



# BRAINWAVES

Newsletter of Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc.

Established in 1988

June  
2009

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## Brain Injury goes to Fort Erie...



Did you know BICR Niagara has been providing group based programming in Fort Erie since 2003? In consultation with the Head Injury Association of Fort Erie (HIAFE), this program was designed to offer additional services to residents living in the Ridgeway, Crystal Beach and Fort Erie areas living with ABIs. Initially the services that BICR offered were time limited groups with a focused theme at various points throughout the year. The groups were well received and discussions began around the feasibility of expanding BICR's service to the Fort Erie area on a consistent basis.

In 2007, as a result of some enhanced funding initiatives, BICR was able to expand our services in Fort Erie to provide two full days of programming each week at HIAFE on Mondays and Tuesdays. Currently, Gillian Rodger, BICR's PET Coordinator and Linda Gosling, a Rehabilitation Counsellor, provide the facilitation of these groups. Recently, BICR participants have been traveling as far as Niagara Falls, Welland and Port Colborne to join these groups. Located along the Niagara Parkway, HIAFE provides the welcoming atmosphere and home like comfort.

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# Executive Director's Report

This year has been very remarkable for many reasons. First of all, the Recreation department held a winter trip to Geneva Park. The trip was well attended and very successful. BICR also recently completed the accreditation process with very good results and exceptional feedback from the families, participants and the community that we partner with. Finally, I take this time to thank all those involved in our Bowling fundraiser; it was a huge success.

As an agency, BICR strives to refine our services to better serve our participants and the positive feedback we received from the participant and family surveys this year provides evidence to the staff's effectiveness.

The Annual General Meeting is being celebrated on June 24, 2009 and many staff are being recognized for 5, 10 and 15 year service awards - Congratulations.

I encourage all participants to get outside and enjoy the summer and the events BICR has to offer. Enjoy a great summer and good health throughout the year.

Frank Greco

## President's Notes

Another year has flown by and summer 2009 is here. It has been a very busy year again, as we all prepared for the Accreditation Canada survey, especially the Executive Director, Managers and Staff. After all the hard work that was done, I congratulate everyone on the efforts that were put into this year's survey. At the debriefing at Bethany Community Church on Wednesday, May 13, 2009 the results seemed very encouraging.

At the last Board of Directors meeting on May 26, 2009, nominations were held for officers at BICR for the next three years. They are as follows:

Nick Ostryhon	-	President
Brenda Yeandle	-	Vice President
John TeBrake	-	Treasurer
Jacqui Graham	-	Secretary

On behalf of the Board I welcome back John TeBrake after his surgery; we are glad to have him back after his successful recovery. After the AGM, which will take place on June 24, 2009, the Board will return from the summer break in September 2009.

I hope everyone and their families have a safe and healthy summer and God bless all.

President Nick Ostryhon

## BICR Prepares for a Successful Accreditation

Since 1997, BICR has been accredited by Accreditation Canada (formerly the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation). Accreditation Canada is a not-for-profit organization that provides BICR with a peer review every three years to assess its quality of services.



Kathleen Stokely & Kelly Milne

Successful Accreditation only happens with a great deal of dedication, planning and teamwork. In 2008, Accreditation Canada launched a new and more comprehensive accreditation process, called Qmentum. Over the past year, board of directors and staff were engaged in the accreditation process that included completing self-assessments and surveys, implementing action plans using a tool called "quality roadmaps" and participating in the on-site survey visit from May 10 - 13, 2009.

Staff's hard work in preparation for accreditation created innovative support ideas that have now become part of the agency's organizational culture. Focus was given to enhancing participant safety and meeting the standards of quality in supporting participants and their families. The following are just some of the areas that were developed or enhanced:

- Development of BICR's Pandemic Plan.
- Creation of an agency-wide Falls Prevention Strategy.
- Creation of the Participant Safety Plan.
- Formalization of Infection Prevention and Control practices.
- Agency Communication Plan, including safety related topics for participants and families.
- Numerous internal process reviews, including information sharing at transition points, forms, etc.

### Celebrate!

Although BICR will not receive a full report from Accreditation Canada for another six months, we are happy to announce that BICR received another three year Accreditation for 2009-2012.

Stay tuned for more Accreditation information in the future.

# Marineland

My name is Erica Hilborn and I am a summer student assisting the therapeutic recreation department.

I am looking forward to an exciting summer filled with lots of activities and groups. On June 5<sup>th</sup> we took a group trip to Marineland. We had a lot of fun watching the dolphin show and going on all the rides. Most of us did not take the long journey up the hill to ride the Sky Screamer but we enjoyed others like the rollercoaster.

We finished the long hot day by getting splashed by the whales to cool down. It was a very successful and enjoyable day hopefully we get the chance to go again next year.



## Staff and families enjoy beach volleyball at Port Dalhousie



On Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009 BICR Wellness Works Committee held its First Annual Beach Volleyball Tournament. Over 70 people attended over the two days consisting of staff and their families. While the standard of play was perhaps not up to Olympic level, much laughter and cheering was heard and a few employees were feeling the effects of the intense physical activity beach volleyball provides. Thank you to everyone who attended and made this such a successful event – see you next year!

## Recreation events at St. Lawrence

Submitted by Rebecca Grigg



On behalf of our wonderful team at St. Lawrence residence, I am proud to report that we have been responsible for hosting a number of recreation events that have been both exciting and unique. These events have challenged participants to be creative, thoughtful and imaginative while promoting lasting, meaningful relationships with each other, as well as staff. We also try to consider therapeutic benefits.

