

BIST

Brain Injury Society of Toronto



ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022

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L-R Annual Picnic, Holiday Paint Night Promotion & BIST Mugs!

MESSAGE

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BIST BOARD



ALEXANDRA PIOTTI

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto, I am pleased to offer this Message from the Chair in support of the Annual Report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022.

As I sat down to write this message, I could not help but reflect on my time volunteering with the Brain Injury Society of Toronto (BIST) and the impact it has had on me. From my days with the Awareness Committee, to my first term on the BIST Board of Directors, this community continually amazes me - especially the passion, resiliency, and commitment of our members, staff, and volunteers - on their impact on the lives of people living with brain injuries.

This past year definitely tested many of us in so many ways, again. The continuing global pandemic has made accessing services and programming challenging for many of our members. However, I am so proud of how the BIST team and our volunteers pulled together to ensure our community remained connected. Our virtual programming made it possible to reach new members again this year and even more people throughout the GTA.

For the first time in our history, we have been able to offer programming 5 days a week! None of this could have been possible without our amazing students and volunteers. This also means that we have helped our community to continue to learn and grow together and to spread greater awareness about brain injuries.

Our programming is funded by generous donations, government grants, fundraising efforts, and sponsors. BIST has been able to offer vital services to vulnerable members of our community through government funded grant initiatives such as the Homeless Prevention Programs.

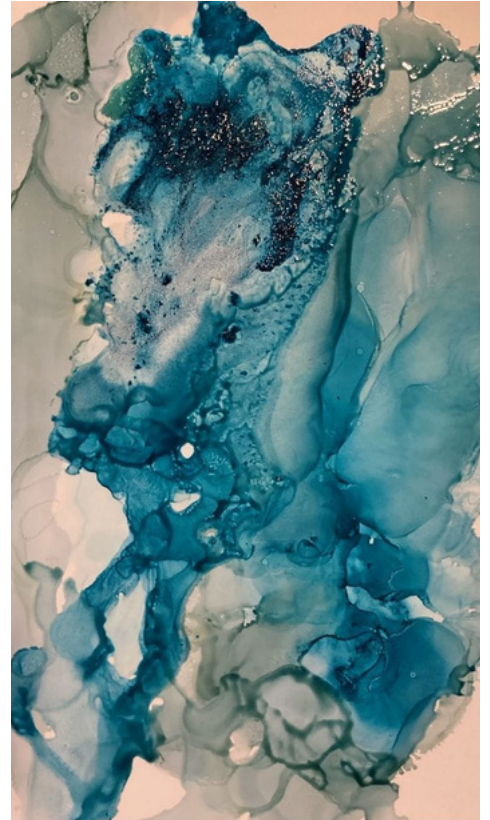
Finally, the Board of Directors and I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our corporate sponsors. Without their continued support, BIST could not continue to provide the high-quality programming we have become known for. Accessing and utilizing funding from several sources allows BIST to continually provide unique and meaningful programming. The Board will continue to explore diverse funding sources to allow BIST to grow bigger and better.

Additionally, we would like to thank our Chief Executive Officer, Melissa Vigar and the entire BIST team for their perseverance, tenacity, and tireless commitment to the organization. They continue to develop new and innovative ways to better serve this community and for that we are ever grateful.

To conclude this message, I would like to thank those Board members who will be departing the board this year. Thank you, Jen Bowler and Shalini Hernandez for all your contributions to the organization and your continued commitment to BIST.

I am excited for the year ahead and I hope to see you all at our upcoming in-person events!

*SINCERELY,
ALEX PIOTTI*



Selections from the 2021 Virtual Expressive Art Show (L-R), Lyndon Andrews (Untitled); Saba Rizvi (Relief); Salima Andany (Untitled)

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



MELISSA VIGAR

The creativity, dedication and determination of the BIST team allowed us to continue supporting our members, providing safe, agile, virtual and in-person support to ensure connectivity and stability during these challenging times.

BIST continues to strive in all we do to meet our mission of providing education, awareness, support and advocacy to individuals with brain injuries in Toronto (and thanks to virtual connections, those outside our the City as well). We continue to be committed to improving the quality of life of those impacted by brain injuries and continue to support anyone who reaches out to us, providing functional and ongoing support with the provision of opportunities for social connections, drop in and support group programming, and Case Coordination to navigate medical, financial, housing and legal systems.

Highlights of the achievements of BIST over this past year include:

TRAININGS AND CONSULTATIONS

City of Toronto Training – BIST provided 4 Trainings to City of Toronto Staff on the anatomy and prevalence of brain injury, vulnerable populations that are affected and common challenges how to support someone experiencing them. Feedback from the training sessions include 97% or attendees agreeing that they would use this training in their work, and 95% would recommend the training to others.

BIST was once again invited to provide training to the Toronto Police Mobility Crises Intervention Team, a team consisting of Police Officers and Nurses who respond to emergency crises situations in the community. This training continues to be well received by the group and we will be continuing to present annually to them.

BIST was also honoured to be a part of a round table advising Mayor John Tory on the barriers facing persons living with ABI as well as being included in the consultative process on the new City of Toronto Police Chief.

Student Placements

BIST could not have the reach and support interactions we do without our Student Placement Program.

This program allows BIST to provide education and support to Practicum students as they learn to provide system navigation and case management support to our members. **This past year, BIST hosted 18 students from Toronto Metropolitan University, Wilfred Laurier, Mohawk College and George Brown College.**

BIST was also part of a panel put together by Sunnybrook Hospital on youth and ABI and accessible community resources that was presented to their practicum students.

