

# Messenger

## A Look Back at 2005 & Ahead to 2006

While the Association may not have been very visible in 2005 and did not put on its annual conference, the Association was very active behind the scene. We have been reviewing where we should focus our efforts to have the biggest impact and accomplish the most good for brain injury survivors.

Several on the Board and several individual members have worked with several other groups on a Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Implementation Grant. We hope to hear within the next two to three months if the grant request will be approved.

This past year we have also worked with Representative Sandra Prater and others in the community as they try to put together a Bill for the 2007 Session to establish a Legislative Commission on Traumatic Brain Injury that will look at the needs of brain injury survivors across the state. The long term goal of this Bill would be to establish a brain injury commission similar to the Spinal Cord Commission.

In the past we have not been consistent in our approach to membership. Memberships expire in almost every month of the year. We are currently planning an Annual Membership drive in March. We plan to kick off the month of March with a Proclamation by Governor Huckabee naming March as TBI Awareness Month in Arkansas to coincide with National TBI Awareness Month (which has been changed from October to March). We are planning one or two activities for March. One of which is having a Walk for Thought walkathon in Little Rock on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. This event is aimed at heightening awareness of brain injuries and serving as a fundraiser.

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## The Association's New Officers

Each year immediately following the Association's Annual General Membership meeting, the Board elects officers for the upcoming year. Officers for 2006 are:

President: Diane Gutierrez, MEd (Little Rock)  
 Vice President: Dana Gonzales, PhD (Little Rock)  
 Secretary: Deborah Gangluff, ScD (Conway)  
 Treasurer: Michael Bell (Little Rock)

Individuals elected to serve a three-year term (2006-2008) were

Theresa Driver (Fayetteville)  
 Shaun Best (Smackover)  
 Dana Gonzales, PhD (Little Rock)  
 Deborah Gangluff, ScD (Conway)  
 Tribble Roddenberry (Maumelle)  
 Larry Thompson (Osceola)

Other members of the Board not already listed are:

Teresa Belew (Little Rock)  
 Rene Boucher (Bentonville)  
 Ann Fullerton (Little Rock)  
 Jim Hamilton, LCSW (Little Rock)  
 Bill Hartley (Hot Springs)  
 Patricia Jackson, RN (Bull Shoals)

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## Support Groups

The purpose of a support group is sharing with and supporting one another for the mutual benefit of the individuals and the total group. Some essential elements of a support group are:

- ❖ Active and involved listening
- ❖ Being heard by others who care
- ❖ Meeting and accepting one another's needs
- ❖ An awareness of common needs and strengths
- ❖ Receive understanding and provide an opportunity for others to be understood
- ❖ A place to find courage and to take risks
- ❖ Providing an atmosphere to get in touch with oneself
- ❖ Positive and negative views can be expressed without judgment or labeling

There are several Support Groups around the state.

**Little Rock:**

2nd Tuesday of each month, 6 - 7:00 p.m.  
Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute  
Therapeutic Recreation Room (Ground Floor)  
Facilitator: Diane Gottsponer  
(501) 202-7047

**Fayetteville:**

Survivors' Support Group, 3rd Friday  
at 2:00 pm  
Caregivers' Support Group, 1st Wednesday  
at 4:00 pm  
Quality Life Associates  
Contact: Theresa Driver  
(479) 571-4455

**Fayetteville:**

2nd Tuesday of each month, 10:00 am -  
12:00 pm  
Sources for Community Independent Living  
Services, Inc.  
Contact: Sherry Priestaf  
(479) 442-5600 or Toll Free: (888) 284-7521

**Bentonville:**

Date, Time & Place to be announced  
Contact: Rene Boucher  
(479) 271-7764

**Hot Springs:**

Date, Time & Place to be announced  
Contact: Bill Hartley  
(501) 525-8463

**Russellville & Clarksville:**

Monthly in each town, at lunch time  
at various restaurant locations  
Facilitator: Jim Spragins (Russellville)  
(479) 890-5751

**Mountain Home:**

1st Saturday of each month, 10:00-11:30 am  
Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
Basement/Fellowship Hall  
Contact: Dr Vann Smith, Neuropsychologist or  
Patricia Jackson, RN  
(870) 445-5941 or (870) 425-7096

**Jonesboro:**

Date, Time & Place to be announced  
Contact: Lourindia Rufkahr  
(870) 933-0420 or (870) 931-1170

More support groups are needed. Contact us if you are interested in starting a support group in your area.

(501) 374-3585 (Little Rock)  
(800) 235-2443 Toll Free, In-state only  
Web Site: [www.BrainAssociation.org](http://www.BrainAssociation.org)  
E-mail: [info@BrainAssociation.org](mailto:info@BrainAssociation.org)

designated the DRC as the independent rights protection and advocacy system for persons with disabilities in Arkansas. DRC operates under authority outlined in Federal law and is funded primarily by the Federal government. For more information contact DRC at:

Disability Right Center  
1100 N University, Suite 201  
Little Rock, AR 72207.  
Phone: (501) 296-1775 V/TTY  
Toll Free: (800) 482-1174 V/TTY  
Fax: (501) 296-1179  
E-mail: [panda@ArkDisabilityRights.org](mailto:panda@ArkDisabilityRights.org)  
Website: [www.ArkDisabilityRights.org](http://www.ArkDisabilityRights.org)  
Forum: <http://www.arkdisabilityrights.org/forum>

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## What is "Walk for Thought?"

The Walk for Thought is a fundraising Walk and public awareness event that will be held at Murray Park in Little Rock on Saturday, March 25. The event is a celebration of life, hope and healing. The walk is open and accessible to all – including those in strollers and wheelchairs. Walkers will have their choice of either a 1-mile walk or a longer 3.1-mile (5K) walk.

Those who walk can do so as an individual or part of a team of three or more. Teams can be made up of family, friends, co-workers and social clubs – anyone who wants to join in the fun and raise money for the Brain Injury Association of Arkansas.

How do walkers raise money? They ask others to sponsor them in the walk!

As we finalize plans for the Walk for Thought we are looking for companies interested in being an event sponsor. Several sponsorship levels are available.

How can you get involved? Simply email a request to [walk@BrainAssociation.org](mailto:walk@BrainAssociation.org) and we'll get information to you as soon as it's available (probably the end of February). Don't have Internet access? Not a problem, just call Gary Low, Walk for Thought Chairman at 501-416-4742 (Little Rock) or on his toll-free number 800-497-4387. Don't be surprised if he answers "Mini-storage".

What are some ways you can be involved?

- ❖ Be an event volunteer
  - ❖ Help secure an event sponsor.
  - ❖ Walk in the event.
  - ❖ Help promote the event in your community.
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The **DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER (DRC)** is a private non-profit agency with offices in Little Rock, Arkansas. Since 1977 the Governor of Arkansas has

## Membership...

Like any organization, we need members. Members' dues help fund the organization by helping pay for newsletters and other efforts. In our organization, members are there to help others and provide points of contact in special situations. If you are not already a member, we hope you will consider becoming a member. We have several levels of membership available. To become a member or renew your membership, complete the following and return with your payment to our PO Box address listed at the bottom of this page.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

H Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ W Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5 Survivor           | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Supporting - Individual    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Student (College) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Century Club - Individual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family member     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Corporate                 |

Survivor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Professional - Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Patron |
|---|---------------------------------------|

Return to:  
Brain Injury Association of Arkansas  
PO Box 26236  
Little Rock AR 72221-6236