

Brain Injury Association of MS
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Brain Injury Association of MS Springs into Action with Fun Events

The Brain Injury Association of Mississippi has been involved in several events since the last publication of the Association News. Some of the events included prevention programs such as:

The staff members of BIA and volunteers from the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Service attended a safety program held at the Trustmark Park Stadium with the Mississippi Braves. While there, 200 helmets were distributed and fitted to people of all ages. We would like to thank the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services for sponsoring this event.

The staff of BIA of MS held a Ride and Roll Prevention Program on the coast. Our first stop was Roseland Park Baptist Church Academy in Picayune. We distributed and fitted helmets for students in grades Kindergarten thru Sixth. After visting in Picayune, we went to Bay St. Louis where we also distributed and fitted helmets at Central Christian Academy for their students in grades Kindergarten thru Twelfth.

Also, The Brain Injury Association of Mississippi held a fun night for its TBI survivors and caregivers. We had a Bowl a Rama on March 21, 2006 at Paradise Lanes in South Jackson. The attendance was great and everyone fellowshiped while enjoying refreshments and awards. We would like to thank Mr. Tony Engels for his hospitality.

Also a special thanks to our lane sponsors who include:

- Dr. Howard T. Katz - Gulf States Physical, Medicine, and Rehabilitation
- Richard Schwartz and Associates
- Dr. Robert C. Sevier - Forrest General Psychology Service
- Milwaukee Electric Tool Corporation

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Mission Statement

The Mission of the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi is to enhance the quality of life for survivors of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries and their families, and to develop and support programs that prevent brain and spinal cor injuries.

Policy Disclaimer

The Brain Injury Association of Mississippi does not support or recommend any person, method, treatment, program, products or firms mentioned in this publication. *Association News* is published quarterly by the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi. The Editor reserves the right to edit materials for style and space. Address all contributions to BIA of MS, P.O. Box 55912, Jackson, MS 39296. (601) 981-1021. Fax: (601) 981-1039. National Brain Injury Information Center 1-800-444-6443

Purpose of the Association

The purpose of the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi is to serve all Mississippians by providing support, education and resource information to survivors and their families; providing education to professionals with the intent of increasing public awareness of the special needs and concerns of brain injury and spinal cord injury survivors; maintaining an information and resource center; sponsoring and encouraging support groups statewide through programs and financial assistance; sponsoring educational conferences, workshops, seminars, and training programs and developing and implementing prevention programs.

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Traumatic Brain Injury: Impact on the Family

The first response to a severe injury to a loved one can be denial, the thought that this can't really be happening. The first few days after an injury can seem like a bad dream that one is fighting to wake up from. Once reality begins to sink in, the focus is on helping the person who was injured. However, as time goes by, family members begin to realize that the injury did not just affect the patient, it affected the whole family.

Initially after an injury to a loved one, the family goes into crisis management mode and works together to try to deal with all the problems. Unfortunately, recovery from traumatic brain injury takes weeks and months and it is not possible for a family to stay in crisis management mode forever. Family members get tired and need to take care of themselves. Friends of the patient who came by at first when the patient was unconscious or confused may now not come around. Due to money problems, family members may need to return to work. After discharge, the burden of caring for the patient with brain injury usually falls mainly on one family member or at most 2 or 3. Usually, the patient's parents or spouse are the main caregivers.

Family members may experience feelings of being overwhelmed with all the care needs of a loved one with brain injury. There may be multiple medications to manage and numerous therapy appointments and doctors' visits to attend. The patient may need help with going to the bathroom and with bathing. The patient may need to be supervised constantly to prevent unsafe actions that could lead to a fall or some other safety problem. There may be confusing paperwork that needs to be completed for disability benefits, Social Security, or Medicaid. Caregivers can easily become depressed and have feelings of hopelessness and helplessness.

One element of depression can be grief for the loved one who was injured. Cognitive, behavioral, and emotional changes in the brain injured person can make it seem as though the old loved one is gone and there is this new person who requires all this care and is not able to help out. Family responsibilities that used to be shared may now all have to be taken care of by the caregiver.

Anger can be a natural response to such a stressful situation. Even if the injury was due to an accident, it seems as though someone or something must be to blame. Sometimes this anger is released on the doctors, nurses, and therapists and sometimes it may be released on other family members. Sometimes it is hard not to be angry with the person with the brain injury. Why couldn't he/she have been more careful?

All these problems are too complex to have simple solutions. Here are some suggestions from people who have had to deal with brain injury:

- 1) Ask family members, church friends, and others you can count on.
- 2) Check out support groups that are affiliated with the Association of Mississippi (601-981-1021).
- 3) Stay involved with your family member's treatment.
- 4) Ask questions. Do not be afraid to ask questions of doctors or therapists. It is a good idea to write questions down so you won't forget.
- 5) Keep a journal of your loved one's progress.
- 6) Take care of yourself. Recovery from brain injury is more of a distance race than a sprint. Get good rest and nutrition. Don't forget to do something fun for yourself every once in a while.
- 7) Call on others for help. You cannot do this alone. Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask other family members, friends, church members, or others to help out.

