

## **Brewing, Brain Injuries, and Breaking Barriers: Erin Deuble's TBI Journey of Self-Advocacy and Giving Back**

**I**n what may now seem like another life, Erin Deuble was a brewer who not only loved her job but was good at it too. She always made sure the brewery she worked at ran smoothly by maintaining and cleaning large, beer-filled storage tanks, as well as lifting heavy objects, such as 50-pound bags of grain—all while on her feet for sometimes more than eight hours at a time in cramped spaces. Although the work could be tough, so was Erin, and nothing could keep her down.

Nothing, that is, until a couple summers ago, when a work-related incident caused a heavy, double-stacked keg to topple off and hit Erin, who was working below on a large beer tank, on the top left of the crown of her head.

Initially, the severity of her injury wasn't really taken into account—she was sent home from work in an Uber and didn't even go to the hospital directly after the accident. It wasn't until weeks later that she



*Erin cuddles up with her dog Dudley*

would have a name for her new condition and symptoms (a concussion, a.k.a. a mild traumatic brain injury), or realize how much her TBI would affect the life she had once known.

At the time of the accident, Erin lived near St. Joseph's Hospital in Phoenix and decided to see a doctor there, who recommended her to the Barrow Concussion and Brain Injury Program, a center located at the hospital. Erin feels lucky she was able to be seen by Dr. Cárdenas, a neurologist at Barrow. "I learned so much from him; I learned what a TBI is," Erin says. "He taught me about the brain and what happened to me...

I got great care, and he helped fight for me to get better." Besides Dr. Cárdenas, she was also seen by Dr. Knieval, a neurologist who specializes in headaches and helped Erin deal with her constant migraines. "I got spoiled by both my doctors," she admits. They also referred her to the

*Continued next page*



***Team Huss at the inaugural Run, Walk, & Roll***

Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona.

Even with attentive specialists, the road to recovery hasn't been an easy one. Pre-accident, Erin had not only prided herself on her strong work ethic, but her active social life as well. From exploratory hiking adventures with her wife and friends, to loudly cheering at spring training games, she was a woman in constant motion. Post-accident, however, she found herself grappling with balance issues, vertigo, migraines, memory issues, vestibular problems, and extreme fatigue. "It [the brain injury] changed me physically," she recalls. Upon returning to work at the brewery, it was taking her twice as long to accomplish tasks and she would often come home feeling sick and exhausted. "I didn't have the energy to be active or see my friends," she shares.

Luckily, besides having amazing medical support, Erin also has another secret weapon that has helped her in her recovery— her wife Elana. "She has been an amazing caregiver," Erin acknowledges, "and helped me to get back out again into the world. Without her, I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel." Elana became Erin's life manager as well, playing an instru-



***Erin and her manager, Chip***

mental role in helping her with several aspects of her worker's compensation case. Like most spouses though, Elana wasn't immune from the hardships and stresses of caregiving. "It took a



toll on her too," Erin says. She suggests that for both survivors and caregivers, there is healing in finding a like-minded community. Both Erin and Elana attended a brain injury support group at St. Joseph's Hospital supported by the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona. At first, only Elana attended. When Erin began coming along, she didn't have much to say at first—she mostly just listened to other people's stories. Due to the support she received, though, Erin was soon able to break out of her shell and share her own struggles and successes in her brain injury journey. As for Elana, Erin believes the group was key in her healing process too. "As a caregiver, I think [she] got to have her voice heard about what she's experiencing. It's not all about the person who is injured there, and she was able to gain a more positive outlook."

Considering the lemons she's been given, Erin has done her best to take them and make meringue, and the positivity has paid off. After leaving her previous employer, Erin found some of her passion for brewing had ebbed, but she still couldn't completely shake her love for the industry or all the knowledge she'd obtained about the business. In the end, her passion won out, which is how she found herself reaching out to Huss Brewing Co. Erin knew they were a big name in brewing and wanted to learn more about their organization. She wasn't really looking for a job, and they weren't really hiring, but owners Jeff and Leah Huss were so impressed by her expansive brewing background, they ended up offering her a job and making her a part of their team.

Now, Erin is the official craft brand ambassador for Huss Brewing Co. and has been with the company for almost a year. She now focuses her attention on the sales and marketing support aspect of the business. Like many survivors of brain injury, she initially feared disclosing too much information about her injury to her new employers. It was her manager, Chip, who became curious as to why she left brewing behind when she had loved it so much and asked her how she'd become involved in sales and marketing instead. The brewery world is a small one, and Erin didn't want for word about her injury to spread and be judged for it. However, in explaining her work-related concussion to Chip and the Husses, she discovered that not only were they sympathetic to her situation but astounded they hadn't heard about her accident



*Erin (on the right) and her wife Elana (on the left)*

before through the grapevine. They were also surprised the accident had occurred in the first place.

Fortunately, Huss Brewing Co. has strict regulations regarding employee safety, as well as specific protocols for the brewery equipment. Erin not only feels safe in her current work environment but valued as an employee and validated as a brain injury survivor. "[Their support] helped me to speak out more," Erin believes. "They helped me realize my feelings about the accident weren't wrong." In openly discussing her brain injury with her employers, Erin has found the freedom to be honest with herself and with them when she is having a bad day, knowing they won't make her feel guilty about it. So far, she has only had to call out a couple of times for migraines. "They tell me to get some rest; they want to see me heal and be successful," Erin says. "We're like a family that way; we have good communication." Having the support of Chip and the Husses has made her want to work even harder to make them all proud.

Not only does Erin once again have a job she enjoys, but also a newfound cause in



raising awareness for TBI. Because of her bravery in sharing her story with the Huss Brewing Co. team, they have also become interested and involved with supporting the brain injury community as well. This past October 20, 2017, in fact, Erin hosted a Craft and Charity Night at The Coronado, an eatery in central Phoenix. Anytime a Huss beer was purchased from The Coronado that night, the proceeds would go toward the organization of Erin's choosing. She chose the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ). By all accounts, the event was extremely successful, and Erin received a lot of great feedback. At the Craft and Charity Night, not only did customers get to enjoy a tasty brew that evening, but they were also able to hear Erin's story and learn more about the effects of brain injury. "I feel like I have such a great platform right now, and I'm trying to use it," she reveals.

The most recent way Erin made use of her platform was at the BIAAZ's inaugural Run, Walk, and Roll event on April 14, 2018, where

participants and sponsors contributed to the nearly \$70,000 raised to support programs for survivors of brain injury and caregivers. Huss Brewery supported the event as a sponsor and

formed Team Huss, showing up on the day of the event to run together. Originally, Erin had been hoping she and Elana would run in the 5K race; however, due to the pain she still sometimes experiences when she runs, on the day of the event, they chose to walk the 5K instead. But that didn't stop them from having

a great time! "I think [it] was fun, and I'm glad we could participate," she says.

While Erin is aware she isn't "out of the woods yet" regarding her TBI, and sometimes still has days where it is easy to dwell on the disheartening or painful aspects of her injury, she is mostly pleased with the progress she has made in her recovery so far. Her goal moving forward is to continue spreading the word about brain injury and help other people know they're not alone. "I want to be a voice for people who don't have one," she says.

“

*I want to be a voice for people who don't have one.”*

ERIN DEUBLE

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**RUN, WALK, & ROLL**

**March 30, 2019**  
Kiwanis Park in Tempe

[biaazwalkandroll.org](http://biaazwalkandroll.org)



# From The Editor

Welcome to the summer 2018 edition of The Noggin. In the blink of an eye, this year is going by, and now we are more than halfway through it! As is customary during this time of year, the snowbirds have headed for cooler climates and the sun is also out in full force. Here at the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ), we're giving the sun a run for its money by bringing the heat with some great programs, old and new, for survivors of brain injury and their families to enjoy.



First up, we are excited to announce our brand-new The Music Advantage classes, which will be held at Ability 360 in Phoenix. Join us to learn how music can contribute to your wellbeing, as well as to cognition, movement, and communication after a brain injury. Classes run through September 21. Register at [biaaz.org](http://biaaz.org). If you are passionate about pets, our No-Show Gala is right around the corner on September 29. Stay at home with your pet and take a picture together. Then, send it to us, and we'll post it to social media. Tickets are \$25, and sales go to the Butters Fund, which helps brain injury survivors maintain their pets after an injury. Visit [butterfund.org](http://butterfund.org) for tickets. Also, back by popular demand, the Living Life Fully After Brain Injury classes will be starting up again in October and will take place at Ability 360. The series will focus on stress management through mindfulness. To ensure you get the most from the series, please plan to attend all sessions. Register is required at [biaaz.org](http://biaaz.org) or email [operations@biaaz.org](mailto:operations@biaaz.org).



