

HeadSTRONG

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.

A Survivor's Story

Game Changing TBI

Written by Cathryn (Cat) Anthony

The morning of Super Bowl Sunday 2015, on a Colorado highway, there was a distracted driver in a pick-up truck that didn't notice traffic was slowing down and slammed into me and my family.

Thank goodness my family checked out okay after an ambulance ride to the Emergency Room (ER). I felt confused and in a fog, but ER staff missed my TBI due to other car accident symptoms. I was released and sent home.

The next morning I woke up with a baseball size hematoma on the back of my head. Concerned, I called my primary physician's office. They told me they couldn't get me in for a few days. I waited a few days for my scheduled appointment. Finally, when meeting with my doctor he said he believed I had a concussion. He recommended I see a neurologist and told me to rest.

I tried pretty much everything my doctors recommended and only improved a little bit. Two years post-concussion, I was told my TBI symptoms were permanent.

I lost my job, my freedom, and much of who I was. There are major limitations on what I now can do. My TBI symptoms have left me disabled and unable to live my pre-TBI life.

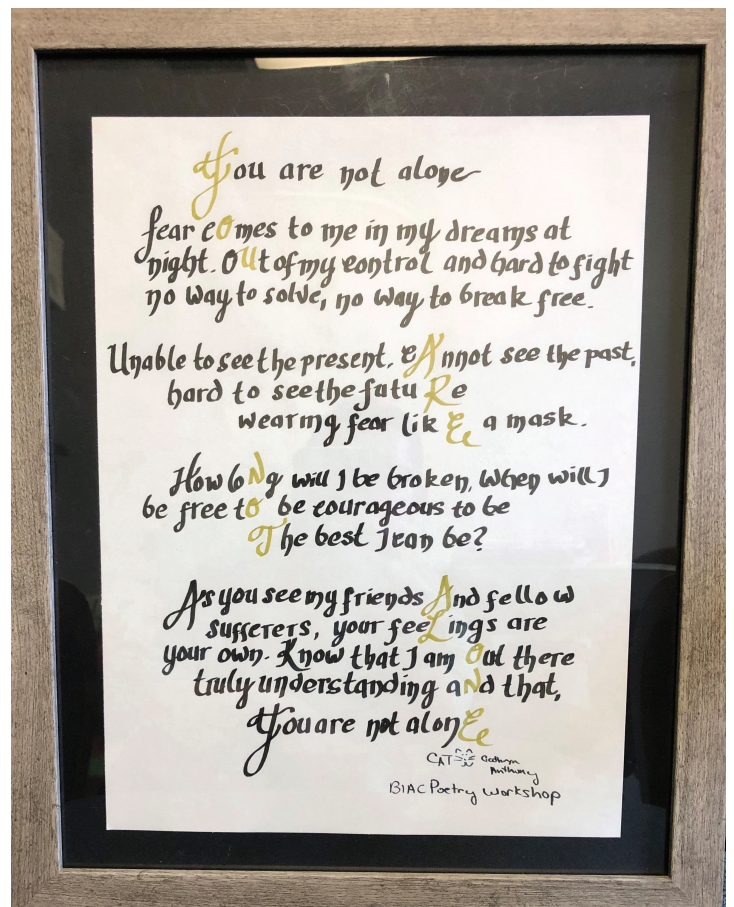


"Thank you BIAC
and my new
brain buddies!"

The Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado (BIAC) has brought me HOPE, JOY and GREAT SUPPORT. Through several workshops, events and programs, I have found a new positive sense of self. Most importantly, I found a community of fellow brain injury survivors and a wonderful BIAC staff to help me live the best life I can live.

Thank you BIAC and my new brain buddies!

It is great to know I am not alone! ■



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.

Art Classes – Colorado Springs

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month through December
1:30 – 3:00pm

Encompass Health
325 S. Parkside Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Art Classes – Denver

Every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month through December
10:00 – 11:30am

Grief & Loss Group

Every 2nd Wednesday of the month through December
1:30 – 3:00pm

Music Therapy – Colorado Springs

September 6th and 20th
2:30 – 3:30pm

Encompass Health
325 S. Parkside Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Music Therapy – Denver

Every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month through December
10:15 – 11:15am



Summer Sensory Program

September 17th
2:30 – 3:30pm

Denver Botanic Gardens
1007 York St.
Denver, CO 80206

The Mindful Brain – Denver

Every 1st Tuesday of the month through June
10:00 – 11:15am

The Mindful Brain – Arvada

The 1st Friday of August, October, and December
10:30 – 11:45 am

A Wildflower/The Journey
9423 W. 64th Ave.
Arvada, CO 80004

Paperwork Assistance

Free assistance with filling out and organizing legal, financial, health, end-of-life, and other paperwork, with Orbitron Document Assistance, LLC. Call 303-355-9969 for more information.