At the start of the year, we thought it would be appropriate to host a "Time Capsule" event where participants were asked to bring one item that represents who they are, or something about them. We facilitated a discussion on the year that had past, and the new one we were now anticipating. We set goals for the New Year and wrote them down on door hangers to remind ourselves of what we are going to work toward. We collected newspaper clippings of current events and ads from retail flyers. In the end we put all of our nostalgic items into a box where

it was then sealed and not to be re-opened until the year 2019!

To celebrate the change in seasons and welcome Spring, we hosted an "Herb Garden Planting" event. We considered all of the cooking we do in residence and thought that it would be a neat way to spice things up! Everything was provided. Each participant was given the opportunity to get their hands dirty and plant! They created their own little sign for the plant so that it could be identified. In the end, each residence was able to take home a little garden of herbs to nourish and look after. I would like to take this time to thank all participants and staff for attending our events and continuing to make them memorable. I want to especially thank staff for going above and beyond while assisting participants to achieve and succeed! It is greatly appreciated.

We would also like to invite everyone out to St. Lawrence in the future to join us for upcoming events!

## The Bagel

By Murray Bowman

A man walks into a Tim Horton's. He finds an empty table and sits down. The waitress comes over with his coffee. He looks at the "Roll Up the Rim" and calls her back. "Wow!", he yells, "I've always wanted an "R.V." "Sir", the waitress replies, "that says 'Win a Bagel'".

Those of us who have "won the bagel" should appreciate the positive elements. For one thing, their mileage is astounding and the only cargo you have to load them with is a generous amount of cream cheese. Seriously though, the writer is still struggling with the "bagel" that fate has bestowed upon him.

When you are dealing with something such as this, think of all that it delivers; new skills, new priorities. For the writer, buttoning a shirt takes as much use of concentration as creating an intricate drawing once would have taken in past years, and the effort required is comparably draining. So while enjoying your "surprise bagel", try to recognize what can be harvested, not what will be sent to "curb-side".

# Buckley Strives for a Pathway to Independence



Welcome to Buckley Towers, BICR's Apartment Program. Just celebrating its 10 year anniversary, the program was established in May 1999. Buckley is situated in the downtown core of Niagara Falls consisting of five apartments with participants ranging from age 27 to 47. The participants are supported by both full and part-time staff that help them to sustain their independent living. The apartments are randomly located throughout the 15 story building, all of which are central to the staff office.

The residents at Buckley have welcomed BICR with opened arms quickly allowing the participants to form a bond within the apartment community.

Participants come to Buckley looking for a means to live independently and assess

skills that they need to gain or improve on so they can eventually live in the community without support.

Participants, with the help of Buckley staff, work on goals daily whether it be fitness, cooking, budgeting, banking or daily living challenges.

Buckley takes great pride in modeling independence and self-awareness, challenging participants to live independently and grow as individuals attaining the necessary skills to live life to their fullest capacity.

Every day is not like the next at Buckley and with every day comes new challenges, but with both staff and participants dedication nothing is impossible.

## Memory Loss

By Jacqui Graham

I am going to offer a very single-minded, opinionated suggestion (as usual). It deals with a specific stereotype that I have lived with since incurring a brain injury in 1985 – memory. Or more accurately the lack of – short-term, long-term, retention levels, new learning ability, etc. Whatever the description I've been embroiled in the diatribe surrounding it.

My suggestion: Why not describe and understand average memory abilities and **then** apply those facts to those individuals that it applies to with a brain injury. For example, it was reported in 2006 by researcher's at the Rotman Institute (part of Baycrest's Research Centre, Toronto) that the "brain's behaviour during memory tasks changes with age, starting when we're between 40 and 60". Let me expand on that by saying that there is less exertion in the region of the brain devoted to such things as concentration and more movement in the area providing distraction. 'They' (I'm not really sure who 'they' are but...) always told me that the fact that I was always so easily distracted was directly related to the brain injury, nothing else! Yet, clearly, there could have been other contributing factors.

As for learning new information, retaining it and retrieving it – again it was blamed on the deficits of brain injury, nothing else. Well, I read that due to slight changes in information recovery and storage it might not always be an easy task to recall it when we require it. The article said that information that gets in is always there but accessing it when we need to isn't always easy. They use the analogy of a library, we may know what books we need and we know they're there but we can't always get to them.

Sandra Cusack, a researcher at Simon Fraser University and co-author of 'Mental Fitness for Life', says that memory loss' worst enemy is 'anxiety'. When tasks in our lives multiply we have a tendency to become overwhelmed, so much so, that brain injuries once again are often categorized as a behaviour problem. We become stuck between a rock and a hard place.

With this in mind, it doesn't come as a surprise that the solutions to everyday, average memory problems are the same as the ones taught to many brain injured people – go figure!

### For example:

**Problem:** Meeting someone new

**Solution:** Associate his or her name or job with something familiar to you.

**Problem:** Where are those blasted keys\books\CDs\journal, etc.

**Solution:** Put everything you'll need again in a usual place and make a conscious effort to always put them there. Using a planner to list your appointments or if you're tech savvy a blackberry or computer is another solution.

All this is because actually performing a task repeatedly (ex: writing things down) solidifies it more in our memories.

And finally, yet one more thing to remember is that in this day and age of speed dial and the ease of access to the internet, it's a good idea to memorize a few facts (important phone numbers, addresses). This, in itself, is actually a memory strengthening exercise!



