

Messenger

TBI Partnership Implementation Grant Update

Loretta Alexander has been selected as project coordinator. She will be responsible for managing all activities, has been selected. She began working on July 3. Loretta has a Master's degree in Health Services Administration from UALR. In addition, she has extensive experience managing federal grants and analyzing health data gained while serving as Project Director for Comprehensive Child Development Program at Arkansas Children's Hospital. She has also worked with the Arkansas Medicaid program while serving as Arkansas Indigent Care Coordinator. She brings valuable expertise to our efforts to improve services for traumatic brain injury patients and their families. Her email address is Loretta.Alexander@arkansas.gov. Her work phone number is 501-280-4923.

The TBI Advisory Board which consists of representatives of partnering organizations, TBI survivors, and family members recently elected officers. They are: Dr. Tonya Thompson, chair; Shaun Best, vice-chair; and Aleecia Starkey, recording secretary.

2007 Walk for Thought

We hope to build on our success this year and have an even more successful Walk For Thought next year. Please reserve Saturday, March 24, 2007, for our second annual walkathon. If you are interested in helping, please contact Gary Low, by phone at 501-416-4742 (Little Rock) or toll-free at 800-497-4387 or by email at gary@glowar.com.

Arkansas Legislative Update

Representative Sandra Prater is leading an effort to put together a draft Bill for the 2007 Session entitled "An Act to Establish the Arkansas Legislative Commission on Traumatic Brain Injury; and for other Purposes." As we listed in our last newsletter, the purposes of this act are:

- ❖ "To study the rates and severity of traumatic brain injuries in Arkansas;
- ❖ To project the incidence of traumatic brain injuries over the next ten (10) years;
- ❖ To develop a strategic plan to ensure an appropriately prepared workforce to treat traumatic brain injuries and provide for rehabilitation services to the extent possible; and
- ❖ To convene stakeholders from health care providers, the health care industry, business, the legislature, and the public."

The Commission will be comprised of 17 voting and 7 non-voting members. For more details, visit our home page to view a pdf copy of the bill in its current draft form.

As we get closer to the 2007 session, we will be looking for co-sponsors in both the House and Senate. If you have a working relationship with your Representative or Senator, please start talking to them about being a co-sponsor.

National Legislative Update

On July 17th, Senators Hatch (R-UT) and Kennedy (D-MA) introduced a bill reauthorizing the Traumatic Brain Injury Act (S 3668). On the House side, Representative Pascrell (D-NJ), introduced the companion bill (HR 5738) on June 29th with 65 co-sponsors. Reauthorization of the TBI Act will continue federal funding for a range of traumatic brain injury programs.

For more information on this and other national legislation, read current and past issues of *Inside Washington* on the National Disability Rights Network web site at www.ndrn.org.

Understanding the Puzzle of Head Injury

The Arkansas Special Education Resource Center (ASERC) is here to provide "child find," referral information to families of children with learning problems due to head injury, as well as technical assistance to schools regarding educational services.

Child find activities may include helping schools identify students who have an educational disability due to a head injury. Child find may also include helping parents and/or other family members recognize that the child's difficulty in learning may be due to an educational disability subsequent to a head injury.

Children, birth to 21 years of age, who have a head injury that is called a "brain injury" or a "traumatic brain injury" may be eligible for services through their school or preschool. This injury may have been due to a concussion, skull fracture, sport or motor vehicle accident, or other closed head injury. Children who have what is called an "acquired brain injury" through blood clots, strokes, infections, aneurysms, tumors or other medical conditions, may also need services.

Even mild head injuries may have a devastating effect on an individual, a family or even a school community. Mild head injuries may be missed by parents, family and school personnel as the reason for school and social difficulties.

For more information, contact ASERC at 501-835-3330, or toll free at 800-482-8437. or send email to Aleecia.Starkey@arkansas.gov.

Join Exploring Spasticity

Call for entries in the fourth annual Exploring Spasticity program. Exploring Spasticity is a national education program that aims to raise awareness for spasticity through creative expression. The program's web site provides general information about spasticity, treatment options, and further resources.

This year's theme, Breakthrough Moments, focuses on instances that have changed spasticity patients' lives for the better. Who has inspired them? What have they achieved? Are there obstacles they've overcome? Beginning now and until September 15, 2006, individuals affected by spasticity are encouraged to submit written (750 words or less) or artistic entries that address these questions. Your submissions will be used to help others understand the challenges spasticity can bring. From the entries received, 12 finalists will be featured in the 2007 Exploring Spasticity calendar and will receive a \$250 gift check. For more information, visit their web site at www.exploringspasticity.com.

Association Update

During the July 5-7, Independence Days – Arkansas disabilities Expo, we set up our display (see photo at end of newsletter), along with many other vendors. We had a few request to be on our newsletter list. The Expo was held in the Statehouse Convention Center. While there was a fee to attend the sessions, the exhibits were open to all. They reportedly had over 300 register for the Expo.

We will also have our display at Baptist Health Rehabilitation Institute's August 31 – September 1 Brain Injury Rehabilitation Conference.

We are looking at having our display at one or two other conferences this fall, including the DD Conference.

If you have articles, conference information or other announcements you would like for us to consider for our October newsletter, please contact us no later than October 1st either by phone or email at any of the following. (501) 374-3585 (Little Rock) • (800) 235-2443 Toll Free

E-mail: info@BrainAssociation.org

Visit our Web Site: www.BrainAssociation.org

National Case Management Week

In an effort to bring focus, attention and recognition to case managers, Case Management Society of America (CMSA) has observed National Case Management Week during the second week of October for the past seven years. This year it will be observed October 8-14. For more information, visit their web site at www.cmsa.org.

Arkansas Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council Conference

This year's 1½ day conference (September 21st – 22nd) will focus on "Disabilities to Possibilities," lifted from keynote speaker Dr. Patrick Schwarz's new book, *From Disability to Possibility*. The theme reflects the Arkansas DD Network's commitment to making total inclusion a constant companion along the way.

Employment, health, education, services and supports, physical fitness, legal rights, the privileges of citizenship and self-worth are among the lessons conference-goers will have an opportunity to include in their intellectual and emotional baggage as they prepare for their journey.

Dr. Patrick Schwarz, the keynote speaker, says conference-goers should be prepared “for something fun and different” during the opening session. An Associate Professor of Special Education and Chair of the Diversity in Learning & Development Department for National-Louis University in Chicago, he will use real life stories taken from his new book to illustrate what needs to change, especially in the field of special education.. “These stories will not only demonstrate the power of inclusion, they will demonstrate the importance of inclusion in schools, the community, the workplace and life,” he comments.

The conference will be held at the Arlington Hotel in Hot Springs. For more information or a conference brochure, contact Arkansas Governor’s Developmental Disabilities office at 501-661-2589 or Voice/TDD 1-800-462-0599, Ext. 661-2589 or bmerc@healthyarkansas.com.

Resource Referral

From time to time we get calls and emails asking for a health professional in a particular part of Arkansas that has a better than average understanding of brain injuries. If you have found a specialist that is knowledgeable when it comes to brain injuries, please share his or her name with us so we can share it with others. We will not share your name but will share the name of your neurologist, neuropsychologist, psychiatrist, PT/OT/speech/language therapist, or rehab facility with others when they ask.

Information...

One excellent source of up-to-date information is a quarterly newsletter, *Inside View*, published by the Centre for Neuro Skills. Their summer 2006 issue had articles on “Why injured children recover,” “Brain damage link to heart attacks,” and “Spurring nerve regeneration.” While there is a delay before these articles are published to their web site, www.neuroskills.com, they will show up there in time.

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

060731

