

Headway is a support and advocacy agency for persons with brain injury, other disabilities and seniors.

HEADWAY OF WNY APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR

We are pleased to announce that Ronald Fernandez has been appointed director of Headway of WNY. For more than 14 years, Ronald has been committed to our agency's mission.

Ronald was previously regional resource development specialist and the director of both of our TBI and NHTD Waiver Programs. He is a licensed mental health counselor and certified rehabilitation counselor. You may also know him as the musical entertainer at many of our fundraising events!

Ronald has made it a priority to continue Headway's vision of being a recognized leader in Western New York for survivors of brain injury and those with related disabilities. Two of Headway's top staff have retired in the past year. We want to make every effort to complete a successful transition as we expand existing programs, increase collaboration with related community agencies, build on our affiliation with People Inc. and continue our outreach to survivors of brain injury and their families.

A goal of Ronald's is to increase volunteer opportunities within our agency and increase the membership base, as well as provide more education to the community regarding the options and challenges for individuals and families coping with brain injury and related disabilities.

"My overall goal is to let our community know that Headway of WNY is here for them," shared Ronald.



HEADWAY HOSTS ANNUAL MEETING

Headway of WNY held its annual meeting and presentation on November 5, 2015, at the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County in Buffalo. Ron Fernandez, director, welcomed all and provided an overview of the current status of the New York Department of Health's TBI and NHTD Waiver Programs.

Christine Melchiorre, funding resource and outreach specialist, distributed an annual summary report, which provided highlights of Headway's activities over the last year. Extra copies of this report are available upon request.

The highlight of the evening was Dr. Lisa Keenan's informative presentation entitled, "Understanding Support Systems after Disability and Illness." Dr. Keenan, chief licensed clinical health psychologist from the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at ECMC, encouraged open discussion with her engaging presentation

style. Many common experiences of TBI survivors and their families were discussed, and the need for additional supports was addressed.

It was agreed that there is a current need in the community for providers, supporters, families and caregivers to come together to address ways to 'think outside the box' when it comes to traditional support groups and providing meaningful programs for TBI survivors.

Dr. Keenan provided handouts of her PowerPoint presentation, which included valuable suggestions and tools to accessing support groups and other types of help in the community.

Thank you to all attendees, participants and presenters for an enjoyable and informative evening.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2 Save These Dates | 4 In Memory of Patricia Nowak |
| 3 Headway Develops New Strategic Plan | 6 Veteran News |
| | 7 Membership News |

Headway is a donor designated agency of the United Way

501C3 Non-Profit Organization



SAVE THESE DATES FOR HEADWAY'S 2016 EVENTS



2nd Annual Dining out for Headway

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

In recognition of Brain Injury Awareness Day.

Participating restaurants will be announced soon and posted on our website and Facebook page.

SPRING GALA

Headway of WNY's 17th Annual Spring Gala

Thursday, May 19, 2016

Details to be announced soon and posted on our website and Facebook page.

NEW

New Summer Event

Date and details to be announced as they become available.



7th Annual Walk, Run & Wheel, 5K

Saturday, September 17, 2016, from 9:30 a.m. to noon

Details announced as they become available.

ANNUAL MEETING

Annual Meeting and Presentation

Thursday, November 3, 2016, from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Details announced as they become available.

HEADWAY DEVELOPS NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Over the course of 2015, Headway of WNY has been in the process of developing and expanding its service initiatives and new plans will begin to be put in place in 2016.

The ground work for most of our initiatives, such as support, advocacy, education and outreach has been established over the years. What we envision for 2016, and beyond, is expanding on these initiatives while adding some new dimensions.

Most importantly, we will continue to be guided by our current mission and vision statements:

Mission Statement

To ensure that individuals in Western New York with brain injuries, other disabilities, and seniors have access to advocacy, resources, and support systems to enable them to live as independently as possible. We seek to educate the broader community about the causes, consequences and means of prevention of brain injury.