By: Mark Sherer, Ph.D., ABPP-Cn, Director of Neuropsychology, Methodist Rehabilitation Center

The TBI Model System of Mississippi is one of only 16 TBI Model Systems programs funded by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The TBI Model Systems program conducts research on recovery and rehabilitation after traumatic brain injury and disseminates information about traumatic brain injury to persons with brain injuries, family/significant others, healthcare professionals, and the community at large. The TBI Model System of Mississippi is housed at Methodist Rehabilitation Center, 1350 E. Woodrow Wilson, Jackson, MS 39216. For more information about the TBI Model System of Mississippi, call 601-364-3448.



From the Desk of the Executive Director

Paul N. Gospodarski, Ed.D. FAAMA, FAAM

This has truly been a very busy year for the staff of your Association. In spite of all the difficulties caused by the storms that buffeted all of our state, we fitted and distributed more than 14,000 sports helmets for our children and visited forty-seven schools and implemented the Ride and Roll Safety Fair.

In the immediate aftermath of Katrina, the staff worked tirelessly to provide assistance to many of our families affected by the storms. They volunteered to work in the FEMA Warehouse in Jackson helping to unload many supplies that were sent to Jackson. We helped to deliver food, water, and much needed cleaning supplies to thousands of families on the gulf coast.

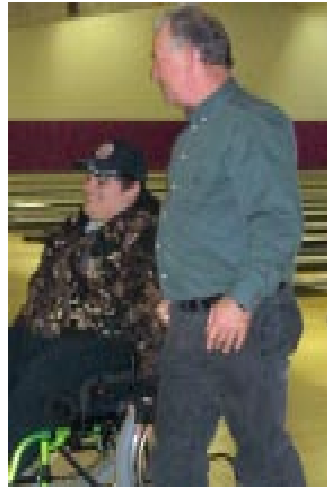
The staff will be going to the Gulf Coast in July to work with other volunteers in the rebuilding efforts. Since early September 2005, staff of the Association has made more than 70 trips to the coast delivering much needed supplies.

We look forward to the new grant year that begins in July. Once again, we will concentrate on implementing prevention programs for our children and their families. The latest data from the Mississippi Department of Health Surveillance Branch has shown a significant drop in the rate of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries for our children, especially school age children. The Ride and Roll Safety Fair program works.

We will continue to Protect our Children One Helmet At A Time.



Support Group Leader Jan Nash having a great time at the Bowl-a-Rama.



TBI Survivor Chris Guzman and Robert Foley at the Bowl a Rama.



Support Group Leaders Jan Nash (Jackson Support Group) and Tina Foley (Vicksburg Support Group) competing with each other and Dr. Greg Little.



The Mississippi Knight of Columbus shows off their awards



Associate Director of BIA, Mrs. Freda Arender (left) and Dr. Howard T. Katz (right) congratulate Mr. Roger Wicker (middle) for his many years of service.

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The Hope Award was presented to Henry S. Jacobs camp which has a program called Camp Dream Street MS. Pictured are: Founder Mrs. Cynthia Huff and Mr. Jona-

Cohen.



Honoree Mr. Sammy Shute with wife Diana.



Dr. Katz and Dr. Paul present The Challenge Award to Mr. Larry Tabour who represents the MS Knights of Columbus.



Dr. Katz and Dr. Paul present The Challenge Award to Mr. Larry Tabour who represents the MS Knights of Columbus.



Dr. Katz presenting Mr. Sammy Shute with the Hope Award.



Dr. Katz presenting Mr. Sammy Shute with the Hope Award.



Wayne Ferrell (mid) and Dr. Paul (right) present Dr. Howard T. Katz (left) with award for many years of service and dedication

Wayne Ferrell (mid) and Dr. Paul (right) present Dr. Howard T. Katz (left) with award for many years of service and dedication



The Honorable Roger Wicker being presented the Founders Award by Dr. Paul Gospodarski and Dr. Howard T. Katz.



The Honorable Roger Wicker being presented the Founders Award by Dr. Paul Gospodarski and Dr. Howard T. Katz.



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Chris Guzman and Curtis Taylor receiving their awards



Mr. Gene Beard along with wife Linda and friend Ray as they enjoy a time of refreshments at the Bowl - a - Rama.



Monica Bither of MDRS volunteers her time to help fit helmets at the Mississippi Braves game.



Alexis Arender volunteers his time to fit helmets and promote the importance of TBI Prevention.



Dana fits helmet at Mississippi Braves Game.



Thank you to all the volunteers from The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. Your services are truly appreciated.



Volunteer Wanda Hilderbrand fits helmets to promote Brain Injury prevention at MS Braves game.



MDRS Volunteer informing this family on proper fit of helmet.