In this issue, you will also have the opportunity to read personal accounts from people whose lives were forever changed by a brain injury and are still in the process of putting the pieces back together, one day at a time. Erin Deuble, a former brewer, recalls the work incident that caused a career change and created a platform for her brain injury advocacy. Bob Millsap shares how he and his wife Shelly grew closer together as they searched for answers to explain the symptoms that arose following a freak kitchen accident that knocked her unconscious. We will also be introducing you to our new director for the Unmasking Brain Injury project, Laura Johnson. New to The Noggin is The Question Corner, where we answer questions about brain injury education, specialists, programs, and more.

As always, the BIAAZ staff would like to give a big shout out to the readers, volunteers, and contributors who make The Noggin possible. As the old existential question goes, if a newsletter is published and no one actually reads it, does it even exist? Luckily, we don't have to stay awake at night worrying about such things because of all our amazing supporters; we really couldn't do this without all of you, so thank you. Happy reading and stay cool out there!

Cheers,  
*Brittany Sweeney*  
Editor-in-Chief



# A Bump Or A Bleed And Where It Can Lead

## UNDERSTANDING CONCUSSION

An educational training for human  
service employees and volunteers.

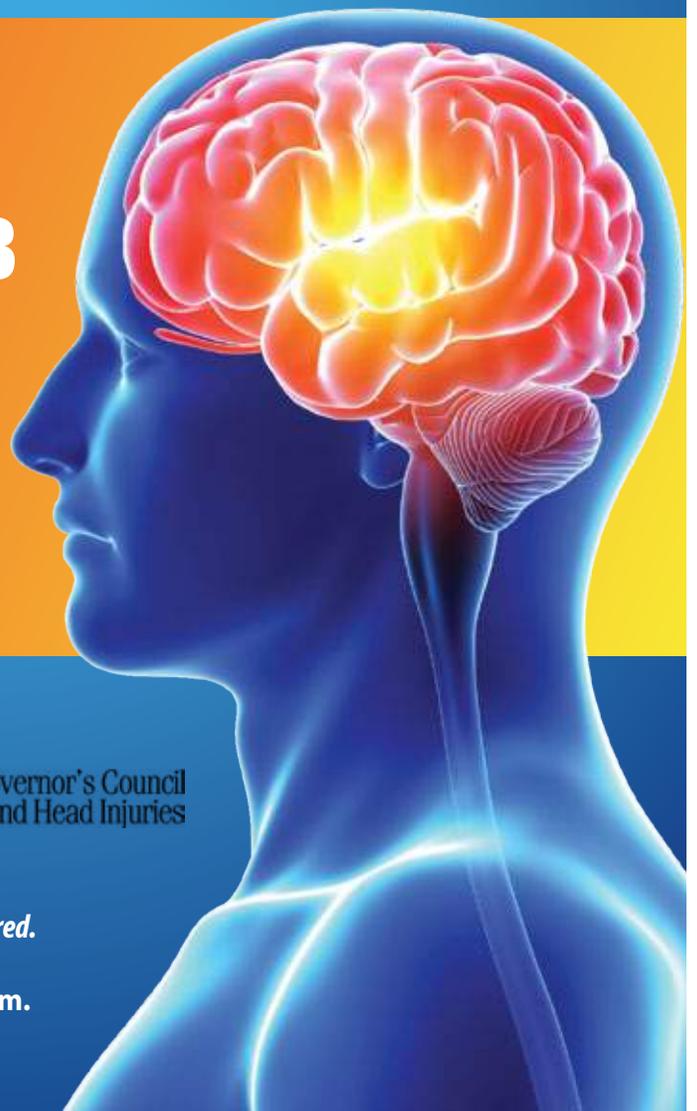
*Featuring Susan M. Wolf, PhD Education Psychologist & Public Health Consultant*

**NATIONAL CONCUSSION  
AWARENESS DAY**

**September 21, 2018**

Lunch & Networking: 12:00-12:30 p.m.  
Training: 12:30-3:30 p.m.

Nina Mason Pulliam Conference Center  
Ability 360 Center  
5025 East Washington  
Phoenix, Arizona 85034



**Brain Injury  
Alliance**  
ARIZONA



Arizona Governor's Council  
on Spinal and Head Injuries

*There is no cost to attend this training, but registration is required.*

Register at [biaaz.org](http://biaaz.org) or [concussionday.eventbrite.com](http://concussionday.eventbrite.com).  
Direct any questions to [carrie@biaaz.org](mailto:carrie@biaaz.org)  
or call 602-508-8024



# NO-SHOW Gala



**September 29, 2018**  
TICKET PRICE IS \$25  
Visit [Buttersfund.org](http://Buttersfund.org) for tickets

*Butters Fund is a program at the  
Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona*



**BE SOCIAL!**



**#ButtersFund**  
**#NoShowGala**

5025 EAST WASHINGTON, SUITE 108 | PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85034 | [BUTTERSFUND@BIAAZ.ORG](mailto:BUTTERSFUND@BIAAZ.ORG)

**JOIN OUR EVENT  
CHAIRS AND STAY HOME  
WITH YOUR PET!**



**Zach Hall & Cassius**  
Author & #WhyArizona Podcast



**Chris Owings & Tucker**  
Arizona Diamondbacks



**Mike Montgomery & Ollie**  
Chicago Cubs



**Evan Marshall & Butters**  
Cleveland Indians



**Kristen Keogh & Ace**  
Anchor & Journalist



**Taylor Motter & Yankee**  
Minnesota Twins

Stay home with your pet and support brain injury survivors struggling to keep their companion and service animals. Buy a ticket and send us a picture of yourself staying home with your pet. We'll post it on our website and social media.

## Bob and Shelly Millsap's Kitchen Mishap and the TBI that Brought Them Closer Together

**T**he five-year anniversary of my wife Shelly's traumatic brain injury (TBI) passed earlier this year. Her life and the lives of our family members were forever changed in January 2013 when a seemingly harmless homemade bottle of ginger ale was taken out of the refrigerator and placed in



Shelly and Bob enjoy spending quality time together.

the kitchen sink to be disposed of. Shelly was busy and didn't pour the beverage out right away. As the bottle sat out for a few days, it went from cold to warm, and slowly fermented, becoming a literal ticking time bomb, which happened to detonate at the exact instant Shelly walked past it in the kitchen. The force of the blast through

the tiny opening of the two-liter bottle knocked her out completely. When she regained consciousness about 20 minutes later, she was bloody, her face was swollen, and there was ginger ale splattered all over the kitchen.

In a daze, she called me immediately. I was at work at a

natural food store I ran in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. At first, I couldn't understand what she was telling me, but when she texted me a picture of herself, I was horrified at the sight of her swollen, bloody, black-and-blue face. At the time, we lived in the remote town of Victor, Idaho. I called our neighbors to see if anyone was available to

take her to the doctor, but everyone I talked to had already made the commute to Jackson Hole for the day. I look back now and realize how foolish I was in not calling an ambulance, but I must have been in a daze too. Somehow, Shelly was able to get herself to the car, which was covered in ice, as it was about zero degrees outside. After scrapping the windshield and running the defroster for a few minutes, she was able to see enough out of a tiny corner of the windshield to drive the mile to the town's lone health clinic.

The nurse and doctor who saw Shelly were, like me, appalled at the sight of her face. At first, they suspected she had been a victim of domestic violence. Shelly was able to explain her accident to them, after which the doctor hastily called me. I was in the middle of crossing the mountainous Teton Pass on the thirty-minute drive home to Idaho. The doctor was extremely concerned that Shelly's nose and eye socket might be broken. She told me the nurse would be driving her to the small hospital in the town of Driggs, which was 10 miles north of Victor. I navigated the ice-packed roads to meet Shelly there. She had a CT scan done, and thankfully, the results came back quickly. The hospital doctor explained that her nose was broken, but her eye socket was fine. She told us how fortunate Shelly was that this was the extent of her injuries.

