



BRAINWAVES

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

Established in 1988

June
2011



Pictured above: Tina Horton, Vocational Coordinator and Lina Somma, Vocational Facilitator



Pictured above: Dave Horton, Recreation Coordinator, Paul Martino, Recreation Summer Student



Pictured above: Gillian Rodger-Pagnotta, PET Coordinator, Lorraine Nadeau, OMOD and Shirley Ely, PET Facilitator

Unit 10 Open House

When BICR held its Community Open Space forum in March 2010, participants and family members alike were clear – they wanted a drop in type environment that offered additional programming options. This request did not go unnoticed. It was endorsed by BICR's Board of Directors and incorporated into their 2010-2013 Strategic Plan. Well, through the dedicated efforts of a number of staff our newest space has become a hub of activity. On June 22nd an Open House was held to showcase the space and services offered from Unit 10. If you were not able to attend, perhaps the snapshot below will encourage you to come out and try some of our new options in the months to come.

Vocational Services offers support in locating and maintaining volunteer and competitive employment. Additionally they offer educational workshops and have access to a computer lab where participants can sign up to work on their resumes, job search skills, or simply surf the net.

Recreation Services offers daily community and/or center based options. Our newest activities offered out of Unit 10 include Gamers' Gallery, Wacky Wednesdays (movies, casino style games, potluck, board games), Craft Corner and free Computer sign up time.

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I am writing this article right after our Annual General Meeting and was very happy with the number of people who attended the event. The night was successful with staff receiving 5, 10, 15 and 20 year service awards, what a pleasure to have 20 year employees.

The participant and family surveys have been returned and the information has been recorded. The surveys were extremely positive and highlight the great work the staff at BICR does every day. The frontline staff and managers should be very proud of the work accomplished each and every day at BICR.

The organization is moving forward with building a residential site to replace St. Lawrence in Welland. I hope by this fall the project will be completed and our residents of St. Lawrence will have a brand new home to reside in.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of Directors and management staff for all of their continued efforts. Have a great summer!

Frank Greco
Executive Director

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Summer 2011 is fast approaching according to the calendar, but as I am writing this note my furnace is on at my house. Two days ago the temperature was 26° Celsius; today it is 8° Celsius.

I am looking forward to summer this year as I will again play some golf after my absence last year due to knee replacement surgery and heart problems.

I am sure everyone has heard the house in Welland will be built this summer; with occupancy sometime this fall. I hope I don't eat those words after waiting for years to complete this endeavour, but I'm optimistic this time!

Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. will celebrate our 23rd Annual General Meeting June 15th, 2011 and I am very pleased to present several employees with longtime service awards. I congratulate all employees for service awards especially those who have been with the organization for 20 years and longer.

I would like to thank Frank, the Managers, Staff, Board of Directors and Volunteers for their dedicated service to BICR. Since BICR was formed I have had the opportunity to get to know many people personally within the organization.

I hope everyone has a safe and fruitful summer and hope the season is sunny and warm.

President, Nick Ostryhon



Winter Geneva Park 2011

By Andy Pagnotta

This year's Winter Geneva Park trip was riddled with laughter, games and friendships. Once again, the group activities were second to none including minute to win it games which were a real hit. The incredible lakefront views, accommodations and exquisite meals were topic for conversation throughout the trip. Although the weather was spring like at times, we did enjoy snowshoeing and no one can forget the snowman making contest and tower building. Launching airplanes off the balcony proved that there weren't a lot of engineers in the group, but they sure looked great coming down.

There was plenty of entertainment, but the highlight has to be Mike tickling the ivories for the group as well as Ronnie throwing a large die and calling out the correct number

before it hit the floor. The biggest challenge was attempting to make barnyard animal noises at 8am as well as keeping Peter away from the chocolate milk.

As this was my first trip to Geneva Park, I learned that our participants have incredible talents and are not afraid to show them off. Everyone was willing to help each other when necessary without prompting which showed genuine leadership skills as well as a kindness you don't get to experience very often.

Everyone advised that they enjoyed their time at Geneva Park due to the well planned and focused events offered, as well as the excitement and participation from staff members who attended and agreed they wouldn't hesitate to go again.

SUBI



Recent research has shown that twenty-five to thirty percent of individuals with ABI were intoxicated at the time of injury. In addition, more than half of those admitted to ABI rehabilitation programs have a history of substance abuse and twenty percent of people who did not previously have substance use problems before injury have developed them post-injury. It has also been shown that substance use typically increases during the post-acute period of brain injury and greatly increases the chances of a second injury.

Due to these staggering facts, the S.U.B.I. (Substance Use/Brain Injury) program was developed through collaboration between Cam-H (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) and CHIRS (Community Head Injury Resource Services). The S.U.B.I. project has not only developed client materials and resources for addiction counseling, but also provider manuals and staff training to agencies across Canada. In recent years, the project has expanded to include a community of practice through BrainWeb and train-the-trainer workshop series which enable agency staff to train their own staff and programs on related areas such as Motivational Interviewing, the Stages of Change Model, and Addiction Counseling related topics.

B.I.C.R. began offering S.U.B.I. related services through the initiation of a group format in early 2009. The group expanded into a ten week structure which to date has run four courses and developed a secondary group aimed at maintaining the changes and commitment involved participants have made in relation to their substance using behaviours. Staff who have attended S.U.B.I. workshops have also developed in-services for B.I.C.R. staff including the current model of Areas of Rehab Level Two covering Motivational Interviewing.

Through the development of S.U.B.I. programming within B.I.C.R.'s services, a previously unaddressed population has been met with services to help address a major barrier typically faced in rehabilitation from A.B.I. The group format continues to evolve and expand while attempting to serve the maximum amount of B.I.C.R.'s participants. Currently, the development of a new group to serve the Fort Erie area is in progress through collaboration between Group Facilitator and Case Coordinator, Jeff Sica and Rural Services Coordinator, Tracy Maddalena. Participants interested in gaining more information regarding the S.U.B.I. group or potentially attending a future group are encouraged to contact Case Coordinator, Jeff Sica at extension 629.

