

BI-INSIDE *Magazine*

FIFTH ISSUE

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS

Come Take a Stroll With Us

FEATURES:

Unmasking Brain Injury

Brain Injury and Accessibility: It's Complicated

Finding a Mentor

Upcoming Events in the Mark Schmitt's Creativ Edge Studio

Telling of a Tale: Train Passenger

Message from the Executive Director

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month and we are ready to hit the ground running.

On Saturday, March 6, 2021, the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin will be hosting a Social and Skills Gathering that replaces our missed Holiday Party for 2020.

These gatherings not only offer a chance to connect with old friends, but it provides an opportunity to make new ones. In addition, re-learning social communication skills after brain injury is crucial during the continued process of recovery. Not only does it ward off negative feelings of isolation, it also helps make life more worth living. Social skills are the skills people use to communicate and interact with others. Social skills include what you say, as well as your body language, eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, and other actions. Cognitive skills (for example: staying focused, memory) and emotions (for example: anxiety, anger, sadness) also play a part in social skills.

Our mission as an organization is to provide resources and information. What better way to fulfill that commitment than by hosting a gathering that brings survivors, caregivers, friends, and family together. Watch your email for more updates on events scheduled for 2021.

Let's make this year a positive year, one step at a time.

Our Mission:

To offer assistance, provide resources, and create a better future through brain injury prevention, education, and advocacy

Lois York-Lewis

Lois York-Lewis
Executive Director and Co-Founder of the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc.

BI-INSIDE Magazine Team:

Bari L. Rieth (TBI Survivor, Daughter, Grand-daughter and Wife to Brain Injury Survivors, Board Secretary, Editor and Writer)

Lois M. York-Lewis (Mother and Mother in-law, Wife and Daughter to Brain Injury Survivors, Pres. of Board of Directors for the BIRCoFWI, Editor and Writer)

Scott Daul (Editor)

Katherine Ayla Marshall (Editor)

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Dr. Nathan Glassman (Neuropsychologist, Board of Director for the BIRCoFWI and Writer)

Teri Quam (Retired School Psychologists, Board of Director for the BIRCoFWI and Writer)

Micki Scherwinski (TBI Survivor and Writer)

Linda Scherwinski (Mother to a Brain Injury Survivor, Writer and the BIRCoFWI)

Michelle Morris (Photographer)



Your Donation will go a Long Way! **THANK YOU!!**

In Honor of...

Castellion, Kyle
Dudzik, Mark
Erickson, Renee'
Franke, Rick
Fromader, Tony
Koenig, Robert
Kraemer, Noelle
Lee, Grace
Marshall, Katie
Rieth, Bari**
Rieth, Gary**
Scherwinski, Micki
Schmitt, Mark*

In Memory of...

Eckholdt, Vicki
Foster, Donna
Franke, Rick ***
Gebert, Elliot
Kasprzak, Loraine
Koehler, Loie (Lois Ann)
Lozak, Margaret (Peggy)
Malueg, Mark
Rieth, Bethany*
Robinson, Derek*
**Indicates additional recognition*

**In memory of Mom, Vicki Eckoldt,
who died of a TBI**

**In honor of everyone who has worked so hard to
keep BIRC strong! Sincerely,
Kathleen McGillis Dryna**

**In memory of Rick Franke Forever in
our hearts, The Franke Family**

Participation in Thrivent Choice® Makes a Difference

As eligible Thrivent Financial members direct Choice Dollars® to Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. the momentum continues to build. The funds we receive from Thrivent are used to help support our efforts to assist brain injury survivors and families locate needed resources, obtain information, and to further our education awareness and prevention efforts. Thank you to Thrivent and its members who helped make this possible! Together, we can strengthen communities and changes lives.

UNMASKING BRAIN INJURY

The theme for the 2021-2023 Brain Injury Association of America national campaign is "More Than My Brain Injury." We, at the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin support this idea and we know you do too!

