

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

FIRED UP AT THE FOUNDRY

Headway's Annual Spring Gala was held on Thursday, May 19, at The Foundry Suites in Buffalo. This celebratory event gathers together friends and colleagues to raise funds and awareness while sharing dinner and making memories.

Each year, the committee convenes in late December/January to begin preparing for our largest fundraising event of the year. Planning occurs in stages with each committee member contributing their expertise in one or more areas. This event would not be possible without the efforts of the volunteer committee, basket

donors, and staff who work together to make it all happen! We are very fortunate for this loyal group of people and welcome new committee members each year! People Inc.'s expert design team in the Marketing Communications Department created the images for our event's promotional pieces.

This year's committee members were as follows: Maggie Apotosky, Felice Bumbaco, Ron Fernandez, Bridget Flynn, Judy Hutson, Beth Mann, Christine Melchiorre, Darlene Robida, Chris Van Veghten and Shannon Winney. Additionally, the

following volunteers contributed to the success of this event: Denise Bienko, Jennifer Blake, Kristen Hewlett, Hope Hoetzer-Cook, Carolyn Isbrandt, Kathleen Janiga, Alicia Lombardo, Antoinette McMyne, Jarrett O'Brien, Cody Pokigo, Lisa Robida, Mare Steiniger, Denise Smith and JoAnn Williamson.

Over 200 guests were in attendance this year and The Foundry Suites' event rooms were spacious and stunning. The layout and ambience

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Headway is a donor designated agency of the United Way

501C3 Non-Profit Organization

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Collaboration is an essential part of Headway of WNY's mission. Here is a recap of some of our recent exciting accomplishments:

On May 4, Headway of WNY collaborated with the Brain Injury Association and the Museum of disABILITY History to present a guided discussion on the topic of aging with brain injury. The presentation was held at the Museum of disABILITY History and featured panelists Dr. Thomas Polisoto and Dr. Lisa Keenan.

On June 22, Headway also collaborated with People Inc. and Catholic Charities on a symposium: Bridging the Gaps: WNY in Support of Veterans. This event was held at the Amherst Ramada and featured four panelists from the VA and veteran's organizations. The keynote address was provided by New York State Senator Robert Ortt, who is himself a veteran.

Both of these events were possible because of collaboration with fellow not-for-profits who share the mission of helping people with disabilities in our region. Collaboration and being a part of this community is essential; particularly due to limited grant opportunities, challenging economics and the large need for services in our community.

Headway has always been a collaborative agency, particularly in its work with the NYS Department of Health and the NHTD and TBI Waiver programs. These programs also brought about collaborations with six Western New York health and human services agencies, area hospitals (particularly ECMC), and provider agencies of the Waivers, as well as collaborative organizations such as the United Way, C.A.S.E., BIANYS and the Network in Aging of WNY.

As we move forward, we will continue to pursue additional opportunities to collaborate with the WNY community and improve communications about what Headway offers. When we are involved with other kindred agencies, we are better equipped to identify best utilization of services in the region for those who come to us for assistance.

I hope everyone has a good and optimistic summer!

Ronald Fernández RRDS, CRC, LMHC
Director

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”

NEW WOMEN'S GROUP BEING FORMED

There has been renewed interest in the country regarding women's issues and traumatic brain injury. Recently, the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force held a briefing, Women and Traumatic Brain Injury: A Frontier Yet to be Explored in Washington DC. Headway recognizes this area of need and has been trying to put together a women's support group to meet during the day, most likely on Wednesdays. In order to begin this group, we are looking for at least six individuals who can commit to attend the first two sessions. If you are interested in attending such a group, email support@headwayofwny.org or call 716.408.3120.

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of the check-in areas worked well, with open space between the two rooms and unique artwork of local artist, Peter Fowler, on display.

As guests arrived, they were pleasantly greeted by Headway staff member, Bridget Flynn and committee member, Felice Bumbaco. Guests were directed to one of two check-in areas, managed by People Inc. staff – Denise Bienko and Jennifer Blake, and Headway staff – Carolyn Isbrandt and Shannon Winney.

Special Headway M&Ms were distributed to guests at the door to the main dining room by volunteer, Lisa Robida.

Basket Raffle tickets were available during the first two hours of the event and sales were expertly handled again this year by Headway staff member, Kristin Hewlett, along with community volunteer, Cody Pokigo.

Hors d’oeuvres were enjoyed in the Basket/Taylor Room, an additional room off the main dining room where guests overlooked the stunning courtyard. All guests received two drink tickets and a cash bar was available throughout the evening. A festive atmosphere filled the rooms!

The spacious Taylor Room was the site of this year’s ever popular theme basket galore! Guests were able to move freely while viewing the vast array of beautifully prepared baskets.

