



BRAINWAVES

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

Established in 1988

December
2008

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Women's Group

Submitted by Ineke Soto



In October many of the women of BICR's Women's Group stepped outside of their comfort zone in response to a challenge presented to the group by Shirley Bedard a fellow member of the group. As the expert, Shirley was able to introduce the group of 13, plus staff, to the art of archery with the assistance of Dave Horton and Bob Mackie of Mackie's Mountain Archery. The response of the women to this challenge varied. One was content to be an onlooker and took pleasure in watching her peers take up a bow and arrow. Others were determined to

hit the bull's eye and a few were successful with their aim and either hit the bull's eye or came close. Many arrows flew off the mark and hit the floor or ceiling.

Mr. Mackie made it possible for the women with physical challenges to shoot as is evident in the accompanying photos. In one photo in particular, you will notice this writer's hands steadying Angalee with Mr. Mackie holding the bow so that Angalee could effectively shoot the bow with good results. Angalee was overjoyed with her success and could not wait share this accomplishment with her family. The group shared this excitement and all were grateful that Mr. Mackie had made this adventure possible by building the indoor archery range.

The feedback at the next Women's Group meeting was extremely positive and the cry went up to go back to the shooting range and go for the bulls eye. Another trip is planned and Shirley reported back to the group that Mr. Mackie was now planning assistive devices so that those with physical challenges could be more independent with this sport.

And on we go as a group of women on another adventure.....

Executive Director's Report

The holiday season is once again approaching quickly and I wish everyone good health as the holidays near. The summer and fall went by so very fast this year partly due to busy schedules for all staff at BICR.

The excellent results from the participant satisfaction survey is an indication of the work being accomplished by all front line staff and makes the managers and myself extremely proud. The front line staff are in many cases the lifeline of BICR and are extremely dedicated individuals.

BICR endeavors to evolve into an organization that continues to grow and therefore the commitment to Accreditation Canada is presently underway. The information we receive allows our Board of Directors, managers and staff to obtain a critical evaluation of our work. This requires a great deal of work and takes courage to be open to suggestion however it is of great value to our agency.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and myself I hope you all have a great holiday season and enjoy the festivities that the season brings.

Frank Greco

What you should know about a flu pandemic

Created by the Government of Ontario



BICR is currently working on developing an action plan to prepare for a pandemic flu outbreak. The brochure "What you should know about a flu pandemic", created by the Government of Ontario, is enclosed for participants and families. It can also be accessed online at www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic. Please take a moment to review the brochure or website. Additional information on BICR's plan is forthcoming.

President's Notes

It's time for the Fall edition of Brainwaves 2008 again. I do not have too much to report, business at BICR appears to be going smoothly. I am happy to report that we have a full slate of directors on board, as Leslie Warriner has changed careers and has come back. Also, I am pleased to welcome Doug Kane - Chief of Niagara Parks Police, as our new Director.

This seems like an old record, but our new residence in Welland has had another setback. It appears there is a restriction by the Ministry of Transportation not allowing building permits on our proposed lot. This is very upsetting since many hours of effort has been put into this project only to be let down again, but we will not give up.

I again would like to wish all in BICR a very Merry Christmas, and a healthy happy and safe New Year to all and your families.

Nick Ostryhon

BICR's Volunteer Board of Directors

Nick Ostryhon - President

Brenda Yeandle - Vice President

Dr Linda Cudmore - Director

Jacqui Graham - Director

Doug Kane - Director

Steve Murphy - Director

Luc Savoie - Director

David Shapiro - Director

John TeBrake - Treasurer

Leslie Warriner - Director



Horticulture Therapy

Submitted by Nicole Verhoef

Douglas Wilder participated weekly in the horticulture therapy group where he used his fine motor skills while watering, weeding, and planting with great detail. Douglas worked on developing his social skills and interactions with the others working with him. Aside from enjoying working hard, Douglas loved the food that was available at Niagara Training and Employment Agency Inc. (N-TEC).

Douglas is pictured here performing his horticulture duties at N-TEC during the summer of 2008.



This is just a thank you to all the individuals that came to the pumpkin carving recreation event at the Main

Office. It was great to have everyone together to enjoy a holiday activity.

It was also great to see everyone enjoying themselves with laughter and sharing stories from the past, getting to know one another and meeting new people. Throughout the night there were scary pumpkins, happy pumpkins and even some creative enough to have facial features made of potato. Everyone's artistic ability really showed.

This event was a great success and I thank everyone again who attended and helped with clean up. It made it an enjoyable evening for everyone.

A Ghoulish Halloween at Richardson Court

Submitted by Murray Bowman

"It was a dark and stormy night" at Richardson Court. A flock of strange figures gathered in the "dying" room to devour whatever their clawed hands could find. Hovering above them was a vampirish figure, looking like a starling with thyroid problems. "Just dropped in for a "bite", he chuckled. Obviously the most evil of them all, he menaced those in the room with a perpetual flood of terrifying jokes, many of which scared the life out of the listeners.



Picture of Murray Bowman

When they all responded to a loud pounding on the front door, they were terrified when told they were being raided by the "Case Facilitator squad", fully armed with an arsenal of programming. Cowering, they flew out of the building and rushed to the nearest Donut Diner. So, as expected, "programs" triumphed over evil!

Canada

Submitted by Frank Destefano



To me Canada is the best country that I ever lived in. The bad things are the cold weather and the long winter - but we get used to it. To me, Canada has been good because in my condition, they have done a lot for me. Had it been any other country, I would probably be dead.

