

# HeadLights

The annual newsletter of the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina • 2024



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## Joyce Davis, BIASC Executive Director Receives Prestigious Award



Marty Van Dam, BIASC Board President (left), with Joyce Davis, BIASC Executive Director and recipient of the 2023 Joyce Davis Impact Award. See page 13.

## Study Uncovers High Incidence of Chronic Pain After TBI

A new study published in the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation (JHTR) found that chronic pain affects approximately 60 percent of traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors, with some respondents reporting chronic pain up to 30 years post-injury. [cont. on page 17](#)



# Brain Injury Association of South Carolina (BIASC)

BIASC is the voice of, and the only organization specializing in brain injury in South Carolina. We represent the brain injury community by offering resources and serving on committees and task forces including the SC Brain Injury Leadership Council (SCBILC). We depend on fundraising, grants, sponsorships, memberships, and donations to provide our services statewide.

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# Message from the Outgoing Board President

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It has been a great year for the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina (BIASC)! Through advocacy efforts and with the help of Rep. Nathan Ballentine, we were able to secure our third year of non-recurring funds through the S.C. State budget process in the amount of \$387,713. Joyce Davis, Executive Director of the BIASC was awarded the first Joyce Davis Impact Award by the Board of Directors this past summer at the Life with Brain Injury state conference. Over the course of her almost 20 years with the organization, Joyce has shown service and dedication to the mission of improving the lives of persons with brain injury.

Her consistent efforts to secure funding within the state budget over the last three years have provided the necessary resources to enhance services addressing the intersections of brain injury, including interpersonal and domestic violence, opioid use, and support for veterans. Along with these new initiatives, BIASC has been able to hire talented and passionate staff to lead and participate in these efforts, continue programs like the Safety Net Project, our many support groups across the state and a long list of education and training opportunities across our state for caregivers, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, educators, school systems, athletic trainers and college students across S.C.



**Marty Van Dam**  
2023 Board President

I am happy to share that our Board of Directors has grown this year with the addition of four new members — all volunteer leaders who bring unique skill sets to our group. I am so very proud of the work that our organization has accomplished this year. BIASC is in a strong position for continued growth as we look at how we can serve the needs of our growing communities in S.C. I am excited and hopeful for our organization’s future and am



**“BIASC is in a strong position for continued growth as we look at how we can serve the needs of our growing communities in S.C.”**



looking forward to being a part of this growth as I pass the baton to Andrew Gowdown, the new President of the Board of Directors. I have the utmost confidence in Andrew’s abilities to lead our organization and believe that we will accomplish great things!

**Thank You!**  
Support from our **Community Sponsors** enables us to provide crucial resources to thousands of individuals in S.C.

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# Message from the Incoming Board President

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**Andrew Gowdown**  
2024 Board President

I am honored to be the incoming president of the BIASC Board of Directors.

I want to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Marty Van Dam, for her hard work and commitment during her time as president. Through her leadership, BIASC continues to be an important resource to brain injury survivors and caregivers. I aim to continue Marty's selfless work, growing BIASC's impact in the community.

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**“... it is critical that we continue to raise awareness about brain injury and increase the number of resources available to those who have been impacted.”**

.....

As a personal injury attorney with the Rosen Hagood law firm in Charleston, I work with clients who have suffered traumatic brain injuries. My clients entrust me to handle their complex personal injury litigation cases and guide them through the process from start to finish. Therefore, I am intimately aware of the challenges presented to brain injury survivors and their families.

Entering 2024, I'm eager to support and uphold BIASC's mission in brain injury prevention, research, education, and advocacy. As I have seen throughout my work with survivors and their caregivers, it is critical that we continue to raise awareness about brain injury and increase the number of resources available to those who have been impacted. BIASC has made significant strides in the last few years in meeting this goal

by securing substantial funding from the S.C.

legislature. This funding is used to support BIASC's various programs, including the S.C.

Visibility Project, the S.C. Brain Injury Safety Net Project, Brain Injury Specialist Certification Training, and many other resources. These programs help spread information on brain injury prevention, treatment, and symptoms, while providing support to those who are affected. They also increase education for the community, law enforcement, schools, and medical professionals. You can learn more about these programs, and several others, at [biaofsc.com](http://biaofsc.com).

I look forward to working with our Executive Director, Joyce Davis, who has been instrumental in the growth of BIASC. Through her tireless efforts, Joyce has increased awareness about brain injury and continues to expand BIASC's education, resources, and services to the community. She helps lead the charge in advocating for and supporting brain injury survivors and their caregivers.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve as the president of this outstanding organization. It is my goal to make a difference in the lives of those impacted by brain injury.

# Welcome!

The South Carolina Brain Injury Leadership Council (SCBILC) welcomes it's newest members, Robert Hinson and Peter McDermott (not pictured) of Columbia, S.C., and Deloris Sullivan of Greenville S.C.