Describe your experience with brain injury or how you sustained your brain injury through creating your very own and unique mask. Let's show everyone that even though your brain has an injury we are so much more and can offer much more!

We are proud to announce that we have collaborated with the Unmasking Brain Injury Project



Mask example found at: [unmaskingbraininjury.org](https://www.unmaskingbraininjury.org)

to represent Wisconsin in this effort to bring about

awareness.

Unmasking Brain Injury - In the beginning

When Marty Foil, Executive Director of Hinds' Feet Farm, received his February 2015 edition of National Geographic subscription, a light bulb went off in his head. In that edition, there was an article (from the National Intrepid Center of Excellence) describing an art project geared toward soldiers who had sustained a traumatic brain injury.

The masks produced were vibrant and healing works of art. *The goal of the Unmasking Brain Injury Project is community awareness and education.*

This occurs when the masks are displayed in the community for the public to see.

Where can the masks be displayed: Hospitals or Rehabilitation Programs, Art or Community Museums Banks, Schools, or Public Buildings Conferences and Workshops

How are the masks displayed: Mask are displayed using a stand, which holds eighteen masks with their stories. Two or more stands can be put together to create a larger display.

Our website will house the

Wisconsin Mask Gallery of creations at: <https://www.bircofwi.org/unmasking-brain-injury.html>

The mission of Unmasking Brain Injury is: to promote awareness of the prevalence of brain injury; to give survivors a voice and the means to educate others on what it's like to live with a brain injury to show others that persons living with a disability due to their brain injury are like anyone else, deserving of dignity, respect, compassion and the opportunity to prove their value.

After the Unmasking Brain Injury project was first launched the official international website was created that allows anyone to view the completed masks (USA, Canada, and Argentina) and their explanations (www.Unmaskingbraininjury.org)

How can I contact the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin Unmasking Brain Injury Project to request Wisconsin masks to display or exhibit in my community or to join a group to create a mask? Contact our organization via our website at <https://www.bircofwi.org/contact-us.html> Email us at admin@bircofwi.org Call us at 262-770-4882



BRAIN INJURY RESOURCE CENTER of Wisconsin
www.bircofwi.org



Lois M. York-Lewis

Brain Injury and Accessibility: It's Complicated

“Having a brain injury causes people to relate and react to you differently. Having patience is one of the biggest challenges (for non-brain injury people).”

After suffering a stroke in 2013, Lucille faced a grim reality and certain situations are daunting. Situations that most people take for granted.

The stroke in 2013 caused paralysis and deficits to the right side of her body. The damage happened in an instant and recovery has been slow.

Accessibility issues prevent Lucille from enjoying many of the pleasures in life she used to take for granted.

For the past 8 years, Lucille has faced accessibility challenges that restrict what building she can enter, what restaurants she can eat in, and even what car or vehicle she can ride in (just to name a few).

A person waiting to enter a building is a classic example of **putting your patience to the test** when a person with a disability is in front of you. After sustaining a brain injury and then having to cope with an unexpected disability, the pleasure of **being able to do it yourself**, may abruptly also disappear.

You may find yourself dependent upon others for

the simplest of tasks.

Life suddenly becomes complicated in ways you never gave a second thought to, prior to it becoming your new reality. According to the United States Department of Justice, on the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) website, City Government Buildings: People who use wheelchairs, scooters, crutches, and others with mobility aids often find that both newer and older city and county facilities have parking, routes to and through buildings, high service counters, and restrooms that are not accessible.

Due to these physical

Brain Injury and Accessibility:

It's Complicated

barriers, some people with mobility impairments may have to rely on others to assist them when transacting their business, or they may not participate in activities in which they would otherwise be interested in.

The good news is the US Department of Justice through its **Project Civic Access** initiative, has worked with over 100 State and local governments to bring them into compliance with the ADA and, in doing so, has observed certain common problems.