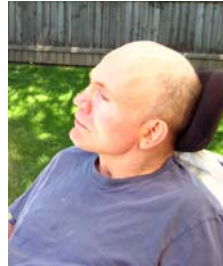
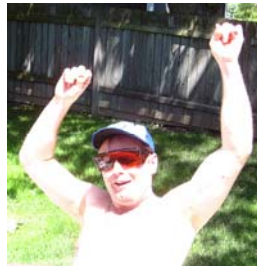


On June 2, 2011, a group of employees from PepsiCo Foods Canada (makers of Pepsi-cola, Gatorade, Tropicana, Quaker Oats and Frito Lay) took time out of their busy day to give back to the community. The group of employees provided BICR with a unique experience and selected Richardson Court as their worksite to put in a vegetable garden along with the added tasks of pruning and weeding our existing flower beds. Approximately twelve men worked for about 2 hours leaving behind a well planned out vegetable garden and an attractive flower garden area with added perennials.

Several participants lingered around the outdoor activity that was going on that afternoon. We learned some fabulous tips on how to ensure that tomatoes grow to their maximum size and how not to trust the outdoor swing at RC! The swing really looked good but clearly it could not handle the weight of an extra donut.

Many thanks to PepsiCo – this was a well appreciated afternoon of muscle, effort, and sweat. In addition, thanks to the participants at Richardson Court who continue to ensure that the garden remains well watered. I know that I personally am looking forward to a fresh garden salad picked from our very own RC garden!! I will bring my favourite salad dressing.

Margo VanHonsberger





BICR's 10th Annual Bowl-a-thon

On March 26, 2011, BICR held its annual bowl-a-thon at Parkway Lanes in St. Catharines. There was a tremendous turnout with a good mix of clients, staff and community members. You could feel the excitement in the air as people were hoping to get their first strike or spare. We even had some teams show up in costumes.

After two games of bowling and a lot of hooting and hollering we made our way over to Boston Pizza for lunch, and what a lunch it was. Pizza, nachos and cactus cuts, I am getting hungry just thinking about it. While everyone was eating, we handed out prizes and awards for the top bowlers. We also handed out the top pledge award which went to the combination of Tom Kazda and Debbie Boutilier who combined raised over \$500.00.

By the end of the day everyone had a great time, was tired and well fed. I would like to thank all our volunteers and staff that helped out as well a big thank you to all our bowlers who combined raised over \$3,000.00. It was another great bowl-a-thon and I look forward to seeing everyone out again next year.

Dave Horton, Recreation Coordinator



Meditation May Help The Brain “Turn Down The Volume” On Distractions

The positive effects of mindfulness meditation on pain and working memory may result from an improved ability to regulate a crucial brain wave called the alpha rhythm. This rhythm is thought to “turn down the volume” on distracting information, which suggests that a key value of meditation may be helping the brain deal with an often-overstimulating world. Researchers from Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH), Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology report that modulation of the alpha rhythm in response to attention-directing cues was faster and significantly more enhanced among study participants who completed an eight-week mindfulness meditation program than in a control group.

The report will appear in the journal *Brain Research Bulletin* and has been released online.

“Mindfulness meditation has been reported to enhance numerous mental abilities, including rapid memory recall,” says Catherine Kerr, PhD, of the Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging at MGH and the Osher Research Center at Harvard Medical School, co-lead author of the report. “Our discovery that mindfulness meditators more quickly adjusted the brain wave that screens out distraction could explain their superior ability to rapidly remember and incorporate new facts.”

Brain cells use particular frequencies or waves to regulate the flow of information in much the same way that radio stations broadcast at specific frequencies. One frequency, the alpha rhythm, is particularly active in the cells that process touch, sight and sound in the brain’s outmost layer, called the cortex, where it helps to suppress irrelevant or distracting

sensations and regulate the flow of sensory information between brain regions.

Previous studies have suggested that attention can be used to regulate the alpha rhythm and, in turn, sensory perception. When an individual anticipates a touch, sight or sound, the focusing of attention toward the expected stimulus induces a lower alpha wave height in cortical cells that would handle the expected sensation, which actually “turns up the volume” of those cells. At the same time the height of the alpha wave in cells that would handle irrelevant or distracting information increases, turning the volume in those regions down. Because mindfulness meditation – in which practitioners direct nonjudgmental attention to their sensations, feelings and state of mind – has been associated with improved performance on attention-based tasks, the research team decided to investigate whether individuals trained in the practice also exhibited enhanced regulation of the timing and intensity of alpha rhythms.

The study tested 12 healthy volunteers with no previous experience in meditation. Half completed the eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program developed at the University of Massachusetts. The other half were asked not to engage in any type of meditation during the study period. Using magnetoencephalography (MEG), an imaging technique that detects the location of brain activity with extreme precision, the researchers measured participants’ alpha rhythms before, during and after the eight-week period. Specifically, they measured alpha rhythms in the brain area that processes signals from the left hand while participants were asked to direct their attention to either their left hand or left foot. Participants’ abilities to

adjust the alpha rhythm in cortical cells associated with the hand, depending on where their attention was directed, were recorded during the milliseconds immediately after they received an attention cue.

Although all participants had showed some attention-related alpha rhythm changes at the beginning of the study, at the end of the eight weeks, those who completed the mindfulness meditation training made faster and significantly more pronounced attention-based adjustments to the alpha rhythm than the non-meditators did. “This result may explain reports that mindfulness meditation decreases pain perception,” says Kerr. “Enhanced ability to turn the alpha rhythm up or down could give practitioners’ greater ability to regulate pain sensation.”

