

Headway is a support and advocacy agency for persons with brain injury, other disabilities and seniors.

SHAWN'S STORY: A POSITIVE REFLECTION ON MOVING FORWARD AFTER A TBI

Shawn Barron, a traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivor, would like his story shared in the hopes that it will shed some light on what individuals with a TBI may experience, and hopefully be helpful for caregivers and loved ones. Although no two brain injuries or journeys to healing are the same, Shawn feels that there is a lack of resources available, such as books related to TBI and views him sharing his personal experience as invaluable. "I feel that many people are unaware that a TBI survivor's recovery can last a lifetime, and we are all unique in our injury and recovery," Shawn said.

On August 19, 1995, Shawn was involved in a car accident and was thrown 80 feet in the air. The TBI he sustained from the accident left him in a coma for two and a half months and he had to relearn how to do many things, such as walking. However, that is not the part of his journey that Shawn would like to focus on.

Fast forward to today: Shawn says he has a variety of issues such as severe memory problems, processing information and problem solving in his daily living.

Since his injury, he prefers solitude in many areas of his life.

When faced with too much information, Shawn feels confused and says he shuts down mentally and physically. "There is a cycle that hinders my sleeping patterns, causing me to be up early, thinking and preparing for my day by writing everything down that I need to remember for my day ahead," he said.

“
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”

Shawn attributes his daily writings for his success in his everyday life. Before he could exercise any helpful tips or tools, Shawn says he had to first stop hiding the effects of his TBI. "For a long time, I would hide it because I was ashamed and had to take the time to accept everything for myself." Once this acceptance occurred, Shawn felt he was able to begin the process of moving forward. He encourages people with a TBI to accept their new challenges, so they too, can then start to become comfortable in the "new version of me." Shawn also expressed how valuable it is to him when those around

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Headway is a donor designated agency of the United Way

501C3 Non-Profit Organization

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Headway of WNY invites you to include our organization in your daily internet activities by visiting our website, headwayofwny.org, interacting with us via email (support@headwayofwny.org) and our Facebook and Twitter pages.

These are ways to keep informed about new information regarding brain injury, veterans and cognitive issues, as well as finding out information about new resources, Headway programs and presentations. Using these internet tools helps establish a community – a place to go in-between our events and public forums.

In addition, since accessing digital communication is instantaneous, it will help you stay updated with the ever changing landscape and challenges that we face. We encourage you to access the wealth of information that modern communication marvels allow. In this way, you can choose to protect your anonymity until you or your loved one are ready to perhaps take the next step, such as joining one of our support groups or volunteering to participate in our educational outreach events.

Headway will continue to communicate with you on a more personal level as needed and will continue to maintain regular business and phone hours.

Ronald Fernández, RRDS, CRC, LMHC
Director



HeadwayWNY



HeadwayofWNY



“Shawn’s Story” continued from page 1

him give him a hint or clue as to what he may have been talking about and forgotten.

When asked what tool has been most valuable in his success in moving forward after suffering his TBI, Shawn said: “Most of all, I give thanks to my Headway support group meetings that I attend twice a month for helping me in my road to recovery. The people I attend

group with have been very instrumental to my healing process because I feel that they are my brothers and sisters, because they can truly understand what I have been through, even if their story is different than mine. I know that we are all in this together. I would like to encourage others who may live with a TBI to join our support group in hopes, that it too, can help them in their recovery process, like it has helped me.”

Headway's 18th Annual Spring Gala

Unite & Move Forward at the Atrium

Tickets \$55 presale, \$60 at the door

Please join us for this exciting fundraising event!

**THURSDAY
MAY 18
6 - 9 PM**

**RICH'S ATRIUM
1 Robert Rich Way
Buffalo, NY 14213**

Headway of Western New York, Inc. is pleased to announce its 18th Annual Spring Gala on Thursday, May 18, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Rich's Atrium at 1 Robert Rich Way, Buffalo

Please join us this year and help raise awareness and funds for Headway of WNY – you will be glad you did! There are many ways to get involved with this event, such as donating items for the basket raffles and/or silent auction, purchasing tickets or making a contribution. Donation forms are enclosed in this newsletter.

Pre-sale tickets are now available and can be purchased online or by completing the enclosed form and returning with your payment. Please note that the pre-sale ticket offer ends on May 16.

Additionally, a variety of sponsorship opportunities are still available. Please see sponsorship level details on our website, headwayofwny.org/how-to-help/fundraisers.

Headway of WNY is a non-profit agency whose mission is to ensure that individuals in Western New York with

brain injuries, other disabilities and seniors have access to advocacy, resources and support systems to enable them to live as independently as possible. We seek to educate the broader community about the causes, consequences and means of prevention of brain injury.

