



# BRAIN POWER

**BIANYS hosts 10th Annual Journey Of Hope Gala at the Manhattan Penthouse October 4, 2017.**



*Kenneth B. Goldblatt, Esq. & Lori Goldblatt 2017 Honorary Chairs*

**BIANYS announces return of popular Rose Day campaign during upcoming holiday season**



*Sara Orleanski, Fulton County BIANYS FACTS program participant made deliveries to CDPHP's headquarters on Rose Day 2016*



# ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Brain Injury Association of New York State (BIANYS) 35th "One Voice for Brain Injury" Professional Symposium and Annual Conference returned to the Holiday Inn in Saratoga Springs, June 14-16. Nearly 300 survivors of brain injury, family members, professionals, and friends from across the state learned about research trends, innovative treatments, and strategies for not just living, but thriving after brain injury.

The organization's one-day symposium featured sessions by top medical professionals and the two-day conference included nearly two dozen workshops led by brain injury survivors, interactive panel discussions and the opportunity to network with leading professionals in the field of brain injury. The conference also featured an exciting keynote address from Dr. Joel Goodman, founder of The HUMOR Project, an effort focusing on the positive power of humor.

"The Annual Conference is a signature event for the organization," said Eileen Reardon, Executive Director for the Brain Injury Association of New York State. "Annually, this event draws hundreds of survivors, family members and leading medical professionals with different backgrounds. They come together, learn about new strategies and ideas, and forge meaningful connections that provide positive outcomes for all involved."

The organization's 36th "One Voice for Brain Injury" Professional Symposium and Annual Conference will return to Saratoga Springs June 12-14, 2018.

# MESSAGE FROM BIANYS BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



*Pictured Left to Right: Board President Barry Dain, Executive Director Eileen Reardon, and Professional Symposium Chair Dr. Steven Flanagan*

As we head into the final quarter of 2017, we are struck by how quickly time spent supporting individuals with brain injuries across New York State flies by and what a task we take on - and accomplish - every day.

We have had an amazing few months here at BIANYS. Since our last newsletter, we have traveled the state for our popular Meet & Greet tour. We hosted a successful Annual Conference and Professional Symposium and welcomed a spring class for CBIS Training in beautiful Saratoga Springs.

On August 26, hundreds of people attended our March On for Brain Injury 5K and Family Fun Walk events across the state. Collectively, these events raised nearly \$90,000 to support individuals and their families impacted by brain injury. We could not be more proud of the support from runners, walkers, sponsors and honorees. Thank you!

Planning for next year is well underway and we are excited for what is in store for the organization in 2018.

As always, none of these accomplishments or future

*This is an exciting  
time for BIANYS*

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plans would be possible without the the support of members who lend their voice, knowledge and passion to the cause.

This is an exciting time for BIANYS and we are glad to share this journey with you.

BARRY DAIN  
President

EILEEN REARDON  
Executive Director



# MARCH ON FOR BRAIN INJURY

*Hundreds Attend March On for Brain Injury Events in Rochester, Hudson Valley and Long Island*

On August 26, hundreds of people attended our March On for Brain Injury 5K and Family Fun Walk events in Rochester, Hudson Valley and our inaugural satellite walk on Long Island. The events served as a statewide celebration in building awareness, visibility and understanding of brain injury. All proceeds benefited the organization's programs and services statewide.

This year our March On for Brain Injury events featured an inaugural 5K course, a one-mile family fun walk and activities for the whole family to enjoy.

The Hudson Valley Honorees included: Adult Honoree Ruby

Tartanian and Youth Honoree Isabella Sementilli. Rochester Honorees included Adult Honoree Evan Pirrello, Youth Honoree Peter Forte and Medical Honoree Dr. Uribe. On Long Island our Honorees included: Partner Honoree Jenna Mosenson, Medical Honoree Dr. Deborah Benson; Corporate Honoree Dr. Hallie Zwibel of New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) and Youth Honoree Donovan Maldonado.

Since its inception in 2014, nearly \$275,000 has been raised to support programs and services provided by the organization.

***Thank you to everyone who participated, donated and sponsored!***



# BIANYS WELCOMES NEW STAFF!

## *FACTS Program: Wendy Verrall*

On April 25, the FACTS Program welcomed the arrival of Wendy Verrall to the Western New York territory. Wendy received her Bachelor's degree in Health and Wellness from the State University of New York College at Buffalo in 2015 and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health from Southern New Hampshire University. Her employment history includes a strong background and knowledge in Health and Wellness programming. Most recently, as a Medicaid Coordinator and Financial Advocate assisting consumers. Wendy has also worked with various populations, including at-risk children and youth. She will be serving the following counties in her position: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming.

We are excited to welcome Wendy to our team and are confident that she will excel in her new role," said Eileen Reardon, Executive Director of BIANYS. "Her experience and commitment to serving others will further support the quality of services we provide in the Western N.Y. territory."



*Pictured: Wendy Verrall*

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## FACTS FEATURE STORY

*The FACTS Program offers individuals with brain injury and their family members emotional support, information, advocacy and training.*

After her 18th birthday, Christine Burns suffered a cerebral hemorrhage accompanied by a grand mal seizure. After several hospitalizations, they found an astrocytoma tumor by her temporal lobe. The tumor was removed but Christine still suffered long-term symptoms. In 2011, Christine had a car accident and sustained a concussion. Later that year, she was diagnosed with another tumor. By this time, she had lost her position at work and was struggling to manage numerous doctors' appointments, attorney meetings and court proceedings from her accident. As time went on, Christine became more distraught. She felt great shame and embarrassment going outdoors and avoided people and social interactions. Christine tried meeting with friends and colleagues from work and felt as if she was in a fog and couldn't connect with their conversations.

A friend then told Christine about the BIANYS support group facilitated by BIANYS FACTS Coordinator Cuca Roberts.

"I remember sitting quietly and crying throughout most of the group- as I heard Cuca describe the cognitive, behavioral and emotional symptoms of brain injury. All the topics that Cuca brought up in the group really hit home for me," said Christine. "I was able for the first time to understand that I was not alone, and able to speak up. Through my meetings with Cuca, I began to understand the process of healing takes time and effort. She connected me with resources for a neuropsychologist to address my symptoms. This set me on the path to seeing a physiatrist to stabilize my physical symptoms. I now attend BIANYS groups every month and look forward to new discoveries and opportunities to reach out and help others going through similar challenges. I'm now finally feeling more like myself again, and I am happy with the person I've become."

Today, Christine is an active member with BIANYS and shared her time and talents during Brain Injury Awareness month to raise community awareness and funds for BIANYS programs and services.



*Pictured: Christine Burns and BIANYS FACTS Coordinator Cuca Roberts*



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# BIANYS STAFF & LEADERSHIP

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