



BRAINWAVES

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

Established in 1988

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2008

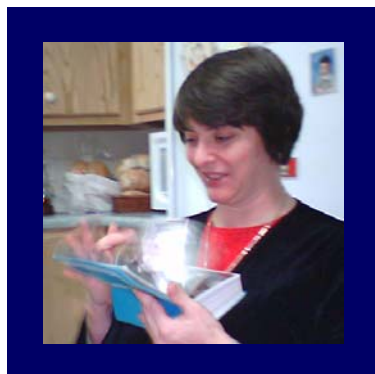
In This Issue

- Executive Director's Report
- President's Notes
- Winter Geneva Park
- Boundless Adventures
- Craig's Story

Website
www.bicr.org

Email
staff@bicr.org

New Memories in Progress at Parkdale...



The participants and staff at Parkdale would like to extend a warm welcome to our new participant, Karen Marr. Karen moved here from Fort Erie on May 5th, 2008. Although she has only been here a couple of weeks, Karen has impressed us with her cheerful disposition and her great sense of humour. Karen loves to listen to country music, George Strait is one of her favourite country singers. If you ever need a trivia partner for Country music questions Karen is your partner, as she always

correctly identifies the singers whenever she hears a country song.

One of Karen's favourite hobbies is taking pictures. She carries her camera wherever she goes (waiting for the perfect opportunity to take a snapshot!) Karen is very fond of her many family photos, especially of her two children, husband, parents, sisters, and their families. Karen also likes to reminisce about the many good times she has with her family members who are very close and supportive of one another.

Karen is looking forward to spending a two week vacation in July with her parents at their cottage up north.

We look forward to making lots of positive memories with Karen at Parkdale!

Executive Director's Report

I am writing this article on a rainy Saturday in May, one can only hope that the forecast of a warm, sunny, summer is correct. This has been a great and exciting year at BICR. The results from the recent Participant Satisfaction survey and Family Members Satisfaction survey were very flattering regarding services offered and the staff here at BICR. I am always joyous at the results of these surveys as at the grass roots level we are only as good as the services that we provide to our participants.

The Annual Bowling Tournament was a huge success, I was happy to attend and watch more than 50 bowler's exhibit tremendous skill. Thank you to Dave Horton and Courtney Kaminski for organizing this great event.

BICR continues to work very hard with furthering the Agency's Strategic Directions: Patient Safety, New Initiatives, Quality of Lifestyles and Linkages with Community Partners. I was very excited at the Open Space for the new skill building program that will be offered in the near future. This summer we will again begin to prepare for the Canadian Council Health Services Accreditation that is scheduled for May 2009. The Annual General meeting will take place on June 11, 2008. I am pleased at the number of staff receiving 5, 10 and 15 year service awards. This continues to demonstrate that our organization provides an environment that can allow staff to develop both personally and professionally.

I would like to thank all the staff and managers for their continued efforts in providing services to persons in the Niagara Region with an acquired brain injury. In my opinion the services are exceptional. The Board of Directors continues to provide excellent leadership and decision making abilities. Without these dedicated individuals BICR could not succeed.

I wish everyone a healthy and happy summer.

FrankGreco

President's Notes

Summer 2008 is coming soon; as I write this report the temperature is 25 degrees Celsius in the latter part of April. The past weekend I was at my cottage in Bancroft, Ontario looking at 10 centimeters of snow on my front lawn, and ice on the lake, but "It's still spring".

I regretfully report Maggie Smith has completed her final term as a Director with BICR's Board of Directors and will be leaving us this June. Maggie was always willing to take responsibility as a Director and her input was always useful. She will be missed! We wish her good health and good luck for her future endeavors. We are presently on the hunt for a new Director to fill her vacancy.

Our Annual General Meeting is coming up on June 11, 2008 and is being held at a new location: The Bridgewater Country Club in Fort Erie. As always I look forward to the presentation of long service awards.

I wish each and every one of you and your families a safe and enjoyable summer and will see you in the fall.

Nick Ostryhon

Participant and Family Satisfaction Survey

In March, BICR mailed out a satisfaction survey to a cross-section of participants and family members. The information we receive in these questionnaires helps us to understand how we can improve the services we offer and it recognizes what the agency is doing well.

What you told us in 2008:

26 out of 80 participants (31% response rate) completed the survey. Here are a few things they told us:

- **80%** of participants indicated that they are satisfied with the **services** currently being received from BICR.
- **88%** of participants feel that BICR staff have the knowledge and education to ensure they receive **safe care**.
- **53%** of participants strongly agree and **31%** of participants agree that BICR staff treats participants with **dignity and respect**.
- **88%** of participants are satisfied with the **BICR staff** they work with and **84%** feel they can **communicate** openly with the staff.

18 out of 60 families (30% response rate) completed the survey. Here are a few things they relayed:

- **89%** of families indicated that they are satisfied with the **services** their family member is currently receiving from BICR.
- **83%** indicated they are satisfied with the **BICR staff** that provide support to the family member.
- **100%** of families feel that their family member is safe when attending BICR programming.

We greatly appreciate the time taken by all participants and families that completed and returned questionnaires to us. Your feedback is important to us and it provides valuable information used towards the strategic direction of the agency. Thank you!

Winter Geneva Park



By a beautiful frozen lake, covered by a pure, crisp non-polluted snow, is a very quiet and serene Geneva Park; very different from summer, which is filled with eager campers, more planned activities, and more noise. Both are great experiences; however if you are looking for a time for self-reflection, inner growth, peacefulness and relaxation, then winter is the time to go!

The food is awesome and plentiful - no one is ever hungry or thirsty. I especially loved the homemade waffles.

