

BI-INSIDE *Magazine*



**BRAIN INJURY
RESOURCE
CENTER** of WisconsinTM

March Through the Storm with us!

13th ISSUE: March 2025
Brain Injury Awareness Issue

FEATURES:

Resource Facilitation: What's the buzz?

Holiday Party: A Review

Stoen Soup
Telling of the Tail: Brittany Cummings (TBI Survivor)

Message from the Executive Director

Hello Everyone!

In this issue of the BI-Inside, we are marching through the storm. Brain Injury is or can be compared to this analogy. The next decision to make is yours or the brain injury survivor in your life. They must decide are they strong and brave enough to march through the storm like this buffalo?

Giving up is not an acceptable option. Fight like this buffalo, turn to the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc., BIRC, and accept our guidance, resources and friendship. No one should have to do brain injury by themselves or feel as if they are by themselves. The BIRC is here for you and we exist because of you.

Until next time God Bless!

Lois York-Lewis

Our Mission:

To offer assistance, provide resources and information and reassure survivors that they are not walking this journey alone.

Who we are:

We are all volunteer and run by brain injury survivors and their support persons.

We are a 501C3, Registered Charity 27-4483622, Tax Exempt Organization, and are 100% funded through the generosity of people like you!

BI-INSIDE Magazine Team:

Bari L. Rieth (Co-Founder, TBI Survivor who inspired our organization, Daughter, Grand-daughter and Wife to Brain Injury Survivors, Board Secretary, Layout-Editor and Contributor)

Lois M. York-Lewis (Co-Founder, Mother of the TBI Survivor who inspired this organization, Mother in-law, Wife and Daughter to Brain Injury Survivors, Pres. of Board of Directors for the BIRCoFWI, and Contributor)

Kathy Richardson, C.B.I.S.T.,¹ (Resource Facilitator, TBI Survivor, Vice President of the Board of Directors for the BIRCoFWI and Contributor)

Linda Scherwinski (Mother to a Brain Injury Survivor, Board Member for the BIRCoFWI and Contributor)

Katie Marshall (Resource Facilitation Assistant, Contributor and Editor)

Scott Daul (Office Assistant and Editor)

Sheri Krahn (Editor-in-chief & Contributor)

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¹: Certified Brain Injury Specialist Trainer

Your Donation will go a Long Way!

THANK YOU!!

In Honor of...

Castellion, Kyle*
Dudzik, Mark
Erickson, Renee'
Franke, Rick
Fromader, Tony
Gerum, Timothy*
Koenig, Robert
Kraemer, Noelle
Krahn, Sheri
Lee, Grace
Marshall, Katie
Rieth, Bari***
Rieth, Gary***
Scherwinski, Micki
Schillinger, Joe
Schmitt, Mark*

