

HeadSTRONG

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

A Survivor's Story

It Can Happen to Anyone

Written by Craig Eliot Cisney, *Adult Survivor*

My name is Craig Eliot Cisney and I am proud to have served as a board member for the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado. My family is no stranger to injuries to the brain. Two of my three brothers had concussions as teenagers. My uncle suffered a brain injury during a tonsillectomy at the age of 16 and spent the rest of his life in an institution. My father-in-law also suffered permanent brain injury as a result of a surgical error in 1992 and has required permanent care ever since. Most recently, our eight-year-old son received a concussion playing soccer last summer.

As a teenager in the 1980's, getting your "bell rung" was just a part of playing football. (How wrong we now know that thinking was.) I had multiple concussions from playing and a couple more in my 20's from skiing without a helmet—one fall left me unconscious and alone on a ski run. Like many people, I thought it wouldn't happen to me and failed to recognize how the cumulative effects were disrupting my daily life. I got the message in 2010

when I broke my neck and back and received a much more serious brain injury that landed me in ICU. This time I temporarily lost the use of the left side of my body and had a limited ability to speak, read or think. Message received!

My story is nothing to compare with that of my brother-in-law Jonny. In 1990, Jonny was trying to do the right thing and break-up a fight when he was punched in the head. He was left in a coma and his parents were given the prognosis that their son would never walk, talk, feed himself or do anything that resembled a normal life. After 4+ years in a rehab hospital he learned to walk, talk and eventually even went back to his job as a civil engineer. Jonny is truly a miracle and the most positive person you would ever meet. His is a living example of what Winston Churchill said: *"Never, never, never give up!"*

BIAC asked Jonny and I to share some advice...so here goes:

Advice for those who have had a past or recent brain injury...

- Take it slow...don't rush your brain. Stimuli like reading, watching TV, using a computer or smart phone can be overwhelming.
- Be positive and patient. After you have a brain injury you might not have as much patience...but that is ok.



Craig Eliot Cisney, *Survivor*

- It is ok to get frustrated. Taking a few deep breaths can really make a difference.
- Know that you are not alone.

Advice for parents or family members of someone with a brain injury...

- Be supportive! Because of their brain injury, your loved one may become much more emotional & irritable. They may have little or no patience and can become highly sensitive to the simplest things, including light, sounds, crowds, or even smells.
- Educate yourself. Keep up with the latest studies and medical breakthroughs about the brain and new brain injury treatments or therapies.

**"Never, never,
never give up!"**

(continued on page 5)

Who We Are

The Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado is the go-to resource for help and services for survivors of an injury to the brain, their families, and providers.

What We Do

Client Programs

- Case Management
- Recreation Programs
- Classes including art, music therapy, yoga, brain injury basics, cooking, and mindfulness
- Emergency Utility Bill Assistance
- Support Groups
- Online Resource Directory
- Education Support

Professional Programs

- Brain Injury Professional Networks
- Community Outreach and Education

Other Programs & Fundraisers

- Public Policy
- Quarterly Newsletters
- Reinhardt/Bruno Golf Tournament



Brain Injury Research

Actively Recruiting Research Studies

NEW Research Study for Traumatic Brain Injury

Craig Hospital has partnered with other researchers who are exploring the use of stem cells as a potential treatment option for chronic motor deficits after traumatic brain injury (TBI). This study, called STEMTRA (A Study of Modified Stem Cells in Traumatic Brain Injury), is an investigational stem cell treatment for patients with a persistent motor deficit caused by TBI. One purpose of this study is to determine the safety and efficacy of surgically implanted modified stem cells into the brain. A second purpose of this study is to help determine if stem cells can repair and regenerate regions of the brain that have been damaged, which could help patients regain motor skills lost following a TBI.