We went home feeling very confused as to how this kind of accident could have happened, but also lucky that she seemed okay. When we arrived home, we were greeted by the sight of the remnants of the ginger ale explosion. I also saw the two-liter soda bottle lying on the ground, somehow still intact. The bottle cap was in the dining room. I cleaned up while Shelly rested, and we counted our blessings.

Shelly returned to work the very next day, shrugging off her injuries. She had recently started a baking business that had really taken off, so much so that she had needed to rent space at a nearby commercial kitchen to keep up with all the orders. As the days passed, her nose and face still hurt, but she was healing steadily, and life seemed to be getting back to normal.

About 15 days after the accident, Shelly called me at work to ask me to bring food home for dinner. At some point while she was talking, words were no longer coming out. Panic-stricken, I quickly left work and drove home. I called the doctor and told her what had just happened, and she told me we needed to see a neurologist right away. There was only one neurologist who visited our remote valley twice a month, but the doctor explained that he would be in the area the following day. When I arrived home, I was greeted by Shelly, who was sitting in the living room. She struggled to talk and barely could walk. I was numb with shock.

We scheduled an appointment with the neurologist for the next day, and he told me that Shelly was much like a soldier who had been hit by a bomb in wartime. She had what was called a traumatic brain injury and she would not be getting better. This would be our "new normal" and we would have to learn to adjust to it. He said this all in such a matter-of-fact way; he certainly seemed to lack anything resembling bedside manner! At one point, he asked Shelly why she talked in such an "infantile" way.

From that day forward, the true journey began. I felt we needed to find a specialist who would be more sensitive to Shelly's needs than our local neurologist had been. Walking and talking had become so difficult for Shelly that she was having to relearn these skills all over



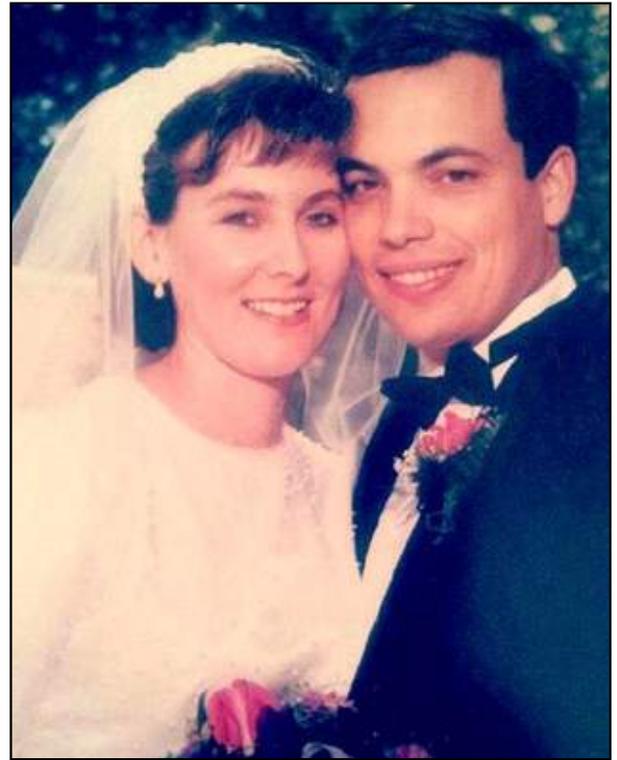
again. Parts of both her short and long-term memory were gone. I was working for an uncompassionate boss who did not understand it when I cut my work week from 70+ hours down to 55 or so. We had moved to the Tetons from Arizona less than two years earlier, so Shelly had not made close friends yet, and we had no nearby family. Essentially, we were isolated, alone, and facing bigger hurdles than anyone could have imagined. We were fortunate that our two amazing children, Dylan (17) and Taylor (12), stepped up and helped however they could, which meant the world to us.

The closest large city to us was Salt Lake City, Utah, about five hours away. I made an appointment for Shelly at the University of Utah's Neurology Department. She was furious with me and did not want to go, not realizing how severe her situation was, or how desperately she needed help. I had since learned we were extremely fortunate that Shelly did not lose her life that January day.

As for me, I was falling apart. I would cry uncontrollably as I drove to and from work. By this point in my life, I was not a stranger to tragedy— My fiancée had been killed over 20 years earlier and now I was driving down the road crying and wondering, "why me again?" and "why Shelly?" But whenever I walked into work or came home to Shelly, I tried to appear to have it all together.

I had never really considered Shelly to be patient person before, but I was amazed at how patient she had become with herself and her new situation. Even though I was feeling sorry for her and for myself, she would have none of that. She started working every day toward self-improvement. Baby steps were being made.

One of the many personal lessons we



Shelly and Bob as Newlyweds.

learned about TBI was the definition of "invisible injury." Shelly's face had healed up nicely, so she looked great! People don't always understand how severely injured a survivor of brain injury can be when they look fine on the outside. Friends and family started to assume she must be ok based on her appearance, which was hard, because, despite appearances, we needed so much help.

Fairly quickly, we discovered that, in our case, western medicine did not have all the answers for Shelly's brain injury. The answer to every problem seemed to be medication, so we found ourselves moving away from western medicine more and more. There were a couple of local alternative medical providers we started seeing who did wonders for Shelly. One provider worked on manipulating her central nervous system in a way that helped rewire her brain cells. The other did amazing work with acupuncture and acupressure. We traveled back to Arizona to learn about neuro-feedback treatments



that we could do from home.

Together, Shelly and I marveled at her constant achievements of small milestones, such as driving to the corner to pick up Taylor at the bus stop, cooking a simple meal, or walking to the mailbox down the street. Shelly worked so hard and was so aware of each improvement she made. The milestones she accomplished gradually grew in scale. Because of these experiences, we also grew closer as a family, since Dylan, Taylor, and I were the only people who truly knew what a courageous battle Shelly was fighting.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is the biggest repercussion of her injury, and her symptoms are still severe. Her brain remains in constant panic mode. Noises, commotion, and sudden changes all wreak complete havoc on her brain. Of necessity, I have become acutely aware of our surroundings and how to make appropriate adjustments. For example, Shelly never misses Taylor's varsity basketball and football games, but we make sure she brings earplugs and sits away from the band and most of the crowd. She can drive, but mostly sticks to the surface streets in our western Phoenix suburbs, and the freeway when traffic is light. The two worst nights of the year for her are the Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, as the fireworks cause her to cry uncontrollably and fill her with fear. There are so many things that can trigger her PTSD, and to see her become so afraid so fast is heartbreaking to me. My biggest goal for us is to find the proper treatment to help combat the effects of her PTSD symptoms.

Two years ago, we moved back to Arizona, which I feel has been the single best thing for Shelly. Friends, sunshine, and familiar surroundings have all been amazing for her. As for her brain injury

symptoms, I am happy and relieved to say that so many of them have improved. The post-traumatic migraine headaches occur far less often now. In my estimation, her motor skills are now eighty percent of what they were prior to her accident. There are areas she still struggles in— for example, her mapping skills are gone, and she struggles with any type of multi-tasking. Simple math has become difficult. Areas of both her short and long-term memory are still affected. She works on brain exercises daily to help with memory and cognition.

Another benefit of being back in Arizona is the wonderful resources that are available. For example, I enjoyed attending the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona's (BIAAZ) annual Rays of Hope Conference for the first time this past May. While there, I developed a better understanding of the local resources available to assist us in our journey. It was also inspiring to hear the stories of resilience from brain injury survivors such as Billy Thompson and Jim Ledgewood. There were so many nice people I met who are walking a similar path as Shelly and I. It was a great experience, and I'm really looking forward to attending more BIAAZ events in the future.

As Shelly's caregiver, I now know there are many things she can no longer do for herself, but I can't properly express how lucky I am to be around her every day, and how inspiring it is to witness her courageous daily battle. She deals with the ramifications of her brain injury and PTSD with such positivity and grace, I can't help but feel awed by her strength and optimism.

Shelly is truly my hero.

*To follow Shelly and Bob's journey, visit Bob's personal blog, [Ten Thousand Days](https://tenthousanddays.blog/), at <https://tenthousanddays.blog/>*



# RAYS OF HOPE



## *It's a Wrap!*

Once again, we had 300 people at our annual family and survivor conference, Rays of Hope. If you missed our fabulous morning keynotes, Jim Ledgewood's *Headstrong & Not Giving Up* and Julie Rake's *The Neuroscience of Transformation*, they are available on YouTube.

