

ABIN-PA MATTERS

BOARD MEMBERS

Congratulations to our newest board member, Beth Adams. Beth is a special education teacher at the Overbrook School for the Blind in Philadelphia.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Linda Collins facilitated our Strategic Planning Meeting at the DoubleTree on Saturday, January 23, 2010, as part of our Inglis Award activities. Next we will set priorities and create an operational plan. Our goals involve growth, programming, our image, technology, visibility, outreach, fund development, and human resources.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

We are happy to have 605 subscribers to our free monthly newsletter. Please contact us if you would like to submit an article. We are always looking for material.

WEBSITE

We are up to 11,096 visitors on our website. Send in your profile if you would like your story to appear there. We provide editing and correct spelling errors so don't be shy. Look for the manual that is easy to understand and written from the standpoint of survivors and family members—give us your feedback!

INFORMATION TABLES—Pens, Magnets

We now have pens and magnets to distribute so please contact us! We also have tablecloths and displays for information tables—and we need your help to use them!

PA LEGISLATIVE BRAIN INJURY CAUCUS COMMITTEE UPDATE

OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION OF THE IMPACT OF BRAIN INJURY IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Educate legislators about brain injury
- Permanent Brain Injury Advisory Board
- Establish an Office of Brain Injury
- Provide brain injury fact sheets upon diagnosis

OBJECTIVE 2: PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH BRAIN INJURY LIVING IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Expand the Waivers that provide assistance in the community.
- Fund the BrainSTEPS Program for schools.
- Implement the findings of the Department of Public Welfare's (DPW) Brain Injury Task Force Report and the "Mercer" report as recommended in 2008.

OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCE THE DETECTION AND PREVENTION OF BRAIN INJURY IN PENNSYLVANIA

- Protect student athletes with concussions.
- Screen for brain injury in all age groups and in varied populations.

Michael J. Miller, Liaison
Phone 570.265.9606
mjmiller@epix.net

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Network of PA**

RESOURCES

(PDO = “PA Department of”)

Brain Injury Help Line—PDO Health
[1-866-412-4755](tel:1-866-412-4755)

Brain Injury InfoLine—ABIN-PA
[1-800-516-8052](tel:1-800-516-8052)

Brain Injury Resource Line—BIAPA
[1-866-635-7097](tel:1-866-635-7097)

Brain STEPS—school children—BIAPA
[1-724-944-6542](tel:1-724-944-6542)

Client Assistance Program for
OVR & CIL Complaints
[1-888-745-2357](tel:1-888-745-2357)

Consumer Protection—PA Atty. General
[1-800-441-2555](tel:1-800-441-2555)

Crime Victim Benefits—PDO Corrections
[800-322-4472](tel:800-322-4472)

Disability Rights Network
[1-800-692-7443](tel:1-800-692-7443)

Domestic Violence Hotline—Nat'l
[1-800-799-7233](tel:1-800-799-7233)

Head Injury Program—PDO Health
[1-717-772-2762](tel:1-717-772-2762)

Health Law Project—Public benefits
[1-800-274-3258](tel:1-800-274-3258)

Managed Care—Health Insurance
[1-888-466-2787](tel:1-888-466-2787) PDO Health

[1-877-881-6388](tel:1-877-881-6388) PDO Insurance
Resources for Daily Living—Inglis

www.easiresources.org
Self-Determination Housing Project

[1-877-550-7347](tel:1-877-550-7347)
Special Ed Consult Line—PDO Educ.

[1-800-879-2301](tel:1-800-879-2301)
National Volunteer Programs

www.nationalservice.gov
Voting Issues—PDO State

[1-877-868-3772](tel:1-877-868-3772)
Waiver Help Line—PDO Public Welfare
[1-800-757-5042](tel:1-800-757-5042)

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Dave made all the
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(Malden, MA)

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Steve poses here with his Ride-Away
Mobility Consultant, Dave Qualey, of the
Londonderry, NH facility.