**Robert Hinson**



**Deloris Sullivan**

SCBILC serves as the statewide advisory council for brain injury, tasked with coordinating and promoting support services for individuals, their families and caregivers.

## Get Involved

SCBILC wants the voices of brain injury survivors at the table.

For more information on the council and how to join visit [scbraininjuryleadershipcouncil.com](http://scbraininjuryleadershipcouncil.com).



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# Program Updates



All updates are for the 2023 calendar year.

## Brain Injury Safety Net Program

Brain Injury Safety Net Program is in its 5th year (Jan. – Dec. 2023) and continues to educate school nurses, athletic trainers, PE coaches, teachers, and medical professionals on the importance of recognizing concussion symptoms and assisting young adults in managing and resolving their symptoms.

### Reach To-Date

- Provided 1,870 SC REAP Manuals
- Provided access to Get Schooled on Concussions (GSOC)/Quick Teacher Acute Concussion Training (QTACT) to 358 professionals that work with youth
- Attended 22 events to educate about concussions in youth
  - 11 exhibitions
  - 14 presentations
- Trained and educated a total of 4,857 professionals who work with youth
  - South Carolina Association of School Nurses (SCASN)
  - Newberry College
  - Bradshaw Institute

- Grand Strand Medical Center
- Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation Hospital
- S.C. Nurses Association
- S.C. Dept. of Health and Environmental Control
- S.C. Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Fort Mill School District
- Office of Special Education
- Event presentations or exhibits
  - Community Access to Child Health (CATCH) Program Meeting
  - 13th Annual Pediatric Trauma and Prevention Symposium
  - Newberry College Professional Development Assessment Day
  - North Augusta Health Fair
  - SCASN Training “Tall Cop: High in Plain Sight”
  - Advisory Council for Educating Students with Disabilities Meeting
  - Grand Strand Medical Center Teddy Bear Clinic
  - Roger C. Peace Launch on the Lawn
  - SCNA Restore, Refresh, Revive Annual Conference
  - 2023 Coaches Clinic
  - 2023 Life with Brain Injury Conference
  - SCAAP Annual Meeting
  - SC Office of Exceptional Children Conference for PE and Health with Fort Mill Schools
  - SC Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

# Program Updates

## Opioids and Brain Injury Intersection

BIASC reached out to harm reduction and state-level organizations providing Narcan kits, which agreed to include a wallet card on overdose-induced brain injury symptoms. To-date, BIASC has provided 1,310 educational wallet cards for distribution to a population of people at-risk of opioid overdose. To receive these wallet cards, contact 1-877-TBI-FACT.



## Interpersonal Violence (IPV)/ Domestic Violence (DV) and Brain Injury Intersection

BIASC spent 9 months building relationships with domestic violence organizations such as South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (SCCADVASA) to determine a collaborative partnership regarding the intersection of interpersonal violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV) with brain injury.

In Sept. 2023, BIASC entered a partnership with Hopeful Horizons, a domestic violence organization

in Beaufort, S.C. to provide a 6-month pilot program regarding brain injury education. Initial staff training provided them with information about brain injury, symptoms to look for with clients and consumers they work with, and the incidence and prevalence for the DV/IPV survivor population.

In Sept., BIASC provided a training to 45 staff members with Hopeful Horizons alongside tangible resources from Ohio Domestic Violence Network (ODVN), who BIASC has also been building a relationship with since the start of 2023. ODVN has allowed BIASC to utilize their CHATS Toolkit resources with the BIASC logo on them in S.C.

- Resources provided to Hopeful Horizons Sept. – Dec. include:
  - 90 BIASC one-pagers.
  - 60 BI screening tool infographic one pagers.
  - 60 small booklets.
  - 65 large booklets.
  - 210 CHATS “Have You Hurt Your Head?” rack cards.
  - 40 BIASC notebooks.

Hopeful Horizon staff complete a monthly report to provide information on what resources have been provided and how many referrals to BIASC have been made.

They completed a pre-test prior to their staff training in Sept. as well as a post-test to assess their knowledge regarding brain injury and physical violence, and intention to use information about brain injury moving forward. They will also complete a 3-month, 6-month, and 9-month post training survey to continue to assess knowledge levels and intentions vs actions when it comes to supporting community members who are at higher risk for brain injury due to violence.

# Veteran Outreach Program

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is considered the signature injury among military service members who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. S.C. has a huge military presence – 58,493 Department of Defense personnel as well as 397,649 veterans including 63,882 military retirees reside in the state. That’s 9.2% of the state population, and the 8th highest percentage of all 50 states.**

**This is why BIASC has committed to focusing on the intersection of brain injury and veterans.**

Over the last year, the BIASC has been active in engaging in many different areas of community outreach. Some of these areas include attending events such as the first ever Veteran Experience Action Center which took place in March 2023. This event was designed to be a one-stop-shop for any questions S.C. veterans may have. It included Veteran Health Care benefits and on-site enrollment, VA Disability Compensation and Pension claims filing assistance, and Veteran Readiness and Employment benefits. BIASC was one of 32 community partners supporting this event along with the American Legion and local veteran service organizations. Over 1,500 veterans attended this event.

