

Partnerships for Success

Partnership between consumers and scientists is essential to the success of our RRTC on Community Integration for Persons with TBI. It is impossible to improve community integration without the input of persons with TBI and their families. This input is crucial to understanding needs and developing programs. It is also important for helping us to determine areas that require further research emphasis and to help us make our outcomes useful for persons with TBI and their families. Consumers are involved in our projects at many different levels. Our Center has an overall advisory board that consists of consumers and scientific advisors. We also have consumers as members of the research team for each of our projects. They attend all research team meetings and provide input into the research methods and measurement tools, as well as into the training materials that are created. We also solicit consumer involvement by conducting focus groups and surveys to help determine community integration needs and to guide development of training materials.

Special ONE TIME Offer

Many of you are receiving this newsletter for the first time. You have been receiving a newsletter called "New Directions". "New Directions" was from a grant that has come to a close this year. "TBI Community News" is a newsletter coming to you through a new grant received this past year from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) called the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Integration of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury at TIRR.

This newsletter is being mailed to the former New Directions recipients ONE TIME through a generous donation from James and Theresa Fruge. Mr. & Mrs. Fruge wanted everyone receiving "New Directions" to receive this issue of "TBI Community News" and to get a chance to sign up to receive it electronically through email for the next four years. **If you would like to continue receiving the "TBI Community News" through email, send your email address to Terri Hudler-Hull at hullt@tirr.tmc.edu.**

Thanks again to Mr. and Mrs. Fruge!

The theme of this newsletter is to introduce you to the consumers who participate in our Center, as well as to the scientific advisor members of our advisory Committee. While we have several consumers who participate in our Center, we can never have too much input.

Below are some of the ways in which you can get involved, get information, or have your voice heard.

1. Send us your e-mail address to receive list serve updates and the newsletter on line. (Go to www.tbicommunity.org and click on "How can I get Involved?")
2. Contact us about your interest in becoming a peer mentor to help other persons with TBI achieve better social integration. Contact Dr. Margaret Struchen or Nancy Smith at 713-666-9550.
3. Sign up for a class at our Center for Creative Expression by calling Terri Hudler-Hull at 713-797-5971.
4. Send us your ideas about classes you would like offered in the future at the Center for Creative Expression to hullt@tirr.tmc.edu or call Terri Hudler-Hull at 713-797-5971.
5. Complete a focus group survey on the web site to help us develop educational materials about TBI for the community by going to www.tbicommunity.org and clicking on "How can I get Involved?"
6. Contact us to be part of a telephone focus group or a face-to-face focus group to develop educational materials about TBI for the community by contacting Terri Hudler-Hull at 713-797-5971.
7. Contact us to review and give us feedback on our family education materials by calling Dr. Angelle Sander or Nancy Smith at 713-666-9550.
8. Contact us to give feedback on your experiences interacting with non-specialist healthcare professionals. What would you like them to know to improve your care? Contact Dr. Margaret Struchen or Nancy Smith at 713-666-9550.

Any other contacts can be made via our web site at www.tbicommunity.org, or you can contact us by telephone at 713-797-5971.

OUR ADVISORS

CONSUMER ADVISORS

JASON FERGUSON is a member of the research team on our Substance Abuse Intervention Project and also serves as an advisor on some of our training projects. He



Jason Ferguson receiving the Survivor of the Year Award from BIA Texas along with Dr. Angelle Sander, PhD.

will also assist in training of peer mentors on the Social Peer Mentoring Project. Jason survived a severe traumatic brain injury in a motor-vehicle accident on the night of December 17, 2002. Jason's spirit, determination, and positive attitude, as well as the support of his family, assisted him in making a remarkable recovery. Since his injury, he has volunteered for St. Luke's Hospital, Houston, and is currently a volunteer on the rehabilitation unit at Quentin Mease Hospital, where he underwent his rehabilitation. He assists the therapy team, participates in the administration of patient satisfaction surveys, and serves as a model of hope for the patients on the unit. Jason was awarded volunteer of the year by the Harris County Hospital District for 2004. He married Susannah Knapp in May, 2004. He is currently attending school with the goal of becoming a physical therapy assistant.

