The Brain Injury Association 4th Annual Conference featured nationally known speakers. This year’s conference included Keynote presentations by Jean Langlois, ScD, with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC); Tim Elliott, Ph.D., ABPP, with the Department of Psychology with Texas A & M University; and Nathan Zasler, MD, FAAPM&R, FACRM, FADEP, DAAPM, CBIT, with the Concussion Care Centre of Virginia.

Dr. Langlois, Senior Epidemiologist with the CDC, discussed hidden populations affected by brain injury. Research shows that a large percentage of individuals who are homeless, are in prison, or have served in the military have an undiagnosed or misdiagnosed brain injury. Dr. Langlois discussed possible reasons of how this happened. She also offered specific suggestions on how to diagnose brain injury within these populations.

Dr. Tim Elliott energized the crowd with his interactive approach to caring for the family caregiver. He demonstrated the need for caregivers to be physically, emotionally and mentally healthy. He challenged everyone to include the care of the caregiver in their care plan for the patient.

Dr. Nathan Zasler, CEO and Medical Director of the Concussion Care Centre of Virginia, shared his expertise during two sessions at this year’s conference. His “Post-Traumatic Headache: A Pain in the Brain” session included information on current research related to diagnosis, types of headaches and treatments of post-traumatic headaches. The “Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: Clinical Caveats and Controversies” spurred discussions regarding research results and implications of effects and treatments of mild brain injuries.

“Inspirational”, “awesome” and “exceptional” were words used to describe the session by nationally recognized speaker Steven Benvenisti, PC. The most challenging case of his entire career was the recovery of a young college student from a car crash. Obstacles and setbacks motivated this young man to work even harder at regaining the physical and cognitive functions lost in the wreck. This college student is now an attorney with a wife and two children. “Never give up” was the message conveyed to the audience.

Inspiration continued into Saturday’s sessions with heartfelt sharing by Margaret Culver of her own brain injury accident and recovery, and challenges still today, many years later. Margaret is the Facilitator for the BIA-MO support group in St. Charles, Missouri.

Additional topics at this conference included practical strategies for impacting positive behavior change, returning to work following brain injury, intimacy and sexual issues following TBI, maximizing the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for your child, and cognitive and emotional functioning following TBI. Family members and brain injury survivors were able to get answers and insight for many situations they are facing. The panel included survivors, TBI professionals and service providers.

This wide range of presentations addressed questions by case workers, rehab specialists, social workers, psychologist, physicians, community-based workers and brain injury survivors and family members.

Plan to join us next year for the 5th Annual BIA-MO Conference to be held September 30 – October 3, 2009 in St. Charles, Missouri.
MAUREEN’S MESSAGE

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Executive Director for the Brain Injury Association of Missouri.

My background includes 16 years of non-profit management experience with various health and disability organizations. Specific experience includes office administration, volunteer management, fundraising, budgeting and strategic planning.

I am truly honored to now be a part of the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO). Since joining BIA-MO on July 1, 2008, I have witnessed so much strength and courage from brain injury survivors and their families. I am glad to be able to help these families through our programs.

Since 1982, BIA-MO has served many individuals with brain injury, their family members, caregivers and healthcare professionals. My plan for the coming year begins with assessing how we have best served these individuals and how we continue to serve them. I look forward to talking with program participants and supporters of our programs as we work together to strengthen the BIA-MO services.

Questions through our Information and Referral Service highlight the need for additional access to services throughout the state. Support group members speak often of not knowing where to turn until they find BIA-MO. Conference and educational seminar participants appreciate information on current research, medical care best practices and coping techniques for families.

I look forward to working with you as we strengthen BIA-MO.
MISSION IN PRACTICE

Ann was in a car crash while out of town visiting friends. After months of hospitalization and rehab across the state, she wanted to go home. The Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) provided Ann’s mom with information about post-acute rehab and community-based programs in their area.

Mike has attended the Donald Danforth, Jr. Wilderness Retreat for many years. He always looks forward to swimming and the bonfire. This week long camp also gives Mike the chance to catch up with his “camp friends” and make new friends, as he did this year. A week of fun and laughs provides a year of memories and anticipation for next year.

Life changed in an instant for the Boland family. An accident while making home repairs took away their once considered mundane routines, outdoor sports and comfortable life style. Participation in the BIA-MO support group has helped them share their feelings including anger, frustrations and hope. Members of the group shared their experiences of life after the accident.

BIA-MO has 23 support groups to help you and other families living with brain injury.