To volunteer for participation in the STEMTRA study, patients must:

- be 18 to 75 years of age,
- be at least one year post- traumatic brain injury,
- be their own guardian/own legal decision maker,
- have specific impairment affecting motor function of one arm and/or leg,
- be willing to travel out-of-state for surgical procedure (travel will be paid for by study),
- be willing to come to Craig Hospital for several assessments over the course of one year.

If you would like more information from Craig Hospital or to see if you qualify for this study, please contact:

- Clare Morey, Clinical Research Coordinator at **303-789-8621** or cmorey@craighospital.org
- Angie Philippus, Research Coordinator at **303-789-8030** or aphilippus@craighospital.org



Coalition for Recovery and Innovation in Traumatic Brain Injury Care Across the Lifespan (CRITICAL)

Project Summary

Individuals with TBI have more health issues than the general population and greater need for effective health promotion to prevent secondary conditions. However, most TBI-related research is focused on identifying new knowledge regarding basic science. Insufficient time and resources have been allocated to exploring strategies aimed at assisting TBI survivors and their caregivers to negotiate long-term recovery.

Improving patient outcomes and supporting long-term recovery demands the collaboration of scientists, clinicians, and those living with and caring for those with TBI.

Gavin Attwood (CEO) and Mark Condon (Statewide Support Group Coordinator) are members of the patient and stakeholder advisory committee that will help steer patient-centered TBI outcomes research.

The CRITICAL advisory committee is charged with developing resources for empowering individuals with cognitive

impairments to collaborate on research as well as lead the formation of a new patient-centered research agenda.

The project objectives are:

- To establish the CRITICAL and develop its capacity to collaborate on clinical effectiveness research
- Develop strategies and resources for engaging individuals with cognitive impairments in research
- Develop a national research agenda for improving the lives of those living with moderate to severe TBI

Representatives from the Veterans Health Administration, the Craig Hospital Brain Injury Program, the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado, MINDSOURCE, and TBI Model Systems have committed to recruit patient partners, support dissemination of results, and/or participate in the coalition.

Learn more at: ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/departments/pmr/Research/Pages/CRITICAL.aspx ■

NEW

Classifieds

CUSTOM BUILT BY LIGHTFOOT CYCLE

Since bought, new tubes and better tires have been added. The overall length is 93" or 7' 9". The frame width is 32" and the width of the two chairs is 42.5". Seat height is 23". Located in Colorado Springs. Paid \$6,800; asking price is \$6000.
For more info, contact Pete at pminck@comcast.net or 719-243-5441

Disclaimer: BIAC has no stake or involvement in the classifieds ads other than to connect people based on their offerings and needs.



March is Brain Injury Awareness Month



An acquired brain injury

is damage to the brain caused by events after birth, including Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), brain tumor, anoxia, infection and poisoning.



Every 23 seconds
a person sustains an injury to the brain in the United States

The Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado recognizes every individual living with an acquired injury to the brain.
We ask that you help us raise awareness for the over 500,000 survivors living in Colorado by sharing at least 10 ribbons of knowledge with someone new.



Falls are the leading cause

of TBI, accounting for over 47% of all TBI-related ER visits, hospitalizations, and deaths in the U.S.



On average,
1 American dies from stroke every 4 minutes



Brains do not finish developing until the mid-20's

The frontal lobe, one of the last parts of your brain to develop, is where "adult thinking skills" reside.



An anoxic brain injury

is when the brain is deprived of oxygen for long enough that brain cells begin to die.



Encephalitis is inflammation of the brain, often due to viral infections. It can cause flu-like symptoms (fever or severe headache), as well as confusion, seizures, or problems with senses/movement.



Effects of brain injury can include impaired thinking, memory, movement, sensation (e.g., vision or hearing), or emotional functioning (e.g., personality changes or depression).



Approximately
90% of concussions are not associated with a loss of consciousness



Males are almost 2x as likely as women to sustain a TBI



Fatigue and cognitive challenges are the two most commonly reported outcomes of Coloradans with brain injury.