Recreation Programs & Social Activities

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

Creative Minds

September 6-9
Cost: \$990

New experiences! Cooking, hiking, field trips, poetry, painting, journaling, movement, karaoke, laughter, dancing and socializing. Program staffed by volunteers, registered nurse, and Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) experienced staff/instructors and interns. Accommodation is at the Griffith Lodge in Breckenridge.

BIAC Road Trip

September 23-26
Cost: \$1,165

A 2019 new adventure for the out of the box thinkers. You will travel from the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) and investigate towns like Estes Park, Winter Park, and Glenwood Springs (so many possibilities). Travel by van and set camp each night. This adventure is designed for those who are able to sit in a van for extended periods and enjoy sleeping under the stars at night.

Brain Injury Professional Networking (BIPN)

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.”

For information, visit

BIAColorado.org/brain-injury-professionals-network/ or contact Ellen Kordonowy at Ellen@BIAColorado.org or 303-562-3298.

BIAC Update

Fiscal Year 2018-2019

Unique Clients Served

775 Resource Navigation

69 Self-management

74 Youth Education Consultation

Classes and Workshops

189 Events Around the State

Outreach & Training Activities

105 Events or Meetings Around the State

Denver BIPN

Ellen Kordonowy is a Certified Brain Injury Specialist and has transitioned with BIAC from working directly with clients to working with professionals in the brain injury field, but one thing has stayed the same: everybody appreciates a resource! Establishing connections and learning about community services are essential for navigating through the world of brain injury. One of Ellen's favorite parts about working in this community is that *you are not alone*.

Kristi Staniszewski is a Physical Therapist who has worked in Brain Injury recovery for over 25 years and has helped facilitate the Denver BIPN group for over 10 years. Kristi loves connecting people who share a passion for helping this community. She also enjoys her role at O.T. Plus using a person-centered approach to problem-solve and find a healthy and sustainable recovery for each individual.

BIPN (Brain Injury Professional Network) meeting content includes guest speakers, networking, resource-sharing, the latest research, and community events. BIPN is designed to be a casual opportunity to engage with other professionals in the brain injury field in a way that's most beneficial for them!

Interested participants can RSVP to upcoming meetings on our website or email Ellen@BIAColorado.org.

Our next meeting is scheduled for October 2019. Kristi and Ellen will send out email updates on date, time, location and content. To add your name on the Denver BIPN email list, please email Ellen Kordonowy at Ellen@BIAColorado.org.

To become involved with Colorado Springs BIPN, contact Carol Cochran, CBIS, Carol@BIAColorado.org.



Staff in the Spotlight

Heather Walker, *Deputy Director of Client Programs*

Heather is BIAC's current Values Award recipient!

"This person leads by example. Her focus is always on providing excellent customer service. She is calm under pressure and always gives 100%. She takes the time to go above and beyond to ensure client satisfaction."



Volunteers in the Spotlight

Meet three volunteers who have dedicated many years to BIAC's primary fundraising event - Pikes Peak Challenge.



Jenny Olson

What is your volunteer role?

My volunteer role began as Transportation Coordinator and then I moved to co-coordinator of Volunteer Coordination.

What is your favorite part of volunteering with BIAC?

My favorite part of working with BIAC is seeing the joy on survivors faces all day long. Whether they have someone on the peak hiking for them or are completing the walk on their own, there is pride written all over them. I love working on the Walk - it gives me a true sense of why we do what we do!



Chris Zwirlein

What is your volunteer role?

My role is a Volunteer Coordinator which means I recruit volunteers and assign roles to each person. I also volunteer about 12-15 hours in the park on the day of the Challenge.

What is your favorite part of volunteering with BIAC?

I have been a part of the walk since it's inception and have seen it grow from the ground up. Seeing the survivors and their smiles as they cross the finish line is the best!



David Learn

What is your volunteer role?

Transportation Coordinator.

How or why did you first start volunteering with BIAC?

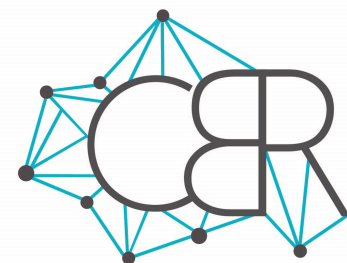
I was made aware of the volunteer opportunity about 18 years ago through my work at Schriever AFB. I started volunteering as a driver until about 6 years ago and was asked to fill the driver coordinator position.

What is your favorite part of volunteering with BIAC?

All the great people we work with that help coordinate this event and to see all the hikers' smiling faces while participating in this great event. The smiling faces let us know we are doing our job well.

