

# Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma

Newsletter February 2009

## President's Letter

With the beginning of a new year, I am mindful of the many things we are charged to do in the coming year to serve the survivors of brain injury in Oklahoma. It is also a great time to celebrate the successes of the past year.

As we work our way through 2009, we hope to continue to make a difference in the brain injury community. We have already met one of our goals for 2009 by providing a telephone number in addition to access via email on the website. The new number for the BIA-OK is 405-513-2575. Phone calls will be answered by selected volunteers of the BIA-OK.

We are also in full swing preparing for another great Camp Sunrise. The camp will be held April 24-26th. There are a variety of ways you can assist us in providing this great camp. We are looking for individuals who can serve as counselors and we also need donations to help offset the cost of the camp to the participants. There is more information about these opportunities in the newsletter. Please consider helping us put on another great event.

Thank you again for your support of this organization. Have a great 2009!

*Lori McMillin, PT  
President, BIA-OK*

Visit us online at:  
[braininjuryoklahoma.com](http://braininjuryoklahoma.com)

## A Survivor's Story

*by Chris Byrd, Greenwell Springs, LA*

My name is Chris Byrd, I am a brain injury survivor who lives in Greenwell Springs, Louisiana. Greenwell Springs is a small community just outside of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

When I was a junior in high school I was involved in a serious car accident. This accident left me traumatically brain injured and legally blind. Despite these disabilities I have suffered I have attained some goals in my life.

After a year of hospital stays and rehabilitation I returned to Central High School and graduated. Following my graduation from high school I enrolled at Louisiana Tech University and I completed a four year bachelor's degree program. I have earned a B.S. in General Studies with a major concentration in business. My university life was one of the most fulfilling times of my life. My university life was fulfilling because it gave me a chance to learn more and become more independent.

I work for the Baton Rouge Clerk of Court's Office. My job duties are that of data entry of tax assessor information. My data entry work is of much importance to my office, the East Baton Rouge Parish Clerk Court's Office. My having this job has given me much self esteem. When I was just sitting at home in front of the television, I didn't have much self esteem.

**REMINDER!** Time to renew your membership! Memberships with the BIA-OK begin on January 1st and end on December 31st. Your membership helps to ensure the success of our mission. Please fill out the enclosed application and mail it to us to join this great organization. As an additional benefit of this membership you will receive the BIA-OK newsletter and the Brain Injury Association of America's publication "TBI Challenge!"

Vocational Rehabilitation first helped me to adapt to my work place. In the beginning VR offered a job coach that was accepted by my employer. Eventually I broke away from my job coach and perform my work independently. Of course, I perform my work independently under the discretion of my immediate supervisors. VR provides for my adaptive equipment. The adaptive equipment includes a computer with the adaptive software for my legal blindness. However, my office eventually provided me with the right computer and VR supplied the adaptive software. Most of the time I ride to and from work by the cab or taxi. My cab rides to and from work are paid through the Louisiana Brain Injury Trust Fund. Occasionally a family member can give me a ride to and from work.

One desire in my life is to be in contact with other brain injury survivors throughout our country. I believe that we survivors can enrich our lives by staying in contact with one another. Thanks to the email we can talk to someone who lives in a faraway state.

## BIA-OK Welcomes New & Renewing Members

*Kathryn Hatcher, David Novey  
Michelle Pitman, Phil Wilber, Jim  
Nungesser, David Hansen, Duane &  
Kay Guynes, Toni Williams, Betty  
Williams, Cathe Fox, Joseph Kearns,  
Karen Bryan, Carrie Martin, Joan  
Gass, Tracy Grammer, Brad Hendrix  
Gale Largent, Kathryn Downing, Lori  
McMillin, Suzan Ward*

The BIA-OK would also like to thank the following for their generous donations:

*Janet Spradlin VA Parrish*

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## 2008 Successes!

In 2008, the BIA-OK had a very successful year. Together, we:

Hosted a book signing for our very own Michael Mason, Vice President of the BIA-OK, as he launched his newly released book, *Head Cases: Stories of Brain Injury and It's Aftermath*. With the debut of the book, Michael participated in a number of interviews, talks, and events to spread the word about the state of care for survivors of brain injury in the United States.

Hosted Camp Sunrise, a camp for brain injury survivors the last weekend of April. With 45+ campers and 30+ counselors, the camp was bustling with activities including the ever popular fishing derby, horse-shoe throwing, crafts and the ever popular Saturday night dance. Fellowship and support were abundant and all who participated left with a feeling of renewal.

Presentations were made to groups around the state on brain injury prevention and education.

Bike Safety classes were presented to school age children.

Members participated in governmental boards and legislative activities to promote the needs of people with brain injury on both a national and state level.