Together, We Can Shine a Light on this Invisible Disease

For more information regarding brain injuries, please visit BIAColorado.org or call us at 303-355-9969

A Survivor's Story

(continued from cover)

Advice for everyone...

- Helmets work...wear one! If you or your kids cycle, skate, ski or snowboard, you have to wear a helmet...or "brain bucket" as our kids call them.
- Don't say, 'that won't happen to me'. According to statistics from the CDC, an estimated 2.8 million people, just like you, suffer traumatic brain injuries in the U.S. every year.

It is so exciting to know how much more brain injury awareness there is now around the globe and how much we are learning. Please support the amazing work that the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado is doing. ■



Jonny Boylan, Survivor

Support Group Spotlight

Pueblo Brain Injury Support Group

How and why was the Pueblo Brain Injury Support Group created?

Pueblo Brain Injury Support Group started over 25 years ago. We have had many leaders -- a nun, community parents, Dr. James Evans as well as the Parkview staff to present, and group participants who continue to lead the group today.

When and where does the group meet?

Pueblo Brain Injury Support Group meets the second Wednesday of each month from 5:30 - 7:00 pm.

Parkview Medical Center, 400 W. 17th St., North Annex Columbine Room, Pueblo, CO 81003.

What is the main goal for the members?

This past year the group went outside their comfort zones and challenged themselves to attend camps, art activities, participating in the Manitou Walk for the second year, and raising funds. Assisting us in our annual goals is Parkview Medical Center, their staff and those who visit the hospital daily in our community.

Then there are those of us who graduated, others going to graduate from college, started their own business and those starting their own new journey.



So, the goals are different but remembering that keeping each brain injury person independent, continue to want to thrive for whatever they dream and advocate. Yep! That is our group!

How can people get involved?

The community of Pueblo is a people who support people. Our group has received support from local businesses, community advocates and others who support brain injury awareness. How can you get involved? Share and support that Pueblo CO has a Brain Injury Support Group and help educate our community. Support Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado as they are our voice in government.

5 Reasons to Get Outdoors This Spring

1 Improved Short-Term Memory

In one study, University of Michigan students were given a brief memory test, then divided into two groups.

One group took a walk around an arboretum, and the other half took a walk down a city street. When the participants returned and did the test again, those who had walked among trees did almost 20% percent better than the first time. The ones who had taken in city sights instead did not consistently improve.

Another similar study on depressed individuals also found that walks in nature boosted working memory much more than walks in urban environments.

Sources: Psychological Science, 2008; Journal of Affective Disorders, 2013

2 Restored Mental Energy

You know that feeling where your brain seems to be sputtering to a halt? Researchers call that “mental fatigue.”

One thing that can help get your mind back into gear is exposing it to restorative environments, which, research has found, generally means the great outdoors. One study found that people’s mental energy bounced back even when they just looked at pictures of nature. (Pictures of city scenes had no such effect.)

Studies have also found that natural beauty can elicit feelings of awe, which is one of the surest ways to experience a mental boost.

Sources: Journal of Environmental Psychology, 1995; Journal of Environmental Psychology, 2005; Psychological Science, 2012



3 Stress Relief

Tensed and stressed? Head for the trees. One study found that students who camped in the forest for two nights had lower levels of cortisol – a hormone often used as a marker for stress – than those who spent that time in the city.

In another study, researchers found a decrease in both heart rate and levels of cortisol in subjects in the forest when compared to those in the city. “Stressful states can be relieved by forest therapy,” they concluded.

Among office workers, even the view of nature out a window is associated with lower stress and higher job satisfaction.

Sources: Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research, 2007; Environmental Health and Preventative Medicine, 2010; Japanese Journal of Hygiene, 2011; Biomedical and Environmental Sciences, 2012

4 Sharper Thinking and Creativity

“Imagine a therapy that had no known side effects, was readily available, and could improve your cognitive functioning at zero cost.” That’s the dramatic opening to a 2008 paper describing the promise of so-called “nature therapy” – or, as a non-academic might call it, “time outside.”