Tips for Brain Injury Survivors

Written by Hilary Booco, MA, CCC-SLP



COLORADO BRAIN RECOVERY

For those who have suffered an acquired brain injury (e.g., TBI, stroke, anoxia, tumor, etc.), navigating your life after injury can be very difficult. You can no longer interact with your world in the same way that you did the day before the injury. So what do you do now? Below are six tips to help you while you are recovering:

1 Know that you are not alone!

There are many survivor groups out there (please refer to BIAC's website to find ones in your area) with people who are willing to share their own survival stories. There is so much that you can learn from their journeys.

2 Get the right help.

Your brain controls everything, so it's very common that multiple systems are impacted after injury. For example, survivors frequently will require physical therapy, occupational therapy, vision/vestibular therapy, counseling, cognitive rehabilitation, and more. Most people are aware of services provided via inpatient and outpatient hospitals, but some companies such as Colorado Brain Recovery (cognitive rehabilitation) specialize in treating survivors who are too high-functioning to qualify for hospital services but are still having difficulties completing their day-to-day responsibilities.

3 Recovery takes time.

The brain not only needs time to heal any physical injuries in the body, it also needs time to heal itself. A good night's sleep is the best way to achieve brain recovery, so you should address any sleep issues with a physician ASAP.

4 There is no specific timeline.

No one can tell you how long it will take to recover as each brain and brain injury is unique. However, the brain is remarkable and has what is called neuroplasticity, the ability to change over time. If you keep working on improving, it is very likely that you will, even if it has been years since the injury.

5 A "bad day" isn't always a bad thing in your recovery.

At a certain point in your recovery, you will likely go from having all "bad days" to having "good and bad days." When someone has a good day and then a bad day, this typically means that he/she overdid it when they felt good. But those delayed symptoms may actually be a sign of recovery, as previously those symptoms would have been immediate. With good self-awareness and self-control, overdoing it can be avoided and this will lead to even more of those good days.

6 Your loved ones may have difficulty understanding.

They don't call brain injuries the "invisible injury" for nothing. If you look "fine" on the outside, it can be difficult for people to understand that you are still healing on the inside. Have clear communication with those in your life about your current abilities, and continue to have these discussions over time as you progress through your recovery. For example, two months ago, meeting at a coffee shop might have been too overwhelming, but today it would be possible to have a short visit. ■

Interested in Advertising in HeadSTRONG?

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

BRAIN INJURY SYMPOSIUM

ENGAGING MINDS

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 1, 2019 | 8:30AM - 3:15PM

LAKEWOOD CULTURAL CENTER

Designed for those who have sustained an injury to the brain and their support systems.

BIACOLORADO.ORG



ZIM is a proud partner of Brain Injury Alliance of CO.
Thank you for all you do in our community.

To learn more about us visit www.ZIMConsulting.com



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neuropsychologist.**

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A physical therapist.

A speech therapist.

An occupational therapist.

And a social worker.

At the Acquired Brain Injury Clinic at Children's Hospital Colorado, we have a full team of experts who work together to treat brain injuries in kids with a range of medical, cognitive, therapeutic, learning and psychosocial services. We're one of the only hospitals in the country to offer this approach, and we work closely with a child's primary physician and school to enhance recovery.

Call 720-777-2806 or visit childrenscolorado.org for more information.



Children's Hospital Colorado
Here, it's different.™

Children's Hospital Colorado complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex. • ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-720-777-1234. • CHÚ Ý: Nếu bạn nói Tiếng Việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Gọi số 1-720-777-1234.

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Practice areas:

**Personal Injury • Catastrophic Injuries • Wrongful Death • Dangerous Products
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Since 1985, the attorneys of Purvis Gray Thomson, LLP, have provided compassionate, knowledgeable legal advice and representation to people who have been seriously injured throughout the state of Colorado, including numerous people who have suffered brain injuries.

Call for a Free Consultation 303-442-3366

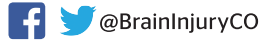
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**Brain Injury
Alliance**

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BIAColorado.org



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Opportunity for Professionals

Become a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS)

BIAC is excited to offer a new opportunity to Colorado professionals who are interested in becoming a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS). Acquiring this

credential provides you with detailed content and strategies, while ensuring you remain a valuable and well-informed asset in the field of brain injury services. Professionals of any level and in any setting will benefit from this knowledge and experience. BIAC provides training sessions, textbook, materials, and proctoring services, as well as year-round opportunities to gain continuing education credits, a requirement in maintaining your certification.

**Register as an individual or as a group
with your colleagues!**

Please contact Liz Gerdeman, MA, CBIS-T,
Director of Professional Programs, with any
questions or to sign up: **Liz@BIAColorado.org**.



**Brain Injury
Alliance**
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