the NOGGIN
VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 3

Sibling Duo
Kiera Flahart and
Chad Arthur are

Superman Strong

A magazine for survivors of brain injury, caregivers, and neuro-professionals by the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

TUCSON 2019

CONCUSSION RUN

Join us for the inaugural Tucson Concussion Run benefitting the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona's outreach and programs in southern Arizona. The event will feature a competitive and timed 10K and 5K, along with a One-Mile Fun Walk. Virtual participants can also follow along from anywhere in the world. Come help us support and raise awareness for the concussion community!

SAVE THE DATE!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13
7:30-11 A.M.

Brandi Fenton Memorial Park in Tucson

Registration will open on July 1st at CONCUSSIONRUN.ORG

Early bird registration is $30 and includes a t-shirt and finisher's medal designed by a Tucson artist.

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- **$5,000 Mindbender:** Name/logo on all professionally designed materials, race bibs, and Dri-FIT T-shirts, collateral, 10x10 exhibit space, microphone time at start and end of race, and 35 race registration slots.
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- **$2,000 Just the Facts Sign Sponsor:** Name/ logo on 20 different facts and stats on concussion, brain injury, and caregiving displayed throughout venue on corrugated signs.
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For more information, contact Carrie at 520-310-3301 or Carrie@biaaz.org

The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona is a statewide social benefit organization dedicated to creating a better future through brain injury prevention, advocacy, and education

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ON the HORIZON

Dear Reader,

Whether this is your first time ever reading through a copy of *The Noggin* e-zine, or you've been following along since the first issue, I'd like to extend to you a big hearty welcome to Volume 4, Issue 3. When interviewing people whose stories are featured in our e-zine, I often reflect on how inspiration seems to be contagious, with symptoms ranging from positivity to renewed determination. Those who peruse *The Noggin's* pages are introduced to survivors, family members, and friends who are in a continuous process of reworking the scripts of their lives after brain injury, that unscrupulous villain, enters the scene. The takeaway often seems to be that life goes on, not solely out of necessity, but because these individuals make it so. For those who are struggling to adjust to a post-brain injury world, seeing others who are not just surviving but thriving can lend them hope.

Brittany Sweeney-Lawson (left) and Rays of Hope Keynote Speaker Courtney Clark (right).

Such inspirational examples are par for the course in this edition of *The Noggin*. For our cover story, you'll meet siblings Kiera Flahart and Chad Arthur, whose entire family has spent years finding a healthy balance as caregivers after a motor vehicle accident left Chad with physical and cognitive disabilities. Additionally, find out what's in store for this year's Camp Can Do, learn the origin story for the BIAAZ Brain Cave Men's Discussion Group, and take a look at the Q&A of a dedicated BIAAZ volunteer. Also, two new columns debuting in this issue are "The Cerebral Chef: Serving up Food for Thought," featuring brain food recipes, and "BIAAZ Profiles of Interest," which will shine a light on those who are striving to make a difference in the brain injury community.

Upcoming events to keep on your radar include the return of Brain Gym to Tucson. Residents of Tucson who like to work up a sweat can also register beginning in July for the Concussion Run, which will be held on October 13, 2019. Finally, due to positive feedback and popularity, The Brain Cave Group for men 18+ with a brain injury will be an ongoing staple. Flyers and schedules for these events are listed throughout this issue.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank everyone who makes *The Noggin* the powerful mode of expression it is— our wonderful readers, sponsors, donors, advertisers, and of course, story contributors, whose honesty and vulnerability are the backbone of every issue we put to print. Whew, well, if you've made it this far, you've earned yourself a solid brain-based joke. Q: What keeps on working even after it's been fired? A: A neuron! So, fire away, and without further ado, happy reading!

Cheers,

Brittany Sweeney-Lawson

Brittany Sweeney-Lawson
The Noggin Editor & BIAAZ Resource Facilitation Manager

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Sibling Duo
Kiera Flahart and Chad Arthur are

Superman Strong

Many kids dream of growing up to be superheroes, but Kiera Flahart gets to be one in real life. Her origin story dates back to 1992 when her family was in a serious car accident, with almost everyone in the vehicle sustaining life-threatening injuries. Chad Arthur, Kiera's brother, was eight years old at the time and suffered a severe traumatic brain injury. As a result, Chad had to completely relearn how to walk, talk, eat, and do the activities of daily living (ADLs). Since his injuries occurred at such a young age, Chad's body underwent a trauma, causing it to grow incorrectly, as well as instigating tone and spasticity issues, that to this day require him to receive Botox injections every three months. Since he has difficulty walking, he also has to wear bilateral lower leg braces (AFOs), and utilize either a cane or a transport wheelchair, depending on how long and far he plans to go.

Due to the many challenges stemming from his life-altering TBI, Chad and Kiera's parents are also Chad's caregivers, ensuring he makes it to his outpatient therapy appointments twice a week at Encompass Health, as well as attending the gym with him five-to-seven times a week to work on stretches and muscle-building activities. Although Chad will be turning 35 this year, the TBI interfered with the development of some of his cognitive abilities, and in certain areas, his functioning level is that of a young teenager. At times, he is frustrated by the consequences of his actions and balks at guidelines set by family members, doctors, and therapists. "My parents have sacrificed their sleep, health, and time with multiple hospital, doctor, and other medical professional visits," Kiera recalls. As is the case for many caregivers, going through the ups and downs of a life-long recovery process with Chad can cause its share of stress, frustration, and anxiety for his family.

While Chad's head injury essentially forced him to undergo a second childhood, it did the exact opposite for Kiera

and her other siblings. "[We] had to grow up fast and learn how to assist our parents and other family member in taking care of [Chad], the house chores, and other necessities," Kiera shares. This supervisory role of assisting Chad in his everyday activities has continued well into Kiera's adulthood. As a secondary caregiver, she has learned a lot from her interactions with her brother, whom she describes as a "busy, social, and loveable guy," and believes the whole family has grown closer while figuring out how to put the pieces of their lives back together. "We have changed in so many ways, becoming more patient, empathetic, understanding, and helpful," she acknowledges. Their main goal is to work together as a team to equip Chad with the tools he needs to be successful, as well as providing support and strength to each other. Kiera notes that "we, as a family, have learned how to adapt, encourage, and assist Chad in keeping on task and following what he needs to do daily by modifying the house, his activities, and our approach on how we communicate with him."

Chad and Kiera with their masks for the Unmasking Brain Injury Project.

If Kiera's caregiving experience with Chad marked the development phase of her superpowers, then entering the medical field to become a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) was the acceptance and realization of her mission. "As a young child, seeing my brother go through hours upon hours of therapies started my interest in becoming a therapist," she says. "I knew I wanted to be in healthcare, and after seeing a PT come to our house to treat [Chad], it just amplified my desire to get into this field."

If Kiera's caregiving experience with Chad marked the development phase of her superpowers, then entering the medical field to become a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) was the acceptance and realization of her mission.

Being a medical professional as well as the sister of a TBI survivor has proven tricky at times, and Kiera has had to learn to balance both roles. "Trying to choose which emotion and "hat" to put on can be daunting and confusing at times," she acknowledges. When Chad is non-compliant in doing his home exercises, or refuses to wear his leg braces or use his cane, it can bring out the super protective sister in her. "It is beyond frustrating at times when I know he can do better but doesn't," she admits. On the other hand, her PTA background has helped remind her that her brother's brain injury often makes it difficult for him to listen or understand the reasoning behind the instructions he's given. It has been the ultimate lesson in patience and compassion.

Kiera has also come to realize that, even though she is the one with the therapy skills and experience, her parents are still Chad's primary caregivers, which means there are certain boundaries she is careful not to cross. "As a daughter, I have learned my assistance is best in an advisory role in regard to medical interventions, therapy needs, and modifications of daily living activities," she says. "My assistance needs to be seen as helpful and not as stepping on the toes of our parents as they continue to do their best in caring for Chad."

Like all stories of life after brain injury, Kiera's and Chad's are powerful in that they shed light on what both survivors and families experience in the aftermath of the incident. When Kiera stumbled upon the BIAAZ Facebook page and discovered they were hosting the Unmasking Brain Injury project for Arizona, she knew it was something she wanted her and Chad to be part of, something special. After all, what's a superhero without a mask? Kiera helped Chad make his mask, and due to his intense love for all things superhero, it was the overarching theme they used to decorate it. The upper half is a vibrant ode to Superman and Batman, while the lower end utilizes their nemeses Kryptonite and The Joker to express the destructive side of brain injury.

Originally, Kiera thought only brain injury survivors could make a mask, so when she found out at the BIAAZ Legislative Day at the Capital that caregivers and family members could also participate, she jumped at the chance, taking a mask-making packet home that same day. Seeing the first crop of masks publicly displayed together for the

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Kiera shows off the mask she made with her family's input to represent their journey as caregivers.

first time at the Legislative Day, including Chad's, was just the spark of inspiration she needed. With the help and input from the rest of the family, Kiera created another super-themed mask, complete with pop-out words descriptive of the family's caregiver journey and a Superman cape draped along the mask's farmost left side. "The masks relate to how we came together as a family to create this artwork," Kiera explains. "We are SUPERMAN STRONG, loving, and active, with a community of friends, family, and strangers that has helped support us."

After experiencing how impactful the Unmasking Brain Injury project was for herself and her family, Kiera informed BIAAZ Executive Director Carrie Collins-Fadell and the Unmasking Project Director Laura Johnson she was interested in arranging a mask-making event at the neuro rehab unit of her workplace, Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of East Valley. She later found out Encompass Health is a BIAAZ sponsor, and was given permission to collaborate with Carrie and Laura to make the event a reality. "I was lucky enough to secure two events for our patients with brain injuries to create their masks," she enthuses. "Our facility was also able to host two displays of some of the other mask creations for a three-week period."