Even though there are less planned activities in the winter than in the summer, we still found things to do. We went to the casino {we did set time limits on our casino visits, so that too much money was not spent}. We played games such as Cribbage, Euchre and other card games. We also took time to read, do crafts,

visit the lake, socialize and nap.

As an experienced traveler, I recommend both the winter and summer Geneva Park trips, but it is up to you to decide what you want from a vacation. Happy traveling from Gabrielle Beckermann.

The first ever Winter Geneva Park event occurred this year, and was a success. From February 19th to February 22nd, a crew of 15 from BICR traveled to beautiful Orillia to enjoy the striking scenery, games, outdoor activities and of course, the fabulous food that Geneva Park has to offer.

As a first-timer at Geneva Park, I have been told that it is exciting and active in the summer. This was definitely not the case in the winter! If you are looking for a relaxing and peaceful week with options to play cards with others or quietly taking in a book by the picture window, the winter version of Geneva Park is your kind of event. Now, don't get me wrong, we have a feisty bunch of broomball players, and a few card sharks in our crowd, but overall it was a laid back kind of week. Aside from the few occasions we loaded up in the vans and tried our luck at the casino, the greatest part of our schedule was that there was no schedule. Apart from sharing the dining room with another small group there attending a conference, we had the facilities to ourselves.

With the chance to just sit back and watch TV, play shuffleboard, ping pong, euchre (LOTS of euchre), cribbage, or go for the more active events like skiing, snowshoeing, broomball or going to Casino Rama, I thoroughly enjoyed the balance this event had to offer. Most importantly, all reports were true: the food was amazing!

Signed-

Full & Happy, Katie MacRae

Feelings

Submitted by Ray Tanguay

Everybody has feelings

When you say something about other people, you hurt their feelings

Do not try to say bad things about them

If you do, you will hurt their feelings!

Feelings come and feelings go

Just watch who you talk about or their feelings will be hurt

Does the other person like to be hurt all the time?

If you see that this person is hurt, try to give them that extra caring time!

*Make them feel good about themselves
Do not try to let them down, because we all hurt one way or another*

*People try to hurt each other's feelings
But when it comes down to it, you make that person feel good about them*

A great partnership continues to grow...

Submitted by Tina Horton, Vocational Coordinator



In July 2005, BICR was given an employment opportunity with a new small business called "Gardening Angels". The business provided gardening care to cemetery plots at the Victoria Lawn Cemetery located in St. Catharines. At that time Gardening Angels (which is owned and operated by Suzy Hastings and Lynda Bradshaw) employed one participant through BICR at minimum wage, working 3 hours/day for 3 days/week. The participant was responsible for raking, weeding, watering and maintaining approximately 70 flowerbeds. With compensatory strategies put in place by BICR staff such as maps, a photo book and a checklist, the participant successfully worked independently until mid-fall. It was a very positive experience for both the participant and Gardening Angels.

With the end of the season approaching Suzy Hastings took the opportunity with BICR's vocational staff to plan for the next year (2006). Gardening Angels was growing and now had

over 90 plots. Two participants were hired to maintain the growing number of plots for Gardening Angels. Suzy was also approached by Victoria Lawn Cemetery to take on a project to plant flowers for the older historical part of the cemetery in celebration of 150 years. This responsibility included hiring two individuals through a Services Canada grant. Gardening Angels approached BICR and the grant enabled two BICR participants to work 5 days/week for 6 hours/day. Their responsibilities were to develop, prepare, plant and maintain gardens in the historical area of Victoria Lawn Cemetery. All their hard work was seen by many visitors during a ceremony at Victoria Lawn in mid June.

With two successful seasons it was no surprise that both Suzy and BICR wanted this partnership to continue for the 2007 season. Again Gardening Angels hired three participants to plant and maintain the growing number of flowerbeds at Victoria Lawn. In addition to Victoria

Lawn, Gardening Angels were expanding to the surrounding cities and were in need of hiring additional individuals for the Welland and Thorold cemeteries. Two BICR participants were given this employment opportunity and with some initial job coaching and the implementation of compensatory strategies, it proved to be a rewarding experience for all.

The 2008 season is fast approaching, however, much of the planning has been going on since last fall. Gardening Angels (renamed Cemetery Gardening Angels in November 2007 and now owned by Suzy Hastings) has requested for BICR to take on a more significant role. BICR will be responsible for the maintenance of flowerbeds in 8 cemeteries (137 plots) located in the Niagara area. This will require hiring 6 participants and 1 additional staff for 20 hours/wk. There has been numerous hours dedicated to organizing schedules, transportation and staffing in order to make this new endeavour successful and the 2008 season has not yet begun!

We would like to thank Suzy Hastings for providing this employment opportunity. We also thank our participants for their hard work and dedication. We hope this successful partnership between BICR and Cemetery Gardening Angels will continue to grow as the years go on.

Brain Tumor Support Group

Submitted by Bryan Dowling

For many patients and families, the diagnosis of a brain tumour is frightening and overwhelming. This was the case for my family and myself when I was diagnosed as having a tumor in May of 2002. In turn, I experienced a brain injury caused by the surgery to remove the tumor. At that point in time, I could have benefited from joining a brain tumor support group but the closest one was in Hamilton. I was very fortunate though to be accepted by BICR as someone who could benefit from meetings with their Social Worker. He was a very knowledgeable and personable professional who helped me immensely.

Yet, I still believe in the need for a local Niagara support group to help those that deal with brain tumors and resulting injuries. In order to initiate organizing such a group, I contacted the Brain Tumor Foundation of Canada. I am happy to report that one group meeting has been held so far, and we are anticipating that another will take place later this year.