Newsletters were sent out to more than 600 individuals/groups around the country.

The website was improved to allow for payment of dues and donations to be made via PayPal online.

Provided resource information to survivors and their families.

### BIA-OK

405-513-2575

P.O. Box 88, Hillsdale, Ok 73743  
brainhelp@braininjuryoklahoma.org

## Announcing the 2009 Camp Sunrise Oklahoma Camp for Brain Injury Survivors

It's time once again for one of our most popular events. **Camp Sunrise 2009** will be held at the Central Christian Camp, in Guthrie, Oklahoma, during the fourth weekend in April.

For information about the camp or to send donations, contact:

Cathe Fox  
4101 Heritage Place Dr.  
Norman, OK 73072  
405-364-8118  
email: cathefox@cox.net

Please make checks payable to:  
**BIA-OK, Camp Fund**

*The Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma is a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organization. All donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the IRS. The goal of BIA-OK is to make a better life for people with brain injuries and their families.*

## BIA-OK Support Group Pizza Challenge

The BIA-OK would like to challenge the Support Groups around the state in a contest to see who can raise the most money for Camp Sunrise this year. The Support Group that raises the most money will win a pizza party for one of its summer support group meetings.

If you would like to participate in this challenge, please contact **Lori McMillin at 405-513-2575** or by email at : **brainhelp@braininjuryoklahoma.org**.by **Feb 13, 2008**.

To be considered for the pizza challenge, donations must be received by March 31st. While we will continue to be grateful for donations received after this date, they won't be considered for determining the winner of the competition.

## CDC Issues New Prevalence Estimates

Recently, the Centers for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released new prevalence estimates for traumatic brain injury (TBI) in the United States.

Reflecting the use of more conservative methodology, the CDC determined that although the annual incidence estimate has not changed (1.4 million individuals), the annual prevalence estimate for long-term TBI-related disability has decreased (from 5.3 million individuals to 3.2 million individuals).

BIAA issued a public statement in response to these new estimates and circulated this statement to members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force. BIAA made a special effort to note to Congressional offices and staffers that changes in the estimated prevalence of TBI are NOT indicative of any change in the annual incidence of TBI in the United States.

In its public statement, BIAA asserted, "The Brain Injury Association of America reminds advocates, clinicians, researchers, policymakers and the public that the 3.17 million people living in the U.S. with a long-term disability are unique individuals whose lives are forever changed by their injuries and who need and deserve ongoing specialized rehabilitation, lifelong neurological disease management and individualized services and supports in order to maximize their health, independence and happiness."

The full public statement is available on the "Policy & Legislation" section of BIAA's website:

<http://www.biausa.org/policy.htm>

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## Support Groups

Enid/Northwes OK BIA Support Group  
Meets 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM  
at St. Mary's RehabCare Unit (5 South)  
305 S. 5th in Enid OK 73701  
Contact Lyle Rader at (580)548-5080 or (580)249-5533.

McAlester Head Injury Support Group  
Meets on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 3:30 to 5:00 PM  
Oklahomans for Independent Living Resource Center  
601 E Carl Albert Pkwy  
McAlester, OK 74501  
Contact Person: Stephen Strickland (918) 426-6220, ext. 107

Muskogee Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma Support Group  
Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM  
at the Conference Room of Muskogee Regional Rehab,  
300 Rockefeller Dr., Muskogee, OK  
Contact Vinnie Payton Hoover at (918)683-8827.

Norman Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma Support Group  
No regular meeting date or facilitator at this time.  
Contact Rick Lewis at Progressive Independence, 121 N. Porter  
Ave. (405)321-3203.

Oklahoma City Support Group  
Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 PM  
5100 N Brookline, Suite 100  
(50th/Brookline)  
One block West of May  
Park North of building and enter  
Contact Gary Bulmer at (405)720-7980 or  
Rod Davidson at (405)524-8953  
write P.O. Box 60912, OKC, OK 73146-0912.  
Visit the OKC website

Tulsa Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma Support Group  
Sponsored by Comprehensive Community Rehabilitation  
Services  
Meets on the 4th Thursday of the month (except for Holidays) at  
6:30 PM at 7146 S. Braden Ave., Suite 500, Tulsa 74136. Please  
call Mary Dobbs at (918)488-6165 for questions or to be added  
to the mailing list.

Citywide Stroke Support Group - Oklahoma City  
Meets on the 4th Monday of the month  
from 6:30-8:30 PM at American Heart Association,  
5700 N Portland, Room 110, Oklahoma City.  
Call Mashell (405)948-2134

**Brain Injury Association  
of Oklahoma**  
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Hillsdale, Ok 73743