



HeadSTRONG

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

A Survivor's Story Victoria

Written by Victoria

My name is Victoria. I am 30 years old, and I have two children ages six and eleven. On September 6, 2016, I was in a bad car accident and sustained a brain injury. The car rolled 7-10 times because my back tire blew up. I was air lifted to the hospital. My husband passed away because his seat belt broke, and he was ejected from the car. My son had scratches and bruises. My daughter broke her arm.

I broke my C2 vertebrae and had two plates and six pins put into my spine. I dislocated my elbow, so the medical team fused it together. The seat belt crushed my trachea, so they removed two levels of my trachea. In total, I think I have had over 25 surgeries, but I honestly lost count.

Personally, I don't feel like I have a brain injury. I know this seems crazy to say until I can't remember if I locked the door when I leave the house. My long-term memory is good; my short-term memory isn't that great. I stutter when I get overwhelmed and need to pause and think of what I'm trying to say. I was on a feeding tube for three months so I wasn't used to eating and was told by a friend this is because my stomach doesn't tell my brain I'm hungry.

I haven't worked in five years because the accident. Now, I'm finally working and love my job. I work at Amazon so it's very physical. Work has been great. I have been messing up because I don't pay attention 100% of the time because my mind races. I've gone to my manager and told her I have a brain injury. She has had me pulled for training twice, which has been so helpful. Other managers have come up to me to say I'm doing fantastic.

I'm a hands-on learner and verbiage is key for me. You can tell me ten times "The sky is blue" and it will not click in my head. If you tell me "The sky has a blue color" then it'll all make sense. When I get overwhelmed, people have learned to give me a minute to figure it out so I don't get frustrated with them. Everyone has been amazing when they hear about my accident. I'm always told they'd have never guessed.

**"Now, I'm finally
working and love my
job."**



I've learned that I need to sit there and think about stuff. I've also learned I need to ask questions if I don't understand something or explain my understanding and have it corrected if needed. I'm usually not one to ask questions, but rather figure it out myself. With my brain injury, it hurts me in the long run doing things that way!

BIAC has been amazing! I get checked in on all the time. When I don't understand something, somehow they know how to explain it in a different way until it clicks in my head. I'm so glad my best friend got me in contact with them. They give me guidance about what to ask for when it comes to work and needing accommodations.

Upcoming Classes and Events

Classes and Workshops

Some classes will be in-person at BIAC's Denver office at 1325 S. Colorado Blvd., Ste B300, Denver, CO 80222 and some are virtual. Please check our website BIAColorado.org for more details.

Virtual classes and workshops will be held via Zoom. Click [here](#) to register. Please provide email during registration to receive the Zoom link. For questions, contact Michael Zavala at Michael@BIAColorado.org or 720-907-1455.

Grief & Loss

Every 2nd Wednesday of the month through March
1:30 – 3:00 pm
In-person and Virtual

Adaptive Yoga

Every Wednesday of the month through March
9:00 am – 10:00 am
In-person

Client Empowerment

1st Wednesday of the month through May
10:30 am – 12:30 pm
In-person and Virtual

Social Wellness

Every 3rd Wednesday of the month through March
2:00 – 3:00 pm
Virtual



Music Therapy

Every 2nd Thursday of the month through March
10:15 – 11:15 am
In-person and Virtual

Movement with Music

Every 4th Thursday of the month through June
10:15 – 11:15 am
In-person and Virtual

Language of Poetry

2nd Monday of month through April
3:00 – 4:00 pm Virtual

Education Workshop for Parents of Youth with a BI

Thursday, March 10th
10:15 – 11:15 am
Virtual

Youth Music Therapy

Every 3rd Thursday of the month through March
4:30 – 5:30 pm
Virtual

Youth Team Building & Social Skills

Thursday, March 24th
1:00 – 3:00 pm
In-person at Washington Park

Social Activities & Recreation Programs

For registration and questions, contact Michael at Michael@BIAColorado.org or 303-562-0401. Visit the [Recreation Programs](#) page for updates.

Brain Busters

Lit-Up My Mind and Pueblo Brain Injury, LLC will be co-hosting Brain Busters! Brain Busters! is a group of survivors of traumatic brain injury and/or those thriving with headache health issues who come together virtually three times per month to play Jack Box Games. Click [here](#) for more info on times and dates.

Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays at various times

Denver Meow Wolf Tour

Join BIAC and other survivors on a tour together of the Meow Wolf immersive art installment at the Denver Convergence Station.

**Thursday, March 17th
1:00 pm**

In-person at Meow Wolf, 1338 1st St., Denver, CO 80204

Cycling Days

**Details TBD
Cost: FREE**

Social Park Days

**Details TBD
Cost: FREE**

Intro to Fly Fishing

Come join BIAC and some of Colorado's most knowledgeable anglers as you learn the basics of fly fishing, fishing etiquette, and all you need to know to get out on your own.

Details TBD

Recreation Programs continued



Challenge by Choice

River rafting, ropes course, hand cycling, wall climbing, theme dance. Program staffed by volunteers, registered nurse, and Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center (BOEC) experienced staff/instructors & interns. Accommodation is at the Scott Griffith Lodge in Breckenridge.

#1 June 12-17

#2 July 10 - 15

#3 July 31 - August 5

#4 August 14 - 19

Cost: \$2,390



Rafting Excursion

Experience team building, rafting, camping, on shore cooking, fishing, swimming, and splashing. The journey begins and ends a BOEC. Accommodations at the beginning and end of your trip will be at the Scott Griffith Lodge in Breckenridge.

August 30 - September 3

Cost: \$1,090



Creative Minds

Cooking, hiking, field trips, poetry, painting, journaling, movement, karaoke, laughter, dancing and socializing. Program staffed by volunteers, registered nurse, and BOEC experienced staff/instructors and interns. Accommodation is at the Scott Griffith Lodge in Breckenridge.

September 9 - 12

Cost: \$1,090



Camping with BIAC

Enjoy camping with other survivors as well as BIAC staff. We will have camp games, smores, cook, learn what you need to go camping with others, and have a great time building connections with the community. Transportation assistance available on a first come, first serve basis. Scholarships are also available to cover 50% of the cost if assistance is needed.

Rocky Mountain National Park

June 22 - 24

Cost: \$150 + any rental gear

Chatfield State Park

October 1 - 2

Cost: \$80 + any rental gear

Statewide Support Groups

Southern Colorado - Pueblo's Center Towards Self-reliance Support Group

Anyone impacted by a brain injury (TBI, stroke, anoxia, etc.) - survivor, family member, caregiver or professional.

Center Toward Self Reliance

Address: 901 West 8th St, Pueblo, CO 81003

Every Monday, 1:00 - 3:00 pm

Contact Information

Jose Garcia: 719-546-1271 Ext 1003, jgarcia@ilcpueblo.org
Maria Martinez: 719.387.7093, pueblo.braininjury@gmail.com

Northern Colorado - Loveland- Foundations BI Support Group

BI survivors of all ages, family members, or anyone associated with a BI looking for support.

Foundations Church

Address: 1380 Denver Ave, Loveland, CO 80537

2nd & 4th Tuesday, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Contact Information

Mary Anderson: 970-691-2886, olympicrunner84@gmail.com
TJ Anderson: tjanderson09.ta@gmail.com

Western Slope/Central Mountain - Fruita Neurological Support Group

Survivors of stroke, brain injury, neurodegenerative disease or chemotherapy, plus their family members, caregivers and medical professionals. RSVP required to meet COVID precautions. Virtual meeting options available. Free transportation within 5 miles of the hospital.

Colorado Canyons Hospital & Medical Center

Address: 300 W Ottley, Fruita, CO 81521

2nd and 4th Wednesdays 3:30-4:30 pm

Contact Information

Lisa Jacobson, SLP: 970-858-2147, ljacobson@fhw.org

For more information about all statewide support groups, please visit biacolorado.org/support-groups

Staff in the Spotlight

Kevin Taulman, *Program Manager - Education Consultation/Youth Services*

What is your involvement with youth survivors of a brain injury?

I assist the students and families in making sure that schools are providing the best level of support so all students can access their education. Over the last year, while schools are doing a combination of remote and in-person learning, individual student needs can be overlooked. My role is to be a voice for survivors in school and remind the educators of some of the learning challenges survivors face. Whether I am working with an elementary student or a high school student, I enjoy helping the school and family develop and implement a plan that will allow the student to have success while in school and afterward.



What is your favorite thing to do outside of work?