We sincerely hope you will join us for a celebratory evening of silent auction bidding, basket raffles, live music, good food and great company.

Please know that your generosity directly affects our ability to provide care and quality support services to many individuals and families in Western New York who may be facing a life-altering situation.

If you have any questions about the event or require further information, call 716.408.3117.

All proceeds from this event benefit Headway of WNY, a not-for-profit agency and an affiliate of People Inc., providing resources, support groups, training and educational programs to both survivors and caregivers of brain injury.

MEET OUR STAFF

We are pleased to announce new staff members and a staff promotion:



PT Assistant Regional Resource Development Specialist, TBI and NHTD Waivers

Danielle Cavaretta was born in Akron, Ohio and is a graduate of the University of Akron School of Social Work. Upon meeting the man of her dreams (Joe), she moved to Buffalo, NY and is currently enrolled in the University at Buffalo Graduate School of Social Work. Danielle has seven plus years of working with the elderly population. In Ohio, Danielle was an activities assistant and social work intern at a nursing home. Before joining Headway, Danielle was the program coordinator for the Valley Community Association senior program as well as family support services. She is passionate about preserving human rights and dignity in any population and is happy to spread the mission of Headway of WNY.

Danielle spends her free time listening to her husband's original music and doing homework. She enjoys a good joke and loves walking each day around Delaware Park (when she is not doing homework, of course).



Regional Resource Development Specialist (NHTD Waiver)

In our last newsletter we introduced Shawniece L. James to you as the new PT Assistant RRDS. Since that time, Shawniece has taken the position of RRDS in the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion area.

Congratulations to both Danielle and Shawniece.

Headway of WNY is pleased to announce that we are currently fully staffed and would like to take this opportunity to let you have a face behind a name!



Top Row (L-R): Maggie Apotosky, Jolene Stanek, Carolyn Isbrandt, Bridget Flynn, Danielle Cavaretta, Judy Hutson, Ginny Haynes. Front Row (L-R): Mary Jo Alessio, Ron Fernandez, Christine Melchiorre, Shawniece James.

Headway Waiver Staff:

Jolene Stanek, *Administrative Specialist, TBI*
Carolyn Isbrandt, *Lead RRDS, TBI*
Bridget Flynn, *RRDS, TBI*
Danielle Cavaretta, *Assistant RRDS, TBI and NHTD*
Judy Hutson, *Lead RRDS, NHTD*
Mary Jo Alessio, *Nurse Evaluator, TBI and NHTD*
Ron Fernandez, *Director, TBI and NHTD*
Shawniece James, *RRDS, NHTD*

Headway Staff

Maggie Apotosky, *Administrative Assistant*
Ginny Haynes, *Advocacy and Support Specialist*
Christine Melchiorre, *Funding Resource and Outreach Specialist*

DID YOU KNOW?

**NO TWO BRAIN INJURIES
ARE EXACTLY ALIKE. THE
PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE
AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS
WILL BE DIFFERENT FOR
EACH PERSON.**

NEWS FROM THE BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



House Committees Pass Reconciliation Bill Affecting Health Care

Two House Committees expedited legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and dramatically reduce and change the Medicaid program. The Committees debating the bill were the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. Congress is using the reconciliation budget process to fast track repealing the health care reform bill. The proposal uses cuts in the Medicaid program as a way to pay for it by capping spending and transferring the program to the states to administer. The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) sent an *Action Alert* earlier this week expressing concerns about the bill and will continue to apprise advocates as the bill. BIAA also sent a letter of support to the Ways and Means Committee in support of Congressman Pascrell's (D-N.J.) amendment to protect individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) by maintaining current premium tax credits and cost-sharing reduction (CSR) subsidies in order to purchase a health plan in the private individual health insurance market.

BIAA Submits Testimony for TBI Funding

BIAA submitted written testimony this week to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies calling for increased fiscal year 2018 appropriations for Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Act programs, including the state grant program, and for TBI Model Systems research funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). BIAA is also working with the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBITF) Co-chairs to obtain support from Congressional members for increased funding.

Lawmaker Introduces Return to Work Bill

Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio) has introduced H.R. 1128, Return to Work Awareness Act of 2017, to assist survivors of stroke and other debilitating health occurrences, including TBI, in returning to work. The legislation authorizes the Secretary of Labor's Job Accommodation Network to disseminate information and promote awareness among survivors, their family members, private employers, government agencies, employee representatives, and service providers in returning to work after a TBI and to enhance self-employment and entrepreneurship options.

To learn more, go to biausa.org.

