

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

## HEADWAY CELEBRATES 30 YEARS OF CARING

*Headway's 16th Annual Spring Gala, Diamond Anniversary – 30 Years of Caring* will be held on Thursday, May 28, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. at Classics V Banquet Center, 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd, Amherst.

Join us in celebrating 30 years of caring in the Western New York community. Plans are underway for a truly memorable evening, complete with live music, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, dinner, a silent auction and one of the largest basket raffles in the area!

All proceeds from this event support our mission of ensuring that individuals in WNY with brain injuries and other disabilities have access to advocacy, resources and support systems to enable them to live as independently as possible.

Each pre-sale ticket will receive a complimentary chance ticket for the lotto drawing and one chance for the door prize. Pre-sale ticket order forms are enclosed with this newsletter or you can purchase online by going to our website, [headwayofwny.org](http://headwayofwny.org), and following the links to the ticket purchase option.

We are now accepting basket raffle items and silent auction items. These donations are also tax deductible. Please see donation forms enclosed and the article on page 4.

This year, the first 200 guests will receive a commemorative 30th anniversary gift, and all guests will have numerous chances to win during the themed basket raffle. Additionally, a unique silent auction will be open for bids throughout the evening.

Please join us and have some classic spring fun with your friends, families and colleagues while helping to make a difference in WNY.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available and may be viewed at [headwayofwny.org](http://headwayofwny.org). If you have any questions about sponsorship or this year's event, contact Christine Melchiorre at [cmelchiorre@headwayofwny.org](mailto:cmelchiorre@headwayofwny.org) or by calling 716.408.3117.

We look forward to seeing you on May 28!



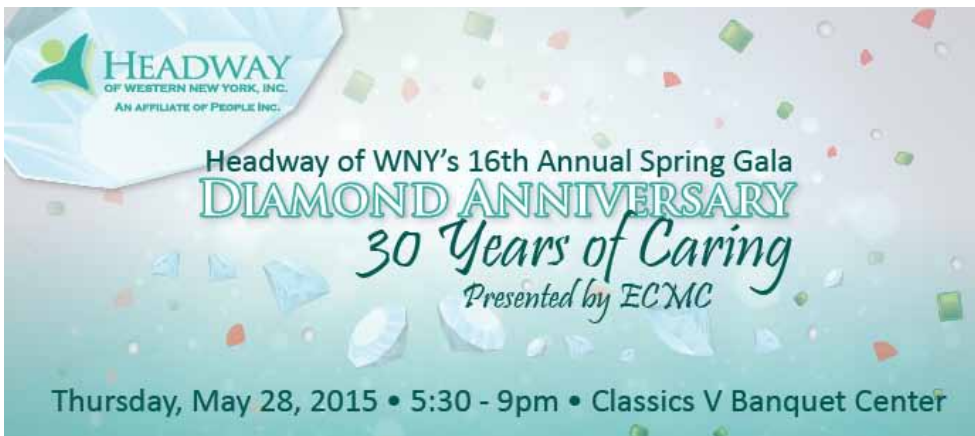
## HEADWAY LAUNCHES NEW DINING OUT EVENT IN WNY

*Thank you* to all our friends and supporters for supporting our our inaugural dining out event in recognition of National Brain Injury Awareness month.

*Dining out for Headway – A Nourishing Event in Support of Headway of WNY* was held at three participating restaurants over the course of three days, March 2, 3 and 4. In spite of the weather, we are happy to report that more than 120 people helped raise funds in support of our mission and awareness of our cause.

We are most grateful to three of the most outstanding restaurants in Western New York who collaborated with us in this endeavor and helped make this unique event a success. We hope to build on the successes of this year and expand the event in the future.

*continued on page 4*



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*Headway is a donor designated agency of the United Way*

*501C3 Non-Profit Organization*

## MEMBER'S CORNER

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we're kicking off a new feature this month with this Member's Corner article. We welcome your story contributions! Member's Corner articles may be sent by email to Christine Melchiorre at [cmelchiorre@headwayofwny.org](mailto:cmelchiorre@headwayofwny.org).

### AN ARTIST REEMERGES AFTER HER TBI



It was the summer of 2001 when Diane Pokorski unexpectedly suffered a stage 5 sub arachnoid hemorrhage; she was only 52 years old.

After six months of hospitalization, two in critical care and four in acute and sub-acute rehab, she was brought home to the care of her husband, Ron.

Her brain injury left her with significant deficits including: right side hemiplegia (she is right handed), blindness in her right eye, and global aphasia and apraxia.

Although the aphasia has improved (now it is "only" expressive), her physical deficits are assumed to be permanent.

A graduate of the Fashion Institute in New York, she had her own business as a seamstress for many years boasting several hundred customers.

When she found she could no longer sew, she wondered what she could do creatively with the abilities that remained. And more importantly, what new skills could she learn so that she could take ADVANTAGE OF what had happened to her?

Years of encouragement and consistent physical and occupational therapies

and speech therapy helped her progress significantly and find some answers to her questions.

Due to the painfully slow improvements that are consistent with a TBI, it was not until around 2011 (10 years out from her TBI), that Diane started to develop the cognitive skills to be able to do something different with her life and tap into her lost creativity.

