President’s Message

Brain Injury Awareness Month
By Terrie Price

One of the questions occasionally asked is how the national organization, Brain Injury Association of America, benefits the state affiliates. There are a number of very vital means, not the least of which is a wealth of information and resources that we routinely use and reference. Their catalog of material and Web site is a superior product that can be of use to all of us in the brain injury community as it spans material for individuals with brain injury, their family members and support systems, professionals, agencies serving the brain injury community and policy makers.

Today I would highlight a lesser-known benefit of major consequence. Through the steadfast diligence of BIA-A and Allan Bergman, the CDC has funds for surveillance of the incidence of TBI. This critical state and national data provides the essential statistical data that we need and do provide to state legislators to request funding for services. We use the information to educate the larger community on the incidence of TBI and its impact. The data has been absolutely vital to our efforts to have TBI Service Coordinators with the Department of Health, TBI specialty caseloads and counselors with Missouri VR, a training module for educators on returning children to school after TBI, and the TBI Trust Funding as of July 1, 2003. We owe a major debt of gratitude for BIA-A and Mr. Bergman for their tireless efforts to keep TBI in the forefront of data collection.

Speaking of the Trust Fund, BIA-MO continues its tireless work in this area. Our efforts were rewarded when the Trust Fund was passed into law. We have since worked steadfastly with MHIAC to ensure that a fair and consistent process is in place for the disbursement of funds. The executive director and Council members have our document on the needs of the TBI community in Missouri, which is our goal statement for the future. At the recent MHIAC conference on October 6-8, we enjoyed many fruitiful conversations with council members and staff and can gladly report that a process is in place. The process provides for a mechanism to appropriate funds from the Trust Fund for approved projects that are within the areas of need identified by the legislature as education, counseling and prevention. We will continue to advocate ensuring that projects selected are for statewide initiatives or pilot programs toward statewide initiatives. We applaud the Council, Donna Mueller and Mark Kaiser for their efforts to put a solid process in place. Please look to the annual report for more information on our needs statement.

Please take an opportunity to educate someone you know about TBI during TBI awareness month.

Inside Highlights

| Scott Gee Appointed Executive | 2 |
| CDC Tool Kit Available        | 2 |
| Roving Reporters              | 3 |
| Giving Appreciated Stock      | 4 |
| Vocational Rehabilitation     | 4 |
| Camp Photos                   | 5 |
| Grassroots Lobbying           | 6 |
Scott Gee Appointed
BIA-MO Executive Director

We would like to welcome our new executive director, Scott Gee, who started his new position on March 31, 2003. He comes to the association with an extensive, 12-year background with a variety of non-profit agencies in development, marketing and public relations. Previously, he was director of Development and Marketing for the St. Louis Institute for the Deaf and United Cerebral Palsy of Greater St. Louis. With Missouri Special Olympics, Gee served as an area director in St. Louis and as an assistant director in Springfield.

"I was attracted to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri because of the opportunity to take a strong organization, move it forward, and see it grow. It's a great organization with tremendous people and a great future," Gee says.

"While still relatively unknown to the general public, Traumatic Brain Injury is one of the leading causes of disabilities in Missouri. Surprisingly more people will sustain a traumatic brain injury this year than will develop Multiple Sclerosis, Spinal Cord Injury, HIV/AIDS and Breast Cancer combined."

"It has been a very exciting five months since assuming the role from Lori Winter. She was a tremendous asset to the organization, and I am thrilled to accept the challenges that come with this position and for the opportunity to serve the many people who have sustained a brain injury, their families and their friends throughout the state of Missouri," said Gee.

Gee graduated from Nixa High School and received his Bachelor of Science degree from Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield. He has a nine-year old son, Connor and resides in St. Peters, Missouri.

Heads Up! Free CDC Tool Kit Available

"Heads Up: Brain Injury in Your Practice" is a free tool kit for health care providers on mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). More than 1.1 million people sustain mild traumatic brain injuries each year. Health care providers can play a key role in helping to prevent MTBI and in improving patient outcomes when it does occur.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), working with a number of partners, has developed a new tool kit to improve clinical diagnosis and management of MTBI. The kit contains practical, easy-to-use clinical information, patient information in English and Spanish, scientific literature and a CD-ROM.