Additionally, the ever popular “lotto tree” was set up alongside the basket activity, and ticket sales were handled by community volunteer, Hope Hoetzer-Cook with the help of Felice Bumbaco.

Ron Fernandez provided music for the event, including guitar, vocals and piano. His repertoire includes familiar hits from the 70s and 80s. Plus, Ron can always be counted on for a joke or two mixed in with the music!

Winning basket numbers were drawn 30 at a time throughout the evening and carefully recorded by committee member, Darlene Robida, who also ensured that copies of the winning numbers sheets were distributed to all tables for guests to view.

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“Fired Up” continued from page 3

Lively conversation filled the air as guests mingled and enjoyed the evening. Coffee and tea were provided, as well as a delicious Wegmans cake and cookies from Rich Products. Both were graciously donated for this event.

Additionally, the silent auction display in the main dining room, monitored by People Inc. staff member, Kathleen Janiga, along with Headway staff member, Christine Melchiorre, featured 18 items, including: an autographed Buffalo Bills football and signed photos, camping equipment, gravity chairs, a night out on the town (complete with dinner, theatre and hotel room) and a handmade wine rack with wine and much more! Guests were intrigued by this colorful and delightful display.

Towards the end of the evening and with much fanfare, the winners of both the door prize and the “lotto tree” were announced and the winning bids from the Silent Auction were revealed.

This year’s event, Headway’s Fired Up at The Foundry was given its name based on the following similarity: the Foundry was originally a factory that produced metal castings by “firing up” metals to form new shapes.

The analogy of “firing” was used to describe the process by which we choose to draw upon the “fire” within to achieve what may seem unachievable (when challenges seem to exceed our capacities) to take on a new form. When viewed in this way, we are in a sense, “fired up.”

Fired Up at the Foundry Sponsors

Presenting Platinum: \$5,000

Anonymous

Silver: \$1,250

Elmwood Health Center, Health Force, The Landwehr Family, People Inc.

Bronze: \$1,000

Erie County Medical Center (ECMC)

Brass: \$500

All Metro Health Care, the Denio Family, Parkview Health Services, Schofield Care, Venture Forthe, Winship & Associates

Steel: \$250

Erie & Niagara Insurance, Merrill Lynch (The Szymanski Jellinick Group), Mark, Nancy and Connor Reed, the Toffoli Family, Rich Products, Chris VanVeghten and Beth Mann

Iron: \$125

Kevin Downes, Rapid Recovery, Upstate Rebar, LLC

Headway is grateful to all its event sponsors for their support of our mission. We thank all who joined us for this much loved and anticipated annual event, and we look forward to seeing you next year!





INFORMATIVE AND INSPIRING VETERANS SYMPOSIUM

On June 22, Headway partnered with People Inc. and Catholic Charities Vision Military Program, and held a Veteran Symposium, Bridging the Gaps: Western New York in Support of Veterans. The symposium was held at the Ramada Hotel in Amherst. This event brought to bring together service providers and veterans, along with surrounding community members to identify key issues and service gaps for Western New York's veteran community.

The morning opened with inspiring words from New York State Senator Robert Ortt. Along with Senator Ortt, there were four expert panelists: Jim Becker, MFA from the Buffalo Vet Center; Kerry Donnelly, PhD, ABPP, from the WNY VA Healthcare System; David Shenk from Erie County Veterans Services; and Joe Chudoba from Erie County Sheriff's Office and Re-Boot Camp, Inc. who were all ready to answer questions on this matter.

With over 45 in attendance, the symposium was filled with an interactive and informational discussion. Topics such as mental health, suicide prevention, benefits, substance abuse treatment, child care, marriage and family counseling were all addressed and discussed. The symposium was an excellent networking opportunity that allowed agencies to connect with each other.

Thank you to all who joined us – we look forward to continued collaboration with other veteran service providers in the Western New York community. If you have any questions pertaining to future veteran related events, contact Shannon W. at support@headwayofwny.org or 716.408.3100.

VETERANS READING GROUP

For the past year, Headway of WNY has offered, in partnership with ECMC, a bibliotherapy group called Wordplay: Compassionate Healing, One Page at Time. This group is offered to veterans and other military personnel with traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, anoxic brain injuries and/or orthopedic injuries who would like to participate in a reading group with other veterans and active military personnel.

This group began meeting in June of 2015. We are currently doing more outreach to increase attendance. Members have found this group to be a great outlet to express their feelings through literature. Those who attend receive an Amazon Kindle Fire that will be theirs to own after 10 completed meetings. If you or anyone you know would be interested in participating in this group, contact Shannon W. at support@headwayofwny.org or call 716.408.3100.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, September 10, 2016
LaSalle Park, Buffalo

WALK, RUN & WHEEL

7th Annual 5K Run to Benefit Headway of WNY



HELMET SAFETY

BE SURE TO REPLACE YOUR HELMET IF IT WAS INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT OR FALL! YOUR HELMET ABSORBED MOST OF THE PREVIOUS IMPACT AND COULD BE COMPROMISED.