**We'd also like to thank our amazing presenters who made our keynotes and 20 breakout sessions possible!**

Ronda Alcorn  
Mary Ann Bebe  
Mattie Cummins  
Chris & Amy Hotaling



Volunteer Dr. Jessica Brown, CCC-SLP joins presenter Chris Hotaling for a quick photo op.

Bruce Kuluris  
Jim Ledgewood  
Malissa Mallett  
Joyce Meyer  
Jocelyn Obermeyer  
Adam Pepiton  
Tara Pepiton  
Julie Rake  
J.J. Rico  
Katie Ritter  
Gaile Sickel  
Chrystal Snyder  
Charlotte Stewart  
Brittany Sweeney  
Ann Tarpy

Sabrina Taylor  
Brain Thomas  
Billy Thompson



Thank you to J.J. Rico, Director of the Arizona Center for Disability Law for joining us.

## SOME SPECIAL FRIENDS STOPPED BY!



The Rehab Without Walls Farmers Market Committee was honored with the Sharron Philips Spirit of Camp Can Do Award.



Bruce Kuluris was able to accept our thanks on behalf of CareMeridian for seven years as BIAAZ corporate supporters.



#PrayforJazmine was honored as the 2018 Run, Walk, & Roll top team



Our 2018 keynote speaker Jason kept the mood light as he reconnected with old friends and made new ones.



The Board was able to thank our Tucson 2018 Bowl for Brain Chairwoman Sofia Melynychuck for her fantastic work on behalf of our signature Southern Arizona event, Bowl for Brain.



Thank you to retired NFL players Bob Crumm of the Cardinals and Greg Boyd of the 49ers for joining us at Rays of Hope.

## Save the date, Rays of Hope 2019 planning has begun!

Meet Courtney Clark, our 2019 Rays of Hope keynote speaker. Courtney is the luckiest unlucky



person in the world. At age 26, she beat melanoma, but five years later, routine follow-up scans found an aneurysm in her brain that was close to hemorrhaging. She is a speaker and the author of two books on resilience – *The Giving Prescription*, and *The Successful Struggle: Powerful Techniques to Achieve Accelerated Resilience*.

## Would you like to help plan or present?

Each year we offer over 20 fun and educational 60-minute breakout sessions at Rays of Hope on a variety of topics of interest to caregivers and survivors. If you would like to submit a proposal to conduct a breakout session as an unpaid volunteer, please contact us at [info@biaaz.org](mailto:info@biaaz.org). You can also apply to volunteer to be part of the BIAAZ Education Committee that works to plan educational workshops year-round by visiting [biaaz.org/get-involved/volunteer](http://biaaz.org/get-involved/volunteer), filling out the volunteer form, and selecting the Education Committee.

**REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR  
RAYS OF HOPE ON FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2019**  
Visit [biaaz.org/rays](http://biaaz.org/rays) today!

# THE QUESTION CORNER



**Brain Injury  
Alliance**  
ARIZONA

**Hello. I was recently in a pretty bad car accident, and a friend recommended I contact you guys. I was wondering what you do at the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona, and who you help? Thanks, I appreciate it!**

**—A Curious Guy**

Well, Curious Guy, at the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ), one of our main goals is to educate the public about brain injury in its many forms: traumatic brain injury (TBI), stroke, aneurysms, anoxia, and brain tumors. Some TBIs, like concussions (mild TBIs), are more well-known due to funding from major sports organizations, as well as awareness raised by the athletes. But besides sports-related injuries, many people experience TBIs from a variety of causes: assault, domestic violence, falls, car accidents, drug overdoses, and more. The ways people experience injuries to their brains are as varied as the people who have them, and often, people don't necessarily realize they've had a brain injury at all. Some go to the hospital and are released after their immediate physical wounds have been treated, while others don't even go to the hospital, and may not start experiencing symptoms from their injury until days or weeks after an incident occurred.

This is essentially where the BIAAZ comes in. We lend a listening ear and help brain injury survivors and their families understand that the frustrations they are experiencing from the physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional changes due to the injury are normal. As an organization, we also strive to provide a sense of hope through a variety of programs and classes, support groups, information, and resources. Best of all, our resources and assistance are available to people at any age and any stage of

their injury. For example, let's say a gentleman such as yourself called us, explaining how he'd been in a car crash a couple months ago, and is now having terrible headaches, feeling depressed, and can't remember new information. We would work with this individual to connect him with neuro specialists who can treat his symptoms and understand brain injury. We would also ask him follow-up questions to see if there are other pressing needs he might have, such as personal injury attorneys, Social Security Disability Income, support groups for him and his family members—anything that could help him adjust and feel less alone in his brain injury journey.

So, thanks for asking such a great question Curious Guy. Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of who we help and how. If you have additional questions or would like to be connected to resources, please give us a call at 602-508-8024. You can also visit our website at [www.biaaz.org](http://www.biaaz.org).

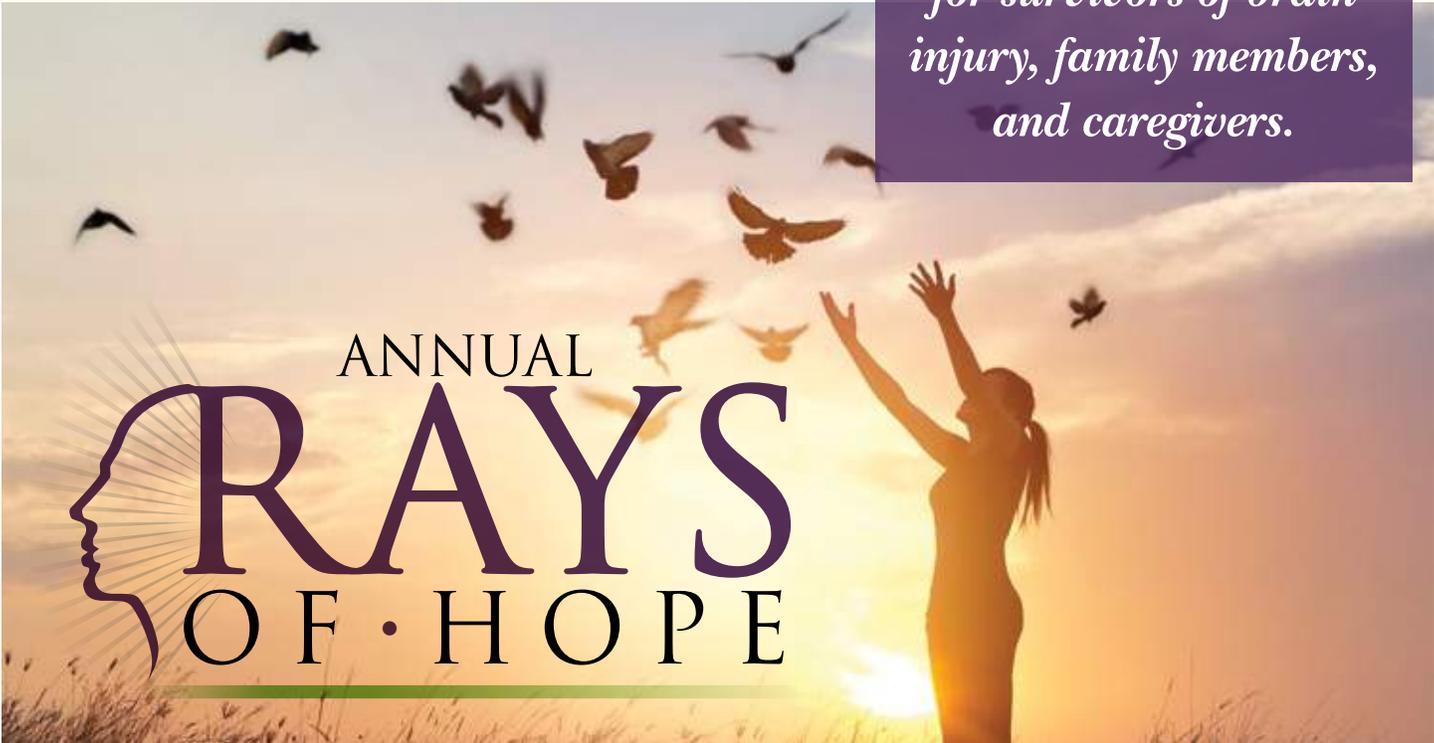
**—Jeanne Anderson,  
BIAAZ Resource Facilitation Manager**