The study also sheds light on how meditation may affect basic brain function, explains Stephanie Jones, PhD, of the Martinos Center, co-lead author of the paper. “Given what we know about how alpha waves arise from electrical currents in sensory cortical cells, these data suggest that mindfulness meditation practitioners can use the mind to enhance regulation of currents in targeted cortical cells. The implications extend far beyond meditation and give us clues about possible ways to help people better regulate a brain rhythm that is dysregulated in attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and other conditions.” Kerr is an instructor in Medicine and Jones an instructor in Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School (HMS).

Material adapted from Massachusetts General Hospital. Courtesy of Christopher Fisher, PhD, submitted on April 21, 2011 in Brain Imaging, Meditation.

<http://www.bmedreport.com/>

N TEC Celebration

N Tec celebrated 40 years of service to the Niagara community by hosting a Reception and Open House on May 19, 2011. There were Greetings and Awards Presentation by Local Politician and Members of Parliament with recognition of the work N Tec has done for the Community supporting individuals with special needs.

The concept has developed from one man wanting to help his son to a multi faceted operation. N Tec runs a Flyer Delivery Service, Landscaping Business, Small Machinery Business, Custodial Service, to name a few of the training and employment possibilities.

Light refreshments were served by the Hospitality & Food Services. Linda Gosling added to the function on behalf of BICR. There was a tour of the various N Tec sites and the gardens and vegetable beds that BICR participants tends were showcased. A thank you gift of a tomato plant was generously given to each person who attended.

The new N Tec ECO Gardens was open for viewing showing the various plants for sale, from herbs, vegetables, eco restoration, and native plants. There is a native species walking trail and workshops.

N Tec is located at 120 Canby Street, Port Robinson.



Hello, my name is Natasha Potter. I was born in Toronto September, 1994. I am from a family of six, with three little brothers and a lot of pets. In my free time I like to horseback ride, garden, and dance. Working as a co-op student at BICR has been an amazing experience and I have had a lot of fun. I learned so many skills such as: organization, cooperation, leadership, patience, and has confirmed to me that recreational therapy is the career I would like to pursue. I also got to explore a new way to look at the world and my community. I am going to miss everyone at BICR, this co-op placement has really made me grow. I have made a second family here. The women of PET were always there with the best advice, I am sure it will get me through some tough times in the future. Dave Horton always made me smile and was happy to teach me what I needed to know. I will remember this for the rest of my life. BICR will always be a part of me.



On May 4, 2011 Linda Gosling, Facilitator for BICR's Horticulture Program and a participant Frank Miltenburg, presented a Power Point Presentation to N Tec staff at their monthly meeting.

The Horticulture Program which began 10 years ago with one participant and staff has grown to have up to 12 participants and staff working 20 flower beds and 3 herbs and vegetable beds, on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The proceeds of the vegetable beds go to Project Share as the beds were donated by United Way. BICR participants take great pride in the maintenance of the strawberry bed, herb garden, flower garden and vegetable beds. This year the theme garden will showcase N Tec's 40th year in operation, supporting individuals with special needs.

A Fantastic Spring Fling!

On Thursday April 14th, 2011, participants, family, friends, and staff enjoyed a fun filled evening at the 2011 Spring Fling dance held at Grantham Optimist Club in St. Catharines. Tickets were only \$5 and everyone who attended was able to enjoy beverage refreshments, pizza from Pete's Pizza, and best of all delicious baked goods from PET at a minimal cost. All proceeds of the event went towards BICR's PET and Recreation programs. The dance floor was a blaze all night as the music of the band "Sour Puss", of which BICR's own Dawn Wolff is a member, made it impossible for anyone to want to 'sit one out'!

Thank you's go out to the generous donors who provided some fantastic door prizes, as well as staff members and volunteers who helped make the evening a phenomenal success. A special thank you to Dave Horton and Gillian Roger-Pagnotta who put a great deal of time and hard work into making a great evening possible.

Picture of Dawn Wolff, COSS Case Facilitator

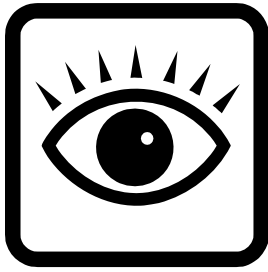


New Adventures Around the Corner...

On Saturday, March 19, 2011, participants and staff at Richardson Court held a party for Murray Bowman who was moving to Linhaven on Monday, March 21, 2011. It was a party with mixed emotions – sad to see Murray moving out, but happy knowing that new adventures were around the corner. Murray was thrilled and very much looking forward to his move. While living at Richardson Court, Murray contributed a great deal to enrich the lives of his fellow housemates, staff and visitors. His artistic talent could be seen in the form of many pastel and coloured-pencil drawings. Often these drawings were humorous caricatures of housemates or staff, or in recognition of a holiday. Murray's dry sense of humour, often involving puns and plays on words, continues to demonstrate his passion to bring laughter to others. One of his most notable

accomplishments was his contribution to the book *Winds of Change*, in which he described in part his experiences as a person coping with the effects of an acquired brain injury. Although Murray lived at Richardson Court since 1993, he was ecstatic to be moving into a facility that would give him exciting, new opportunities while being cared for and monitored by nursing staff. It is for this reason that the team at Richardson Court could not be happier.

To date, Murray is well adjusted and states that he loves his new home. Murray enjoys attending church services, spending time in the outdoor garden area and participating in the social activities that are organized at Linhaven. Murray remains involved in an Outreach capacity and continues to have opportunities to join groups and activities from BICR. Congratulations to you Murray!!!



LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE VOCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

Submitted by Lina Somma, Vocational Facilitator

BREAKING NEWS...