In addition to attending and exhibiting at numerous events, BIASC Veteran Outreach Program has been making connections throughout S.C. with other local, state, and federal agencies as well as other non-profit organizations that support veterans with brain injury. These organizations



**Sarah Lustig with HITS introduces Woody the wooden horse as an aid to teaching participants how to handle a real horse.**

include the Big Red Barn Retreat, located in Blythewood, and Hoofprints in the Sand (HITS) in Wando. BIASC also participated in Speech Language Pathology and Associates’ Art Class in Columbia. An intersectional panel discussion was held during the Life with Brain Injury Conference which allowed individuals who have either experienced a brain injury or work with those who have had brain injuries, to discuss topics related to veterans, opioids, and interpersonal violence/ domestic violence.



# Veterans Outreach Program




Detail from a painting by a participant in Speech Language Pathology and Associates' Art Class.

Many services are offered through the VA healthcare system for veterans who have experienced a brain injury. Find out more at [bit.ly/48LiBqr](https://bit.ly/48LiBqr).

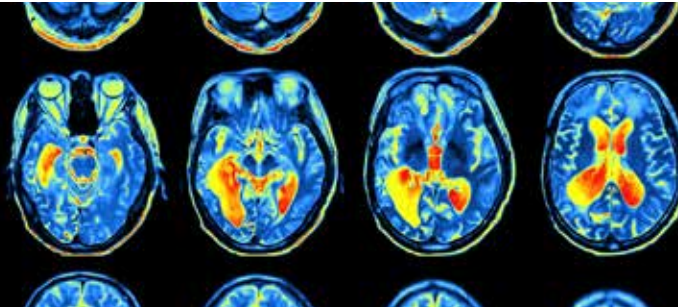
**Your feedback is important to us!**

BIASC is conducting a survey for veterans who have experienced a brain injury to identify needs in the community so we can better focus our services and outreach efforts.



Please take the survey at [bit.ly/BIASCVET](https://bit.ly/BIASCVET), or by scanning the code.

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# Brain Injury Awareness Month

March 9

## Press Conference for BI Awareness

BIASC celebrated its 25th anniversary by kicking off Brain Injury Awareness Month with a press conference at the State House. The event drew many friends and supporters including former BIASC board members and officers. Marty Van Dam, BIASC president, granted an interview to ABC 25 Columbia news where she shared insights into her role as a clinical speech pathologist and certified brain injury specialist. William “Lucky” Jollye also participated in an interview recounting his personal experience with TBI from 2012. Serving on the Board of Directors for the BIASC, Jollye conveyed a message of hope for those living with brain injury.

Watch the interview at:

<http://tinyurl.com/5fb8rzf8>

March 14

## Brain Injury Friendly Art Class

Allison Moir-Smith is a brain injury survivor and advocate, and talented artist who loves teaching others how to paint, especially as part of the recovery process following a brain injury.

In 2023, Allison held four brain-injury friendly art classes online. These sessions are framed as art classes but they're more like art therapy where everyone works at their own pace and expresses themselves freely. Emphasis was placed on mixing colors and exercising creativity.

See page 22 for the 2024 art class schedule.

March 19–25

## Walk, Run & Roll 5K



Columbia Brain Injury Support Group members gathered to walk, run, or roll at the Columbia Riverfront Park followed by a picnic.

BIASC promoted brain injury awareness by hosting the second annual Virtual Walk, Run & Roll 5k. Several support groups throughout the state met in person to complete the 5k together! All proceeds are used to support the many programs and services offered by BIASC, such as:

- Toll-free helpline.
- SC Visibility Project resource bags for new brain injury patients .
- Brain Injury Safety Net Project.
- Education and training .
- Brain injury support groups.
- Injury prevention initiatives.
- Advocacy.
- Opioid crisis outreach.
- Veteran’s outreach.
- Support for survivors of intimate partner violence.

## 2023 Recap

# Brain Injury Awareness Month

March 23

## Fox 24 News Now Interview



Speech Language Pathologist and Certified Brain Injury Specialist, Michelle Moore, provided insight into the brain injury rehabilitation process and tips for caring for your cranium.

Watch the interview at: [tinyurl.com/yc8h8nj7](https://tinyurl.com/yc8h8nj7)

Thank you to the sponsors of  
2023 Walk, Run & Roll 5K!