My favorite thing to do outside of work is spend time with my family. My wife of 27 years and two boys (ages 22 and 20) have always enjoyed family dinners and movie nights. We have also enjoyed traveling as a family and have visited Italy, Spain, France, and the Caribbean. Since my wife and I are empty nesters now, we enjoy exploring everything Denver and the surrounding area has to offer including hiking, golfing, skiing, live music, and the theater.

What three traits define you?

Three traits that define me are Loyalty, Empathy, and Integrity.



Event Spotlight

Education Consultation Workshop

This workshop will address types of brain injury, educational terms, understanding 504s and IEPs and the supports available, areas of impact observed in the school setting, and classroom and school intervention strategies.

Thursday, March 10th

6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Virtual via Zoom, [register here](#)

Resource Highlight



Why are we talking about COVID-19 and concussion in the same sentence?

Because the neurological symptoms of COVID-19, classified by the CDC as BRAIN FOG => difficulty thinking, remembering, concentrating, completing cognitive tasks quickly, emotional and behavioral reactions, are similar to the cognitive symptoms we have seen and researched for 20+ years in students following a concussion.

The evidence-based interventions applied to cognitive symptoms post-concussion can now be similarly applied to students returning to your classroom post-COVID-19.

For more information, visit www.getschooledoncovid.com

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 Brain Injury

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

Elana Meyers Taylor: 'I Was Sidelined By An Invisible Injury'

Elana Meyers Taylor, as told to Blair Henley

Last season, Olympic silver medalist Elana Meyers Taylor won an historic gold medal -- the first world championship title in women's bobsled for the United States. But scary concussion symptoms from an earlier crash soon surfaced, and everything changed. After extensive rehab, she's back and looking to defend her world title this week. She told us what the past year has been like.

We were flying.

My brakeman, Cherelle Garrett, and I were traveling faster than any female team in history on the track in Königssee, Germany, in January 2014. My bobsled was a 75-mile-per-hour missile on ice.

Coming down the first couple of curves, I was still building speed, going much faster than I ever had before. I remember coming out of a sharp turn -- a "kreisel" in bobsled speak -- and approaching the two smaller curves ahead. Our 380-pound sled went airborne on the second bend, crashing to the ice before I had time to tuck my head under the front, like we've been trained. Amazingly, we popped back up on the following curve, allowing us to finish and place sixth overall.

As I exited the battered bobsled, my adrenaline still racing, people were yelling at me. "Get to the podium!" But even then I knew something was wrong. I felt foggy, nauseous, disoriented. It was an out-of-body experience. So we skipped the award ceremony and headed straight back to the hotel to see a doctor. He didn't use the word "concussion," but in a sport in which head injuries are common, I didn't need an official diagnosis. I've described bobsledding (or sliding, as we like to call it) as being put in a garbage can and kicked down a rocky hill: Concussions are a reality in my world.

After being evaluated, all I wanted to do was rest -- to sleep off my headache and the disappointment of a great run gone bad. Instead the doctor told me I had to stay awake for at least a few hours, which is standard concussion protocol. Cherelle, who escaped the crash with minor back injuries, helped entertain me by talking about the cute pink bags awarded to the winners that day. "We should have had those pink purses!" she joked, and I laughed right along with her.

I wasn't scared at the time. Even when trainers woke me up periodically throughout the night to make sure I was conscious, I considered it a step toward recovery. It wasn't until they cleared me to slide again four days later that the fear and uncertainty began to creep in. I felt OK, but my memory and concentration were off. It was enough to make me a bit gun-shy, knowing all too well the consequences of a split-second mistake.

I relied on my feel as a driver in the days and weeks ahead, though -- and I won a world championship title less than a month after that high-speed crash. My concussion worries were behind me, or so I thought.

I headed into the offseason on a high, ready to start a two-month summer internship with the International Olympic Committee in Switzerland. Instead of rattling around in a sled during training runs, I was at a desk for eight hours each day before going to the gym. Ironically, it was the time sitting in front of a computer screen that triggered the return of my concussion symptoms. The headaches were terrible and constant.



Last February, Elana Meyers Taylor (right) won the first world championship title in bobsled for a U.S. woman, with her brakewoman, Cherelle Garrett.

Elana Meyers Taylor: 'I Was Sidelined By An Invisible Injury' continued

Traditionally, the treatment for a concussion has been to stare at a wall and wait for your brain to heal itself. Don't watch TV, don't read a book, don't look at your phone and definitely don't train. It's a torturous protocol for an athlete.

