



Brain Injury Center of Ventura County

HEAD TALES

Spring 2016

P. O. Box 1477 • Camarillo, CA 93011 • 805-482-1312

www.BrainInjuryCenter.org

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL **Brain Injury** AWARENESS MONTH

Brain Injury Center of Ventura County receives Congressional Recognition

The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County was honored by Congresswoman Julia Brownley (D-Westlake Village) for its commitment to improving the quality of life for those affected by brain injury during its Board of Directors meeting on March 8. The commendation is especially meaningful since March is National Brain Injury Awareness Month.

Brownley thanked the Brain Injury Center for its work with families who are suffering and have suffered a brain injury in Ventura County.

"It's important that we advocate and get the information out so that people in our community and across the country know where to go when they've experienced this type of traumatic injury," she said.

Brownley also stood before Congress and recognized the Brain Injury Center's efforts and the fact that this month is Brain Injury Awareness Month.

"Community organizations like the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County play an important role in raising awareness about the prevalence of brain injury, and helping survivors and their caregivers on the road to recovery,"

—Rep. Jullia Brownley.

"Although brain injury can happen to anyone at any age, it is particularly prevalent among the men and women serving in the Armed Forces. In 2014, 25,111 service members were diagnosed with traumatic brain injury (TBI). In Congress, I am a strong supporter of federally funded research and treatment, so that we can better understand the signs and symptoms associated with TBI and improve treatment options," she said.

Donna Davies, Brain Injury Center board president, said the center is expanding its services to accommodate the increasing number of survivors and caregivers in need in the county. She noted that in 2015 the Brain Injury Center helped 800 individuals living with brain injury, an increase of 200 over the last year.



Rep. Julia Brownley presents a certificate of Congressional Record to the BIC Board of Directors during the Brain Injury Center's March 8 board of directors meeting. From left are Dani Anderson, Sue Tatangelo, Donna Davies, Rep. Brownley, Dennis Wood, Kristen Linton and John Cortes.

Davies and Sue Tatangelo, a board member and Chief Resource officer at the Camarillo Health Care District, both said that as parents of survivors, more support and services are needed for caregivers. They said recovery can be a slow, life-long process.

Brownley said assistance for caregivers is an issue, as more people want to remain in a home environment, including brain injury survivors, the elderly and those with other disabilities.

"Government is slow to accept the concept of providing resources to home caregivers to do what they do and what survivors need. Government is paying for nursing homes and facilities, but needs to provide resources upfront to increase the caregiver base and provide more services for those who prefer to remain at home," she said.

There are 5.3 million Americans living with long-term disability as a result of a traumatic brain injury and 1.3 million due to stroke. In Ventura County, there are an estimated 16,000 people living with traumatic brain injury – and thousands of stroke survivors with acquired brain injuries.

The Brain Injury Center is expanding its resources and support services in 2016. All services are provided free of charge and include a continuum of care, individual support for both caregivers and survivors, support groups, skill-building classes, education and awareness, referral and social events. 🌱

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Donna Davies, President, BIC Board of Directors

"March is Brain Injury Awareness Month, but," says a survivor who posts on the Web, "for me, it's also January, February, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November and December." One does not get to forget an event that changes life in previously unimagined ways.

More than 800 people facing life after an acquired brain injury receive direct benefit through the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County's services throughout every month of the year.

Each week BIC provides sound information, encouragement and solace through information and referral services, and support groups. BIC provides classes, where needed skills are learned. Our Brain Injury Specialists work with individuals as problems arise to help sort through the challenges faced by survivors or family

caregivers. The Brain Injury Center speaks to the public through its website, newsletters, print media, survivor presentations and radio interviews to increase awareness.

Yes, this is Brain Injury Awareness Month. It is good to pause and make a special effort to be a voice for those who live with the effects of brain injury. It is good to advocate for improved services, more research, access to needed support and resources. But, as every individual who lives with an injured brain knows, every month is brain injury awareness month. The work does not end on March 31.

