

BITBISTIDE **Magazine**



**BRAIN INJURY
RESOURCE
CENTER** of Wisconsin

**Have you discovered your path?
Let us help you...**

15th ISSUE: March 2026

Brain Injury Awareness Issue

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Message from the Executive Director

Hi Friends,

Brain Injury Awareness month is observed every March. In Wisconsin alone, according to Wisconsin Department of Health Services, there is an estimated 19,046 medical encounters or deaths that were reported in 2023. The sad fact is that not every brain injury is diagnosed, therefore not every brain injury makes up this number. This month is dedicated to education, prevention, and advocacy for individuals and families affected by brain injuries.

If your path needs some tending, give us a call: (262) 770-4882 We can help you turn your undesirable path into a path that is easier to navigate.

Until next time!

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, ABI Survivor, 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 (TBI Survivor, Resource Facilitator, Vice President of the Board of Directors for the BIRCoFWI and Contributor)

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Katie Marshall (TBI, Resource, Facilitation Assistant, Contributor and Editor)

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

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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

Most people get adequate vitamins and minerals from a well-rounded diet and don't need supplements. However, vitamin and mineral deficiencies can lead to various neurological problems.

Deficiencies are most

Resource Facilitation: What's the Buzz

New Beginnings: A handbook for life after brain injury

excerpt: chapter: 47 - Supplements



commonly caused by malnutrition or certain diseases. For example, a **lack** of vitamin B12 can cause cognitive impairment resulting in difficulty walking, weakness, numbness, and poor coordination.

Here is a **list of some supplements that have helped TBI survivors :**

- Multivitamins
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids
- Probiotics
- Antioxidants, including Vitamins C, E, and Beta Carotene.

- Coenzyme Q10
- Phosphatidyl Serine (PS)
- Acetyl L-Carnitine
- Vitamin B12
- Glycerophosphocholine (GPC)
- Choline
- Vitamin D
- Creatinine
- Zinc
- Amino Acids
- ButterBur
- Magnesium

ALWAYS check with your doctor before taking any new supplements.

Holiday Gathering: Thunder Bay Grille

Written by: Bari Rieth

The staff of BIRC gathered at the Thunder Bay Grille for a nice luncheon on December 20, 2025. Linda and Micki Scherwinski were also in attendance and not pictured above as well as Taryn was unable to join us.

The item selections were amazing. The attendees could choose from either the salad bar or a regular menu item.

Conversation was had by all. The topic of conversation ranged from topics dealing with the BIRC to topics in general.



This location proved to be an ideal spot mainly due to the Thunder Bay Grille being located conveniently off of hwy 94.



Concussions and Prevention

Did you know... The United States Congress has recognized National Concussion Awareness Day. National Concussion Awareness Day will be recognized on the third Friday of each September yearly and is registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

Hands-On Demonstration and Educational Presentation

What is the goal?

This presentation is designed to raise awareness about concussions and to educate individuals about the consequences. Seeing and feeling is believing.

The presentation was created and is conducted by survivors of brain injury who share their stories to explain the day-to-day ramifications. Post and pre-tests are administered to determine the level of awareness for each participant.

Concussion and Double Vision goggles are used to allow the participants to experience firsthand what it feels like to sustain these injuries. *Leaving a lasting impression is the goal.*

Event Description

Imagine you can experience the impact of a brain injury firsthand. You may have heard about it.

You may have seen it on TV. But do you know and understand the ramifications of a brain injury?

Hear from survivors firsthand how life can be

dramatically altered in the blink of an eye. Experience a concussion without actually sustaining one; experiencing is believing.

Are you ready to schedule your presentation?

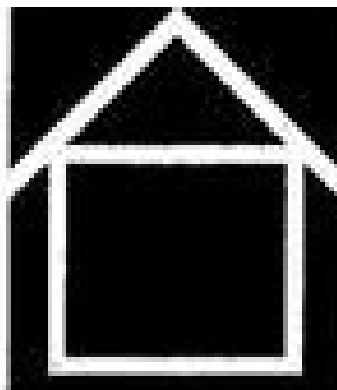
The suggested donation for this hands-on experience is \$300.00.