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THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

NOVEMBER 2009

Kevin Austin, Marta Bivins,
LaVerne Devenny,
John & Barb Dively, Robert Drucker,
Sherri Herschfeld,
Fred Krause, Helen & Chris Love,
Joan Nolan, Kay & Gordon Rowe,
Frank & Pat Strenk.
Carole & John Frock *in loving memory
of their daughter Anne Frock Olson*
Sandra Rogers *in loving memory
of her husband Bruce Rogers*

DECEMBER 2009

Barry & Anna Marie Childress,
Robert Drucker, John & Barb Dively,

Helen Jagger, Ann Keech,
Stephen J. Leshinskie,
Mike & Sharon Miller,
Kay & Gordon Rowe,
Dick & Mary Stoner,
Main Line Rehabilitation Associates, Inc.
Sylvia & Harry Bingham *in honor of her
daughter Ellen Solt*

JANUARY 2010

Robert Drucker, Robin Gane,
Marlene Nathans,
Kay & Gordon Rowe,
John & Barb Dively,
Denise Westerfer,
Jeannette Kline

ATTENTION CONSUMERS

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IF YOU VOTE, YOU COUNT!

**by Rachel Freund of the
Disability Voting Coalition
(Anna Marie Childress represents
ABIN-PA on the Coalition.)**

Voting does more than elect politicians.

Through the act of voting, people become dynamic players in the political arena where policy decisions are made and both our political and personal power grows. We become active citizens, connected with the community of voters.

Unfortunately, according to US Census data, people with disabilities, are 15% less likely to be registered to vote and 20% less likely to vote if registered. Consequently, our issues take a back seat to those associated with groups who have more political clout, groups more likely to turn out voters.

The **Disability Voting Coalition of Pennsylvania (DVC)** is a growing statewide organization that focuses on building a voting bloc in the disability community and mobilizing people with disabilities to vote.

Please help us build the DVC by increasing our membership; we want to show politicians that we are a force to be reckoned with!

Membership is FREE! We welcome people with disabilities and their friends, families and allies. Members receive a membership card, bi-monthly newsletter and access to our monthly organizer calls.

If you would like help with a voter registration drive, vote education or more information, please contact Rachel Freund, DVC Project Coordinator at 1-877-391-3820 x. 2002 or at rfreund@mhaac.net

**DAILY LIVING MADE easi !
easiresources.org
Services for Independence
(the website announcement)**

easiresources.org is a brand new website designed to make daily living activities easier for people with disabilities and seniors.

If you, or someone you care for, need to find a podiatrist experienced with paralysis, or a certain assistive technology, this site is for you. From entertainment venues to home modification providers, **easiresources.org** will help you find an accessible local service.

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2009 EASI Development Partners

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People with Disabilities
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Delaware County
Freedom Valley Disability Center
Homemaker Service of the Metropolitan
Area, Inc.
Inglis Foundation
JEVS Health Services
Magee Rehabilitation Hospital
Main Line Rehabilitation Associates, Inc.
Moss Rehabilitation Hospital
Philadelphia Corporation for Aging (PCA).

This project is funded, in part, under a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

I FLUNKED DOG OBEDIENCE CLASS—But then.....

by Pat Strenk, 06/03/2009

(Pat is an ABIN-PA Board Member and active in inclusive worship groups.)

I had a goal in mind, to give back what I turned down while in rehab due to a Traumatic Brain Injury, a visit from the dogs.

First, I needed a dog. After scanning the pet ads in the paper, I thought I found the perfect one for me. The ad said this dog was housebroken, good with kids, etc, etc. Perfect, I thought. How soon I was reminded what my Husband always says, "If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is."

I went to see this pup, 9 mos. old Mya, a Border Collie/Red Husky mix, who turned out a bit larger than I anticipated. She was on the high end of the MEDIUM size range, very excited, but she absolutely loved me. She was all over me. The owner said that she never saw the dog react this way before as she had me on the floor. I thought, "Wow, she really, really likes me!" OK, how to tell my Husband who I told earlier, "I'm only going to look." How he knows better.

Now for the next step, find a dog obedience class. I found a beginner's class and thought "I'm a beginner", so...I signed us up. Did I have a lot to learn!?

Once at class in this huge gym type room, there were maybe 25 dogs with their handlers standing in a very large circle. We were to follow the directions of the instructor teaching us the very basics. In the beginning, we all fared about the same, some got it, and some didn't.