I met my wife here. I have two

kids and two grandsons. What else can I ask for in life.

I like the wilderness of northern Quebec, where I lived for six years of my life. They have a great provincial park and a lot of moose. They also have good fishing there, pickerel and pike. I used to love the wild blueberries in northern Quebec. They were very good to make blueberry pie and turnovers. The wild blueberries in the bush are not the same as what you buy in the grocery store.

Personally, I like the province of Quebec very much. That is where I learned to speak French. I am waiting for all the snow to come. All that white stuff that comes after Halloween.

My Story...

My name is Terry Crysler. I am a college graduate and former Brinks Canada employee. While employed with Brinks Canada, I was qualified to be a driver, an armed guard and an ATM technician. I was also part owner of a Pet Valu franchise. My duties included hiring staff, ordering stock, unloading trucks, customer service and all facets of store management.

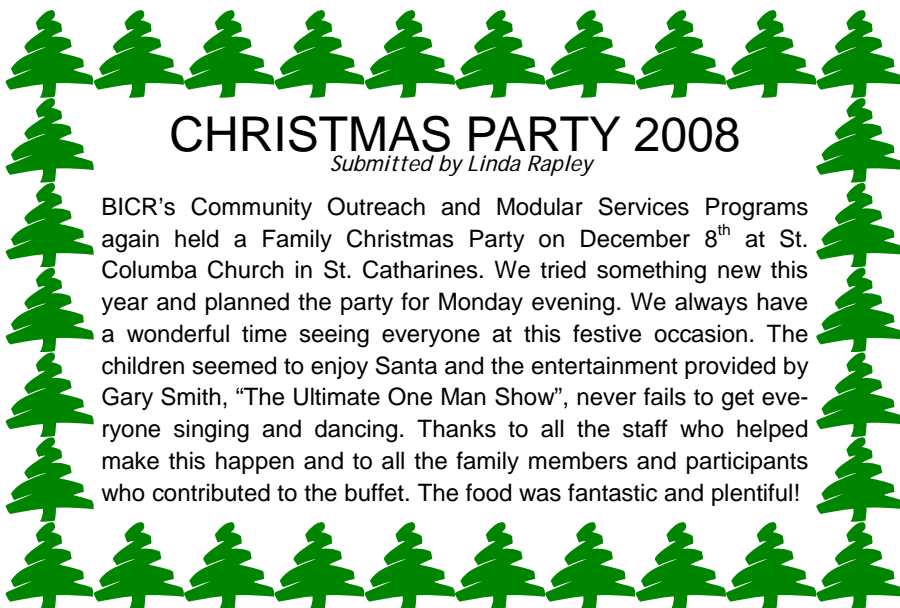
In the fall of 2006, I had a scope test performed at the Welland Hospital. During this procedure, my heart stopped, resulting in anoxic brain damage. I was in a coma for 14 days.

The year following my injury, I worked with staff at Shaver Hospital as an inpatient and outpatient. I had to relearn everything, from the basic fundamentals in life, like tying my shoes, to basic mathematics.

In the past year, I have worked with BICR's Vocational Department. I am currently volunteering at the Hope Centre in Welland. I work in the food pantry organizing cans and boxes of food. On occasion, I cook in the kitchen to help out with lunch preparation. I have built up my strength and stamina by going to the YMCA four times per week. In my spare time I enjoy being with my three nephews and my family. Occasionally, I am invited to Shaver Hospital to speak to patients about my experience.

My greatest accomplishment in the last two years is having my license reinstated in May 2008.

My future goals are to return to some kind of employment, continue attending the YMCA and be a positive role model to my nephews.



CHRISTMAS PARTY 2008

Submitted by Linda Rapley

BICR's Community Outreach and Modular Services Programs again held a Family Christmas Party on December 8th at St. Columba Church in St. Catharines. We tried something new this year and planned the party for Monday evening. We always have a wonderful time seeing everyone at this festive occasion. The children seemed to enjoy Santa and the entertainment provided by Gary Smith, "The Ultimate One Man Show", never fails to get everyone singing and dancing. Thanks to all the staff who helped make this happen and to all the family members and participants who contributed to the buffet. The food was fantastic and plentiful!

Awareness x Two Brain Injury VS Homelessness

Submitted by Jacqui Graham

I always wondered about the connection between homelessness and brain injury, or if there was one at all. Now, there is a study that was published by the Canadian Medical Association, that was in the *Globe & Mail* on October 8th, 2008 (Dianne Radunsky from OBIA sent it to me) that substantiated my musings. Steven Hwang, a scientist at St. Michael's in Toronto, co-authored a study of 904 individuals who had different homeless issues. The study determined that at least 70% of them "had experienced a severe brain injury" before becoming homeless.

This is the first study to show some co-relation between brain injury and homelessness.

It also puts an emphasis on the importance of better rehabilitation for the vulnerable, so that their future issues don't include homelessness. This in turn, lends credence to BICR's positive approach to the life-long journey that is brain injury; both through the constant support of our Residential Programs, and the arms-length support offered by the Supported Independent Living Programs that direct our participants towards their final destination of total reintegration into their own apartments in the community of their choice. BICR is still there to offer support and services if need be.

However, with the services that facilities like BICR offer in the Niagara region, there is a beacon of hope.

With the continued support of these organizations, perhaps as we look to the future we will see that homelessness will no longer have a direct correlation to brain injury!

Stroke Survivor Story

My name is Alex Acob and my wife's name is Arlyn. We are stroke survivors.

Contrary to popular belief that strokes are only for older people and for people who do not live a healthy lifestyle ... Arlyn is the opposite of that.