Hidden Disability Campaign

HIDDEN DISABILITY CAMPAIGN

Because hidden disabilities are not readily apparent to others, there is a need for awareness, self-advocacy and representation of the Hidden Disability Community (HDC). BIST is a founder of a campaign for Canada to adopt a Hidden Disability Symbol and has created a website to provide education and recruit allies to this cause (<https://hdscanada.wordpress.com>). The Hidden Disability Network has presented at workshops, composed email and social media campaigns and to date has rallied 35 organisations as allies and over 1,000 supporters of an Open Letter and Petition to the federal government to enact this request.

Goals:

- The Canadian Hidden Disability Community will experience equitable inclusion and barrier-free living;
- The Government of Canada will adopt and promote a national Hidden Disability Symbol;
- The national Hidden Disability Symbol will be free, accessible, and used voluntarily;
- The national Hidden Disability Symbol's design will be relevant to the hidden disability community (HDC), and inclusive of all hidden and episodic disabilities without detracting from detectable/evident disabilities;
- The national Hidden Disability Symbol will be designed and used as an effective self-advocacy tool, and as an impactful social, cultural and systemic transformation tool;

Recommendations:

- Development and implementation of a hidden disability statistical, research, and intersectoral classification category;
- Incentives for data gathering and research that examines the HDC, its experiences, and its needs
- Identification of best practices regarding inclusion of, and equitable accessibility and accommodation(s) for, the HDC
- Endorsement and adoption of perceptual frameworks that influence the CRPD, ISA, ICF, and Universal Design Principles toward equitable inclusion of the HDC
- Implementation of medical, social service, and business models that support equitable inclusion of the HDC
- Development and adoption of style guidance and iconography that is inclusive of all types of disabilities;

- Legislation, policies, and programs that equitably include the HDC;
- Accessibility and inclusion measures that ensure the identification and removal of barriers faced by the HDC;
- Accommodation and inclusion processes that easily identify and address behavioural, cognitive, communication, complexity, durational, emotional and psychological, environmental, intensity, physical, and sensory functions, as experienced by the HDC;
- Incentives for health and human services and programs to work cooperatively toward the equitable inclusion of the HDC;

TAX CLINIC

Once again BIST was able to offer a free virtual income tax assistance service in March of 2022 which assisted 28 of our members to file taxes (both for current and past years).

TORONTO POLICE BEYOND DISABILITY COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

I am pleased to continue serving as the Civilian Co-chair on this important committee comprised of community agencies that are working with the Toronto Police to spread awareness on the challenges people with various abilities face, especially when dealing with law enforcement and EMS.

FOCUS TORONTO

The mandate of the committee is to assist Toronto Police Services in identifying, prioritizing and working towards solutions to issues in policing. During the course of the fiscal year, BIST provided input during monthly meetings on a variety of topics affecting our community, including how to improve access to the Vulnerable Persons Registry.

Isabelle Rivaletto, one of BIST's Community Coordinators, represents ABI at two Toronto Focus tables. Focus Tables are a City of Toronto, United Way Toronto and Toronto Police Service initiative that aims to reduce risk, harm, crime, victimization and improve community resiliency and wellbeing.



ONTARIO BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

BIST spoke about our www.abijustice.org initiative and our program that provides functional support to persons with ABI who are justice involved. The presentation highlighted these two consecutive projects that aim to assist justice-involved persons with ABI throughout Ontario.

The first is an educational awareness toolkit and the second is a practical, functional ABI support program. This project has been rolled out across Ontario and has received acclaim for its ability to provide an easily accessible tool that meets this need. This project was created in collaboration with legal professionals, experts in brain injury and individuals with lived experience.

The ABI Justice, a Functional Support Initiative funded by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, was co-created by the Brain Injury Associations of Toronto and North Bay. It provides support to persons with ABI to increase equitable justice when navigating the judicial system. This results in a reduction of missed appointments/court dates, an increase in supporting documentation, and a clearer understanding of the judicial process.

This program also increases education to legal professionals on the challenges and barriers faced by this population. This project serves to provide functional support, increased advocacy, and awareness to provide individuals with ABI equitable and accessible support within the broader community and a criminal justice context.

BRAINY BOUTIQUE

BIST was so excited to launch a virtual link to shops for community members who want to support businesses created and run by persons with Brain Injury. Our site can be found at: <https://bist.ca/brainy-boutique/> and features links to artists, authors, clothing designers and so much more! Purchases are made directly through the sellers.



VULNERABLE ROAD USERS COALITION

BIST remains an active member of this coalition created by Bike Law Canada that is advocating for increased penalties for drivers who violate any provision of the Highway Traffic Act that results in injury or death of a vulnerable road user. BIST is proud to lend its voice to this group and help advocate for safer streets and reduced risk of injury or death.

TORONTO ABI NETWORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

BIST is proud to sit on this committee with inpatient and outpatient brain injury services across the City of Toronto. The Toronto ABI Network is focused on supporting efficient transitions from hospital to community and improving knowledge of and access to publicly funded ABI community services.

MOHAWK COLLEGE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

During this past report year, BIST became a member of the advisory committee for Mohawk College's Brain Disorders Program.