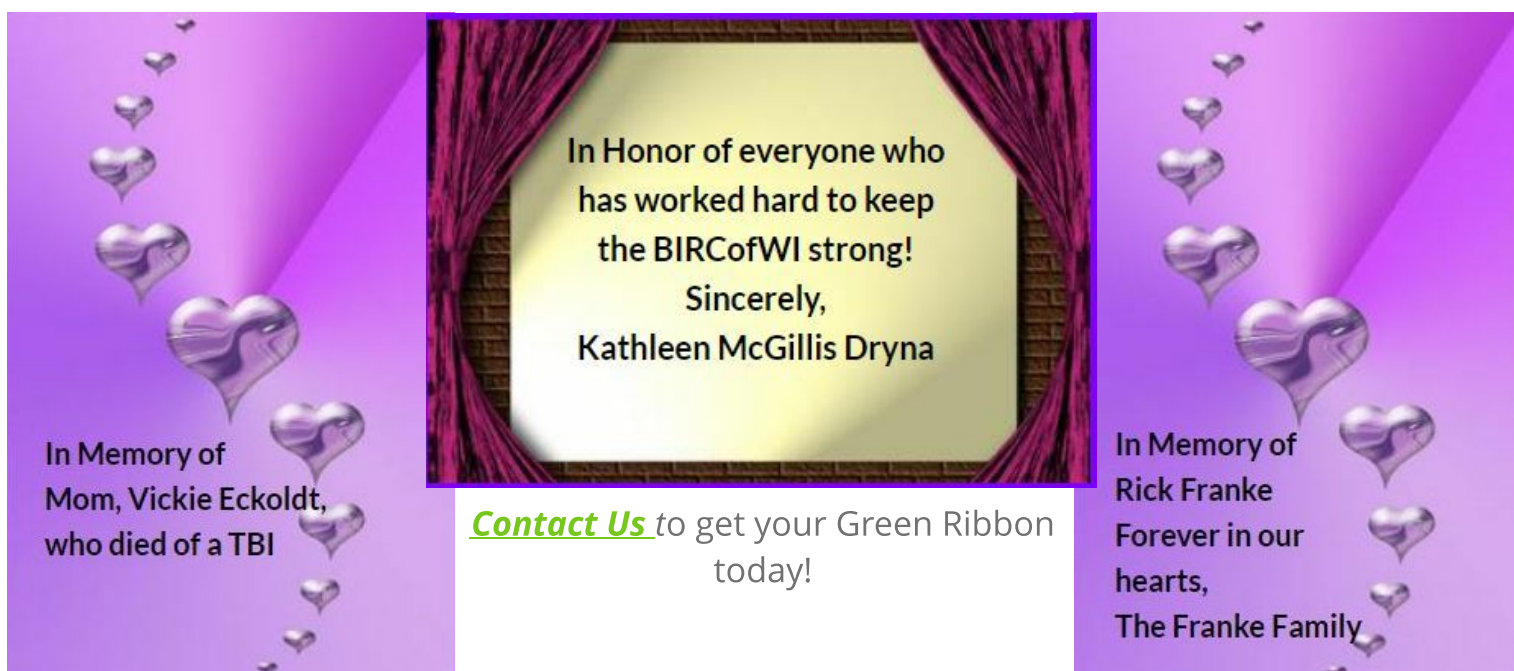
In Memory of...

Eckholdt, Vickie
Foster, Donna
Franke, Rick ***
Gebert, Elliot
Hiekkanen, Bee
Kasprzak, Loraine
Koehler, Lois (Lois Ann)
Kozak, Margaret (Peggy)
Krebs, Lucille*
Krebs, Richard W. Sr.*
Malueg, Mark
Niebuhr, Matthew Marvin
Rieth, Bethany*
Robinson, Derek*

* Indicates additional recognition for multiple giving

Make your Donation today!

Visit: <https://www.bircofwi.org/donations-link/>



In Honor of everyone who
has worked hard to keep
the BIRCoFWI strong!
Sincerely,
Kathleen McGillis Dryna

Contact Us to get your Green Ribbon
today!

In Memory of
Mom, Vickie Eckoldt,
who died of a TBI

In Memory of
Rick Franke
Forever in our
hearts,
The Franke Family



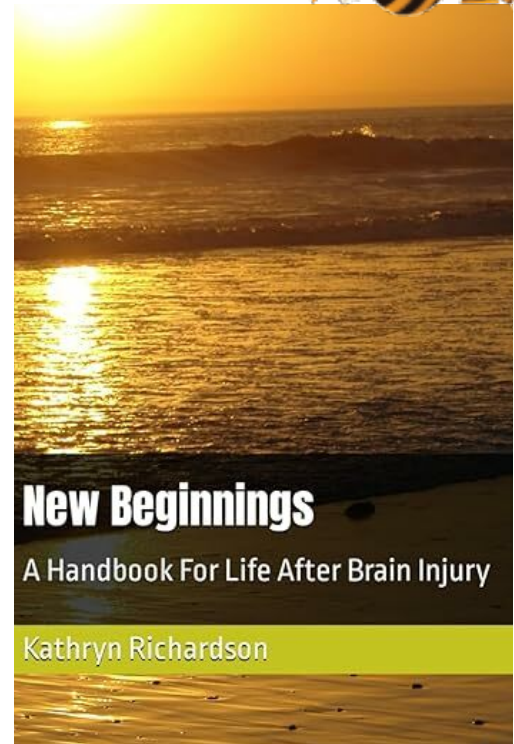
Kathy Richardson,
CBIST
Resource Facilitator

I wrote this user-friendly handbook for brain injury survivors, their families, and their support personnel. It is an in-depth guide to comprehending and understanding what challenges a survivor must face and accept.