Five years ago she had AVM – arterial vein malformation. The vein ruptured in her brain, which resulted in a massive bleeding on the frontal left side of her brain. The timely surgery saved her life, but she still experienced right sided weakness. She can not use the right side of her body, including her right hand and leg. This affected her memory, speech and hearing, but above all her self-esteem.

From a person who had control of her life reduced to somebody who is forever dependent for her needs, it was devastating for her and the family. This happened when our sons were aged two and seven. She was just 36 years old, and in the prime of her career. She felt life cheated her.

Getting well is the only option; she has made the determination to go back as close to normal as possible, in the shortest amount of time, for the sake of our kids. As soon as her therapy finished in Niagara Rehab, we continued to pay for private therapy, in order to keep the gains that she had and to achieve more physical progress. She took driving lessons and got her license back. She had to re-learn everything with her left hand, including writing, driving and even painting, which she never knew how to do before. Amazingly, her brain rewired! The grace of God, and support from our families and friends, played a big role in her recovery.

There are two victims in a stroke, my wife manifests the physical effects and I carry the emotional aspect. It is also important not to forget the care giver. We also need support and reassurance that our efforts are paying off and are appreciated.

As healthcare professionals you set the pace of a stroke patient's recovery. The patient's need for empathy, the caring words of a nurse, the reassuring visits of a Doctor, the support of the social worker and the overall hospital staff demeanor can make a big difference in a patient's road to recovery. A care givers role is the pillar of a patient's recovery. They are likened to a coach that keeps the patient supported.

Arlyn is also a member of S.O.S. (the stroke support group). This helped us appreciate our blessings even more and enabled us to share our experiences with others.

Now, she has a full life ahead of her, although there are more challenges to come. What is important is that we face it together with optimism – it is the only way it works.

There is light at the end of the tunnel; no trial is more difficult than what we went through. We look at life positively — life is too short to waddle in "what could have been" and grieve about our losses — instead we counted what we have and appreciate it in order to move on. Not for a moment have we looked back ...We just continue on with optimism.

"Find it if you can"

Submitted by Shawn Hall

When NASA heard "Houston we have a problem", it wasn't exactly what they wanted to hear; but fortunately the astronauts of Apollo 13 were able to fix their problem so they could make it back to earth safely. The astronauts were able to receive orders on how to fix the problem of their ship so they could have enough power for that final thrust to make it back to earth safely from the signals they received from NASA.

And as an example when you signal yourself to lift an arm or move a finger your brain automatically sends out a signal and your finger moves as the message was delivered. But when you tell yourself the same thing after a severe traumatic brain injury especially towards the side of the body that was injured, sometimes that message doesn't exactly reach the target you expected in time. This leaves your arm, finger or leg moving very slowly, because the messenger in your brain had to stop and think about which way to go to deliver the order, costing you precious time. If the astronauts from Apollo 13 couldn't receive such vital signals from NASA who knows if the journey back to earth would have been a journey at all.

If this makes any sense then maybe there's an answer that I have discovered *for/in* myself and if so *find it if you can!*

I have discovered that in order for the messenger to deliver its message in myself and for it to reach its destination in time I had to first find a correct pathway for my brain to send a signal towards the destination I intended. Therefore I, and you if you have a brain injury, must always practice and practice and keep looking and looking until the signals have finally found a nice fast and easy pathway to its destination. **Repetition** becomes the antidote for you and me to find the easiest and fastest route. To this day in 2008, I'm still searching for little routes and pathways throughout myself, as it's an on going journey.

For example, I must still make sure and keep alert of my movement of going heel to toe with my left foot while jogging. If I don't, after awhile when jogging, my foot will start to smack down on the ground leaving a noticeable sound on the track at the gym. My smooth path for the heel to toe with my left foot while jogging. If I don't, after awhile when jogging, my foot will start to smack down on the ground leaving a noticeable sound on the track at the gym. My smooth path for the heel to toe signal must have been held up or took a wrong turn leaving it behind somewhere, causing me to have to think again about finding a correct path for my foot to start moving heel to toe once again. Not only is this a pain to all.

But speaking of finding correct pathways, I discovered something interesting in 2004 -05, and what I found out was when using the computer mouse with my right side/hand, it was becoming very tired and discomforting for me after a while. So I then switched the mouse to my left side/hand and what I found was the signals to my fingers on my left hand were not hitting the destination I had ordered and therefore leading some other finger to move instead or delaying the movement by a second or two.

Now, a second or two doesn't seem long but when your brain is shooting a signal at 186 thousand miles per second, the speed of light/electricity; but a second does seem long when assessing about moving the body part you intended, or at least, that's my theory.

So when I'm telling a certain finger to move at this time by the computer and it wouldn't or it moved very slowly, I then became astonished of my deficit and so I would try this again and certain times I would be just staring at the computer screen. Staring and just concentrating and focusing on feeling the finger I'm trying to move, it was weird because I couldn't at times. This was something I became amused at, as this situation became a consequence of me ignoring my injured side all these years. And because I ignored that side all those years it had become a challenge for me of having to honestly concentrate on what finger I'm trying to move to press down on the mouse without having to look down at my left hand for help. And this simple little task took me months of practice to accomplish without having to concentrate as hard about making my left fingers move.