JOSE CANO survived a severe traumatic brain injury on November 15, 2001. He underwent rehabilitation at Quentin Mease Community Hospital and the TIRR Challenge Program. He currently attends school at Alvin Community College, with the goal of earning a degree in Accounting. When not attending school, he enjoys playing golf and socializing with friends. Jose is Hispanic, and serves as the consumer advisor on our project involving ethnic differences in community integration needs, acceptance of disability, and social support after TBI.

MICHAEL SEGAL, LMSW, LMFT is a social worker at Memorial Hermann Hospital in Houston. He survived a severe traumatic brain injury as a result of a gunshot wound to the head in 1981. Mike went on to make a miraculous recovery and to obtain a graduate degree in Social Work. He works with patients and families in the Neuro Trauma Intensive Care Unit at Memorial Hermann Hospital. His story was published in *Chicken Soup for the Christian Family Soul*. He has also published various inspirational writings and stories in anthologies, newsletters, and magazines. He served as an advisor on several previous grants, including the TBI Model System and the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Interventions After Traumatic Brain Injury at TIRR in Houston.

CHERYL AMORUSO, M.S.W., LCDC, ADC is the Director of the Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students With Disabilities at the University of Houston. She is the sister of a young man who sustained a severe traumatic brain injury many years ago. Her experiences in helping her brother to obtain services and to navigate through a chaotic medical, legal, and financial system inspired her to want to help others. She is a founding

member of the TBI Network, a group of professionals and consumers in Houston whose mission is to facilitate increased networking opportunities, disseminate information, and increase the knowledge base about injury for persons with TBI and their families. Cheryl served as the President of the TBI Network for many years. She is also a Past President of the Brain Injury Association of Texas. She has served on the Advisory Board of the TIRR TBI Model System grant and the TIRR Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Interventions After Traumatic Brain Injury.

LATRICIA ECKENRODE is working with the RRTC on the Social Peer Mentoring Project, and has been involved with the development of the Peer Mentor Training Program. In 2002, she survived a motor vehicle accident in which she sustained a severe traumatic brain injury. Ms. Eckenrode is a single mother of two beautiful girls and a full-time college student working toward an associate degree with the Ultrasound program at Cy-Fair College. She is enjoying college life and the opportunity to meet new people. She states that she appreciates the encouragement and loving support that she has received from family and friends in raising her daughters and pursuing a great career. The smiles and laughter of her precious daughters brings her joy. She enjoys being able to encourage others and to watch them overcome their obstacles in life. Her words of wisdom to others, "Keep your faith, Keep your joy, and Keep your determination!"

LINDA HERMAN is a member of the research team for our project investigating the impact of employer's attitudes on employment after TBI. Linda survived a severe TBI in February 2001, when her car

hydroplaned off the road, rolled over, and hit a tree. She was unconscious for 2 weeks and underwent rehabilitation therapies for approximately 2 years. Linda was a civil engineer prior to her injury, but found it difficult to return to this role after injury. Instead, she has focused on hobbies, such as architectural design, creative cooking, and sewing. She recently designed an addition to her family's summer cottage. She also enjoys cataloguing wildflowers. Linda's input into the design of the research project has been very valuable.



The research team for the "Employer's Attitudes Project" L to R: Angelle Sander, Walter High, Marie Silva, Linda Herman, and Margaret Struchen with Les Young (DRS) on speaker phone.

ROBERT HAMILTON, CRC, LPC is involved on the research team for our project on examining factors that contribute to social integration outcomes after TBI. He will also be involved with the Social Peer Mentoring Project. Mr. Hamilton was initially trained as an electrical engineer at the University of California, Santa Barbara, California Institute of Technology, and University of Southern California and was employed as a researcher at China Lake Naval Weapons Center and Hughes Aircraft Company. He was formerly an Assistant Professor at Purdue University and Research Associate at University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and was an International Captain for American Airlines. After sustaining a serious brain injury, Mr. Hamilton returned to graduate school at the University of North Texas to pursue training as a counselor in order to help others in rehabilitation. He counseled for several years at Neuropsychology Associates of Dallas, an organization specializing in brain injury assessment and rehabilitation. He is currently Vice President of Operations for Cup of Water International Ministries Inc., a Christian-based international humanitarian aid organization specializing in child abuse and brain injury education

and assistance. He also serves as Secretary Member of the Board of Directors for the Brain Injury Association of Texas.

