

BRAIN POWER

2018, Volume III

The Family Advocacy Counseling and Training Services Program: Guiding Families to Opportunity

Navigating the education system after a brain injury can be confusing and frustrating. It might seem like the school just doesn't want to help, or that they're unwilling to provide the services your child needs to return to a classroom setting. That's where BIANYS' FACTS Program comes in. Megan Humiston, FACTS Coordinator for the North Country, recently helped a family get the proper assessments and accommodations for their child, who had been home schooled for six years, waiting for the day their daughter could get back in the classroom.



North Country FACTS Coordinator
Megan Humiston

Mary* sustained a severe brain injury in a car accident while on vacation, driving back to the hotel after a day at the beach. After the accident, her family had been working to get her back in school, homeschooling Mary, who was missing out on her favorite activities and being with her friends. Luckily, Mary's family found Megan.

Megan spent countless hours discussing options with Mary's family, providing them with the information and resources they needed, while talking to other organizations and attending meetings with the school to advocate on Mary's behalf along with her family. All the hard work paid off. After years of struggling, Mary returned to school with the needed accommodations in place - everything that her family had hoped for. Most importantly, though, Mary is happy and succeeding back in school!

*Names and identifying information have been changed to protect privacy.

For more information on our FACTS Program, call 1-800-444-6443 or visit bianys.org.

A Message from our Executive Director & Board President



Board President Barry Dain

With the year coming to a close, it's time to look back at all we've accomplished, and look ahead at what's to come. All of our events - Advocacy Day, the Annual Conference & Professional Symposium, March On for Brain Injury, the Journey of Hope Gala, just to name a few - would not be possible without our members, volunteers, donors and corporate sponsors. **Simply and humbly, THANK YOU for your support.**

The services that the Brain Injury Association of New York State provides are vital to our communities. They bring hope and understanding to a survivor feeling alone, they provide a space for families and caregivers to feel welcome, they bring the most current information to service providers and other professionals, and they are brought to bear to advocate for progressive change in public policies that impact the brain injury community. **We are committed to bringing New Yorkers these services in 2019 and beyond**, and we'll be calling on you for your support once again.

We are stronger together, when we speak with one voice. The easiest way to join us in the chorus is to become a member. In 2019 we'll be rolling out new members-only benefits, with new opportunities to stand with our community. For more information on membership, visit our website or call our Membership Coordinator, Allison Barna, at 518-459-7911.

Once again, thank you for your tireless commitment, dedication and enthusiasm. We're looking forward to 2019 and all that is to come.

Eileen Reardon
Executive Director

Barry Dain
President, Board of Directors

BIANYS 2019 Events

Brain Injury Awareness Month is set for March 2019. Keep an eye out for ways to show your support for the brain injury community, including participating in Advocacy Day 2019 on March 26.

The 2019 Annual Conference and Professional Symposium will be returning to Saratoga Springs from June 3-6, with keynote speaker Sharon Epperson of CNBC. Ms. Epperson will talk about avoiding financial disaster after a brain injury and sharing her personal experiences. **New this year:** an additional day has been added to the Professional Symposium, offering training for attorneys on issues related to brain injury. CLE credits will be available! We will be looking for presenters and opening registration in January, so stay tuned!

Other events on the schedule are the March On for Brain Injury on September 14 and the Journey of Hope Gala on November 7.

Journey of Hope Gala Recognizes Achievement in the Brain Injury Community

This year's Journey of Hope Gala was a tribute to the commitment of the brain injury community. Supporters came together to recognize and celebrate those that go above and beyond to improve the lives of people impacted by brain injury.

The Corporate Citizen Award was given to Rusk Rehabilitation at NYU Langone Health for their dedication to the care and rehabilitation of people living with brain injury.

The Leadership Award was given to Mauricio Blandino, whose courage and commitment to fellow brain injury survivors and their families will serve as an inspiration to us all for years to come.

The Victory Award was given to Dr. Thomas Mayer, Psy.D, for his contributions to improving the lives and care for those living with brain injury.

When all was said and done, more than \$83,000 was raised, which will go directly to our programs and services. A special thank you to our Honorary Chair Dr. Emerald Lin, the Honorary Committee, our sponsors and to everyone that attended- it was truly a night to remember!



Advocacy Update

BIANYS has been advocating for those impacted by brain injury since 1982. Recently, our efforts were successful in preventing the Traumatic Brain Injury Medicaid Waiver from being moved into managed care. The Waiver provides thousands of New Yorkers with better specialized services to help them live independently, and has been extended until 2022.

We're also working to secure funds to close the gap on the Continuum of Care. We've been actively meeting with decision makers to educate them on the proposed Continuum of Care Program (CCP). The CCP will meet goals identified in the New York State Department of Health's Traumatic Brain Injury 5-year Action Plan, and those identified by the Centers for Disease Control in their report "Traumatic Brain Injury in the United States: Epidemiology and Rehabilitation." The focus will not only be on providing services to people with brain injury, but also on specific action items targeting critical elements of continued care that require immediate attention. We're really looking forward to working on this important proposal.

Thank you to all of the amazing institutions for coming together with BIANYS to get a letter of support for this project out to the Governor: Albany Medical Center, Erie County Medical Center, Mount Sinai Brain Injury Research Center, Rochester Regional Health, Rusk Rehabilitation at NYU Langone Health, Sunnyview Rehabilitation Hospital, University of Rochester Medical Center and Westchester Medical Center.

The Concussion Initiative is also in full swing. We're constantly working on new efforts to fully engage New York State government and its agencies on the importance of amending the 2011 Concussion Management Awareness Act. More to come on that soon and see you at Advocacy Day on March 26!

2018 March On for Brain Injury Raises Money for BIANYS Services

On September 15, hundreds of people gathered at three locations around New York to raise money and awareness about brain injuries. Events were held at Seneca Park in Rochester, at the Walkway Over the Hudson in Highland, and on the campus of the New York Institute of Technology in Old Westbury (Long Island).

March On also honored brain injury survivors for their work to inspire and help others on their journey. In Rochester, we honored Justin Oot; in Highland we honored Jimmy Shearer and Joey Battistoni; and on Long Island we honored Koby Bernstein and Colon Trowbridge.

The events were a tremendous success, reminding us that we are stronger together- we were able to raise more than \$100,000 for BIANYS programs and services. Thank you to our sponsors and to everyone who participated!



New Membership Benefits Coming in 2019

Every year we think up new ways to enhance your BIANYS membership experience. This year, we're excited to announce new benefits for new and existing members:

- A members-only page on our bianys.org website,
- Early access and special members-only pricing for events, including the Annual Conference & Professional Symposium, and
- A members-only, digital monthly newsletter (this is in addition to the quarterly newsletter Brain Power).

These are just a few things we have in store for 2019. You can also look forward to special pricing on annual memberships for brain injury survivors, bringing more people access to member benefits like the Family Fund.

For more information, call us at 518-459-7911, visit our website at bianys.org/membership, or email our Membership Coordinator Allison Barna at abarna@bianys.org.



THE VOICE OF BRAIN INJURY



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** Indicates District Board Members. Each of these Board Members is selected by BIANYS Members to represent one of the six districts in New York State.