



## First International Conference on Culture, Ethnicity and TBI Rehabilitation Held in Northern Virginia

The First International Conference on Culture, Ethnicity and TBI Rehabilitation was held on March 12th and 13th in the Washington DC area at the Marriott Gateway Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Over 200 participants attended the conference to hear and discuss ideas regarding effective assessment, intervention and research practices with rehabilitation experts from around the world. Program faculty included speakers from Asia, Australia, South America, United Kingdom, Spain, Canada and the United States. A full spectrum of topics relating to the neurobehavioral, cognitive, functional, vocational, psychosocial, family and medical aspects of rehabilitation was addressed via lectures, workshops, panel presentations, and posters. Sessions also focused on health care disparities, successful research with multi-ethnic populations, and how to meet the clinical care needs of diverse patient populations.

The Conference was a joint project of BIS and Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, Assistant Professor and TBIMS Cultural Competency Coordinator, at Virginia Commonwealth University and Dr. Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, Professor, Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Neurosurgery, & Psychiatry Director, Virginia Traumatic Brain Injury Model System worked with BIS and conceived the conference, developing the curriculum and inviting the faculty to this exciting conference. BIS Staff were instrumental in setting up the logistics for the conference. *Continued on page 2*

- Consumer Profile
- Band Raises Funds for BIS
- Clubhouse News

BIS Volunteer Receives Service Award

Upcoming Events

Advocacy Update

People in the News

Focus on Peds

Volunteer Corner

Montgomery House Improved

Kit's Miracle Mile

Glory Days Fundraiser

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**NKenya Lassiter**, Program Director of Adult Case Management Services

**Michelle Thyen**, Program Director of Volunteer Services

**Betsy Zeigler**, Program Director of Pediatric and Adolescent Case Management Services

**Brian McCarthy**, Clubhouse Director of ADAPT and Westwood

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*Brain Injury Services is supported by state general funds administered by the Department of Rehabilitative Services.*

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## A MESSAGE *from Karen Brown*

**VISION 20/20** is a concept BIS is developing to celebrate and review in retrospect our achievements in the last 20 years and start planning our “vision” for the next 20 years. We are very proud of our many accomplishments but we are certainly not an organization that is ready to “plateau” and be satisfied to maintain the status quo. It is with great anticipation that as we move into the next 20 years, we will continue to focus on creating innovative programs that meet a void in our community, increase our partnerships to more effectively serve our clients, and concentrate on quality services that best meet the needs of those we serve in a timely manner.

I never fail to remember that we are only here because of the strong support of our community and stakeholders. It is with this in mind that I hope you will continue to provide your ideas and input for improving the services we provide. I am also hopeful that you will consider ways to become more involved with BIS. Our Board of Directors and Staff are very proud of this organization and feel it is a great privilege to have an opportunity to “make a difference” in someone’s life. BIS has many opportunities for participation in our work. This includes serving on our Board of Directors, volunteering in one of our Special Volunteer Programs, working on one of our major events, or taking a role in fund raising.

As Vision 20/20 unfolds, I am looking forward to working more closely with our community to ensure our continued success in the provision of “state of the art” community-based services that improve the lives of people whose lives have been affected by a brain injury.

Sincerely,

### ***Conference, continued from page 1***

Sponsors for this conference included Virginia Commonwealth University Traumatic Brain Injury Model System, Brain Injury Services, Inc., National Institute on Disability And Rehabilitation Research, International Brain Injury Association, VCU Center on Health Care Disparities (COHD), Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Integration for Persons with TBI at TIRR Memorial Hermann, Henry M. Kessler Foundation, and the Defense Veterans Brain Injury Center.

BIS and VCU will also be sponsoring the annual Williamsburg Conference on June 4th and 5th, and the National Caregivers Conference on June 6th. For more information on these conferences, please go to [www.tbiconferences.org](http://www.tbiconferences.org) or contact Linda Nowsherwan at 703-451-8881.

## Never Give Up

by Mahlon Frankhauser

**M**y name is Mahlon Frankhauser. I had a career I loved as a securities attorney for 40 years, having worked for the Securities and Exchange Commission, The New York Stock Exchange and, for 28 years, had been a partner of a large nationwide and international law firm.

In December 1997, I fell from a ladder onto a concrete driveway while hanging Christmas wreaths on the windows of our home and sustained a severe traumatic brain injury. My life changed in the blink of an eye.