Two years ago, we told you about Patrick Boucher and his volunteer initiatives with Bethlehem Projects and his After School Program. Fast-forward to May 2011, we caught up with Patrick to see what he's been up to. Patrick continues to be an active volunteer at Bethlehem Projects. "I feel young again", when asked about his volunteer placement. "I get enjoyment from being around children". Although, Patrick reports working with children ages 6-12 can sometimes be challenging, the most important thing that he has learned is "children are bright and they can always teach you something". Congratulations to Patrick for more than two years of dedicated volunteer work!

HERE WE GO AGAIN...

The Vocational Department and the Cemetery Gardening Angels are teaming up again to launch the gardening season on May 30, 2011. Four returning participants and two new participants will be heading out into the trenches of the sleeping soils of Victoria Lawn Cemetery. A big thank you to Owner and Proprietor, Suzy Hastings of the Cemetery Gardening Angels for your continued partnership with Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc.

ANOTHER CLEAN ROAD...

The Vocational Staff and four participants ventured out on May 4, 2011 to volunteer in the Adopt-a-Road Program. Martindale Road received a clean sweep of its street when garbage was picked up and disposed of properly. Thank you to all the participants that helped out this Spring. We look forward to giving Martindale Road another face lift in Fall 2011.

VOCATIONAL WORKSHOPS...

The Vocational Workshop Series Modular 2 will launch in Fall 2011. The focus of this 6 week workshop series will be on job preparation and job search. Please contact Tina Horton, Vocational Coordinator at ext. 704 or Lina Somma, Vocational Facilitator ext. 730 for additional details.



Work Rest & Play

For the past 10 plus years, two days a week Brain Injury Community Re-entry has had a partnership with the Niagara Parks and the School of Horticulture where we volunteer our time. Over this span we have had many different opportunities to complete a variety of tasks. Under the watchful eye of both school students and instructors, we assist in the beautifying of the Niagara Parks. We have completed tasks such as vertical edging and weeding in the rose gardens to planting bulbs or transplanting flowers.

Rain or shine, you can expect there to be some sort of work to be done.

If you have a green thumb, enjoy volunteering or want to learn more about plants, this is the program for you. Contact Dave Horton, Recreation Coordinator at BICR's office for further details.



Pictured above left to right: Managers of BICR, Heather Olszewski, Linda Rapley, Margo VanHonsberger, Christine Williams, Darlene Stevenson and Gina Aiello



Pictured above: Nick Ostryhon, Christine Williams and Frank Greco



Pictured above: Nick Ostryhon, Jeniffer Kiers and Christine Williams

Annual General Meeting June 15, 2011



Pictured above left to right: Brandon P, Donna R, Marj D, Valdi P, Christine W and Jeniffer K



Pictured above: Nick Ostryhon, Marj Dermatas and Heather Olszewski

It was a beautiful summer day as BICR hosted its 23rd Annual General Meeting at Bridgewater Golf and Country Club. The sky was blue and clear, the air was warm and the atmosphere inside the dining area was welcoming and full of laughter. 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 (delivered by Mr. Larry Iggulden from Partridge Iggulden), 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. Frank was pleased to announce the location for the building of a residential site in Welland. All plans are currently being finalized and ground breaking is fast approaching.

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

Congratulations to the following employees for completing 20 years of service: Donna Rix, Paul Tkach and Christine Williams.

Congratulations to the following employees for completing 15 years of service: Valdi Paron.

Congratulations to the following employees for completing 10 years of service: Jamie Bird, Marj Dermatas, Jeniffer Kiers and Brandon Pearson.

Congratulations to the following employees for completing 5 years of service: Shelby Banas, Amanda Brady, Sandra Daniels and Linda Gosling.

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

*Submitted by Gina Aiello,
Director of Human Resources*



Pictured above: Nick Ostryhon, Brandon Pearson and Linda Rapley



Pictured above: Nick Ostryhon, Valdi Paron and Christine Williams



Pictured above: Nick Ostryhon, Donna Rix and Darlene Stevenson



Gardening Angels

Submitted by Tina Horton, Vocational Coordinator

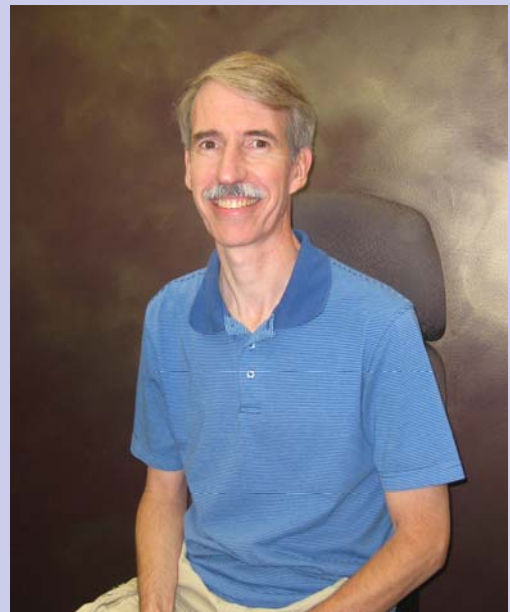
Summer is finally here and the flowers are in bloom, no one knows better than the 6 participants that are working for Cemetery Gardening Angels. From the end of May to October they will work 2 to 4 days per week at a variety of cemeteries in the Niagara Region, deadheading flowers and weeding and watering approximately 150 plots. There are many hours allocated to making this partnership successful, for example developing schedules, creating maps of the plots, coordinating times and endless hours of job coaching. There are 4 returning participants who have been with Cemetery Gardening Angels for the past 5 years and 2 participants who are new to the company. Owner Suzie Hastings has been an excellent employer, encouraging the new participants and enhancing the skills of the returning participants.

Congratulations to John Froud!!

