

BIANYS is working on new public policy advocacy efforts, including calls to action and talking points for speaking with legislators. Mark your calendars – March 2016 will include a Legislative Awareness Day in Albany to show our State Government that the brain injury community is strong and expects action. Stay tuned to the Advocacy area of the BIANYS website for information on how you can help advocate for brain injury services!

BIANYS is focused on two areas of advocacy for Medicaid TBI Waiver program participants. In response to strong advocacy from the TBI community, the NYS Department of Health implemented a mandatory training on cognitive functioning training for Uniform Assessment Screening assessors. We continue to monitor UAS implementation; please contact BIANYS if you experience problems with the assessment. No new information is available on the move to Managed Long Term Care system, but BIANYS will keep advocating for caution and evaluation to ensure that Waiver participants will receive appropriate services. Resources to help advocate on many brain injury issues are available at bianys.org/advocacy.

Extra, Extra, Read All About it!

BIANYS is hosting two opportunities to enjoy a beautiful day with the local brain injury community, show support of everyone impacted by brain injury and increase BIANYS ability to meet our mission by raising funds!

Please join us for the March On for Brain Injury Walk this year! We are hosting events in the Rochester and Hudson Valley communities. Not in those communities? That's okay! Please join us as a virtual walker. You can register to walk, set up your personal fundraising page, and share your story of why you support the Brain Injury Association of New York State.

Details can be found on www.bianys.org. Registration will open in late March in honor of Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Dates:

Hudson Valley Walk will be held August 29th, 2015 at the Walkway Over the Hudson in Highland, NY
 Rochester Walk will be held on September 12, 2015, Seneca Park, Rochester, NY

BIANYS had a very successful 5th Annual Tinsel Time Toy Drive in December

Sending out holiday cheer and needed "wish list" items to 21 families across the State. BIANYS staff mailed out -- or delivered in person -- gifts for 39 individuals, from age 2-21. Some of the individual recipients have brain injuries, while others were children who have a parent with a brain injury. But it is the stories that touch our hearts. FACTS Coordinator in the Buffalo region, Vicky Myers, remembers a family's reaction when they saw the gifts. "One of my families was so excited, they just couldn't stop saying thank you. There was lots of excitement, particularly with the children when they knew there was a secret Santa from BIANYS. Mom cried with joy, "God Bless you Miss Vicky and BIANYS for thinking of us." The train set was the biggest hit! Gifts of all sizes mean so much to a family in need!



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BIANYS STAFF MEMBER
 MARGO SINGER, ADDRESSES
 AN AUDIENCE IN ALBANY, NY

Brain Power 2015 Year of the New!

March 2015



Welcome to the new Brain Power Newsletter! We are so excited to be embarking on the year of the new! As you can see, we have a lot of new announcements. Not only the new newsletter but soon a new website! Keep a look out for the new website to be unveiled this spring. Also new are our additions to the BIANYS team. Jessica, ToniAnn, Tish and Stefany bring in new ideas and a fresh perspective to the organization. We are incorporating a new event in Rochester in 2015. We are expanding on

the success of the Hudson Valley March on for Brain Injury and will be taking it to Rochester this fall. New membership benefits! We are offering more to our members to engage them and provide much needed resources. New advocacy efforts and outreach programs make our mission even stronger. We welcome all of you to be part of this New Year. Reach out to us at info@bianys.org.

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month... Text to Donate

Support BIANYS during Brain Injury Awareness Month and our efforts by texting your donation on your phone or iPad. If you would like to donate through your mobile device, text the word "BRAIN" to 91999 and follow the link to make your secured online donation. Your donation will help us continue our outreach and advocacy efforts.

Gary Busey to be Keynote Speaker at the Annual Conference... Expect Just About Anything!

We are pleased to announce Actor and Brain Injury Survivor, Gary Busey as the keynote speaker to the 33rd Annual Conference on June 4-5, 2015 at the Albany Marriott in Albany, New York. Gary Busey is enjoying a 44-year career in Hollywood. In fact, 2015 marks the 35th anniversary of The Buddy Holly Story, which garnered Busey a BAFTA win and an Academy Award nomination for Best Actor for his performance in the title role of Buddy Holly. His other notable film credits include memorable roles in The Firm, Under Siege, Point Break, Big Wednesday, Straight Time and Lethal Weapon. Busey became a household name and a TV sensation in his recent starring roles on Celebrity Wife Swap and The Celebrity Apprentice.

In 1988, Busey was the victim of a near-fatal motorcycle accident, which resulted in the enactment of stricter

helmet laws. He speaks all over the country about the challenges, the triumphs of living every day with a head injury. His personal experience with a Traumatic Brain Injury is one that will be inspiring! Make your reservation today for the annual conference. Learn more at www.bianys.org/annual-conference.



The appearance of Mr. Busey is made possible through the generous support of



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From the Executive Director, Eileen Reardon

I find myself to be a broken record. I keep saying that I am so proud to call myself the Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of NYS. I mean it. Although it has only been only 6 months, I am so pleased to be a part of such a wonderful and dedicated team. The staff in the Albany office, field staff, Board of Directors, members, and partners are unified with one purpose and one mission. It is heartfelt and warming. We started by **"Crossing Bridges"** together, gathering photos from all over NYS. We will continue to cross the bridge together in 2015 with new marketing initiatives such as a website and yes, even this **newsletter**. We asked for your opinion in our **needs assessment**. We received so many comments that we are continuing to look at the data. It will be the cornerstone to developing a **5 year strategic plan**. The plan will address all the needs of the organization and make it stronger. We are on the road shaking hands and meeting our members, supporters and donors through our **Meet and Greet Tour**. We are adding another **"March on for Brain Injury" Walk** in Rochester in September. This will compliment the 2nd annual **"March on for Brain Injury" Walk** in the Hudson Valley in August. You will see our **advocacy efforts** increase and we are knocking on the doors of our legislators to tell them about your needs. But one of our most exciting initiatives is our new **membership benefits** for 2015. Literally and figuratively, we will work together to get the job done and strengthen the mission of BIANYS.

