

Champion
Schools



Holmdel High School

2010

2011



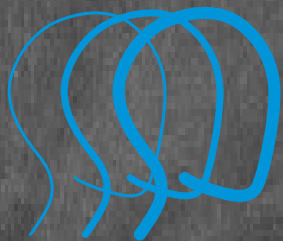
Lenape Regional High School District



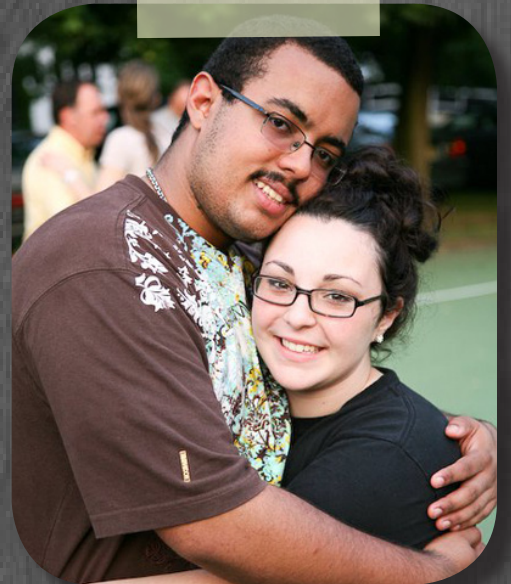
Matt Gross plays his
guitar



2011 ANNUAL REPORT



BRAIN INJURY
ASSOCIATION
OF NEW JERSEY



A Message From Our Leaders

Friends and Colleagues:

This year, the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey (the Association) approaches 30 years of supporting and advocating for individuals with brain injury, as well as raising public awareness through education and prevention. Over these many years, our programs and services have expanded tremendously in scope and impact. Each year, our dedicated staff, board, volunteers, donors and other partners work tirelessly to ensure improvements in all areas of the Association.

Before we review some of our proudest accomplishments of this last year, we would like to present a historical perspective of one of the Association's most important services over the last three decades, the Helpline. It has been the Helpline that keeps our Association in touch with the needs of individuals with brain injuries, helping us to foresee emerging issues and adapt our programs and services to meet these needs throughout New Jersey.

From its inception, the Association has been a lifeline for individuals affected by brain injury – one caller at a time. Our Helpline was the first service provided by the Association, designed to assist individuals with brain injury, family members and professionals in getting the support, information and services that they need. The Helpline was the brainstorm of the founders of the Association, as one of the original trustees, Louise Murnane, explained. The first calls were taken at her kitchen table in the early 1980s. Mrs. Murnane envisioned the Helpline as a central point of access for people and families learning to live with brain injury. Mrs. Murnane's son had recently sustained a traumatic brain injury, and she was struck by the fact that the rehabilitation process was "learn as you go." As Mrs. Murnane noted "once you finished (with rehabilitation), that was it, there was nothing else" to help. "We needed to get moving," she continued, "so I said, well okay, I'll take the calls, and it started from there." Mrs. Murnane believed that the most important thing about the Helpline was that people who felt alone could talk to someone who understood brain injury. "I was in crisis myself," she says, "so I knew what that was like." As the Association grew and staff members took over to help, Mrs. Murnane remained available to field calls. "If a family member called and wanted to speak (to someone who had experienced what they were going through) they got me."

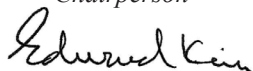
From this humble grass-roots beginning, the Helpline has evolved into a large scale operation that fields calls from thousands of people each year across the state seeking information about brain injury and related resources. With the advent of the internet came new and efficient ways to provide information to those in need – the Association created a website that posted articles on brain injury issues on-line, and responded to requests for information that came in via the website. While technology continues to advance the Association's goal of providing information and resources to those in need, as in the beginning, there is still a caring voice that answers our Helpline to provide the critical personal contact that our founders identified as so important to those struggling to understand and cope with the issues of brain injury.

The pages that follow document the work of the Association over the past year. We note with great sadness the passing of our long-time staff member, Jill Schulman, who lost her battle with cancer on May 1, 2011. Jill was a tireless advocate for people with brain injuries, and her presence is greatly missed.