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

MARK SHERER, PH.D., ABPP is Director of Neuropsychology and Clinical Director of the QUEST program for community integration after brain injury at Methodist Rehabilitation Center in Jackson, Mississippi. He is Clinical Professor of Neurology and Psychiatry at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. Dr. Sherer is Principal Investigator of the TBI Model System of Mississippi. He is a Board Certified Neuropsychologist and a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and the National Academy of Neuropsychology. He has published over 150 peer-reviewed articles, chapters, and abstracts, including groundbreaking work in the areas of impaired awareness and post-traumatic confusion. Dr. Sherer serves as an advisor to our research project on ethnic diversity in community integration needs and to our training project on training non-specialist health care professionals in the needs of persons with TBI.

JEFFREY KREUTZER, PH.D., ABPP is Director of Rehabilitation Psychology and Neuropsychology at the Medical College of Virginia/Virginia Commonwealth University. He is Professor in the Departments of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and

the Department of Surgery's Division of Neurological Surgery at Medical College of Virginia (MCV). Dr. Kreutzer is the Principal Investigator for MCV's TBI Model System. He is also the Project Director for an Advanced Research Fellowship Training Grant from NIDRR. Dr. Kreutzer has authored or co-authored over 150 peer-reviewed articles and has authored numerous publications for consumers, including educational manuals and workbooks. He is Co-Editor-and-Chief for the journals Brain Injury and NeuroRehabilitation. Dr. Kreutzer is serving as an advisor on our research projects on substance abuse intervention and on training family members as paraprofessionals.

MITCHELL ROSENTHAL, PH.D., ABPP is Vice President for Research for Kessler Medical Rehabilitation Research and Education Corporation, and Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation for the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He is Project Director for the TBI Model System National Database Center. For 15 years, he served as Project Director for the Southeastern Michigan TBI System. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and former President of its Division of Rehabilitation Psychology. He has authored or co-authored over 80 peer-reviewed articles and given hundreds of lectures at both national and international levels. He co-founded and co-edits the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation. We are pleased to have Dr. Rosenthal as an advisor to our research project on ethnic diversity in community integration needs and to our training project on increasing community awareness of TBI.

JAMES MALEC, PH.D., ABPP is Professor in the Department of Psychology and Psychiatry at Mayo Medical School. He is Principal Investigator for the TBI Model System at the Mayo Clinic. He is a founding member of the Association

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of Postdoctoral Programs in Clinical Neuropsychology, and was Vice-President from 1995 to 1997. He is a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and is a member of the Board of Directors of the International Neuropsychological Society. He is an active member of the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine, and served as Chair of its Brain Injury Interdisciplinary Special Interest Group from 1996 to 2000.

Dr. Malec has a long history of active involvement with consumer organizations, having served on the Board of Directors for the Brain Injury Association of Minnesota and the Board of Directors for the South-eastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living. Dr. Malec will serve as an advisor on two of our research projects involving assessing employer attitudes toward persons with TBI and training family members as paraprofessionals.

Brain Injury Association of Texas 22nd Annual State Conference

Staff members of the RRTC on Community Integration of Persons with TBI were actively involved in the 22nd Annual Brain Injury Association of Texas State Conference held in Houston, Texas on August 14 and 15, 2004. This annual conference brings together people with brain injuries, researchers, family members, service providers, brain injury advocates, staff of state and local government agencies, and students from Texas to find common ground by learning from each other about the needs of our communities and to share information. This year's conference theme was "It Takes a Village: Working Together to Build a Strong Texas Brain Injury Community". Dr. Margaret Struchen, Co-Director of the RRTC, served as the Conference Chairperson for this year's meeting and organized the speaker sessions. Dr. Angelle Sander, Co-Director of the RRTC, presented a breakout session on "Assessing and Treating Alcohol Use Disorders after TBI". Drs. Struchen and Sander, along with Dr. Karen Hart, Director of Training for the RRTC, presented information about several of the projects from the RRTC in a talk entitled, "Novel Approaches to Promoting Community Integration after TBI". In addition to the presentations, Dr. Hart and Ms. Terri Hudler-Hull were able to convene focus groups to collect information that will be used to help create information packets for a community awareness project. Finally, we were able to share information about the RRTC's projects and ways that others can become involved with our center.



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