



Manitoba Brain Injury ASSOCIATION

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Supporting each
other towards
a new beginning

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Manitoba Brain Injury ASSOCIATION

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Facilitator/Social Worker :

Tina Di Fronzo

UPCOMING EVENTS

Annual General Meeting

- * Date : June 24
- * Time : 5—7 PM
- * Location : 825 Sherbrook St. (SMD Building)

MBIA 11th Annual Walk

- * Date : September 6
- * Registration : starts at 10 AM
- * Location : Assiniboine Park Conservatory
- * Please visit our website for more information

MBIA MISSION

To offer help and hope to individuals and families living with the effects of brain injury through direct services, education and advocacy; to promote independent living and a sense of community among those affected; and to educate all Manitobans towards the prevention of acquired brain injury

Contact us: (204) 975-3280

Visit us: www.mbia.ca

Email: info@mbia.ca

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2014 Christmas Party

December 11, 2014- Twas the night before Christmas for the MBIA community as we celebrated our Annual Christmas Party. This is the most popular event of the year as members get the opportunity to get together and meet other members. In addition to gifts from Santa Claus and a sumptuous meal, the members were treated to a holiday music from Papa John's Blues band. Since the beginning, the party is all about bringing together all members of the community to share the holiday spirit.



In The News

A big thank you to COLIN WRIGHT for keeping us full and warm during the cold winter months.



Annual MBIA Conference

Over 150 participants attended the MBIA's inaugural conference titled "Putting the Pieces Together" at Fort Garry Hotel on April 23-24, 2015. It brought together professionals, health care providers, caregivers and brain injury survivors.

Val Loughheed, the keynote speaker opened the conference on Trauma, Rehabilitation and Recovery. The keynote speech was followed by simultaneous breakout sessions with topics ranging from concussion, intervention strategies to vocational rehabilitation. The conference provided a platform to 17 enthusiastic speakers across different disciplines to impart their expertise on issues and practices on brain injury rehabilitation. The spirit of exchange was carried forth into the dinner reception, where participants listened to different stories of recovery through the panel discussion and photo voice.

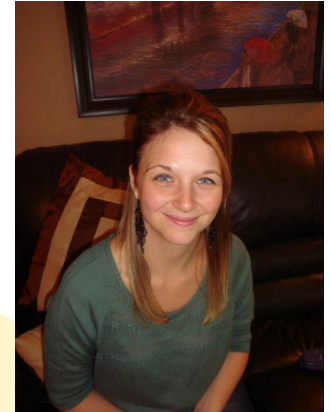
MBIA would like to thank all the presenters, volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors and participants for making this endeavor possible. We hope to see you next year!

A surprise photo-op with our Prime Minister Stephen Harper



Welcoming A New Facilitator

In this newsletter, I introduce myself to you. My name is Tina Di Fronzo and I am extremely pleased to have been chosen as the Wednesday night group facilitator for the Manitoba Brain Injury Association. I started working with MBIA in September 2014 and can say I absolutely fell in love with the job! I have met many committed and proud Members and Staff since I have started my employment. I am proud to be among you. I intend to reward the trust you have instilled in me by working my hardest to ensure the Survivors Support Group is focused on what the Members want most out of the meetings. I am really interested in hearing what you would like the Survivor Support Groups to offer. I am a big advocate on these meetings being for the Members and what they want.



A little bit about me. I received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Winnipeg and a Social Work degree from the University of Manitoba. I am a Registered Social Worker with the Manitoba Institute of Registered Social Workers. I wear many hats depending on what day of the week it is – my fulltime day job is in child welfare and I volunteer with Girl Guides of Canada as a Brownie Leader. I have one cat named Cara (she is my baby) and no children.

Although I may be new to the position, I am definitely not new to MBIA or brain injuries. Some of you may know my personal story and connection to MBIA already, but for those of you that do not know here is the story. In November 2009 my mother was in a head on car collision motor vehicle accident which resulted in many physical impairments, including a brain injury. She spent months in the hospital rehabilitating and today she lives with the ongoing impacts of a brain injury. I joined MBIA in early 2010 as a caregiver looking for support and guidance. Since then I have been a member, attended caregiver support groups, and participated in the MBIA Annual Walks for the past couple of years.

Needless to say, I've been a grateful recipient of MBIA when I did not know who else to turn to for support; as well, I come to MBIA with second-hand experience and empathy for individuals and families who have been impacted by a brain injury.

