

HELPING PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY BRAIN INJURY

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Meet Jack, a tenacious brain injury survivor!

My story starts July 27, 1984.

I made the decision to take a ride to cool off, and I told friends there would be a band at the lake. As I looked out in front of me, I saw a car cross the road. I cut loose on the throttle and let it go. But as I reached the speed of 70mph, that same car turned in front of me.

In a split second, my 23-year-old life changed forever. As an experienced rider, I did everything I could to stop on a dime. Some things are not easy to do; at impact the bike was forced under the car, and for me, it was head-first into the car, no helmet, then 20 to 30 feet into the air only to slam headfirst into the pavement. A pick-up truck locked up its brake to only miss my head by inches.

Jack's story, continued

I struggled to get up to see how badly the bike was damaged. It was completely totaled.

For me, the same. I had blood coming out of both ears. It ran down both sides of my eyes and mouth. I was still confused; I just wanted get to my bike so I could go fix it.

The first hospital, Madison ER, stabilized me for a transfer procedure.

Not good. Kept hearing the words he was 'not going to make it'.

Sioux Falls ER stabilized me well enough to do the surgery I needed. It released the blood off my brain and stopped the swelling that could have caused more damage. It was the beginning of the hard, long road that I still deal with today.

My skull shattered to pieces. The only thing they could do was to push all the pieces back together the best they could, and wrap it in gauze to keep it in place so it could heal while I was in a coma for the next several months.

I sustained many more injuries. I went in and out of a coma; the coma, I was told, helped the brain to heal.

Now, the long hard road to recovery took two years just to help me feel part-way normal. I guess that's when I said 'this is as good as it is going to get'. It was time to learn how to live with the new person I had become. That 23-year-old young man was long gone.

When my accident happened all those years ago, I was told by the doctors that something might break in my head one day. Well, that day came. 28 years or so later, I started to have uncontrollable grand mal seizures.

Each seizure was stronger than the last. Each time it would take longer to remember who I was and where I was at. The answer to the doctor was more medication that only worked for a while. After one seizure I lost the option of brain surgery to control my seizures. At that point I had a mission to find out everything I could about seizures. This journey helped me understand more about my brain injury. What a journey that was.

The only thing that I really knew was that I had a brain injury. No one told me anything more than that. Wow. I had no idea about what an eye-opening experience it could be to learn what this brain of mine was doing? Luckily, I had good doctors that just didn't answer the questions. Rather, they gave me contact information for people to talk with. It helped me connect with the TBI group where we can meet and get help to better understand our injuries.

-Jack Canton

Book

Headstrong:
Surviving a
Traumatic
Brain Injury

Author

JoAnne
Silver Jones

**Review
by**

NeHa Karna
Brookings, SD

Read & review

“Headstrong” presents a captivating memoir by JoAnne Silver Jones, delving into a transformative journey of her life before and after an unforeseen assault. The book is unlike any other brain injury book written from a clinical or medical perspective; this book offers a unique narrative that can also serve as a reference to understand the perspective of a person with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

One of her psychiatrists defines the experience of traumatic brain injury to be like a filing cabinet that gets thrown in the air: “When it lands, some things drop in familiar places and some things stay rearranged and lost.” Through her introspective recollection, moments of delayed understanding, and memories contributed by those around her, JoAnne walks readers through her heart-wrenching journey of assault and recovery.

JoAnne starts the book by recounting her excitement to attend inauguration of first black president, Barrack Obama. She would have never known that a simple decision to take a shortcut through a DC alley would lead to a pivotal moment that could alter the course of her entire existence. The traumatic brain injury she sustained in a hammer attack shattered not only her physical well-being but also her theories, beliefs, aspirations expectations, competencies, and sense of self.