Resource Facilitation: What's the Buzz *New Beginnings*

New Beginnings also details daily living skills that will help you become as independent as possible, along with other pertinent topics. I wrote this book as someone who has worked with brain injury survivors for over 30 years and as a traumatic brain injury survivor myself.

I have a unique understanding of the processes a survivor must go through to become their best self.



**Spring
Arts & Crafts Fair**

**Join us on
Saturday,
April 5, 2025**

FREE ADMISSION
CRAFTS, JEWELRY, HOME
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MUCH MORE!

FOR SOME EGG-CITING FUN!
American Legion Post #434
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HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE

**ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT
OUR VETERANS**

Be sure to stop to support the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. (BIRC) at the American Legion Post #434 for an Arts and Crafts Fair! We will have different decor items, eye glass chains, lanyards, scarfs, paintings, pictures and more!

A great aspect of this event is that the event is free to attend and all proceeds will go towards supporting our veterans! Make sure you stop by and say hi!



CataStrophic reaction

What it is and what to do to prevent one from happening.

Recently, I was in a position to witness an individual with a brain injury have a reaction to a situation that seemed out of proportion. Was this a temper tantrum, or a behavioral outburst, or was it a form of a ***catastrophic reaction***?

What is a ***catastrophic reaction***? This condition is recognized as a reaction that may be related to past events, unhappy memories, or tasks, communications, and/or instructions that are too complicated.

The result is an inappropriate emotional outburst due to a person's inability to cope with the

real or imagined event.

People who sustain brain injuries or damage to the brain (including stroke, dementia, and TBI) are easily overwhelmed and may respond with excessive emotions and behaviors (e.g.: panic or aggression) as a result of frustration, cognitive overload or the inability to communicate needs or perform tasks.

Prevention is always better than the cure!

Avoid:

1. Presenting a task that is too difficult
2. Overwhelming them with decisions (e.g. "would you

like to wear this dress, or would you rather have a tracksuit or stay in your pajamas" = Brain overload)

3. Recalling distressing memories
 4. Making sudden or unnecessary changes
 5. Applying physical restraint
 6. Arguing or trying to make them see it from your view
 7. Communicating in a way that asserts authority or lack of respect
- Creating unnecessary changes to the environment.



Lois York-Lewis



Bari is demonstrating where a headache caused by cognitive overload from a catastrophic reaction can be located.



This drawing is demonstrating a catastrophic reaction.

As the book **Worms: for one more day** Book Written by: Mitch Albom

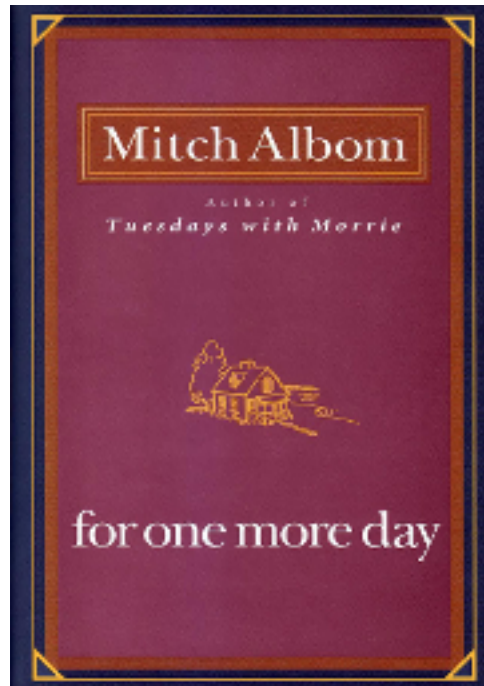
"If you had the chance, just one chance to go back and fix what you did wrong in life, would you take it? And if you did, would you be big enough to stand it? Mitch Albom, in this new book, once again demonstrates why he is one of my favorite writers: a fearless explorer of the wishful and magical, he is also a devout believer in the power of love. For One More Day will make you smile. It will make you wistful. But most of all, it will make you believe in the eternal power of a mother's love."

-James McBride, author of
The Color of Water

Currently we are in the process of reviewing this book and once we are done we will be writing a review. Every second and fourth Wednesday we gather at the BIRC to read about 20 pages, have light snacks, and discuss what we have read.

We each take turns reading two pages. No judgment is given biased on reading speed or any other reason as we all understand everyone is different and their recoveries are the same.