When college students were asked to repeat sequences of numbers back to the researchers, they were much more accurate after a walk in nature. This finding built on previous research that showed how nature can restore attention and memory.

Another study found that people immersed in nature for four days – significantly more time than a lunchtime walk in the park – boosted their performance on a creative problem-solving test by 50%.

While the research suggests the possibility of a positive relationship between creative thinking and the outdoors, it wasn't enough to determine whether the effects were due to "increased exposure to nature, decreased exposure to technology, or other factors."

Sources: Psychological Science, 2008; PLOS ONE, 2012

5 Improved Mental Health

Anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues may all be eased by some time in the great outdoors – especially when that's combined with exercise. (This is to be expected, to some extent, as both greenery and exercise are known to reduce stress.)

One study found that walks in the forest were specifically associated with decreased levels of anxiety and bad moods, and another found that outdoor walks could be "useful clinically as a supplement to existing treatments" for major depressive disorder.

"Every green environment improved both self-esteem and mood," found an analysis of 10 earlier studies about so-called "green exercise," and "the mentally ill had one of the greatest self-esteem improvements." The presence of water made the positive effects even stronger.

Sources: Environmental Science and Technology, 2010; Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine, 2012; Journal of Affective Disorders, 2013

Excerpt from Business Insider Online article (<http://www.businessinsider.com/scientific-benefits-of-nature-outdoors-2016-4/>) ■



2018 PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

BIAC's 34th Annual Conference will be held this November in Denver. Our focus will be on Behavioral Health and Brain Injury. The conference audience is typically comprised of mid-level professionals, such as rehabilitation specialists, mental health professionals, social workers, and advocates. This year, the conference committee is seeking qualified speakers to submit proposals for presentations. Please visit our website for more details about criteria and topics:

BIAColorado.org/2018-professional-conference-request-for-proposals/

Upcoming Events and Classes

Classes and Workshops

For registration and questions, contact Heather at **720-907-1455** or Heather@BIAColorado.org.

Unless otherwise noted, classes and workshops are held at BIAC's Denver office at 1325 S. Colorado Blvd, B-300, Denver, CO 80222.

Music Therapy

Every Thursday
10:15 - 11:15am

Art Classes

Every 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month
10:00 - 11:30am

Needlework

Work to improve your fine motor skills and challenge your brain in new ways through various forms of needlework.

Every 3rd Tuesday of the month,
January - June 2018
10:00 - 11:00am

The Mindful Brain

Learn how mindfulness can help promote wellness in body and mind and help cope with the challenges of living with a brain injury or concussion.

Every 1st Tuesday of the month,
January - June 2018
10:00 - 11:15am

Adaptive Yoga

This specialized yoga class is adapted specifically for adults living with a brain

injury in northern Colorado. Props such as chairs, bolsters, blankets, blocks, and fit balls are used to support the stability, safety, and comfort of each participant. Each class will provide the experience of various breathing techniques, mindful movement that includes both strengthening and stretching exercises, and relaxation techniques.

Every Wednesday from March 21 - April 25, 2018 (6 weeks)
10:30 - 11:30am

Raintree Athletic Club
2555 S. Shields St.
Fort Collins, CO 80526

Recreation Programs & Social Activities

For registration and questions, contact Linda at **303-562-0401** or Linda@BIAColorado.org.

Challenge by Choice Multi-Day Recreation Programs

River rafting, ropes course, hand cycling, wall climbing, theme dance. Program staffed by volunteers, RN, and Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) experienced staff/instructors and interns.

Cost: \$1,890

Challenge by Choice #1
June 10 - June 15, 2018

Challenge by Choice #2
July 8 - July 13, 2018

Challenge by Choice #3
July 29 - August 3, 2018

Challenge by Choice #4
August 12 - August 17, 2018

Ruby & Horse Thief Canyons Multi-Day Canoe Excursion

Join us for a gentle float downstream and experience rafting, camping, fishing, and more. Journey begins & ends at the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center.