Due to Kiera's initiative and enthusiasm, participants including Encompass Health inpatients and outpatients, as well as community members, showed up to participate at one of the two available events. "Those who attended were inspired, emotional, and creative with their mask projects," she notes. Multiple patients even asked for a kit to take home for family members to work on the project as a joint collaboration, requests which Laura, the project's director, willingly and helpfully accommodated. Several participants expressed to Kiera how much it meant to them to have a medium through which they could tell their stories. Some wished they'd known about the project's existence years ago. Others were dismayed to learn not every state hosts the Unmasking Brain Injury project, as they wanted friends and family who live outside Arizona to have the same positive experiences they did.

Now, with feedback and hindsight, Kiera hopes to bring the project back to Encompass Health next year, with additional time to spread the word to their community and patients. She's grateful to have connected with BIAAZ, and looks forward to attending upcoming events and becoming even more involved with the organization in the future. While the path to becoming a super sister, PTA, and yes, hero, hasn't always been smooth or easy, Kiera has come to find that "every new scar and surgery is a story and learning experience for Chad and our family that we can only grow from."

The Arthur and Flahart 2016 Christmas family photo

RAYS OF HOPE

2019 in Review

Miss Arizona 2018 Isabel Ticlo poses with Jasmine, a Rays of Hope guest

On May 17th, 2019, the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona invited brain injury survivors and their families from all over the state to attend its free annual Rays of Hope Conference. The 300 people who traveled to the Desert Willow Conference Center in Phoenix were treated to a wide array of interesting and useful vendors, as well as a variety of incredible speakers such as Shana Malone, the Clinical Initiatives Project Manager of the Arizona Health Cost Care Containment System (AHCCCS), who kicked off the morning session by speaking on the effects of the state's ongoing opioid epidemic. She was followed by motivational speaker and native Texan Courtney Clark, whose frank discussion on handling life's detours earned her enthusiastic applause.

Courtney Clark had a great time visiting the vendor booths at Rays of Hope.

The lunch program speaker was author of the book, I'll Be Ok, It's Just a Hole in my Head, and budding comedian Mimi Hayes, whose presentation on her blind date-ruining ruptured aneurism had the crowd laughing out loud. Her takeaway message focused on finding humor and healing amidst life's "traumadies."

Attendees were also able to select from a variety of break-out sessions tailored to fit a wide range of needs. Some new additions this year included the recently formed BIAAZ men's discussion group, The Brain Cave, as well as a Q&A with Dr. Sean Southland called Ask the Neuroplastician. Author, advocate, and survivor Amy Zellmer provided guidance in navigating social relationships post-injury with her session, Oops, I lost my Friends! Other topics of interest included reconnecting and moving forward as a couple post-brain injury, legal concerns involving the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a class on breathing and relaxation techniques, and many more.

From left to right, Keynote Speaker Courtney Clark, Ms. Wheelchair Arizona 2019 Shawnique Cotton, and Lunch Program Speaker Mimi Hayes.

On display all day in the main conference hall were the 300 masks submitted to BIAAZ by brain injury survivors and caregivers for the Unmasking Brain Injury Project, many of which belonged to conference attendees. The Unmasking Project Director Laura Johnson had mask-making tables available throughout the day for anyone interested to create and contribute a mask to the project.

BIAAZ was pleased to see several familiar faces in attendance, as well as many new additions who were joining in on the fun for the first time. Both seasoned attendees and newcomers alike were quick to express their gratitude for the classes, programs, and available resources, and described this year's conference as everything from "educational" to "exceptional." All-in-all, the 2019 Rays of Hope was a huge success thanks to everyone who participated, as well as the BIAAZ partners and sponsors who helped make the conference possible.

Jim Ledgewood fundraises, facilitates, and focuses on

Staying Forever HEADSTRONG

Jim and Ms. Wheelchair Arizona 2019 meet for the first time at the BIAAZ office.

"Oh my gosh, I recognize you; I just saw you on one of those early morning new shows!" gushes Shawnique Cotton, aka, Miss Wheelchair Arizona 2019. "I can't believe I'm getting to meet you!"

For the record, the person causing so much excitement in the small space of the BIAAZ lobby is Jim Ledgewood, brain injury survivor and advocate. The news show he'd appeared on was AZTV-7, where he'd been promoting the Unmasking Brain Injury Project, which aims to show the hidden aspects of living day-to-day life with brain Injury.

Initially, I was a bit surprised by Shawnique's reaction. We at the BIAAZ office are no stranger to Jim, who now and then drops by to say hi to the staff or to meet with our Executive Director Carrie Collins-Fadell about an idea or project to help raise awareness for brain injury. He also attends many BIAAZ events, and even spearheads a couple of them. He's friendly, hard-working, and smart, but famous? That was never a word I'd associated with him before, that is, until seeing Miss Wheelchair Arizona's enthusiastic response to her chance encounter with him in our office. Clearly, she would beg to differ.

"Do you mind if we get a picture together?" she asks him, adjusting her crown, which she seems to still be getting used to. He obliges, and they pose in front of one of the display racks for the Unmasking Brain Injury Project. Jim's mask, with its striking design of alternating orange and black markings, is visible directly above their heads in the photo.

After Shawnique and Jim left the office to go about their respective days, I was struck by the notion that Shawnique's excitement at meeting Jim wasn't due to his perceived celebrity status, but rather an acknowledgement of how crucial it is for those with a brain injury, and on a larger scale, the disability community, to have a recognizable face and a powerful voice representing them.

It doesn't hurt that Jim's not even slightly shy about his sharing his story. As he tells it, 13 years ago, he was shot in the face, with the bullet striking his frontal and temporal lobes, in a case of mistaken identity while enjoying the night out at a sports bar in Glendale. The aftermath of the incident left him blind, deaf, and paralyzed on the left side of his face, and also interfered with his cognitive functioning. "The injury affected how I walk through life for the rest of my life," he tells me. However, he believes life goes on, and even though the brain injury changed every aspect of his life, from economic to social, he says, "I pretty much do everything I did before, but with adjustments to the afflictions.

One such adjustment can be summed up in one word: headstrong. Not only is it the title of one of his favorite workout songs, but a message in and of itself, reminding him to stay strong and overcome the odds. Headstrong has come to represent how Jim sees himself and a way to tackle the challenges of brain injury (how else?) head-on. It's also a word that seems to inspire action. The name of Jim's keynote address at the 2018 Rays of Hope conference was "HeadStrong and NO Giving Up," and Team HeadStrong was the chosen moniker for his team for the BIAAZ's annual Run, Walk, and Roll fundraiser, which was held this past March. It was also Jim's second year as the Run, Walk, and Roll co-chair.

For anyone who's followed along up until this point and recognizes Jim's tendency for tenacity, it probably won't come as a surprise that Team HeadStrong had the highest number of participants of any of the teams formed for the Run, Walk, and Roll, which garnered nearly $70,000 for BIAAZ's brain injury education, programs, and resources.

"How on earth did you get so many people interested in the race and joining your team?" I ask him in amazement. "They like the message," he says simply, "it was mostly good networking." Co-workers at Swaback Architects + Planners and family members from all over the country would see his posts on Facebook and feel inspired by the cause and Jim's obvious dedication to it.

Fittingly, Jim placed first in the Males 40-45 division of the Run, Walk, and Roll's 5K race. It was an especially proud moment, as it was the first time he'd been able to run in the last seven-to-eight years. Due to his injury, his auditory issues had thrown off his balance, causing him to fall or be unsteady on his feet. To prepare for the race, he kept to a strict daily running routine, and also lifted weights and engaged in avid exercise. The hard work paid off when he was able to good-naturedly tease his work colleagues and fellow team runners whom he beat, as some of them regularly run 5K races. "I guess you don't need your whole brain to win the race after all," Jim says jokingly.

I was glad to learn from Jim himself that he has already been asked and accepted to co-chair the Run, Walk, and Roll for next year. People who have seen the pictures he's posted on Facebook of the event or seen him around town wearing his popular black Team Headstrong t-shirt have already said to him, "that looks like fun; we want to do it next year!" he tells me. For his part, Jim's already brainstorming how to have an even bigger turnout for 2020.

Until then, Jim will be keeping himself busy running the pilot discussion group for men with brain injuries called The Brain Cave, a responsibility he shares with Ability 360 employee and stroke survivor Steve Norton. The plan for the group was hatched when Jim started talking with Carrie from BIAAZ about the fact he didn't know of any support groups in his area or any that focused on his particular needs. Once BIAAZ secured the funding to get the group up and running, Jim was surprised but flattered when Carrie asked him to be one of the group's co-facilitators. "I wanted to be a part of a group [like this] because I wanted to learn from other people's experiences and hope they learn from mine," he shares.

Some may wonder why the group is exclusively for men. When I bring this up, Jim admits there are some topics that are difficult for men with brain injuries to talk about in front women. From Jim's explanation though, the men mostly discuss everyday situations that are affected by their injuries

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Jim Ledgewood and some members of Team Headstrong after the 5K race at BIAAZ's 2nd annual Run, Walk, & Roll.

and how they respond to them. "If one person doesn't have the answer, someone else in the group might," Jim points out. The purpose of the group is to provide a casual, relaxed atmosphere where participants feel at ease to be themselves and enjoy the support and understanding of like-minded survivors.

