

Alabama Head Injury Task Force News



Survivor Spotlight – Ian Phillips, Prattville, AL

Remember to breathe... words spoken to me by my father in the first few days after I woke up from my brain injury. He would notice as he sat by my bedside that I was holding my breath, or just not taking a breath. The simple reminder from him in those first moments has become a motto for me in the years since. 2012 ended on such a high note-- we found out we were expecting our second child. And then 2013 hit like a freight train. My brain injury occurred on January 9, 2013. I lost consciousness at home and was taken to the ER by ambulance. Once I arrived at the hospital, 33 cm of an NG tube was shoved into my brain, hitting all four lobes. I lost consciousness originally because I had meningitis, and then while recovering, I developed a pulmonary embolism. I wasn't supposed to survive, and yet, here I am. Six weeks after my TBI, I lost my mom very unexpectedly. Because of the harsh side effects of my TBI, it took years to be able to fully process that grief. Then, in July, our daughter was born, and we learned that she had a rare genetic blood disorder. When I say 2013 was a rough year, I mean it.

In the years since my injury, I have struggled with executive function issues, planning, organizing, motor function control in my left leg and foot, and memory lapses. I have found one of the most impactful ways to set myself up for success is to create routines and stick to them, even for the most seemingly mundane things. Place my keys, wallet, and cell phone in the same spot every time I am done with them. Keep a calendar (and actually check it daily). Maintain a morning and evening routine for hygiene and medication. Maintain a routine for getting the kids up and ready for their day. I have also found that maintaining a structured gym and workout routine improves my daily life by leaps and bounds. I have been able to improve the strength in my left leg which offsets some of the motor deficit in my left leg and foot. Along with weightlifting, my son and I started taking Taekwondo together and we both earned our Black Belts at the same time. I also earned my Blue Belt in Jujitsu. I have found that training in two different disciplines of martial arts has greatly helped with my motor control and memory recall. The endorphin release from my workouts improves the mood swings that can sometimes accompany a frontal lobe injury, and I find that pushing myself in the gym is a great stress and frustration reliever. Prior to my injury, I was a locomotive engineer. Now, I'm a stay-at-home dad with three beautiful, healthy, wonderful kids (maybe that helps explain some of the fatigue also). Life is certainly different since January 9, 2013. I have learned it's incredibly important to celebrate the me I am now. It's also okay to grieve the loss of the person I was before.

TBI Core Competency 2022

At the end of April, the ADRS TBI care coordinators, ACL grant staff, and the Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF) staff gathered for the first in-person TBI Core Competency Training since 2019! Attendees earned CEUs while learning more about Personal Safety for In-home and Community-based Services from Det. Tomatra Johnson at the Mobile Police Dept., TBI and Behavioral Health Training, which included the debut of the new training video & informational guide for behavioral health professionals, and Brief Negotiated Interviewing presented by Audra Morrison, MSW-SBRIT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) Project Manager at the University of Alabama. There was also a lunch & learn during which the new ADRS TBI Navigation System was introduced.



Gina Hornsby, New CRS Care Coordination Program Specialist

Gina Hornsby, LICSW PIP, was recently promoted to Care Coordination Program Specialist with CRS in Montgomery. She has worked with CRS for over 11 years, first as a Care Coordinator, then as a Social Work Administrator. Gina is looking forward to working closely with care coordinators, specialists, and community providers to develop policies and procedures that provide quality services and family-centered care to children and youth with special health care needs.



 **SAVE THE DATE!** 

Don't miss our last 2021-22 Task Force meeting on September 8th!



Pilot Club of Lee County

The ADRS Traumatic Brain Injury Staff would like to thank the Pilot Club of Lee County for donating cognition bags for all new consumers and their families within the Pediatric and Adult TBI Care Coordination Program. The Pilot Club created and assembled over 250 bags. Pilot International's Mission is to influence positive change in communities throughout the world by coming together in friendship and service, focusing on brain safety and health, and supporting those who care for others. Visit the Pilot Club of Lee County Facebook Group [here](#) for more information.

Return to Learn Protocol for COVID and Concussion

Karen McAvoy spoke to the Pediatrics Priority Group this month regarding updates to GetSchooledonConcussions.com and GetSchooledonCOVID.com. They have expanded to include language about "Brain Fog" from COVID and cognitive inefficiencies from trauma, flu, mono, stress, chemotherapy, seizures, mental health crisis, etc. The Teacher Acute Concussion Tool (TACT) and Tip Sheets are also being rewritten, and they have created a COVID Teacher Training Video. Click [here](#) to watch the video.