I had several brain operations the first two days in order to save my life. A large portion of both frontal lobes had been severely damaged and had to be removed. The frontal lobes are the executive and organizational parts of the brain, which also control impulses and balance. There was also damage to other areas of my brain.

When I awoke from a two-month coma, I was transferred to Mt. Vernon Rehab Hospital for 7 weeks. Unable to keep up with the pace of therapy, I was transferred to an acute care facility for 7½ months while receiving therapy and regaining strength and some memory.

Encouraged by my neurosurgeon and with the help of Susan Rudolph of BIS, my wife, Joan, had our house modified to make it handicapped accessible, and on Halloween 1998, brought me home where she believed I would have a better chance of recovery. At first, I was in bed for 22 hours a day, couldn't sit up or turn over, was tube fed, and still had a catheter.

My first goal was to get out of bed and into a wheelchair fulltime. After two years of very hard work, I did! Now I use a rollator walker and a cane. I have even started walking short distances around the house on my own!

I have had 18 major surgeries. In 1999, following back to back surgeries, I developed a very rare neurological syndrome. For nine months, hundreds of times a day, I had the delusion that my wife was a former co-worker.

In addition, I've lost 90% of my hearing, and even with special hearing devices, I am unable to hear much. I have Parkinsonian Syndrome, which causes my right hand to shake so much that I am unable to write. I have learned to use my left hand to eat. I also have optic nerve damage to both eyes that affects my vision. Because of the frontal lobe issues, I am unable to control my temper.

The daily activities of personal care that I used to take for granted have taken a great deal of effort to re-learn. I still need help with showering and dressing, and I am unable to drive (which I really miss) due to seizures.

At the time of my accident, I was 66, and my family was told that my recovery would be 6 months to one year. I continue to make progress and amaze all of my doctors, but it's been a very long 11-year journey.

I have the distinct advantage of being married to an upbeat, positive Irish lady, who will NOT take no for an answer. Joan says that she doesn't know what she would have done without BIS, who took her by the hand and showed her the path to follow. Then, they took my hand and guided me to be the best that I can be!

BIS Volunteer Coordinator Michelle Thyen helped us find volunteer opportunities I enjoy. I read to children at the local

YWCA every week; every month I take a brain injury survivor to his Community Center for activities and lunch; and Joan and I do volunteer work from home, such as preparing information packets and making sandwiches for the homeless.

Most importantly, I am a member of the BIS Speaker's Bureau. It is wonderful for me to be out with people in the community and to share my story. Many survivors of brain injury are left in nursing facilities and are given little or no hope of recovery. So I believe that it is necessary for people to learn that we are happy, caring and productive members of society, who just happen to have sustained a brain injury. My deepest gratitude goes to Brain Injury Services for making this possible.

Yes, my life is vastly different, but I have good quality to it. I try to live each day to the fullest and with gratitude. The message I would like to leave with you is "Never give up — persevere!" Things are never as bad as they seem. Ask God for help, but remember, He expects you to do the leg work!



Mahlon & Joan are still going strong after 50 years of marriage.

## Band Raises Funds for BIS



**Stephanie Rooker and her band performed at Blues Alley**

Thank you to the Stephanie Rooker Band that dedicated their performance at Blues Alley—one of the country's oldest and most prestigious jazz clubs located in Georgetown—to brain injury awareness. They collected donations for Brain Injury Services at both of their performances on April 6, 2009. This is the second tour that Stephanie and her band have performed through Virginia raising awareness and funds for brain injury.

Stephanie's parents, Fran and Greg Rooker, founded a non-profit organization in 1998, The Jason Foundation, after the tragic loss of their son as a result of a brain injury. Not stopping there, they continued, through brain injury activism, to develop Brain Injury Services of SWVA, based on the BIS model of case management. The Rookers have dedicated their lives to pushing through legislation that generates funding for brain injury in Virginia and they continue to work diligently on filling the void of service needs of survivors and their families in Southwest Virginia.