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri works on various advocacy efforts in collaboration with other brain injury and disability organizations. These organizations include the Congress on Disability, Missouri Association of Rehab Facilities and the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council. Together we represent the needs of individuals living with brain injury. We also work for prevention efforts such as keeping the Helmet Law intact in Missouri.

CAMPERS CATCH-UP WITH OLD FRIENDS AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS AT THE DONALD DANFORTH, JR. WILDERNESS RETREAT.

21ST ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

You Play and We All Win was the theme for this year’s golf tournament which was held on Sunday, August 17, 2008 at the Norman Probstein Golf Course in Forest Park, St. Louis.

More than 100 golfers enjoyed a four-person 18 hole golf scramble along with lunch, dinner, raffles, silent auction and a live auction. This fun filled day was complemented with beautiful weather as $60,000 was raised to support BIA-MO programs in the St. Louis community.

Dobbs Tire and Auto Centers was the Event Sponsor with Cedar Creek Conference Center as the Platinum Sponsor. Gold Sponsors included Holloran White & Schwartz LLP, Lewis Rice & Fingersh LC, and Charlie Erker with Merrill Lynch.

Thank you to the committee for making this event successful. The 2008 Committee Members were Gayla and Jim Bernardini, Gloria Burns, Kathy Kuesenkothben, Retta and Dan Leritz, Bev Rubenstein, Karen and Len Ruzicka, Nancy and Stan Wieberg, Joan Vatterott and Lori Winter. A special thank you also to Sue Orton and Diane Trame for their many years of leadership to make this event a successful tradition.

Committee Members, Sponsors and Golfers are all needed to make this event successful so please plan to join us for the 22nd Annual Charity Golf Tournament to benefit BIA-MO. Date and location to be determined.

SMOKIN’ ON BIG CREEK

The 4th Annual Brain Injury Association of Missouri BBQ Competition was held on April 4 and 5, 2008 in Pleasant Hill, Missouri and raised more than $14,000. BBQ experts prepared tasty fixins’ for more than 400 guests. Grand Champion of the 2008 BIA BBQ Competition was Pork Pullin Plow Boys. Plan to join us next year for this finger-licking event.

Thank you to committee members Aimee Olmstead, Jeff and Tammy Stith, Jamey Johnson, Scott George and Stan Hays.
MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO) helps thousands of individuals and families affected by brain injury each year. Our programs of education, advocacy and support are offered for persons with brain injury, their families, caregivers, physicians, therapists, case managers and others throughout the state of Missouri. Your Membership matters so together we can create better futures for survivors of brain injury and their families.

HOW YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Each year, an estimated 100,000 individuals suffer a traumatic brain injury (TBI) that results in a lasting disability. To serve such individuals, BIA-MO provides information and referral to resources and services.

Survivors of a severe traumatic brain injury are likely to experience prolonged anxiety and depression, and they are at a high risk for loss of friendships and social support. Each month our support groups and recreational activities provide opportunities for sharing and laughter among TBI survivors and their families.

Motor vehicle crashes cause 44% of all traumatic brain injuries. Falls account for 26%, assaults and violence 17% and sports and others causes are 13%. The Brain Injury Association of Missouri works toward reducing the number of incidences of brain injury through advocacy and educational programs.

MAKE YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTER

Benefits of membership include our chapter newsletter which features topics of interest regarding brain injury, discounted rates for the annual BIA-MO conference and the Donald Danforth, Jr. Wilderness Retreat, as well as free attendance to educational seminars.

Every 21 seconds someone sustains a brain injury. By the time you complete this Membership form another child or adult will have sustained a brain injury. Make your Membership matter and sign-up today.

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI MEMBERSHIP

☐ My annual membership is a ☐ New Membership ☐ Renewed Membership
  ☐ Points of Light ($250 or more) ☐ Supporter ($35 or more)
  ☐ Corporate ($200 or more) ☐ Entry ($5 for individuals of limited resources)
  ☐ Professional (50 or more) ☐ Other $ _______________________

Name: __________________________________________
Day Phone: ________________________________
Company/Agency: ______________________________
Address: ____________________________________________ Apt # _________
City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: __________
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Payment: Check payable to Brain Injury Association or credit cards.
Visa or MasterCard # ____________________________
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Cardholder billing address if different than above _______________________________________
City: __________________________ State: ______ Zip: __________

Mail to: 10270 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132 or fax credit card information to 314.426.3290.
SHARING EXPERIENCE ON MOTIVATION

BY TIM LANDWEHR

My niece is nearly 4 years old. She gets into mischief often, as young children do frequently. My younger brother (her dad) was asking her why she was doing what she was told not to, and she responded, “I don’t know.” A popular comedian from the 80’s says that children who respond with “I don’t know” have brain damage.