*The answers provided by The Question Corner are meant to be informative only; they are not intended as a replacement for medical, legal, or other specialist-based advice. You should always consult a professional regarding issues related to your health and the law. If you have an educational, informational, or resource-based question you would like answered by The Question Corner, please email it to [resources@biaaz.org](mailto:resources@biaaz.org), or mail it to BIAAZ Attn:Brittany Sweeney, 5025 E. Washington St., Ste. 108, Phoenix, Arizona 85034.*



*Join us for the annual educational conference for survivors of brain injury, family members, and caregivers.*



**FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2019**

**8:15-9 a.m. Breakfast & Registration  
9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Program**

**Desert Willow Conference Center  
in Phoenix**

**FREE EVENT  
REGISTRATION REQUIRED**

**FEATURING 22 EDUCATIONAL AND FUN  
BREAKOUT SESSIONS TO CHOOSE FROM!**

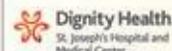
**This event is for survivors of brain injury,  
their family members and caregivers**

*Call The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona at  
(602) 508-8024 to register or register online at [BIAAZ.org](http://BIAAZ.org).*

**FEATURING  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

**Courtney Clark**

Courtney is the luckiest unlucky person in the world. At age 26, Courtney beat melanoma. But five years later, routine follow-up scans found an aneurysm in her brain that was close to hemorrhaging. Multiple brain surgeries later, she is a speaker and the author of two books on personal resilience.



5025 E. Washington Street, Suite 108 • Phoenix, Arizona 85034 • 602.508.8024 • [BIAAZ.org](http://BIAAZ.org)



**Brain Injury  
Alliance**  
ARIZONA

## **SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT SERIES**

# **A New Brain Emerges After Brain Injury**



**Jonathan Lifshitz, PhD**  
*Director, Translational  
Neurotrauma Research Program*

*Jonathan Lifshitz, PhD, serves as the Director of the Translational Neurotrauma Research Program, which is a joint venture at Phoenix Children's Hospital, the Department of Child Health at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix and the Phoenix Veterans Affairs Health Care System.*

Brain injury, regardless of severity, dismantles the delicate circuits that perform the functions we come to expect from our brain. As the brain repairs itself, some impairments heal while others emerge. We will discuss analogies to help the audience appreciate these elegant reparative and regenerative functions, while showing some scientific evidence for these processes. Based on the presenter's ongoing research, information will be discussed with regard to aging with a brain injury, whether starting from puberty or subject to a repeated head injury. Audience members will leave with an appreciation for the scope of issues regarding traumatic brain injury as a disease, and the assurance that treatment and recovery are possible.

**Friday, December 7, 2018**

**8:30-9 a.m. Registration & Breakfast**

**9-10:15 a.m. Program**

**Register online at [biaazanewbrain.eventbrite.com](http://biaazanewbrain.eventbrite.com)  
or call 602-508-8024**

This program is designed for survivors of brain injury, and their caregivers or family members. There is no cost to attend, but registration is required. The Brain Injury Alliance is a statewide nonprofit charity dedicated to helping individuals live well after brain injury.



# The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona Brings Unmasking Brain Injury to Arizona

*This spring it was announced that the global two-year-old visual art and education project, Unmasking Brain Injury, will be coming to Arizona. The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ) will be making this exciting project available throughout the state. Laura Johnson, who has personal brain injury experience, is a new BIAAZ team member who will be spearheading the project as the Unmasking Brain Injury Arizona director.*

**Q** Please tell us about yourself and your background.

**A** I grew up in Syracuse, New York. In 1990, my family moved out to Phoenix. After graduating from Phoenix Country Day School, I went back east for college and received a B.A. in business administration with a minor in art history from Northeastern University in Boston. Subsequently, I worked as a general manager for Williams-Sonoma in both Boston and New York City, and fell in love with the visual merchandising aspect of the industry. I love being able to tell a story through creativity.

Art and design have always been a passion of mine. In 2003, due to ongoing health problems, I relocated to Phoenix to be closer to my family. I was battling severe head and spinal pain, vertigo, numbness, and depth perception problems, and was no longer able to perform the intense



physical demands of retail. My parents, who really do know me best, supported me to follow my passion for art, so I enrolled in the Art Institute of Phoenix to pursue a degree in interior design and architecture.

December 7, 2007 — the date that my and my family's lives changed forever. I only had six classes left to complete for my final graduate project and degree when, out of nowhere, I blacked out while at home, hit the back of my head on marble tile, and sustained a traumatic brain injury with frontal lobe damage. It was never determined what caused the black out!

Traumatic brain injury. A what? I had never heard of or known anyone who had endured one.

Really? My frontal lobe? In one instant, I had been stripped of the qualities I identified with, including the innate pride of being a workaholic. I didn't know me anymore. I had always excelled at decision making; I was highly detail-oriented and efficient; a savant at multitasking, organization, project management, and problem solving. Now my "broken" frontal lobe could not think its way out of a paper bag, even if said bag was open at both ends and cut down the middle.

Thank goodness for my parents, who were relentless in seeking the care that I needed. They were finally able to find Dr. Christina Kwasnica at Valley Physical Medicine in Phoenix. Six months after my injury, I was accepted into The Barrow Center for Transitional Neurorehabilitation's (CTN) Work Re-entry Program. Thus, began the long process of tough love, understanding, recovery, rehabilitation, and ultimately, acceptance.

## **Q** What is the Unmasking Brain Injury project?

**A** This project gives survivors a voice and a way to tell their story through art. I am a big believer in holistic therapies, such as art and music therapy, and this project outlines a non-threatening framework for individuals to design and create a mask representing their journey. It is crucial to understand that each person's journey is unique and special.

I think the way it is laid out is just so cool— we provide a mask kit and a "road map" with suggestions, which people can choose to use or not. It's not just about decorating a mask; I think the process in getting there is part of what is so revealing. To start, individuals can identify feelings associated with their brain injury through brainstorming emotions and/or struggles. The fun part is when survivors then translate these emotions into shapes, colors, or images using whatever medium they would like (collage, beads, paint, papers, stickers, etc.), and create the art work on the mask.

Brain injury does not discriminate and can affect anyone of any age, gender, or race, at any time. This world-wide project is a collective effort to educate and spread the word about the prevalence of both acquired brain injuries, (including aneurysms, anoxia, brain tumors, encephalitis, meningitis, metabolic disorders, and strokes), as well as traumatic brain injuries, and the impact they have on so many people; not just survivors, but the families, loved ones, and caregivers involved in the ongoing recovery as well.

Once the masks have been created, I will be collecting and cataloguing the stories behind the masks. Then, I think what is most exciting is that in 2019, all of the collected masks will be displayed throughout communities state-wide in an



effort to promote brain injury awareness. I think this is a special component to the project; the creators of the masks will get to see their stories come to life!

**Q** **What do you want people to get out of the Unmasking Brain Injury project?**

**A** While the primary mission of the project is to “promote awareness of the prevalence of brain injury, and to give survivors a voice and the means to educate others about what it’s like to live with a brain injury,” I also think it’s a therapeutic way for individuals (including me) to help transfer emotions from our heads and into something physical and beautiful. It’s a way to showcase our ups and downs, the positives and negatives, the struggles and successes, and to use this platform to show others what our “new” world looks like.



I do also hope that in raising awareness for brain injury, we will be able to reach out and touch new individuals, community partners, and populations outside of the medical community. We need to obtain new sponsorships that will not only help to fund and sustain this project, but other Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona resources and programs as well. It takes a village, and in the world of brain injury, support is critical.

This project is open for anyone to participate in and no one needs to have any experience or background in art. For additional information regarding the project, to have a presentation done in the community, or to host a mask making event, or to have a mask mailed directly to you, please email me at [unmasking@biaaz.org](mailto:unmasking@biaaz.org).

**Q** **What do you enjoy doing when you are not working?**

**A** I still haven’t mastered the art of life balance! I continue to work incredibly hard each day so that I can maintain part-time employment, get enough rest, attend medical appointments, exercise, maintain a healthy life style, and still have time for fun. I have to say the hardest part for me still is the social aspect of recovery. Social anxiety and isolation still linger, which is something I hear all the time from survivors. Pain and fatigue can make it hard to want to do anything, which is why balance is so important. (I can hear my mother and doctors saying that in my head now)!