Stephanie's sister Jennifer is also a talented singer in the band which is composed of a range of instruments that support the diversity of her music which includes jazz, reggae, gospel and hip-hop. Her first album *Tellin You Right Now* certainly demonstrates her many gifts as well as her flair for musical diversity with extraordinary expertise. It truly was a magical evening for all and we are looking forward to her next album due out this year! Visit [www.stephanierooker.com](http://www.stephanierooker.com) for more information. *Photo courtesy Jati Lindsay.*

## CLUBHOUSE NEWS

This time of year brings all the fun of summer including **a new intern at ADAPT Clubhouse!** ADAPT was chosen again to host another ExxonMobile Intern this summer: Heather Wynn. She is motivated and eager to have a unique experience. Heather's duties will include learning the basics of brain injury, how to work one-on-one and in small groups with members, and taking on the general duties of a Unit Coordinator within the clubhouse facilitating the Garden Unit. Heather will also be responsible for starting a partnership with a local nursery to provide expertise to members and to create an even greater sense of pride in the garden. Welcome Heather!!

**Recently, the members of ADAPT** were also busy planning an **Easter Egg Hunt** for the children of a nearby daycare. Members stuffed over 200 eggs with candy for over 35 kids to search for in and around the facility. Members were paired up with the 3-6 year olds to help them find all of the hidden eggs. The kids then used sidewalk chalk to draw their impressions of the Easter Bunny and his footprints. Everyone had a blast. The members are now planning another event that will feature members presenting each child with a bike helmet. Special thanks to Barbara Cox, a member's mother,

for donating 100+ stuffed eggs for the event, in addition to her regular donations of cleaning and office supplies!

**The members of Westwood Clubhouse** have been busy as well. The Fredericksburg program recently had some **kitchen construction** that allows for more accessibility and further improves the layout and aesthetics. Tearing down a wall and adding a fixed island has tripled the amount of kitchen work space and storage.

In addition, the clubhouse now has **a new fish tank!** The 60-gallon tank not only looks awesome, it gives members an opportunity to learn about caring for fish and allows them to take part in an ongoing "pet therapy" project. Westwood will also begin implementing a **transportation scholarship** for future members who cannot afford the costs of getting to and from the program.

Members of both clubhouse programs are planning their own **Summer Kickoff BBQs** that will include: great food, a band/DJ, moon bounce, dunk tank, interactive games and contests, prizes, and much more! Members are looking forward to inviting friends, family, past members, local businesses and residents, as well as the different professionals and agencies who have worked with the programs over the last year. **ADAPT will host its BBQ at the clubhouse on Thursday, June 18th from 11am–3:30pm. Westwood will host its event Friday, June 25th at the clubhouse from 11am–3:30pm.**

# BIS Volunteer Wins Prestigious Service Award

On April 24th, Volunteer Fairfax held its 17th Annual Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards at the Fairview Park Marriott. This year's emcee, Doug McKelway, ABC 7/WJLA-TV anchor, announced our very own Deena Hunkler-Sanks as the recipient of the Adult Volunteer Award. Deena was chosen from a group of 22 other nominees in the category of less than 250 hours of service.

Recommendation letters were sent in by Michelle Thyen, Director of Volunteer Programs, Molly Raymond and Cathy Pearson, both BIS consumers. Deena also works with Peggy Good and Lynnita Langland.

Deena was recognized for several of her volunteer projects, including creating a "playroom" in her home, where she invites consumers to come and enjoy painting and other arts and craft projects with her. She recognizes the importance of allowing our consumers to express themselves through art and she has enabled them to do that in a stress-free environment under her guidance.

Deena has also worked extensively with Cathy Pearson on re-organizing her basement area which became disorganized and overwhelming after her injury. Deena



Left to right: Cathy Pearson, BIS consumer; Deena Hunkler-Sanks, Volunteer Fairfax Adult Volunteer Award winner; Michelle Thyen, Director of Volunteer Programs.

also devoted several mornings to help Lynnita Langland pack up her home and purge items before moving to a new apartment.

Molly and Cathy wrote in their recommendation letters that Deena has been such an inspiration to them and her belief in them and her smile have helped them immensely in their recovery process. Deena truly lives a favorite quote signed at the end of her emails: "No day should pass in a person's life without an act of charity." BIS is so thankful to have her working with us.

Congratulations to Deena for her accomplishment. She joins the BIS volunteer ranks as the second recipient of a Volunteer Fairfax Award. In 2006, the Speaker's Bureau was recognized as most outstanding adult volunteer group.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**All Year 2009**

### ***Brain Injury Services Celebrates 20 Years!***

Stay tuned for events to celebrate our success. For more information, contact: Karen Luffred, 703-451-8881, ext 223.