He was obviously going for the funny, and as humorous as that particular comedian is, knowing why and having a source of motivation or purpose is often times one of the biggest obstacles that survivors of brain injury face.

Before my brain injury, I took great pride in my musical talent and experience working in the Theatre. As a junior in high school, I achieved more success in district and state music contests than many of my classmates achieved in their entire 4-year high school experience. I worked on over 50 different productions, attaining over 4000 hours of Theatre experience. I was a very proud student.

Brain injury reduces a person’s stamina. It reduces their physical and mental strength. It makes simple tasks, such as tying their shoes, burdensome, difficult, and time consuming. Due to complications resulting from my brain injury, I can no longer sing nearly as well as I could before and I do not have the stamina to work on a show. Why even try to do such things when you know you cannot? Right?

No. Actually that’s wrong. That kind of thinking will keep a person disabled and handicapped for the rest of their lives. As survivors of brain injury, we must find new sources of motivation and purpose.

When I was in rehabilitation following my brain injury, I decided to recover from my injury enough to go back to college within 5 years from the date of my injury. Due to the determination that God gave me, I achieved that goal sooner than anticipated.

I have been asked several times by a survivor or a survivor’s family member how to motivate their loved one. Following are some suggestions that have worked in the past:

A survivor could not stay on task and finish what they were doing. This survivor enjoyed listening to music. Someone suggested allowing them to listen to their favorite kind of music while working on a task and the survivor then finished their tasks.

A survivor liked to talk to people, but they were almost always talking to and distracting people while they were trying to work. I suggested taking the survivor to visit a nursing home. Permission from the nursing home must be obtained, but the suggestion worked.

The key is to find something that the survivor enjoys, and then delve into that and support it in a productive way. Doing so can also improve a survivor’s self-esteem — which is another problem area for survivors.

HOW CAN I HELP?

- Make a financial contribution to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri (BIA-MO).
- Share information about BIA with families impacted by brain injury.
- Attend your local support group or recreational programs to share your experience and care with other families.
- Participate in the 100 Neediest Cases project to support a family affected by brain injury. Contact Mary Bernickus at 314-831-7211 or wbernickus@earthlink.net.
- Attend an educational, social or fundraising event hosted by or to benefit the BIA-MO.
- Become a BIA-MO member.
- Make a bequest gift to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Inc. The address is 10270 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132.

BOOTS & SPURS

Energy was high for this young professionals golf scramble, Texas Hold’em Tournament, silent auction, live band and hotel accommodations at the relaxingly beautiful Cedar Creek Conference Center in New Haven, Missouri. More than 80 guests enjoyed the activities and approximately $10,000 was raised for BIA-MO.

Thank you committee members Genny Haas, Kelli Fitzpatrick, Maura Martin, Mary Walker, Chrissy Wojak, Lindsey Dolan, Lisa Crowell, and Liz Sharp for a wonderful event.
BIA-MO AWARDS 2008

The Brain Injury Association of Missouri annually honors individuals who have made exceptional advances in their own life or the life of others who are living with brain injury. We are proud to recognize the following:

**Courage Award**— Matthew Kurz for his personal strength to overcome the challenges he faced after his brain injury from a car crash in 2004.

**Excellence in Service Award—Community Service**— Lori Brenneke, Coordinator for the Adult Head Injury Program with the Missouri Department of Health. Lori is honored for her efforts to serve individuals with traumatic brain injury in Missouri.

**Bill Buell Memorial Award** - Bill Buell was a longtime friend of the Brain Injury Association of Missouri and to honor his memory and service to the organization we created the Bill Buell Memorial Award. This award recognizes vocational rehabilitation professionals who are dedicated to helping brain injury survivors have a rewarding future.

Two individuals received the Bill Buell Memorial Award in 2008. Glenn B. Smith, a Senior Counselor in the Kansas City East office of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, was honored for his exceptional commitment to clients and co-workers. Tom Sampson is a TBI Specialist in the Sedalia Voc Rehab Office and was instrumental in beginning the BIA support group in that community.

Lori Winter, Executive Director of the BIA-MO from 1997 to 2005, was recognized for her efforts as interim executive director during the recent leadership transition at the BIA office.