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We are grateful to all those who give us constant support and dedication including our members, staff, the Board of Directors and all our amazing volunteers. We are excited to be coming back in person and are looking forward to continuing to grow our supports and community!

*SINCERELY,
MELISSA VIGAR*



PROGRAMS REPORT

**MELISSA FORREST, PROGRAMS & PEER SUPPORT COORDINATOR
& MADISON CHONG, PROGRAM ASSISTANT**

The 2021-2022 fiscal year saw several changes in programs.

This year, the reoccurring COVID-19 restrictions continued to bring changes to the way we deliver programs at BIST, and we continued to provide supports primarily in a virtual space.

A few more changes developed, as new programs were introduced in 2021/2022. These programs have continued to grow and engage members. The introduction of our Freaky Fridays Social Drop-In group has seen a continued rise in interest.

BIST ran several series of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Groups throughout the year. These are Mental Health Support Groups, where members can learn and develop a wellness plan of healthy coping strategies to support their mental health. WRAP Groups have been largely popular with our members, and as a result we continue to develop and run more series.

The Men's Social Drop-In has continued with Group Facilitator, Shawayne Folkes, who holds monthly groups for members who identify as male or non-binary.

Not-So-Blue Mondays: Adventures in Youtube, is a Social Drop-In program which resumed in January 2022 in coordination with Community Head Injury Resource Services (CHIRS). Members now engage on the virtual platform Zoom to watch fun and/or educational Youtube videos while participating in engaging discussion, playing interactive games with staff accompanied by live singing.

Our new program Freaky Fridays has been successfully providing a social opportunity for members to play virtual games, trivia, share stories and co-facilitate - making it the first Member-led program at BIST.

We look forward to developing new programs in 2022 that will increase Member opportunities, encourage and facilitate their skills, and provide dynamic and engaging programs at BIST!

5,939 / **48%**
PROGRAM SUPPORT
INTERACTIONS 2021/2022 **INCREASE FROM**
PREVIOUS YEAR

WOMEN AND BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP

This group is meant for individuals who identify as women with ABI, and is inclusive to individuals who identify as trans and/or non-binary. Sessions are held on a bi-monthly basis and are facilitated by a Registered Social Worker, a BIST staff member, and Placement Student. This group provides Member support with shared discussion on issues related to ABI. Despite the transition of groups still being held on a virtual platform; numbers in attendance have continued to grow yearly.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 205

PEER-LED CAREGIVER GROUP

This group offers support to ABI Caregivers which includes: spouses, roommates, friends, Partners, Adult Siblings, Parents of Adult Children, and for Adult Children of a Parent who lives with Brain Injury. The group is led by a trained Peer Facilitator who assists to provide members with a supportive social educational space where members share experiences and learn from one another.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 48

WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN (WRAP) GROUP

This acronym "WRAP" stands for Wellness Recovery Action Plan. Since June 2020, BIST has expanded this WRAP Mental Health Support Group to provide more diverse support to persons in need. These groups are held in 6 session series, and are facilitated by Staff Member, Isabelle Rivaletto and other WRAP Facilitators: Fozia Murtaza and Wayne O'Brien. Members learn, create and implement a wellness action plan of personalized coping strategies to support their mental health. In 2022, BIST increased program accessibility and offered WRAP Groups in 2 time frames - morning and afternoon. We have also provided WRAP Groups that focus on being trauma-informed, promote housing advocacy, welcome the LGBTQ2S+ Community, and support Caregivers of an individual who lives with Brain Injury such as, Spouses, Roommates, Best Friends, Partners, Adult siblings, Parents of an Adult Child or an Adult Child of a Parent.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 134

ABI SUPPORT GROUP

This support group is facilitated by a Registered Social Worker, a BIST Staff Member and a Placement Student. The group continues to serve individuals with mild to moderate brain injury, providing a supportive group setting for individuals to connect and share their experiences, challenges, successes and coping strategies in an inclusive safe space.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 203

SOCIAL DROP-IN FOR MEN WITH BRAIN INJURY

This social drop-in is for individuals who identify as men with ABI and are looking to connect with others. The drop-ins occur monthly and are facilitated by a Registered Social Worker. For this fiscal year, there was an increase in individuals served.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 62

SOCIAL DROP-IN: MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH ASIAN & EAST INDIAN COMMUNITIES

This social drop-in that began in March 2020 was launched as a pilot project in partnership with our Corporate Sponsor Singer Kwinter in February 2021. The drop-in was designed to create an inclusive space for the South Asian & East Indian communities who live with brain Injury. As BIST is committed to diversity and inclusion; this is the first ever BIST program to be run in a second language other than English.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 32

NEW - SOCIAL DROP-IN: FREAKY FRIDAYS

This social drop-in was launched in February 2022 in response to members' request for more opportunity for social opportunity, additional workshops, and space to share their skills with the BIST community. This program is a Member-led virtual drop-in and includes games, karaoke, trivia, and opportunities for members to lead the program. This drop-in also includes our community outings which began again in July 2022 and will include guest speakers and workshops.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 80

RESUMED - Not-So-Blue Mondays: Adventures in YouTube

The return of BIST's popular and Member favourite program, Not-So-Blue Mondays resumed in virtual format with a new creative component added called, 'Adventures in YouTube'. BIST and CHIRS partner to host an interactive social drop-in program where participants watch engaging and/or educational YouTube videos while playing fun games with each other. This program also includes sharing of music videos, discussion, and live singing!