This March the Brain Injury Center is honored to be recognized for its important work by the U.S. Congress, thanks to the efforts of Rep. Julia Brownley. It is an honor we share with many. As Board President and as a family member of a survivor, I commend the donors, board members, staff, survivors, caregivers, professionals, volunteers and committee members who make all BIC's work possible. Thank you for your work every month of the year. 🌱



BIC Welcomes New Board Members

The Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County is pleased to announce the addition of Danielle "Dani" Anderson and Kristen Linton to its Board of Directors.

Dani Anderson is Executive Director at the Independent Living Resource Center serving the tri-counties. Anderson also has worked with the California Department of Health Care Services, the California Department of Rehabilitation and the California Health Incentives Improvement Project. She is a graduate of California State University, Channel Islands, and the Policy and Planning Chair for the California State Rehabilitation Council since 2013.



Dani Anderson

"Dani is a strong voice for anyone with mental or physical disabilities," said Jeanette Villanueva, BIC Executive Director. "She was listed as one of the 50 Notable People in the Disability Community by the State of California Department of Rehabilitation in 2013 and has been advocating for those with disabilities for more than 10 years," Villanueva said.

Kristen Linton, is an assistant professor in the Health Sciences Program at California State University, Channel Islands, where she launched the "Trabajadora de Salud" or "health worker" project with a \$5,000 grant she received from the Solution-Focused Brief

Therapy Association (SFBTA), an organization dedicated to finding effective treatments for a variety of mental and physical health issues. The program offers Latinos with traumatic brain injury a series of in-home visits from upper level health science students who will offer education, resources and a chance to connect with someone who understands their burden. Linton received her Ph.D. in social work from Arizona State University and a masters of arts in social service administration at the University of Chicago. She received her bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.



Kristen Linton

"I am proud to welcome Dr. Kristen Linton to our Board of Directors. With her advanced education in social work, post as Assistant Professor in the Health Science Program at California State University Channel Islands and extensive research on traumatic brain injury, she is an invaluable addition, said Villanueva.

"Her current pilot study of the Trabajadora de Salud Intervention for Latinos with Traumatic Brain Injuries will help BIC support our Latino community. This study is aligned with the Brain Injury Center's goal of providing transitional care from the hospital to the survivor's home, and working with both the survivor and family caregivers," Villanueva said. "Kristen has a genuine interest in providing her expertise and resources as a researcher and educator in brain injury, disability and health to make a positive impact in our community."

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jeanette Marie Villanueva, MPPA

It's a time of growth at the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County!

A brain injury happens in an instant and can mean a lifetime of physical, cognitive and behavioral challenges. Early care can greatly improve outcomes, but most people don't know where to turn. This is why we are so pleased to be in communication with the Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC) so we can provide our services to those with severe brain injuries and awareness for patients who end up in the Emergency Room with concussions. VCMC is one of two major trauma hospitals in Ventura County, so we appreciate this collaboration and know we are stronger when we all work together.

We also have a big goal of expanding our support groups over the Conejo Grade to serve brain injury survivors and caregivers living in the communities of Newbury Park, Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village. We are making important connections and hope to launch our new group in the coming months. I want to welcome our new program facilitator, Suzie Schultz Bevilacqua, a well-respected social worker with extensive professional experience. She is already proving to be a great addition!

We also welcomed two outstanding board members, Dr. Kristen Linton and Dani Anderson. They are passionate, smart and dedicated professionals making a difference right now for people with disabilities. It is invigorating to have their insight at our board meetings and see them getting involved in our programs, making them stronger. Kristen and Dani are highlighted in this newsletter, so take a few minutes to learn more about their backgrounds and what they bring to the BIC Board of Directors.