# National Volunteer Appreciation Week at BICR April 19 - 26, 2009

On Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 BICR hosted their annual volunteer appreciation event at Bethany Community Church. It was attended by students, volunteers and management from every department. The event gave an opportunity for everyone to share stories, experiences and connect with old friends. It was also an opportunity for BICR to thank all of our amazing volunteers with a small token of our appreciation and a certificate for all they contribute to the agency. As the attendees enjoyed a slice of cake, Nick Ostryhon, BICR President, thanked the volunteers and spoke about the importance that volunteering has for our agency. An excerpt of the speech delivered by Nick is below...

*“National Volunteer Week began in 1943 as a volunteer recruitment effort to enlist women for wartime voluntary service. Now every year more than 80,000 registered charities and 100,000 not-for-profit organizations across Canada pause to thank and recognize their volunteers. Volunteers have always been an integral part of BICR and we are once again blessed in having the opportunity to honour and applaud our Volunteer efforts.*

*Our participants are often lonely having lost their social support system as a result of their injury; volunteers have helped fill that void and make life meaningful again. In these tough economic times, it is refreshing to know that there are people out there who can help our participants cope with the pain and suffering that they have experienced ... Our volunteers help with friendly visits, motivation and fundamental activities of daily living.*

*In addition, volunteers play a vital role in helping raise funds for our agency. Once a month they run bingo games in St. Catharines, bringing in much needed money which goes towards such projects as Geneva Park and other fun activities our participants look forward to. As well, they are an integral part of the annual golf tournament and bowl-a-thon ... During this National Volunteer Week, on behalf of BICR, I would like to thank all of you for your extraordinary dedication and commitment to our participants. “*

Nick then shared some personal experiences that he encountered with volunteers whilst caring for his son after his acquired brain injury. He also spoke on the history of BICR and how the agency was founded in 1988 by a group of dedicated parents.

Thank you again to everyone for making this volunteer appreciation event a success. We look forward to working with you for many years to come.

# Fall Prevention Starts at Personal Effectiveness Training

Submitted by Gillian Roger



Niagara's PET program is pleased to announce a new program which focuses on fall prevention through improving participant's physical health.

The PET program would like to formally thank the YMCA of Niagara for offering a subsidized group membership to our program. Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. and Ontario March of Dimes participants will now have the opportunity to better themselves by partaking in various physical activities including: swimming, aqua fit, yoga and personalized cardiovascular and strength training activities to help build muscle tone, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, balance and improve their confidence and general well being. All of which will assist to prevent participants from falling and injuring themselves.

The program has two components. The first component focuses on educating participants surrounding the topic of fall prevention including: making healthy informed decisions, environmental safety issues and the benefits of physical

activity and proper nutrition. These topics are presently being discussed in a group environment. During this time participants also have an opportunity to set goals and begin measuring their personal performance. This will include charting participant's improvements in regards to their Body Mass Index (BMI), weight, strength, endurance, self awareness and overall body, spirit and mind wellness.

The second component takes place at the YMCA of Niagara Fitness Centre. This will provide participants an opportunity to improve their strength, balance and cardiovascular fitness level which specifically will help to improve participant's endurance, thus allowing them to be more alert to their environment.

Once again the PET program would like to give thanks to the YMCA of Niagara for providing us the opportunity to implement our strategies for our new Fall Prevention Program.

# Winter at Geneva Park

Submitted by Chelsie Cutler

This year, I had the wonderful opportunity to go to the winter Geneva Park, with both residential and outreach participants and staff. The group which participated was a great group who got along really well and made for a very fun-filled trip. We played many games of cards and enjoyed both the group activities and, of course, eating the delicious Geneva Park food.

Some of the group activities included team-building games that needed teamwork and brain storming ideas to win. On one of the days, we did an egg drop where the teams were each given \$40 to bid on items they thought would come in handy for building their protective cover for their non-boiled egg and let me say this was a challenge. The loser of this challenge was to dish out everyone's dessert at dinner, with a special clause that if everyone passed the challenge Dave Horton would dish out our dessert. Needless to say everyone was trying to successfully have their egg drop without it breaking. Three out of four teams dropped their egg keeping it in tact, with the scrambled eggs dishing out the dessert. We then participated in a team scavenger hunt which was organized by Dave Horton. We were divided into four different groups and sent out on our way. Again, the prize for this challenge was not having to pass out the dessert come dinnertime, and this time we were not going to lose. We all worked together and with the help of all the team members and the staff at Geneva Park, we all succeeded and completed the challenge! So at dessert time, although he complained just a little, Dave served the dessert and everyone else just sat back and enjoyed it.

Overall, we had a great time at Geneva Park playing outdoor hockey, going to the casino, watching the Olympics on television and just enjoying each other's company. Personally, I also got to see how when people work together things get done and, ultimately, are a lot more enjoyable. I look forward to participating in future Geneva Park trips and hope that everyone enjoyed the trip as much as I did.