I have a small circle of family and select friends, and my dog Sophie, who is my everything! I love to read, (something I am only starting to do again after 10 years!), watch movies, hike, and sail. I am slowly getting into meditation and holistic practices, although I still struggle with the inner workaholic mind-set and can never



seem to shut off completely— baby steps! I love to travel, but have not done much since my injury, and the one thing I swear I am going to do one day is start painting!

**Q** Any final thoughts?

**A** Honestly, pinch me! If you had told me 10-and-a-half-years ago I would be heading up the Unmasking Brain Injury project, I would have laughed, cried, probably gotten angry, and never believed you in a million years. This project is the culmination of my life experiences: health setbacks, education, love of art, previous work in design, project management, and the past six years of non-profit work in our community. I cannot believe I have

the important role for the state of Arizona to help raise awareness and guide people through art to tell their stories.

In 2009, when I graduated from the Art Institute of Phoenix, my mother gave me a simple black-and-white card that said, “just when the caterpillar thought its world was over, it became a butterfly.” Guess what? For me, I think it has just happened!

You can find more information about the Unmasking Brain Injury project online at [BIAAZ.org/unmasking](http://BIAAZ.org/unmasking). You can contact Laura at [unmasking@biaaz.org](mailto:unmasking@biaaz.org) for information about requesting a mask or sponsoring the two-year project.

PHOTO CREDIT: CLINTON R. MCDANIEL



The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona (BIAAZ) is excited to bring *Unmasking Brain Injury*, a visual art and education project, to Arizona.

The objective of this project is to have each person living with a brain injury, create a mask that depicts the hidden feelings behind their brain injury. All masks will be displayed in 2019 throughout our state in an effort to raise awareness and give survivors a voice through storytelling and art therapy.



**To learn more about the Unmasking Brain Injury project please visit [BIAAZ.org/unmasking](http://BIAAZ.org/unmasking) or contact Laura Johnson at [unmasking@biaaz.org](mailto:unmasking@biaaz.org) to request masks, host a mask making event or for additional information about how to sponsor the project.**



# SIMS Business Systems' Scot Taggart Slated to Serve on BIAAZ Advisory Council

## Former Student Athlete Brings Unique Skillset to Leadership Position

The Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona's (BIAAZ) Advisory Council is adding a new member to its ranks — Scot Taggart. As a three-sport athlete at Perry High School in Gilbert and a college football player at South Dakota's Northern State University under coach Tom Dosch, Scot has a keen interest in supporting the BIAAZ's mission of assisting student athletes in safely participating in their favorite sports and athletic hobbies. "In high school and as a NCAA Division II football player, I learned so much about teamwork, competition, and



Taggart played college football in South Dakota.

overcoming adversity," Scot says. "Being an athlete in both college and high school was such a gift and I want to pay it forward by helping others enjoy the things they love in a way that is mindful of their cognitive health."

Although BIAAZ has been around for over 35 years now, Scot hopes to bring a fresh approach to the organization in order to help student athletes balance sports excellence with neuro-wellness. "Student athletes are making choices every day that can impact them for better or for worse long-term," Scot acknowledges.



Scot's leadership will ensure the Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona will be able to continue helping connect the more than 3,000 survivors of brain injury who contact them per year with comprehensive neuro-resources, sur-

vivor empowerment programs, and professional education. The BIAAZ also runs one of the few retreats for adult survivors of brain injury in North America— Camp Can Do— which aims to help survivors of serious brain injury rebuild their social lives and enjoy new experiences.

# THE MUSIC ADVANTAGE

*A hands-on class that will demonstrate ways music can contribute to your cognition, movement, and communication following a traumatic brain injury.*

**First and third Friday of the month  
July–September 10:30am-12pm**

- **July 6 and July 20**
- **Aug 3 and Aug 17**
- **Sept 7 and Sept 21**

Ability360 Center  
5025 E. Washington St.  
Phoenix Arizona 85034  
Classes to be held in Class Room B

[HTTPS://MUSICTHERAPYBIAAZ.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://musictherapybiaaz.eventbrite.com)



**Brain Injury  
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ARIZONA



**K2**  
**ADVENTURES**  
**FOUNDATION**

**“Changing Lives  
One Adventure at  
a Time!”**

**Community Service opportunities  
in Arizona, Nepal, Peru and Tanzania.**

*“Our Mission is to care for children, adults and families  
with special needs and or life-changing medical  
and financial circumstances  
by providing services, support and funds that will be used  
for educational and medical enrichment.”*

**[k2adventures.org](http://k2adventures.org)**

**Kristen Sandquist  
480-797-2950**

# Bartlett Lake Marina

Home of the Day on the Lake program since 1996



DAY ON  
THE LAKE



## 2018 Summer Series

May 31 - June 2 and September 6-8

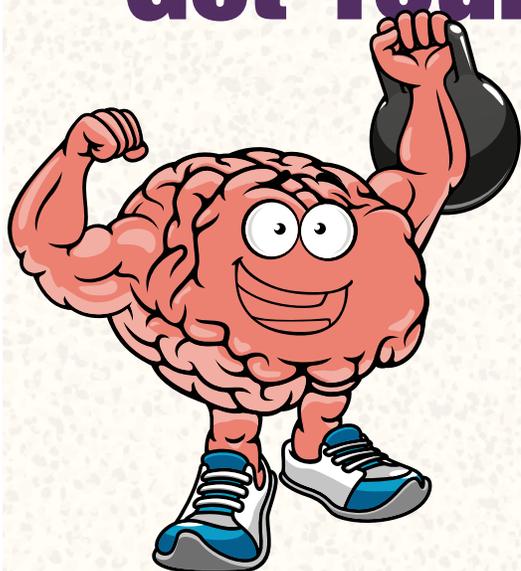
Contact Barrow Connection at 602-406-6280 for more information or to register visit:  
[barrowneuro.org/patients-families/find-a-support-group/the-barrow-connection/day-on-the-lake/](http://barrowneuro.org/patients-families/find-a-support-group/the-barrow-connection/day-on-the-lake/)





# BRAIN GYM<sup>®</sup> PHOENIX!

## Get Your Brain In Shape!



### Brain Gym<sup>®</sup> may help optimize brain performance

Brain Gym<sup>®</sup> is based on a series of 26 movements designed to promote a more efficient mind-body connection. Brain Gym<sup>®</sup> exercises have been effective in improving the following areas:

- Concentration and Focus
- Memory
- Academics: Reading, Writing, Math
- Physical Coordination
- Organization Skills
- Attitude

*Call Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona for more information,  
(602) 508-8024. Individual results may vary.*

**Please join us  
for a class  
and see what Brain Gym<sup>®</sup>  
can do for you!**

**Ability360 Sports &  
Fitness Center**  
5031 E. Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85034

*All classes are held in the Group  
Fitness Room on 2nd Floor*

### CLASS SCHEDULE

January 3	1:00 pm	June 19	5:45 pm
January 16	5:45 pm	July 17	5:45 pm
February 7	1:00 pm	August 21	5:45 pm
February 20	5:45 pm	September 18	5:45 pm
March 7	1:00 pm	October 3	1:00 pm
March 20	5:45 pm	October 16	5:45 pm
April 4	1:00 pm	November 7	1:00 pm
April 17	5:45 pm	November 20	5:45 pm
May 2	1:00 pm	December 5	1:00 pm
May 15	5:45 pm	December 18	5:45 pm





# Wild Nights, Wild Lights

A night out to support programs that help student veterans with brain injuries succeed in college

*Help our heroes transition to the classroom and beyond!  
Join us for a cocktail reception at the Phoenix Zoo's Orangutan House followed by a private early-access tour of Zoo Lights.*

**Friday, November 9**

**5:30-7:00 p.m.**

**Crowns for Camo Reception**

**7:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Private Early-Access Tour of Zoo Lights**

Advance tickets are \$50

Tickets the night of the event are \$75

Purchase tickets at [crownsandcamo.org](http://crownsandcamo.org)  
or call 602-508-8024

**HOSTED BY**

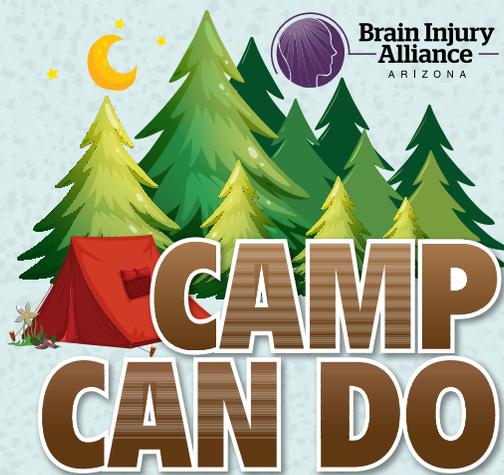


**KIMBERLY JONES**  
Ms. America International 2018

[development@biaaz.org](mailto:development@biaaz.org)  
| 602-508-8024 |  
[crownsandcamo.org](http://crownsandcamo.org)