Please visit this Web site www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/tbi_toolkit/toolkit.htm to order your free tool kit. You can also fax your request to (770) 488-4338, ATTN: TBI tool kit.
Roving Reporters

Do you know a brain injury survivor who might make an interesting story? We need you to help us out. Keep your eyes open for the following information. The stories don’t have to meet all the criteria, just one:

1. How did the individual’s brain injury occur? Was it in a manner that could have been prevented, e.g., an ATV accident, riding a motorcycle without a helmet, riding in a car without a seatbelt, etc.? Often, we learn from the mistakes of others so someone who had an injury which could have been prevented may be a great spokesperson.

2. Has the person achieved interesting or noteworthy accomplishments? Did the individual get married, go on to college, have children, etc.?

3. Is the person willing and able to tell his/her story and be interviewed?

If you find an individual who is willing to tell his/her story, please do the following:

1. Find out all the contact information from the individual: phone, e-mail, best time to reach him/her, etc. Don’t promise the individual that he/she will be in the paper or on TV, just that it would be a possibility.

2. E-mail Scott Gee, BIA-MO, and pass along this information, along with a brief summary of the person’s story. Send your e-mail to: spec@biamo.org.

3. During its regular meeting, the PR committee will review story ideas and contact you if the story has potential media interest. We may send you a list of additional questions to ask the individual.

4. Once you obtain all the necessary information from the individual, you will be asked to help write the individual’s story. Your BIA PR committee member will help you review your story to make sure it is formatted correctly.

By becoming a Roving Reporter, you will help the Brain Injury Association of Missouri communicate a greater awareness of brain injury and its effects. If you have any questions about this process, contact the Brain Injury Association of Missouri at (800) 377-6442 or e-mail: info@biamo.org.

Roving Reporter Theatre Review

Lion King Theatre Review

By Chris Ciense
Office Volunteer, Brain Injury Association of Missouri

The Lion King is my favorite movie of all time. When I heard about Lion King: The Musical coming to the Fox Theatre in St. Louis two years ago, I really wanted to go. Two years later, I went, and boy, it was worth the wait. The Lion King has finished the St. Louis run at this theatre.

Just in case you are living under a (Pride) rock lately, the story is kind of like Shakespeare’s Hamlet, told a la Disney, with animals instead of humans. Simba is the central character in this play. His father is the lion king, Mufasa, king of Pride Rock. He often talks to Simba about “The Circle of Life” and how animals are connected to it. But Simba’s uncle, the ruthless Scar, wants to be king too. So, Scar and his coyote friends set up a plan to kill Mufasa, become king, and blame this all on Simba. Scar tells Simba this, and Simba runs away to an oasis, where he is befriended by Timon, a meerkat and Pumbaa, a warthog. They talk to him about the philosophy of Hakuna Matata—“no worries.” Simba’s childhood friend, Nala, comes back to him as an adult and explains to him that he is the rightful king. After much convincing by Rafiki, another friend, he goes back to take away the throne of Scar.

I have one word about this play: GO! This is the best musical I have ever seen in my life. What makes this musical different from the rest is the actors playing the characters “come out” to operate them. The music from Academy Award winning composers Elton John and Tim Rice is great. There are a couple of new songs used in the stage version different from the movie version. The DVD version is out right now. The scenery, the lightening, the special effects, everything is musical. Don’t take my word for it. When this show comes back (and I hope it does), Go, Run, and See this extravaganza.

Another Review from Chris

Bend It Like Beckham (PG-13)

I usually see about five or six movies a week on average, usually renting from Blockbuster and Hollywood Videos. When I heard about the success of this movie in theatres, I quickly ran to borrow this tremendous and amazing flick.

This movie is about Jess, a teenager who loves to play soccer. She idolizes David Beckham, a world-famous soccer star. She has posters and pictures plastered all over the walls. She even plays the sport for fun. When Jules, a player for the English soccer team spots Jess playing soccer with her friends, she enlists and recruits her to her team. The only thing that’s stopping her from playing is her parents. Will Jess follow her dreams or will her parents have the final say?