Both newer and older buildings and establishments of all kinds pose a challenge. Once barriers have been identified using ADA checklists (<https://www.adachecklist.org/>), a business should develop a plan

to remove readily achievable barriers. Reaching full compliance for many businesses is ongoing and takes several years. The ADA recognizes that a number of small businesses will never have the resources to bring their building(s) into full compliance. However, these businesses should continue to do as much as they can to become more accessible, based upon changes in resources over time.

Individuals who sustain brain injuries may have cognitive and physical challenges. Recovery takes time and the direction that the persons' life goes

depends on the strategies they use to overcome, the sacrifices made, and the people who support and encourage them.

To get a sense of what it is like, the next time you are walking through your home, going out to eat, or just moving through your day, take a moment and ask yourself "how difficult would it be if I were affected by brain injury and a disability in an accessibility sort of way."

Reference List:

United States, D. (2020). Cities and Counties: First Steps Toward Solving Common ADA Problems. Retrieved from <https://www.ada.gov/civic/commonprobs.htm>

2020 Brain Injury Resource Center Picnic Recap



Linda Scherwinski

On September 19th 2020 we gathered at Blue Lotus Farm and Retreat Center located off county road M east of West Bend for our annual BIRC annual picnic. With the day being sunny, warm and fragrant with fall, it was a great day to be outdoors and enjoy the absolutely beautiful grounds.

The activities included boating, a campfire, a scavenger hunt, a fun game of bingo, before exploring and playing in our glorious surroundings; with prizes

delicious meal consisting of pulled pork, mashed potatoes, salad and their wonderful rolls donated by Angie and Katie Marshall. While we weren't able to use the swimming pool this year due to the Covid 19 pandemic, the rest of the outdoor activities were enjoyed by all.

Some of us even got fishing in! Texas Road House of West Bend graciously donated a with the cinnamon butter. There was plenty to go around and cookies for dessert.

It was a great day to unwind and catch up with friends from the BIRC in a peaceful setting. With the *Unmasking Brain Injury* masks on display, it was good to gain the perspectives of the TBI survivors who've had the opportunity to create one.

Contact Lois at the

BIRC if you are interested in creating a mask of your own. Call (262) 770-4882 or send an email to admin@bircofwi.org with a subject line of:

Mask Creation

A big thank you to everyone who helped get things set up and cleaned up. We hope to see you all at next year's event.

Annual BIRC PICNIC

July 10, 2021

LOCATION: BLUE LOTUS FARM AND RETREAT CENTER in WEST BEND

Check your email for more information



Craft Masonry, Inc.

Concrete • Masonry
Excavating

(262) 677-4088

Jackson, WI

Picnic Review - Blue Lotus Farm and Retreat Center Written by: Micki Scherwinski

It was a great day with nice weather and we even had some great sunshine! We had our picnic at Blue Lotus in Newburg, close to West Bend, Wi. We have had our picnic there for the past few years now. It's a very fun place to spend your day. They have a nice shelter to have a nice meal there and so much to do outside. They have a nice pond to paddle boat or kayak on. Here is a picture of Kyle Castellion and Micki Scherwinski (myself), we had just gotten out of a paddle boat taking a trip around the lake. It's great that while on the lake, you can look at the views of what



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SPECIALIZING IN NEUROPSYCHOLOGY, FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT



Brent Jones

Finding a Mentor

Suffering a brain injury is a traumatic experience for anyone, the person's world instantly turned upside down. As a 16-year-old teenager, my family was in an automobile accident that changed my life forever. I woke up after 3 weeks not knowing what happened, where I was and unable to move or talk. Once I realized that I

was not in my own room but in a hospital bed, I figured that something was seriously wrong. My grandparents had been there with me for weeks while I was in the hospital to support and be with me. They reluctantly explained the whole story of what happened to our family while driving back from Illinois to Wisconsin.