**Brain Injury  
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**A retreat for adult survivors of brain injury presented by:**



**EVERLASTING**  
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*Brain Injury Assisted Living Homes*



**Compassion Dental**  
**Don't Dis Disabilities**  
**Dr. Ted Firestone**  
**The Random Gingers**

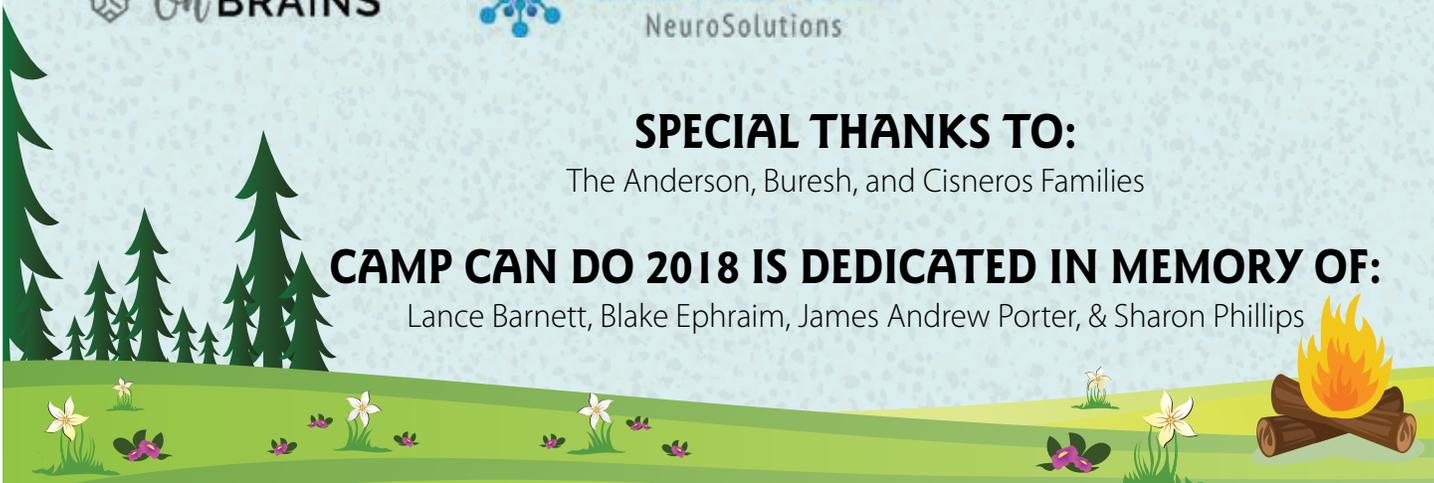


**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

The Anderson, Buresh, and Cisneros Families

**CAMP CAN DO 2018 IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF:**

Lance Barnett, Blake Ephraim, James Andrew Porter, & Sharon Phillips



**Thank you for being the official sponsor of smiles, laughter, and friendship!**



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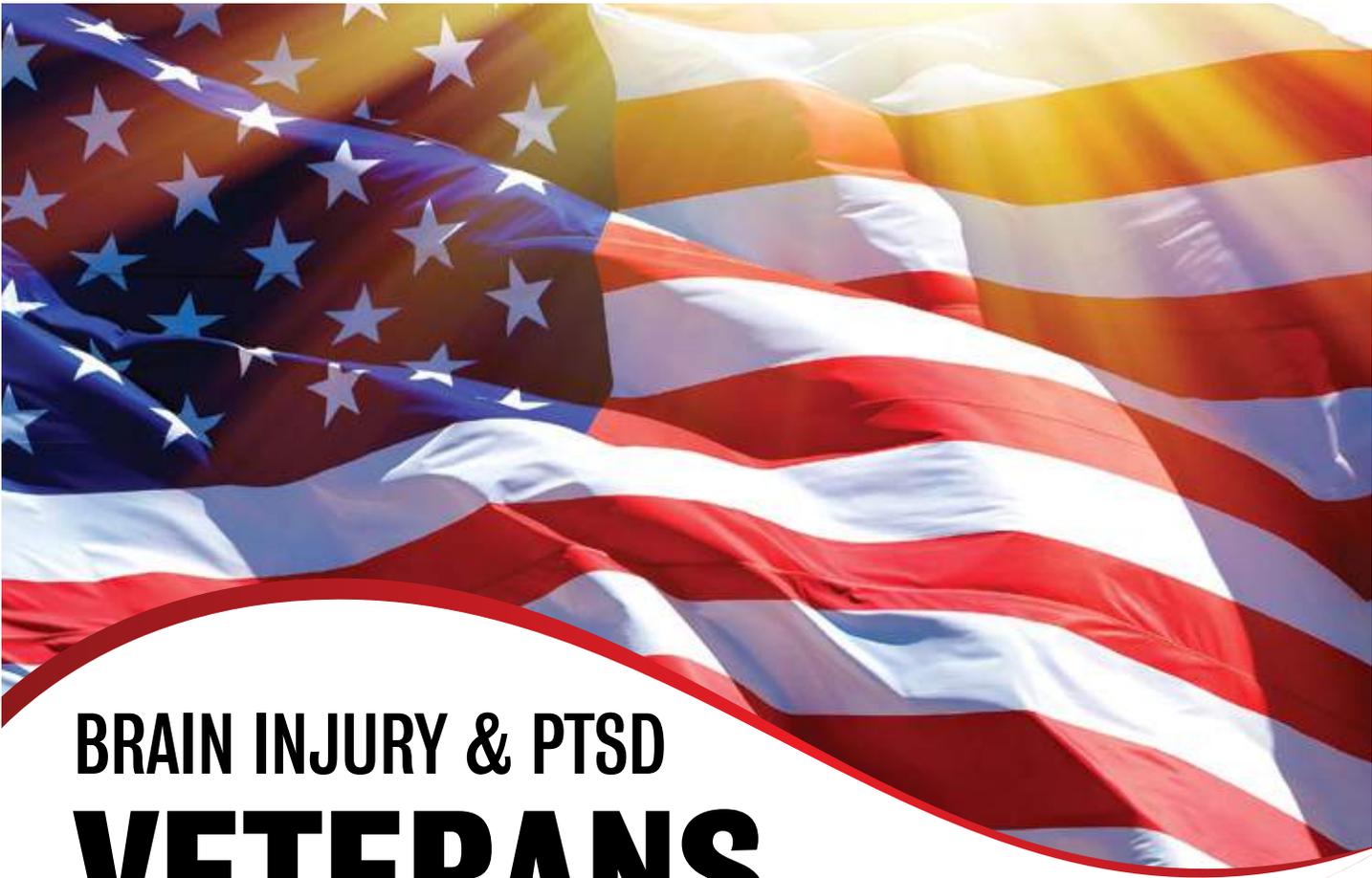
*Save  
the  
Date*

# THE MYSTERIES OF BRAIN INJURY

*Annual Conference for Professionals*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2018  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

*To register or for more information, please visit [BIAAZ.org](http://BIAAZ.org)*



# BRAIN INJURY & PTSD **VETERANS SUPPORT GROUP**

**THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH @ 6 P.M.**



**Brain Injury  
Alliance**  
ARIZONA

**Ability360 Center  
Conference Room 1  
5025 E Washington St  
Phoenix, AZ 85034**

**ABILITY360**  
SPORTS & FITNESS CENTER

*Contact Malissa Mallett at 602-508-8024 or [program@biaaz.org](mailto:program@biaaz.org) for additional information.*

**VETERANS CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP, HOSTED BY THE ELIZABETH DOLE FOUNDATION,  
OFFERED AT THE SAME TIME AND LOCATION IN A SEPARATE ROOM**

# Living Life Fully after Brain Injury

## THE STRESS-PROOF BRAIN

Understand your emotional responses to stress using mindfulness and neuroplasticity. Each class may be attended individually; however, to ensure you obtain the full benefits from this series, please plan to attend all sessions.