March 29

## State House Announcement from Rep. Nathan Ballentine



**BIASC Staff members with SC State Representatives on BI Awareness Day.**

BIASC received recognition in the House of Representatives from Rep. Nathan Ballentine, who highlighted the services and programs provided by BIASC and their contributions to the community.

Joyce Davis, Executive Director expressed the organization's gratitude. "Thank you to Representatives Nathan Ballentine, Jay Kilmartin, Sylleste Davis, and Justin Bamberg for taking the time to talk with us about the brain injury community in our state. And thank you Rep. Ballentine for recognizing BIASC and Brain Injury Awareness Month on the House floor."

March 30

## BI Awareness Day

On March 30, BIASC staff, volunteers, and brain injury survivors gathered at the SC State House to visit their legislators, distribute "Gummi Brains," small bags of gummy candy shaped like brains, and advocated for Brain Injury Awareness.

# Life with Brain Injury Conference

**The 2023 Life with Brain Injury Conference marked a significant return to in-person gatherings since 2019, bringing together 204 attendees and 28 exhibitors at the Cooperative Conference Center.**

BIASC staff and Brain Injury Leadership Council members were excited to have the opportunity to reconnect with everyone. BIASC thanks the conference sponsors for their contributions including Brookhaven NeuroRehabilitation Network Hospital in Tulsa, OK; Disability Rights South Carolina; Heart of The Carolinas Homecare; Prisma Health Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation Hospital; and South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council.

Throughout the conference, a diverse range of topics were explored, encompassing brain injury prevention, concussion resources, and panel discussions featuring individuals with lived experiences at the intersections of brain injury and opioid use, veterans, and interpersonal violence. A special listening session addressed the challenges faced by brain injury survivors and caregivers in S.C., offering insights crucial for systemic change.

Keynote speaker, Kelly Lang, a brain injury survivor and caregiver, shared her compelling story, emphasizing the significance of communication and advocacy in brain injury recovery.

SC Rep. Nathan Ballentine was honored with the Brain Injury Association Legislator of the Year Award for his steadfast support of BIASC and the legislation that established the SC Brain Injury Leadership Council in 2013. Rep. Ballentine played a crucial role over the last three years in supporting BIASC's appropriations requests



**Rep. Nathan Ballentine receives the BIA Legislator of the Year Award.**



**Conference participants are welcomed by BIASC staff members.**

from the General Assembly, particularly after Representative Huggins' retirement. He formally requested appropriations for BIASC, resulting in the authorization of nonrecurring appropriations for fiscal year 2024 totaling \$387,000.

BIASC appreciates all the presenters, exhibitors, sponsors, and attendees for contributing to the success of the conference.

# Life with Brain Injury Conference

## Joyce Davis Receives Prestigious Award

In 2006, Joyce Davis assumed the role of Executive Director at the Brain Injury Association of SC, driven by her unwavering passion for advocating for the needs of brain injury survivors and their families. Recognized as a formidable leader, Joyce tirelessly serves as the voice for the brain injury community, establishing crucial connections with legislators.



**Joyce Davis, left, with Rep. Nathan Ballentine at the Life with Brain Injury Conference.**

Under her leadership, Joyce successfully facilitated a funding request to expand outreach for those affected by brain injury. The approval of this request in December 2022 enabled BIASC to bolster its staff, focusing on addressing the specific needs of the veteran community. Additionally, resources and training initiatives were implemented to address the intersection of brain injury with opioid use and interpersonal violence.

Joyce's commendable efforts in enhancing the lives of brain injury survivors were acknowledged during the 2023 Life with Brain Injury Conference. To her surprise, she was presented with the Joyce Davis Impact Award, a special recognition created by the Board of Directors during BIASC's 25th year. This award honors unwavering dedication to serving individuals with brain injury in South Carolina. The title aptly reflects Joyce's profound impact, as she continues her commitment to listening to the community's needs, inspiring resilience, and advocating for legislative changes.

A heartfelt thank you to Joyce for her dedication and hard work in advancing BIASC's mission to forge a better future through brain injury prevention, research, education, and advocacy.

Thank you to our 2023 conference sponsors!



# Support Groups



**The Charleston Trident Head Injury Support Group** had a successful year. In addition to their monthly meetings, the group organized the annual Walk for Brain Injury Awareness in March and a picnic in May. A notable meeting took place in Nov. when Blissful Dreams Rescue Ranch was invited to discuss their work with animals in Huger, SC. Some members had the opportunity to visit the ranch, and plans are underway for a picnic at Blissful Dreams in the spring.

**The Neuro Caregiver Support Group** was established in Feb. 2023. The group caters to caregivers of those with brain injury and stroke, providing a platform for mutual support and exchange of resources. Meetings are conducted via Zoom on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, sometimes featuring guest speakers. This inclusive initiative welcomes participants from across the state. For further details about the group, interested individuals are encouraged to contact Michelle Moore at [michelle.moore@rsfh.com](mailto:michelle.moore@rsfh.com).