Vision Statement (new in 2015)

To be the recognized leader in WNY working with survivors of brain injury, and those with related disabilities so they are not alone, find meaning, and move forward.

Stay tuned – there is much to accomplish as we enter a new year!

HOW IS WILL SMITH HELPING TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT CONCUSSIONS?

INFORMATION FROM BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The subject of concussions have been in the news due to the release of Sony Pictures movie *Concussion*. The movie stars Will Smith as Bennett Omalu, MD, the pathologist credited with discovering the link between repeated concussions in professional football and a condition known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE).

Despite this increased attention to concussion, a majority of people in the U.S. do not understand the injury. In a recent Harris poll, 87 percent of Americans surveyed did not know what a concussion is, and 68 percent did not know that a person can sustain a concussion without receiving a blow to the head. Fewer than 50 percent of those polled knew all the signs and symptoms indicating that someone has sustained a concussion.

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the brain to bounce or twist inside the skull, stretching and damaging brain cells and causing chemical changes in the brain. This movement can result in either a temporary alteration in consciousness (feeling dazed, stunned, or confused) or a loss of consciousness.

Concussions can happen anywhere – home, school, work, playing field – and they can happen to anyone – adults, teens, children and babies.

More research is needed to understand why some people who sustain concussions recover spontaneously while others – about 15 percent of those who experience a concussion – require medical treatment, including rehabilitation.

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) has authored *Brain Injury: Dispelling Myths and Misunderstandings about Concussion*. The 16-page brochure discusses signs and symptoms of concussion, when to seek medical attention, how to aid and speed recovery, long-term effects, research, and prevention. BIAA also provides information through its concussion information on the organization's website at biausa.org.

The Brain Injury Association of America (BIAA) is the country's oldest and largest nationwide brain injury advocacy organization. Our mission is to advance brain injury prevention, research, treatment, and education, and to improve the quality of life for all individuals impacted by brain injury. Through advocacy, we bring help, hope and healing to millions of individuals living with brain injury, their families and the professionals who serve them.



Courtesy of Sony Pictures

IN MEMORY OF PATRICIA NOWAK

Patricia Nowak, one of the original founders of Headway for the Brain Injured (now known as Headway of WNY, Inc.), passed away on October 16, 2015.

She was the first volunteer recreation director for the organization and led many activities, excursions and support groups for those whose lives were affected by TBI. She did these things in service and gratitude for having her own daughter's life restored after sustaining a TBI in a car accident in 1982.

In respectful memory, we are reprinting her obituary:

Patricia Nowak, March 5, 1941 – Oct. 16, 2015 Patricia Nowak of West Falls, a founding member of Headway of Western New York Inc., a support and advocacy agency for survivors of brain injury and their families, died Oct. 16 in the Mercy Ambulatory Care Center on Southwestern Boulevard in Orchard Park. She was 74. Born Patricia Ziolkowski in Buffalo, she grew up in the city's Clinton-Fillmore neighborhood and spoke only Polish for the first six years of her life. Her parents sent her to School 25, in part so that she could learn English. She later attended local parochial schools and graduated from Villa Maria Academy. She earned an associate degree in therapeutic recreation from Erie Community College in the 1980s, which was prompted by her daughter, Julie, suffering a traumatic brain injury in a 1982 car accident. "Julie was delayed almost six years from getting her degree, but Patty transported her back and forth to school," said Ronald Sr., Mrs. Nowak's husband of 55 years. Mrs. Nowak used the knowledge she had gained from her degree and nursing her daughter to become a founding member of Headway Inc., for which she served voluntarily as director of activities for many years. In that capacity, Mrs. Nowak led field trips to the Catskills resorts and other venues in Toronto, Niagara Falls and Pittsburgh, and established peer and family support groups for those suffering from traumatic brain injury. Additionally, she volunteered to care for head injury patients at Mercy Hospital in South Buffalo, the Father Baker Victory Facility in Lackawanna and at Union Presbyterian Church in Blasdell. At 17, Mrs. Nowak was secretary and worked in the payroll office for Crest Standard Corp. and Amber Weaving in Buffalo, and later served as manager of Crest Cleaners locations in West Seneca and East Aurora. She also was an accomplished, self-taught seamstress and clothing designer. In addition to her husband and daughter, she is survived by two sons, Ronald Jr. and Christopher; and seven grandchildren.