Cost: \$970

August 27 - August 31, 2018



Brain Injury Professional Networking (BIPN) Meetings

The Brain Injury Professional Networking (BIPN) groups seek to "improve the availability of services and supports for individuals with brain injury, promote the ongoing sustainability of community support systems, and share resources."

Each BIPN group is unique to its geographic region and strives to serve its community/region based upon identified needs.

Boulder-Longmont

Contact Tim Schaaf at
Tim@BoulderShelter.org or
303-468-4321

Denver

April 27, 2018

11:45am - 1:00pm

Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado
1325 S Colorado Blvd, B-300
Denver, CO 80222

Contact Liz Gerdeman at 303-562-3298
or Liz@BIAColorado.org

Colorado Springs

March 20, 2018

April 17, 2018

May 15, 2018

11:30am - 2:00pm

Health South Rehab Hospital
325 Parkside Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Contact Carol Roche, MA, CBIS at
719-330-3624 or
carol.supportforsuccess@gmail.com
or Carol Cochran, CBIS at
carol@BIAColorado.org

Northern Colorado

May 7, 2018

2:30 - 4:30 pm

Northern Colorado Rehab Hospital
4401 Union St.
Johnstown, CO 80534

Contact Sarah Beetch at 970-491-3733
or Sarah.S.Beetch@colostate.edu

Western Slope

Contact Audrey McNeely at
Audrey@BIAColorado.org

Statewide Pediatric BIPN

Quarterly

Contact Liz Gerdeman at
Liz@BIAColorado.org or 303-562-3298



Save THE Date

Pikes Peak Challenge 2018

September 8

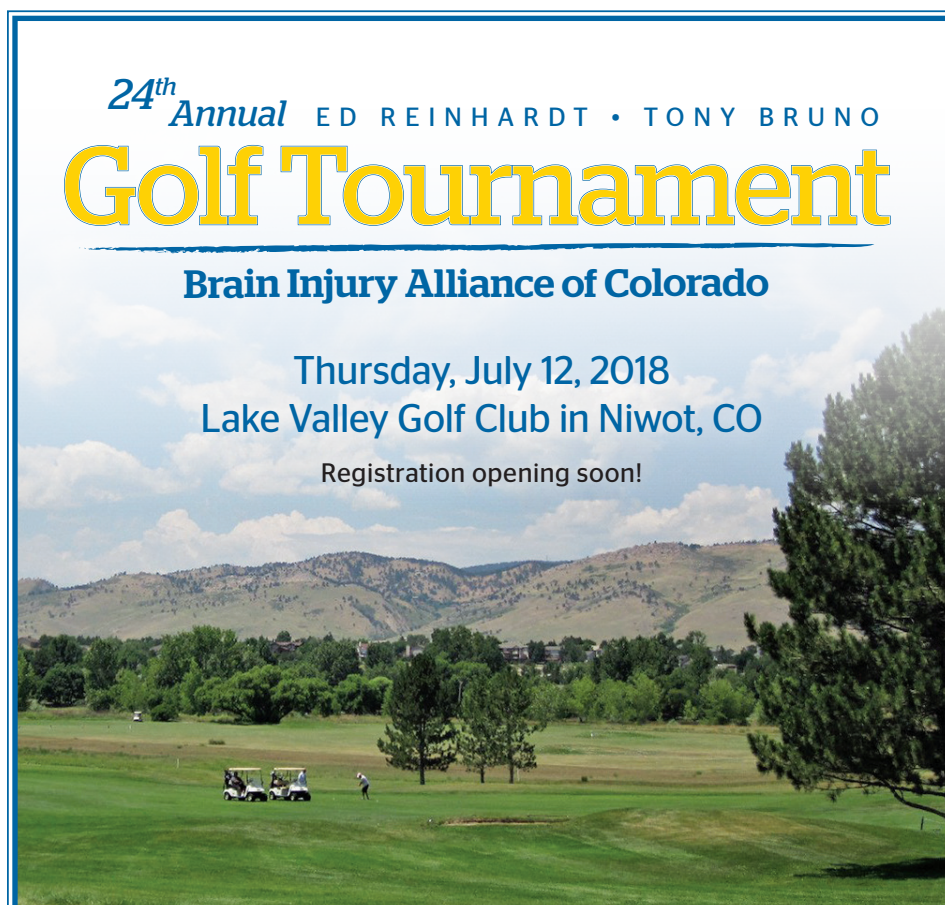
Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado proudly presents the 33RD annual Pikes Peak Challenge