**BrainStorm's Young Adult Support and Advocacy Group** resumed its monthly meetings in Sept. following a summer break. The addition of two new co-facilitators, Matthew Smith and Luke Bohnenberger, both brain injury survivors, has brought a dynamic and effective team to the group. Since the group reconvened, the

overarching theme has revolved around “Sharing the Similarities While Celebrating the Differences of Brain Injuries”.

**The Greenville Brain Injury Support Group** expresses gratitude for the core group members, professionals, survivors, and caregivers who generously offer their talents, time, and resources to make this group a success.

The group has established meaningful traditions that foster unity. In Feb., members create Valentine cards to display at Roger C. Peace Hospital for survivors, caregivers, and staff, while March/April brings the annual Chili Cook-off.

In Aug., the group shifts focus to address the question, “How Can We Help?” Meeting topics are selected to ensure more meaningful discussions.

Sept. brings a collaboration between survivors and Warehouse Theatre and Thrive Upstate, Head and Spinal Cord Injury Division, where survivors participate in a play. Come Dec., the group enjoys a sit-down dinner, entertainment, and reflecting on the meaning of Christmas with an emphasis on the supportive bonds within the brain injury family.

**The Chapin/SC Statewide Online Brain Injury Support Group** has evolved into a statewide group, now co-facilitated by Teresa Satterfield, LPCA, CBIST, and Joyce Davis, CBIS. Membership includes individuals from Rock Hill, Charleston, Aiken, Chapin, Conway, and other areas, including participants from out-of-state. Discussions within the group typically flow organically, and members readily provide encouragement and support when needed. New participants are warmly welcomed to join on the third Wed. of each month at 6 p.m.

# Members, Donors, Memorials

### New/Renewing Members

Sarah McCary  
Taylor Harrison  
Joy Kinney  
Jeff Halloway  
Lindsey Branston  
Kimberly Fanquy  
Vallie Taylor  
Alfreda King  
Normand Dumais  
Deborah Schneider  
Marty Van Dam  
Patrica Smith  
Robert Durland  
Carol and Luke Gribick  
Marsha and Tate Mikell  
David Gaffney  
Bonnie Muntz-Pope  
Catherine Barbuscak  
Christy Wolfe  
Jazlyn Marina Edwards  
Kenneth Felder  
Tricia Payne  
John Willie Keigley  
Mark Wheeler  
Kay Brooks  
Annette Farr  
Kellie Seger  
Christina Bailey  
Marjorie Ehrenclou  
Nicolee Alexander  
Synetha Melton  
Mark Sejman

Sherry Caldwell  
Teresa Satterfield  
Jennifer Litchfield  
Adrienne McMillian  
Elizabeth Dubose  
Jacqueline Scott-Mattison  
Ashley Harbin  
Karen Corbett  
Jennifer Litchfield  
Larry, Theresa and  
Paul Sanfacon  
Karen Crider  
Philip, Marilyn and  
Mark Clarkson

### Donors

John Simpson  
Melissa Ritter  
(Baking for Brains)  
Andrew Gowdown  
Streetmeat  
(Fundraiser for BI Awareness)  
Sherry Caldwell  
Larry Lucas  
Laurie David  
Kay Brooks  
Sarah McCary  
Jessica Trego  
Michael Simmons  
Joyce Davis  
Debra Feda  
Hinson Family  
Thomas Seastrunk

Stephanie Opet  
William "Lucky" Jollye  
Marty Van Dam  
Nichole Mayberry  
Nina Spinelli  
Yvonne Smith  
Kerry Stubbs  
Donald Cleveland  
Anne Iriel  
Deanna Norungolo



### Memorials

In Memory of Danny Brothers  
by Environmental Properties  
In Memory of Danny Brothers  
by Derek Harwell  
In Memory of Danny Brothers  
by Virgil Wall Jr.  
In Memory of Cliff Gribick  
by Katheryn Powers  
In Memory of  
William Glenn Kluttz  
by Phil Clarkson

# Volunteer Spotlight

**Sidney Earley, originally from North Lake Tahoe, California is currently a Graduate Student at the University of South Carolina pursuing her Master’s in Health Administration.**

A few weeks after she was born, she had a stroke and spent most of her childhood in speech, occupational, and physical therapy. As an athlete, she also had her share of concussions. While these experiences were challenging, they helped her develop a strong work ethic and resiliency. Sidney credits the never-ending support and inspiration from her family, friends, doctors, and coaches, with helping her to get where she is today.

