

# BIRCoFWI Bulletin

A Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue 1

## Message from the Executive Director

*Are you the one? This is the question being asked. Are you part of the 99 with good intentions or the One that makes a difference?*  
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## TBI: A Day in the Life

*Traumatic brain injury*  
101

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## A Step-by-step guide

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*People with disabilities are people first!*  
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Photo was taken by:  
Nicholas R. Tischer / BIRCoFWI Bulletin



## Our Goal

*Our goal briefly explains why our non-profit was founded and what we intend to do with this organization.*

Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non profit organization which was founded by a mother-daughter team (Lois York-Lewis and Bari York). They saw first hand the need to help survivors of brain injury in Wisconsin lead a fulfilling life after brain injury.

### Tragedy Brings to light a Need in Wisconsin

This need was realized in 2005 after Bari sustained a severe traumatic brain injury. Once Bari was released from the hospital and re entered daily life she found it to be very difficult.

With the help of her family and their unconditional love they pressed forward. Realizing the challenges a person with a brain injury can sustain and what they face once



they are released from the hospital, gave these two ladies the drive to move forward and develop this organization.

Doctors and nurses are there to help a person when they are in the hospital and a lot of times shortly thereafter, but what do they do after they have recovered to the point where they can re enter daily life? This is where the

Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. steps in to help.

There can be a lot of confusion during the "what now" phase of brain injury.

### What Now?

Confusion can be a part of the aftermath of brain injury, and the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. wants to help all survivors during this phase and after!

### Bringing Brain Injury Survivors Together

Are you a Brain Injury Survivor looking to make a social connection with other Brain Injury Survivors? Social Gatherings are scheduled to assist the brain injury survivor in building strong, long lasting bridges of trust, respect, understanding, and acceptance.

Friendship Network Members gather at our Franklin Office to enjoy music, partake in games, share a conversation over a few snacks, and just get a chance to relax in a non-judgmental environment. Contact us TODAY! (262) 770-4882 or email us at: [admin@bircowfi.org](mailto:admin@bircowfi.org) to sign up and join!



Welcome

### **Upcoming events:**

Also check our Calendar of Events on  
[www.bircowwi.org](http://www.bircowwi.org)

#### **Support Groups:**

Every first Tuesday of the Month

#### **Spiritual Outreach:**

Every second Wednesday of the Month

#### **\*Grand Opening:**

When: March 9th from 1:00 p - 4:00p

Where: BIRCoFWI Franklin Office

5129 W. Franklin Drive, Franklin, WI 53132  
(262-770-4882) Come join us for snacks,  
beverages and a chance to tour the facility! See  
you then!

#### **Salute to Brain Injury Survivors Fashion Show and Silent Auction:**

When: March 24th from 11:00 a - 4:00p

Where: Olympia Resort

1350 Royale Mile Rd. Oconomowoc, WI 53066

#### **Education and Awareness Event:**

Day in the Life Series

Call (262) 770-4882 For More Information

Dear Friends,

March is known as Brain Injury Awareness Month and in the spirit  
of this month our question for you is, "Are You the One?"

Simply put, "One person with a passion will accomplish more than  
99 with good intentions."

Too many individuals (from children to the elderly) have been  
touched by brain injury in one form or another. Are you the child  
of a parent with a brain injury, the wife of a husband with a brain  
injury, does your neighbor have a brain injury, did your co-worker  
sustain a brain injury? There may even be people in your life who  
were never diagnosed with a brain injury, yet struggle in silence  
and do not know why.

Step outside of your comfort zone and educate yourself about  
brain injury. We invite you to attend our Education and Awareness  
Training Sessions or just stop by. Knowledge is power and  
knowledge builds tolerance and understanding, knowledge  
narrows the gap between isolation and feelings of acceptance,  
knowledge dispels the myths and destroys the stereotypes  
associated with brain injury.

Your spot at the table is waiting! ARE YOU THE ONE?