Like I have said this was the consequence of me always ignoring my weak side and using my strong side instead. "Sounds familiar eh", I did have an advantage though and that was for me to take a sip of a hot drink with my strong side, I simply couldn't. I couldn't use my strong side to take a sip as it would leave my neck to shake and leaving my coffee to spill, but by using my weak side to take a sip I was actually able to drink my coffee without spilling and splashing it on myself. And that and that alone were the only reason I used my weak side. And if I didn't discover this about my weak side who knows what would become of my weak left arm/side.

"Who knows?", "I don't".

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WELLNESS WORKS!

Submitted by Sharon Coulson

The BICR Wellness Works Committee has had a very successful and busy year, culminating in winning the **Gold Award for a healthy workplace** from the Region for the fourth consecutive year.

Initiatives during the past 12 months have been numerous and varied. One of our chief initiatives this year was the Physical Activity Promotion in September 2008. To increase employee awareness and understanding of how important physical exercise is, the Wellness Committee promoted a six week physical activity initiative. We started with a healthy kick-off breakfast meeting, employees were provided with motivational information on how to increase their physical activity each day. Physical activity tool kits were supplied at a subsidized rate by Heart Niagara and included a pedometer, tote bag, t-shirt, Regional Niagara bicycling map, whistle, activity journal, active living guide, Canada's physical activity guide, Canada's food guide and Healthy Lifestyle magazine. The promotion was a great success with more than 50% of employees taking part.

Recognizing that being healthy is not just about being active, BICR celebrated and promoted "Weedless Wednesday" on January 23, 2008 as part of National Non-Smoking Week and recognized successful smoking "quitters" at BICR with a draw for a gift certificate to Swiss Chalet. International Earth Day, April 22, 2008 was acknowledged by inviting staff to participate in a clean-up

of the area to the rear of our building. We began at 11am, gloves, garbage and recycle bags were provided and a lunch of pizza and beverage refreshments followed.

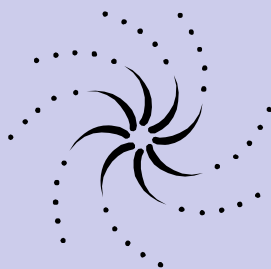
In addition to these activities, every month a member of the committee is responsible for a bulletin board displaying information and resources about a specific topic. A summary is then communicated in a newsletter that is distributed within the agency. Previous topics have included BICR's Employee Assistance Program, herbal healing and remedies, understanding cholesterol, going green, Heart and Stroke/Big Bike, resiliency, organics, kindness, healthy walking and leisure.

A result of all this hard work, BICR was awarded the Gold Award for a Healthy Workplace. The award demonstrates excellence in encouraging, supporting and sustaining healthy choices for employees and addresses the area of smoke-free living, healthy eating and physical activity. BICR was one of fourteen companies within the Niagara Region to receive the Gold Award. On November 19, 2008, Sharon Coulson and Eva Holder attended the awards breakfast, featuring guest speaker Denise Koster, who spoke on creating an abuse free living and working environment.

The challenge is now to keep growing on our successes, and continue to create a healthy workplace environment and future seems rosy.

Planned Giving and In Memoriums....

Brain Injury Community Re-Entry (Niagara) Inc. appreciates all funds that are received from various donors from time to time. Many of these funds have been used to purchase much needed items and services for participants who could otherwise not afford these items or where it would have created a hardship for some individuals. When you are donating or arranging for donations on behalf of your loved one, please remember **Brain Injury Community Re-Entry (Niagara) Inc.**



Volunteer Opportunities at BICR

BICR offers volunteer opportunities in a variety of areas, including:

- Friendly visiting** with individuals with an acquired brain injury
- Attending or assisting with **fundraising** events for the agency
- Completing clerical duties to provide **office support**
- Become a **volunteer driver** to transport clients to medical appointments

Stories from trips to Geneva Park, Summer of 2008



Geneva Park was a very relaxed and positive experience for our residential participants and accompanying staff this past August. The weather was pleasant and beautiful, but cooler than what was expected. This made it necessary to modify our activities to suit the conditions we encountered. Our leader, Dave Horton did an excellent job of modifying and scheduling the activities to best suit the weather and the participants' interests and choices. Each morning he started the day off on a positive note with the "Joke of the Day" and/or a "Reflective Quote of the Day".

The participants that attended this outing were Kathleen Ball, Franc Poringa, Doug Wilder, Patrick Boucher and Rick Midgley. They were accompanied to Geneva Park by staff members Dave Horton, Jean Harte, Nely Ayala and last but not least myself, Valdi Paron. The interactions that took place between participants, staff and one another were excellent and created a very positive and relaxed atmosphere for all.

Doug Wilder and Franc Poringa

I had walks in the wooded area of Geneva Park with staff and enjoyed the beautiful scenery and wildlife it had to offer. The duration of the walks were often short due to their limited endurance, but their facial expressions verified that they truly enjoyed these outings. We had a bon fire on a couple of occasions and enjoyed toasting marshmallows, telling our fireside tales and enjoying many other delicious goodies. I used this opportunity to show everyone how to place the kindling to start the bonfire and where to place the logs to ensure the fire is controlled properly. I demonstrated the importance of placing the green needles from the cedar tree on the fire to keep away the hungry mosquitoes that were searching for a meal. Rick, Kathleen and Patrick enjoyed their time at Geneva Park by testing their luck at the casino, dining on the wonderful food and enjoying the peace and tranquility that was always present at Geneva Park.

The last evening meal at the park was an eventful one because staff and fellow participants threw Franc Poringa a surprise birthday party for his 56th birthday, including a cake with many candles on it. Franc made a wish and needed several blows to extinguish all the candles! The party ended and it was time to get back to the reality of daily routines and responsibilities of life within the residences and in the community.