**June 4-5, 2009**

### ***The 2009 Williamsburg Conference: "Rehabilitation of the Adult and Child with Brain Injury: Practical Solutions to Real World Problems"***

at Williamsburg Hospitality House, Williamsburg, VA. Visit [www.tbiconferences.org](http://www.tbiconferences.org).

**June 6, 2009**

### ***The National TBI Caregivers Conference***

in Williamsburg, VA. For more information, visit [www.tbiconferences.org](http://www.tbiconferences.org).

**August 26, 2009**

### ***The Annual Volunteer Recognition Event***

at The Waterford in Springfield, VA. For more information, contact: Michelle Thyen at 703-451-8881 ext 232.

**September 27, 2009**

### ***6th Annual Kit Callahan's Miracle Mile 10K Run/Walk & Kid's Fun Run***

at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. For more information, contact: Karen Luffred, 703-451-8881, ext 223 or visit [www.kitsmiraclemile.org](http://www.kitsmiraclemile.org).

## ADVOCACY UPDATE



### New Cooking Group!

*Come join us at Let's Dish to prepare meals for you and your family! Specially designed for survivors of brain injury. RSVP is required, space is limited. View the monthly menu at [www.letsdish.com/menus/storemenu.aspx](http://www.letsdish.com/menus/storemenu.aspx).*

### Meets 3rd Thursday of each month, 1:00-3:00pm

Let's Dish, Fairfax  
Contact Lisa Garver at (703) 451-8881 x224

### Recovery Group

*Helping Yourself after Mild Traumatic Brain Injury or Concussion*

### Meets Monthly, 10:30am-12:00pm

Braddock Hall, adjacent to Kings Park Library  
9002 Burke Lake Road, Burke, VA 22015

- **May 13, 2009** — How Do I Take Care of Myself?
- **June 10, 2009** — How Do I Find Me?
- **July 8, 2009** — What are the Financial and Legal Resources?

### Caregivers Support Group

*For Caregivers of survivors of brain injuries — respite available on-site*

### Meets 1st and 3rd Monday of the month

Contact Earl Durant (703) 437-9993

### Adjustment Group

*For Survivors of brain injury*

### Meets 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month

Brain Injury Services  
8136 Old Keene Mill Road, Suite B102  
Springfield, VA 22152

Contact Earl Durant (703) 437-9993

**New groups are being formed!** More to come on groups for families and cognitive rehabilitation.

## People In the News

Our very own Board of Directors Vice President, **Barbara S. Williams, Esq.**, of Barbara S. Williams PC, Leesburg, has been named one of Virginia Lawyers Weekly's 2009 "Influential Women of Virginia". This year, the awards recognize the outstanding efforts of 27 women in the commonwealth who are making notable contributions to their chosen professions, their communities and society at large. Barbara has selflessly served on our Board for over 10 years. Way to go, Barbara!



**Barbara S. Williams, Esq.**



**Mac Fedge**

If you were watching NBC's Today Show on April 21st, you may have seen BIS consumer and Speaker's Bureau member **Mac Fedge** being interviewed by Tom Costello on the dangers of aggressive driving. Mac sustained a brain injury when he was hit head on by an aggressive driver eight years ago. Mac's Speaker's Bureau skills were in prime form! The segment can be viewed at <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/26184891/vp/30322098#30322098>.

## FOCUS ON

## PEDS

### Upcoming **REBUILD FAMILIES** Group

- **June 6, 2009** — Helping Your Child Survive Adolescence  
Conference Rooms D, E, & F at Inova Fairfax Hospital. *A Kids' Activity Program is held during the meeting.* To register, please contact Betsy Zeigler at (703) 451-8881 x 229.

### Pediatric Program Picnic

Plans are underway for our annual picnic in July. Information will be sent to client families soon.

### New Staff Member

The Pediatric Program welcomes Brooke Annessa who will join the staff as a case manager on June 9th! Brooke was an intern in the program during the 2007/2008 academic year. We are delighted to have her as part of the Pediatric Team!!