But as the weeks passed and everyone's dog's behavior improved, I continually fell behind never being able to physically and mentally keep up to the commands myself,

let alone for Mya to follow. We did fine practicing at home, but keeping up in class was different.

Completely devastated by my inability to follow group directions and Mya's anxiety issues, I abruptly left the class with Mya one night in tears just 2 classes shy of completing the course. We... flunked out.

In order to be successful at this dog training thing, I decided that maybe a different type of class would be better suited for me. I found a listing for a local personal trainer who would work 1-1 with me and my dog. Together, we adapted traditional commands that worked easier for me around my abilities and also easier for Mya to understand.

That was almost ten years ago.

Today, Mya and I are a team with Therapy Dogs Inc. visiting Hospice patients from our local hospital's Hospice Program "Sharing Smiles and Joy" with everyone we meet.

Not only are we a therapy team in our visits, but just as I went through therapy to relearn the basics of living following my TBI, so did Mya in a way. Two years ago, she was hit by a car as she chased after me crossing the street. The driver never did stop.

I've learned that just as there are "trauma" hospitals for people, there are also trauma veterinarians with ICU's and visiting hours.

So, as a team we've shared our lives in the brink of recovery from devastating accidents, and as a team we "share smiles and joy" with others in the brink of their lives

HOMEOPATHY AND TBI
by JoAnn Jarvis

I am writing to share with you a different healing modality that may help your TBI. Notice I wrote “may” as nothing in life is guaranteed.

Also, as we all know, if someone is not a doctor they should not be advising or telling someone what to do for their illness or injury. I am not a doctor, and I am not advising anyone here. But, I am sharing the information that Homeopathy was one of those things that did help me greatly to heal from my TBI and return me to work.

I wrote a book about my TBI experience and also my healing. It is called “Brain Jolt: A Life Renewed After Traumatic Brain Injury.” It is available through Lulu.com and Amazon.com. There are two editions and the second edition includes an appendix for the homeopathic practitioner.

If you are able to find a good Homeopath (someone who has studied and practiced this discipline for at least 15 years!.) your chance of improvement may be much greater. I say that only because Homeopathy was the difference that counted for me.

Also in my book I talk about other modalities that helped me. Unfortunately, those things that may make the best difference in your health are not found always in mainstream medicine. I wish you all the very best on your healing journey.

Editor’s note: See “Homeopathic Treatment of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial”, Edward H. Chapman, M.D., D.Ht., Clinical Instructor, Harvard University School of Medicine. Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation, 14:6 December 1999, page 521. The study took place at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital in Boston, a TBI Model Systems grantee.

EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE
by Luke Whittaker

I’ve never written about my accident, few outside my family know it ever took place.

I don’t have a before and after story; I was 18 months old when the accident occurred and have no recollection of the event.

It was November 1988; George H.W. Bush was the newly elected president and The Beach Boys “Kokomo” was atop radio playlists.

I was an active child—the youngest of five boys growing up on a farm in rural central Pennsylvania. I was playing with my brothers when I ran into the path of a United Postal Service truck.

I was rushed to Huntingdon’s J.C. Blair Hospital by my father. I was unconscious when I arrived and, from there, life-flown 80 miles to Danville’s Geisinger Hospital.

I suffered a fractured skull and a broken arm; the truck’s ground clearance spared my life. Four days later, I was released.

At the time, resources and information regarding TBI were less known and my parents were told I would be fine.

“Fine,” as I understood it, would come to manifest itself in different and more pronounced ways.

Running my hand through my hair I can still feel the bump, and for most of my life that’s all I understood it to be.

It wasn’t until I enrolled in college that I began to ask questions and seek answers.

To be Continued—More to Follow

Newsletter Sign-Up, Donations & Tributes

ABIN-PA is dedicated to increasing public awareness about acquired brain injury and to providing support, education, information, advocacy and other services for individuals with acquired brain injury and their families.

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The official registration and financial information of the Acquired Brain Injury Network of Pennsylvania, Inc., may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1 (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

PLEASE REMEMBER ABIN-PA IN YOUR WILL.

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