Sheri details her thoughts:



"Our lead person Bari, prepares questions for us after our bi-weekly session. Everyone is encouraged to answer with the help of each other."

Bari keeps the questions and answers for us to review or help aid us in remembering the story. All this information is used for our final book review.

"It is very helpful that Bari does this," Scott Daul continues this thought by saying that "she makes sure to review these notes before we start a new chapter."



Katie Marshall &
Scott Daul



Sheri Krahn



Bari Rieth



Shari K.



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Linda Scherwinski

The annual BIRC Christmas party was held on December 15th 2024. We were offered the use of the Big Lake Room, located inside Lake Point Church in Muskego, WI, to gather at.

It was a very well attended event with over 40 participants. We had a simple lunch with subs and chips.

We had a variety of Christmas cookies and sweet treats for everyone to enjoy.

BIRCOFWI Holiday Party: A Review

We started the day with a Holiday themed Ice Breaker game. This allowed everyone to mingle and get acquainted with one another.

There was a nice variety of raffle baskets available for each attendee to "bid" on. Also, there was a door prize raffle and the picture of the winners are below.

Almost everyone went home with something new or a plateful of leftover goodies! And as always there was a craft project for everyone to complete as a keepsake.

We saw a number of

new faces in our group. Welcome to these new participants!

We look forward to seeing you all at our next event!



Donna, Dawn and Shawn figuring out the ice-breaker.



Door Prize winners

Stone Soup: Feeding the Hungry in Waukesha

Stone Soup was inspired by a tale where an old woman made soup with stones. Villagers added ingredients until it became a hearty meal shared by all.

Maureen Dunne founded Stone Soup, which feeds the hungry. After witnessing her father give a doggie bag of leftovers and money to a hungry man.

Dunne was only eight years old. When she asked her Dad why, he said, "that might be the only food he had to eat that day".

This experience stayed with her, and now she feeds the hungry.

Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 4 PM, volunteers gather at Cantarito's restaurant's parking lot at 408 E Main St, Waukesha. The volunteers are there to serve their hot, home cooked, hearty, wholesome and delicious meals to anyone in need, no questions asked.



Angie and Katie Marshall
serving at Stone Soup -
Waukesha

Some days they serve 5 people other days 65, with an average of 20. Meals are made off site, brought and distributed by many of the dedicated volunteer cooks.

In addition to Cantarito, support also comes from: Just One More Ministry, The Destination Bar, Panera Bread, and Journey 21. Journey 21 is a nonprofit center in Oconomowoc.

They offer cooking and other supportive lessons for adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Monthly, Journey 21 donates the meal to Stone Soup.

Katie, a survivor of a traumatic brain injury (TBI), she enhances her cooking skills at Journey 21.

This marked a new chapter for Katie who also volunteers at the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin (BIRC).

She and her mother spend three days a month preparing meals at home and then serving them at Stone Soup. On cold days, she helps prepare meals packaged "to go".

This has helped Katie as well as others, with sequencing, processing and zoning. Maureen states that "Katie is a ray of sunshine and all of the patrons she serves love her."

Katie has a warm and welcoming smile, enjoys making friends and chatting with those



Deborah Stitch

she serves.

Katie says, "I feel like am contributing, filling a hole that otherwise might not get attention." Her mother, Angie, says Katie regularly looks forward cooking and serving the meals.

Being independent and/or feeling independent and productive is psychologically very important for those dealing with a TBI.

Anyone wishing to



contribute or volunteer at Stone Soup, which is always looking for cooks and food, may contact Maureen at: (262) 696-9085, www.thestonesoupproject.org, mail@thestonesoupproject.org or Facebook. Anyone wishing to learn more about BIRC may contact Lois at (262) 770-4882 or via their website at www.bircofwi.org



Patrick Jensen

Calligraphy is therapeutic and satisfying. I love to see people smile when they examine the lettering I've done for them.

I don't charge money, but I do accept tips.

The Bible Project is the 27 books of the New Testament. It is had lettered and will include illustrations of Capitols.

The Book of God

Typed by Katie Marshall

I have been working with a printing company in West Allis to scan verses and add print numbers to the pages. The cost will be \$2 per page to scan, 60 cents per page to print.

The original pages at 14" by 17" and will likely be reduced in size for publication. The illustration will be possible using all Art of the Masters creations.

