



Indiana “Brain Beat” Newsletter

May 2023



Letter from the President:

Hello! Warmer weather is here and flowers are blooming!! Hooray! ☀️

March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month and this year was no different. Indiana marked the event sharing important education and awareness messages advocating for increased funding for the TBI Act, TBI model systems of care and other coordinated services for individuals impacted by brain injury. By bringing awareness to identification, diagnosis, treatment, and research for brain injury, we can improve outcomes and lead to better quality of life for so many. The Brain Injury Association of Indiana in partnership with the Brain Injury Association of America continues to support year-round activities and events for fundraising, education, and support. I personally invite you to join us throughout the year in ways that suit your individual needs. Attend a support group meeting, join us for Trivia Night, play in our Wiffle Ball game this Fall, lead a fundraiser, or donate money to help us fulfill our mission. Whatever is best for you.

In this newsletter you will find updated information on the Indiana Board of Directors, an exciting introduction to our new national Executive Director for the BIAA, changes to Indiana Resource Facilitation, dates for upcoming events and more. You can also check out our website at www.biaindiana.org or follow us on Facebook.

Happy Summer to everyone!

Sincerely,

Wendy Waldman, BSW CBIST
President - Brain Injury Association of Indiana



Brain Injury programs across the US celebrated March as Brain Injury Awareness Month. The Brain Injury Association of America leads the nation in observing Brain Injury Awareness Month in March each year. BIAA selects a theme each year for the month and you can see in the logo above this year is again “More than my brain injury.”

Indiana’s own Darcy Keith, an individual who experienced a brain injury 31 years ago has become a professional speaker on brain injury nationally. Darcy was asked to participate in BIAA’s Brain Injury Awareness Month kickoff event. She shared her story on You Tube. Darcy is a longtime advocate for brain injury awareness. She is former member of the BIAI Board of Directors and currently serves on advisory councils for both BIAA and the Ohio Valley Center for Brain Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation at Ohio State University. Locally, she is a member of the Fishers Advisory Community on Disability. Darcy told BIAI that Brain Injury Awareness Month is important to her because people are excited and united about one cause, brain injury. There is a unique, positive energy surrounding brain injury discussion and events in March. Her message to share this year is “Never give up!” Darcy states that even if you are told there is only a small window for improvement, please know you can still make improvements! She continues to improve 31 years after her initial injury. So never give up!

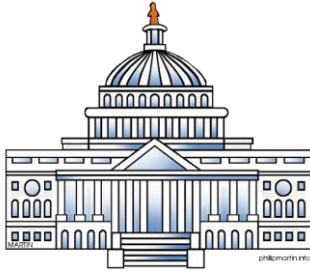
Visit www.DarcyKeith.com to learn more about Darcy and her work.



Andre Carson Speaks on Brain Injury Awareness Month

Andre Carson, US representative from Indiana’s 7th District, serves on the Congressional TBI Brain Injury Task Force in Washington. Rep. Carson offered the following statement to the Brain Injury Association of Indiana in support of Brain Injury Awareness Month. “Brain injuries can be devastating to individuals and also entire families. That’s why I’m committed to supporting improved research and providing ongoing support for those impacted. Together, we can remove stigmas, advocate for patients, and ensure a brighter future for all.”

Thank you Representative Carson, for advocating and speaking up for individuals impacted by brain injury!



Congressional Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force

U.S. Representative Bill Pascrell addressed Brain Injury Awareness Month 2023 on a website at RollCall.com. Rep. Bill Pascrell is the founder and co-chair of the Congressional Traumatic Brain Injury Task Force which has been active since 2001. Each March we observe Brain injury Awareness Month to promote learning more about brain injury and work together to end its dangerous effects. He went on to state there is no question that more of us understand the dangers of even the mildest of brain injuries, and concussions, than we did 10 years ago. While enhanced awareness is a positive outcome, much more remains to be done. More resources are needed today to support cutting-edge research and development for effective treatments for concussion. This year, we will push for an “all hands on pump” approach and invite more stakeholders and partners to join the fight against TBI and develop innovative prevention and treatment strategies.

Changes to Indiana Resource Facilitation

In December the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana made the decision to discontinue offering the resource facilitation program funded through Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation for individuals diagnosed with a brain who want to return to work or school. Resource facilitation provides “case management” like assistance to help people navigate through resources available in their local For community and was available statewide. It was a huge loss for people currently being served and those who had been referred to the program. Fortunately, EasterSeals Crossroads of Indiana identified the need to continue this program and announced they would take over administration of the program. They quickly hired many of the RF staff members and restored services to people that had previously been served. Soon they were taking on new referrals as well. Thank you to EasterSeals Crossroads for seeing the value of this assistance program and for the commitment to make it available in Indiana.