# A Cleaner Environment for All



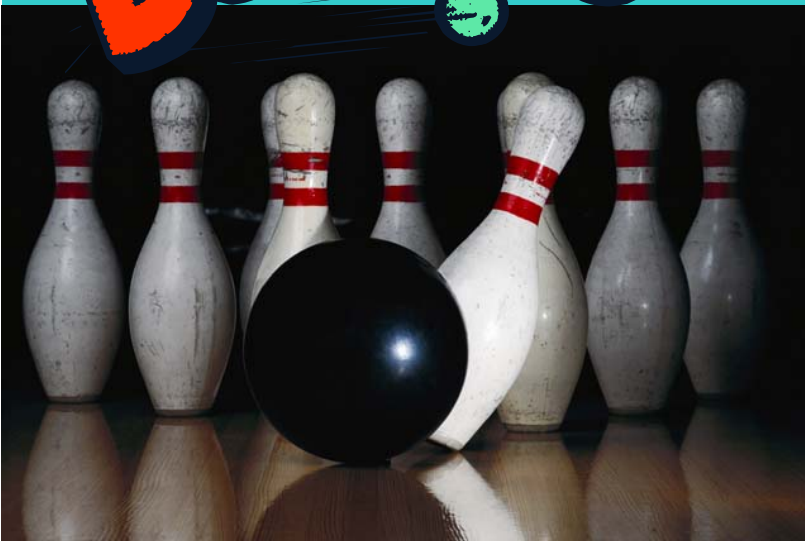
Pictured left to right: Fraser Burton, Mitch Hebert and Brian Stevens

Biannually, the Vocational Department along with several participants, volunteer in the Adopt-a-Road program. The Region of Niagara's Adopt-a-Road program has been established as a public service program for volunteers to pick up litter along regional road right-of-ways. It is a way for environmentally conscious citizens, community and civic organizations, private businesses and industry to contribute to a cleaner and more beautiful Regional Road System.

BICR has been actively involved in this partnership since 1999. At the present time, BICR is responsible for a portion of Martindale Rd, located in front of the main office. The group gets together one day in early spring and late fall taking several hours to pick up litter along Martindale Rd.

Thank you to all participants who have volunteered in the Adopt-a-Road program since 1999. It is with their assistance that this partnership continues.

# BOWLING



On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Brain Injury Community Re-entry hosted its 8<sup>th</sup> annual **Bowl-A-Thon** fundraiser at Parkway Lanes in St. Catharines. The event was a great success with over 40 enthusiastic bowlers coming out to enjoy the fun. After bowling a couple of games, everyone went to Boston Pizza on Ontario Street to enjoy a buffet lunch, along with the draw for raffle prizes and awards for the tournament!

BICR would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who helped in planning this great day, as well as to everyone who participated or made a donation. Your support is greatly appreciated by everyone.

# Staff Appreciation 2009

Submitted by Melissa Pett

On Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, a very rainy day, 52 BICR staff members went to Henley Island for Staff Appreciation 2009. The evening was spent eating a delicious meal catered by Classic Catering and doing a scavenger hunt wonderfully organized by our very own Jonathan Williams. Staff were separated into teams and sent out into the rain to collect items like Canadian flags, acorns, baseball gloves, etc ... Staff used their ingenuity to try to collect all the items, including GPSs and cell phones; some even lived close enough to go to their homes for items. After the game, the fabulous prizes that had been organized by the management team were drawn.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Debbie Morden for making two beautiful cakes for everyone to enjoy, as well as the Social Committee for all their hard work and commitment to making this event a big hit!

## Vision Board Creation

Starting in January 2009, the women of BICR's Women's Group began an ongoing project: Creating their own vision board. The purpose of a vision board is to activate the law of attraction in your life or the things that you want to become. The law of attraction states that anything that we give attention to, whether it be positive or negative, is attracted into our lives. Creating a vision board allows an individual to focus their attention on the positive things that they want to attract into their lives.



"The vision board provided me with an open pathway towards the dreams and goals in my life that I haven't thought of for a long while. A very rewarding and inspirational experience..." - Lynda Gordon



"It is in my living room on the wall and it inspires me to keep on trying." - Gabe Beckerman

So in January, the group began searching through magazines to find images and phrases that represented the overall theme of what they wanted their vision board to be. Over the next three months, the women assembled their vision boards - ending in April when they had completed their source of positive images and affirmations to take home to put on their walls.

## Brain Injury and Substance Dependence Support Group

A focus on addiction issues in the area of Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) is becoming increasingly relevant due to several staggering facts. For example, more than half of individuals admitted into ABI programs have a history of substance use. Also, substance use has been shown to increase during the post-acute period of a brain injury, and ongoing use of substances greatly increases the probability of a second injury. In addition, 25 – 30% of individuals with an acquired brain injury were intoxicated at the time of injury, a fact that is predictive of post-injury dependence.

Brain Injury Community Re-entry is proud to announce the first completion of the new educational support group which commenced the first week of April 2009. Facilitated by Social Worker Kimberley Underhill and Outreach Case Facilitator Jeff Sica, the group met each Thursday from 2 – 4 p.m. at the BICR main office for ten consecutive weeks. Course content consisted of workbooks developed from the Substance Use Brain Injury (SUBI) bridging program along with additional materials and activities, including film materials from the Canadian National Film Board and numerous group activities and exercises. The group also enjoyed joining the recreational group on a field trip to the Ontario Science Centre. Participants who completed the program were rewarded with a certificate of achievement, and each set plans to continue utilizing strategies learned within the group.

With the successful completion of the first group of participants, referrals are now being accepted for the second group which will commence in the fall of 2009. To make a referral for the group, please contact Kimberley Underhill at extension 657 or Jeff Sica at extension 617.

# BICR's Annual General Meeting 2009

Submitted by Gina Aiello



Staff celebrating left to right: Tracey Maddalena, John Froud, Linda Rapley, Diane Thomson, Margo VanHonsberger, Melissa Pett, Sharon Coulson, Susanne Greenhalgh.