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 157

NEW - Online Yoga Series

This yoga series workshop offers 45 minutes of accessible gentle hatha yoga and 15 minutes of meditation. This popular series is led by Certified Yoga Instructor and BIST Member, Elise Bernard.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 173

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Community Meetings are held on a monthly basis. Meetings feature a guest speaker who presents a topic related to ABI with time for Q & A. The community shares stories, tips and information with other people living with ABI. Meetings are open to anyone, and registration is not required. These monthly meetings also serve as a community social gathering, as well as an educational workshop experience.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 312 (9.8% DECLINE)

VIRTUAL EXPRESSIVE ART SHOW

BIST launched our Annual Expressive Art Show for Brain Injury Awareness Month in June 2021. Over 30 artists - including people from Alberta, British Columbia and the US - participated in our Virtual Art Show. Art from selected artists was put on display during the month at venues across Toronto: Neurocore, Rehab Lab, Cristall Opticians, Courage My Love, McLeish Orlando, Pro Accessibility Ltd, and Oatley Vigmond. Our Expressive Art Show launched virtually, with our 100 people in attendance over Zoom. The Virtual Expressive Art Show continues to be hosted on BIST's website: <https://bist.ca/2021-virtual-expressive-art-show/>

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 125

WEEKLY MEMBER PHONE & EMAIL SUPPORT

BIST Staff, Placement Students and Volunteers remain dedicated to providing regular support via phone communications through the use of our Warm Line. Our team also provides consistent email communication through info@bist.ca and connections@bist.ca. Members are provided with resources, educational information and social support.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 3709

WEEKLY ONE-ON-ONE MEMBER SUPPORT (STUDENT SUPPORT)

This program offers the opportunity for placements students eg. Metropolitan University, Social Work Students to have direct experience in assisting members with tasks, such as completing application forms (Wheeltrans, ABI Network, Access 2 Card). Students also assist members with paperwork and calendar scheduling.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 103

WORKSHOPS:

In 2021/2022, BIST continued to provide creative, educational, supportive and forward-thinking workshops designed to respond to the unprecedented challenges of navigating a brain injury during the COVID-19 pandemic. The CIR Concussion Series and ABI Info Series continue to provide practical coping strategies and information about navigating an ABI. Additional workshops included a weekly yoga series, interactive paint nights, and strategies to cope with mental health and isolation during COVID-19.

TOTAL MEMBERS SERVED: 1718

BIST/OBIA PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Peer Support Program connects trained Mentors with lived ABI experience, with partners seeking support following a brain injury. This program is delivered in collaboration with BIA's across the province and in partnership with the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA).

2021 / 2022 PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

Category	Number Served
Number of Trainings	1
Number of Current Active Matches	12
Number of Partner Intakes	7
Number of Mentor Intakes	4
Number of BIST Mentors Matched	4
Number of Matches Completed	4
Total Number Served	32

PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

for people living with the effects of an acquired brain injury (ABI)

Why be a Partner?

As a Partner in the program, you have the opportunity to learn from someone "who has been there" and can offer you guidance and support based on their own personal experiences living with ABI. Support is provided to you via the telephone or internet, based on your preference. This allows you to participate in the program from the comfort and privacy of your home.



PARTNER



MENTOR

Why be a Mentor?

As a Mentor, you have the opportunity to help others by sharing your experiences and by providing support and information to your Partner who has similar lived experience. If being a Mentor is of interest to you, you will undergo comprehensive training in your own community prior to being matched with a Partner.



Ontario Brain Injury Association
PO Box 2338
St. Catharines, ON L2R 7R9
Ph: 1-800-263-5404 or 905-641-8877
eMail: peersupport@obia.on.ca
Web: www.obia.ca

FINANCIAL REPORT

ANDRE GADBOIS, TREASURER

CDN\$				Year Ended March 31st, 2022	Year Ended March 31st, 2021	Year Ended March 31st, 2020
Revenue						
	Fundraising Revenue			\$ 126,647.47	\$ 93,381.72	\$ 207,833.89
	Grant Revenue			\$ 150,674.01	\$ 328,952.45	\$ 205,886.45
	Other Revenue			\$ 96,906.44	\$ 101,810.13	\$ 68,772.01
Total Revenue				\$ 374,227.92	\$ 524,144.30	\$ 482,492.35
Expenses						
	Contractor Fees & Program Expenses			\$ 131,526.17	\$ 30,090.80	\$ 138,977.47
	Fundraising Event Expenses			\$ 44,862.72	\$ 31,098.35	\$ 46,786.47
	Grant Expenses			\$ 153,797.08	\$ 330,857.34	\$ 209,496.36
	Admin and Other Expenses			\$ 90,280.48	\$ 23,367.37	\$ 31,337.47
Total Expenses				\$ 420,466.45	\$ 415,413.86	\$ 426,597.77
Surplus (Deficit)				-\$ 46,238.53	\$ 108,730.44	\$ 55,894.58
CDN\$						
Assets						
	Cash			\$ 272,405.83	\$ 81,964.47	\$ 222,161.07
	HST Receivable			\$ 26,481.08	\$ 22,526.15	\$ 11,024.31
	Accounts Receivable			\$ 3,534.83	\$ 77,472.52	\$ 36,113.20
	Prepaid Expenses			\$ 2,185.23	\$ 2,185.23	\$ 4,685.23
	Investments			\$ 63,245.90	\$ 218,361.03	\$ 62,781.07
Total Assets				\$ 367,852.87	\$ 402,509.40	\$ 336,764.88
Liabilities & Equity						
	Accounts Payable			\$ 33,963.56	\$ 38,868.75	\$ 32,630.76
	Deferred Revenue			\$ 118,734.83	\$ 114,079.83	\$ 163,303.74
	Retained Earnings			\$ 215,154.48	\$ 249,560.82	\$ 140,830.38
Total Liabilities and Equity				\$ 367,852.87	\$ 402,509.40	\$ 336,764.88