As of my interview with Jim, The Brain Cave has had two meetings. "At the first one, three TBI survivors showed up, which I hear is pretty good for a first meeting," Jim acknowledges. "This last time, we had seven total!" Both Jim and Steve are making sure to spread the word by posting on social media and handing out Brain Cave flyers whenever and wherever they can. For any men interested and wanting to know what they can expect if they attend a meeting, Jim says discussion topics are as varied as the attendees, so there's something for everyone. Those who come aren't required to say anything, they can just come to listen and feel included. "Plus, Café Cultivate provides snack and drinks, which is always a bonus!" Jim adds.

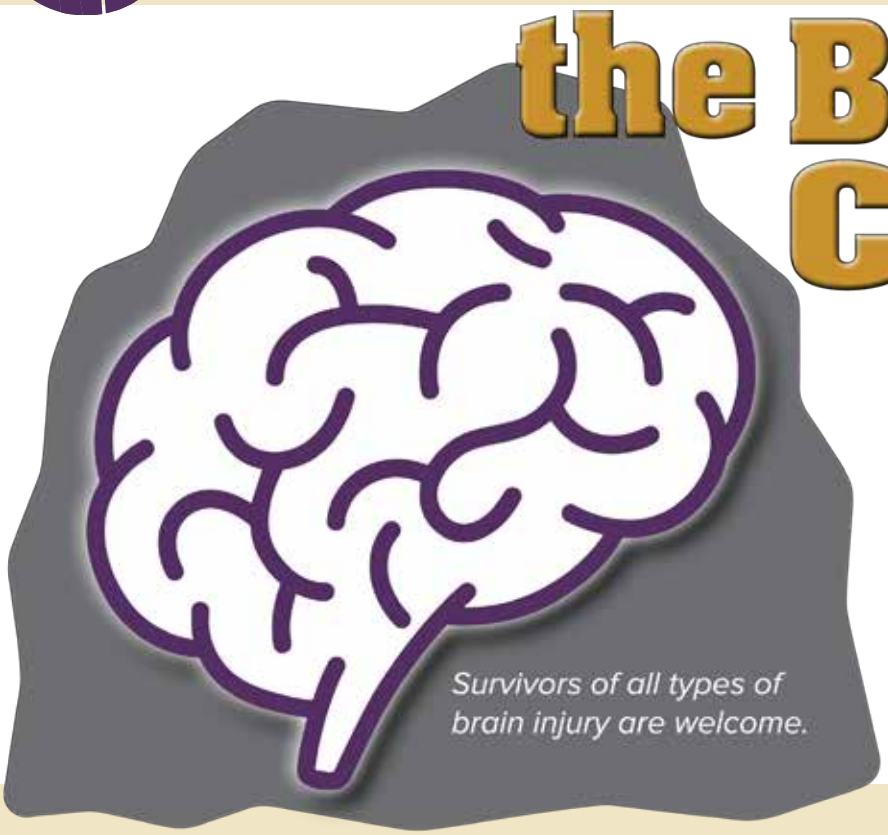
Talking with Jim is always a positive experience because I leave the conservation feeling better than when we started it. I call it the "Joining Jim" effect, because being around him makes you feel like getting involved and being a part of something bigger than yourself. When I question him about what made him want to become an advocate for brain injury survivors, he responds, "to me, it's what was supposed to be done." For seven years, he didn't even know he had a TBI, or that it was the reason his life had been turned upside-down; if he had, he believes he would have been able to get help much earlier on. "I don't want people to go through what I went through," he emphasizes. "When you're more informed about your situation, it makes you more confident. When you're more confident, you're happier." Or, as acclaimed writer Maya Angelou put it, "when you know better, do better." For his part, Jim is doing his best to make sure that, like his conversations, he leaves the brain injury community better than he found it.

If you'd like to participate in The Brain Cave Men's Discussion Group, it's held on the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00 p.m-7:30 p.m. outside Café Cultivate, located at Ability 360. Contact the BIAAZ office at 602-508-8024 or info@biaaz.org for more details.

Brain Injury Alliance
ARIZONA

PRESENTS

the BRAIN CAVE



A discussion group for men on life after brain injury

Men ages 18+ who have survived any type of brain injury are invited to join us for a special pilot of Brain Cave—a discussion group for men on life after brain injury.

This is a conversation-based group where your thoughts and interests are welcome. We will meet at Café Cultivate which will be open just for us at this time. Light snacks and refreshments will be served.

DATE + TIME: This group will meet the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM

LOCATION: Café Cultivate is in the Ability 360 Center at 5025 E. Washington Street in Phoenix

JOIN FACILITATORS

JIM LEDGEWOOD—Jim is an architect for a Scottsdale firm. He has been a TBI survivor since he was shot in the head during a random act of violence. With the bullet still lodged in his brain, Jim began to rebuild his life, seeking both justice and looking to understand his new life as a brain injury survivor. Jim often shares his experience during keynotes and workshops to help others adjusting to their new normal.

STEVE NORTON—Steve is an acquired non-traumatic brain injury survivor after a stroke changed his life at the height of his globetrotting career in the culinary services industry. Steve has spent years as a coach, teacher, and mentor helping those living with disability thrive. He is an author and a staple in the Phoenix disability community.

For questions about living well after brain injury contact the Brain Injury Alliance—BIAAZ.org | info@biaaz.org | 888-500-9165

And the Big Winner is...

Congratulations and a huge thank you to Chekela Turner! She is the big winner for the private Diamondbacks suite, which she and 17 of her lucky friends will get to enjoy at Chase Field in Phoenix.

From January through the first of June of this year, anyone who donated or raised $500 or more on behalf of the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona to help support our programs, education, and resources, was entered into a drawing for the suite. Donations made on Facebook for the Run, Walk, & Roll, Facebook birthday fundraisers, Facebook non-profit fundraisers where BIAAZ was the beneficiary, and personal contributions, were all eligible for the contest.

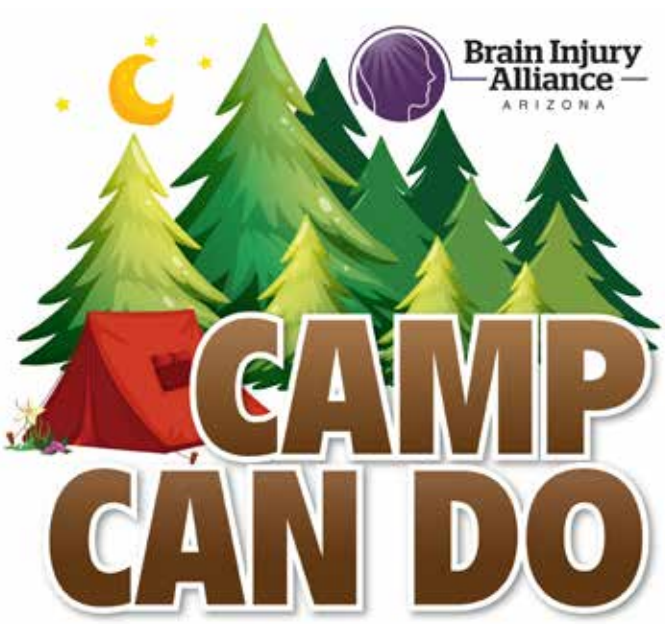
If you didn't win this time around, don't worry! For every $25 donated to the BIAAZ between June 1st and July 31, 2019, you will receive an entry into a drawing for four Arizona Cardinals tickets on the 50-yard line in section 108, as well as a parking pass for the October 19th game versus the Atlanta Falcons, valued at $900. You can donate on the BIAAZ.org website or mail a check to the BIAAZ office at 5025 East Washington St., Suite 108, Phoenix, AZ 85034.

The drawing will take place in the BIAAZ office on August 1st, which you are invited to attend. We'd like to express our gratitude to Palumbo, Wolfe, & Palumbo for the generous donation of the tickets, and we appreciate everyone's help in raising funds and awareness for the cause of brain injury in Arizona. Thank you to everyone for supporting our good and important work.

SAVE THE DATE

RAYS OF HOPE

May 15 & 16, 2020



Camp Director Barbara Corell

Directing Camp Can Do— Take Two!

It's that time of year again! Camp Can Do 2019 is fast-approaching, and we want to see you there! Visit the BIAAZ website at www.biaaz.org to register, or call the BIAAZ office at 1-888-500-9165 for more details.

The crackle of a blazing campfire. The intoxicating scent of pine trees. The cool, clear lake water lapping at a sandy shore. For those who know and love Camp Can Do, the summer camp for survivors of a brain injury, these are just are a few of the sights, smells, and sensations they look forward to each year when they arrive at the Whispering Hope Ranch, located in Payson, Arizona.

For those who've never attended the camp and are curious as to what would make it worth their while, Camp Can Do 2018's Camp Director Barbara Correll has a simple explanation— "campers [have] the opportunity to make lasting friendships and enjoy activities with greater independence."

Barbara was available at Rays of Hope 2019 to answer questions about this year's Camp Can Do.

Since directing last year's camp, Barbara has been as busy as ever. She recently began working as a COTA/L at Sante of Chandler, as well as an instructor for Pima Medical Institute's OTA program. She holds such a high opinion of camp, though, that even with her demanding schedule, she's decided to come on board again as the Camp Director for 2019. When asked how her previous experience affected her decision to return to the helm this year, she said, "[Last year's camp] was an amazing experience. I had the opportunity to work side-by-side with the amazing BIAAZ staff and the most incredible volunteers." For her, it was everyone's impressive teamwork and dedication that made for a successful camp session, and also helped make her job as director that much easier.