But there was a place called Cerebrum Health Centers near my home in Georgia that offered another option: brain rehab. I spent a week there after returning home from Switzerland, working on eye tracking, responding to stimuli and improving my reaction times.

My symptoms went away, and again, I thought I was out of the woods. But when I got back to sliding in October, my reactions were slow and my practice runs shaky. I took another knock to the head in November during a World Cup stop in Altenberg, Germany -- one of the toughest tracks in the world -- and then the headaches returned. Along with my coaches and my husband, fellow bobsledder Nic Taylor, I decided to return home from Europe in early December for another stint at Cerebrum.

Elana Meyers Taylor won the Olympic silver medal in Sochi in 2014. Leon Neal/
I was devastated. There was nothing I wanted more than to slide down that hill. When that opportunity is taken away, it feels like your heart is being ripped out. I thought my season might be over -- and maybe even my career. I'm a world-champion athlete, sidelined by an invisible injury.

It's hard to describe what it's like to live with a concussion. You want to enjoy things like you used to, but you can't. You wake up in the morning and wonder how you're going to feel that day: What will my reactions be like? Will I have a headache? Will I have to triple check to see if I unplugged the flat iron?

It was a scary, uncertain time. But then I had a breakthrough.

In mid-December I finished my last treatments, and was cleared to train again. I was extremely relieved. But it's one thing to be cleared by a neurologist, and another thing to actually get behind a bobsled. Trusting that my reaction time would be there and that everything was going to be OK was really hard. And bobsled is a violent sport in which you take hits to the head on a regular basis. I was terrified I'd take a hit and be sidelined again.

So now I take a lot fewer trips down in a sled -- and if I'm tired or something doesn't feel right, I make sure not to go again. It's too dangerous to push through it. I have a new helmet from a company called D Helmets that helps reduce concussion impact, and extra padding in my sled. I'm also very careful with my nutrition, even more so than ever before. I'm gluten-free, sugar-free and dairy-free, and super strict about it. I've noticed when I eat any of those foods, my head feels awful.

And I have, without a doubt, a new perspective. I had gotten into the mindset of wanting to win and wanting to dominate every race. And of course I still want to win, but now it's just being thankful for every day I get to be out on the ice. Every day I get to slide is a good day. If I wake up in the morning and I don't have a headache and I get to go down the track, it's pretty amazing.

Right now I'm cleared only for specific tracks -- the ones that are safer and have less vibration to them. The fear is still there: I've only been sliding for three weeks and it's going to still be there. I feel a little rusty, and I may always have some fear.

On Friday, I'll compete again to defend my world title. My goal is simple: to put together four solid runs. That's the only thing I can really ask for at this point. I'd love to repeat as world champion, and if I can put together the four runs I'm capable of I know I'll win another world championship. But win, lose or draw, if I'm out there, putting together the best runs I can, I'm happy.

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

Arrowhead Golf Course | Littleton, CO



Cathleen's Cause GOLF TOURNAMENT

Benefiting the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado

Registration | 7:00 a.m.

Shotgun Start | 8:00 a.m.

Lunch & Prizes | 1:00 p.m.

FUN • ON-COURSE CONTESTS • PRIZES • FOOD

Register at BIAColorado.org

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS BRAIN INJURY CONFERENCE

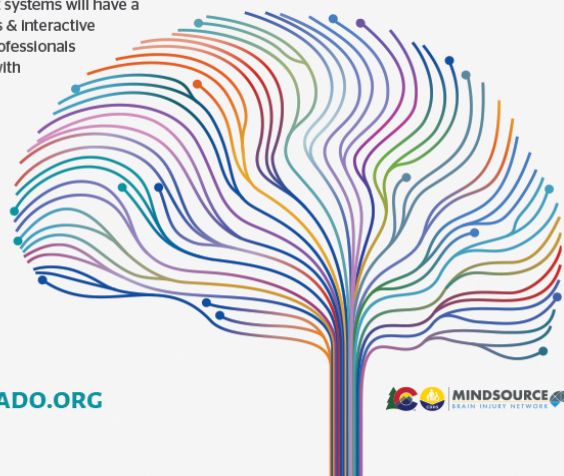
Save the Date

NOVEMBER 3 - 4, 2022
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

Each day will be designed for a specific audience within the brain injury community. Survivors and their support systems will have a day of workshops & interactive presentations. Professionals will be supplied with the latest in brain injury recovery.