COMMUNITY COORDINATOR PROGRAM

LAURA BELLON, HOMELESSNESS COMMUNITY COORDINATOR HOMELESS PREVENTION PROGRAM

During the April 1 2021 to March 31 2022 year, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, three-year Grant for the Homeless Prevention Program (HPP) ran servicing individuals in the Toronto area who identify with cognitive issues and/or brain injury, with the stabilization of and/or finding of appropriate housing in order to prevent homelessness. The grant requirements are to service 75 participants during the three-year time span.

During this time period a total of 75 individuals requested support from the program and are currently being serviced. Several of the individuals were supported in multiple areas of the program during the course of the year. Of these individuals, 10 were supported from being evicted from current housing arrangements, and 34 participants were supported in securing housing or transitioning to new housing. Support included help with completing housing searches, communication with Landlords, Legal Aid, the Landlord and Tenant Board, shelter workers, community housing supports in various areas across the GTA.

Having connections in shelters across the city was instrumental in allowing for better communication and more direct support with individuals in the stabilization of medical, completion of housing referrals, support letters from workers, and continuous connection with participants with limited access to technology.

The Homeless Prevention Program worked with individuals to stabilize other areas in their lives including financial, medical and social as needed. During this time period, 23 individuals were connected to financial supports, and 29 were connected to social supports and/or community agencies to help with ongoing stabilization needs. This included completion of financial applications for subsidies, the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and completion of the Disability Determination Packages in order to increase the amount of funds available for rent. A large endeavour was to support clients with the completion of taxes for the purpose of accessing other financial supports such as the Ontario Energy Savings Plan, Rogers "Connected for Success", and various subsidies.

In order to help with the stabilization of clients, attention was given to helping secure medical supports such as finding a Family Physician. During this time period, 44 individuals requested and received help with connecting to medical specialists. Individuals often required help with booking and planning of appointments as well as support at appointments to relay information and appointment outcome follow-up. Covid-19 and Pandemic restrictions continued to play a factor in the way support was given to participants. A Hybrid approach was maintained during this time with a mix of in-person supports when necessary, and the remainder as virtual support.

Placement students completing third year, fourth year and Masters programs, also provided additional support with the Homeless Prevention Program. Each student was tasked with interacting and supporting a group of clients on a weekly basis, helping contribute to the stabilization of the 75 individuals that were a part of the Homeless Prevention Program grant. In total a number of 10 students were completing placements during this time period. The support they provided allowed for a broader reach and increased support to the participants of the program.



TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT COORDINATOR PROGRAM

ISABELLE RIVALETTO, VIOLENCE IMPACT COMMUNITY COORDINATOR

VIOLENCE IMPACT PROGRAM

The Violence Impact Coordinator Program offered women and individuals who identified as female and living in the Toronto area who have been victims of Intimate Partner Violence, with a Brain Injury and/or cognitive issues that impact their lives support in many different areas. This support was inclusive of stabilization through connection with Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, Disability Tax Credit as well as other Tax support.

Participants in the program also received support with community referral to the ABI Network, Family Physicians, and other specialists. The Violence Impact Coordinator was also present to support individuals through court related processes in both criminal and family court as well as support through Social Justice Tribunals, with food security, technology and to seek and obtain housing or new housing. It was funded through the Canadian Women's Foundation from July 2021- March 2022 and supported 32 individuals during this time.

The purpose of the program was to support individuals in rapid stabilization in all areas of life through community partnership and referral. In addition to transitional case-management the Violence Impact Coordinator was able to provide support in learning new compensatory strategies and increasing insight and awareness of self through providing WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) Groups. Through the course of these groups, participants were able to explore symptoms and symptom management in a group setting through facilitation offered by the Violence Impact Coordinator and a Stress Prevention Strategist.

Facilitators and participants worked together to learn key concepts, identifying traits of themselves when they are well, stressors, how they appear or feel when things are breaking down and development and execution of a Crisis Plan as well as Crisis Planning and the Post Crisis Phase. The WRAP Program is designed to assist individuals in understanding the importance of Crisis Planning when they feel well so they can maintain control of outcomes if they should find themselves within a crisis period. As well participants learned symptom management and personal responsibility. Each participant was provided work materials and able to create their own WRAP during the duration of the program.

The Violence Impact Coordinator is also a member of FOCUS Toronto and holds a seat the Scarborough and Black Creek FOCUS Tables. The FOCUS Tables are designed to support individuals in the community who are deemed to be at Acute Elevated Risk and in need of immediate support. Through presentation at FOCUS, community agencies seated at the table are able to provide immediate wrap around support to individuals and families as well as obtain support through direct referral to community agencies if not deemed Acute Elevated Risk but still identified as a higher risk/needs case within the community.