While earning her Bachelor of Science at the University of Oregon, she served as a liaison



**“Volunteering at BIASC allows me to help those with shared experiences, from young athletes with concussions to stroke survivors. Aligned with BIASC’s mission, I’m committed to connecting people with stress-reducing resources. This experience, complements my MHA degree and drives me toward a career in brain injury prevention policy or program management.”**



**Sidney Earley**  
**BIASC Volunteer**

between the Accessibility Student Union and student government to promote the communication of problems and offer solutions regarding equal accessibility on campus. She also played a crucial role in bridging the gap between students’ accessibility needs and the resources offered by the Academic Education Center and University Health Services.

She decided to pursue her Master’s in Health Administration because she wanted to be an advocate for brain injury survivors as well as a supporter of healthcare workers who dedicate their time to helping those who face brain injuries.

With her lived experience of brain injury and passion for advocating for students with brain injuries, she was a perfect fit to volunteer for the Brain Injury Association of S.C. Since October 2023, she has volunteered her time researching and compiling additional available resources and support services for BIASC staff to provide to survivors, caregivers, and professionals.

Growing up in a small mountain town, she developed a love for skiing. She has a twin sister who constantly inspires her to try new things and be the best person she can be. Being new to the Columbia area, she has enjoyed exploring new restaurants, meeting new people, and getting involved in new activities.



## Chronic Pain (cont.)

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The research surveyed patients who were being followed in 18 TBI Model System centers, a research program that includes 16 civilian and 5 veteran rehabilitation centers in the U.S.

“We have known for some time that chronic pain frequently co-occurs with chronic brain injury,” said John D. Corrigan, PhD, national research director of the Brain Injury Association of America and editor-in-chief of JHTR. “Clinically, it can both limit independence and diminish well-being. This series of studies has demonstrated empirically that indeed it is both frequent and disruptive.”

All 3,804 respondents had been hospitalized with moderate to severe TBI. Time since injury ranged from one to 30 years, with the average time since injury being five years.

Cynthia Harrison-Felix, PhD, FACRM, co-project director of the TBI Model System at Craig Hospital in Englewood, Colo., said this is the first study that examines the experience of chronic pain in a large TBI sample this far post-injury. “Pain status did not differ significantly across follow-up years,” she added. “While our data are not longitudinal, it suggests that chronic pain occurs at varying points after injury, and may interfere with initial recovery and long-term, necessitating proactive pain assessment and treatment.”

The survey informed participants that chronic pain can be defined as “persistent or recurring pain that lasts longer than three months. It includes headaches or pain anywhere in the body, which occurs more than half of the days over a three-month period.” When study participants were asked for specifics about their own pain, key results included:



- 46 percent reported current chronic pain.
- 14 percent reported past chronic pain (after TBI).
- 40 percent reported no chronic pain.
- 32.5 percent of participants with current chronic pain reported constant pain.

Compared with participants who reported no chronic pain after TBI or only past chronic pain, those with current chronic pain had significantly worse results on all three outcome measures included in the survey: the Functional Independence Measure motor and cognitive subscores, the Disability Rating Scale, and the Glasgow Outcome Scale–Extended.

Medications, physical therapy, and home exercise programs were the pain treatments most commonly reported amongst respondents. Medications were used by 91 percent of participants with current chronic pain and had been used by 90 percent of those with past chronic pain. The least frequently reported treatment was comprehensive chronic pain rehabilitation.

The researchers concluded that chronic pain should be assessed and treated along with other neurocognitive and neurobehavioral disorders such as memory deficits and depression, and that while the directionality of the relationship between pain and outcomes cannot be assessed, the findings indicate that the presence of chronic pain after TBI is “far from benign.”

2024

# Brain Injury Awareness Month

## March is Brain Injury Awareness Month in S.C.

BIASC will participate in the following events to promote BI awareness:

### March 4–6

S.C. Human Service Providers Association Conference, Myrtle Beach

### March 6

Brain Injury Awareness Day on Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C.

Virtual Yoga for Brain Health

### March 12

S.C. Assistive Technology Expo, Columbia

### March 13

Recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Month in the S.C. House of Representatives and the Senate

### March 19

Legislative visits with SC Representatives and Senators to talk about brain injury

To participate in any of these activities, call 1-877-TBI-FACT.



## Statewide Walk, Run, and Roll for Brain Injury Awareness

BIASC is set to host a statewide Walk, Run, and Roll from March 17–23, 2024.

The event aims to increase awareness of brain injuries while raising funds to support BIASC's initiatives. The organization, with a mission focused on creating a better future through brain injury

prevention, research, education, and advocacy, encourages individuals affected by brain injury to participate in this year's awareness campaign. Interested participants can form groups to walk, run, or roll on a designated day within that week. Early registration ensures receipt of a commemorative t-shirt to be worn on the chosen day. Participants are encouraged to share photographs on social media using hashtag #WalkRunRoll. **Additional event details can be found at [biaofsc.com](http://biaofsc.com).**



## Donate Today!

Your gift helps to provide critical resources to brain injury survivors, their families, and caregivers.