BIANYS Staff Crosses State of New York!

BIANYS Staff Creates a **"Listening Tour"** to hear from Members, Providers and Community Leaders! The BIANYS team is hitting the road and has scheduled multiple **"Meet & Greet"** Meetings throughout New York State. The first was held on January 14, 2015 at Burke Rehabilitation Center in White Plains. The purpose of the "Meet & Greet" tour is to share our new initiatives for 2015, providing an opportunity to offer new ideas, and discussing results of a recent Needs Assessment and issues that matter to you! Call our office at 518-459-7911 or email Stefany Matamoros, Administrative Assistant at smatamoros@bianys.org to be added to the invitation list.

Upcoming Dates and Locations

| | Time | Location |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Capital District March 26, 2015 | 10:00 a.m. – Noon | Living Resources, 300 Washington Ave. Ext., Albany |
| Plattsburgh April 15, 2015 | 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. | SUNY Plattsburgh, Angell College Center, Cardinal Lounge, 101 Broad St., Plattsburgh |
| Syracuse April 22, 2015 | 10:00 a.m. – Noon | Upstate University Hospital, Oasis Center, One Telergy Parkway, East Syracuse |
| Rochester May 13, 2015 | 11:00 a.m. – 1 p.m. | Golisano Restorative Neurology & Rehabilitation Center, 1555 Long Pond Rd, Rochester |

BIANYS

Welcome New Staff!

We are excited to announce the addition of four new staff members to the BIANYS team. Jessica Morley joined us on February 2nd as the FACTS Coordinator for the Southern Tier. She is serving Broome, Chemung, Cortland, Tioga, and Tompkins Counties. Jessica has a background in conflict resolution and adult education. Most recently, she was teaching software classes and assisting people with disabilities in accessing the digital world.

ToniAnn Tuminnaro joined the team on February 9th as the Long Island FACTS Coordinator serving Nassau and Suffolk Counties. ToniAnn was born and raised on Long Island. She has been working in the field for many years and has a background in psychology and community integration counseling.

Tish Czachor has joined BIANYS as the Development Director. Tish brings over a decade of fundraising and nonprofit event planning experience and has worked for incredible organizations such as Susan G Komen Colorado and the Denver Zoo. As a native New Yorker, she has returned to her home state after living in Denver, CO for 15 years.

Stefany Matamoros has joined the BIANYS as an Administrative Assistant. Stefany initially came to us as an intern last fall and after graduating SUNY Albany

"Journey of Hope" Gala Brings New Meaning to Our Mission

The evening of October 28th could not have been more perfect. A beautiful fall evening welcomed over 225 people to the Union League in Manhattan for an evening of music and celebration to the 7th Annual "Journey of Hope" Gala. Honorary Chairs Penny Marshall, Lorraine Bracco, Senator Charles Schumer and Bob and Lee Woodruff, along with celebrity guest Stephen Baldwin wined and dined all night long, while raising vital funds for Brain Injury Association of NYS. Gala chair, Lisa Robateau-Epps and committee treated guests to a magical evening. Special guests were honored for their tireless efforts in the brain injury field, including Dr. Joseph Sanford, Dr. Wayne Gordon, Judith Avner and Steven Miller. The evening's most memorable moment came from Stephen Miller, brain injury survivor who spoke so eloquently of his personal journey after his accident. Steven spoke from the heart when he said "Seven years ago, I was an operating engineer in NYC. While working at the World Trade Center, a pipe exploded and hit me in the head. I suffered from a Traumatic Brain Injury and was put on life support. The doctors in the ICU didn't have much hope and told my family if I survived, I probably would be living in a nursing home in a vegetative state. I was 26 years old. With the grace of God and the loving support of so many people, I am here today. While it was difficult at first, I realized I had to overcome my challenges and move forward. Today, I am living on my own and attending school." Thank you to all our sponsors and all who came to support this beautiful evening.

in December 2014 with a psychology degree she became a part of our team. Stefany is a pursuing a masters degree in neuropsychology.



JESSICA MORLEY

STEFANY MATAMOROS

TISH CZACHOR



TONIANN TUMINNARO
WITH KAREN THOMAS

Members: the Backbone of BIANYS

BIANYS is in the midst of the 2015 membership drive and encourages all BIANYS members to share the details with their friends and families. There is strength in numbers - membership in BIANYS shows that this is a strong community working together to improve the lives of those with brain injury. We need to work as a team to make an impact!

Headway of Western NY is a new BIANYS Organizational member from the Buffalo area. Headway is a local community resource working to help members of the brain injury community. They are encouraging membership in BIANYS to all of their supporters and will be working with us to grow in the Western end of New York. We have many opportunities for organizations, agencies, providers, and businesses through our new Patron membership program, and welcome anyone who is interested in making a difference for New Yorkers with brain injury.

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