MARCH ON FOR BRAIN INJURY
LONG ISLAND HONOREE 2026

The Brain Injury Association of New York State is proud to recognize Yianni Hatzikontos as the 2026 March On for Brain Injury Long Island Honoree.

Long Island Honoree

On July 16, 2016, at just 21 years old, Yianni's life changed in an instant. The carefree promise of young adulthood was shattered when he became the passenger of a reckless driver in a near-fatal car accident. In a single moment, everything shifted — not only for Yianni, but for everyone who loves him. The future they once imagined was replaced with uncertainty, fear, and an unimaginable fight for survival.

Yianni suffered multiple traumatic bodily injuries along with a severe traumatic brain injury. He remained unresponsive for one month before entering a vegetative state. During that time, his family and friends lived between hope and heartbreak, praying for signs of the vibrant young man they knew and loved. He endured numerous surgeries and, once medically stable, began a long and grueling road to recovery. Nine months later, Yianni spoke his first word — a moment that reignited hope and marked a turning point in a journey that once seemed impossible.

Yianni spent four years in a rehabilitation center, where every small milestone required extraordinary effort. Against all odds, and driven by an unbreakable spirit, he chose to fight every single day. Though now a quadriplegic, Yianni refuses to let his circumstances define him. His determination has become his greatest strength.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck and visitation restrictions prevented his mother from seeing him, she made a life-changing decision to bring him home. Refusing to allow isolation to hinder his progress, she dedicated herself fully to his care. Through daily hands-on therapies, structured TBI programs, and tireless advocacy, she worked relentlessly to help her son continue healing and moving forward.

At home, Yianni began to thrive. Surrounded by love, consistency, and unwavering belief, he achieved strides that once seemed out of reach. His positive outlook, upbeat personality, resilience, and infectious smile continue to inspire everyone around him. Through every setback and every victory, Yianni has remained a true fighter, determined to keep reaching goals that many once believed he would never achieve.

Today, Yianni continues to push boundaries through his participation in Achilles International, Like A Daisy Foundation, the Mount Sinai Abilities Research Center Clinical Program, and Wandercraft. These programs provide opportunity, innovation, and community while empowering Yianni to continue striving toward greater mobility, strength, and independence.

For his extraordinary resilience, unwavering determination, and inspiring ability to overcome unimaginable challenges with hope and positivity, Yianni is proudly being recognized as the 2026 Long Island March On for Brain Injury Honoree. His journey serves as a powerful reminder of the strength of the human spirit and the importance of community, advocacy, and never giving up.

Support Yianni as he Marches On!

March On for Brain Injury is the Brain Injury Association of New York State's annual awareness and fundraising walk, supporting programs, education, advocacy, and resources for New Yorkers affected by brain injury.