### CLASS SCHEDULE 9:30am-11:30am

#### October 2nd

Introduction to Neuroplasticity and Your Brain's Response to Stress

#### October 9th

Understanding Acute vs. Chronic Stress, Evaluating Your Current Stress Levels, and Introduction to Mindfulness.

#### October 16th

Understanding the Characteristics of a Mindful State and Learning to Integrate Mindfulness Into Everyday Life

#### October 23rd

Finding the Confidence to Manage Stress and Learning Self-Compassion

*The classes are designed for persons living with a brain injury, their families, and their nonprofessional caregivers.*

**Ability 360, Classroom A**  
**5025 E Washington Street • Phoenix AZ 85034**  
**Class Times: 9:30-11:30**

**CLASSROOM SPACE IS LIMITED.  
REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.**

**Please register at [biaaz.org](http://biaaz.org)**  
or call the BIAAZ office at  
602.508.8024 and ask for Faes.



**Brain Injury Alliance**  
ARIZONA

## **Survivor Empowerment Series**

# **Building Resilience: How to Look Forward to 2019**

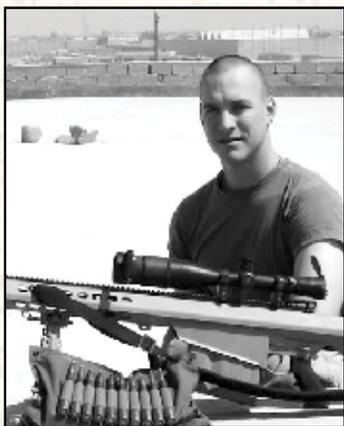
*with* **PATRICK ZIEGERT**

**Saturday, January 5, 2019**

**9:00-9:30am Registration & Coffee Bar • 9:30-11:00am Program**

**The Nina Mason Pulliam Conference Center • Ability 360 Campus**

**5025 East Washington Street • Phoenix**



**ABILITY360**

What is resilience and how can building your personal resilience impact your everyday life? Join us as Patrick Ziegert leads a group discussion and shares his personal journey overcoming trauma through building resilience.

Patrick Ziegert is a proud veteran of both the Navy and the Army. In the 1990's, Mr. Ziegert served in the submarine force during the end of the Cold War and Desert Storm. He left the Navy to pursue a career in law enforcement. He felt a strong calling to re-enlist after 9/11, and in 2004 he chose to re-enlist with the Army to fight in the war on global terrorism.

During a deployment to Iraq in 2005, Mr. Ziegert's unit saw heavy casualties, including the deaths of his three squad members, leaving Mr. Ziegert as the only survivor. After deployment, Mr. Ziegert sought out services to address his combat-related PTSD and survivor's guilt.

Mr. Ziegert received a medical retirement in 2012 and currently works in city government.



**Register here: [patztalk.eventbrite.com](http://patztalk.eventbrite.com)**

**Contact the BIAAZ office with questions, 602-508-8024 or [info@biaaz.org](mailto:info@biaaz.org)**

**THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

# BRAIN MAP

## PARIETAL LOBE

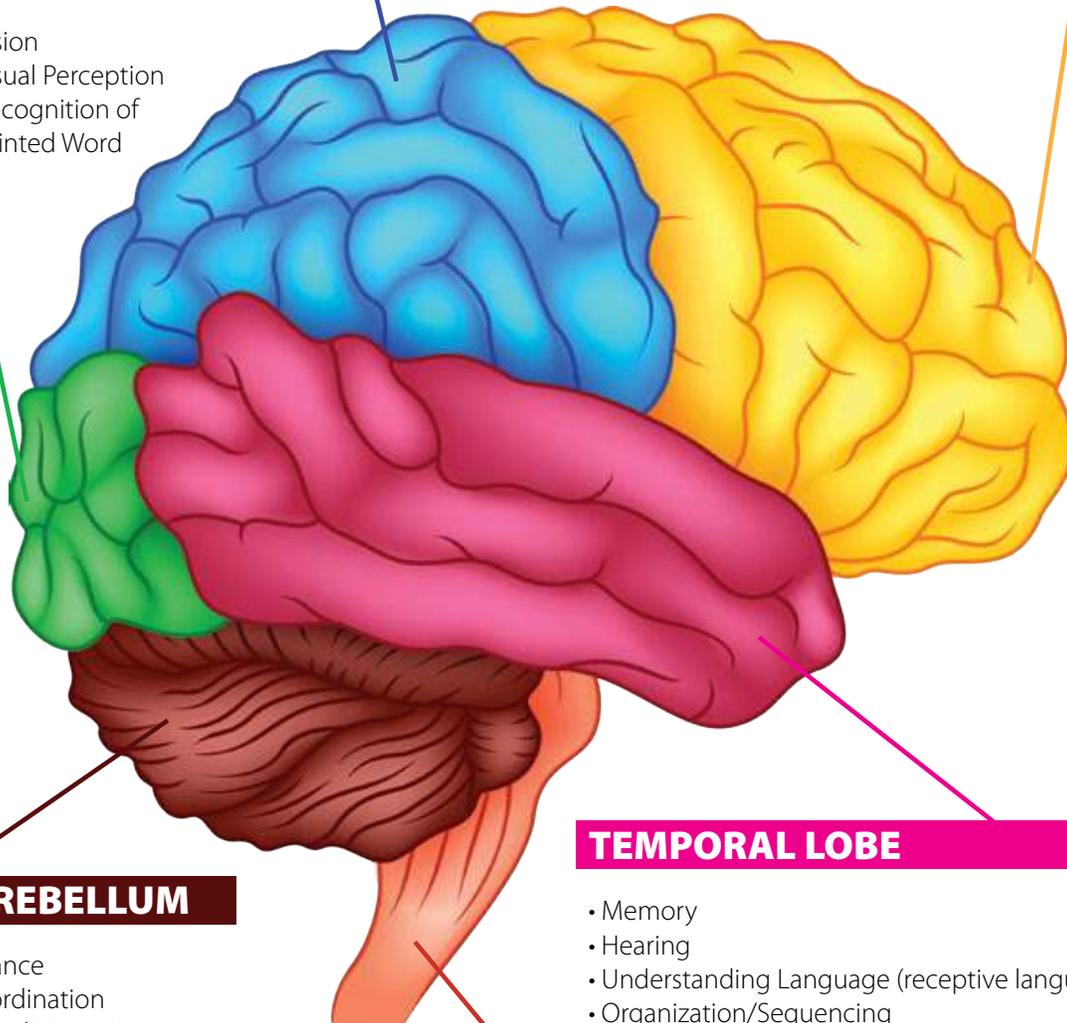
- Sense of Touch
- Differentiation:  
Size, Shape, Color
- Spatial Perception
- Sense of Taste and Smell

## FRONTAL LOBE

- Initiation
- Problem-Solving
- Judgment
- Inhibition of Behavior
- Planning/Anticipation
- Self-Monitoring
- Motor Planning
- Personality/Emotions
- Awareness of Abilities/  
Limitations
- Organization
- Attention/Concentration
- Mental Flexibility
- Speaking  
(Expressive Language)

## OCCIPITAL LOBE

- Vision
- Visual Perception
- Recognition of  
Printed Word



## CEREBELLUM

- Balance
- Coordination
- Skilled Motor Activity

## TEMPORAL LOBE

- Memory
- Hearing
- Understanding Language (receptive language)
- Organization/Sequencing

## BRAIN STEM

- Breathing
- Heart Rate
- Arousal/Consciousness
- Sleep/Wake Functions
- Attention/Concentration



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CELEBRATING  
**35 YEARS**  
  
**Brain Injury Alliance**  
 ARIZONA  
*The Voice of Brain Injury in Arizona Since 1983*

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**DPT, NCS, GCS**  
*SWAN Rehab*



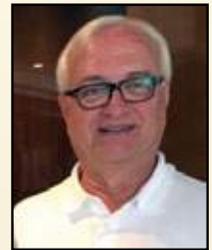
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Austin Brooks, a veteran of the U.S. Army and Buddy Rake, a veteran of the U.S. Navy were pleased to present BIAAZ with a \$1,000 sponsorship.

Thank you

## Rake Law Group for sponsoring BIAAZ veterans programs!

BIAAZ would like to extend a sincere thank you to Buddy Rake and the entire Rake Law Group for their generous sponsorship of veterans programs. Their generosity will allow us to serve veterans impacted by brain injury.



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