We are aggressively applying for grants and researching new opportunities. Since we do not receive government funds, we rely on grants and fundraising to fulfill our mission. With the recently created the Finance and Development Committee, chaired by Sue Tatangelo, and the enthusiastic Evening of Magical Memories Committee, chaired by Dotti Oliver, 2016 is off to a good start!



In honor of National Brain Injury Awareness Month, this newsletter issue is dedicated to the 16,000 people in our community living with brain injury – and thousands of stroke survivors with acquired brain injuries.

I encourage you, our BIC community, to spread the word about our programs and services. We can provide resources, referrals, supportive programs and social connections for both brain injury survivors and caregivers. Ventura County, we are here for you! 🌱



The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County is grateful for your support. Because we are not government funded, we rely on the community's generosity to enable us to fulfill our mission of helping people with brain injuries and their families. Brain Injury is permanent, yet survivors' lifelong challenges and needs change over time. BIC provides programs and resources for survivors and caregivers at every stage in life and continue to fill a huge gap in services for adults with brain injury. Especially during National Brain Injury Awareness Month, please consider giving a gift that will make a significant difference in the lives of those affected by brain injury. If you can, please complete the attached envelope with your contribution and drop it in the mail.

Thank you!



Support BIC with a generous donation



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Survivor Council

SThe Brain Injury Center of Ventura County is pleased to announce the formation of its new Survivor Council, a leadership committee made up of brain injury survivors representing support groups in Oxnard, Ventura and Camarillo.

The first meeting of the newly developed Survivor Council took place in March. Dennis Wood, Vice President of BIC's Board of Directors, is chairing the Council. Committee members also include Ryan Clem, Michele Evelyn, Diane Huddleson, Bernadette Lyons-Sales and Kathy Miller.

This group will be meeting quarterly to provide feedback on BIC programs and plan social activities and fundraisers for survivors and family members.



Survivor Council. From left to right, Kathy Miller, Michele Evelyn, Dennis Wood (Chair), Diane Huddleson, Bernadette Lyons-Sales

"We all have challenges in life that benefit from support and counsel from loved ones, friends and constituents," said Dennis Wood. "Being a survivor of a brain injury is indescribable with challenges only other survivors can fully understand. I am honored to be a member of our Survivor Council to relate, embrace and advance all survivor's quality of life."

"The Brain Injury Center has never offered a group like this before, and it will be an exciting experience to have more of our clients directly involved in the development of our programming," said Chrissy Riley, BIC program coordinator.



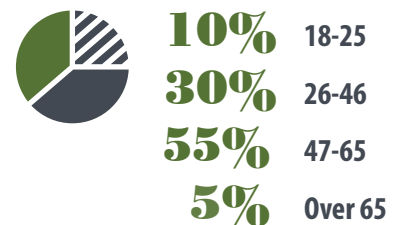
Brain Injury Center by the Numbers

A CONCUSSION is a form of traumatic brain injury



- 484** Care Coordination/Referral Assistance
- 131** Survivor and Family Support Groups
- 216** Social Opportunity Groups and Socials
- 89** Annual Countywide Conference
- 13** TeleREACH
- 18** Skill Building Groups

Percentages Served by Age Group



According to the CDC, brain injury will be the **BIGGEST** public health problem in the U.S. by 2020.

Conference Series Kicks Off with New Format

“Surviving-Striving-Thriving with Acquired Brain Injury”

The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County kicked off its 2016 Conference Series in early February with the ABC's of Special Needs Planning Made Easy. The conference covered topics such as special needs trusts, wills, guardianship and conservatorship, trustees, budget planning, Social Security, Medi-Cal, Medicare, letter of intent and the ABLE Act of 2014.

The conference, in its seventh year, offers a series of panels, presentations and activities by leading physicians and professionals in the field of brain injury. The conference format changed this year, offering a series of sessions throughout the year at different locations throughout the county, which are open to the public.