# Survivors' Spotlight

## The Phoenix Center's Empowering Path to Recovery



The Phoenix Center operates as a dedicated program offering services to individuals with TBI and Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI). Their range of offerings includes exercises, mindful meditation, engaging in arts and crafts projects, community orientation activities, and personalized training objectives.

At the heart of The Phoenix Center's initiatives is the ThinkFirst program, where individuals visit local schools. Here, they deliver impactful presentations, share personal experiences of TBI, and discuss strategies for maintaining safety in daily routines.

Supported individuals actively shape monthly activities and community outings, fostering a collaborative, dynamic and empowering environment. The seasoned staff boasts over 63 years of combined experience in supporting individuals with disabilities and special needs.

mindfulness applied  
**BRAIN INJURY LEADERSHIP**  
ACADEMY

Supporting the development of leaders in brain injury rehabilitation through mindfulness. Learn more at [braininjuryleadership.com](http://braininjuryleadership.com)

 Heart of the Carolinas

*Specializing in home care assistance for those with brain injuries*



*Our caregivers are matched to the care level required*



Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs)

Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) and Home Health Aides (HHAs)



Heart of the Carolinas  
121 Edinburgh Court  
Greenville, SC 29607  
864-990-4345

[www.heartofthecarolinasc.com](http://www.heartofthecarolinasc.com)



We accept Private Pay,  
VA Insurance,  
Community Long Term Care & DDSN (Medicaid)

# Upcoming Professional Training

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## Certified Brain Injury Specialist

The Brain Injury Association of America's Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) is the nation's premiere brain injury certification program.

Acquiring a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) credential is the next step ensuring you remain a valuable, marketable, and well-informed asset in the field of brain injury services. If you are interested in becoming a CBIS and meet the requirements, please contact BIASC at 803.731.9823.

### Requirements

1. High school diploma or equivalent
2. 500 hours of verifiable direct contact experience with an individual or individuals with brain injury
  - Experience may be paid employment and/or academic internship. Volunteer work or self-discovery does not qualify.
  - The qualifying experience must have included formal supervision or have been conducted while the applicant operated, in good standing, under a professional license.

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## Brain Injury Fundamentals

**Developed by experienced clinicians and rehabilitation professionals, Brain Injury Fundamentals is a training and certificate program designed to address the unique needs and challenges of those who care for or encounter individuals with brain injury.**

This includes non-licensed direct care staff, facility staff, family and friends, first responders, and others in the community. The mandatory training course covers essential topics such as:

- Cognition.
- Guidelines for interacting and building rapport.
- Brain injury and behavior.
- Medical complications.
- Safe medication management.
- Families coping with brain injury.

The course maximizes engagement through an interactive workbook. Participants learn about the challenges faced following brain injury and the types of support needed. The program helps candidates understand different types of behavior, manage medication safely, and provide support to families and friends. This course is required to receive the Brain Injury Fundamentals certificate. The training takes 7–12 hours depending on the instructor. Training is provided by approved Brain Injury Fundamentals instructors. After completing training, candidates will take an open-book online exam. Certification is valid for three years.

Contact BIASC at 803.731.9823.

# Make a Difference by Supporting BIASC!

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## Become a Member

**BIASC Members receive exclusive benefits while supporting the organization's mission to provide advocacy, education, and resources to the brain injury community.**

Memberships are available for survivors and families, friends, professionals, and agencies.

### Benefits include:

- Subscriptions to the BIASC and BIAA newsletters
- Registration discounts for the Life with Brain Injury Conference
- Discounts on trainings
- Legislative updates
- and much more.

**Join today at [biaofsc.com/membership](http://biaofsc.com/membership).**

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## Donate

**Without support of the community, BIASC would be unable to provide free resources, support programs, and educational services. Your gift has a direct impact on brain injury survivors statewide. Here's how:**

**\$25** provides a resource kit to a family learning to manage life with brain injury.

**\$40** provides a concussion tool kit for a school nurse, physician, or family.

**\$50** connects a brain injury survivor with a Certified Brain Injury Specialist.

**\$100** provides the Brain Injury Fundamentals training to caregivers.

**Donate today at [biaofsc.com/donate](http://biaofsc.com/donate).**

## Sponsor

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**Community sponsorships enable BIASC to provide crucial support to thousands of individuals in S.C. by unlocking the potential for recovery through rehabilitation, vocational, and educational services.**

**By aligning with BIASC, your company becomes an integral part of the solution, offering hope and assistance to those impacted by brain injury.**

**Contact Joyce Davis at [joyce@biaofsc.com](mailto:joyce@biaofsc.com) to discuss our customized sponsorship levels and associated benefits designed to showcase your commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of those affected by brain injury.**

# Survivor Resources

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## BI Friendly Art Classes

Join BIASC and Allison Moir-Smith, a brain injury advocate, survivor, and artist for Brain Injury Friendly Art. This event is held via Zoom and allows participants to focus on art as a form of relaxation and therapy in an inviting environment. A theme for each class is indicated in the schedule below:

**Tues. Feb. 6**

Raising Awareness for Brain Injury

**Tues. May 7**

Mental Health

**Tues. July 2**

LWBI Conference

**Tues. Sept. 3**

National Concussion Awareness Day and Veteran Support Holidays like 9/11 and Veterans Day



**Allison Moir-Smith**  
Facilitator

Facilitated by Allison Moir-Smith, Brain Injury Survivor, Advocate, and Artist.