If you or someone you know would like additional information including the timing and location of this support group, please feel free to e-mail me at bdowling1@cogeco.ca or phone me at 905-892-1229.

"M⁰N^ST^ER"

Once in a far off land was a courageous and intelligent King who ruled a great kingdom and to rule such a kingdom the King had to occupy and keep his fellow people entertained so they wouldn't cause any trouble from boredom. To keep his people entertained the King constructed an orchestra to play music for all his people to listen to and enjoy. During the next day something felt wrong for the King and indeed something was wrong as the King's number one violinist became very ill and had to retire as he couldn't play as he was lacking the ability to keep up with the rest of the players. With one of the symphony players falling ill this now put the King in a situation to fulfill the space of the violinist. Signs were stapled on poles around the kingdom declaring a contest was to be held looking for a violinist to take place of the lost violinist. On the signs it's written:

The King hereby declares a contest to be held to honor the disbanded violinist and to fulfill the empty position left by him to complete the King's orchestra.

P.S. apply outside by the castle drawbridge

The contest was a chance in a lifetime for the people as the King was a well known and an accomplished conductor and for the last 18 years his people applauded the King for the use of the baton as he kept his people in a nice peaceful nirvana state. The King often ordered and signaled his right side of his orchestra to watch and begin playing and without any hesitation the left side would finish up the King's vision and that in itself brought wonderful music for everyone to listen to. The King's use of the baton changed his people's lives year after year until one day a dark mysterious man appeared out of no where. The man declared he was the best violin player and once the King saw him play, the King would choose him immediately as the lone violinist. Confident was the man who loved to show off while playing his instrument, but in his case maybe a little too confident. The man tried out for the orchestra with blazing glory but unfortunately was let go by the King and didn't make it. The man had a confused look on his face and was notified he did not make the orchestra because of his show boating, as it was unnecessary said the King. The man was devastated from the King's decision that day, so devastated that the man vowed revenge on his majesty.

As time passed on in the kingdom everything seemed quiet, maybe just a little too quiet for the kingdom. In the midst of a quiet summer day stumbled a boy who was irresponsible and always causing mischief. According to the masses of people who knew of him, they all stated that one-day his mischief caught up to him and unfortunately backfired on him. It so happened on the day of August 12 the mysterious man saw and greeted the boy with plans to get back at the King for not selecting him for the orchestra. The plan was to give the boy a vile of poison so he could pour it into the kingdom's water supply so everybody would get sick. If the boy accomplished the evil plan, the man promised the boy a delightful surprise; he would make the boy feel invincible. As the boy was thinking this over he thought wow and was intrigued that the man was so nice to him. So without hesitation the boy decided to follow the instructions given to him and he used the vile of poison and poured it down into the kingdom's watering well. Later on during the night something just didn't seem right, as the King was feeling ill and retreated to bed. The King wasn't the only one to be sweating profusely, his whole kingdom were as well and his beloved orchestra was not able to play. As the King and his entourage felt very light headed and unfocussed by drinking the tainted water all was not well for the coming days. During this time the King couldn't conduct his symphony for the people, as he was bed ridden and soon his people were becoming bored and agitated. The people were becoming very restless, as the poor King couldn't keep them all in a rational state of mind. So What was the King to do?

The King wasn't sure what to do, as all became helpless as he had lost all control over his kingdom. "How did this happen to us?" asked the King. No one really knew, as everyone just seemed very eerie and disoriented from the water. Living in the kingdom, that was like a small town, word suddenly got out about who caused this disaster and the message would soon be brought forward to his majesty. When the King finally received the gossip he became very upset that the boy had committed this ruthless act. And the King vowed punishment. "The boy must pay for his decision to hurt my precious orchestra and beloved people," said the King while he was in his bed still feeling ill. And pay for it he did as all the King's men brought the boy forward to the King. The boy was later sent away to be locked up inside the kingdom's dungeon for his selfish act. During the night and deep into the early morning Mother Nature came to visit with a loud thundering sound to be heard from outside of the kingdom. The loud sound was a tornado twirling towards the kingdom as everyone was fast asleep. The tornado moved forward while destroying everything in sight picking

Continued on page 14

Brain Injury Community Re-entry's 20th Annual General Meeting



Maggie Smith

Left to right: Darlene Stevenson, Diane DeForge, Frank Greco, Irene Steveson, Dr. John Davis, Marge VanVliet and Maggie Smith

BICR's 20th Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday June 11, 2008 at the Bridgewater Golf and Country Club.

The AGM started with a brief business meeting. Mr. Larry Iggulden of Partridge Iggulden Chartered Accountants completed a review of the Auditor's Report that his firm had conducted for BICR's 2007-2008 fiscal year.

Both Nick Ostyhon, President of BICR's Board of Directors and Frank Greco, Executive Director also reviewed their year end reports.

A delectable meal was prepared by the staff at Bridgewater and was enjoyed by all. Following the meal, BICR employee service awards were provided to staff who have completed 5 and 10 years of employment with BICR. A service award consists of a BICR plaque and a small gift of the employee's choice to honour their service contributions.

Congratulations to the following employees for completing 10 years of service: Dr. John Davis, Psychologist and Clinical Director, Diane DeForge, Rehabilitation Counsellor, Frank Greco, Executive Director, Jean Harte, Case Facilitator, Susan Keus, Accounting Assistant, Irene Stephenson, Night Rehabilitation Counsellor, Joseph Talarico, Case Coordinator, and Marge VanVliet, Rehabilitation Counsellor/House Facilitator.

Congratulations to the following employees for completing 5 years of service: Suzanne Augerman, Bingo Convener, Allan Gilbert, Rehabilitation Counsellor, Gerald Korpan, Rehabilitation Counsellor, Darlene Stevenson, Modular Services Manager, and Tawnya Telenko, Rehabilitation Counsellor.