PEOPLE INC. NEWS

APARTMENT APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED FOR PEOPLE INC.'S NEW INTEGRATED HOUSING PROJECT IN TONAWANDA

People Inc.'s new integrated housing project, Highland School Apartments on 105 Highland Avenue in Tonawanda, is welcoming apartment applications for its wait list. The project brings together a diverse group of people who are eligible; as tenants can be those who have been diagnosed with a developmental disability or with a traumatic brain injury and for the general public who meet income guidelines.

Highland School Apartments houses 35 one-bedroom and three two-bedroom handicap adaptable apartments that include kitchen appliances. The building includes a community room with Wi-Fi, laundry facilities, storage in each apartment and a 24-hour on call emergency service. Tenants are welcome to have one small pet.

The adaptive reuse project includes substantial rehabilitation of the two-story former Highland School, into an integrated, vibrant residential community.



The building has been vacant in the City of Tonawanda since 2009, and fills an important need in the community.

The apartment building is scheduled to open in June. Income limits are based on the current federal rate and are subject to change.

To learn how to apply for the wait list, go to people-inc.org/highland, email housing@people-inc.org or call 716.880.3890.



We're moving to the summer!
June 24th, 2017



Find us on:
facebook.

**WNY Adaptive
Rec Expo**

Buffalo Niagara Court Center
425 Meyer Rd
West Seneca NY 14224

www.WNYAdaptiveRecExpo.org



DEFENSE AND VETERANS BRAIN INJURY CENTER: TBI AND THE MILITARY

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a significant health issue which affects service members and veterans during times of both peace and war. The high rate of TBI and blast-related concussion events resulting from current combat operations directly impacts the health and safety of individual service members and subsequently the level of unit readiness and troop retention. The impacts of TBI are felt within each branch of the service and throughout both the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care systems.

In the VA, TBI has become a major focus, second only to recognition of the need for increased resources to provide health care and vocational retraining for individuals with a diagnosis of TBI, as they transition to veteran status. Veterans may sustain TBIs throughout their lifespan, with the largest increase as the veterans enter into their 70s and 80s; these injuries are often caused by falls and result in high levels of disability.

Active duty and reserve service members are at increased risk for sustaining a TBI compared to their civilian peers. This is a result of several factors, including the specific demographics of the military. In general, young men between the ages of 18 to 24 are at greatest risk for TBI.

Many operational and training activities, which are routine in the military, are physically demanding and even potentially dangerous. Military service members are increasingly deployed to areas where they are at risk for experiencing blast exposures from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombers, land mines, mortar rounds and rocket-propelled grenades. These and other combat related activities put our military service members at increased risk for sustaining a TBI.

Although recent attention has been intensively focused on combat-related TBI, it should be noted that TBI is not uncommon even in garrison and can occur during usual daily activities. Service members enjoy exciting leisure activities: They ride motorcycles, climb mountains and parachute from planes for recreation. In addition, physical training is an integral part of the active duty service member's everyday life. These activities are expected for our service members and contribute to a positive quality of life; but these activities also can increase risk for TBI.

To delve deeper into issues of TBI and the military, additional articles can be found at dvbic.dcoe.mil/tbi-military.

Headway of WNY, Inc. maintains an online Veterans Events bulletin at headwayofwny.org/veterans_events_bulletin/index.html

This past fall, Headway's three-year AmeriCorps funded veterans outreach specialist position reached completion. However, we continue to explore ways to engage the veteran community in Western New York, including offering an annual symposium; the inaugural event took place last June 2016. Stay tuned for more information about this year's event.

Additionally, Headway continues to seek new initiatives and identify additional resources to support the veteran's population, specifically those living with a TBI.



2635 Delaware Ave., Suite E
Buffalo, NY 14216

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YOU ARE NOT ALONE, MOVE FORWARD WITH HEADWAY.

HEADWAY'S SUPPORT GROUPS FOR SURVIVORS OF BRAIN INJURY AND THEIR FAMILIES

All meetings, except as noted, will take place at Headway of WNY
2635 Delaware Avenue, Suite E, Buffalo, NY 14216 • 716.408.3100
(Please take note of changes to dates and times of support groups)

PEER SUPPORT

Enter at Suite B
First and third Tuesday of each month
6:30 to 8 p.m.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT

Enter at Suite E
First Tuesday of each month
6:30 to 8 p.m.

PLEASE NOTE:

If the Buffalo Schools are closed due to inclement weather, support meetings listed here are also cancelled.

PEER SUPPORT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

DeGraff Hospital/Admin Board Meeting Room
445 Tremont Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120
Second Tuesday of each month
4:30 to 6 p.m.

*If you have questions,
call 716.694.4500
or 716.523.9623*

Do you wish to continue to receive this newsletter? If not, please contact our office at 716.408.3100 to be removed from the subscription list.

HEADWAYOFFWNY.ORG