The following information is an excerpt from an article, "County law will mandate concussion training for youth sports coaches," that was in The Buffalo News, by Sandra Tan on June 22, 2016.



The Erie County Legislature is poised to approve a new law Thursday that will make concussion safety courses mandatory for all coaches of youth sports in Erie County. The law, which would take effect immediately, is expected to pass overwhelmingly just as schools are letting out and summer youth sports move into full swing.

Meanwhile, the Legislature also is slated to adopt the final component of County Executive Mark Poloncarz's lead prevention initiative, which would involve hiring more county employees to nearly double the number of environmental health inspections the county does now and improve services to children with high lead levels in their blood.

The concussion training law would fine youth sports organizations \$100 to \$200 if they cannot produce records showing that all of their coaches have taken concussion safety courses either in person, through their sports organizations, or online. The requirement would primarily affect smaller, independent youth organizations that engage in contact sports.

The proposal requires that coaches of any "contact or collision sports" take a free concussion safety program offered by the County Health Department or online through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's HEADS UP to Youth Sports.

"The state already mandates the coaches of public schools have this training," said Legislator Patrick Burke, D-Buffalo, who co-sponsored the law along with Majority Leader Joseph Lorigo, C-West Seneca. "It just seems crazy to me that not everyone is mandated to have this concussion training."

Though the new law would take effect immediately, Burke said he expects the county will give sports organizations a grace period prior to enforcement of the new requirements.



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FACEBOOK.COM/HEADWAYOFWNY**

SUPPORT GROUP NEWS

Headway of WNY provides support groups for TBI survivors as well as caregivers. Our TBI peer support includes groups that meet twice a month at Headway and a group that meets once a month at DeGraff Hospital in North Tonawanda. Both groups have been very successful: Our Peer Support in Rural Communities (DeGraff Hospital) recently had outstanding numbers of 22 people who joined us for the month of June. Kudos to Mark Shaw, our volunteer facilitator! Keep up the great work!

There is an increased interest in WNY for Caregiver Support Groups. Headway's Caregiver Support Group meets on the first Tuesday of each month (see back of this newsletter for support group listings). Caregiver support is a great outlet for people to take a break in the evening to connect with fellow caregivers and share their experiences.

Headway is also currently interested in identifying other areas in need of support, including a possible Women's Support Group. If anyone has suggestions for other areas of support or is interested in attending any support group, contact Shannon W. at support@headwayofwny.org or call 716.408.3100.

Our support groups are free and open to anyone who would like to attend.

UPDATE REGARDING TBI AND NHTD TRANSITION

The Department of Health has presented a draft proposed transition plan for both waiver programs. The plan has not been approved by CMS and is open to comment. This plan does include a role for the Regional Centers for which Headway has the Buffalo Regional contract. If you are interested in reading the plan or getting more information, go to: www.health.ny.gov/health_care/medicaid/redesign/mrt90/tbi-nhtd_waiver_trans_ingo.htm.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AND OPPORTUNITIES

Headway of WNY started as a grass-roots agency more than 30 years ago. For many years, people in Western New York volunteered their time and efforts to address the needs of individuals and families whose lives had been altered due to a traumatic brain injury. As the agency grew, services were expanded to include seniors and individuals with other cognitive issues.

Volunteers have always been a vital attribute to our agency. On April 19, Headway held an informative volunteer appreciation event. The event was a gathering where we spoke about our volunteer opportunities and an introduction of our vision and mission. Headway plans to create more volunteer events and trainings to help our volunteers know they are valued and appreciated. Our volunteer opportunities include help with the following:

- Educational In-services (giving education presentations and sharing experiences with TBI)
- Outreach events (helping with community events and health fairs, speaking about Headway)
- Fundraising events
- Support group facilitation

For those who are interested in giving back for a rewarding experience, all upcoming events and trainings will be announced on our Facebook page and posted on our website, headwayofwny.org. If you wish to reach out and contact us, email support@headwayofwny.org or call 716.408.3100.

**WRITING THINGS DOWN
CAN HELP A PERSON
WITH TBI TO COPE. KEEP
A RECORD OF IMPORTANT
EVENTS, PEOPLE'S NAMES,
TASKS OR OTHER THINGS
THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO
REMEMBER.**



2635 Delaware Ave., Suite E
Buffalo, NY 14216

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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 to 8 p.m.

CAREGIVERS SUPPORT

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

VETERAN'S READING GROUP

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

*If you have questions,
call 716.694.4500
or 716.523.9623*

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