Program Funder

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

ALLISON FOO, CO CHAIR

The Advocacy Committee was formed to support BIST in its goals of reducing vulnerability in the brain injury community with a focus on self-advocacy. In its second year of operation, the 11 committee members spread awareness about brain injury and advocated for our community in various ways, including, but not limited to:

- Representing BIST and brain injury survivors at city-level meetings
- Signing and sharing petitions that aim to improve services for ODSP recipients and/or increase visibility for people living with brain injury
- Completing surveys focused on addressing accessibility
- Writing a newsletter to disseminate important information (e.g. Affordable A/C Alternatives)
- Developing a presentation on practical strategies for self-advocacy in collaboration with a subject matter expert

The Advocacy Committee looks forward to offering their continued support in the upcoming year.

INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY (IDEA) COMMITTEE

MELISSA FORREST, CO CHAIR

AARON PALMER, CO CHAIR

This is a new initiative developed to provide education and increased access to BIST services by reviewing outreach and advocacy streams, connecting with diverse, community partners and providing guidance on programs and, supports that promote cultural competence, cultural humility and cultural responsiveness.

Members are made up of BIST staff, board members, students and BIST members; professionals from other Brain Injury Associations, and community service professionals

This committee will provide training and support to BIST staff, students, volunteers and board members to ensure BIST is meeting the needs of our diverse population and providing our community with the tools needed to ensure our organisation is at the forefront of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessible practices.

BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH COMMITTEE

MATTHEW CHUNG, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

For Brain Injury Awareness Month 2021, BIST's Brain Injury Awareness Month (BIAM) Committee continued to evolve our successful Annual Expressive Art Show. Over 30 artists who live with the effects of brain injury from across North America were featured virtually:
<https://bist.ca/2021-virtual-expressive-art-show/>

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the show kicked off with a virtual launch event on June 1. Artists shared their stories and presented their works, including visual art, poetry and songs. BIST was honoured to have Dr. Jill Andrew, MPP, Toronto-St. Paul's, in attendance.

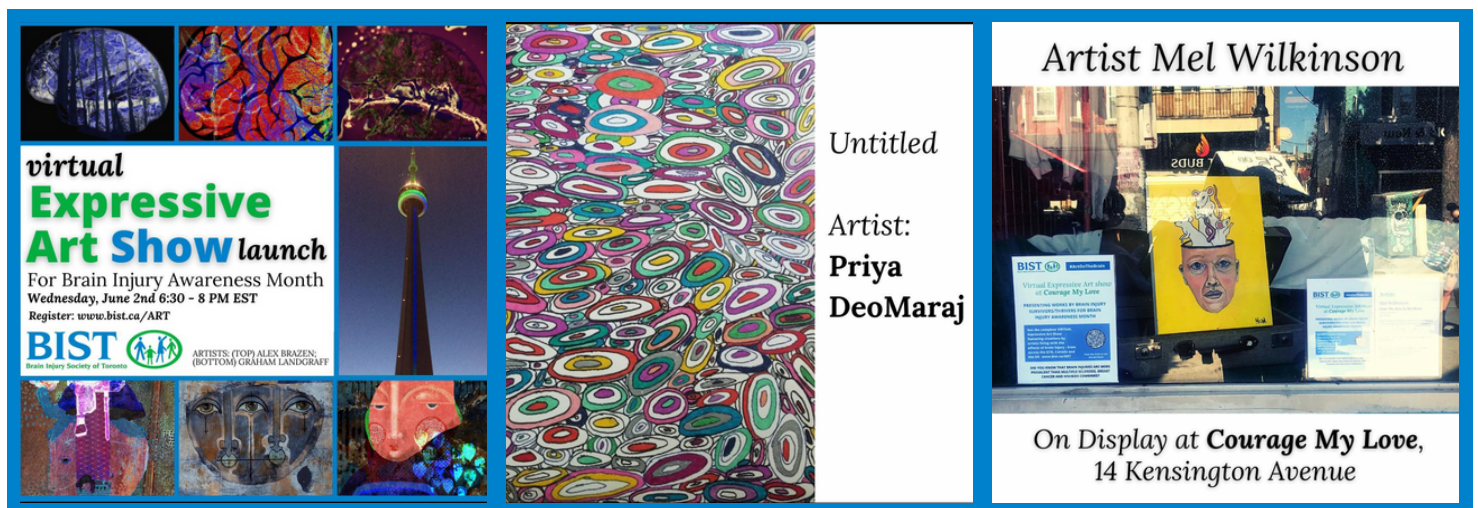
The BIAM committee also put an increased focus on social media, including posting artists' bios and work on BIST's social media platforms, as well as engaging with influencers in the health and wellness space to further amplify the art show.

The CN Tower was lit up once again in the Brain Injury colours of Blue and Green on June 2 and Mayor John Tory proclaimed June Brain Injury Awareness Month in the city of Toronto. **These posts were our most successful during the month, reaching over 18,000 people across all platforms.**

In September, 2021, The BIAM committee was also thrilled to represent BIST at one of the first in-person events since March, 2020, the Access Expo at Variety Village.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 EXPRESSIVE ART SHOW VENUES:

Courage My Love Neurocore Physiotherapy and Pilates Centre
Cristall Opticians Pro Accessibility Ltd
McLeish Orlando Rehab Lab
Oatley Vigmond



SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

MERI PERRA, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

BIST reached and engaged over half a million people online in the period from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. Across all platforms, BIST has 8542 followers.