## VOLUNTEER CORNER

### Save the Date! Saturday, June 13th

**The Third Annual Bob Martel Mini-Golf Classic is back by popular demand.** Long time PALS match Eric Stewart and Bob Martel challenge you to come out and play your best mini golf game and join us afterwards for a fun picnic. *For more info, contact Michelle Thyen at [mthyen@braininjurysvcs.org](mailto:mthyen@braininjurysvcs.org) or 703-451-8881, ext. 232.*

#### Welcome and Thank You New Volunteers for 2009

- Michelle Russell
- Goli Parvizi
- Sara Masouleh
- Ericka Ward
- Natee Winder
- Lisa Wardlaw
- Rita Murtaugh
- Matt Odhner
- Astrid Stankus
- Robin Smith
- Nidhi Sachdeva
- Janis Wesenick

### Speaking of *the Speaker's Bureau...*

**The Speaker's Bureau is very busy** these days with a full schedule of presentations throughout the community. So far in 2009, the bureau has presented at Rolls Royce of America (a presentation through United Way), Neuropsychology Associates of Fairfax, Ashburn Psychological Associates, McLean Community Center's youth program and has upcoming presentations at GWU, Catholic University and Argosy University. *If you are interested in learning more about the Speaker's Bureau, please contact Michelle Thyen at [mthyen@braininjurysvcs.org](mailto:mthyen@braininjurysvcs.org).*

The Speaker's Bureau is also beginning a brand new project called **PHOTOVOICE**. This is a cutting edge approach to promote the healing process after brain injury through photographs. The bureau members have agreed to begin capturing photographs of their surroundings and writing about their experiences on their own journeys. *For more information, please send an email to [biama@biama.org](mailto:biama@biama.org) or [mthyen@braininjurysvcs.org](mailto:mthyen@braininjurysvcs.org).*

### Montgomery House Improved

On Saturday, April 25th, over 50 volunteers from The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax volunteered their time and efforts at Brain Injury Services' residential home, "Montgomery House", as part of Rebuilding Together's volunteer event for home repair and improvements across the region.

Rebuilding Together, (formerly Christmas in April), helps to recruit and organize volunteers who donate their time to make improvements in the homes and living conditions of low income citizens in the community. Montgomery House provides housing for five BIS clients as part of a partnership between Brain Injury Services and RPJ Housing, who provides property management. The house serves as a transitional living program towards fully independent living.



On April 25th and preparation days prior, volunteers donated their time and home repair expertise to determine ways in which Montgomery House could be made even better. The repairs and improvements are far too great to mention them all but included installation of grab bars in the home, painting, electrical repair, fixing broken doors, plumbing, as well as cleaning and removing no longer needed items from the property.

BIS would like to thank Rebuilding Together and RPJ Housing. We would also like to extend a special thank you to each and every volunteer who came that day. The improvements are amazing and the Residents are fortunate and deeply gracious to have had so many people who were willing to volunteer their Saturday to help making their home a nicer place to live. Thank you all!

## Mark Your Calendar!



Join us on **Sunday, September 27th** for the 6th Annual Kit Callahan's Miracle Mile, 10K Run/

Walk and Survivor's Circle of Hope. This event rejoices in the triumphs of survivors with brain injuries; provides outreach and education about brain injuries; promotes prevention; and raises funds for Brain Injury Services.

Last year, over 350 participants came out to support survivors and to cheer them on as they celebrated their success. Our goal this year is to attract over 500 participants. New to this year's event will be a FREE FUN RUN for kids under 10 years old. In addition, the Brain Injury Awareness Fair will be expanded with more vendors and activities. For more information please visit [www.kitsmiraclemile.org](http://www.kitsmiraclemile.org).



### ADAPT Clubhouse Fundraiser

March 1, 2009 – June 30, 2009

**DINE AT ANY** Glory Days Grill, and they will contribute **10%** of your total food purchases to ADAPT! Simply ask your server for a copy of your **guest check** (not credit card receipt), and mail it to:

**ADAPT Clubhouse c/o Keith Robinson  
4100 Mohawk Lane, Alexandria, VA 22309**

Questions? Call Keith at 703-799-9401.

*Donation cannot apply to sales tax, alcoholic beverages, or to any guest check that receives any other type of discount, coupon, offer or promotion. See Fundraiser Rules for full details at*

[WWW.GLORYDAYSGRILL.COM](http://WWW.GLORYDAYSGRILL.COM).



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