I was lucky enough to have secured a position with MBIA and I look forward to meeting each and every Member. I will be facilitating the Support Group for Survivors the first three Wednesday's of each month from 7-9 p.m. I welcome all Members to come down to a meeting anytime to join us! I would love to meet you – see you there!

Every Little Bit Helps

By: Jim Siclair (with permission from Stroke Network's Newsletter)

Last September during a presentation that I made to third year medical students one of the students asked if I could think of something a doctor had done that had a dramatic positive effect on my recovery or something that I wish they had not done as it was detrimental to my recovery. Having never previously given any thought to that I was hard pressed to immediately think of some examples.

My simple response at that time was that by far the most important positive action taken by any medical professional was the repetitive reassurances that a full recovery was possible made by my first neurologist during the first month following my strokes. I emphasized that having Dr Bill Martin ,from the very beginning, instill within me a confident belief that a full recovery was possible provided the motivation needed to allow me to do what needed to be done.

Having now had some time to contemplate that question I have come to realize that my response at that time was much too simplistic. I realized the young lady had asked the question in hopes of gaining a tool which she could use at some point in her career.

A far better response at the time would have been to take advantage of the opportunity to impress upon this group of students that recovery is not the result of one or two single actions and no one magic bullet; it is the cumulative result of a great many very small actions over a lengthy period of time with any single action not necessarily being of greater importance than any other single action. Since recovery following stroke is a process of small steps taken slowly, each and every action that contributes to a step forward is as important as each and every other action. Every little bit is significant.

At that time the only negative that came to mind occurred five years post stroke. I consulted with a neurologist because of some confusion and disorientation that I would occasionally experience. He suggested that what might work was to take respiridone, an antipsychotic medication that was at times effective for other off label uses. I agreed to try this medication.

Every Little Bit Helps

Unfortunately at about that same time my antidepressant stopped being effective as did my sleep assist medication to which I had become addicted. Adding respiridone at this point only made me feel worse. I did however, caution the students that this had no long term detrimental effect on my recovery and was only a small bump in the road to recovery; and that they should never hesitate in being creative with what they believe might be of value in our recovery.

While I would like to think that my very successful recovery has been primarily the result of my own hard work supported by the assistance of many peers, I am fully aware that these were secondary to the ability of a great many health care professionals to each do their small part in providing what was necessary to have my progress inch forward slowly.

It was the aggregate of actions that was significant with each and every act contributing in their own way to my journey of recovery. I feel that the act of a Health Care Assistant rolling me over during the night when I was unable to do so was as necessary to my recovery as was the act of my neurologist and my cardiologist meeting together to determine that my strokes were enabled by a hole in my heart(a PFO).

Since every journey of recovery of every stroke survivor is as unique to each survivor as is their own personal makeup and their particular stroke circumstances the relative importance of the specific actions of health care professionals will vary greatly from survivor to survivor. I firmly believe that the goal of recovery is to attain a quality of life which is meaningful and satisfying for each survivor in whatever terms defined by each survivor.

I believe that everything we encounter along our journey of recovery is a contributing factor in that recovery. It is often difficult for us to understand how certain negative experiences can contribute to our recovery. We must remain confident that even every adversity has its purpose and maintain our faith that all we encounter helps us move towards that meaningful quality of life we seek. Every little bit helps.

Group Meetings & Activities

- **Survivor's Group**
 - First three Wednesday's of the month
 - 7 — 9 PM
- **Caregiver's Group**
 - Third Wednesday of the month
 - 7:30 — 9 PM
- **Discussion Group**
 - Every Thursdays of the month
 - 2 — 4 PM
- **Boston Pizza Night**
 - Last Wednesday of the month
 - Location — 333 St. Mary's Ave (City Place)
 - 7—9 PM
 - Cost not covered by MBIA
- **Movie Night**
 - July 15 & 29, August 12 & 26
 - 5—7 PM

Friends of MBIA

MBIA thanks the following individuals and organizations who contributed donations for Annual Christmas Party:

Agnes Milne

Bob Rempel

Carol Burdett

Chris Sunde

Clark Brownlee

Curtis Spencer Cross

Denise & Burley Townsend

Don & Debbie Rose

Elaine Bedard

Ginette Goulet

Gordon Dehn

Hans & Marianne Bucheli

Helen Shewchuk

Kristyn Cain

Lou's Liquid Waste Removal Ltd.

Lucille Erin

Special thanks for Denise & Burley Townsend for collecting gifts and donations and Glennis Kendall & Tammy Kehler for helping us preparing for the event.

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salt
snowball

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