This is a feel-good movie, full of spunk and attitude. The movie explores the Indian culture in a positive way. The characters and story are likeable. The music is fun! This movie gives you a message; never give up on your dreams, and don’t let people tell you otherwise.
Another Successful Wilderness Retreat

They arrived on a hot August afternoon. Nearly 70 survivors from across the state of Missouri and three other states, ready for a week of learning, relaxation and building friendships. For nearly 20 years, this scene has been played out each summer. The Donald Danforth Jr. Wilderness Retreat is the only week-long, organized, outdoor experience specifically designed for people with brain injury. “This is the best time of my life,” stated one camper from St. Louis.

The need for the Donald Danforth Jr. camp was determined through discussions with many families coping with the change in their lives following a head injury. For the survivor, there is a need to rebuild his/her self-confidence to begin to learn how to overcome new obstacles and rebuild a new life for himself/herself and for the caregivers. For the caregivers, respite from daily responsibilities and care of their loved one is occasionally needed. When asked about camp, Greg said, “I look forward to this all year.”

Supported by grants, donations and camper fees, the Donald Danforth Jr. Wilderness Retreat is held at Wonderland Camp in Rock Mount, Missouri and is fully accessible. Activities such as swimming, boating, fishing, arts and crafts, sports, games and miniature golf are adapted to the abilities of the individual. Plans are already underway for the next year’s retreat.

For more information on how you can attend camp or make a donation to support camp, call (800) 377-6442.

[Editor’s note: See Wilderness Retreat photo essay page 5.]

Giving Appreciated Stock for a Tax Deduction

By John H. Russell
Senior Vice President/Investments
Stifel Nicolaus & Company, Inc.

Many people own appreciated stock - stock that has risen in value over time. If you are planning on making a contribution to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, give appreciated stock!

Donors who give their appreciated stock to a charity avoid the tax on the appreciation and receive, instead, an income tax deduction on the full value of the stock. What’s more, because the Brain Injury Association is a qualified charitable organization, it could sell the stock and avoid any tax on the appreciation. A win for everyone! Remember to gift only those investments you have held for more than one year, and use those investments with the lowest tax base.

Have you ever considered making a gift of appreciated stock to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri? It may be better for you than making a gift of cash. To learn more about this, please call Scott Gee at (314) 426-4024 or John Russell at (314) 862-8800.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) is a program designed to help persons with a physical or mental impairment to become employed. It is operated in Missouri by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. MDVR is credited with establishing TBI specialists in all of their offices. Here are some of their recent successes:

- MDVR ranks in top 10 in the nation;
- Success rate is 71.6%;
- Funds from general revenue, lottery, and mental health;
- 28 district offices, six in this region;
- 205,000 grants of which TRI has one (T&E grant);
- FY01, 720 of closures were sheltered/ FY02 only 26 down from previous year;
- Last year almost 7,000 clients had mental illness;
- 6,500 clients has physical disability;
- 50% of closures touched by CRP;
- FY02, 5,125 successful closures;
- 80% federal/20% state;
- Supported employment 77% success rate in FY02;
- Serving more people:
  - Normally 17,000
  - Last year 18,500
  - This year 10,000 first six months and will be 20,000
  - Referrals up with unemployment and poor economy.

Putting people first means ensuring that MDVR provides the highest quality of employment oriented services to Missourians with disabilities.

Important Reading From Dennis P. Swiercinsky

Normal Again, written by Dennis P. Swiercinsky, Ph.D., focuses on a compassionate understanding of the personal experience of brain injury. Eleven individuals with whom the author has worked contributed stories of their experiences with brain injury.

The book includes medical and psychological information about brain injury, and considerable suggestions for how to cope with and grow from brain injury. Practical advice about rehabilitation strategies is offered based on the author’s 25 years of experience working with individuals, families, rehabilitation therapists, educators and employers.
This photo essay says it all! For nearly 20 years, Wilderness Retreat continues to be a source of happiness and confidence-building for many brain injury survivors!

Enjoying the pool

Sunbathers relax.

A comfortable rest break.

Partying and Dancing.

A great hat!

Campers attend group event.

These actions speak louder than words! Campers enjoy another successful Donald Danforth, Jr. Wilderness Retreat.
Grassroots Lobbying
What Works - What Doesn’t?

The following is a condensed summary of a legislative survey, to learn how legislators feel about grassroots lobbying efforts. The survey was prepared by the Family Support and Respite Coalition of Missouri for the AAMR/People 1st and Direct Support Professional Conference.