Submitted by Margo VanHonsberger, Residential Manager

John has been working towards his Bachelor of Arts degree from McMaster University since September 1993 while primarily working within a full-time capacity at BICR. No doubt there were times for John when this idea seemed like an overwhelming, daunting task. But on Thursday, June 16th 2011, John can proudly say he has achieved success as he will hold his BA in Gerontology with a Certificate in Case Management.

Congratulations to you John for your determination, hard work, perseverance and the time you have consciously invested into reaching this achievement. You have much to celebrate!



“A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.” – Francis Bacon, 1625

Updates from Parkdale...



On May 2nd, 2011, Bruce Dyke moved from 32 Parkdale Place to Millennium Trail Manor in Niagara Falls. Bruce resided at Parkdale for over ten years. All of the staff and friends at Parkdale will miss his smiles, jokes, playing cards with him, watching comedies, listening to country music and talking about the 'good ol' days' when he played in the Band – Final Touch. (He used to wear a silver sequined shirt and pants to match, by the way.)

Pictured left: Karen Marr, Dianne Peitsch and Bruce Dyke celebrating his move. We will miss seeing you, Bruce every day, but we'll visit you often. All the best to you Bruce!!!

Bingo Anyone? If you are not busy on Tuesday mornings from 10:30 – Noon, come out to Parkdale for some gabbing and gambling – all legal of course. We always start with coffee and cookies first and then move onto Bingo.

If you are more advanced, then you can play more than one card at a time. Occasionally a fight breaks out, but it always ends in a handshake and another cookie. Winners get to stay for lunch!!!

Pictured right: Jen Kiers, Bruce Dyke, Karen Marr, Amber McNamara, Gilles LaPointe, Franc Poringa and Kelley Brown.

Submitted by Jen Kiers



(Continued from cover page)

Personal Effectiveness Training (PET) in partnership with the March of Dimes offers diverse day activity programming options Monday through Friday each week. In addition to regular programming they also offer specific interest groups that include activities like Yoga, Jewellery Making, Seasonal Canning and Preserves, Healthy Lifestyles and Cooking groups and Music Therapy.

While this is just a snapshot of some of our newer groups and activities, remember that our Learning & Leisure Guide printed quarterly provides detailed listings of all our groups and activities. Check it out!!

Back to the Open House.....thank you to all community partners, participants and family members and BICR board members who attended. Your support of BICR and these initiatives is greatly appreciated. Gabe, I thank you for both cutting and assisting in serving the cake. I would also like to extend an extra special thank you to all the staff who did a fabulous job coordinating this event - Sharon Coulson, Administrative Assistant; Dave Horton, Recreation Coordinator; Tina Horton, Vocational Coordinator; Gillian Rodger-Pagnota, PET Coordinator; Shirley Ely, PET Facilitator; Lina Somma, Vocational Facilitator; Jessica Conroy, Summer Student; Paul Martino, Summer Student; Natasha Lambert, Student; Natasha Potter, Student. You made the event a resounding success!!

Submitted by Darlene Stevenson, Modular Services Manager

Fire Prevention

Mark your calendar, test your smoke alarms monthly and clean them every 6 months. Things to remember when testing your smoke alarm:

- ψ Install a smoke detector outside bedrooms and on each floor of your home.
- ψ Test your smoke alarm by pressing the test button.
- ψ Battery operated smoke alarms will warn you when batteries need replacing, despite this, test them yearly.
- ψ Remember, your smoke alarm can't protect you if the batteries have been removed or a plug has been disconnected.
- ψ The lifespan of a typical smoke alarm is about 10 years, but some models last as little as 5 years.
- ψ To clean the alarm, open the cover and gently vacuum the interior.

Quick Facts on CO

- ≡ **What is it:** A colourless, odourless and tasteless gas.
- ≡ **Signs:** Stuffiness, water vapour, backdraft and soot from a fireplace.
- ≡ **Symptoms:** Headache, weakness, nausea, vomiting and loss of muscle control.
- ≡ **Effects:** If inhaled, carbon monoxide deprives the blood of oxygen. Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness, brain damage or death.
- ≡ **Causes:** Blocked or dirty vents, flues, chimneys and furnaces, as well as improper ventilation of burning fireplaces or woodstoves.
- ≡ **Deaths:** Approximately 200 per year.
- ≡ **Prevention:** Annual inspection and cleaning of: Furnaces, chimneys, fireplaces, other fuel-burning equipment such as gas dryers.

Safety tips on how to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning:

- ζ Install at least one carbon monoxide detector in your home.
- ζ Ensure a wood or coal-burning stove is properly installed and vented.
- ζ Don't operate a gasoline-powered engine, kerosene stove or charcoal grill in a closed space.
- ζ Barbecue grills should never be operated indoors.
- ζ Check clothes dryer vents that open outside the house for lint.
- ζ Check forced air fans for proper ventilation.

If you suspect fire or carbon monoxide in your home, get out immediately and call the fire department.

Way to go Diane...

In 2007, Diane had the opportunity to put her formal training as a registered social worker (BSW) to the test when she completed a 1 year maternity leave for BICR's sole social worker. Diane reported that she enjoyed the opportunity and it solidified her decision to further pursue her education and obtain her Masters of Social Work degree through the University of Windsor. Beginning in the fall of 2009, while continuing to work full time and manage her family, Diane travelled every other weekend to Brampton to complete her in-class studies. She completed her clinical social work placement through BICR and by December 2010 she had successfully met all requirements of her degree. To anyone who knows Diane, this is no

(Continued on page 21)





Staff Appreciation 2011

Submitted by Margo VanHonsberger

To an outsider, it might have seemed a bit odd - the clapping, singing, speaking in various tongues, and the verbal challenges shouted to teams scattered around the room. But to the staff who attended Staff Appreciation at the Henley Clubhouse on Wednesday June 8th, this was a great evening filled with significant quantities of wholesome fun.