Headway of WNY is grateful for Patricia's service throughout the years.



ECMC Department of Rehabilitation Services presents:

Rehab Symposium 2016

A Multidisciplinary Approach to the Neurologically Impaired Patient

Saturday, March 12, 2016 • 7 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Therapists working in neurologic rehabilitation settings are challenged by the medical complexities of their patients and the responsibility of finding creative ways to decrease hospital costs. This conference is designed to provide knowledge of best practices, current trends and contemporary topics pertaining to the management of the neurologically impaired patients.

Headway of WNY will have an information table at this event.

For more details and registration information, visit: ecmc.edu/about/lifeline/rehab16.asp

Registration flyers are also available at:

Headway of WNY, Inc.
2635 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14216

JOIN BIANYS IN ALBANY FOR BRAIN INJURY ADVOCACY DAY!

March 23, 2016

Legislative Office Building, Albany, NY

BIANYS is organizing a day of action, visibility, and advocacy. Bring your friends, family and community members to



Albany to share your experiences and be an advocate. Meet with legislators, learn about the legislative process, and show your support for brain injury awareness.

Providers: learn how you can help spread the word & get involved – contact BIANYS for details and information www.bianys.org/advocacy/advocacy-day-2016

Together, we can show New York that brain injury is a significant health and social issue that deserves attention. Join us in Albany on March 23 to take action!

DID YOU KNOW?

WRITING THINGS DOWN CAN HELP A PERSON WITH TBI. KEEP A RECORD OF IMPORTANT EVENTS, PEOPLE'S NAMES AND BIRTHDAY OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS, AS WELL AS TASKS OR OTHER THINGS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO REMEMBER.



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716.817.9090





VETERAN NEWS

Many service members, particularly the men and women who served after 9/11, have been diagnosed with a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). These diagnoses are deployment related as well as non-deployment related. The highest amount of reported cases happened between the years of 2007 and 2013. The highest year 2011, with 32,907 reported cases. Half of 2015 has been reported, and there have already been 11,715 reported cases of TBI (DoD, DVVIC).

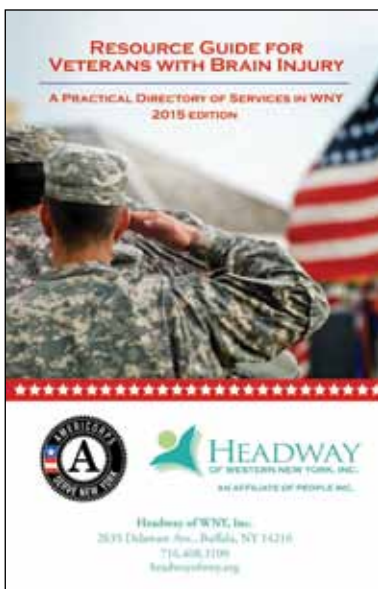
Men and women are returning from war and dealing with their injuries as well as trying to re-adjust to civilian life. This affects people biologically, psychologically and socially as well. This re-adjustment that affects their life is commonly recognized as the “new normal.” As part of our AmeriCorps VISTA Program, we are trying to see what gaps we can fill in order to help better serve these Veterans adjusting to their new normal. There is a tremendous amount support available through various veteran agencies; however, as of this newsletter printing, a program has not been found that focuses specifically on TBI in the military.

The brain injury survivors that we meet with have expressed that they would like to see support groups or programs that can help with cognitive and critical thinking skills. Currently, we provide a Veterans Reading Support Group that meets every first and third Thursday of every month. This group is a great outlet to concentrate on your cognitive and critical thinking skills; those who participate have been enjoying their experience.