“After attending the ABC's of Special Needs Planning Made Easy workshop last fall, I was excited the presenters were willing to come share their knowledge with Brain Injury Center survivors, families and caregivers,” said Donna Davies, president of the Brain Injury Center's board of directors and parent of a brain injury survivor.

The conference sold out the seats in the Camarillo Health Care District classroom, where it was held, and evaluation forms showed a positive response to the information provided with most attendees saying they were happy with what they learned and felt they were better informed after attending the session, said Chrissy Riley, BIC's Program Coordinator and a Brain Injury Specialist.

A session on Executive Function: Enhancing Community Re-Entry Following Traumatic Brain Injury, took place March 8, at CHCD. The session was presented by Marsha Zak, Ph.D. CCC-SLP, who has specialized in the management of neurogenic disorders for the past 22 years in acute care, rehabilitation, sub-acute care, post-acute care and ventilator facilities. She also has extensive expertise with traumatic brain injury and its effects on cognitive communicative function. The session covered the changes to executive functions of the brain caused by traumatic brain injury that affect cognition, behavior and emotions and interfere with a survivor's return to functional living. She also discussed behaviors and techniques that help with successful community reintegration.

Other topics already scheduled in the conference series include:

Tackling Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), noon, March 31, Academic Family Medical Center, 3291 Loma Vista Road, Ventura, Building 340, 1st Floor Auditorium. Learn all about concussions, post-traumatic stress disorder, unlocking the secrets of traumatic brain injury, the art of recovery, art therapy, the crisis/emergency of brain injury and how the hospital responds to trauma patients in this informative session presented by Dr. Thomas Duncan, FACS, FICS, Co-Medical



Dr. Erik Lande moderates the Brain Injury 101 panel during the 2015 Brain Injury Conference, including Chrissy Riley, BIC program coordinator, and Nancy Porcella and Celeste Racicot with Brain Injury Specialists.

Director of Anacapa Surgical Associates and Co-Trauma Medical Director at VCMS.

Acquired Brain Injury 101, 6:30 p.m., Thursday, April 28, CHCD, Building H. Moderated by Dr. Erik Lande, Ph.D and a neuropsychologist, this panel discussion will offer information from experts in the field of brain injury as well as a question and answer session for attendees. Panelists include Nancy Porcella, SLP, MACCC; Celeste Racicot, M.Ed. CRC, CVE; and Chrissy Riley, CBIS and the Brain Injury Center program coordinator.

Registration for each session is \$15. Additional sessions will be added throughout the year.

Brain Injury Center Executive Director Jeanette Villanueva said she would like to thank the conference sponsors, Anacapa Surgical Associates, Neuroscience Center of Ventura County, Camarillo Health Care District and Senior Helpers for their continued support. She said she is excited to see the changes in the conference format as well.

“In the past the conference was all in one day at a single location, but feedback from survivors and caregivers indicated that holding several sessions in one day made for too long a day, and forced attendees to choose between various sessions,” she said. “Survivors also found it difficult to get transportation, so having sessions in a variety of locations, closer to home is beneficial!”

Riley said the series will offer some socially oriented activities that will be free to survivors, such as a game night and an art therapy session. She said plans for these types of activities are still being finalized.

“We are excited to offer several interesting and informative sessions that will appeal to survivors, family members, professionals and the general public. The chance to spend an afternoon or evening with leading professionals in the field of brain injury could be educational and potentially life changing,” she said.

For information on additional sessions or to register, please visit www.BrainInjuryCenter.org and click on Events or call (805) 482-1312. 📍

PROGRAM UPDATE

Chrissy Riley, Brain Injury Specialist

The people that I work with continue to amaze me, whether they are surviving, striving, or thriving in their new life after acquired brain injury. As many of you know all too well, it can sometimes be a struggle to open your eyes and get out of bed. Then there are those days when you wake up and are grateful for another day to spend on this earth. As one of our longtime support group members recently said, "Things get a little better every day when you're dealing with this."