Sincerely,

Edward Kim, MD, MBA

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Barbara Geiger Parker

President & CEO



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Education & Outreach

The Association is proud that our education and outreach arm continues to quickly and flexibly develop new content for trainings, presentations, and other modes of information delivery on topics that are rooted in the substantial needs we hear from the community. Our goal is to keep ahead of emerging issues and keep a finger on the pulse of the important concerns of people with brain injuries, their families and the professionals who work with them. This past year, the Association's new educational efforts focused on helping individuals and their families cope with life after brain injury, and simultaneously worked to provide the professional community with the critical information and tools needed to deliver appropriate services. Important activities for the year are detailed below.

The *Adjustment to Brain Injury* seminar series is a newly developed presentation focusing on the emotional adjustment that people with brain injuries and their families go through following the injury. These sessions were designed to follow up and complement our existing *Brain Injury Basics* series. Both of these topics are offered at multiple locations throughout the state during the course of the year. During the past year, 198 individuals attended these sessions, and 1,255 individuals have attended the sessions since they began in 2005.

Brain Injury in Students sessions is another newly developed series, created to fill the information gap about brain injury for parents and school professionals and offer an overview of learning to identify, understand and respond to the special needs of students with brain injuries.

Discovering Success: From Trauma to Community was the topic of the Association's annual two-day seminar program aimed at the broader community and attended by over 300 people this year. A focused one day program, *The Medical Management of Concussion*, was offered as an alternative track for professionals involved in the identification and treatment of sports concussions.

Every year, the Association identifies a topic of particular concern for professionals who work with people with brain injuries and addresses this issue in our *Regional Trainings*. These regional trainings are open to all health and human service workers in the state at geographically disparate locations, with presenters who are experts in the topic being tackled. This past year, one concern that Association staff heard about frequently was substance abuse; this was the impetus for the training focus in 2011, resulting in the seminars entitled *Substance Abuse & Brain Injury: A Dangerous Mix*.

The *website* of the Association, (www.bianj.org) has increasingly become the first point of contact for people seeking information about brain injury, and the gateway to the services and programs of the Association. This critical public face of the Association is continuously updated to ensure that the most current information and resources are accessible to the public. Over the course of the year, 169,648 visitors looked to www.bianj.org for help.

Newsletters distributed in print quarterly over the course of the year complement our educational offerings and website information, disseminating a wide range of information about brain injury, community events, and the Association. An additional electronic newsletter was distributed each month to 2,500 subscribers.

Prevention

The hard work of the Association's prevention efforts paid off large dividends this past year. Most notably, on December 7, 2010, after years of campaigning for attention to be paid to the serious issue of youth sports concussions, Association President and CEO Barbara Geiger-Parker was on the podium with public officials and NFL legends as Governor Christie signed into law a bill requiring schools districts to develop and implement a concussion policy. The Association's leading role in this effort was further acknowledged by the New Jersey Department of Education, which invited Association staff to participate in the workgroup that developed the model concussion policy for school districts to use. In addition, the Association continued its wide-ranging prevention campaigns, employing the use of websites, social media, and community outreach to spread the message. These campaigns are detailed below.

The work of the *sports concussion campaign* this past year was a timely complement to the passage of the youth sports concussion legislation. The Association held a concussion public service announcement (PSA) contest for high school students, challenging them to develop and submit PSAs to be used as educational tools in collaboration with the Partners for Health Foundation. A track on the *Medical Management of Concussion* was held at the Annual Seminar, and a *Return to Play* poster and concussion tear off pad were developed and distributed to schools throughout the state. The Association updated and re-launched the www.sportsc concussion.com website. With the passage of the concussion law, the Association is poised to provide information about concussion in the schools statewide.

The Association launched a new *motorcycle safety* campaign and website, www.njsmartriders.org, aimed at keeping motorcycle riders safe through the use of smart gear, smart training and smart judgment.

The Association continued providing information about *helmet and transportation safety* for young children through our www.brainybunch.info campaign.

Recognizing the importance of keeping new drivers safe, the Association's *teen driver safety* campaign made safety information available through its websites geared to teen drivers (www.ugotbrains.com), their parents (www.njteedriver.com), and driver's education instructors (www.njdrivereducation.com). Additionally, the Association's new *Champion Schools* contest challenged groups of high school students to develop their own traffic safety messages. High schools across the state enthusiastically participated in the contest and in the culminating showcase of their work.

As the incidence of brain injuries caused by falls increases in the senior population, the Association continues its *Heads Up! Seniors* campaign to raise awareness of how to prevent senior falls through community outreach and presentations.