She needed physical help sewing, which she continues to get from her mom, however her sense of creativity was coming back and she could design again. This meant she could collaborate with her mom and find her way back to her creativity in a meaningful way.

Her renewed sense of purpose and creativity began with jewelry making and she has created many unique pieces which she meticulously designs and assembles herself.



Shortly after that, her speech therapist began a program with Diane to help her express herself in writing. She began by spelling words or drawing pictures to let others know what she was trying to say.



As drawing became the communication tool of choice, she began to draw things around the house in great detail.

She also began drawing scenes from Italy, where she had lived and visited frequently over the years.

The results are highly detailed pen and ink drawings that she continues to improve upon virtually every day.

She also has a small business called Artistic Challenges. She most recently had a website created, [artisticchallenges.com](http://artisticchallenges.com), and has a Facebook page as well. She sells prints, t-shirts, earrings, mugs and note cards, all by taking advantage of her renewed creativity.

You may also see her artwork and jewelry at the Museum of disABILITY History, a project of People Inc., at 3826 Main Street, Buffalo (near Eggert Road).



**"LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK! [FACEBOOK.COM/HEADWAYOFWNY](https://www.facebook.com/headwayofwny)**

## DON'T EVER GIVE UP!

*By Mark M. Shaw*

Ten and a half years later and I have overcome yet another hurdle! 2015 is my year! On January 6, I went for a cerebral angiogram and I was told that the leak at the AVM site was gone and there was no sign of aneurysm or AVM at all. I am still so excited as I share this news! I go on many websites and pages for survivors on Facebook to offer my support and advice to others that are new to brain injury or are at the point of nearly giving up. The key is NOT to give up.

I was not expected to live and I did. I was told I can't do or won't be able to do whatever and that gave me the push to keep going and accomplish more and more.

I have also put together a support group through Headway of WNY and collaborate with Kaleida's Reconnecting After Stroke Support Group. We have increased in size and have outgrown two rooms. We are now meeting (still the third Tuesday of the month) in the administrative meeting room at DeGraff Hospital.

I went back to school and graduated with my associates degree in human services and then went on to get my Bachelor's degree in health and human Services. I am currently working on my Master's degree in clinical mental health counseling.

**DON'T EVER GIVE UP!**

## HEADWAY WELCOMES REBECCA SALAZAR, RN

Rebecca Salazar, RN, recently started working for Headway of WNY as a nurse evaluator for the NHTD and TBI Waiver program. "It is a great feeling to be able to help people with services," Rebecca said. She previously worked for People Inc. for eight years as a residential RN at group homes throughout the agency. Rebecca has a BSN and is currently enrolled in graduate school working towards becoming an Advanced Nurse Practitioner. She will be writing her thesis on Improving Health Care for People with Intellectual Disabilities in the Hospital Setting.



## CELEBRATING TWO YEARS WITH HEADWAY!

*By Antoinette McMyne*

I have learned so much in my two years as a RRDS with Headway of WNY. My responsibilities include, but are not limited to, taking referrals for new intakes, obtaining and verifying medical records, completing evaluations and intakes, overseeing the TBI Housing Subsidy and overseeing and completing serious reportable incidents. I enjoy meeting and working with the participants of the TBI and NHTD Waivers and their families. For most individuals, I am their initial contact with Headway and the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver. This experience has been very rewarding for me and I hope to continue to learn for many more years at Headway of WNY.

## IN LOVING MEMORY OF DOROTHY M. PISKOROWSKI

May 16, 1927 - November 13, 2014

Dorothy was one of many advocates for persons with brain injuries who helped raise awareness. She volunteered at Headway of WNY with recreation activities, helped coordinate picnics, summer camp outings and lunches. She brought much laughter, smiles and joy to all around her.

## THE BASKETS ARE COMING, THE BASKETS ARE COMING!

For those of you who have attended Headway's Spring Gala in the past know that this event is noted for having miles of aisles of fabulous baskets for auction! We are able to have this large and lavish display each year because of the generosity of people like you – our wonderful volunteers and donors. Planning is underway for this year and basket assembly has officially started!

Are you able to help? Please contact us if you are able to make and donate a themed basket or drop it off at our office during regular business hours. If you want to help but don't feel particularly handy or creative, just let us know, and we will be happy to accept your donated items (new or unobtrusively used) and create the themed basket for you.



Additionally, we are accepting donations of other items to add to the creation of various themed baskets. Some items to consider donating to add to baskets are: bottles of wine or spirits, gift cards, lottery tickets or perhaps holiday presents you need to re-gift for a good cause. We also appreciate donations of empty baskets (particularly larger ones), ribbons, cellophane and other basket decorating materials.

Join us in celebrating *Headway's 30th Anniversary Gala* and help us make the basket display the best it's ever been! This year's event is on Thursday, May 28, from 5:30 to 9pm, at Classics V, 2425 Niagara Falls Blvd., Amherst. If you are able to make a donation or help in anyway, call 716.408.3100.