Board of Directors left to right: Nick Ostryhon, Dr. Linda Cudmore, Jacqui Graham, Steve Murphy, Brenda Yeandle, Leslie Warriner, Doug Kane, Frank Greco (ED), John TeBrake. Absent: David Shapiro, Luc Savoie

It was a beautiful summer day for BICR to host its 21<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting at Bridgewater Golf and Country Club. The sky was clear, the wind was warm and the atmosphere was welcoming. The evening began with the Board of Directors final meeting before resuming their regular schedule in the fall. Nick Ostryhon the President of BICR's Board of Directors facilitated the meeting which included: Auditors report, Appointment of Auditors, and Recognition and Confirmation of Officers for the next term.

Frank Greco (Executive Director for BICR) opened by emphasizing and

thanking the front line staff for their dedicated efforts as well as the continued commitment and support of the Management team. In praising the efforts of all BICR staff, Frank was pleased to announce our successful re-certification from Accreditation Canada for 2009-2012. What a great accomplishment for BICR.

After a wonderful meal prepared by the Bridgewater Staff, Frank began our employee recognition awards ceremony.

**Congratulations** to the following employees for completing 15 years of service: Sandra Cantalini, Melissa

Pett, Linda Rapley, Amanda Heidebrecht, Margo VanHonsberger, John Froud and Diane Thomson.

**Congratulations** to the following employees for completing 10 years of service: Christine Mombourquette, Juanita Holub, Anna Warner, and Tina Horton.

**Congratulations** to the following employees for completing five years of service: Sue Greenhalgh, Laurie Rossi, Tara Ferrusi, Jacqueline Buchanan, Tracy Maddalena and Sharon Coulson.

A special thank you to Jennifer MacLean and Sharon Coulson for organizing this wonderful event.



On Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, BICR held the annual baseball tournament. There was a great turnout with over 60 participants and staff at the event. Two diamonds were in action, one with a fun game and the other with a more competitive game. Everyone looked like they were enjoying themselves and loud cheers could be heard from the bleachers. The Lions Club had a delicious barbecue with sausages, hotdogs and hamburgers for everyone. After lunch we watched big dark clouds roll in the sky, we called the day short so everyone could get home before the storm. The baseball tournament was an awesome day and I was happy to be a part of it.

Submitted by Erica Hilborn, Recreation Summer Student

# Fun in the Sun



Father's Day, June 21, was a perfect summer day that poured into another on Monday, June 22. It was great news, since it was the fourth Fun in the Sun at Port Dalhousie. Over the past four weeks all attending Fun in the Sun had the opportunity to socialize while making butterfly houses, wind chimes and painting hand crafted wood art. At our latest Fun in the Sun, we held the first of three Casino days.

A great number showed up and

supported each other in Black Jack and the Wheel of Fortune. In the final moments of the excitement, Annette was the big winner followed by Jason. Both went home with prizes of their choice, in this case a bottle of Celine Dion perfume and a banana scented body wash. Following the big winners in order of takings came Bruce who tied with John and each went home with a new deck of cards, and then Jason was our final winner who chose a word search book. Thank you to every one who came to play, it made our day. We look forward to seeing you all on June 29 as we celebrate with a Canada day theme. See you there, and hope you enjoy what looks like a great summer!

From your Fun in the Sun team,

Jackie Lange and Cheril Kavanagh

# Open the Door to Safety: Awareness is the Key

I'm pleased to announce that BICR is implementing a new feature in our newsletter – a page dedicated to promoting safety awareness. Our intention with this initiative is to ensure that we provide participants, family members and community partners at large with information regarding current safety topics that relate to the season, current events and trends. We want to keep you informed on what BICR is doing to promote safety and wellness and provide you with knowledge on how to locate additional information on topics that you are interested in. Our website [www.bicr.org](http://www.bicr.org) provides links to many safety topics – so if you have access to a computer check it out!

It was difficult to pick a topic for this initial feature, however, after some discussion it was settled, *Influenza*. When we first started talking about a safety page we immediately thought of influenza as a topic for the fall season as people gear up for winter and information regarding flu shots is abundant. However, as I think everyone is aware, a global occurrence of the H1N1 influenza has been sweeping across the world. This spring has challenged many people's thinking that influenza only affects us in the winter. There has been increased discussion regarding world pandemics and the difficulties communities and individuals will have in responding to the needs of everyone – perhaps the H1N1 is a trial run to enable us all to start thinking about the potential implications of influenza and a pandemic a little more seriously.

## What is It?

Influenza, more commonly known as the flu, is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus. Influenza can be a mild or severe illness depending on the type of influenza virus causing it and the age and general health of the person affected.

## How does a pandemic start?

A pandemic starts when a new strain of flu virus emerges that is different from common strains of flu. Because people have no immunity to the new virus, it can spread quickly and infect hundreds of thousands of people. Pandemic flu strains often develop when an animal or bird virus mixes with a human virus to form a new virus. As we are witnessing with the H1N1, a pandemic is identified by the number of people affected, not necessarily the severity.

## How can you prevent the spread and transmission?

To reduce your risk and protect yourself and your family from seasonal influenza and other infections:

- Get your seasonal influenza shot every year – the flu shot will not protect you from an Influenza Pandemic virus, but it will protect you from getting seasonal influenza, which could weaken your immune system, or increase resistance to the Influenza Pandemic.
- Clean your hands thoroughly and often by washing your hands at a sink with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your upper sleeve whenever you cough or sneeze. Do not

cover your mouth and nose with your hand. Dispose of the tissue in the garbage, and then clean your hands by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Keep alcohol-based sanitizer (gel or wipes) handy at work, home, or in the car for those situations where soap and water aren't available.
- Clean hard surfaces (e.g., kitchen worktops, door handles) frequently, using a normal cleaning product.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Avoid non-essential travel and large crowds when there have been Influenza Pandemic cases in your community.