[Contact us today to schedule your event.](#)

PREVENTION!

Don't learn the meaning by accident!

Can you face the inconvenient truth? There is no other way to say it: Traumatic brain injuries are predictable



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and preventable.

Local and national news and other media outlets are all abuzz when something horrible happens. Often, they speak of “accidents or incidents” when referring to “unintentional injuries.”

Although these incidents—such as car/semi crashes, falls, work-related

injuries, playground accidents, bar fights, sports-related, and so on—may be unforeseen, they are neither isolated nor arbitrary. More importantly, these events are both predictable and preventable.

Human factors play a role in prevention. Individual characteristics that influence behavior at work, rest, and play in a way that can affect health and

safety.

While none of this information is new, it must be part of the prevention equation.

Coming to a location near you!
 To reserve this presentation, contact us by calling (262) 770-4882.

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Pt. 1: Katie Goes to the Library

What may be easy for some might confuse others, read to learn more...

Written by: Bari Rieth and Sheri Krahn

Going to the library requires a lot of planning, organizing and implementing. This is exactly what

Katie Marshall did the other day when we went to the Waukesha Library, which is just a hop,

skip and a jump from our office.

Early in December, we decided to walk on a nice day to this library. Those in attendance were:

Katie Marshall, Scott Dual, Sheri Krahn and Bari Rieth.

Upon arriving we took everything into consideration, including the sidewalks which were

properly cleared and maintained for the colder weather. Free of snow!

When we entered the Waukesha Library we went to the reference desk, which is in the front part of the library. At this desk we found the correct person to speak with.

Katie proceeded to apply for her library card by filling out an information form and handing this

to the lady. Next, it was picture time!

Smile and say cheese! Katie's library card is below:

The lady at the reference desk then asked Katie which library card design she wanted. At the

Waukesha library there are many designs.

At first Katie selected a library card design that someone who had no

cognitive challenges

would be have been fine with. Due to the problems Katie has with her short-term memory, she

would know about this design in this moment, however when she went back to look at her

library card she would become confused.

The opposite side of this card has an older library card and when Katie would look at this, she

might toss out this card thinking it was put in her wallet by mistake. After we explained this to

the reference desk lady, she helped Katie to select a library card design that would work for her.

When all was said and done, we left the library feeling good that Katie was not only able to walk

to the library, she asked for a library card, we stepped in when appropriate, but for the most

part Katie did everything on her own! Way to go Katie!



Where in the Community is the BIRC?

We were at Carroll University - Non-profit Expo

Written by: Bari Rieth and Lois York-Lewis

On February 5th, the Waukesha Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. held the Non-profit Expo, which took place at Carroll University. Our booth caught everyone's eye. People who wanted to learn more came by and left with a better knowledge of the devastating consequences that sustaining a brain injury can entail. Thank you for including us in your event!

We were interviewed by *Fox 6!* *Be sure to watch our segment!*



Human Factors and Environmental Factors Matter

Three aspects of **Mind-Body-Spirit/Mood**

- **MIND**= The five factors that mostly influence the state of mind are Place, Time, Food, Past Impressions (including misconceptions), Associations, and Actions.
- **BODY**= How your body feels and reacts is indicative of how you will approach every moment of the day. How do you respond when your body is not working like you want it to?
- **SPIRIT/MOOD**= The

Written by: Lois York-Lewis

essential difference between the two concepts is that spirit generally refers to a failure of will to control one's longings or reactions to daily life, while mood (such as depression) is considered a medical condition or a failure of the body.

This is about **MIND + BODY + SPIRIT** and what human factors affect your choices.

Environmental factors play a role in

prevention. Refers to characteristics that influence reactions and behaviors at work, rest, and play in a way that can affect health and safety. While none of this information is new as well, it too must be part of the prevention equation.

Three aspects of environmental factors: **WEATHER – PLACE/SURROUNDINGS – VISIBILITY**

- **WEATHER:** Is it safe to be out and about? Wind, rain, ice, snow, and even sunrise and sunset can be a factor.
- **PLACE/SURROUNDINGS:** Are you traveling an



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Human Factors and Environmental Factors Matter

Continued from pg. 9

Written by: Lois York-Lewis

unfamiliar road?
Are you in a dark alley? Is the staircase free of obstructions?