Instagram: 1840 Followers

- 50K Reach
- 9% Increase in followers

Facebook: 1850 Followers

- 74K Reach
- 14% Engagement Rate

Twitter: 3595 Followers

- 215K Reach
- 10% Increase in Followers

Linked In: 825 Followers

- 102K Reach
- 27% Increase in Followers

Blog: 322 Followers

- 20K Visits

YouTube: 110 Followers

- 3.4K Reach

bist.ca: 43.5K Visits

& abijustice.org

Linked IN
showed the
largest
increase in
followers -
increasing
by **27%**

Twitter
had the
highest
social
media
reach of
215K

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

BIST is fortunate to have so many hard-working and dedicated volunteers. Our volunteers sit on committees, help plan and lead our programs, plan our fundraising and social events and contribute to our blog. Our volunteers are survivors, family members, professionals from the ABI field, and individuals interested in giving back to their community and supporting the mission of BIST.

Due to the high number of quality volunteers, the committee acknowledged volunteers in 3 categories: ABI Survivor/Thrivers, Caregiver, BIST Ambassador.

ABI SURVIVOR/THRIVER WINNER: ROXANNE (ROXY) RIESS

Roxanne has been a pivotal member of BIST for many years. She is a huge advocate for the neuro-diverse community and is a master at creating connections amongst people and organizations to improve the quality of life for people with brain injury. She is a passionate speaker and advocate and has done media talks, consultations and is a respected member of BIST's Advocacy Committee. In addition she is also a talented artist and contributes her work to our Annual Expressive Art Shows.

CAREGIVER WINNER: SAMIRA OMAR

Samira Omar is the sister of an individual with a brain injury. In her journey to support her brother she has become a strong voice and advocate in recognizing the role race plays in accessing rehabilitation. Samira spoke to BIST members this past year on her experiences and research and helped BIST to launch our IDEA (Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility) Committee.

BIST AMBASSADOR: JOSIE COLOMA

Josie has been volunteering with BIST for four years. During her time she has written blog articles, showcased her cooking skills and now assists with administrative support and helps at all our events. Josie's warmth, smile and humour brightens everyone's day!



Roxanne (left) and Josie (right)



FUNDRAISERS!

Although Covid continued to cause restrictions on our fundraising events, BIST's community continued to support us. We didn't hold our signature Mix and Mingle during this period but we were happy to still host:

BIRDIES FOR BRAIN INJURY

Lionhead Golf & Country Club- June 18th, 2021

\$37,179.55 RAISED

VIRTUAL 1, 5 OR 10K RUN, WALK OR ROLL

Launch Event at Wilket Creek Park - Sept 26th, 2021

\$18,101.50 RAISED

TANYA'S RIDE FOR BRAIN INJURY

Albion Hills - October 4th, 2021

\$26,320.58 RAISED

A BIG THANK YOU to the Luder Family who organized this event, with all proceeds supporting BIST.



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2021 Birdies Sponsors

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2021 HEROES RUN, WALK OR ROLL SPONSORS

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Lad & Associates
Iacobelli Law Firm
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Innovative Rehab
Rehab First

COMMUNITY HEROES :

CARON THORBURN INSTITUTE
TORONTO PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION

Board of Directors

Alexandra Piotti, Chair

Alexandra Piotti is a private Case Manager/ Rehabilitation Consultant working with the catastrophically injured. Her areas of expertise include working with individuals who have sustained an acquired brain injury, have complex medical needs, mental health issues, dual diagnosis and the behaviourally challenged. Alex is an advocate for her clients, dedicated to helping to ensure the best environment for maximal recovery. Alex has been a member of BIST since 2012 and currently is the Chair of the Awareness Committee. As a member of the BIST Board, Alex hopes to bring her passion for people and service and hopes to find new ways cast a wider net to increase the presence of the Brain Injury Society of Toronto in our city.

Dr. Hiten Lad, Vice Chair

Dr. Lad is a registered Clinical Psychologist with specialization in the practice of Clinical Neuropsychology for adults and seniors. He is listed with the Canadian Register of Health Service Providers in Psychology and is the Practice Director and Owner at Lad & Associates. Dr. Lad previously held positions as a Clinical Neuropsychologist with the Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) Program at Hamilton Health Sciences and as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University. He is also involved in research and has co-authored journal articles as well as a book chapter related to acquired brain injury. Dr. Lad also held a position as a clinical coordinator and training supervisor for the Canadian Psychology Association Accredited Neuropsychology Internship program at Hamilton Health Sciences. Furthermore, he worked as the clinical supervisor for rehabilitation therapists at the Acquired Brain Injury Community Services program at Hamilton Health Sciences. Prior to working with Hamilton Health Sciences, Dr. Lad worked in a multidisciplinary team at Toronto Western Hospital providing cognitive behavioural rehabilitation services for the treatment of chronic pain patients.