For participants in S.C. requiring art supplies, BIASC offers them at no cost. The organization also extends assistance for art supplies to large groups, day programs, rehabilitation groups, etc.



**Register for FREE at [biaofsc.com](http://biaofsc.com), in the calendar of events, or by scanning the code.**

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## BI Mindfulness Yoga

Reduce stress and anxiety, increase focus and concentration, and improve cognitive function, in this one- hour mindfulness yoga class. This is a seated adapted yoga class, for participants of any ability level.

Facilitated by S.C.-Based Yoga Instructor, Shanika Pichey



**Shanika Pichey**  
Facilitator

All classes are held from 10 a.m. – 11 a.m. ET.

- Wed., March 6**
- Tues., June 11**
- Tues., Aug. 6**
- Tues. Nov.12**



**Register for FREE at [biaofsc.com](http://biaofsc.com), in the calendar of events, or by scanning the code.**

2024

# S.C. Brain Injury Support Groups

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## BrainStorm

**3rd Wednesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.**  
Online support group for young adults 16-29.  
To attend, please email [coordinator@biaofsc.com](mailto:coordinator@biaofsc.com).

## SC Online Support Group

**3rd Thursday of each month, 6 p.m.**  
Contact Joyce Davis for the link to the Zoom meeting at [joyce.davis@biaofsc.com](mailto:joyce.davis@biaofsc.com) or 803-731-9823.

## Neuro Caregiver Support Group of the Lowcountry– Online

**2nd Tuesday of each month, 5:30 p.m.**  
Contact Michelle Moore at [michelle.moore@rsfh.com](mailto:michelle.moore@rsfh.com) or 843-720-8378.

## Trident Head Injury Support Group

**1st Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.**  
RIPPLE, 701 East Bay Street, Suite 121  
Charleston, SC  
Contact Kyle Hopfensperger at [kwhopfen@aol.com](mailto:kwhopfen@aol.com) or 803-767-7153.

## Columbia

**1st Thursday of each month, 6 p.m.**  
Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital  
2935 Colonial Dr, Columbia, SC  
Contact Jennifer Ross, [jross@homelessnomoresc.org](mailto:jross@homelessnomoresc.org), or 803-237-6551.

## Greenville

**1st Tuesday of most months, 7 p.m.**  
Thrive Upstate, Head and Spinal Cord Injury Resource Center (HASCI)  
McAlister Square, Suite B-6



225 S. Pleasantburg Drive, Greenville, SC  
Contact Anne Medlock at [greenvillebi@gmail.com](mailto:greenvillebi@gmail.com);  
Kay Brooks at [kbrooks@thriveupstate.org](mailto:kbrooks@thriveupstate.org) or phone 864-230-7821.

## Myrtle Beach

**3rd Thursday of each month, 6 p.m.**  
Health Finders in Coastal Grand Mall near Dillard's  
2000 Coastal Grand Circle, Myrtle Beach, SC  
Contact William Jollye, 864-906-1158  
Registration is preferred but not required. Call 843-692-4444.

## Spartanburg/Lyman

**2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 p.m.**  
Meets in person and via Zoom.  
SC Vocational Rehabilitation  
The Bryant Center  
180 Groce Road, Lyman, SC  
Contact Tanya Lambert at [tlambert1@scvrd.state.sc.us](mailto:tlambert1@scvrd.state.sc.us), 864-249-8048 or 864-249-8030.

## NEW Veteran Brain Injury Support Group

**4th Tuesday of each month, 3 p.m.**  
Speech-Language Pathology Associates of S.C.  
3710 Landmark Dr Suite 108, Columbia, SC  
Contact Joy Kinney, MSR, CCC-SLP at 803-766-4723.



**140-A Amicks Ferry Road, Suite #331  
Chapin, SC 29036**

# Save the Date!

## 2024 Life with Brain Injury Conference

**Friday, July 26, 2024**

**Columbia Cooperative Conference Center  
169 Laurelhurst Avenue, Columbia, SC**

**A forum for exchanging information on programs, resources,  
and best practices in rehabilitation and services.**

Take advantage of this opportunity for networking with professionals, survivors, and caregivers. Contact: Rose Burgess, Conference Coordinator at [burgessenterprises@windstream.net](mailto:burgessenterprises@windstream.net).