Our agency's philosophy and mission is based on its title, *Brain Injury Community Re-entry*. Trips like Geneva Park, which the agency organizes, represent an important step for our participants to be successful in their reintroduction into the community they reside in. But most of all, they provide an opportunity to get away for a few days and enjoy some much needed relaxation!

Submitted by Valdi Paron

As a first timer at Geneva Park this summer I got to realize how much fun it was to spend four days with people who you are not familiar with, people who face challenges of everyday life. Well at least this is what you would think before going on a trip to Geneva Park.

This trip taught me about having fun, working with what you have and just enjoying the fact that you are here. The group of individuals I went to Geneva Park with this summer were a great group. We got to participate in activities such as frisbee, baseball, fishing, cards, campfires, scavenger hunts and also spend time just socializing. They taught me team spirit and how to work together as one, instead of an individual. I realized on this trip that even though there may be obstacles that these people faced they taught me how to be determined, to fight, and to reach for the top; they taught me how to face challenges. Geneva Park was a great building block for me, and although I was supposed to be at work, it seemed more like a group vacation.

Geneva Park has great food and a great atmosphere to get to know one another and learn new things. It teaches you how to work as a team, through activities like the Scavenger hunt, how to be an individual, how to share at campfires and life stories, and how to push yourself to be and do what you want to do.

Geneva Park taught me that although you may think there is never an answer, there is, and the group taught me that no matter the size of the obstacle you just need to take time to figure out the way that works best for you, not what works best for everyone else.

Geneva Park opened my eyes to a new way of looking at life and it was great to share such a fun time with a great group of people.

Submitted by Chelsie Cutler

Another Year Successfully Completed...

Submitted by Linda Gosling



Picture of Sarah and Andrea tending a flower bed

The Horticultural Therapy Program successfully completed another year with a party held out at N-TEC for the participants. A light lunch and movie were enjoyed by those attending and a certificate of participation was given to everyone.

The season began in May and finished in October. Tuesday's group had six participants and Thursday's group had eight, all bringing various skills and

interest in planning, and implementing the planting and maintenance of the flower beds. This year the theme beds represented the Olympics that took place in August and the upcoming Olympics in Vancouver in 2010. The Olympic ring and flame were vibrant in colour. All learned which plant grew best in sunlight and shade and the combination of flowers that mixed well.

The vegetable garden was another great success, growing a few varieties of tomatoes, peppers, lettuce and cabbage. The participants enjoyed taking home the results of their labour to share with family members.

We had a few outings to Country Basket to purchase plants after planning our flower beds. The perennial garden developed very well, especially with donations

from BICR staff bringing in plants from their gardens. A neighbour across from N-TEC kindly donated a hose reel and a hundred dollars was donated to the Horticulture Program.

The group of individuals who continued to come out were dedicated showing up whatever the weather. Activities of painting pots and planting indoor plants were organized for a few of the rainiest days, with these great efforts taken home to be cared for.

Well done to all the individuals that took part in the Horticulture Therapy Program in 2008. Hard work developed into beautiful flower beds and many laughs were shared during this time.

A big thank you to N-TEC for all the assistance offered and to Country Basket for the plants that were generously donated.

We look forward to 2009!

Ingredients:

Cake:

2/3 cup flour, 1/4 teaspoon baking soda, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 4 eggs, 3/4 cup sugar, 3 squares of unsweetened chocolate, 2 tablespoons water

Filling:

1/2 pint whipped cream, 2 tablespoons icing (confectioner's) sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla

Icing:

1/3 cup butter, 2 cups icing (confectioners') sugar, 1/4 cup cocoa, 2 tablespoons milk, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Directions:

Cake:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 15 x 10 inch jelly roll pan and line with waxed paper. Grease waxed paper. Mix flour, soda, and salt together. Beat eggs in a small mixer bowl at high speed until thick and light - about 5 minutes. Gradually add the sugar and beat until thick. Melt the chocolate and water together and add to the egg mixture. Fold in the dry ingredients and mix gently but thoroughly. Spread in prepared pan and bake for 15-17 minutes until the cake springs back when lightly touched. Remove from oven and turn out immediately onto a tea towel that has been sprinkled generously with icing sugar. Remove waxed paper and trim off any crisp edges of the cake. Begin at the narrow end and roll up the cake and the tea towel together. Allow to cool.

Filling:

Whip cream until soft peaks form. Stir in icing sugar and vanilla and whip until stiff. Unroll the cake when cool and spread the top with the whip cream. Re-roll without the towel. Cut a thin slice off of each end of the roll to make them even.

Icing:

Soften butter. Combine all ingredients and beat until smooth and of good spreading consistency. Use the centers of the ends you sliced off the cake to make "bumps on the log". Use a little of the icing to affix the bump to the side of the cake - one on each side. Ice the entire cake with the icing including the ends and the bumps. Run a fork along the icing so that it resembles tree bark. Sprinkle with icing sugar and decorate with holly or other Christmas decoration leaves. Store in refrigerator. *Eat and Enjoy!*



Health Canada Reminds Canadians of Holiday Food Safety

Submitted by Eva Holder on behalf of the Joint Health and Safety Committee

Food is an important part of many holiday celebrations. However, many of the foods found at holiday parties, such as baked goods, eggnog, cider, seafood and turkey, can carry bacteria that cause food borne illness. You can help reduce the risk of food borne illnesses for your family and friends during the holiday season by following some basic food safety tips.