The story is not just of a person who was bludgeoned with a hammer and lived to tell the tale; it’s a saga of a resilient woman who ultimately triumphs over her adversities. Each time she endeavored forward she was dragged down again by the formidable specters of PTSD, seizures, tinnitus, and other health-related issues. To top it off, she also encountered professional setbacks by an unjust burden imposed by the university dean, forcing her to confront an overwhelming class load in the face of her ongoing mental health battles.

Beyond the tale of assault and recovery, “Headstrong” also imparts a powerful lesson on the significance of love in our lives. In the appendix section of the book, JoAnne offers some practical advice to help her readers effectively communicate with an individual who has TBI. It is advised to give people room and time to respond or connect.

-Neha Karna

History of BIASD

Forging the mission

In 2003, a group of individuals who were dedicated to supporting those who had sustained a brain injury, their families, and friends met to discuss how this could be accomplished. The group was given a startup grant of \$5,000.00, and a smaller subgroup formed the Brain Injury Alliance of South Dakota. The original BIASD board consisted of Ron Hoops and Robert Woodring from Aberdeen; Jim Norton from Watertown; Carol Jorgensen-Ehlers and Karen Brokenleg from Sioux Falls; Shelly Pfaff from Pierre; Beth Haug from Hermosa; and Betsy Valnes and Mike Gilleland from Rapid City. A mission statement was written, and bylaws were created. This small group became the first Board for the organization.

Over the years, the organization has offered support to many who have sustained a brain injury and their families in dealing with the changes that occur after sustaining a brain injury. The organization empowers families by providing educational resources to help them understand the changes in their loved ones and how to work on accepting these changes. These changes are difficult and those who have sustained a brain injury may struggle to accept who they have become, and so do their families. Guidance for families and those who have sustained a brain injury in accepting who they are now and assisting them in discovering what they are able to accomplish, are important objectives of the organization. There was already a Sioux Falls Area Brain Injury Support Group in Sioux Falls, SD, that had begun in 1989, and the Brain Injury Alliance of South Dakota was able to act as a resource for the members of this group, and other support groups as they were created, to provide support and resources.

Today, the Brain Injury Alliance of South Dakota continues educating the public, advocating for improvements in the quality of life for persons with brain injury and their families and supporting programs to prevent brain injury. The group has become a 501(c)3, or nonprofit group, so all donations are tax deductible. In the near future, strategic planning will take place to help the organization continue to grow, to direct fundraising efforts, work on legislation, and increase membership.

Submitted by Karen Brokenleg, current BIASD Board Member

Current Board Members:

Justine Ashokar
Karen Brokenleg
Brenna Christiansen
Jenny Hallan
Brian Poelstra
Mary Tommeraasen
Jennifer Williams

Support Groups

Aberdeen

Where:

Avera St. Luke's
305 S. State St.
Aberdeen, SD 57401

When:

Monthly, 3rd Tuesday
7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Contact:

(605) 380-6655

Brookings

Where:

United Way Office
908 Hope Drive
Brookings, SD 57006

When:

Monthly, 1st Thursday
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Contact:

(605) 697-6678

Sioux Falls

Where:

Active Generations
2300 W. 46th St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

When:

Monthly, 2nd Saturday
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM

Contact:

(605) 940-1815
(605) 322-5066
(605) 367-5260

Rapid City

Where:

Black Hills
Brain Health
803 Sioux San Dr.
Rapid City, SD 57702

When:

Monthly, 2nd Tuesday
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Contact:

(605) 343-7297

Mark your calendars!