Not that being camp director is without its challenges. For Barbara, her first year in charge taught her to learn from the little things, such as planning for the unexpected. She also learned that getting all the details to fall just so into

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"...it was everyone's impressive teamwork and dedication that made for a successful camp session, and also helped make her job as director that much easier."

place prior to the start of camp is not always an easy task. "It's so important to me that our campers can just relax and have a great experience," she said. "It can be stressful to attempt to plan the coordination of so many people and events for each day."

However, when all is said and done, and the campers actually arrive and she sees how excited they are to be there, Barbara feels proud of the part she plays in bringing it all together. "Every bit of effort that goes into [preparing for camp] is instantly worth it," she shared. As for how she handles those "little things" that can sometimes go awry? "Even when things don't go according to plan, they can still work out," is her positive take.

Another advantage of having previously filled the role of camp director is that Barbara has come up with some ideas about how to make the 2019 session even better. "This year, we will be adding kayaking to our already awesome line-up [of activities]," she divulged. Campers can also look forward to familiar favorites such as horseback riding, a mini petting zoo, daily nature hikes, archery, arts and crafts, a splash pad, Camp Can Do Olympics, a themed dinner, and of course, the ever-popular talent show. There will also be a "Mask"erade Ball, where campers can dress up in a style that helps them express and share their personal brain injury stories.

With her can-do positive attitude and contagious enthusiasm, Barbara's set to make Camp Can Do 2019 an unforgettable experience for all. "I can't say enough how honored I am to be part of this incredible camp and spend time getting to know such wonderful people," she said. As for what she'd like attendees to take away from this year's camp, Barbara hopes everyone will enjoy "the genuine human connection that occurs, despite our differences and disabilities, when we stop and see each other for who we are and not for what we can or can't do."

SAVE THE DATE!

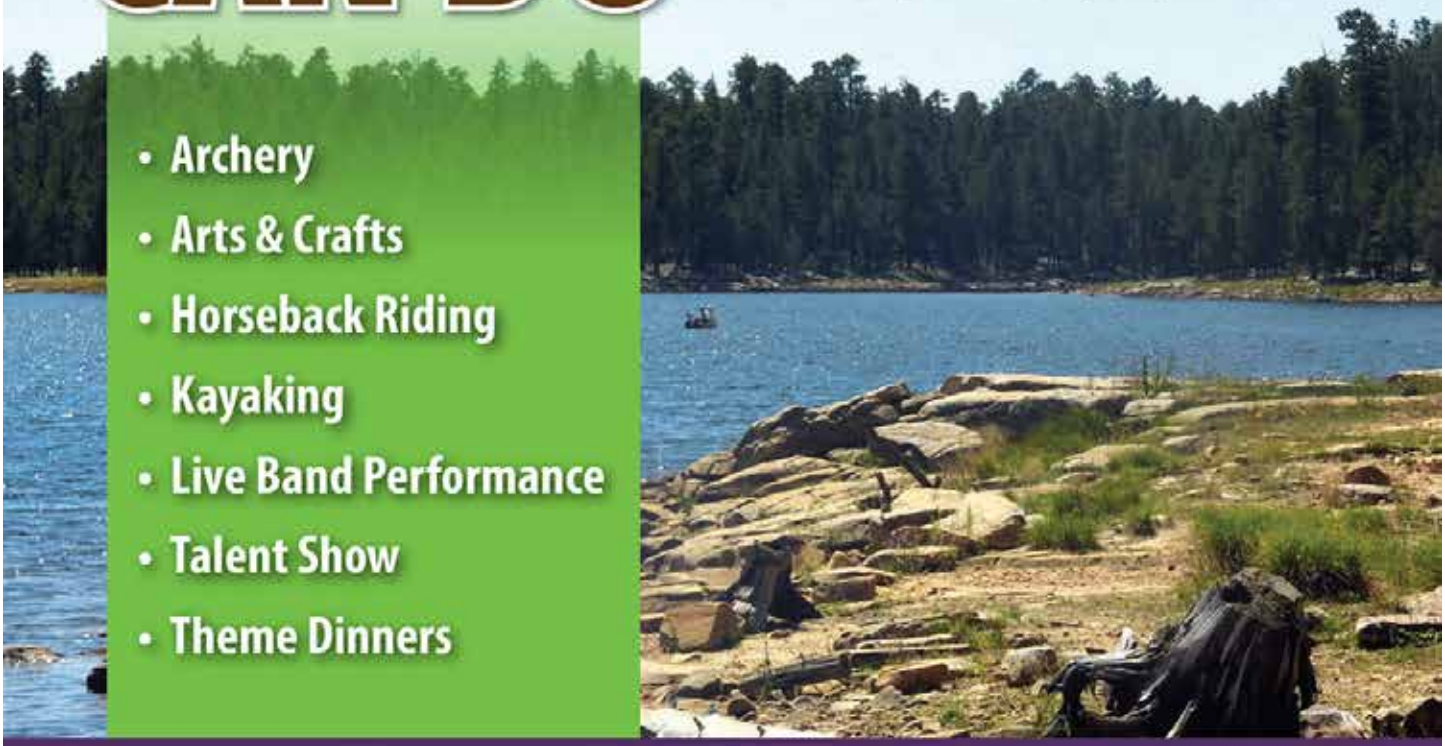
Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

CAMP CAN DO

AUGUST 8-11 2019

Join us for fun, friendship, acceptance, and cabin-style camping. This is a retreat for adult survivors of brain injury that takes place in Payson, Arizona.

- Archery
- Arts & Crafts
- Horseback Riding
- Kayaking
- Live Band Performance
- Talent Show
- Theme Dinners



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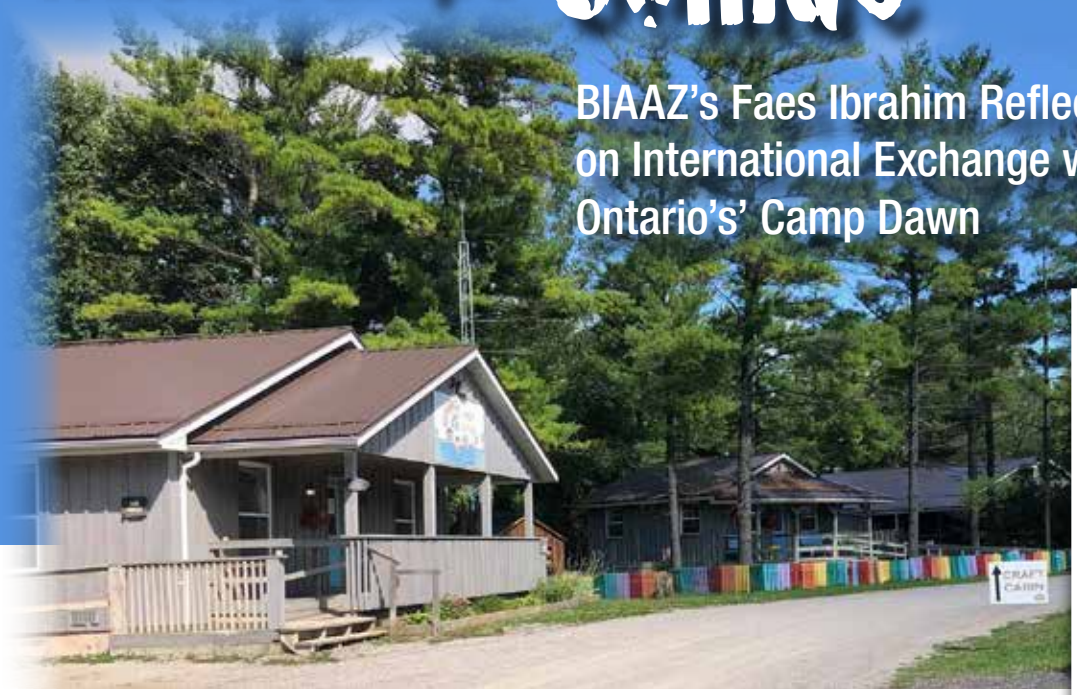
When Camps Collide

BIAAZ's Faes Ibrahim Reflects on International Exchange with Ontario's' Camp Dawn



During the summer of 2018, I was fortunate enough to be invited to participate in an international brain injury survivors camp exchange program. While I went up north in September to see how things are done at Camp Dawn, located in Ontario, Canada, Julie Dickison, the manager for Camp Dawn, came down in August to learn about how BIAAZ runs Camp Can Do.

My experience helping to operate Camp Can Do these last few years and interacting with our awesome campers made the prospect of meeting the ones at Camp Dawn all the more exciting. Getting to know the campers is one of my favorite things to do, because I'm able to hear their survivor stories and find out why they love attending camp so much. While at Camp Dawn, I learned that the majority of attendees are seasoned veterans who have consistently attended camp for three-plus years; for many of them, it's the best and only time they can meet up to catch up with their friends. Some of their favorite pastimes when they get together include playing card games, fishing, looking out at the lake, and simply enjoying a cup of their favorite coffee (Tim Horton) together. That last one is especially important; those campers sure do love a good cup of Joe!

Camp Dawn, much like Camp Can Do, provides the opportunity for brain injury survivors to appreciate and participate in all the activities that typically make camping great— everything from karaoke, arts & crafts, canoeing, fishing, hiking, and group campfires. Additionally, Camp Dawn has a popular supervised high ropes course that is used in team building exercises. Out of all the activities, the high ropes course was the most inspirational one for me to watch take place. Seeing a participant go from a wheelchair or walker to climbing up the course wall was awesome! The enthusiasm of the different groups of individuals cheering each other on was contagious, and by the end, there wasn't a single person involved who wasn't smiling, myself included.