Finding a Mentor

A drunk driver crossed the center-line of a highway and hit our vehicle head-on, killing my mom and injuring my brother, dad and me. The news was so devastating and unbelievable; living the next day seemed meaningless. At the time, I was so weak and sad that I could not focus on myself or what I could do to help my family. Until I heard my dad's exact words to me, "your mom would want you to live," did my attitude change. That would be the beginning of my new life and journey from my head injury.

Since a head injury is unique for each person, there is not a common road for recovery.

Doctors explained to me that my condition was my new "normal" and I would never be the same person. Of course, I did not want to hear or accept this terrible fate for my future. Like others who suffer brain injuries,

I spent several months in the hospital, rehab facilities and outpatient programs to help me gain back my speech, strength, balance and thought processes. My hard work paid off as I made great strides in my recovery. My youth and determination were assets as I refused to fail, though, I slowly began to understand my limitations. Therefore, I had to develop other strategies to help me in my recovery.

In addition to hard work, I learned that finding a support system was critical to my ongoing recovery. I was very fortunate to have a great network of people around me, while for others it will be necessary to identify mentors. Whether these people are part of your friends, teachers, or strangers you're introduced to, they can provide the stability and guidance to move forward. In fact, I had a number of mentors after my accident who helped me, I would

lean on them when I became discouraged and frustrated which was a constant struggle for me.

Early on one of my first mentors was my high school wrestling coach who visited me every day I was in the hospital. Coach spent time pushing and challenging me as I transitioned from the hospital back into high school. He made me participate in sports and work out with my classmates even when I felt sorry for myself. Coach didn't want me to use my accident as an excuse for not playing the sports I loved, he knew that these activities were important to my life. He gave me opportunities throughout my time in high school and I will never forget his unconditional support. Even after thirty years, Coach is still a friend and mentor to me.

Finding a Mentor

His strength gave me the foundation to accomplish goals in sports as well as in school and life I never thought were possible.

Another mentor was a childhood friend who was older and someone I grew up with in my neighborhood. Jerry and I became friends mainly because we both loved sports and shared the same competitive spirit. Whether we were playing basketball, football, baseball or video games, Jerry was always the person I wanted to beat and/or impress. After my accident, Jerry became more than a friend, he became a big brother. He was someone that would help and push me when needed but always had my best interest in mind. His influence was instrumental to my improvement because he unknowingly challenged me to

get better as a person. Through the years, our friendship has continued to grow, I still look to him for advice and support.

Both Coach and Jerry were different types of mentors, but both helped me when I needed it most. In fact, I've always looked for mentors or role models during my life whether it has been at school, work or another aspect of my life. Finding a mentor may be challenging, but mentors are people who you can trust and depend on. These people have provided me direction, support and given me hope as I deal with the long-term effects of my brain

injury. Having mentors in my life has played a pivotal role in my recovery. It has been 37 years since that terrible day, I am lucky to have a great network of people in my life. Finding a mentor can be crucial to one's long-term success after a brain injury, mentors push and can have the ability to challenge us more than our family and those who are closest to us.



Adopting Brain Injury

For Parents of adopted or foster care children with a brain injury: Things to think about and perspectives one might take

The plaque on my wall starts off: "Not breath of my breath nor bone of my bone but still miraculously my own. You didn't grow under my heart but in it." This was the message written on my adoptive mother's heart to me.

When adults make the decision to adopt or to foster a child, they don't make that decision lightly. Adoption is the cementing of a relationship between a child and a caring adult who is willing to make a life-long commitment.

That is why so many agencies require hours of training and home studies. The little person (or bigger kid) needs an emotionally and physically safe environment in

which to grow and develop into a productive adult.

Just like a parent who is having a natural birth, parents of adoption/foster care don't always know if the child will have special needs. Sometimes they do know.

Sometimes we can just infer that they will have some level of trauma. The simple act of removing a child from their parent is traumatizing even when the home/parents they go to are safe and caring. It just is.

The good news: Human beings are resilient

This will be a series of articles around adoption/foster care and children with brain injury.

Things to think about: Adopting or Fostering a child with Special Needs.