Baked goods: Holiday cookies and squares are a special treat, but uncooked cookie dough, batters or frostings made with raw eggs can contain Salmonella bacteria. Always make sure your baked goods are cooked thoroughly and never lick the spoon or eat raw cookie dough when baking using raw eggs.

Eggnog: Store-bought eggnog is pasteurized to remove any dangerous bacteria before it is shipped for sale. If you're making eggnog at home using raw eggs, be sure to heat the egg and milk mixture to at least 71° C (160° F). Immediately after heating, refrigerate the eggnog in small, shallow containers to allow it to cool quickly. Or, use pasteurized egg and milk ingredients, which are available at many grocery stores.

Fruit juice and cider: When making punch or serving cider, check the product label to make sure the juice or cider has been pasteurized. Unpasteurized juice may contain bacteria like E.coli or Salmonella that can make you sick. If it has not been pasteurized, you can make it safer by boiling the product before serving.

Oysters and seafood: Some people enjoy eating raw seafood, such as oysters and sushi, during their holiday festivities. However, because raw or undercooked fish and seafood may contain bacteria, parasites or viruses, special care in their preparation and handling is needed. If you choose to serve and eat raw oysters and seafood, care is needed, as with any perishable food. Keep seafood like raw oysters or cold cooked shrimp rings refrigerated and serve them on ice to ensure they remain cold at holiday buffets. People who are more vulnerable to the risks of food borne illness, such as older adults, pregnant women, young children and people with weakened immune systems, should avoid eating raw or undercooked fish and seafood.

Holiday Buffets: If you are serving food buffet-style, use warming trays, chafing dishes or crock pots to keep hot foods hot, and put serving trays on crushed ice to keep cold foods cold. Don't let food remain at room temperature for more than two hours or add new food to serving dishes already in use. Instead, use a clean platter or serving dish each time you re-stock the buffet.

Turkey and stuffing: If cooking a turkey for a holiday meal, use a digital food thermometer to make sure it is cooked properly. The temperature of the thickest part of the breast or thigh should be at least 85° C (185° F). To prevent potential cross-contamination, cook stuffing separately in its own oven dish or on the stove top. If you do stuff your turkey, stuff loosely just prior to roasting, and remove all stuffing immediately after cooking. Cook stuffing to a minimum internal temperature of 74° C (165° F), and refrigerate within two hours of cooking.

It is estimated that there are between 11 million and 13 million cases of food-related illnesses in Canada every year. Many of these illnesses could be prevented by following proper food handling and preparation techniques.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM THE JHSC!**

Information source: http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/advisories-avis/_2007/2007_172_e.html



Bring Your Kids to Work Day



Hi! My name is Victoria Pett. I am a grade nine student at Denis Morris high school and I was lucky enough to take part in the "Bring Your Kids To Work Day" at BICR.

My friend Rosemary and I went to work at BICR (five minutes late according to Alice, BICR's receptionist). We started with a presentation on the brain which was really neat. Then we did a scavenger hunt, went for lunch, went to archery and then to the P.E.T. Program where we played a game of Family Feud.

I learned a lot and saw that BICR does make a difference in peoples' lives. No wonder my mom has worked there for so long! I hope to come back to do Community Service hours at the P.E.T. Program.

Thank you to all who made our day a fun and great experience!

Victoria Pett

Introduction

My name is Jeff Sica and I am a new Case Facilitator within the Outreach Department of BICR. I graduated from Brock University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. Following graduation, I worked for Durham Mental Health Services, in the role of Residential Counsellor within a residential setting, working with adults dealing with severe mental illness and substance abuse issues. Following that position, I worked with Brain Injury Services of Hamilton, in the role of Rehabilitation Facilitator, within one of their residential programs. Currently, I am completing the Addictions Counsellor program with McMaster University with a focus on concurrent diagnoses. In my spare time, I am a movie buff and music lover so feel free to challenge me with movie trivia questions. I look forward to working with everyone at BICR and am excited for what the future holds.

Social Committee Update



Left to right back row then front row: Jamie, Brandon, Tina, Cheril, Jonathan, Dianne, Melissa. Absent: Debbie, Linda, Rebecca.

In June of 2000, BICR held its first Staff Appreciation event. At that time it was planned and organized by the managers and coordinators. The success of this event helped create the agency's first Social Committee. Representatives came from all areas of the agency; Administration, Finance, Modular Services, Outreach and Residential. The Committee has evolved from those first years.

BICR understands that both work place satisfaction and employee well-being are of the utmost importance. By providing social events, lunches and various draws it is hoped that

employees will feel better about their work life and at the same time perform better.

We take into consideration past year's costs and try to maintain the same amounts. At times we have had to pare down some events or not provide prizes for draws or events.

For this past year the following events were planned:

- February – Sub Potluck lunch
- March – Easter Potluck
- June – Staff Appreciation
- August – Summer BBQ
- October – Fall Potluck