Staff reported that they thoroughly enjoyed their time at the Henley Clubhouse and gave several comments on the delicious meal prepared by Classic Caterers. Our game of Wacky Questions was based on topics that ranged from tattoos, to years of experience at BICR, to a demonstration of staff having the skill to touch their tongue to their nose. This was followed by thirteen unique gifts being distributed to a lucky winners around the room.

Thank you to the Social Committee Members (Julia Denning, Debbie LaFleur, Cheryl Kavanagh, Jamie Bird, Brandon Pearson, Melissa Pett, Tina Horton and Dianne Pietsch) for their work, imagination, and talent in pulling this evening together!!

New! Participant Wellness Committee at BICR

Submitted by Beth Neufeld

The residential program has started an exciting new committee focusing on participant wellness. The committee was established in February of this year and consists of various rehabilitation counselors who have a high interest in promoting health and wellness at the residential sites. The committee meets quarterly to brainstorm ideas for healthier living at the residential homes. Each month there are different wellness activities that the residences focus on, including healthy food choices, physical activities, and fun theme-based crafts. For example, in May the participants painted and decorated clay flower pots for Mother's Day. They had a great time and the clay pots looked awesome. In late June there will be an outing to go strawberry picking, and then a "Strawberry Social" afterwards, where the fresh picked berries will be utilized in fruit smoothies. As you can see, being healthy can be both fun and delicious! We have also started a walking/fitness challenge at each of the residences, where the amount of walking and exercises completed are tracked on a map of Canada. So far, St. Lawrence is in the lead by already having "travelled" across Canada twice. Way to go! Upcoming Wellness activities include: A fondue night (complete with **dark** chocolate and fresh fruit), a "healthy foods" summer picnic and a "Canada Day" games day. Thank you to all of the staff who promote wellness for the participants on a daily basis.

Let's keep moving!

How we Celebrated Family Day at BICR

Submitted by Linda Rapley, Community Outreach Support Services Manager

On February 21st, 2011, BICR's Wellness Committee held its first Family Day skate at the Four Plex arena in St Catharines. The event was open to all staff, family members and friends of BICR. There was a great turnout of over 80 people who enjoyed the music and fun of a leisurely skate in a great environment. We were able to see our ED and his family taking turns around the rink and other staff and their children who are amazing on skates. After skating for an hour, refreshments followed supplied by BICR's Wellness Committee. There was much laughter to be heard and people seemed to enjoy themselves. All in all it was a success and may even be repeated next year.



National Volunteer Week

by Jacqueline Buchanan

National Volunteer Week was April 11 – 17, 2011 with the theme of *Volunteers: Passion. Action. Impact.* On Wednesday April 13, BICR hosted an event that recognized the passion, the action and the impact that all our volunteers have had throughout the past year. The event consisted of cake, refreshments and tributes from Nick Ostryhon and me as the Volunteer Coordinator. In the tributes we celebrated the various projects and successes that our volunteers have experienced over the past year.

1 in 3 Canadians volunteer in some capacity, they volunteer for any number of reasons; all bring exceptional skills, abilities and life experiences which enrich and enhance our participants' lives.

In recognition of the extraordinary impact of volunteers worldwide, the UN General Assembly has called 2011 the International Year of the Volunteer +10, hoping to continue the trend started by the first International Year of the Volunteer in 2001. This year the UN issued a global call to action to "empower people to take an active part in the development of their own communities, to take responsibility for the needs of others, and to make an impact in their own lives."

BICR has been fortunate enough to have a volunteer in every department at some point during the year. As well we have seen an increase in volunteers who come as a result of personal influences, as opposed to through academic requirements.

I can, without hesitation, say that while St. Catharines is far away from the UN General Assembly, our students and volunteers embody the spirit and the enthusiasm as well as the dedication and compassion that was behind the decision to name 2011 as the International Year of the Volunteer +10.

By providing support to individuals living with the effects of acquired brain injury our volunteers encourage self-direction, and facilitate opportunities for meaningful community living. We recognize that volunteers have the choice where to go to give back and on behalf of BICR and the management team I would like to thank them for choosing BICR.



5 QUESTIONS WITH... Shelby Banas

In this latest installment highlighting a BICR staff member, the focus turns to our Team Coordinator at the apartment complex, Shelby Banas. Shelby first joined BICR in the fall of 2006 covering a maternity leave within the Vocational Department. From that starting point, Shelby moved onto to be a Case Facilitator in COSS and then in early 2008, Shelby accepted her current role as Team Coordinator at Buckley Towers. Shelby is also an integral member of various committees at BICR, including Joint Health & Safety and Wellness Works, as well as participating in the research project "Affect Recognition Training for Persons with TBI" which is a joint project involving Universities in Canada, the US and New Zealand.

My first job was at Nector Doughnuts on Welland Avenue. I was there for 3 years.

My favourite leisure activity is walking with my dogs and being outside. I love enjoying the beautiful weather.

Who do you admire most dead or alive? That would be my nana. She lives life to the fullest, always has a positive attitude and has made the best of everything.

The best advice I've ever received was from my nana – go see and enjoy life. You can't take the memories with you when you leave.

The 3 items I would bring with me if I knew I would be trapped on a desert island are... 1) sunscreen, 2) my music and 3) my cats.



Hello, My name is Paul Martino and I am a 19-year-old student working a summer job with Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. as a Recreational Assistant under the watchful eye of Mr. Dave Horton, and could not ask for anything else. I was born and raised in Niagara Falls, and come from an Italian background. I have a lengthy list of family members, which include my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins that I am very close with, and who are always there for me whenever I need them. My immediate family, the closest, most important people in my life, consists of my mother Anna, my father John, and my sister Stephanie. The three of them together offer me endless support, motivation, guidance and love and without them I can honestly say that I would not be where I am, or the person I am, today.