Dementia Friendly ALABAMA Memory Cafés in Alabama

A Memory Café is a wonderfully welcoming place for individuals with Alzheimer's Disease or any other form of dementia, cognitive impairments, or other brain disorders including TBI. They are designed to include the care partner as well, for a shared experience. Email Delane Poague, Project Coordinator at Delane.Richardson@adss.alabama.gov, for more information at Dementia Friendly Alabama. Access their *Dementia Resource Guide* [here](#).

Accessible Journeys Magazine

Accessible Journeys is a disabled consumer travel magazine. This new online magazine is full of articles and resources for disabled travelers and is a partnership between TravelAbility and the Mélange Publishing Group. The magazine is available free of charge to read or download at Accessible Journeys.



Dan Parker, Survivor - Guest Speaker

Blind Machinist • World's Fastest Blind Man

In 2012, Dan Parker, a lifelong drag racer, lost his eyesight and sustained a TBI in a horrific race car accident. But he was determined to keep racing, and now races with no human assistance using a custom guidance system that gives him audible feedback on how to correct his course. He supports his racing goals by selling writing pens that he machines from start to finish by himself. Learn more [here](#).

 Toll Free TBI Helpline 

1-888-879-4706



AHiF Alabama Head Injury Foundation (AHIF)

Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Recreational and Therapy-

Based TBI camp dates have been set and our online support groups continue to meet. To learn more about our camps and support group options, click [here](#).

Upcoming Recreational Camp Dates

Camp ASCCA Week-Long Camp – Aug. 14-19

Camp McDowell Weekend Camp – Oct. 7-9

Upcoming Therapy-Based Camps

Samford Bright Ideas TBI Camp – June 21-23

USA Bright Ideas TBI Camp – June 29 – July 1

UA Bright Ideas TBI Camp – July 19-21

UAB Bright Ideas TBI Camp – September 7-9

Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS)

The PASSAGES Pediatric TBI Care Coordinators have served a total of **269** consumers through the second quarter of FY22 assisting children and youth with transition from hospital to home, community, school and providing information and education on TBI residuals to families and school systems. Learn more about CRS [here](#).



The **Adult TBI Program** served **204** caseload consumers and their families through the second quarter of FY22. The program provides individual cognitive remediation, counseling, TBI education, and accommodations to transition to community and/or employment. Staff remain low with no funds to retain full time staff in some areas of the state despite the increase in overall referrals. Learn more about the Adult TBI Program [here](#).

Governor Ivey Declares TBI Awareness Month in Alabama



Pictured (from left): TBI survivor and Veteran Brandon Peters and Aspen the Service Dog, Veterans Recovery Resources, Mobile County; Dr. Graham Sisson, Governor's Office on Disability, ADRS; Elmore County student and TBI survivor Eleora Littlejohn; State Head Injury Coordinator April B. Turner, ADRS; Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Chair Dr. Despina Stavrinos, UAB; Joshua Harmon, Coosa County TBI survivor; Brinda Dungan, TBI Navigator, ADRS, AHITF Advisory Council, Jefferson County, TBI survivor; Ian Phillips, Alabama Head Injury Task Force Advisory Council, Autauga County, TBI survivor; Matt Beth, Auburn University Doctoral Student, AHITF Advisory Council, Lee County, TBI survivor.

TBI Core Comp 2022 Invites SBIRT

Pictured (left to right): Whitney Storey, TBI Care Coordinator; Audra Morrison, MSW-SBRIT Project Manager; Tammy Lovell, TBI Care Coordinator; April Turner, State Head Injury Coordinator; Fara Flick, TBI Navigator; Brinda Dungan, TBI Navigator; Lisa Miles, TBI Care Coordinator.



Brain Bags from Pilot Club of Lee County



Back Row (left to right): David White, TBI Grant Project Coordinator; Lisa Miles, TBI Care Coordinator-Decatur VR; Stacie Rolfe, TBI Care Coordinator-Huntsville CRS; Whitney Storey, TBI Care Coordinator-Montgomery VR; Kristen Moore, TBI Care Coordinator-Montgomery CRS; Hayden Kelley, TBI Care Coordinator-Andalusia CRS; Kayla Freeman, Mobile VR; Brinda Dungan, TBI Grant Navigator-Homewood VR; Cynthia Murphy, TBI Care Coordinator-Homewood CRS.

Front Row (left to right): Atallah Cotton, TBI Care Coordinator-Dothan CRS; Monica Grammer, TBI Care Coordinator-Homewood CRS; Bonnie Hindman, TBI Care Coordinator-Mobile CRS; Tammy Lovell, TBI Care Coordinator-Homewood VR; Fara Flick, TBI Grant Navigator-Opelika VR; Jamie Nicole DeLee, TBI Care Coordinator-Opelika CRS; Gina Hornsby, Care Coordination Program Specialist-Montgomery CRS; April B. Turner, State Head Injury Coordinator-State Office.