## What is BICR doing about it?

BICR has a plan to provide current information to staff and participants regarding influenza, other infections and the status of the H1N1 flu virus:

- Staff complete training and are educated on what to do if there is a pandemic flu outbreak.
- Staff are provided with and are required to wear personal protective equipment. This includes wearing gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection.
- Visitors are logging in at each site and asked to self screen upon entry.
- BICR's website provides direct links to the World Health Organization, Niagara Region, Public Health Agency of Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care websites. In addition, influenza facts, hand washing and other pertinent resources and information is available on the agency website. Check it out!

**We hope you enjoy this new feature and welcome any feedback and suggestions that you may have.**

# Brain Teasers

These visual word puzzles make some common sayings and phrases!

**1**

gesg  
segg  
gegs  
gges

**2**

Insult + Injury

**3**

one another  
one another  
one another  
one another  
one another

**4**

Beating  
Beating BUSH Beating  
Beating

**5**

Plans  
Plasn  
Plsna  
Plsan

**6**

ABCDEFGHIJ MOPQRSTUVWXYZ

**7**

13579 AZ

**8**

Give Get  
Give Get  
Give Get  
Give Get

**9**

ONCE  
4:56 p.m.

**10**

Let Gone Gone  
Be Gone Gone

## BONUS ROUND!

Quick! Say aloud what color that every word is, NOT what the word actually reads.

Explanation: The Stroop Test is used in neuropsychological evaluations to measure mental vitality and flexibility, since performing well requires strong attention and self-regulation capability.

red	white	green	blue
green	red	blue	white
white	blue	green	red
red	white	green	blue
blue	green	white	red
white	blue	red	green
green	white	blue	red
red	blue	green	white

# Brainpower

One way to maintain your mental faculties as you age is to eat a proper diet, and the sooner you start nourishing your brain, the better. Generally speaking, foods that are good for the heart are beneficial to the brain because both organs demand a steady stream of oxygen to perform optimally. For this reason, heart disease and mental decline often go hand in hand.

Antioxidant-rich foods like pomegranates, grape juice and blueberries help protect the brain from free-radical damage, while omega-3 fatty acids found in fish, leafy greens, walnuts and flaxseed can help aid communication between neurons.

## Brainpower Foods:

Blueberry	Salmon	Hazelnut
Garlic	Spinach	Tomato
Cheese	Water	

## Brainpower Recipe to Feed Your Head

### Smoked Turkey Salad with Blueberries

Blueberries make an unusual, but delicious partner for the tomatoes and smoked turkey in this red, white, and blue salad.

#### Ingredients:

2 green onions  
 1 small head Boston lettuce  
 1 piece (1-pound) smoked turkey, cut into 4 by 1/2 inch strips  
 2 medium ripe tomatoes, sliced  
 1 cup (s) fresh blueberries  
 Lime slices (optional)  
 Balsamic vinegar or prepared salad dressing

#### Nutritional Information (per serving)

Calories	400
Total Fat	4.0g
Cholesterol	79.0mg
Sodium	83mg
Carbohydrate	9g
Dietary Fiber	2.00g
Protein	5.0g

#### Directions

At least 30 minutes before assembling salad, cut green onions lengthwise into thin strips. Cut strips across into 3-inch lengths. Drop in small bowl of ice water and refrigerate 15 minutes to curl. Divide lettuce among 4 chilled plates. Arrange smoked turkey, tomatoes, blueberries, and drained green onion curls on lettuce. If desired, cut lime slices crosswise to within 1/4 inch of edge and twist for garnish. Pass balsamic vinegar or prepared salad dressing to serve on salad, if desired.

Source: <http://yourtotalhealth.ivillage.com/brainpower-recipes-feed-your-head.html>

# June is Brain Injury Awareness Month

Have you ever noticed someone with head and / or facial scars who are maybe fatigued or have really poor memory skills? Maybe someone who is extremely impulsive with problems in speech, language and communication? That person may have experienced a brain injury; a completely life altering event that may have resulted from something as simple as a car accident on the way to the grocery store or a concussion sustained during a routine pick-up hockey game.

Brain injuries are an increasing concern especially since many of them could be prevented or the severity reduced with easily accessible tools, such as helmets. The Brain Injury Association of Canada (BIAC) is organizing many different events in support of this national initiative designed to entertain, educate and legislate.

Some events that BIAC is sponsoring are:

- (Across Canada) The Great Canadian Barbecue... BIAC invites Canadians to host barbecues in their backyards, a park, campground, parking lot, or anywhere friends, work colleagues, and family can be brought together. BIAC will provide someone to talk about brain injury prevention, while a brain injury survivor can inspire change with his/her success story. The format is whatever is comfortable. BIAC can also supply its logo for BBQ event signs or banners. Interested organizers should contact [harry.zarins@biac-aclc.ca](mailto:harry.zarins@biac-aclc.ca).
- In June, Alberta brain injury survivor, Ian Young, will be riding VIA Rail across Canada, stopping in selected towns and cities to bring his acquired brain injury story and message of prevention. Go to [www.biac-aclc.ca](http://www.biac-aclc.ca) for more information about the voyage (*Happening Now* section; story, "Glenrose Patient Rewarded for Courage") and to learn more about Ian follow the journey at [www.ianyong.ca](http://www.ianyong.ca).
- BIAC is calling on all Canadians to support Private Members Bill C-289 by writing to the Public Health Agency of Canada to explain that they want all helmets sold in this country to be built using the highest standards possible, as developed by the Canadian Standards Association. The bill would amend the Hazardous Products Act, so as to prohibit the advertising, sale, or import into Canada, of recreational snow sport helmets that do not meet a national standard. The amendment is being re-introduced by the Honourable Dr. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre). For more information about Bill C-289, the issues involved, and how Canadians can support Dr. Fry's efforts, please visit [www.biac-aclc.ca](http://www.biac-aclc.ca).