Maggie Smith, a director on BICR's board was also recognized for her invaluable contributions over a 9-year period. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours Maggie!!

BICR's Staff Appreciation Event

On Wednesday, June 19, 2008, a record number of BICR staff descended upon the clubhouse at Henley Island, Port Dalhousie for the annual staff appreciation event. The weather was a little uncertain so the celebration was held inside rather than on the patio. The venue was perfect for such an enthusiastic crowd.

Classic Caterers provided the food. Many compliments from staff could be heard as they enjoyed beef on a bun, veggie burgers, chicken, sausage, roasted vegetables, salads and fruit. And let's not forget the delicious vanilla and chocolate cakes baked by Debbie Morden.

After dinner the staff were divided into five teams for a rousing game of Jeopardy. We are definitely a competitive crowd! Tiebreaker questions were asked to determine the winning team as it turned out to be a close call. After the game, draws were held for staff to win prizes that were generously provided by the management team. Happy staff were seen leaving with tool boxes, plants and various other swag.

Staff look forward to this event each and every year. A big **thank you** goes to the social committee who as always did an awesome job at organizing and hosting this event. Without the committee and the enthusiasm of staff who attend, this event would not be such a success.

Many thanks for a job well done to the social committee: Christine Williams, Melissa Pett, Brandon Pearson, Jamie Bird, Tina Horton, Debbie Morden, Diane Peitsch, Jonathan Williams and Tara Ferrusi.

Off the beaten path: Remembering Laurie...

On May 31, 2008, we lost a dear friend, Laurie Brown. Laurie was an active member of Women's Group and attended many other recreation events with BICR in her time with us. She loved art, and attended Whispering Pines in the past. She was creative and loving, and her cat, Chloe, was one lucky creature to have such a loving mom!

At Women's Group, we remember her as a warm, friendly, and completely hilarious individual who shared such warmth with us. A genuine person, Laurie had an easy going perspective that we should all aspire to have. She was open to new possibilities in her life and was friendly with everyone she encountered. While we often saw her as "kooky" with the practical jokes she loved to play on all of us, there was a deeper side to this special woman. Even through her own struggles, she remembered to encourage and support her friends in a gentle, compassionate way. Her humor and generosity were gifts to us, and we will never forget her.

"When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight." -Kahlil Gibran



BIG BIKE FOR HEART AND STROKE



May 28 turned out to be a beautiful sunny afternoon to board the “Big Bike” - a tandem bicycle built for 30. Eight BICR employees and two of their family members participated in this event, raising \$770 in support of the Heart and Stroke Foundation. They did two laps around a downtown St. Catharines route, all the while singing to oldies tunes and cheering “We are BICR” and “We support Heart and Stroke.” Afterwards, the famished riders sat down to a delicious dinner provided by Stella’s.

Thank you to the Wellness Committee for spearheading this initiative, to Co-Captains Sarah Smith and Aleena Vanden Bogert for leading the team, to Amanda Heidebrecht, Colleen McIntosh, Christine Williams, Sandra Daniels, Liz Snieder, and Linda Rapley for being enthusiastic riders, and to Jennifer Lightfoot and Erica LaPlante for lending their support through additional fundraising. Another big thank you goes out to all those who sponsored our riders. The Big Bike event is evidence of what BICR can accomplish when we truly put our heart into it!

'Tis' the season... for Strawberries!

Support our farmers- buy fresh local strawberries and try this recipe.

Strawberry Sensation

Prep Time: 20 mins

You will need:

- 4 cups of fresh strawberries, divided
- 1 can (14oz) Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 tub (8oz) Cool Whip Whipped Topping, thawed, divided
- 16 Oreo Chocolate Sandwich Cookies, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. butter, melted



Directions:

Line 9x5 inch loaf pan with foil, with ends of foil extending over sides of pan. Mash 2 cups of the strawberries in large bowl.

Add condensed milk, juice and 2 cups of the whipped topping; mix well. Pour into prepared pan.

Mix chopped cookies and butter. Spoon over whipped topping mixture. Cover with ends of foil and gently press cookie mixture into whipped topping mixture. Freeze 6 hours or until firm.

Invert dessert onto serving plate when ready to serve; remove pan and foil. Spread remaining whipped topping onto top and sides of dessert. Slice remaining 2 cups strawberries; arrange over dessert. Store leftovers in freezer.

Makes 12 servings.

Recreation

A man in a red hoodie is shown from the side, looking down at a plant in a black plastic crate. He is in a greenhouse or nursery setting. In the background, another person in a red hoodie is partially visible. A sign on the wall in the background reads "Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)".

Get Involved! See the calendar for specific details. Upcoming summer 2008 events include:

- ◇ Christmas in July Event
- ◇ Classic Car Show and Concert
- ◇ Merrittville Speedway
- ◇ St. David's Carnival
- ◇ Concert and Fireworks in Niagara Falls
- ◇ Niagara Dog Fest
- ◇ Picnic at Merritt Island
- ◇ Toronto Zoo
- ◇ Nature hike at Balls Falls
- ◇ Fallsview Casino
- ◇ Bingo
- ◇ Brunch at Betty's Restaurant
- ◇ Archery
- ◇ Work Rest and Play at Botanical Gardens, NF
- ◇ Women's Group
- ◇ Canoeing
- ◇ Whispering Pines painting class
- ◇ Bowling
- ◇ Fun in the Sun
- ◇ Men's Social Group
- ◇ Baseball team and tournament
- ◇ Trip to Geneva Park, Orillia
- ◇ Horticulture Therapy

n at BICR



Boundless Adventures

Submitted by Gillian Rodger, Personal Effectiveness Training Coordinator



Family Trip—Spring 2008

This year was the first Brain Injury Community Re-Entry Niagara Family trip. Fourteen individuals began their voyage for five days packed full of fun, friendships, memories and adventures.