Kindest Regards,



*Lois York-Lewis*

*Executive Director*

#### **BIRC of WI Bulletin Editorial Staff:**

**Bari L. York** Director of PR and Mktg & Brain Injury Survivor (Editor and Writer)

**Lois M. York-Lewis** Executive Director & Mother of a Brain Injury Survivor (Editor and Writer)

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Nicholas R. Tischer / BIRCoFWI Bulletin

## Brain Injury Identification Cards for Survivors of Traumatic Brain Injuries

By M. Angela Dentice / BIRCoWI Bulletin

### Wisconsin can move towards creating a state sponsored system of issuing identification cards based off of Texas' model

Some of the most common symptoms after a traumatic brain injury (TBI) are difficulties communicating, speaking, or even conducting ones self in stressful or even relaxed environments. Due to the myriad effects these types of injuries can have on the brain, TBI survivors often face difficulties returning to and interacting with others who are not familiar with these complications.

#### Police enforcement gets involved

One concern regarding these communication issues arises from instances in which TBI survivors become involved in situations involving police and emergency response workers. In some unfortunate situations, law enforcement and other emergency response professionals may mistake symptoms of a TBI survivor with intoxication or refusal to cooperate.

Some states and organizations have created brain injury identification cards to help inform others of those individuals who have suffered a TBI and who have difficulty communicating on their own. These TBI identification cards are similar in size to a driver's license and list the individual's name, address, and emergency contact information on one side, while listing common symptoms of TBI's and suggestions on how to best communicate with a card holder on the back.

As a result, these cards can help communicate to police officers and emergency workers that a person is a TBI survivor. The cards provide an explanation of behavior or symptoms in order to avoid any confusion, miscommunication, or potentially dangerous situations.

To date, states have made these cards available in two ways. First, states such as Texas and South Carolina have implemented state specific cards through their Department of Health and Human Services and South Carolina Brain Injury Association respectively.

#### Texas takes the lead

The leading example of these state sponsored cards is Texas where federal grant money was used to create a system for individuals who have been diagnosed with a TBI by a medical professional to receive these identification cards.

The primary issue Texas faced before providing these cards was that because of the serious nature of the cards, the cards could only be provided after professional recognition of a

traumatic brain injury as a causal factor for "at risk" behavior in stressful or emergency situations.

As a result, in order to ensure the cards are properly authoritative, Texas implemented their own limited system of issuing brain injury survivor identification cards as a part of their Health and Human Services Commission and as a public service to those suffering from TBI's.

In addition, South Carolina has followed Texas' lead and not only established its own TBI identification card but also added a drafted letter that physicians of patients affected with TBI may sign. These letters, in addition to the identification card, not only help to communicate the extent of a person's symptoms but also serve to give more direction to whatever resulting assistance or considerations the individual may need because of the challenges TBI presents in every-day life.

#### The Perspectives Network

Conversely, where states do not have their own system of issuing identification cards, some states, such as Minnesota and New Mexico, direct individuals suffering from the effects of TBI's to an organization known as The Perspectives Network. The Perspectives Network (TPN) was established after the founder had created and subsequently used an identification card in scenarios where her symptoms could have otherwise appeared as mere intoxication.

#### Globally Popular

Over time, requests for this type of card, developed by TPN, resulted in cards being carried by "survivors in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa." Now, TPN works to foster awareness of TBI's and will send individuals a TBI survivor identification card as long as the survivor sends in a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

However, the downside of this type of identification system is that due to the absence of a required survey and evaluation by medical professionals, the card serves merely as a sort of informative device rather than authoritative documentation of a disability. As a result, while these Perspective Network cards are still helpful in everyday interactions, they carry less significance in situations with law enforcement compared to, say, Texas' cards that require professional evaluations prior to issuance.

Consequently, Wisconsin can take multiple steps in order to increase the use of brain injury identification cards within the state. The simplest and most immediate action that Wisconsin

could take would simply be to circulate the website and contact information for The Perspectives Network and their offer of informative identification cards.

This could be accomplished by posting the information for TPN on Wisconsin TBI informative websites such as the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin and the Brain Injury Alliance of Wisconsin, much like Minnesota has done.

Beyond this, Wisconsin can move towards creating a state sponsored system of issuing identification cards based off of Texas' model through the Department of Health and Human Services. This sort of system would necessarily take more time in order to secure funding both for the production of cards and for resources to ensure that individuals applying for the card do in fact have professional evaluations to verify their conditions.

However, the improved authenticity and legal weight of such verified cards would greatly aid individuals suffering from the effects of TBI's both in their everyday interactions but especially in difficult or emergency situations involving the law.