This is all in the public domain and free of copyright that I may use it in this project. I am open to artwork for the

project that is made as a donation.

The Lord made it possible for me to create calligraphy and put it in my heart to do this project. Not only will the product of publication provide for my immediate needs financially, it will make philanthropy possible.

The mercy ships are my main goal to fund and help in anyway possible. Leaving this planet a positive resource after I die, that is the main aim of finishing and publishing this project.



Discontinuing Print Version

As of March 2024 we will no longer be offering the print version of the BI-INSIDE Magazine. This is a great opportunity to break isolation by visiting your local library to use their computer and to view this magazine!

Take this opportunity to catch up with a friend

and take a look together!

We value our readers and want to encourage survivor to keep reading! Each issue has fascinating articles that cover brain injury awareness as well as brain injury recovery.

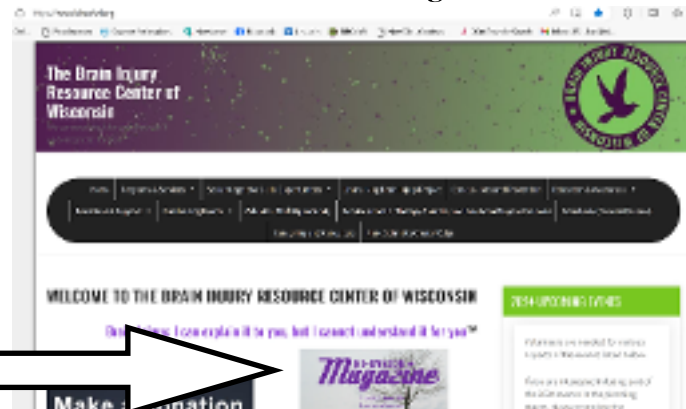
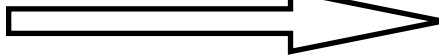
We sent out a letter to everyone who received the BI-INSIDE Magazine in print and got no indication back that anyone wanted to continue.

Look below to view instructions on how to access the BI-INSIDE Magazine online!

Step-by-Step Instructions:

(How to view)

Step 1: Enter in the URL shown at the top of the screen. www.bircofwi.org



Step 2: Click the BI-INSIDE Magazine you would like to access



Step 3: Scroll down to the middle of the page where you will see the current magazine ^ last edition.



Telling of the Tale: Brittany Elizabeth

Written by: Deborah Stitch and Brittany Elizabeth

I am Brittany Elizabeth and I am a Neuro/Trauma/Stroke Nurse who lives with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) caused by one of my patients. It was four years ago, a normal evening at the hospital.

I was attempting to care for a patient when suddenly I was struck on the side of my head and everything started spinning. I must have passed out.

Waking up in the emergency room with a shocking headache was unbearable! Every little noise seemed extremely loud; the lights were unbearable.

Putting sentences together seemed almost impossible. I was having a hard time remembering the names of those closest to me.

I thought, "How could I now be lying in the same hospital bed where I treated patients?" "I just need ice, the lights off, the noise off and I will be fine".

While experiencing all of this, even as a Neuro nurse, I did not grasp that I had received a (TBI).

The following day I had a doctor's appointment. I felt this would be a simple one time visit and I would be ok.

I informed my nursing manager that I would be absent from work for the day, but would return tomorrow. However, I became aware that there was an issue when I could not link her voice to her name or convey my thoughts to her accurately.

Entering the occupational health provider's office with my

husband by my side, I used him to support me both physically and emotionally.

I slightly remember being unable to stand on my own on the scale to take my weight.

With nearly a decade of experience, I could not manage my own head injury. The pain in my head and neck, dizziness, nausea, and confusion were severe.

I had difficulty understanding the occupational health providers' instructions and questions due to the blurred perception. I just kept thinking, "When will this be over? I need a dark room, and I need a bed."

Confusion erupted shortly after, as I was faced with these many questions.

I also was suffering massive migraines, making it almost impossible to get out of bed. I had trouble understanding words, and found holding phone conversations or any conversation, difficult if not impossible.

My short-term memory was greatly affected.

I remember putting a blouse into the kitchen sink to soak. I turned on the water and walked away and completely forgot what I had just done.

The water poured over the sink onto my wooden floors. Then through the ceiling and walls onto the bedroom floor below.