Our trip began on Tuesday May 13th, 2008. We loaded into a big white bus and began our six hour voyage to the "Boundless Adventures Ranch," located in picturesque Palmer Rapids. Upon our arrival we were greeted by the very enthusiastic Boundless staff. They assisted everyone with their luggage and into their rooms. After an amazing lunch we gathered outside for a tour of the ranch and some activities that helped the group get to know each other better. We then ate dinner and gathered around the campfire for some campfire games, "banana boats", and yes, cake. Yummy!

Day 2

We were woken by the Boundless staff singing to us at 7:15 am. After breakfast and a quick meeting we were off to the High Ropes Course for the majority of the day. Family members and participants were able to challenge themselves and support each other 50-feet above the ground. After lunch and a well deserved break we met back at the ranch for an "Iron Chef Camp Fire" competition. The group was divided into two teams and a competition to make the best camp fire dinner began. Both teams prepared a fabulous dinner which we ate together. After dinner some people headed up the mountain for a hike and others attempted to go fishing but were chased away by vicious, blood thirsty black flies. We met up at the ranch for some evening fun, games and snacks.

Day 3

Another early morning serenade to start our day. After breakfast and a quick meeting we were off for a morning canoe lesson. Our group learned different paddling techniques and no one fell in the water. After canoeing we headed back to the ranch for a hardy lunch followed by an afternoon of wall climbing. Family members and participants cheered each other on as they scaled an

indoor climbing wall. After climbing for a couple of hours some of the group went on another hike up the mountain, others went fishing and headed back to the ranch to relax. After dinner we all met back at the camp fire for an evening of live music followed by a relaxing sauna to ease our black fly bites.

Day 4

Early to rise and more good morning music to start our day. After breakfast and a quick meeting we packed our gear and headed down to the Little Mississippi River for a canoe trip. We spent the morning paddling down the river, watching birds and searching for other wildlife. We stopped along the waterside for some games, Frisbee, a hike and a campfire lunch of the cheesiest macaroni you've ever tasted. After lunch, some fishing and free time we headed back to the ranch. Some of our group was feeling a little hot from the morning of canoeing and decided to go for a little swim. Or should I say a jump in the water, scream and jump out. Cold guys? Before dinner some of the group enjoyed a relaxing sauna. After dinner our group met for an evening slideshow where we got to reminisce about all of our fun challenges and funny moments. After some evening snacks and chats some cards were in order.

Day 5

Early out of bed, packing up and our last yummy breakfast before our long ride home singing and laughing on the bus.

For everyone who attended this year's Boundless Adventures Trip here are a some insider only comments: Be one with the bug, Parachuting eggs, Cliff's fish, Happy straps, Kathy's magic fingers, Cold water plunge, Volleyball with Turk, Ken's great hair, Shannon running at 6:00 am?, Jump John Jump, Mike scaling the wall... blindfolded, Iron Chef 2008, Pat can cook?, Sam's smile, Banana Boats and Smores, Brad with his camera, Larry's thoughtful fatherly advice, Terry's wall climbing, Dave burning his mouth on the butter tart and Gillian's camp fire songs.

Thanks to all who made this year's trip great!



Going Green at BICR

BICR is joining the battle to reduce global warming through energy conservation and recycling by increasing awareness in our workplace through 'green' initiatives. The most recent way we have done this is by having our new stationery (including letterhead, business cards and envelopes) printed on 100% post consumer, chlorine and acid-free recycled paper!

However, there are other ways in which BICR has already been contributing to this cause: we reduce waste by using water coolers instead of individual water bottles, we have replaced incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, our kitchen is stocked with reusable dishware instead of contributing to landfill by using paper and plastic supplies, recycling containers are easily accessible and convenient to use for almost any kind of paper we need to throw out, and we are installing motion sensor lights in rooms in order to reduce energy consumption. This year, the staff at BICR also contributed to the cause by allotted time on Earth Day to pick up garbage around the building grounds!

"Going green" is a gradual process. Making one tiny change often enough, DOES make a difference. For tips about how you can help improve the environment by being more eco-friendly at home and in the office, visit www.earthday.ca, www.ns.ec.gc.ca/udo/reuse, & www.greenlivingonline.com.

What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to one another. – Gandhi

June is Brain Injury Awareness Month

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES



1. The cause of half of all ABI's in Ontario result from:
 - a. Falls
 - b. Work-related injuries
 - c. Car accidents
 - d. Sports.
2. An ABI is a trauma that:
 - a. Occurs at birth and is related to a degenerative disease (*i.e. Alzheimer's*) or a congenital condition (*i.e. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome*)
 - b. Occurs after birth by means of a traumatic or non traumatic injury and affects cells throughout the entire brain
 - c. Occurs either at or after birth affecting only a certain portion of the brain
 - d. Occurs after birth, is related to a degenerative disease or congenital disorder and affects a specific area of the brain.
3. Exactly which of the brain's functions will be affected by an ABI depends on:
 - a. The age of the individual
 - b. The location and extent of the injury
 - c. The type of medical attention received
 - d. All of the above.
4. A typical ABI can result in:
 - a. Temporary or prolonged impairments in cognitive, emotional and behavioural functioning
 - b. Permanent impairments in cognitive, emotional and physical functioning
 - c. There is no such thing as a 'typical' ABI
 - d. Both a) & b).
5. Causes of ABI can include:
 - a. Electrical shock or lightning strike
 - b. Heart attack, stroke, aneurysm, intracranial surgery or tumors
 - c. Infectious or insect-carried diseases, AIDS, Meningitis
 - d. All of the above.
6. Anyone can get a brain injury. However, statistics show that:
 - a. Males are two times more likely than females to sustain a brain injury
 - b. Females are two times more likely than males to sustain a brain injury
 - c. The highest rates of brain injury typically occur in individuals ages 25-30
 - d. Individuals who have already sustained a brain injury will eventually sustain another brain injury.