Jennifer L. Lile, of the



Teri Quam

Special Need Alliance writes: "There are up to 134,000 children with "special needs" awaiting permanent homes, according to the National Adoption Center, and the demand is growing. In the context of foster care and child welfare, "special needs" refers not only to a child who has disabilities, but to children whose risk factors for disability, age, racial or ethnic background, or other characteristics often make them more difficult to place."

Self-assessment is an essential early step when considering adoption of a child with special needs. Prospective adoptive parents should ask themselves:

- ▶ What disabilities are we prepared to handle?
- ▶ What physical and / or emotional challenges are

Adopting Brain Injury

- ▶ we able to face?
- ▶ Do we have the financial resources to care for another child, especially one with disabilities?
- ▶ Does our insurance policy cover all of the child's physical and emotional issues, pre-existing conditions and required therapies?
- ▶ Does our insurance policy adequately cover the necessary health care providers?
- ▶ Will we be able to find a doctor who is willing and capable of providing the level of care the child might require?
- ▶ Will our school district be able to support the child's educational needs?
- ▶ Have we talked to the parent of a child with a similar condition to help prepare us for the challenges ahead?
- ▶ Have we identified sources where we can

receive the training necessary to help us support a child with special needs?

- ▶ What age range, family background and ethnicity would fit our situation?
- ▶ Are we going to help the adopted child maintain contact with birth relatives?

The adoptive parent should secure as much medical information about the child as possible. Requested information about the child, that may be beyond what's typically addressed by adoption agencies, includes: birth weight, gestation at birth, past and present health and developmental information (reading level, physical abilities, social and communication skills), family history, vaccination history, the child's understanding of and attitude toward adoption, the child's motivation to succeed and responses to frustration or disappointment, and the child's family memories.

Adoptive parents should

also ask what therapeutic services, such as physical or speech therapy, might be needed. One way to prepare for adopting a child with disabilities is to spend time with children who have similar needs.

Ideally, it is helpful to communicate with a family who has adopted a child with similar issues to gain valuable insights from their experience. Once a child with special needs is adopted, parents should not forget to review their personal estate planning to address issues such as guardianship and long-term financial support. "

You've said YES to adoption or fostering and the child has brain injury!!!!

Perspectives:

1.The Brain Injury Association of America reminds us that "while the symptoms of a brain injury in children are similar to those experienced by adults, the functional impact can be very different.Children are NOT little adults; they brain of a child is still developing. The cognitive impairments of children with brain

Adopting Brain Injury

injury may not be immediately obvious after the injury, but may become apparent as the child gets older. These implications can create lifetime challenges for living and learning for children, their families, school and communities."

2. Children are first and foremost children.

3. Children are developing human beings

(physically, emotionally, [BR1] cognitively) regardless of their brain injury. Everyone's rate of progress is

different. [BR2]

4. The brain has ways of making multiple connections and finding new paths.

5. Managing trauma most likely will be a priority over brain injury recovery. Supporting the treatment of trauma will support brain development.

6. The caregiver should make sure they eat well, sleep well, and have a support system. This will enable them to support this child to the best of their ability.

7. Be creative. All of us need strategies to master skills. (some of us write lists, some of us use a

timer on our phone, some of us use a calculator, some of us listen to books rather than read them, some of us benefit from color coding, some of us need "to do" in order to learn.....etc.).

Next issue: Child Development and Brain Injury

What is your opinion?

If you are a full guardian of a brain injury Survivor how has that impacted your life and how has that changed you as a person

Governor Tony Evers has proclaimed March 2021 as Brain Injury Awareness Month!

This Proclamation recognizes brain injury survivors, their struggles, and their triumphs.

Support brain injury survivors by making a donation to the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc.

Visit our homepage (www.bircofwi.org) to donate online.

Your donation is vital and allows us to continue the work we do and to support our mission to offer assistance, provide resources, and create a better future through brain injury prevention, education, and advocacy.