By the last day of camp, I wasn't quite sure where the time had gone; the days had all flown by so fast. My short time at Camp Dawn was fun, but it was also educational; I came away from the experience with useful technical and operational knowledge I believe will be beneficial for planning future sessions of Camp Can Do. It was hard leaving the relaxing and scenic Camp Dawn and saying goodbye to all the great people I'd met, but I knew when I arrived back in Phoenix, I'd be bringing all the wonderful memories I'd made with me.

Representative Stanton Poised to Play Pivotal Role in Assisting Veterans and All Impacted by Traumatic Brain Injury

As the executive director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ), Carrie Collins-Fadell didn't waste any time recruiting Congressman Greg Stanton (D-Phoenix) for the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force (CBIT). In fact, she asked him to join the Task Force at precisely 4:05 p.m. on May 30, 2018— five minutes after Stanton's duties as long-time mayor of Phoenix ended and his bid for Congress officially began.

As mayor of Phoenix, Stanton was no stranger to the BIAAZ and their work serving survivors of all types of injury. In 2016, he started a tradition that continues to this day of cutting a purple ribbon on March 1st for Brain Injury Awareness Month in honor of the thousands of survivors of brain injury and caregivers in Phoenix. This year, then-Mayor Thelda Williams was happy to continue the tradition at City Hall.

Representative Stanton with Miss Arizona and BIAAZ Board Members kicking off Brain Injury Awareness Month in 2016.

Mayor Thelda Williams was excited to continue the ribbon cutting tradition for Brain Injury Awareness month in 2019.

Now that Congressman Stanton has taken office, he is ready to get to work on the Task Force's priorities. "When we work together in a bipartisan way, we can make a real difference in the lives of individuals with brain injuries and their families. Our work on the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force can help advance important bills that support our veterans, caregivers, brain injury survivors, neuro professionals, and many Arizona residents," he said.

> *"When we work together in a bipartisan way, we can make a real difference in the lives of individuals with brain injuries and their families."*

The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona and its Board are thrilled Congressman Stanton has lent his time and talents to the worthy cause of the Task Force. "I know both sides of this coin," said BIAAZ Board Member and Flagstaff resident Dr. Katie Pierce. "As a practicing physical therapist, I see dozens of clients every week who have had their life turned upside down by brain injury."

Dr. Pierce continued to explain that as a survivor of multiple concussions, she knows the courage and determination that goes into recovery; and that those in our community who are working hard on living well after brain injury deserve our full support, including from policy makers in Washington D.C. "There are countless people with stories like mine and my patients', many in Congressman Stanton's

As a concussion survivor, Dr. Katie Pierce knows the hard work and determination that goes into recovery...

BIAAZ staff visited Congressman Stanton's Phoenix office this summer.

district. We are so thankful for his leadership on this issue," said Dr. Pierce.

The leadership from the BIAAZ-affiliated United States Brain Injury Alliance (USBIA) expressed similar enthusiasm, noting that Congressman Stanton and the CBIT is a spectacular fit." USBIA is pleased that Congressman Stanton has joined the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force," said David King, Board Chair of the USBIA. "Stanton is a lifetime advocate of those living with disabilities, including the invisible disability of brain injury," stated King. "We are all excited to know he will be contributing to this task force in 2019-2020 and beyond."

BIAAZ would also like to thank the Task Force co-chairs, Congressman Bill Pascrell of New Jersey and Congressman Thomas J. Rooney of Florida, for their continued work on this issue. The CBIT was formed by Pascrell in 2001. Approximately 1.7 million Americans experience Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) each year and an estimated 3.2 million Americans are living with long-term, severe disabilities because of brain injury. Representative Stanton joins other Arizona representatives, as well as Senator Sinema, who are also on the task force.

"We hope the rest of the Arizona delegation will join U.S. Representatives Stanton, Gallego, Grijalva, and Senator Sinema in membership on the Task Force," said Collins-Fadell.

"There are countless people with stories like mine and my patients', many in Congressman Stanton's district.We are so thankful for his leadership on this issue..."
—Dr. Katie Pierce
Board Member
Brain Injury Alliance Arizona

To send a postcard to your member of Congress and ask them to join the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, email your name and complete mailing address to info@biaaz.org or call Faes at 602-508-8024 and we will send it for you.

GREATER PHOENIX CHAMBER
IMPACTAWARDS

Thank you to the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce for nominating Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona as one of Arizona's 2019 Impactful Nonprofits. BIAAZ Resource Facilitation Specialist Will Grove was able to accept the nomination in person.

Thank you to the Phoenix business community for celebrating and recognizing the work we do with caregivers and survivors of brain injury.

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

Making the invisible visible since 1983

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

Making the invisible visible since 1983

Thank You to Isabel Ticlo...

...for your outstanding advocacy for survivors of brain injury in Arizona during your reign as Miss Arizona 2018! What an incredible year!

NOVEMBER 2018

Isabel, along with former Navy SEAL Jimmy Hatch and Arizona Outstanding Teen Ashlyn Thompson, hosted Crowns for Camo, a Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona event that raises funds for services and programs supporting veterans living with TBI throughout the state.

A veteran participating in the Unmasking Brain Injury project, thanks to BIAAZ's Crowns for Camo!

FEBRUARY 2019

In February, Isabel joined Miss America Nia Franklin and survivors of brain injury in hosting a legislative preview of the Brain Injury Alliance's newest program, Unmasking Brain Injury, for 100 members of the Arizona legislature. The preview engaged the elected officials and encouraged them to learn more about their constituents living with brain injury.

MARCH 2019

Isabel joined the Brain Injury Alliance in Tucson for an official purple ribbon cutting to kick off Brain Injury Awareness Month, a time for learning and educating the community about the unique contributions and needs of survivors of brain injury. Isabel spoke at the ribbon cutting, and met with Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, as well as Tucson residents living with brain injury

MAY 2019

Isabel attended the BIAAZ's annual Rays of Hope conference, where she addressed many of the 300 attendees during the opening session about her year of advocacy and her platform advocating for those with vision impairments. She noted that seventy percent of survivors of traumatic brain injury have temporary or permanent vision-related disorders. She also acted as the conference's official greeter and took some time to visit and appreciate the Unmasking Brain Injury art display.

CAUSES OF BRAIN INJURY

TRAUMATIC

- Falls
- Assaults
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Sports/Recreation Injuries
- Abusive Head Trauma (Shaken Baby Syndrome)
- Gunshot Wounds
- Workplace Injuries
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Military Actions (Blast Injury)

NON-TRAUMATIC

- Stroke (Hemorrhage, Blood Clot)
- Infectious Disease (Meningitis, Encephalitis)
- Seizure
- Electric Shock
- Toxic Exposure
- Metabolic Disorders
- Neurotoxic Poisoning (Carbon Monoxide, Lead Exposure)
- Lack of Oxygen (Drowning, Choking, Hypoxic/Anoxic Injury)
- Drug Overdose

Q&A

WITH BRAIN INJURY SURVIVOR
AND VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE
BILLY BRIDGEWATER

Billy Bridgewater (left) and Mark Cook (right) dressed to the nines for the BIAAZ and We're MOVING Forward's Desserts and Dancing formal event.

Q: What is your brain injury backstory?

I've had three brain injuries in total. I've also had a spinal cord injury. When I was three, some big kids were sliding down a second story railing at a two-story apartment complex. I asked them to put me on the railing so I could slide down too. Instead of sliding down, I went over the railing, overshooting it, and went head-first into concrete. This accident caused me to have educational difficulties, like retaining information and trouble with reading, writing, and communicating. I couldn't remember things I was told.

My second TBI was back in 2016, when I was diagnosed with a schwannoma tumor in my brain on my balance nerve. My doctor wanted me to have surgery, and referred me to Barrow Brain and Spine, but my insurance wouldn't cover it, so I called my insurance company to be referred to a neurosurgeon who was in my network. However, the treatment I received did not get rid of my tumor, so in October 2016, I reached out to Barrow Brain and Spine, and asked what insurance they take. I switched insurance [to one they accept] and went to see the neuro specialist my doctor originally recommended. He ordered an MRI and found out my tumor had spread from the balance nerve in the cerebellum to the brain stem.

I went in to have surgery in March of 2017. The surgery lasted several hours, and I experienced complications. I had to have a double-titanium plate put in my head, and I was in a medically induced coma for six weeks on and off. There was an infection in my brain that caused me to have a stroke, which was my third brain injury. It was expected that I'd be in rehab for a few months, but thanks to my son and caregiver Mark Cook, I was able to leave in six weeks. He wouldn't leave me alone; he kept helping me do my physical, speech, and occupational therapies with me throughout the day. He's my main source of support. I had to re-learn to walk, talk, and eat, and I'm still one-hundred percent deaf in my right ear, and blind in my right eye.

My spinal cord injury happened when I was twenty-four. I was wrestling with my brother. At one point, my head went one way, my neck went the other, and I woke up in the hospital ten days later. I had a C-4 and C-5 lumbar fracture. It gives me headaches and affects my balance sometimes.

Q: What are some things having a brain injury has taught you?

I've learned that I have deficits and I've learned how to compensate for them to make my life better. I try to live a positive life, because positive thinking brings positive results, and negative thinking brings negative results. Reading the materials and books provided by the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona has helped me with my research and has given me good tips. It's hard sometimes, because I forget things a lot. It can be hard sometimes because my mom keeps waiting for the old Billy to come back and I have to tell her that Billy is gone; he died on the operating table. This is the new me, and I need you to accept me. I can't do all the things I used to do. I will do the best I can, but I can't necessarily do it the way I did before. I have to rely on Mark and other people to help me sometimes. Sometimes, I have to apologize to the people I lash out at who don't deserve it; I have had to learn to manage my behaviors. I've also learned, even those of us who have brain injuries, we have to learn to accept the injuries and figure out how to act with the "normals" (people without brain injuries), and function in their society.