Answers to the quiz are below

Resiliency

"It may sound strange, but many champions are made by setbacks."

– Bob Richards

This quote speaks to a very important human characteristic – that of resiliency. Resiliency is the ability to spring back from, and successfully adapt to, adversity. An increasing body of research from the fields of psychology and sociology proves that many individuals can and do bounce back from stressful, traumatic crises and events in their lives, and go on to experience much success.

Humans have a naturally resilient nature, but it needs to be nurtured, or it will be lost. An individual's resiliency, or lack thereof, can greatly impact his or her ability to succeed at work, at home, at school, or in society. Resiliency enables people to move forward in life despite the many challenges, obstacles, and setbacks that they face on a daily basis. Resilient people have several traits and beliefs in common: they accept reality for what it is, they have the ability to improvise, and they view adversity as an opportunity for growth.

According to resiliency guru Dick O'Brien, the average person will encounter 5,000 significant difficulties over the course of their life. A normal day contains approximately 100 irritations. Dick recommends changing your irritations into invitations and turning them down before it's too late – before your health starts to pay the price.

For more information on this fascinating topic, please visit www.theresilientjourney.com.

By Colleen McIntosh & Alexis van Baalen

"You are the most content and cheerful individual that I know!" In other words, resilient! If I had a dollar for every time that I've been told that or something similar I would be sipping a tropical drink on a beach somewhere in Australia, instead of suffering through this winter with the rest of you! Considering that I've had a brain injury (and all that entails), I watched my marriage crumble and end in divorce and my father pass away (just this past November) and if that's not enough---I'm a woman (all the ladies can fully comprehend that one)! Most people who go through only a quarter of that would (and do) wither away (trust me I know some of them!).

I venture into this territory because of an article that I read in the National Post on February 20th. It was the sub-title that caught my eye, 'Being emotionally down can seem hopeless, but experts insist we can strategize our way up again'. The title on the second page was even better 'Don't just cope---cope constructively'. Wow, I thought. Every time I've spoken I talk about compensatory strategies and the fact that there are no barriers in life just how we look and deal with them and a positive attitude is the basis for everything we do! Only we can make obstructions and only we can adjust to them.

The article says that there are actually genes that determine how we'll deal with the darker side of our lives. Beth Miller, (California University) actually did her doctoral dissertation on the subject of resiliency. She wrote on why some

people deal with bad issues head on and others wander over to the nearest corner with no self-esteem and suck their thumbs.

She's even written a book and she says '...even with temperament or genes or biology that predisposes us to be depressed or overly vulnerable, there are things that we can do that will compensate and actually help us be more resilient', It's directed towards women but I think, no, I know, that everyone will benefit from it. The book, which everyone will benefit from is available at your library. It is entitled 'The Woman's Book of Resilience, 12 Qualities to Cultivate'.

Dr. Myriam Mongrain (of York University) agrees 100%. She says 'people can be taught to cope more constructively'. She goes onto explain how this can be accomplished but suffice it to say that we all possess the ability, it's just a matter of tapping into it and finding the right, positive environmental social networks to assist us. She does say (and this is important) '...in psychological terms, one of the first things that has to happen is there has to be a build-up of some kind of strength inside'.

So, the next time I'm asked where all MY positivity comes from I can just say it's inside me and I compensate for every obstacle I encounter through self-made resilience and so can you!

Brain injury is no longer the final frontier!

Submitted by Jacqui Graham

Volunteer News

Submitted by Aleena Vanden Bogert

Many Thanks!

BICR's volunteer program has been in transition for much of the last year, as the role of Volunteer Coordinator has been filled on an interim basis. As the new Volunteer Coordinator at BICR I hope to bring renewed enthusiasm and momentum to the volunteer program because of the tremendous importance of the support given to BICR by students and volunteers. With this goal in mind, several volunteer recognition efforts have been in progress.

I am extremely thankful to the participants and staff at PET that helped to create beautiful handmade bookmarks to give to BICR's students and volunteers. These bookmarks will be enclosed with a card and sent to our students and volunteers in honour of National Volunteer Week, which begins April 27 and ends May 3, 2008. Thank you to all that give of their time to benefit others.

Craig's Story



In April, the Mackie Family generously donated \$3000 to BICR by means of a fundraiser hosted at Mackie's Mountain Archery. As seen in the photo, Dave Horton accepted the donation from Bob Mackie on behalf of the agency. BICR would like to thank the Mackie family and all others for their continued support through such generous donations.

I would like to thank BICR for the opportunity to give a little bit back. Without the support and direction of BICR, the sudden inclusion of a family member with an acquired brain injury in our home would have been overwhelming. Over the past two years, living with a family member that has an acquired brain injury presents new challenges every day that someone with a healthy brain can only imagine.

On January 23, 2006, our son Craig was hospitalized in Hamilton because of liver failure. He spent a few hours in the emergency and then was transported to the Transplant Unit at London's University Hospital. Two days later Craig's liver failed completely and he was put into a chemically induced coma to wait for a transplant. It was another two days before a suitable donor liver was found. During the two day waiting time, Craig's brain started to swell and his body temperature needed to quickly be lowered far below normal body temperature to protect his brain. A liver match was found and on Saturday morning Craig had his surgery. The Doctor doing the surgery spoke to my

wife Starr and I prior to the surgery, explaining the additional complications that his swollen brain presented.