Telling of the Tale: Train Passenger

Written By: Anonymous Writer

*The train has left the station
and its leaving me behind...*

I keep trying to catch up

but

Is it just a waste of time?

I never felt the rush that comes from experiencing this

What I am left with are emotions

emotions that I am unsure of, what did I miss?

The train has left the station

I may be able to catch up, I just might

Is it worth it, I wonder, yes it supposed to be just right...

Feelings of intimacy can be complicated after brain injury. The train has left the station correlates to a brain injury survivors feeling about their issues with intimacy.

*Join us for lots of food, fun, and
shopping at the 3rd Annual
CRAFT AND VENDOR FAIR
Fundraiser for*



**BRAIN INJURY
RESOURCE
CENTER** of Wisconsin

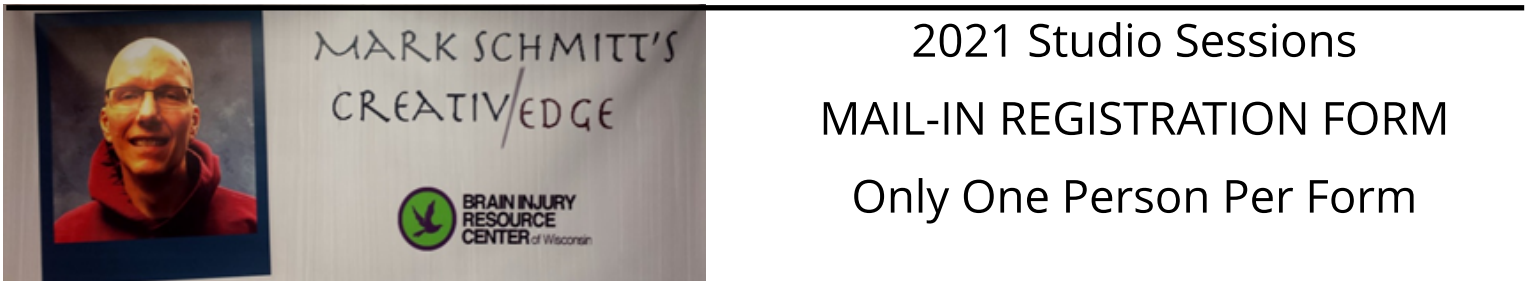
Saturday, May 15, 2021

**Moose Lodge 1721
Lower Level
1721 Chestnut Street
West Bend, WI
9:00 am until 3:00 pm**

*Come hungry as the Moose Lodge is also
having a drive through Brat Fry!*

Watch your mail/email for more information on upcoming events such as Unmasking Brain Injury Events! If you are not on our mailing list, complete the information below to get added!

Contacts First Name:		Contacts Last Name:	
Mailing Address:			
City:	State:	Zip Code:	
Cell # (including area code):			
Home # (including area code):			
(Choose One) Call me on this phone in case of cancellation: <input type="checkbox"/> CELL <input type="checkbox"/> HOME			
Email:			



First Name:		Last Name:	
Mailing Address:			
City:	State:	Zip Code:	
Cell # (including area code):		Email:	

Class Session(s) Selected (Class is limited to 8 participants per session – register early!)

- _____ April 14 and May 12 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) - Macrame Plant Holder
- _____ June 16 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) - Window Sun Catcher
- _____ July 14 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) - Clay Freeform Bowls
- _____ August 18 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) - Lawnware Hanging Light
- _____ September 8 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) - Electrical Tape Collage
- _____ October 13 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) - Olive Bottle Project
- _____ November 17 (1:00 pm - 4:00 pm) – Christmas Gnome Door Stop

\$ 10.00 per session to cover the cost of materials (Checks Payable to BIRCoFWI)

Total Number of Sessions Attending: _____

Total Payment Enclosed: \$ _____

Mail completed forms and payment to Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin
 Attn: Craft Session Coordinator 511 North Grand Ave Waukesha, WI 53186-4916