I am currently a full time student at Niagara College and completed a

one-year General Arts and Science course this past academic year. In September I will begin a two-year Social Service Worker Program at Niagara College where I will receive my Social Work diploma, and will hopefully go on to complete another two years at Niagara University, where I will receive my Masters in Social Work.

Two years ago I applied for a high school co-op position with Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. not knowing what to expect, or if I was even going to be accepted for the position. After being accepted, I was given the opportunity to see all aspects of the organization, what it did and how it worked. At that point, being someone who didn't even know what field of study he wanted to pursue after high school, the whole experience was a complete eye opener and made me realize that I wanted to be working with, and helping people. After high school and throughout the summer I continued to volunteer at BICR whenever I could. I volunteered at the annual Golf Tournament and even got the opportunity to go to Geneva Park in August, an experience I will never forget. Because of this volunteering, I was nominated by Jacqueline Buchanan for the Margaret MacLennan Youth Volunteer of the Year award, and was named the recipient of the award by the City of St. Catharines. It was an extremely humbling and honorable award to win.

Now, I work as a summer student in the Recreation Department assisting in setting and planning activities and events. I build rapport

with participants and do whatever I can to make the activities and events fun and entertaining, while at the same time try to form friendships with them as well.

The question "what do you want to do with your life?" is one that I have thought about for many years, and one that I still continue to think about. I am only 19 years old, still in school and experiencing life. For me to say what exactly I want to do for the rest of my life is impossible right now. However, I know that as years go by and I continue to go to school and learn through life experiences, that question will become easier for me to answer. I do know, however, that I want to work with people, whether it is adults, teens, or kids. I aspire to be someone who people can go to in their times of need, someone who helps others when they need help, someone who makes those around him laugh and make their day better, in whatever way he can.

I am excited about the next 3 months at BICR and the opportunity I have to learn and gain not only experience, but many memories as well!

The winner of the Margaret MacLennan Youth Volunteer Award is... Paul Martino, volunteer at Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc.

With those words the family of Margaret MacLennan, amid much applause, presented Paul Martino the Award for Youth Volunteer of the Year at the City of St. Catharines 23rd Annual Volunteer Recognition Night on April 19, 2011. Paul received the award in recognition of his outstanding dedication, effort and contribution that he has made to the agency since he first volunteered in February 2010.

Work Well at BICR

Submitted by Heather Gleddie, Human Resources Coordinator

With recent research being conducted on the value and effectiveness of the health and safety systems in Ontario, along with high profile court cases and amendments to governing legislation- Occupational Health and Safety is now in the forefront of current events more than ever before. This time of transformation from enforcement of legislation to prevention of injuries, and many topics in between, has allowed for some significant re-structuring in the government agencies that provide service to employers and workers in the province of Ontario.

As a result, the government of Ontario has increased the number of Workwell Audits performed. While the concept of a Workwell Audit, may be unfamiliar for some, the staff at BICR have become well versed in the associated guidelines and expectations put forward by governing agencies. Staff, including members of the Joint Health and Safety Committee, Human Resources department, Senior management, and residential staff, all worked together to reach the common goal of a successful audit. This tremendous accomplishment is directly attributed to the dedication, commitment and determination of our team to create a healthy and safe workplace for all.

To shine light on the specifics of a Workwell Audit, one must first understand the background of the program. First approved in 1989, and funded through the WSIB, the audit is an incentive based program that rewards organizations for excellence in their health and safety programs and penalizes organizations for weak health and safety programs. The consequences for an unsuccessful audit can be steep, ranging from fines, to surcharges, along with hefty recommendations and a potential for jail time; not to mention the heightened monitoring of your agency by the WSIB, and MOL.

The Workwell Audit was an enormous learning opportunity for BICR, as there is an incredible amount of knowledge and information that can be learned, and used to protect the health and safety of workers; a common goal that employers, employees and WSIB share. Workwell Evaluators are a fantastic resource, as they have diverse experience working with agencies in various industries and

can share best practices and procedures, to assist in developing a health and safety program.

Brain Injury Community Re-entry received formal notification of a Workwell Audit in February 2011. After six weeks of collecting supporting documents, tightening up procedures, and briefing staff on health and safety topics, we are proud to announce a successful completion of our Workwell Audit, with a score of 88.6%! This is an amazing accomplishment for BICR, its' staff and participants, as this represents a commitment to occupational health and safety from all levels of the agency. A strong health and safety program goes beyond policies, first aid kits and training, but fully embraces past events, current trends, and future initiatives. The Joint Health and Safety Committee, Human Resources department and senior staff constantly evaluate statistics and reports, take part in training, review changes to related legislation and participate in specialized prevention groups to enhance our understanding of safety culture in a service sector setting.

Brain Injury Community Re-Entry, has dedicated itself to occupational health and safety, more so than ever before. With the successful completion of a Workwell Audit this past winter, BICR has become proactive and ready to face to challenges and opportunities that arise in the field of occupational health and safety. As an organization, we strive for distinction and leadership in ABI rehabilitation for our participants, however, for our team of hard working, talented staff, we have shown excellence, and made great strides in the fostering a healthy and safe work environment. We will continue to dedicate time, effort and resources to maintain a comprehensive health and safety program that will ensure the health and safety of all staff and participants within our agency.



Brain Injury and Alzheimer's

by Jacqui Graham

I read an article on Alzheimer's and thought, wow, do some of the symptoms mimic deficits of brain injury! So, I thought it was important to differentiate between the two. I'm going to point out some of the more common, as some are more glaring than others. I mean, in some extreme cases of brain injury not only are you dealing with major memory problems (past, present and future) but sometimes those nonsensical questions and thoughts. At times they call it simple 'paranoia'; I just call it one more annoying character trait I have to deal with.