His body cavity had to be warmed to normal while keeping his brain well below normal temperature. The surgery went well for the most part, until the doctors went to close the incision. The new liver was functioning but was too large for Craig's muscular abdomen and the surgeon was unable to close the incision until the following week. At this point the doctor suspected some brain damage had been caused by the swelling but did not know to what extent. An MRI was performed that showed some shadows on the brain, a possible stroke. A second MRI a few days later revealed severe brain damage and on February 11, 2006, Craig's mother Starr, grandmother Jacqueline and sister Jessica were told that Craig would never walk, talk or be able to feed himself, and he would be institutionalized the rest of his life. Craig was kept in a chemically induced coma for approximately three weeks. He was allowed to wake periodically to test the brain. On February 14, 2006, Pastor Mark from Starr's church came to London and prayed with our family. All this time post surgery Craig had been on twenty-four hour dialysis. During periods when Craig was allowed to wake he was able to move his arms and legs although some the movement was involuntary reflex movement. It was during this time that Craig made a turn for the better and in a matter of days, on February 20, he was able to breath on his own and the ventilator was removed permanently and he was moved from ICU back to the Transplant Unit. By February 23 dialysis was no longer needed, and the day after Craig spoke his first words. On February 27 Craig's tracheotomy tube was removed and he began to eat real food. Then on March 3, Craig walked for the first time. At six feet tall, 120 pounds and weak from being in bed almost two months, Craig walked with the support of two shorter nurses- he looked like a wobbly legged

new born giraffe! Home at last! Craig was an excellent Archer before his brain injury. His first day home, we walked out to our archery range and I showed him a compound bow I had modified for him to use in his weakened state. To my surprise he did not know what a bow was. I helped him nock an arrow and get into the shooting position. Once he came to full draw it was amazing how muscle-memory took over and completed the shot. His first arrow was dead center in the bull's eye! Cognitively he had no idea what had just happened, his comments were "What happened? What did I do?"

When Starr and I were introduced to BICR, we told staff and participants about Craig's first day home and suggested that the BICR participants may also receive some enjoyment and benefit from Archery. There was some discussion and the staff agreed. It has been two years now and the participants that come out on a regular basis have made tremendous improvement. Some have even purchased their own equipment and have taken up the sport full time.

I have been involved in the shooting sports all my life and have a passion for the outdoors. I opened Mackie's Mountain Archery after being diagnosed with congenital heart disease and told I needed corrective surgery. I operated our store and ranges approximately four year before Craig's injury, supplying a service for our community, schools, church groups, boy scouts and the public at large.

After seeing the enjoyment and benefits the participants from BICR are receiving from this ancient sport, I realize that there are many challenged people in Niagara that would enjoy Archery. For some, this may be the only physical activity available to persons with a whole host of challenges.

A heart felt thank you to BICR for their continued support and encouragement.

Bob Mackie
Mackie's Mountain Archery

Continued from page 5

up things and throwing them back and forth throughout and damaging the inside of the kingdom. As everything was in chaos the tornado finally slowed down and stopped with a halt. Those who survived the brief incident were still in trouble because the aftermath of the storm still brought on strong winds to be dealt with. The winds were still strong enough to topple the kingdom and destroy it for good unless the people obeyed the King's new order of opening their doors to let the wind gush through. By opening their doors the kingdom became safe as it allowed the air not to be trapped inside their homes and thus relieving the kingdom walls so they wouldn't collapse and damage the kingdom.

Once everything calmed down and the wind disappeared the people noticed their King was badly wounded from the storm, along with his people living there. The kingdom was also darkened by the clouds from the storm and kept everyone frightened inside a dark world, as sunshine never existed for a large period of time. This incident was tragic on everyone especially his fellow people living towards the right side of the kingdom, for the storm hit that part of the kingdom with the greatest impact as it picked up a gigantic boulder from and outside hurled it towards that particular area, crushing it. People had to practice living and working together now without the music to keep them happy and occupied. The survivors of the storm had to come together and find a way to rebuild their kingdom. "To build this great kingdom of mine," said the King, "we must first rebuild it from the bottom up and start all over. The King then proceeded to give out the blueprints of the kingdom to his workers on what he wanted his kingdom to look like. But before the workers could start with the rebuilding the King sent out a SOS looking for any musicians so he could slowly start to build his orchestra, for that was an important part of the people's work ethic. "Well how long do we have to wait", moaned his people, "As long as it takes", replied the King with his head down. From a far off distance the King heard a cry, "Who's making that crying sound?" the King asked. "I think it's the young boy" said one of the musicians. "Oh you mean the boy who wreaked havoc on my kingdom" replied the king, "That's the one", they all replied.