August 22 – September 26, 2023:

What: Powerful Tools for Caregivers Class

When: Tuesdays, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Where: Zoom

Cost: Free

For more information, contact: carly.endres@UND.edu

September – December 2023:

What: North Dakota Brain Injury Network Classes

- 09/06/2023: Nutrition and Brain Injury
- 09/20/2023: The Power of the Process
- 10/04/2023: Reflections of a Pediatric Survivor 42 years later
- 11/01/2023: More than you can see: A Mother's Memoir
- 12/13/2023: Sleep and Brain Injury

When: Wednesdays, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM Central

Where: Webinar

Cost: Free

For more information, contact: carly.endres@UND.edu

September 8, 2023:

What: Latino Survivor Series – A Talk about Brain Injury for the Spanish Speaking Community

When: 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM Central

Where: Zoom

Cost: Free

For more information, visit: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/events/>

September 15, 2023:

What: Virtual Concussion Symposium

When: 9:00 AM – 3:35 PM

Where: Virtual

Cost: Free

For more information, contact: carly.endres@UND.edu

October 6 – 7, 2023:

What: BBQ Competition & Music Festival hosted by Brain Injury Advocates of Wyoming

When: 1:00 PM

Where: Central Wyoming Fairgrounds, Bar Nunn, WY

Cost: See website

For more information, visit: <https://advocates.org/services/brain-injury-services>



October 13, 2023:

What: The Impact of Traumatic Brain Injury on Military Families, Active Service Members and Veterans: A Resource Panel

When: See website

Where: Virtual

Cost: Free

For more information, visit: <https://www.braininjuryhopefoundation.org/events/>

November 28, 2023:

What: South Dakota Day of Giving – Fundraising opportunity for BIASD

When: All day event

Where: See page 7 for details

Cost: Donation-based

For more information, contact: dahschumacher@hotmail.com

November 5, 2023:

What: Empty Bowls Event (soups from local businesses, live music, & silent auction)

When: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Where: Nicolay Sen Art Museum in Casper, WY

Cost: See website

For more information, visit: <https://advocates.org/services/brain-injury-services>

March 21 – 22, 2024:

What: Mind Matters Conference hosted by the North Dakota Brain Injury Network (www.ndbin.org)

When: Full-day

Where: Fargo, ND at the Ramada Inn by Wyndham

Cost: See website

For more information, contact: carly.endres@UND.edu

South Dakota Day of Giving:

The first Tuesday following Thanksgiving, is our largest fund raiser. Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday is about generosity during the holiday season. Although Day of Giving is a “global generosity movement” this is only the 4th year BIASD is participating. It is “a 24-hour extravaganza of generosity and all the money stays right here at home”. The money collected goes to specific nonprofit organizations. In 2022 \$1328 was raised in one day for BIASD. This year we are looking for individuals who can assist on **November 28**. If you use Twitter and/or Instagram, we can use you. If you know how to set up a message to post at a later time either on email and/or Facebook, we need you. Please contact Doris Schumacher, dahschumacher@hotmail.com or 605-697-6678. Donations can be fulfilled at braininjurysd.org, or by mailing to:

Brain Injury Alliance of South Dakota
4304 S. Glenview Road
Sioux Falls, SD 57103

Get involved and make an impact!

Helping People Who Have Been Touched by Brain Injury

Independent
newsletter
serving the
South Dakota
brain injury
movement.

Seeking to
inform, inspire,
and connect
those in the
brain injury
community.



In May the Brookings Area Brain Injury Support Group sponsored a booth at the Brookings Mental Health Awareness Day sponsored by Brookings Behavioral Health & Wellness

Please contact us at braininjurySD@gmail.com to share in future editions of this newsletter.

Newsletter co-editors:

Doris Schumacher and Jennifer Williams



Disability Awareness and Outreach Initiative
at the Brookings Public Library

Accessible Activity Series

Come enjoy disability and neurodivergent-friendly activities at the Brookings Public Library that are accessible, adaptable, and welcoming. Activities are free and open to the public. All ages are welcome. Please contact mneubauer@cityofbrookings-sd.gov with any questions!



Yard Game Day
August 11 @ 1pm



Collage Making Craft Class
September 8 @ 1pm



Board Game Day
October 13 at 1pm

These programs are made possible by the Peggy Barber Tribute Grant from the American Library Association

If you require assistance, alternative formats, and/or accesible locations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact the City ADA Coordinator at (605) 692-6281 at least 3 working days prior to any meeting held at the Library