Darrell Booker, Secretary

Darrell began volunteering for BIST so that he could be involved with helping survivors from the ground up. As the owner of DH Group Inc. Darrell works daily to assist those in their homes who have acquired an injury, either physically or mentally. He has a passion for designing and building, and has worked in this space for over 10 years. Darrell believes providing people with a new home or renovation is a rewarding feeling. In his free time he enjoys living an active lifestyle. You can usually find him after work biking along the lake or playing baseball. Darrell began his involvement with BIST in 2016 as committee member assisting with the annual golf tournament. He enjoys being part of the committee and working together with the other volunteers. He wanted to join the board to assist with growing the society and developing new ideas to raise awareness and funds for its many programs and services. One of his favourite quotes is " Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." – Thomas Edison

Andre Gadbois, Treasurer

Andre completed his undergraduate degree in BComm specializing in finance and accounting at the University of Toronto. He currently works as a Bilingual Junior Analyst at First National LLP. During his time at the University of Toronto, he was the director of finance at CivicSpark. Andre found BIST through our Persistent Concussion Series, and used it as a resource to understand his symptoms and manage his new world following his concussion. Seeing the benefit that BIST provides, he wants to lend his experience, knowledge and talents to our organization.

Jennifer Bowler

Jenn is a social worker with more than 12 years experience working with adolescents and adults with acquired brain injuries and their families. She currently works as a clinical leader at Markham Stouffville Hospital where she is responsible for providing day-to-day supervision and operational support to over 100 staff members. Prior to this role, Jenn worked for 11 years full-time at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre with the majority of those years working in the Trauma Program, and she still works at Sunnybrook in a casual social work capacity. While full-time at Sunnybrook, Jenn was a member of the ABI Network Transitions Committee for several years. She has also been a regular promoter of BIST services/supports with her patients, families, and colleagues including being a volunteer on the 5K Run, Walk, and Roll Committee since 2017. Based on Jenn's experiences supporting ABI affected individuals and families in their hospital journeys and community transitions, she hopes that she can provide insights and advocate for support during the early phases of ABI. She is also passionate about ABI education and prevention and looks forward to promoting awareness and safety strategies. Jenn spends her free time travelling, watching movies, playing tennis, and enjoying the Toronto restaurant scene.

Alison Foo

Alison has been a member of BIST since 2013. She was previously on the Special Events Committee and currently writes for the "Mind Yourself with Alison" column on the BIST Blog. She's dedicated to using her unique perspective, research and experience to help other brain injury survivors and their caregivers. She has a B.Sc.H. from Queen's University, a M.Sc. from University of Toronto and a Project Management Professional (PMP) certification. She worked in the pharmaceutical industry for over 10 years and created the brand, Cooking with Alison, which offers social media marketing services. Her other interests include dogs, new experiences, and psychology. Her current daily mantras are, "good enough is good enough" and "I didn't come this far to only come this far".

Dr. Carolyn Lemsky

Dr. Carolyn Lemsky is a neuropsychologist with over 25 years of experience working in rehabilitation settings in the U.S. and Canada and has been the Clinical Director at CHIRS since 1998. She is also the director of the Substance Use and Brain Injury Bridging Project (SUBI), a research and knowledge transfer initiative funded by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation. Carolyn supervises an active clinical research program related to co-morbid mental health and problematic substance use and is a regular presenter at national and international conferences on brain injury. She is hoping to bring her skills and expertise to the BIST board to help further awareness and advocacy efforts. Carolyn has a passion for working with people and loves the outdoors. In her spare time, she volunteers with the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing, plays soccer and baseball and is an expert 'green thumb.'

Gazal Kukreja

Gazal was motivated to join BIST as a board member through her experience collaborating with the organization in her roles at the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (ONF) and the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA). At ONF, Gazal was responsible for managing projects across the province that involved implementing evidence-based brain injury guidelines in practice with the aim of providing better services and care for persons living with brain injury. Using the principles of Implementation Science, Gazal provided implementation and evaluation support for project leads. At OBIA, Gazal was expanding Brain Injury Speaks, the Stakeholder Engagement Network of Ontario, to provide persons with lived experience with the opportunity to share their opinions, express their needs, and provide feedback about existing service and initiatives. Gazal holds a Master's degree in Kinesiology from Western University where she focused on mental health and resilience research. She is a strong advocate for mental health and is looking forward to being involved with BIST to help improve the quality of life of those affected by brain injury. In her downtime, Gazal is an avid traveler and loves to be active outdoors. She is adventurous in trying new foods and seeks the excitement of exploring new places.

Lara Fitzgerald-Husek

Lara is a lawyer from Oatley Vigmond, representing seriously injured individuals and their loved ones. Lara's practice focuses solely on personal injury law, including motor vehicle accidents, medical malpractice, occupier's liability, and product liability cases. Lara completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Toronto. She obtained her Juris Doctor and Master of Public Administration at Queen's University and also completed the International Business Law program at the Bader International Study Centre in England. When Lara is not practicing law, she enjoys hiking with her dog and tending to her balcony garden.

Samantha Shatz

Samantha completed her Bachelor of Arts at Wilfrid Laurier University and went on to obtain her J.D. from the University of Western Ontario. Following her call to the bar, she practiced both plaintiff side personal injury and insurance defence. However, her passion was to practice exclusively on behalf of plaintiffs, particularly in medical negligence cases. At present, she is a lawyer at Howie, Sacks & Henry LLP. Her practice focuses primarily on medical malpractice, helping victims and their families who have suffered as a result of medical and hospital negligence. A large portion of the cases she assists on are obstetrical negligence cases. She works with young children who suffered severe brain injuries at or around the time of their birth. Through her work, she sees first-hand the impact that a brain injury can have on an individual and their family and how important community supports are. In her spare time, she loves going to concerts; watching live music is one of her favorite things to do! She also loves spending time outdoors (in the summer!), going to movies and spending time with friends and family.





COMMUNITY OF HEROES

www.bist.ca