Our goal is to develop new ideas to better serve Veterans with TBI through educational/volunteer programs or support groups. If you have ideas to share on this subject, call 716.408.3100.



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NEW RESOURCE GUIDE FOR VETERANS WITH BRAIN INJURIES

The second edition of the Resource Guide for Veterans with Brain Injuries, produced by Headway of WNY, is now available to veterans and their families. This edition includes more than 30 organizations from Western New York and nationally. The guide is made possible with the help of United Way of Buffalo and Erie County, Freedom Village and Catholic Charities. If you would like a copy of the resource guide, download it from our website, headwayofwny.org, or call 716.408.3100.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Headway's current membership program is active with more than 150 members in one of the following categories: Individual, Family, Professional, Supporting, Corporate or Life. Thank you to all who have renewed or joined over the last year; we are truly grateful for your support.

If you haven't yet joined, now is your chance. Memberships are now renewable on an annual basis. If you join in February 2016, your membership is valid until February 2017. Renewal forms and reminders are sent to our members on a monthly basis, depending on when your membership is up for renewal.

Membership is one of the ways we continue our mission. Annual membership helps make it possible for us to provide supports in the community, including the following:

- Support groups for survivors of brain injury
- Support groups for caregivers and families
- Support groups for veterans
- Quarterly newsletters
- Resource guides
- Educational outreach
- Advocacy
- Various resources and linkages
- Assistance in accessing other support systems as needed

There are many ways to become involved with all that Headway of WNY is doing this year and membership is one way to get involved to help make a difference. Our members are the first to know about service opportunities within the agency, such as special events, advocacy and educational outreach. We hope we can count on you this year!

For more information about membership levels and benefits, please go to our membership page at www.headwayofwny.org/how_to_help/membership

PEOPLE INC. NEWS

PEOPLE INC. OPERATES NYS LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM, LOOKS TO ADD VOLUNTEERS

People Inc. was recently selected by the New York State Office for the Aging to operate the New York State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. The program provides resources and advocates for older adults who live in nursing homes, assisted living and other licensed adult care homes in Erie, Niagara, Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties.

The heart of the program is the core group of volunteers called ombudsmen who go through comprehensive training to be certified to listen to, investigate and help resolve concerns on behalf of long-term care residents. Ombudsmen help residents understand and exercise their rights to good care in an environment that protects their dignity and quality of life.

Ombudsmen bring compassion and problem-solving skills as they visit long-term care facilities to empower residents and help them resolve complaints. Ombudsmen respond to a variety of concerns about long-term care, such as: quality of care, abuse and neglect, lost and stolen belongings, dietary concerns and public benefits programs.

People Inc. provides comprehensive training and ongoing support. With a minimum commitment of two hours per week, ombudsmen have the ability to decide the days and the times they work. Volunteers in are being enrolled in upcoming training sessions.

To learn more, call 716.817.9222, or toll-free at 1.844.527.5509.





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YOU ARE NOT ALONE, MOVE FORWARD WITH HEADWAY.

HEADWAY'S SUPPORT GROUPS FOR SURVIVORS OF BRAIN INJURY AND THEIR FAMILIES

All meetings, except as noted, will take place at Headway of WNY
2635 Delaware Avenue, Suite E, Buffalo, NY 14216 • 716.408.3100
(Please take note of changes to dates and times of support groups)

PEER SUPPORT

Enter at Suite B
First and third Tuesday
of each month
6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT

Enter at Suite E
First Tuesday of each month
6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.

VETERAN'S READING GROUP

Enter at Suite B
First Thursday of
each month
6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.
716.408.3110

PLEASE NOTE:

If the Buffalo Schools are closed due to inclement weather, support meetings listed here are also cancelled.

PEER SUPPORT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

DeGraff Hospital/Admin Board Meeting Room
445 Tremont Street, North Tonawanda, NY 14120
Second Tuesday of each month
4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

*If you have questions
about cancellations due
to inclement weather,
call 716.694.4500 or
716.523.9623*

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