- **VISIBILITY:** Can you see what is around the corner? Is the fog too dense to be out? Is your view obstructed in any way?



This is about WEATHER – PLACE/SURROUNDINGS – VISIBILITY, and what environmental factors affect your choices.

“A parent’s worst nightmare is their child sustaining a severe traumatic brain injury because someone else made a very bad choice.”

Quote from Lois York-Lewis – mother of a TBI Survivor

Telling of the Tale: Bari Rieth

Written by: Bari Rieth and Lois York-Lewis

*Reprint and updated from the BIRCoFWI Bulletin

The crash took place on June 17, 2005 and at that time I was 15. My 16th birthday was looming near, August 24th to be exact.

School was done for the year. It felt like the best year of my life.

I finished a dance recital, I was in a school play, and I got 2nd runner up in the Miss. Dance Masters of Wisconsin dance pageant.

I was on top of the world in almost every aspect, but the events that would unfold on June 17, 2005 would force me to come crashing down. On this fateful day my friend and I had decided to attend a birthday party for a classmate.

Ironically on that same day I had completed my first week of drivers’ education class. My friend picked me up from this class to go to the party.

It was on our way home that my life was dramatically changed for ever.

The last memory I have from that night is walking up a set of white wooden stairs. The information that follows has been shared with me, as I do not remember.

We were driving down Calumet Rd. heading towards 81st when we approached the intersection. Our side of traffic had the right-of-way and the

cross traffic had a stop sign.

As we approached this road, my friend saw the semi-truck coming, it was apparent he was not going to stop. In an effort to avoid this massive truck he tried to swerve out of the way.

The semi-truck rolled over the front of our car, trapping me inside.

I have been told that the semi-truck driver fell asleep behind the wheel. The semi-truck driver apparently did not wake up until the truck jolted as it came to a stop on top of our car.

According to reports, multiple response units were on the scene. The JAWS of life was used to extricate me from the car.



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My injuries included a laceration on the right side of my head, a five-inch laceration on my calf, (they had to sew through three layers of flesh to close), five fractured ribs, one bruised lung, one punctured lung, there were tears to my spleen and liver and I had a blown right pupil.

The most impactful injury that I sustained was a severe traumatic brain injury, TBI.

The first two years is when a lot of recovery can take place, but recovery will continue for the rest of your life.

This continued recovery, depends on the individual, the family and friends who support them and faith in God.

I was unaware that all of my high school friends could not comprehend the magnitude of what had happened. So, instead of wanting to be there for me they weren't.

Now I understand and I hold no resentment against them. My injury was too severe, too complicated to understand and they were just high school students; that was too much for them to grasp.



I was also not able to comprehend and didn't really understand my brain injury back then.

I was able to graduate from high school and with the assistance of the special education department at **Carroll University**, I was able to complete my college degree in four years.

After college, I was driven to help other survivors and families who were able to re-gain a sense of independence.

Fast-forward to February of 2011 when my Mom and I co-founded the Brain Injury Resource Center of Wisconsin, Inc. We now serve all of Wisconsin.

Our mission is to provide resources and information, as well as education and awareness.

Our motto is: *Brain Injury: I can explain it to you, but I can't understand it for you.*™

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 or visit us [online](#).

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City:	State:
Cell # (including area code):	
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(Choose One) Call me on this phone in case of cancellation: <input type="checkbox"/> CELL <input type="checkbox"/> HOME	
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P	A	X	N	E	H	C	A	D	A	E	H
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|---------------|-------------|
| 1. CONCUSSION | 5. BEHAVIOR |
| 2. HEADACHE | 6. SUDDEN |
| 3. DIZZINESS | 7. IMPACT |
| 4. CONFUSION | |

Scott Daul and Katie Marshall present and have created our Concussion Awareness Program. To *learn more* or *book* the presentation for your group, organization, or company contact us by email at admin@bircofwi.org or call (262) 770-4882. Remember we all have brain injuries too! When you contact us via email indicate in the subject line that the email is about the Concussion Awareness Program.