BIACOLORADO.ORG



Research Studies



Kessler Foundation has teamed up with Children's Specialized Hospital to research new ways of helping to improve the lives of children. We are seeking children who are willing to volunteer to be research participants in a completely virtual Emotional Processing Study.

Eligibility

- ❖ has sustained a traumatic brain injury at least 1 year ago
- ❖ is between the ages of 9-17
- ❖ is experiencing difficulties understanding others emotions
- ❖ has no other neurological illness
- ❖ is able to speak and read English fluently
- ❖ is able to use a computer

What does it require?

- ❖ 45 minute screening evaluation for full study inclusion
- ❖ 8 weeks of participation
- ❖ Week 1: 3 hour visit for paper-and-pencil tests and questionnaires
- ❖ Weeks 2-7: 45 minutes to 1-hour sessions twice per week for 6 weeks, during which your child has a *50/50 chance* of either undergoing an experimental treatment for processing emotions or participating in computer exercises
- ❖ Week 8: 3 hour visit for paper-and-pencil tests and questionnaires

For more information, please contact Clarice Bourland at **973-323-3678** or cbourland@kesslerfoundation.org

HeadSTRONG

27th Annual ED REINHARDT • TONY BRUNO Golf Tournament

Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado

July 14, 2022

Group A & B Shotgun Start: 8:30 A.M.
Registration begins at 7:00 A.M.

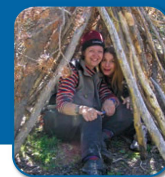
Lunch for all participants begins at noon!

Lake Valley Golf Club
4400 Lake Valley Drive, Longmont, CO 80503

Take Highway 36 - 2.5 miles north of Boulder.
Turn east on Neva Road Follow signs east for 1 mile.

27th Annual ED REINHARDT • TONY BRUNO Golf Tournament

Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado



Benefiting the Brain Injury Alliance of Colorado's

Recreation Programs

Now in its 27th year, the Ed Reinhardt-Tony Bruno Golf Tournament has helped send hundreds of survivors of a brain injury to recreation programs in the Colorado backcountry and Front Range. After green fees, 100% of net proceeds go directly for scholarships for survivors and to the BIAC recreational programs.

BIAC offers Single and Multi-day recreation programs featuring a range of activities such as hiking, climbing, a ropes course, cycling and rafting. Winter activities include skiing, snowboarding, ice fishing and snowshoeing. Music and Art Classes and social activities are held throughout the year.

We thank all our supporters/corporate sponsors, players and donors for your on-going and generous support.

Ed Reinhardt



Ed was a sophomore tight end for the University of Colorado in 1984. His brain injury occurred during a tackle in a football game between Colorado and Oregon. He was in a coma for 62 days. It was five months before he spoke a word. It was two years before he could walk. Ed gives the credit to God for his amazing recovery. Today he volunteers at an elementary school, is a speaker and a singer, creates and sells art work and helps the Brain Injury Alliance to give others an opportunity.

Tony Bruno



On April 6, 1983, in a boxing incident at the University of Colorado, Tony sustained an acute, subdural hematoma. He survived three brain surgeries in one night, a drug induced coma to save his life and thirty days on life support systems. This was just the beginning of a long struggle. With severe brain damage and paralysis on his right side, Tony has fought back with years of intensive physical and cognitive therapies. Tony now attends day programs at Rocky Mt. M.S. Center.

Resource Highlight

**Every Colorado
youth is now
eligible for free
therapy sessions.**

Visit [IMatterColorado.org](https://imattercolorado.org)
to learn more.

IMatter.

In October 2021, the Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health launched I Matter, a program that provides up to six free counseling sessions for any Colorado youth until June 30, 2022. Youth and their parents can visit the I Matter platform to take a confidential online survey about their mental health and schedule sessions with a licensed behavioral health clinician, primarily via telehealth. All Colorado youth ages 18 or younger—or 21 and younger if receiving special education services—are eligible to receive free services. Youth 12 and older can sign up for counseling sessions without a parent or guardian's consent.

For more information, visit imatter.org. To receive help with the website or support in scheduling a session, email support@imattercolorado.org.