Q: What do you wish other people understood more about brain injury?

For one, I don't like the terms the "normals" use for brain injury, like "lazy" or "stupid." That's not the case; we're not giving excuses, it's just the way it is. People think we're

Billy enjoying the petting zoo during his first time at Camp Can Do.

making things up or making excuses. The don't understand mental, emotional, and physical fatigue, or why we have to take naps. They think we treat our survival tactics as full-time job. Just because we look fine on the outside doesn't mean we are. Sometimes "normals" make accusations and judgments. If they were in our situation for ten minutes, they would understand. The thing that annoys me most, though, is when survivors use brain injury as a crutch. We all have to learn to overcome our deficits the best we can and move forward.

Q: How did you learn about and become connected with the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ)?

I went to my favorite Mexican restaurant one night, and there was a gentleman there with his mom. He had a big scar on his head. I looked at Mark and said, "I'm gonna ask if he had his surgery at Barrow." He told me his whole story. His mom said to me, "You're supposed to be here right now," and then asked if I'd heard of some helpful organizations, like BIAAZ, which I had not. I went home later and did some research into BIAAZ, as well as We're Moving Forward (WMF is a socialization group for survivors of brain injury). I signed up that night for a WMF event, and I called you guys at BIAAZ and said, "I want to help; how can I get involved?" I met with Resource Facilitator Brittany Sweeney-Lawson, and got some information. She told me about Rays of Hope, which we went to. I got to meet tons of people there. After Rays of Hope, I contacted you guys again and started volunteering. I also applied for a sponsorship to go to BIAAZ's Camp Can Do, and was able to raise the money to go myself, which opened the door for someone else to go to camp. I also started signing up for all the events with WMF and BIAAZ that I could.

Q: You have volunteered a lot with BIAAZ, as well as other brain injury-related organizations. What made you interested in volunteering?

I want to give back. There was a gentleman I spoke to once who was really down in the dumps. I let him know about a support group, and he was later able to attend it. I feel like BIAAZ has given me my life back, and it makes me want to give back. Since I can't work anymore, I want to help people with brain injuries and other disabilities as well. I took the BIAAZ Living Well with Brain Injury class, and it made me want to be an advocate. I'll start with volunteering and do whatever it takes. It makes me happy if I get to talk to a new survivor or family member, and I can tell them about BIAAZ. I'm part of four different Facebook support groups, and I'll talk to people who seem to be on their last ropes. I'll tell them, wherever you live, reach out to your [state's] Brain Injury Alliance, and they'll help you.

Q: What has the experience of volunteering been like? What do you enjoy most about it?

It's been awesome. I've been able to learn so much and feel like I'm accepted, regardless of my brain injury. My favorite part of volunteering is getting to give back, and every once in a while, I get to tell my story.

Q: What are some of your hobbies?

I enjoy doing archery with Arizona Disabled Sports. I also like playing videogames like Kingdom Hearts and Destiny. I love going to movies and going out and being part of nature. I like going on trips a lot too!

Q: Any final thoughts you would like to share?

A quote from one of my favorite authors, William James, says, "the greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude." To me, this goes back to the idea that a positive attitude brings positive results. In spite of everything, I've chosen to be positive, and it has definitely altered my life for the better.

Also, if people have questions or concerns or need any help, contact the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona. They don't bite; they're nice and they want to help!

Billy volunteered at the Camp Can Do table during the 2019 Rays of Hope Conference.

BRAIN INJURY SURVIVOR & SPECIAL NEEDS

FREE COMMUNITY SAFETY EVENT

LEARN HOW TO SAFELY INTERACT WITH FIRST RESPONDERS!

At this event teens and young adults living with brain injury, Autism, or a disability will engage with first responders to learn key safety skills through activities, talks, and episodes of Be Safe The Movie.

Brought to you by:

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

BE SAFE THE MOVIE

RSVP TODAY & GET A FREE COPY OF BE SAFE THE MOVIE WHEN YOU ATTEND!

November 23, 2019
12 p.m.-3 p.m.

12:00-12:30 Registration & Lunch with Officers
12:30-2:00 Be Safe Training for Those Living with a Disability
2:00-3:00 Interactive Discussion on Family Planning: When to Call 911 & What Happens Next
Location: Ability 360 Campus
5025 East Washington, Phoenix
Nina Mason Pulliam Conference Center

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Carrie Collins-Fadell,
Be Safe Certified Trainer

This event is free and open to the public. Registration is required. Please RSVP online at BIAAZ.org

Lunch will be provided including vegetarian fare. Those who have other food preferences or restrictions are welcome to bring their own.

Please contact Carrie with any questions at Carrie@biaaz.org or call/text 520-310-3301

The Cerebral Chef

Serving Up Food for Thought

Steve Norton, co-facilitator of BIAAZ's The Brain Cave men's discussion group, was diagnosed with Type II Diabetes in 2006. While working as a private chef for a family in northern California in 2012, he experienced a hemorrhagic stroke, which caused paralysis on the left side of his body. Even though he had spent years ensuring those he cooked for ate healthy meals made with fresh ingredients, his own eating habits were poor due to long work hours and a busy schedule. The stroke proved to be the wake-up call Steve needed to take charge of his health and what he put into his body. He now uses food as medicine, and believes people can heal their bodies from the inside-out. His column, which will be regularly featured in The Noggin, will offer recipes, ideas, and tips for incorporating and enjoying delicious brain-boosting foods.

Some of the best foods for brain health are avocados, beets, blueberries, broccoli, coconut oil, dark chocolate, green leafy vegetables, rosemary, salmon, turmeric, and walnuts. They are rich in antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats that provide nourishment for your mind and body. They aid in improved awareness, processing information, increased concentration, and memory function and help increase your energy. This month, we will focus on the benefits of avocados, beets, blueberries, and leafy greens.

Avocados are rich in folate and vitamin K, which improve concentration and memory.

Beets are high in nitrates, which increase blood flow to the brain, allowing for clearer thinking and a greater attention span.

Blueberries, containing the highest antioxidant level of all foods, protect the brain from toxins, degeneration, and stress.

Leafy greens such as kale, arugula, spinach, collards, and broccoli are loaded with vitamin K, lutein, folate, and beta carotene, which may help slow cognitive deterioration.

I hope you enjoy this fresh summer salad recipe that incorporates these four brain-healthy foods!

RECIPE

Roasted Beet, Avocado, and Berry Salad
Serves 4-6 as a side

INGREDIENTS

- 4 beets (golden, red, or variety)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 peaches, pitted and diced
- 1 cup blueberries
- 2 avocados, pitted and sliced
- Arugula
- 1/3 cup crumbled goat cheese
- 1/3 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
- Balsamic vinaigrette

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Place scrubbed beets in a 9x13-inch baking dish, then toss beets with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Cover dish tightly with foil and roast 45-60 minutes or until tender when pierced with a fork. When beets become cool enough to handle, rub them with a paper towel to remove the skins. (Tip: Use gloves to avoid staining your hands; slice the beets on top of parchment paper to prevent staining your cutting board). Toss the sliced beets with 1 tablespoon of the balsamic vinaigrette. Cover, and place in the fridge while preparing the rest of the salad. This process can be done the night prior to serving.

In a large bowl, add the peaches, blueberries, avocados, and arugula to the sliced beets, then top with goat cheese and walnuts; season with salt and pepper if desired, and serve with the vinaigrette.

Next issue, follow along as we explore the benefits of salmon, a great source of omega-3 fatty acids.

the NOGGIN

presents

BIAAZ Profiles of Interest

Shining the spotlight on those raising their voice, lending a hand, and making a difference in the brain injury community

Nicole Soares (left) with her friend Kristine Marandola (right).

PERSON(S) OF INTEREST:

Kristine Marandola, Nicole Soares, and Jami Storing

RELATIONSHIP: Kristine has been Nicole and Jami's best friend since high school. Nicole and Jami are sisters who come from a family of five kids, and when Kristine started dating their brother Dave in high school, she was unofficially adopted into the family. Not only did she look similar to Nicole and Jami with her long blonde hair and blue eyes, but she also enjoyed similar outdoor activities, country music and dancing, traveling, and the beach. Their friendship was forged fast and remained strong through family vacations together, marriages, having kids, and going through divorces. Regardless of what life threw at each of them, the three stayed close and supported each other through all of their ups and downs.

Because Kristine's parents were divorced and not on friendly terms when Kristine experienced her TBI, Nicole found herself playing a central role in bridging gaps in communication and bringing the family together. Nicole helped lead the medical, legal, and financial arrangements made on Kristine's behalf to ensure important decisions and tasks were being completed on time. Not long after Kristine's accident, Nicole willingly agreed to become Kristine's guardian and conservator at her family's request. Nicole and Jami have worked closely together ever since, combining their different strengths to offer Kristine the best possible care and support.

Personal affiliation with brain injury: Kristine was in a boat towing accident on July 29, 2018 on Lake Powell, which resulted in a major brain injury, requiring surgery and the removal of a golf ball-sized part of the right side of her brain. Nicole was in California when she received the call informing her of Kristine's accident, but she rushed to the ICU in Flagstaff where Kristine was in critical condition. Prior to this experience, Nicole had very little knowledge of what a brain injury was or what it would mean for her friend. She now handles Kristine's financial, medical, and legal affairs in order to best protect and plan for her recovery needs. Nicole's credit repair and coaching business, bSquared Credit, helps those who have experienced life events like Kristine's to protect and repair their credit. She is actively expanding her company through personal accident attorney partnerships so she can protect and repair more accident victim's credit and help them obtain necessary loans in the future.