For more events in Ontario and throughout Canada please see <http://obia.on.ca/index.php?page=events> or [www.biac-aclc.ca](http://www.biac-aclc.ca).

# Stem Cell Research



I don't think I've ever attempted to cover two of my famous wandering tangents at once but I'm going to try. The main thing to remember is that I do have a point, honest!

Four years ago former President Bush, in a political ethics (yes, I know it's an oxymoron) move made a point of putting a stop to federal funding concerning stem cell research dollars. Claiming that pro-life groups had a point by saying a life begins at the embryonic stage (or is it conception, I get confused with all these petrie dishes). Now wonder-kin President Barack Obama, who, it seems, can do no wrong, gave stem cell research, specifically \$10 billion as part of his stimulus package. The whole package is designed to get the otherwise battered US economy back on track. This is where I tie it to Canada. Yesterday, PM Harper said (in very Conservative fashion, i.e. pass the buck if you can) that Canada's financial woes are a result (direct or not) of the US' financial situation. When it is straightened out, then ours will follow. Now, does this mean that because US President Obama gave \$10 billion to stem cell research that we will too? I know it's too much to hope that we'll see that many dollars but still is our outlook positive (my magic eight ball is broken).

Now that I've covered the financial aspect of this on-going debate I'll try and explain the 'ethical (religious) ideology' of it, and the second part of my wandering tangent. Canadian star Michael J. Fox, (well known Parkinson's

advocate) said in the March 10<sup>th</sup> National Post that it was about time that politics and science were separated. I'll go him one better by being extremely controversial and opinionated by saying not only is it good to finally see politics and science separated but it's also good to see religion and research separated, (I know, I'm going to hell! But it's all in the name of science, right?)

I've always been of the opinion that it's our bodies; we can do whatever we want with it (and anything that comes from it). I've also wondered why pro-life groups never make a stink out of donated organs. I mean after all donating embryonic stem cells that are going to be thrown away, isn't that the same as donating say, your eyes or a kidney? I can honestly say that I just don't get it.

In any case, it all may be an irrelevant issue because it was reported in the science journal *Nature* (National Post) that a group of Canadian and Scottish Researchers have found a safe way to 'grow stem cells from a patients own skin'. Wow, that's some discovery. They report that 'some day' they'll be able to convert these 'skin-based stem cells' so that they can be used to repair damaged organs. Just think what that could mean to brain tissue that previously was totally unusable.

The strides that the medical community is making in areas important to us are just astounding to me.

*Submitted by Jacqui Graham*

# Two months at BICR



By Corinna Horbach (Department of Psychology, University of Trier, Germany)

Which of the following aspects is important for a good psychological internship? A nice place to work at? Doing work that you are genuinely interested in? Great conversation with open minded co-workers? A competent supervisor who attends to you? Someone from whom you can learn a lot? Benefitting from excellent training programs? Experiencing how the organization you work for functions and how the employees communicate? Getting in contact with participants and working with them at a personal level?

I guess all of them are important. At least I would say that now, after I enjoyed my internship with John Davis at BICR in February and March 2009.

But let us go back a little bit: Why did I come to St. Catharines?

I am originally from a small city called Trier in the West of Germany. In 2006 I went there to study psychology as a major. During our studies at the university we have to attend to three months of internships. None of my friends were looking for an internship abroad, because it is really hard to get a clinical internship in another country.

Our university system differs a lot from others and usually we wouldn't have the allowance to work with participants if we went to Australia or America. So I really needed a lot of time to find a place to work at. As I love English, I was looking for an internship in an English speaking country, and after 2 months of writing letters and sending emails I finally got a reply. It was from Dr. John Davis who told me that he would like to have me as his intern for 2 months in 2009.

Could you imagine how happy I was? Well, I was thrilled! There was still almost a year left until I would leave Germany and I found a neuropsychological class at the university in which I learned a lot about the field BICR works in. Finally coming to BICR I was never disappointed about any aspect of my internship. I experienced all of the above mentioned points.

BICR is a great place to work at. The people there are very well educated and trained, extremely open-minded, they work hard and care a lot about their participants while not forgetting to have good relationships with their co-workers as well. Having the opportunity

to meet so many participants that were gracious enough to let me sit in on their appointments was something I deeply appreciate. It helped me more than they could imagine. Furthermore Dr. John Davis was always concerned about if I learned enough, saw enough, understood everything and enjoyed my stay. He explained everything he did and gave me the opportunity to do things on my own. Whether it was at the Personal Effectiveness Training, the Women's Group, the Vocational Program, the "Anger Management Training" I completed, or in other situations, I always got the impression that BICR is a great organization where people care and help their participants wherever they can.

I was also extremely impressed by how much the BICR staff works together to achieve the best outcome in a participant's treatment. It was team work I have never experienced, ever before. At this point I would really like to thank all BICR staff and especially Dr. Davis for giving me this great opportunity, welcoming me instantly with open arms and letting me participate in so many activities. It was an amazing time!

Thank you all!  
Conny



**Volunteer  
Opportunities  
at BICR**

Call Jacqueline Buchanan  
at 905-687-6788 ext. 640  
for details.

