent auction items that were donated by local businesses which meant we raised a net total of over \$8,000. We also participated in two helmet giveaways this spring with a new business partner and the events were popular as we gave away 450 helmets! Finally, we were the “nonprofit of the month” at a local supermarket chain with our slogan, “Change Your Mind about Brain Injury” in a “donate change canister” which was on check stands in front of thousands of shoppers all month long, promoting brain injury awareness the whole month of March.

Our upcoming events this summer include four helmet giveaways which will take place throughout the state at the baseball stadiums where our minor league baseball team's play and our annual brain injury conference on September 17th is scheduled to be held in Missoula this year.

### The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey



We held our 10th Annual Gala on March 22nd and raised a substantial amount of funds for our organization. Many of the donations that evening will go towards Camp TREK—a one week camp for brain injury survivors and week-long respite for caregivers. We're grateful for all the hard work our staff, board members, gala committee members, honorees, and corporate partners put in to make this a successful event and raise awareness of brain injury.

BIANJ hosted two seminars entitled, Pediatric Brain Injury: Behavioral Challenges. Attendance was at an all-time high and everyone left with valuable new knowledge and insights regarding pediatric brain injury.

The organization held our 34th Annual Seminar: Achieving Meaningful Outcomes at Monmouth University on May 12, 2016. It was another successful and educational event at our new venue.

BIANJ also held a press event at Monmouth University on May 16, 2016 with multiple community partners, speaking to the importance of 'sharing the road,' and preventing brain injury. Partners include: NJ Division of Highway Traffic Safety, AAA, NJ State Police, Shoreline Harley-Davidson, and more.

Our Walk for Brain Injury Awareness is set for September 24, 2016 at three convenient locations in North, Central, and South New Jersey.

### The Brain Injury Alliance of Utah



The BIAU's 22nd annual "Run, Walk & Roll" 5K was a tremendous success with nearly 600 participants braving a pouring rain and very cold temperatures on May 21. Our participant total more than doubled that of a year ago, and 20 sponsors (with \$10,000 in new and renewed money raised) helped make this important annual event happen. The weather in no way dampened spirits or participation, as many individuals spoke of enjoying the extra challenge of the elements. It was a memorable day!

### The Brain Alliance of Washington



BIAWA has had a great 2016 so far. We held our 6th annual Walk, Run & Roll for Thought on April 3rd at Green Lake Park in Seattle. This was our first year at Green Lake Park in Seattle and we were joined by over 400 participants, volunteers, and community members -- making 2016 our biggest walk ever! It was another great year of accomplishments for survivors and community members alike. Edith Jackson and Eric Allison walked the full 5k route around Green Lake. Team Terry Home led the 1 milers out of the gate and finished with big smiles. Zack Lystedt sped around the 5k loop on his recumbent bike. We want to offer a big thank you to all of our volunteers, sponsors, and community members who make this event possible year after year.

We are gearing up for an eventful year with hosting our bi-annual Medical-Legal Seminar, Brain Injury Art Show, first ever Brain Injury Golf Tournament to benefit our pediatric programs, and the Sea Over Summit Bike Ride from Redmond to Leavenworth - a 145 mile trip! BIAWA is also well into our second quarter of classes with our new Brain Health and Wellness program - offering non-clinical classes to Brain Injury survivors and their caregivers

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### OUR MISSION

The mission of the United States Brain Injury Alliance is to engage the community in preventing brain injuries and improving lives. We will accomplish this through awareness, prevention, advocacy, support, research, and community engagement.



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