Throughout the year, the Association promoted its prevention campaigns through a variety of *social media outreach*, including Twitter and Facebook. Visitors to our prevention websites increased dramatically from the previous year, with 123,908 individuals seeking information. Association staff also reached out to the community through schools and community events to raise awareness of prevention, reaching close to 10,000 individuals during the year.

Support Services

At the core of the Association's work is our support of people with brain injuries and their caregivers, from the time of injury through the rehabilitation process and beyond. These direct support services are detailed below.

The Association's Family Helpline responded to 1,665 requests for *information and resources* from people with brain injury, family members, and professionals.

The Association has affiliated *support groups* in almost every county throughout the state. These groups allow people with brain injuries and their families to connect with others in similar situations, gain valuable emotional support and friendships, and hear speakers discuss a variety of brain injury related topics.

Through our free *Family Care Coordination Program*, hundreds of families received assistance and support on a wide range of issues.

This was the 25th year of *TREK (Together in Recreation, Exploration and Knowledge)*, a respite and recreation camping program that took place the week of June 11 – 18, 2011 at Camp Oakhurst in Monmouth County. Forty-three individuals participated in this year's program.

The Association collaborated with the Boggs Center on a *return to work project* to develop and deliver full day training programs for job coaches working with individuals with brain injury. Consultation regarding return-to-work issues was provided to counselors, job coaches, and individuals with brain injury.

Advocacy

The Association is proud to represent the interests of people with brain injury and their caregivers by identifying and advocating for legislative change on issues of importance to the brain injury community, and is elated to have played a leading role this past year in two significant legislative victories: the passage of youth sports concussion legislation and a ski helmet law for children under the age of 18. In honor of our important work, the Association was recognized on the Senate floor at the New Jersey State House on Brain Injury Awareness day for 30 years of service to the community. A summary of our most important advocacy activities is detailed below.

Working in tandem with the prevention team, the Association marshaled the resources of its advocacy arm to push for *legislative change*. Staff worked together to raise the alarm about the seriousness of sports concussions, and strongly supported the youth sports concussion law signed by Governor Christie. The Association also successfully brought its advocacy resources to bear on the issue of ski helmets by advocating for a law requiring youth under the age of 18 to wear a helmet while skiing; this legislation was signed into law on April 6, 2011, making New Jersey the first state in the nation to have such a law.

The Association *supported funding* for the TBI Act, the TBI Model Systems and the Pediatric Acquired Brain Injury Plan Act. The Advocacy and Public Affairs Committee worked to renew the Traumatic Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver and supported the creation of an acquired brain injury fund. Other advocacy efforts included continuing requests of the Governor to appoint members to the New Jersey Special Education & Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force and campaigning for passage of legislation that would add cheerleaders to the recently enacted concussion in youths sports awareness and management law.

The *Council for the Head Injured Community (CHIC)*, designed to help its members to become effective self-advocates, participated in multiple advocacy events across New Jersey. Members raised awareness of CHIC through events such as the North Brunswick Disability Awareness Day and Congressman Bill Pascrell's congressional health fair. Members also conducted three *Mike-at-the-Mike* events; held a BBQ and *Dress to Impress* event for current and prospective members; got involved with research studies; and participated in the JFK Medical Center Benefit for The Center for Head Injuries, the Association's Walk for Thought and Brain Injury Awareness Day at the State House.

Development

The Association continues to rely on fundraising to help provide our programs and services and meet the needs of people with brain injury and their caregivers. Our annual Gala and Walk for Thought/Cycle for Safety, along with our Corporate Circle sponsors, Association members and other supportive donors, help to sustain and grow the programs and services of our Association.

Walk For Thought/Cycle for Safety, October 16, 2010: The Association's 7th annual statewide recreational event, held annually to raise awareness and funds for individuals with brain injury, was supported by more than 300 people.

Annual Gala: March 8, 2011: Our 5th Annual Gala celebrated the achievements of the Association and honored Steven K. Jones, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Health System.

Corporate Circle: the Association is grateful for the on-going support of the corporate community, which is made up of a variety of organizations whose work touches the lives of people with brain injuries.

Association Membership: The Association is pleased to offer the benefits of membership to the general public, and these membership fees are an important financial underpinning that supports the programs and services of the Association.

Donors: Individual support was given to the Association through donations, tributes, and memorials. (See list on next page).

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