The article written by 12 yr old (boy, does she ever have a firm grasp on the disease) Sarah Condie, who watched Alzheimer's ravage and take her great grandfather, describes some of the symptoms she saw firsthand.

Ms. Condie compared Alzheimer's to a computer hard drive that has been totally wiped out. That over time backspace and delete take over, the information lost forever, with no undo button available. Well, brain injury does essentially the same thing, at least initially and I've heard that exact comparison often. The only blessed difference (if I dare to say that) is that with a lot of **hard work sometimes** 'we' are able to 'unstuck' the undo button **somewhat!**

Let's see, then there are the other common adjectives that we share

like becoming suspicious of everything and everyone (especially our main caregivers or loved ones). Then there's the ever present battle with paranoia (that's my big one), frustration (not only with us but others) and socially unacceptable behaviours (personally, I think I'm more in control of that particular one than I was before my injury!)

Then for the future we find that we're constantly looking at 'properly trained' nursing care, lack of **proper** facilities, and of course lack of beds. All of this leads to family and caregiver stress and assistant breakdown. Of course, we mustn't forget the initial and often time's constant supervision and the always ever-present dollar issues. This all leads to other added concerns; older parents wondering how long they will be around to help out while dealing with their own pains and illnesses, and who will be there for their loved one when they're gone. Not having anyone at all opens a whole new can of worms.

This part, I say begrudgingly and with some personal input, at least in the case of Alzheimer's there is a finality, unlike brain injury that leaves the 'world' with a type of walking, breathing dead (no I don't mean we're all some sort of new zombie, but it's not unusual for us to feel that way, at times!) This is also something that occurs to me occasionally, I saw Alzheimer's destroy my one aunt and it is

presently destroying another, but there is and was an end to everyone's suffering eventually and the memories were/are bittersweet whereas in the case of most brain injuries the suffering both mental and physical go on indefinitely for **all** involved directly or not!

On that note, I'll end my article, hoping and praying that there are advancements (both medical and financial) that will alleviate these feelings soon (for both issues!)

(Continued from page 15)

surprise as she is consistently a high achiever who does not believe in the words "can't" or "no". Whether it was luck, the stars aligned or a collection of good karma, the permanent position of social worker at BICR became available as Diane was nearing completion of her degree. Needless to say Diane was the perfect fit. Diane formally received her Masters of Social Work Degree on June 23, 2011. I am confident that Diane's compassion, dedication, knowledge and advocacy skills are assets that benefit our participants and family members alike.

Congratulations Diane!!

Submitted by Darlene Stevenson,
Modular Services Manager



Strawberry Sensation

Enjoy a variety of delicious strawberry recipes by The Canadian Living Test Kitchen.

For more recipes and information visit the following link: <http://www.canadianliving.com/food/>

Think strawberries are finished after the month of June? Well, think again. In addition to the traditional June varieties, there are also ever-bearing and day-neutral strawberry plants that produce fruit all summer long. Unlike the June fruit, day-neutrals are not affected by the length of daylight, so they flower more than once a year and continue all the way into September.

Classic Strawberry Jam

Ingredients

6 cups crushed hulled strawberries
1 package light fruit pectin crystals
4 1/2 cups granulated sugar

Preparation:

Pour strawberries into large Dutch oven.

Combine pectin crystals with 1/4 cup of the sugar; stir into pan. Bring to full rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Stir in remaining sugar; return to full rolling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Remove from heat. Stir for 5 minutes to prevent fruit from floating, skimming off foam.

Using sterilized metal funnel and 1/2-cup measure, pour into hot sterilized 1-cup canning jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. If necessary, wipe rims. Cover with hot lids; screw on bands fingertip tight. Process in boiling water canner for 5 minutes. Remove jars and let cool, undisturbed, for 24 hours. Check for seal, ensuring that lids curve downward. (If not, refrigerate and use within 3 weeks.) Store in cool, dry, dark place for up to 1 year.

Strawberry Banana Smoothie

Ingredients

1 cup milk
1/2 cup frozen strawberries
1/2 banana
1/4 cup plain yogurt
1 tbsp liquid honey

Preparation:

In blender, blend milk, strawberries, banana, yogurt and honey until smooth and frothy.



Brain teasers

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



2. In this puzzle, three numbers: 16, 14 and 38, need to be assigned to one of the rows of numbers below. To which row should each number be assigned? (Hint: This is not a mathematical problem. The numerical values are irrelevant.)

A	0	6	8	9	3
B	15	27	21	10	19
C	7	1	47	11	17

The numbers are organized by shape. In Row A, all the numbers have rounded shapes. In Row C, all the numbers have linear shapes. Row B is mix of curves and lines. Therefore, 16 goes to B, 14 goes to C and 38 goes to A.

The Answer:

3. You have a 3 gallon jug and a 5 gallon jug. You need to measure out exactly 7 gallons of water. How do you do it?

The Answer: Fill the 5 gallon jug with water, pour it into the 3 gallon jug until the 3 gallon is full, leaving 2 gallons in the 5 gallon jug. Now pour out the water in the 3 gallon jug. Pour the 2 gallons of water (in the 5 gallon jug) into the empty 3 gallon jug. Fill the 5 gallon jug. You now have exactly 7 gallons!

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Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. is hosting it's 14th 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 12th, 2011
Bridgewater Country Club
Registration @ 11:00 a.m.
SHOT GUN start at 1:00 p.m.
4 Person Scramble
\$125 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.

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The views expressed in this publication are the views of Brain Injury Community Re-Entry (Niagara) Inc. and do not necessarily reflect those of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) or the government of Ontario.

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Turning the Key to Opportunity in Niagara since 1988

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