The author wishes to thank Ryan Session of Marquette University Law School for his assistance on this article.

#### General References:

[http://www.tbi.org/html/id\\_cards.html](http://www.tbi.org/html/id_cards.html)  
[http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/hhsc\\_projects/abj/wallet-cards.shtml](http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/hhsc_projects/abj/wallet-cards.shtml)  
<http://www.biausa.org/SC/advocacy.htm>  
<http://www.braininjurymn.org/consumerguide/transportation.php>



Ms. Dentice represents adults and children who have sustained brain injuries as a result of the negligence of others. In 2010, she received the Trial Lawyer of the Year Award from the Wisconsin Associate of Justice. Before attending law school, she taught handicapped children.



Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. Presents:  
**SALUTE TO BRAIN INJURY SURVIVORS  
FASHION SHOW AND SILENT AUCTION**

*Order your tickets today!*  
*(262) 770-4882*  
*[www.shop.bircofwi.org](http://www.shop.bircofwi.org)*



**Date:** Sunday March 24, 2013

**Time:** 11:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**Location:** Olympia Resort and Conference Center

(1350 Royale Mile Rd. Oconomowoc, WI 53066)

**Ticket Price:**

(Individual): **\$50.00**

(Children 4-10): **\$15.00**

(Infant 0-3): **Free**

(Table of 8): **\$350.00**

The event will feature an italian style buffet, silent auction,  
fashion show, and a trip to the shutter booth to make your memory complete.

*There are only 250 tickets available for this event.*

Get yours today! Go to: <http://www.shop.bircofwi.org>

*Tickets go on sale: February 1, 2013*



*All models for this event are brain injury survivors  
and their escorts are those who support them  
along this journey.*



## What is Traumatic Brain Injury?

By Bari L. York / BIRCoFWI Bulletin

A Day in the Life Series will expand your cranium



Photo was taken at our last Fashion Show and Silent Auction March 24 2012

*Brain Injury Survivors  
are still people at the end of the day*

What is TBI? Have you ever heard of this injury? TBI stands for traumatic brain injury.

According to the publication *What is TBI?* from the Technology and Applications magazine, a "traumatic brain injury is defined as a blow or jolt to the head or penetrating head injury that disrupts the function of the brain (2011)." A TBI can range from being mild to severe.

A severe TBI has been linked to the person having an extended period of unconsciousness. The other side of the range for TBI is known as mild, which is a brief change in consciousness.

There is no exact number for the amount of TBI's sustained in Wisconsin and in the United States many go undiagnosed. The cause of brain injury can be just as vast, this injury can be caused from falling, a collision or anything that disrupts the blood flow in the brain.

The book *Successfully Surviving a Brain Injury A Family Guidebook*, goes into more detail about TBI when it states that there are two different types of brain injury. One being closed head and the other is open head (G. Prowe, 2010).

This book goes on to state that the majority of TBI's are closed head injuries. With this type of injury, the skull is left intact and the trauma to the brain is inside the head.

Have you ever heard "it's all in your head," that is entirely true in some cases.

An open head injury is such that an external force tears open the scalp, cracks the skull, rips apart the membranes, and exposes the brain.

There are many categories within the closed and open brain injury, but this next injury is one that does not fit in either category. This type of brain injury is known as an acquired brain injury.

According to Prowe these injuries are caused by an internal event "such as a stroke, heart attack, aneurysm, tumor, infection, disease, poisoning or substance abuse (2010)." Any internal

event that disrupts the normal operations of the brain's neurons.

In order to educate the public about brain injury and to take them through a "Day in the Life" the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. has developed this series of informational sessions.

To learn more about this injury reserve your seat at one of the *Day in the Life* presentation at the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. Call (262) 770-4882 or email [admin@bircofwi.org](mailto:admin@bircofwi.org) to express your interest and reserve your space today!

### Resources:

Wiley-Blackwell. (2011, August/September). *What is TBI? Pharmaceutical Formulation & Quality*, 17. Retrieved from <http://www.pharmaquality.com>

Prowe, G. (2010). *Brain Injury Basics #1 A Brain Injury is Forever. Successfully surviving a Brain Injury, A Family Guidebook*.