So the King took it upon himself to deal with the boy. As the boy was still very young the King arranged for the boy to be given another chance. So the King came up with an idea, a harsh one but one that would hopefully teach him a lesson. While in the dungeon the boy soon realized that the old man's promise of invincibility was nothing more than a lie. And for believing the old man, the boy's punishment was he was to live his life as a monster and walk amongst everyone in shame. What he found out during those black days when the boy was down in the dungeon was that the sobbing sound the King heard was the result of some of people picking on him and showing the boy what had become of himself. The boy couldn't comprehend all the damage that was put upon the King and his people as he had single handedly traumatized the whole kingdom and the King. But in the end the people forgave the boy and they all came together and gathered around outside the dungeon to free him from the dark dungeon and let him go. Inside the dungeon the boy and the people who were freeing him heard the workers outside cheer. "The clouds are gone", yelled the workers. No one in the kingdom had seen sunlight for so long, everybody rushed to the nearest window to take a look outside. While the King's people and the boy each went to a window to look outside, what they saw weren't the surroundings of a kingdom but instead the surroundings were of a hospital room. **THE END**

This would evidently be the beginning of my 2nd chance, as I look around I can still remember when I first opened my eyes and noticed the surroundings of the hospital. I wasn't stunned by the surroundings but as I look back on it, it was like a scene from the twilight zone. But to be honest I just laid there, looked around some more, my knowledge of being in a car last so I figured I must have been in a car accident I do remember my first thought that came to me and it was "*Go figure*". I had absolutely no memory of the accident and that day was pretty much erased, as I must have blacked out suggesting my alcohol consumption to be over the limit. Stranger than that was I had no sense of fear that came to me encountering this scenery, instead I just calmly looked around again thought to myself "hmm", then I shut my eyes and fell back to sleep. Having no idea whatsoever that for the past two months these things happened: I had tubes coming in and out of me all over, learnt to eat my first solid meal (again) had to be hand fed at first, wore diapers (even had my aunt and mom change me when they fed me as much as I wanted when I was able to eat again, deserves them right). My family and friends taking me for walks in my wheelchair around the hospital and outside of it, I couldn't talk at first but just made sounds (as I couldn't talk but sounds that would eventually have syllables but without good pronunciation), I had no eyes (just slits as eyes at first), couldn't pull myself up to sit up on the bed (ever see a baby try and sit up but just can't, you get the picture), I had drool running down my chin (just as a baby) and my head was twice the size as it is now. These are just a few facts that happened to me in the hospital. The moral to my story is why you **SHOULDN'T DRINK AND DRIVE**.

CHARACTERS IN MY STORY

King = Brain

The Boy = Conscience of a teenager (Me)

Windows = My eyes

Kingdom = skull

Evil Man = Bad conscience

Poison = Alcohol

The Kings orchestra and people = Neurons (brain cells)

Tornado = Car Crash

Dark Storm = Induced Coma

This story is based on the day of my accident and my first two months in the hospital that I have no recollection of, except for an old rugged book that documents my time in the hospital and what happened during my visitors' visits; that and a few interval memories that last from seconds to minutes after my great decision to **DRINK AND DRIVE**.

Submitted by Shawn Hall

Introduction



My name is Aleena Vanden Bogert and I am thrilled to be working at BICR as the new Education and Volunteer Coordinator! I am a recent graduate of Brock University, having completed my BA (Hons.) Psychology in April 2007. During my education at Brock my passion became Neuropsychology and I had the opportunity to work as a Laboratory Demonstrator in the Department of Psychology as well as a Research Assistant on a pediatric brain injury project between Brock University and the Ontario Brain Injury Association. When I discovered that BICR was looking for an Education Coordinator I was extremely interested, not only because of the job description, but because I had heard that it was a fantastic place to work.

Now that I am in the role, I am so thankful that I was able to find a position within an agency that values and respects people and their quality of life. I truly appreciate that BICR is a workplace that is in alignment with my own values and fits so well into my lifestyle. As a recent graduate, a newlywed and a new employee of BICR my life has been full of transition! It has been a pleasure to transition into this position and to get to know everyone at BICR.

BICR's 7th Annual Bowling Fundraiser

Submitted by Ineke Soto & Katie MacRae

April 12th, 2008 marked the 7th Annual BICR Bowling Fundraiser at Parkway Lanes, in St. Catharines. Prior to this event, many challenges were voiced at the BICR office. For example, much competition arose between the group of women who meet regularly versus a group of men who meet weekly. Ultimately, both groups exhibited a lot of spirit during the event. Additionally, a number of staff and their families attended. Much encouragement was dolled out to the younger children attempting to bowl ten-pin!

This event was attended by a record number of 54 bowling participants. As well, over \$3,400 was raised, a record amount of money for the agency's event! Congratulations to all participants and fundraisers!

It was obvious that everyone had a great time and hoots of encouragement and laughter could be heard throughout the bowling alley. The women from women's group were especially gleeful when a case facilitator inadvertently dropped the bowling ball, which started to roll towards the bowling group instead of down the lane. It was this point, the women on this team were concerned more about their safety than their bowling score!

To top off this lighthearted experience the entire group of bowlers enjoyed a buffet lunch and various prizes at Boston Pizza. During lunch, several winners were recognized including:

Top Bowler—men	Lewis Thompson	Top Bowler—women	Roseanne Shugan
Top Bowler—boy	Hunter Hogan	Top Bowler—girl	Madison Hogan
50/50 winner	Tracey Maddalena	Top Fundraiser	Dave Horton

The success of this event has everyone anticipating next year's Bowling Fundraiser and many are prepared to challenge others so that this event will continue to be successful.

A special thanks to the bowling committee for a job well done: Dave Horton, Courtney Kaminski, Heather Olszewski, Juanita Holub, Colleen Egan and Katie MacRae.



Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. is hosting it's 11th 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 8th, 2008

Bridgewater Country Club

Registration @ 11:00 a.m.

SHOT GUN start at 1:00 p.m.

4 Person Scramble

\$115 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 Erica LaPlante at our office at (905) 687-6788 ext. 637 or 1-800-996-8796 or email staff@bicr.org.



Brain Injury Community Re-entry (NIAGARA) INC.

Turning the Key to Opportunity in Niagara since 1988

Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc.
261 Martindale Road, Suites 12 & 13
St. Catharines, Ontario L2W 1A1

Phone: 905-687-6788 or 1-800-996-8796
Fax: 905-641-2785
Email: staff@bicr.org
Website: www.bicr.org