## Wellness Works!

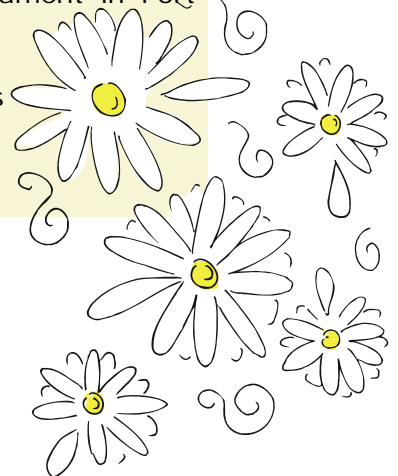
The first six months of 2009 have been busy indeed for BICR's Wellness Works Committee. January's theme was humour and the beneficial effects of taking a few moments out of your day to laugh. Weedless Wednesday was also in January. In February we focused on work / life balance. Ours is a very stressful industry; in order to look after others, we must look after ourselves first. BICR is committed to promoting a healthy work/life balance and the Wellness Works Committee is taking a leading role in promoting the advantages to the staff.

Towards the end of March healthy, quick lunches were discussed and delicious homemade soups were prepared to showcase just how easy it is to eat well. Everybody who came into the office that day commented on the wonderful smell. Thanks to some very generous donations we were able to provide some giveaways in April to support Oral Health Month. Did you know eating cheese after a meal may be an alternative to brushing your teeth?

It is not just the staff that we look after regarding wellness but also the larger community. Earth Day was April 21<sup>st</sup> and in support of this global initiative BICR sponsored an office clean-up day. Fifteen garbage bags and two recycle bags were collected during the clean up at the main office. In addition, staff participated at Richardson Court, Parkdale, St. Lawrence, PET/VOC, and Buckley Towers. Pizza and pop were enjoyed by all following the clean-up. Thank you for joining in to save our precious earth. Well done!

With the warmer weather comes the emphasis on physical activity. BICR once again participated in the Big Bike for Stroke raising over \$400 in support of that worthwhile cause. In June, the Wellness Works Committee sponsored BICR's 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Beach Volleyball Tournament in Port Dalhousie.

Stay tuned for more exciting details of how Wellness Works at BICR.



*Continued from page 1*

In 2007, Niagara College's Many Hands Project focused their time and resources to re-design HIAFE making it accessible. The kitchen was remodeled making it much bigger and a wheel chair ramp was installed. A front porch and ramp were built to allow participants easy access to the outdoor space. Along with purchasing benches and patio furniture, the Many Hands Project built a shed, replaced flooring and painted the interior of HIAFE a once inaccessible older building has now been remodeled to service ambulatory participants and staff as well as those with physical disabilities. BICR designs its programs to suit the ABI population it currently services. Thus, a Fitness Program is offered on Mondays from 1-3 p.m. This program typically runs for six months out of the year during the colder months. In partnership with the YMCA of Niagara and HIAFE participants actively participate in individualized fitness programs designed to improve cardiovascular activity, weight management, balance, muscle tone, increase confidence and improve social skills.

A cooking program has been offered since 2006 on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Participants learn to plan menus, shop smart, budget money and cook healthy and satisfying meals while adhering to proper safety standards, using various kitchen equipment and proper cleaning and sanitizing. Participants are asked to pay a nominal fee of \$2.00 per meal.

Music for Therapy is also offered bi-weekly on Tuesday afternoons from 1:30-2:30 p.m. This program enhances communication and social skills while improving confidence in a fun and interactive environment.

Other group programs are offered on a rotational basis throughout the year on Monday mornings and Tuesday afternoons and usually take place over a three month time period. These groups have included: Art Therapy, Life and Social Skills, Educational Learning groups, Fun in the Sun, Crafts and Gardening. BICR also facilitates a number of community recreational outings including: Lunch and a movie in Niagara Falls, Marineland, Niagara Falls Bird Aviary, picnics and recreational activities at local beaches and parks, mini golf and lunches at various community restaurants. In the summer months, BICR's recreational Coordinator, Dave Horton also provides canoeing outings to Fort Erie participants at Chippewa Creek.

BICR is indebted to HIAFE for providing their space to offer these groups and programming initiatives. We are pleased that we are able to respond to the needs of participants and their families living in the outlying areas of the Niagara Region with limited access to our main center in St. Catharines. If you have an acquired brain injury and are interested in accessing some of the groups that are offered in Fort Erie please contact BICR or HIAFE.



Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. is hosting it's 12th Annual Charity Golf Tournament

### *Make a Difference by:*

**PLAYING** a round of golf or **PROVIDING** a prize/cash donation or **SPONSORING** a hole (starting at \$150.00)

Of course, you're always welcome to participate by contributing to all three!

We would be pleased to provide you with a tax receipt for your charitable contribution and will ensure your donation is recognized in the local media and in our upcoming newsletters.

### *Tournament Information*

Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Bridgewater Country Club

Registration @ 11:00 a.m.

SHOT GUN start at 1:00 p.m.

4 Person Scramble

\$120 per person

**Includes: 18 holes, Cart, Prize, Lunch and Dinner**

**& use of the Driving Range from 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**on the day of the tournament**

For further information on how you or your company can **Make a Difference**, please contact Jen MacLean at our office at (905) 687-6788 ext. 637 or 1-800-996-8796 or email [staff@bicr.org](mailto:staff@bicr.org).

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# Brain Injury Community Re-entry (NIAGARA) INC.

*Turning the Key to Opportunity in Niagara since 1988*

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