Jami decided to discontinue working so she could care for Kristine full-time. She moved Kristine into her home with her family in order to provide 24/7 caregiving for as long as it is needed.

Hobbies/interests: Kristine continues to love the hobbies she enjoyed prior to her injury. She recently took her first trip to California to attend the wedding of Nicole's oldest son, where she danced from her wheelchair with one arm in the air until late into the night. Kristine has a strong zest for life and works hard every day to continue making physical and cognitive improvements. Nicole and Jami enjoy spending time with Kristine, seeing her happy, and following her example of determination and positivity. This July, all three women will be taking a vacation together to re-explore some of their favorite spots from earlier family vacations in the states of Idaho and Washington.

Connection to the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ): Kristine and Jami were informed about BIAAZ and its services from the staff at Barrow St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center where Kristine was a patient for the final month-and-a-half of her nearly four-month hospital stay, as well as via the group and individual therapy sessions she and Jami attended.

Raising Awareness for the brain injury community: In March 2019, BIAAZ hosted its 2nd Annual Run, Walk, and Roll event, which helps fund the non-profit's education and programs. The event was posted on Kristine's group therapy calendar and was also posted at her outpatient rehab center, Encompass Health, in Mesa.

After Kristine was released from the hospital, Nicole and Jami wanted to celebrate how far she had come. It was hard for Kristine to be around a lot of people and noise, so they were cautious about throwing a big party for her, but after eight months of hard work and recovery, she was ready and deserving of a big celebration. The Run, Walk, and Roll seemed like the perfect way to gather Kristine's family, friends, and Bank of America co-workers together in her honor, as well as fundraise for a worthwhile cause which they felt had indirectly helped save Kristine's life.

Nicole and Jami had their work cut out for them to make sure all the celebration pieces fell into place, starting with contacting Kristine's employer, Bank of America, to see if they'd be interested in supporting the event. Luckily, Bank of America approved the Run, Walk, and Roll as a volunteer event so Kristine's co-workers could participate and cheer her on. Additionally, Nicole and Jami created a Facebook group, used their CaringBridge site, and made countless calls and texts to friends and family asking for their support. They also worked with another one of Kristine's friends, Angel, to have customized t-shirts made in purple (Kristine's favorite color), with the team name, This Too Shall Pass, which is a special saying to Kristine and is tattooed on both her and Jami's upper arms. Proceeds from the shirt sales helped pay some of Kristine's uncovered medical bills.

Over 40 people represented team This Too Shall Pass in the 5k Fun Run/Walk, and Nicole was even able to get her friend Ricky Woolstenhulme, the talented drummer from the band Lifehouse, to come out with his beautiful wife Jen to prepare and serve the team a delicious gourmet meal at the end of the race. During the walk, Kristine's brother pushed her wheelchair right up until the end, where she stood up and, using her cane, crossed the finish line with Nicole and Jami at her side and the rest of her team bringing up the rear. There wasn't a dry eye from anyone who watched Kristine take those special, hard-earned steps.

Takeaway lessons and thoughts: Nicole strongly believes that for those like Kristine whose lives have been forever changed by a brain injury, it is important to have people in their corner to advocate and be there for them, even and especially when some of their behaviors brought on by the injury can be difficult to handle. With patience and understanding, survivors of brain injury are better able to heal and have the quality of life they deserve.

For next year's Run Walk, and Roll, which will take place on Sunday, March 22, 2019, Nicole is committed to returning with an even bigger team, and looks forward to Kristine being able to walk even more of the route on her own. She appreciates everyone who turned out for the event and made it such a success. In the future, Nicole hopes more families and friends will utilize the Run, Walk, and Roll as a way to celebrate survivors and acknowledge the hard work and dedication of their loved ones striving to thrive with a brain injury.

Kristine had a wonderfully supportive team made up of family, friends, and co-workers join her for the BIAAZ's 2nd annual Run, Walk, & Roll fundraising event.

Brain Injury Alliance
ARIZONA

Making the invisible visible since 1983

The Brain Injury Alliance is proud to bring you the perspectives, thoughts, and reflections of survivors of brain injury from around the globe. Jarrod Flowers is a 27-year-old teacher from Toowoomba, Australia. A brain injury changed his life 9 months ago. If you have questions about living well after brain injury, please contact the Alliance. We work with thousands of survivors of brain injury, their caregivers, and family members every year. Our services are complimentary and we work with people who self-report a brain injury. You do not need to have a medical diagnosis.

Carrie Collins-Fadell, MPA | Executive Director, Brain Injury Alliance

Perspectives from Picnic Point

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BY JARROD FLOWERS

Picnic Point is a park located on the edge of the Toowoomba Range. It's a beautiful, popular place for everyone. There are playgrounds, a restaurant, an ice cream shop, a waterfall and lots of different bush walking tracks with magnificent views. It's a great place with something for everyone and all are welcome.

As I was strolling through the thick fog up at Picnic Point at 5:00am, I couldn't see much, and everything was different to what it usually is when there's no fog. It's cold, dark and no one else was around. A miserable place to be. At first, it was a little daunting and I could see how it could be depressing. As I was wondering through, taking this whole new place in, I started to realize that it was the same Picnic Point that I've visited and enjoyed many times. Sure, it was dark, wet, foggy and quite uncomfortable, but once I adjusted to the differences, I was able to see some beautiful things that I had not noticed at Picnic Point before. Now these things were the same as they have always been, but I was seeing them through a different perspective.

I started to see beauty in things I always just took for granted in the sunny daylight. A shiny picnic table reflected from the lights around, with a light fog surrounding it. I have walked past that picnic table so many times throughout my life, without even acknowledging it. I also learned to be more careful when I was getting around, as the risks where higher for doing anything when it's dark and slippery. I was walking along a muddy track on the edge of a steep hill, filled with bushland. One slip and it would be a hell of a drop. I thought twice about walking this path, taking into consideration the risks that it involved. I have also walked this path many times before. Now, there were just

different conditions that I needed to adjust to. Step by step, using my breath to get through each moment, I made it through. It was a huge accomplishment that was terrifying but being able to overcome it gave me a sense of feeling that whatever life throws my way, with a careful and well planned approach, it's possible to overcome these obstacles that once seemed so easy.

I also think about how lots of places have fog for most of the year. Some people don't know any different, yet they are able to live functioning lives and be ok. Just because things are different, doesn't mean the beauty is gone. A changed outlook on life is the most beautiful thing I could ever ask for - focusing on what is available and being grateful for that, is easier than dwelling on how beautiful the bright, sunny weather is and how easy things are when there isn't any fog. It's always a scary thing venturing out into unpredictable weather. But when you look in the right places, there is beauty to be found.

After meditating with this idea of how things are different in foggy weather, I realized the fog is a perfect analogy for my life since my brain injury. I was used to bright blue skies, things were clear, comfortable and easy. When I woke up in hospital, it was like seeing everything through a thick blanket of fog. As time has passed, I have learnt the most beautiful thing in this world - that beauty can be found anywhere. Sure, going to Picnic Point was hard, dangerous and quite out of my comfort zone as it was so wet and foggy. But if I never pushed myself out of what I am so used to - the bright, clear, sunny days, then I would have missed out on what a change of perspective can add to one's life.

Author
Jerrod Flowers

Homeless & Living with a Brain Injury—

A Deadly Combination in Arizona's Summer Heat

The unrelenting heat of the Arizona summer is just around the corner. For most of us that means higher power bills as we crank up the air conditioning, but for Arizona's homeless the heat means a grueling slog to the next shady spot, water cup, or cooling station. Summer for the state's homeless often means full shelters and heat exhaustion, blistering sunburns, and, too often, death or injury from exposure.

Events that lead to homelessness are myriad and complex. Still, it can't be coincidence that over half of all homeless men in **a 2014 study** conducted by Neuroscience Research Program for St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada were found to have sustained a traumatic brain injury, or TBI.

The implications of the study's findings are huge and indicate the danger of being homeless with a brain injury are two-fold. Brain injury can lead to cognitive defects that include diminished executive function, the ability to actually do something the brain injury survivor may know intellectually they need to do, such as seek shade or water. This can add to litany of reasons life on the street and in the elements is already dangerous for anyone. Secondly, once shelter has been secured homeless men and women can lack the ability to maintain themselves in a housing program the way their counterparts without brain injury can. The inability to keep track of important paperwork, keep and attend appointments, or follow directions in sequential order can due to brain injury and can lead to being disqualified or ejected from life-changing programs which seek to address chronic or temporary homelessness.

It's also important to note the study's findings that the majority of homeless men who were also brain injury survivors sustained their injuries prior to becoming homeless, meaning prior to the brain injury they were able to maintain housing. Brain injury may very well be a risk factor for homelessness.

The causes of the brain injury that lead to homelessness are varied. A **2011 Wisconsin study** found that out of 3,000 homeless people at least half had sustained their injuries as children and teenagers as a result of domestic or family violence. But many other homeless brain injury survivors sustain their injuries through nonviolent means, such as car accidents, falls, brain tumors, or sports-related injuries, sometimes decades before they experience actual homelessness.

The road leading from a head injury to homeless is a bit nebulous and hard to quantify because so often information about the injury is not gathered. But common sense offers a guide of sort. The abilities that allow one to avoid homelessness – executive function which tells one to pay bills on time, emotional regulation that helps avoid conflict or strife with loved ones, the absence of neuro-fatigue or memory issues that allow for productivity at work – are can be severely impacted by head injury.