As I worked at healing, every task felt overwhelming, confusing and painful. Grocery

shopping was a nightmare.

I couldn't remember the layout. I could not handle the lights and noises.

Turning my head in different directions often resulted in a debilitating, spinning headache, causing me to leave my cart and exit the store.

If I managed to reach the checkout, I needed a human cashier. I found the self-checkouts too complicated to use at that time.

It took me a couple of years to resume driving. I had to get rides everywhere, which added another layer of stress to my already difficult therapy schedule.

Just getting into the car could trigger extreme nausea. As I healed and started to drive, adverse weather conditions such as rain, snow or the sound of the blinker would make driving challenging.

My mind struggled to process the substantial number of stimuli involved in driving. Especially the strobe-like effect of oncoming headlights at night.

Numerous times I had to pull over and call my husband to pick me up. With time driving has become more normalized.

My physical therapist had me work on virtual driving to starting driving again.

Even today I am not completely healed. My neck hurts every day, all day.

Continued from page 11

I still receive numerous monthly injections in my face/head. I also receive occipital nerve block injections into the base of my skull.

In addition, I take a fair amount of medicine to keep the painful migraine headaches under control. The long unknown journey of several years of treatment for head injuries became my life.

On the bright side, I have come a long way. For three and a half years I did up to three therapies a day, up to five days a week focusing on retraining my brain.

Each therapy was extremely difficult. I had to regain my balance, my focus, and my thought process.

However, by doing so my brain has dramatically rewiring itself. This healing process is called neuroplasticity.

I learned about the different therapies from one therapist to another, with each of them saying I should have started their therapy so much sooner after the assault. I have completed speech therapy, vestibular therapy¹, psychotherapy, and occupational therapy.

I also had CAT scans and MRI's. I have recently learned about 3D MRI's which shows

much more detail.

At the time, I thought "My Goodness, isn't there a "How To" book that provides steps to healing one's brain injury?" I quickly discovered even if there was a book I was not capable of reading it.

My mother had to read the few we found. They were all too confusing and too long for me to read or comprehend with my injury.

At the time, we did not realize groups like the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, BIRC, existed. At the BIRC, they guide people with their information and resources.

It has been four years. I started with part-time work and I am now working full time.

I don't know if I will ever work in a highly stressful hospital environment again.

I was an avid rock climber of towering mountains and it is unlikely I will ever be able to do that again.

However, I can walk, talk, and see.

Being able to tolerate noise and lights once again has been such an asset to me.

I endured a lot of hard work

and therapies. I never would have made it to this point without the help and support of my incredible husband.

My mother would come and stay for months at a time. Also, my dad, Tia, and my birth mom are here for me. I have my Animals and my supportive friends.

I have an appointed advocate (which everyone should have to navigate the complicated medical system). My fabulous therapists who kept telling me I could do it.

It may not be quite the same as before my injury. I may be going in a different direction than I thought I would. I am blessed to still have a full life.



Brittany with Koda

1: If your TBI damages your vestibular system, you may have balance problems, dizziness, or a sudden feeling that you're spinning or that your head is spinning.

Watch your mail/email for more information on upcoming events! If you are not on our mailing list, complete the information below to get started!

Contacts First Name:		Contacts Last Name:	
Mailing Address:			
City:		State:	
Cell # (including area code):			
Home # (including area code):			
(Choose One) Call me on this phone in case of cancellation:		<input type="checkbox"/> CELL	<input type="checkbox"/> HOME
Email:			

☐ I am a brain injury survivor and I would like to receive a birthday post card from BIRC!

B E T T E R H E A L T H
W O R D S E A R C H

H	E	C	N	A	T	P	E	C	C	A	B
T	S	N	N	O	I	T	I	R	T	U	N
L	I	F	E	N	A	E	L	C	Y	O	J
A	C	A	W	R	F	S	L	L	I	K	S
E	R	I	E	S	G	N	I	T	E	E	M
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R	X	H	A	X	G	V	M	K	P	G	U
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GROUPS
COURAGE
POWER
JOY
LIFE
CLEAN
MEETINGS
EXERCISE
FAITH
NUTRITION
WILLPOWER
SUCCESS
FITNESS
SKILLS
GOALS
CHOICES
HEALTH
ENERGY

This word search was created by brain injury survivors: Katie Marshall and Scott Daul.