HIKE HIKE WALK

REGISTRATION OPENING SOON!

PikesPeakChallenge.com

 **BIAC**



24th Annual ED REINHARDT • TONY BRUNO

Golf Tournament

Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado

Thursday, July 12, 2018
Lake Valley Golf Club in Niwot, CO

Registration opening soon!



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ColoradoInjuryLaw.com



A Wildflower Assisted Living and Care Homes offers three locations that provide a life wonderful experience for those with traumatic brain injuries. We have 24 hour on-site staff and are RN owned and operated. We accept private pay, workman's, Medicaid, and long-term care insurance.

AWildflowerAssistedLiving.com | 720-628-9092

Interested in Advertising in Head**STRONG**?

Contact Gavin Attwood, CEO
303-562-3199 or Gavin@BIAColorado.org

Resource Highlight

Colorado Talking Book Library

For some, reading after a brain injury can be a struggle. Vision issues, challenges with focus and attention, and comprehension difficulties are all possible side effects of the injury. Luckily, there are wonderful free ways to overcome these challenges and still enjoy books, magazines, and even keep up with the weekly grocery ads in audio format.

What

Recorded books and magazines from a national collection that includes bestsellers, classics, mysteries, westerns, poetry, biographies, informational works, religious literature, children's books, and foreign language materials. You can also subscribe to more than 70 popular magazines.

How Much? Free!

How Do You Listen?

The Colorado Talking Book Library will loan you specialized equipment, which you may keep as long as you are actively using the recorded books and magazines. You can also listen on a smart phone with an app!

How to Sign Up

You can find an application on the web at tinyurl.com/MyCTBLApp or ask your case manager to help.



Learn More at cde.state.co.us/ctbl/

Staff in the Spotlight

Linda Heesch, *Recreation Programs Coordinator*

How did you get involved with BIAC?

17 years ago this month, I was looking for something new in my career after working as a legal assistant for a number of years. There was an ad in the newspaper for a part time receptionist for BIAC and little did I know that phone call would result in work that I have grown to love.

What is your role at BIAC?

Recreation Coordinator

What has been your favorite project at BIAC?

Not one favorite, but overall, working on new program ideas that hopefully will bring pleasure and confidence to those we serve.

What is your favorite thing to do outside of the office?

Riding my bike. For a short time, I am totally in charge of my destination. ■



Small gifts can
make a **BIG** impact!

YES! I want to support Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado
by donating \$ _____

- ☐ Charge my credit card
☐ One Time ☐ Monthly
☐ Please find my enclosed check

Name as it appears on card

Address

City State Zip

Signature

Credit Card Number

Expiration CCV

Mail completed form to Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado
1325 South Colorado Boulevard, Suite B-300, Denver, CO 80222

Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado is a 501(c)(3) organization.
All donations are 100% tax deductible. EIN # 84-0893049



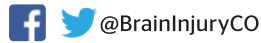
Donate online at
BIAColorado.org



Brain Injury Alliance

C O L O R A D O


1325 South Colorado Boulevard
Suite B-300
Denver, CO 80222
info@BIAColorado.org
BIAColorado.org



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