Fortunately, the solutions are far clearer. Those who work with the homeless population should integrate brain injury assessment and screening into their initial intake procedures. Once identified as a brain injury survivor, the person needs access to specialized services that help to mitigate cognitive and emotional defects so that they can meet the requirements of the shelter program and have a real shot at safety and success. This requires consistency and time and, it should come as no surprise, both can only be offered alongside that most basic of needs, shelter.

Carrie Collins-Fadell is the executive director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona. You can talk to her about everything neuro at Carrie@biaaz.org.

Home Care Assistance of Tucson and Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona Invite you to attend

Northwest Tucson All Brain Injury Support Group

4th Wednesday of the Month
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm
Home Care Assistance of Tucson
7619 N Oracle Rd #113
Tucson, AZ 85704
Crossroads are Ina and Oracle

For more information call
Carol Chandler
520-276-6555 ext 206

Persons living with brain injury and caregivers over age 18 are invited to attend.

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

Meeting space provided by: Home Care ASSISTANCE

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

BRAIN GYM® TUCSON!

Get Your Brain In Shape!

Brain Gym® may help optimize brain performance

Brain Gym® is based on a series of 26 movements designed to promote a more efficient mind-body connection. Brain Gym® exercises have been effective in improving the following areas:

- Concentration and Focus
- Memory
- Academics: Reading, Writing, Math
- Physicial Coordination
- Organization Skills
- Attitude

Call Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona for more information, (888) 500-9165. *Individual results may vary.*

2019 CLASS SCHEDULE

SESSION 1

July 11	2:30-3:30pm
July 18	2:30-3:30pm
July 25	2:30-3:30pm
September 5	2:30-3:30pm
September 12	2:30-3:30pm
September 19	2:30-3:30pm

LOCATION: Encompass Health Rehabilitation Institute of Tucson, 2650 N. Wyatt Drive

SESSION 2

October 1	11:30am-12:30pm
October 8	11:30am-12:30pm
October 15	11:30am-12:30pm
October 22	11:30am-12:30pm
October 29	11:30am-12:30pm
November 5	11:30am-12:30pm

LOCATION: Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Northwest Tucson, 1921 W. Hospital Drive

Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospitals

Central Tucson • Northwest Tucson

These classes are free and open to the public. They are designed with survivors and caregivers of all types of brain injury and all ability levels in mind. To participate, please wear comfortable clothing, tennis shoes, and bring your own water bottle. To participate you must sign a liability waiver and follow the instructor's instructions.

Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona • 5025 E. Washington Street • Phoenix, AZ 85034 • 602.508.8024 • BIAAZ.org

BRAIN GYM® PHOENIX!

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

Get Your Brain In Shape!

Brain Gym® may help optimize brain performance

Brain Gym® is based on a series of 26 movements designed to promote a more efficient mind-body connection. Brain Gym® exercises have been effective in improving the following areas:

- Concentration and Focus
- Memory
- Academics: Reading, Writing, Math
- Physicial Coordination
- Organization Skills
- Attitude

Call Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona for more information, (602) 508-8024. Individual results may vary.

Please join us for a class

and see what Brain Gym® can do for you!

Ability360 Sports & Fitness Center
5031 E. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85034

All classes are held in the Group Fitness Room on 2nd Floor
YOU MUST BRING YOUR OWN WATER BOTTLE TO PARTICIPATE!

2019 CLASS SCHEDULE

January 15	5:45 pm
February 6	1:00 pm
February 19	5:45 pm
March 6	1:00 pm
March 19	5:45 pm
April 3	1:00 pm
April 16	5:45 pm
May 1	1:00 pm
May 21	5:45 pm
June 5	1:00 pm
July 3	1:00 pm
September 4	1:00 pm
October 2	1:00 pm
October 15	5:45 pm
November 6	1:00 pm
November 19	5:45 pm
December 4	1:00 pm
December 17	5:45 pm

Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association · ABILITY360 SPORTS & FITNESS CENTER · BARROW Neurological Institute · Dignity Health St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center

Brain Injury Alliance ARIZONA

Living Life Fully after Brain Injury

STRESS MANAGEMENT SERIES

This class is an introduction to the 5 R's of Stress Management. Recognizing, Relaxation, Reassuring, Relating and Recovery.

CLASS SCHEDULE
9:30am-11:30am

To ensure you get the most out of this series please plan to attend all sessions.

July 10th
The 5 R's of Stress Management and Relaxation

July 17th
Practicing More Relaxation and Reassuring Thinking and Effective Problem-Solving Part 1

July 24th
Reassuring Thinking and Effective Problem Solving, Part 2 and Solving Everyday Problems

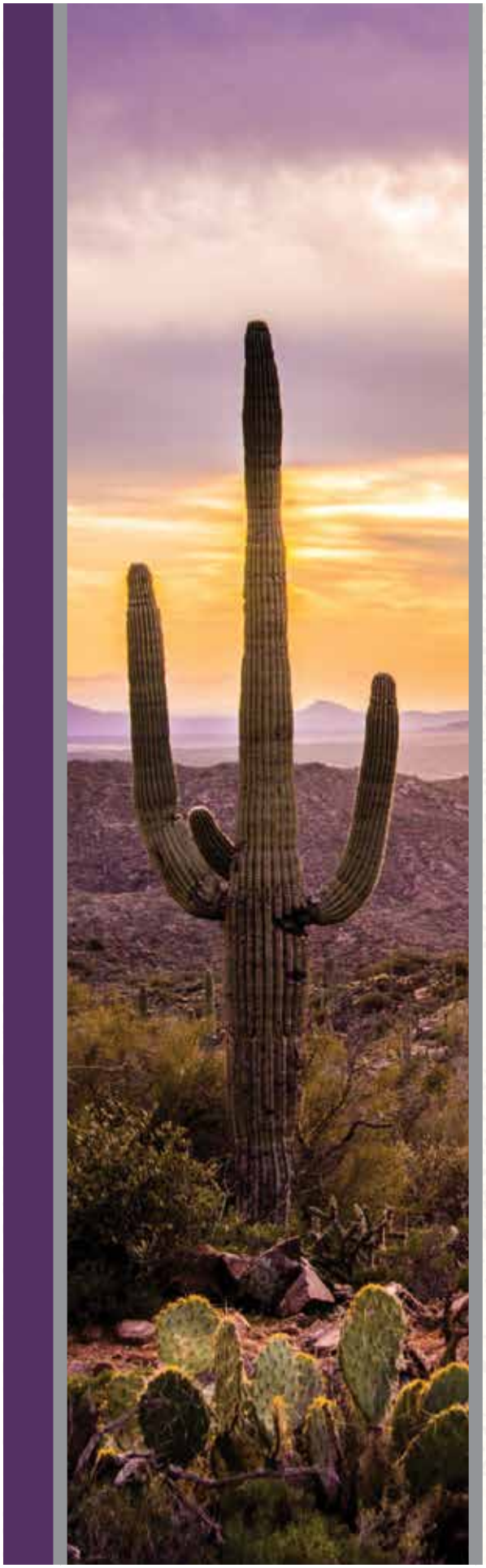
July 31st
Caregiver connection and Survivor Support, Relating assertively, and Recovery "Do's and Don'ts".

The classes are designed for persons living with a brain injury, their families, and their nonprofessional caregivers.

Ability 360, Classroom A
5025 E Washington Street • Phoenix AZ 85034
Class Times: 9:30-11:30

CLASSROOM SPACE IS LIMITED. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Please register at:
https://livinglifefully.eventbrite.com or call the BIAAZ office at 602.508.8024 and ask for Faes.



Do you have questions about brain injury after an accident, illness, or injury?

We are here to answer your questions about stroke, concussion, traumatic brain injury, brain tumors, brain bleeds, and more.

Call today—our services are complimentary.

Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona provides resource facilitation services, referrals, and survivor and family empowerment activities. We serve individuals, family members, and professionals who are dealing with any type of brain injury.

Brain Injury Alliance
ARIZONA

Making the invisible visible since 1983

info@BIAAZ.org | 888.500.9165 | BIAAZ.org

Unique Gated Community for Adults with Disabilities Takes Shape.

Artist's rendering of Luna Azul, a pocket neighborhood

Luna Azul, the nation's first for-sale residential community designed specifically for those with intellectual, developmental and acquired disabilities, broke ground last year at 1500 E. Wahalla Lane in Phoenix.

Now, it's opening its doors. The four-and-a-half-acre development is designed for residents to live together in a safe and social setting. It is a place that encourages connections, fosters independence, and lays the foundation for caring relationships, social interaction and neighborly assistance when a fellow resident needs a hand. "My wife and I were concerned about our daughter's future, especially after we're gone," says Mark Roth, developer of Luna Azul. "Here residents don't stand out, nor are they isolated. They, their friends and families all come and go as they please, living safely and comfortably in an inclusive, gated community managed by an experienced on-site director."

Roth, whose adult daughter has a developmental disability, recognizes that ownership at Luna Azul offers families and their children the greatest and most reliable degree of choice and freedom,including the ability to choose where, how and with whom they live, while managing the services they need.

Owning a cottage here assures that a loved one has a permanent home where he or she lives safely within a traffic-free campus, conveniently accesses 24-hour services, and is close to employment opportunities and urban amenities.

While the community is open to those with special needs, anyone may purchase a home here. The 2-bedroom cottage-style residences are priced from the low $400s and 30 percent of the development is already sold.

"We are thrilled to see this project come to life, and more, relieved to know our daughter will be safe and feel welcome," Roth adds.

For Details Call: Sean Zimmerman

480.239.9911

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This is not an offer to sell, nor a solicitation of an offer to buy, to residents of any state or province in which registration or other legal requirements have not been fulfilled.