What is the best method for contacting my Legislator?

Seven methods were offered, and legislators were asked how important each method was. Following are methods in order of importance with the higher scores being the most important:

- Face-to-face visit in Jefferson City office 3.83
- Face-to-face visit in home district 3.5
- Phone call to Jefferson City office 3
- Leave message with legislative aid 2.67
- E-mail 2.67
- Phone call to district office or home 2.33
- Fax 2.17

Some indicated they prefer e-mail, but others strongly indicated the volume they receive is unmanageable - up to 100 a day. One indicated he only reads e-mail from constituents he knows and deletes all others. On the other hand, they usually get a very few letters concerning a specific issue. The advantage of a letter is they have the piece of paper and can refer to it later.

Where does my Legislator get information to decide how to vote on bills?

Legislators were asked to rank a list of seven sources and the results are below. The higher scores should correlate to greater influence:

- Constituents 5.75
- Other Senators or Representatives 5.5
- Advocates on an issue (not paid lobbyists) 5
- Paid, professional lobbyists 4.75
- House or Senate staff 3.75
- State department head or representative 2
- Governor or his staff 1.25

Results confirm what every source on grassroots lobbying will tell you. Constituent-based strategies are most effective. Constituents represent votes. It is the constituent back home in the district that put the legislator in office, and it is the constituent who will get the legislator’s ear first.

How do Legislators decide what events to attend?

Legislators were given a list of 18 factors and asked which ones influence if they attend an event. The three highest scores indicate that the most significant factor is getting a personal invitation followed closely by whether they are familiar with the group/person extending the invitation. Rounding out the top three factors is having an invitation extended by a constituent.

Missouri Support Partner Program
information & support for Traumatic Brain Injury Survivors & their guardians or families.
1-800-779-8652
www.tbimo.com

Support Partners are Needed!!

We are looking for families, loved ones or survivors who are interested in becoming trained as a Support Partner to be matched with someone in need to share interests, challenges, information and resources. This program is made up entirely of volunteers.

Funded by the Missouri Head Injury Advisory Council

Development assistance provided by:

UMKC - Institute for Human Development, Missouri’s UCEDD
Department of Health and Senior Services
Brain injury Association of Missouri
Department of Mental Health
Department of Social Services
Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Brain Injury Association of Greater Kansas City/Kansas
Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities

Hand in Hand...One step at a Time.

In Memory or Tribute

A memorial gift to the Brain Injury Association of Missouri is a thoughtful gift - a living memorial. It is a means of providing a fitting memorial to a loved one or friend, and in doing so knowing that you are helping a survivor of brain injury. Certainly, there could be no finer tribute or intentions to your loved one.

Or you can consider sending a gift in honor of a special celebration or milestones in your life. Use this unique gift to celebrate anniversaries, birthdays and other special occasions in your life and in that of your friends and loved ones. Call the Brain Injury Association at (800) 377-6442 or e-mail at info@biamo.org for more information.

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.
Sponsorship Rates

We accept sponsored Ads in Connections that meet our mission.

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Contents and approval of all sponsored ads are at the discretion of BIA-MO. Full payment is due at time of copy deadline. Camera-ready black and white artwork to size is required.

Copy deadline: **January 15; April 15; July 15 and October 15**. Call the BIA-MO office at (800) 377-6442 for more information.
Because life after brain injury is never the same.

## Membership Application

Your dues include membership in the Brain Injury Association which entitles you to a copy of its newsletters. There have been many gains toward awareness of brain injury and the development of brain injury rehabilitation in Missouri. Your dues are essential for us to continue positively affecting the lives of many people.

This is your organization! We look forward to your continued support!
Yes, I want to be a member of the Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Inc.

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Make checks payable to BIA-MO and mail to: 10270 Page #100, St. Louis, Missouri 63132 OR Use your credit card!

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard  Expiration Date: _______  Account Number: _______  Signature: __________________________

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

State: __________  Zip + 4: __________

Phone Work: ( ) _______________________  Phone Home: ( ) _______________________

Brain injury connection: ☐ Survivor  ☐ Family  ☐ Caregiver  ☐ Other

Membership in the Brain Injury Association of Missouri is open to everyone!