Some days, you just need to "grab the bull by the horns" and take charge of this new life, like **Martina Gallegos**. Martina recently published a book of her poems, so that she can share her inspiring message with others who may or may not know what it is like to live through a brain injury. Martina recently shared, "The stroke and the surgeries were nothing. It's when I got home that the real fight began."

Survivors and caregivers sharing their stories, whether they are in the midst of challenges or conquering their daily activities, provide hope to those around them. It is only by sharing these struggles with each other that we can overcome them and learn to thrive. I would like to congratulate the 10 graduates of BIC's most recent Vocational Skills course. By working together to improve

communication and social skills, these individuals are now more prepared to work or volunteer in the community. BIC is planning to offer two more skills courses this year and I am excited to see how participants in our many programs will continue to grow and flourish in 2016. 🌱



Top row: Diane Huddleson, Yayo Robles, Gerri Andersen, and Tyler Sutton. Bottom row: Bernadette Lyons-Sales, Camilla Seippel (Class Facilitator) and Michele Evelyn.

An Evening of Magical Memories

Benefitting the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, September 24, 2016

Beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Residence Inn by Marriott, Oxnard

Tickets: \$100 each – Limited Seating

Champagne Reception, Silent and Live Auction,

Gourmet Dinner & Award Presentation

To purchase tickets or inquire regarding Sponsorship

Opportunities Please call 805-482-1312

www.braininjurycenter.org



Evening of Magical Memories



@BICVC Memories



eveningofmagicalmemories

Brain Injury Center is a 501C (3) non profit organization Tax ID 77-0491413



Winchester's Grill & Saloon

Winchester's event to benefit BIC



Winchester's Grill and Saloon
632 E. Main St. in Downtown Ventura will offer a night out fundraiser to benefit the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County on June 28. Winchester's will donate a portion of the evening's proceeds to the center. Last year's event raised nearly \$500.

Swift Foundation Grant Updates BIC Technology

Through funds provided by an \$8,500 Swift Foundation grant, the Brain Injury Center was able to implement the technology component of a the Collaborative Bicultural Rehabilitation Access Integration and Needs Assessment, or B.R.A.I.N., Project.

The project is a partnership between the Brain Injury Center of Ventura County, the Neuroscience Center of Ventura County and the Camarillo Health Care District's Wellness and Caregiver Center to provide a comprehensive community-based approach.

With the funds provided, the Brain Injury Center was able to purchase a case management program, TBI Management Suite by Q90 Corp., to coordinate rehabilitative services and resources to maximize a survivor's recovery after trauma.

Program Coordinator Chrissy Riley said the case management system, purchased in July has improved the center's ability to report and coordinate information efficiently, keeping accurate case notes and tracking client goals, disabilities, referrals and services. It also allows the center to more accurately track demographics and analytics, she said.

"With the new case management system, TBI Suite, we are able to more effectively assess and respond to our clients' needs. The improvement of tracking our clients electronically allows BIC to follow up so that fewer people are 'falling through the cracks.'"

The grant also allowed the center to purchase new computers for the first time ever. Jeanette Villanueva, BIC Executive Director, said the center had been using recycled computers that were donated several years ago, but they were outdated, slow performing and not compatible with current software needs.

The computers are used for occupational skills training and the internship program for brain injury survivors. The office is able to run much more efficiently as well. Villanueva said, "Adequate technology needs are extremely important in terms of meeting our goals for the case management software and providing survivors with an occupational training program that features up-to-date computer resources." 🌱

Welcome Suzie Schultz Bevilacqua

The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County is pleased to announce the addition of Suzie Schultz Bevilacqua, MSW, as a program facilitator. She will be conducting support groups in Camarillo and eventually a new support group that will start in the Conejo Valley.

Schultz Bevilacqua brings a wealth of experience to the program with nearly 30 years as a case manager at Dignity Health's Northridge Hospital, where she works as a Planning Coordinator in the acute rehabilitation unit, educating families about discharge planning options, post-acute programs and community resources, and counseling patients and care partners on coping and understanding disability. She also has facilitated a brain injury support group at Northridge Hospital for about 20 years.