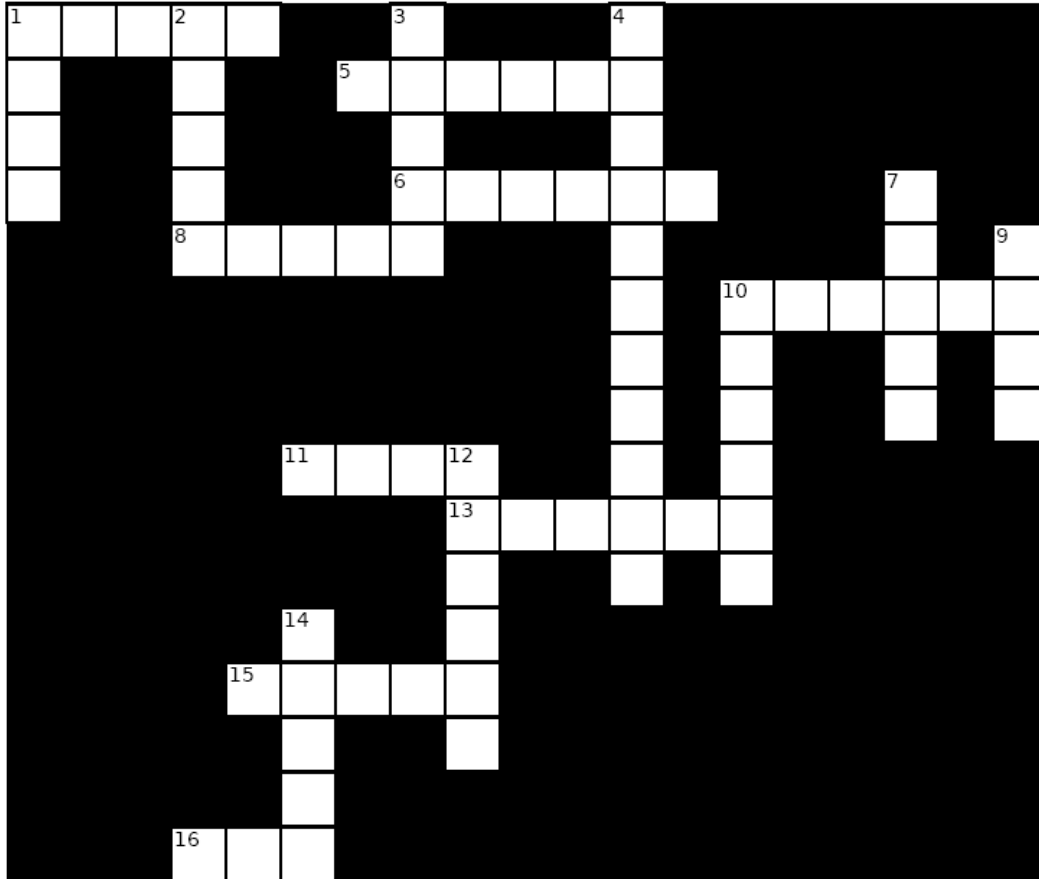
Goodie bags were also distributed to all staff in the spring and pizzas were provided to the various residences on Staff Appreciation night to staff that were unable to attend.

November 26th the Social Committee hosted the Agency's employee Christmas Party at Cat's Caboose and will organize a Potluck lunch on December 18th for staff to enjoy.

Thanks to all Committee members, both past and present for all their hard work and a special thanks to Management for providing the resources to make the committee a success.

BICR's Social Committee meets on average of once a month to discuss various activities that help enhance the work life of employees. The committee is provided with a budget from finance for each fiscal year. Within this budget the planning takes place.

Submitted by Courtney Kaminski



WINTER WORD PUZZLE

Across:

- 1. Snow that is partly melted
- 5. To become hardened into ice or a solid form through loss of heat
- 6. Of snow, to fall lightly and for a short time
- 8. A light, white covering of dew or water vapor frozen into ice crystals
- 10. To storm suddenly and for a brief time
- 11. To become unfrozen or melt
- 13. A tapered spike of ice formed by the freezing of dripping water
- 15. Any small or light piece of snow
- 16. Water, in a frozen state

Down:

- 1. A flat platform, usually mounted on runners, that is used to travel over snow
- 2. A long and narrow woven or knitted garment worn around the neck
- 3. A mass or bank made up of drifting matter such as snow
- 4. These are sometimes the result of overexertion in winter, such as shoveling without taking breaks
- 7. A seasonal gloominess noted amongst people, the winter _____
- 9. Any of a variety of similar heavy tools or machines used to clear away snow
- 10. A large, long-handled scoop for digging or lifting material, such as snow
- 12. The coldest of the four seasons
- 14. A covering for the hand, usually made of cloth or leather and having separate sections for each finger and the thumb

Answers: Across 1. slush 5. freeze 6. flurry 8. frost 10. squal 11. thaw 13. icicle 15. flake 16. ice
 Answers: Down 1. sled 2. scarf 3. drift 4. heart attack 7. winter blues 9. plow 10. shovel 12. winter 14. glove

Hi, my name is Carolyn Czyrko...



I am a third year neuroscience major at Brock University with a dream to one day be a doctor. I first heard about BICR through Brock's co-op program job board and decided to

research their website, which ultimately resulted in me applying for a volunteer position. Everyone at BICR was so helpful and friendly, and right away I knew I would love being a part of this organization!

My volunteering experience so far has been amazing; very rewarding and definitely a learning experience. It felt so good to see the participant I was working with improve so much over the course of a few months. It was great knowing that I had played a role in their improvement and had helped them move one step closer to their goals. I encourage everyone to consider a volunteer position, it is truly a life-enhancing experience to know you've had a positive impact on the life of another.

Education Events

By Aleena Vanden Bogert

On Friday, September 26th, 2008, BICR welcomed Dr. Carolyn Lemsky, from Community Head Injury Resources Services of Toronto (CHIRS), and Mr. Tim Godden, from Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to educate our staff and community partners regarding the complexities of Brain Injury and Substance Use. Their efforts were a part the SUBI bridging project, an initiative of CHIRS, CAMH, the Toronto ABI Network and the Ontario Ministry of Health, to bring together service providers from the field of brain injury and the field of substance use. This full day workshop was well received by the 32 BICR staff and the 12 external individuals that attended. Feedback demonstrated that attendees valued the opportunity to network with community partners and the high quality of information provided. BICR would like to thank the Alcohol and Drug Treatment Centre (Niagara), Ontario Treatment Rehabilitation and Counseling, Niagara Alcohol and Drug Assessment Services, the New Port Centre, Port Cares, Port Colborne Community Living and the Port Colborne/Wainfleet Health Lifestyles Coalition for their participation in this event.