For more information on this program, contact Easter Seals Crossroads at 317.466.1000.



Shop to support BIAI and buy beautiful gifts!

Right Hemisphere Designs

Right Hemisphere Designs (RHD) is a company created by two dedicated and passionate brain injury professionals who seized an opportunity to raise funds for specific non-profit organizations dedicated to brain injury rehabilitation and community support. RHD creates homemade beautiful jewelry, stationary, apparel, tumblers, glassware & more & sells it on their website.



RHD donates 100% of profits from all sales to non-profit organizations dedicated to causes. Visit their website to see the incredible merchandise they have available. www.righthemispheredesigns.com.

Brain Injury Association of America Names New CEO and President Rick Willis



Through its existence, the BIAA has become the largest and longest-running organization that seeks to spread awareness and further research, treatment, and education on traumatic brain injuries. BIAA seeks to improve the lives of over multiple million Americans whose lives are influenced by brain injuries and does this by advocating for equal access to the necessary care in this realm.

As of December 1, 2022, Rick Willis has become the new CEO and president of the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) following a unanimous endorsement by the Board of Directors. Mr. Willis fulfills the role after the retirement of Susan H. Connors, president of over 17 years. Ms. Connors has brought significant improvement to the BIAA over the years, especially in the area of outreach. The Chairwoman of the BIAA board of directors, Shana De Caro, had the following to say regarding the transition in leadership: "The organization is indebted to Connors, for her extraordinary efforts to strengthen and expand the reach of the organization. This is a solid foundation upon which Rick Willis will be able to grow the impact and lead BIAA into the future."

Mr. Willis has more than two decades worth of leadership experience in various levels of the volunteer organization sector. Mr. Willis graduated from the University of Tennessee, and has since worked with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, Diabetes Association, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and Melbourne, Australia-based Cancer Council Victoria. Mr. Willis is transitioning

to his role with the BIAA from his work with the Arthritis Foundation where he served as the Senior Vice President of Community Engagement and Revenue Strategy. Mr. Willis has accomplished a great deal with the Arthritis Foundation, including the delivery of a \$54 million fundraising portfolio. Mr. Willis said the following regarding work with those affected by brain injuries: "I'm profoundly inspired by the multitudes of caring people who give so generously of their time, talents, and resources to help those whose lives have been affected by brain injury. Not only do they fuel the mission, but they also drive our success. I'm eager to work alongside them, building upon BIAA's distinguished legacy, to achieve new heights and an even brighter future for those we serve."



2023 Brain Injury of Association of Indiana Board of Directors

New terms for the Board of Directors for the Brain Injury Association of Indiana (BIAI) were announced January 1, 2023. Current and new board members work to continue the mission of the association to reduce the incident and impact of brain injury through education, advocacy, support, prevention, and facilitating inter-agency commitment and collaboration. Members envision that people with brain injury and their caregivers will be served, understood, empowered, and supported in living full and meaningful lives. The following individuals compose the 2023 Board of Directors:

Wendy Waldman- President
Wendy Pullen-Secretary
Sachin Mehta MD
Dawn Westfall
Tranicia Hankins
Nancy Ritter
Brian Norton
Luis Aju
Marlene Gregory

Kristin Hull-Vice President
Dan Buba-Treasurer
Gary Turner
Heidi Whitrock
Summer Ibarra Ph.D
Kent Winingham
Lisa Speidel
Karen Thomas

Membership

Stay in the loop and become a member of the Brain Injury Association of Indiana (BIAI). For a small annual membership fee, enjoy discounted rates to events, monthly email updates, get BI support group updates and more. Receive the BIAI "BrainBeat" newsletter and the Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) magazine, "The Challenge". Also, be the first to hear about what is new in the brain injury community, such as group activities, fundraisers, educational seminars, and other opportunities to get involved. Membership rates are as follows; \$5 for survivors and caregivers; \$25 for supporters; \$15 for students; \$45 for all service providers; and \$100 for any company or organization.

You will also get your own BIAI Membership Card sent to you to keep. Check the BIAI website at www.biaindiana.org for more information.

Thank You!

BIAI thanks the Sons of the American Legion for their extremely kind and generous donation they made to BIAI. This generous gift will allow BIAI to continue to move forward with our mission to help Hoosiers impacted by brain injury. During the past few years, the Sons of the American Legion have been helping BIAI provide information and support to individuals impacted by brain injury and increase public awareness. Thank you to the Sons of the American Legion for all of your hard work.

BIAI would like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to Sons of the American Legion!

And thank you to our official BIAI Corporate Sponsors:



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