"I am excited to be part of such a well-regarded organization and to contribute to its growth in reaching out to as many individuals affected by brain injury as possible," she said. "It will be a privilege to have the group share their personal experiences with me so we can, together, help individual and collective goals be met, as well as allow healthier emotional coping under sometimes difficult circumstances.

"I have worked as a social worker in the field of brain injury for many years and have the patience and compassion necessary to assist others in navigating through the myriad issues that result. In following in the footsteps of facilitators past, I plan to stimulate ideas and further the goals of the group. I look forward to getting to know each of the survivors and their families and am grateful for the opportunity to help," she said.

Schultz Bevilacqua received her masters of social work at the University of Michigan and her bachelor's degree in psychology/sociology at State University of New York, Buffalo. 🌱



Support Groups

BIC offers these programs at no charge. Please contact the office before attending for the first time.

CAMARILLO

1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month
4:00-5:30 pm

AlmaVia of Camarillo

2500 N. Ponderosa Drive, Camarillo

Survivor and loved one's group held concurrently

OXNARD

2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month
2:00-3:30 pm

St. John's Regional Medical Center
1600 N. Rose Ave., Oxnard

Survivor and loved one's group held concurrently
Enter through main/front entrance

OXNARD

GRUPO DE APOYO EN ESPAÑOL

Primero y Tercero miércoles de cada mes
2:00-3:30 pm

En la Sain John's Hospital de Oxnard
1600 N. Rose Ave., Oxnard

Los sobrevivientes, la familia y los cuidadores están invitados a participar en este grupo de apoyo gratuito.

Entrar por entrada principal

VENTURA

2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month
4:00-5:30 pm

Bible Fellowship Church

6950 Ralston, Bldg. #300, Ventura

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

One hour sessions are available for either brain injury survivors and/or family members.

Referrals and support to promote physical and emotional health and well-being are offered.

Appointments are required.

Please contact the office for more information.

SOCIAL GATHERING FOR BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS AND LOVED ONES

Activities are offered periodically – an opportunity to have some fun.

Call (805) 482-1312 or email info@BrainInjuryCenter.org to express your interest.

Stay Connected

The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County offers several ways to stay engaged and informed.



Join us for quarterly social activities. Check our website calendar for details!



www.facebook.com/eveningofmagicalmemories
www.facebook.com/BrainInjuryCenter



Visit our website, www.BrainInjuryCenter.org.



**Brain Injury Center
of Ventura County**
P.O. Box 1477
Camarillo, CA 93011-1147
(805) 482-1312
www.BrainInjuryCenter.org

Community programs benefit Brain Injury Center:



AmazonSmile is a simple automatic way for you to support BIC every time you shop, at no cost to you. On your first visit to smile.amazon.com you will need to select Brain Injury Center to receive donation from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Smile.amazon.com will remember your selection, then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a portion of the purchase price being donated to BIC.



The Brain Injury Center of Ventura County is now enrolled in Ralph's Community Contribution Program. All you need to do is follow the easy steps on our website, braininjurycenter.org, under the Get Involved tab to link your Ralph's Reward Card with the Brain Injury Center when you shop, and Ralph's will donate a percentage of your bill to the Brain Injury Center. It's a free and easy way to make a difference in the lives of survivors of acquired brain injury.



Purchase gift certificates, enjoy a great meal or gather for happy hour this season and Mission Oaks Café will graciously donate five percent of each receipt to the Brain Injury Center. Just write, "Brain Injury Center" on the receipt and drop it in the jar by the door. Mission Oaks Cafe is open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and is located at 5227 Mission Oaks Blvd. in Camarillo in the Von's shopping center on the corner of Mission Oaks Boulevard and Woodcreek Road.