BICR also hosted a workshop entitled "Awareness of Mental Health at Work" on Tuesday, October 28th, 2008 that was presented by Elaine Edmiston and Mary Barzyk from Mental Health Works. This



workshop provided an opportunity for attendees to gain an understanding of individuals that struggle with mental health issues in the workplace, and how to support such co-workers. The workshop consisted of excellent information, real-life examples and an opportunity for discussion. Thanks to all BICR staff that took the opportunity to learn more about this topic and improve the workplace. BICR would also like to thank the Alzheimer's Society of Niagara, Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln & West Lincoln, Folk Arts Council, Veteran's Affairs of

Hamilton, and Womens-Place for their participation in this training event.

New Face

Hello, my name is Phil Garner and I am one of the new Case Facilitators at BICR. I graduated from Sheridan College in 1999 and I have been pursuing my Bachelor of Education in Adult Education from Brock University part time since 2002. Prior to joining the team at BICR I worked as an Employment Counsellor and Team leader for the YMCA of Niagara Employment Assistance Program. For the past eight years I have also worked as a Special Services At Home Worker for Niagara Support Services. In my spare time I like to golf and make music with friends. I am excited to be here at BICR and look forward to the challenges ahead.

Phil Garner

Men's Group

Over the past year the BICR Men's Group has done many exciting and interesting activities. A couple of examples of the activities that the group have done are the following.

- Archery
- Bowling
- Darts
- The Casino
- Fishing
- And go carting

In my opinion the reason the Men's Group is so successful is because the group picks their own activities. Once every three months, the group sits down and plans what activities they want to do over a designated time frame. By having the group choose the activities they not only are empowered, but they also get the opportunity to research what activities are available in our area.

I look forward to seeing what the new year will bring. Keep up the good work guys.

Dave Horton
Recreation Coordinator

Continued from page 6

"But" would you believe that this is just the tip of the iceberg of my discovery that night by the computer, I would also notice that after awhile the veins in my left arm started to appear more visibly again. Seriously I started seeing my veins again throughout my arm which I thought was fascinating as I think by keeping those signals moving though out my left arm, I brought **life** back into it. But this theory of mine so far has worked for Frankenstein and myself as electricity brought back some life for us. And in the meantime if you are in the same position I don't see why it wouldn't work for to **you** too by assessing movements though out that dull limb. So while your watching T.V or sitting down somewhere just try tapping/moving your fingers from pinky to thumb on your lap or something and see how fast you can get, then switch it up. It's a start, but what else have you got to lose!! This was something I did even riding on the bus at times, as I had to do something, I may of looked weird but looking weird is nothing like what I've been through.

In the long run I have shared my contribution as I have personally mentioned to people with the similar injury (TBI) and suggested to them to start thinking about using that side/limb of theirs instead of ignoring it. As I have witnessed that people only use their strong side to work out at the gym and that's it, hey I used to be like that too! It's a struggle to use that weak side and on top of it I know it's uncomfortable and very tiring. Fortunately from my computer blunder, I realized by signaling your weak side in due time you too can begin using that body part again by bringing life back into it instead of just ignoring it and leaving it dead.

Remember keep those signals moving throughout because it's true what they say "anything's possible if you put your **mind** to it".

Hey **Superman** was able to move his **finger** again and that's saying a lot.

It's saying a lot cause for one he believed in it, or else it wouldn't have happened. I too believed in something I felt and seen or else it wouldn't have happened.

I'm not Superman but what I've found frustrating was when telling someone who's working with someone with this injury about using a particular body part, sometimes I get a little frustrated. Why? Well it's because a lot of the time I get bluffed off or talked down to, I just have to smile as I couldn't care less, but maybe it was because I never went to university on this matter or it could be I don't wear a cape. It must be the cape cause my way of thinking could be wrong, I don't think it is and by all means if I'm wrong than I'm wrong.

"But by not **listening** am I wrong!"

"I don't think SO"

"So all I got to say is to the worker/family/friend listen to whom ever has the injury and just don't be there but try and do what's best for him/hers interest even if they don't acknowledge it. Make them think about goals then set a goal and then give them a **challenge**, and some **confidence**, it'll not only make **us** feel good but it'll make you feel good too". Too whoever has the injury **challenge** yourself!

In the end it's your life and not theirs so **speak up!**



THANK YOU!

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BICR hosted its 11th Annual Golf Tournament at Bridgewater Country Club in Fort Erie on Monday, September 8th, 2008. The beautiful day drew 138 golfers. Through the generous donations of everyone who contributed, our organization raised over \$11,000 towards serving the individuals we support.

Tournament Champions:
 Luc Savoie,
 Don Taliano,
 Steve Murphy,
 and Doug Campbell.



Thank you to all of our sponsors, golfers and volunteers who contributed to the tournament; it could not have been as successful without you. A special thank you to **Bridgewater Country Club, Rob Phillips (Boston Pizza, Ontario Street), Guy Rizzo (TRG Insurance), Frank Sifania (Tim Hortons), Majestic Wines, the Lattimer Family (No Frills), and the Main Family.**



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