*"Dining Out Event" continued from page 1*

The participating restaurants were:

Betty's



Ristorante  
Lombardo



Fat Bob's  
Smokehouse



A specially designed logo and promotional pieces were created by the People Inc. Marketing Communications team and links to all three restaurants were available on our website during the promotion.

Each restaurant donated a percentage of food sales to Headway of WNY and all proceeds generated go directly to activities in support of our mission.

Thank you again for your support and generosity!

## UNITING AS THE VOICE OF BRAIN INJURY

**BIANYS 33rd Annual Conference**  
**Thursday and Friday, June 4 and 5, 2015**  
**Marriott Hotel, Albany, New York**



The Brain Injury Association of New York State (BIANYS) annual conference features workshops on a number of different topics, as well as the opportunity to network with individuals with brain injury, their family members and friends, professionals in the field, advocates, health care providers and agency representatives.



Featuring a keynote address by actor Gary Busey, who is celebrating his 45th anniversary in show business and has filled that career with memorable performances, from *The Buddy Holly Story* to *Lethal Weapon* to *Celebrity Apprentice*.

In 1988, Busey was involved in a near-fatal motorcycle accident, resulting in a brain injury. The accident changed Busey's life and resulted in the enactment of stricter helmet laws across the United States. He speaks all over the country about the challenges and triumphs of living every day with a traumatic brain injury.

His speech about his own personal experience with brain injury will inspire! For complete conference information, visit <http://bianys.org/ac-registration-info>. Headway members receive the BIANYS membership rate.



Jill Bolte Taylor. Photo courtesy of ted.com.

## MY STROKE OF INSIGHT

The article below is a partial transcript of a TED Talk filmed at TED2008, February 2008

I grew up to study the brain because I have a brother who has been diagnosed with a brain disorder, schizophrenia. And as a sister and later, as a scientist, I wanted to understand, why is it that I can take my dreams, I can connect them to my reality, and I can make my dreams come true? What is it about my brother's brain and his schizophrenia that he cannot connect his dreams to a common and shared reality, so they instead become delusion?

So I dedicated my career to research into the severe mental illnesses. I moved from my home state of Indiana to Boston, where I was working in the lab of Dr. Benes, in the Harvard Department of Psychiatry. And in the lab, we were asking the question, "What are the biological differences between the brains of individuals who would be diagnosed as normal control, as compared with the brains of individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia, schizoaffective or bipolar disorder?"

So we were essentially mapping the microcircuitry of the brain. There was a lot of meaning in my life because I was performing this type of research during the day, but then in the evenings and on the weekends, I traveled as an advocate for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. But on the morning of December 10, 1996, I woke up to discover that I had a brain disorder of my own. A blood vessel exploded in the left half of my brain. In the course of four hours, I watched my brain completely deteriorate in its ability to process all information. On the morning of the hemorrhage, I could not walk, talk, read, write or recall any of my life. I essentially became an infant in a woman's body.

To view the rest of this talk, go to [www.ted.com/talks/Jill\\_Bolte\\_Taylor:\\_My\\_stroke\\_of\\_insight](http://www.ted.com/talks/Jill_Bolte_Taylor:_My_stroke_of_insight)



## NEW TBI SUPPORT GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS

A new support group for caregivers will be held on the first Wednesday of each month from 1 to 2:30 p.m., beginning on Wednesday, June 3. It will be held at Headway of WNY, 2635 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo. Knowing that you are not alone can be very uplifting and informative. Talking to others who understand what you are going through may help you deal with your feelings.

For more details or if you have any questions, contact Diana Landwehr at [support@headwayofwny.org](mailto:support@headwayofwny.org) or by calling 716.408.3103.

## MYTH FACT

### CLARIFYING WAIVER MYTHS

#### Myth

The waiver programs provide care for eligible individuals in the same manner as nursing homes.

#### Fact

As the Regional Resource Development Center (RRDC), Headway of WNY staff administers the New York State Department of Health's Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) Waiver, and the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Waiver. The RRDC does not administer nursing services, such as wound care or passing of medication. These supports must come from a certified home health care agency or more informally from other family members and/or friends.

Together with other services, as well as family members and/or friends, the waiver programs are designed to help many individuals stay in their own homes and avoid institutional care.

For more information on the TBI and NHTD waiver programs and how they might be able to help you or someone you know, call Headway at 716.408.3120.

## ADVOCACY INFORMATION FROM BIANYS

Our state legislature is divided into two separate bodies: the New York State Senate and the New York State Assembly. We are each represented by one state senator and one state assemblymember, each determined by your address.

### To find your NYS Senator, visit here:

[www.nysenate.gov/senators](http://www.nysenate.gov/senators)

### To find your NYS Assemblymember, visit here:

[www.assembly.state.ny.us](http://www.assembly.state.ny.us)

These elected officials like to be contacted by email or telephone.

### When you call, do the following:

- Introduce yourself and tell them that you are a constituent and a member of the Brain Injury Association of New York State (BIANYS).
- Briefly mention your relationship to brain injury (i.e.: that you have a brain injury; that a family member has a brain injury; you are a provider; you are a professional in the field, etc.).
- You are calling because there are a number of issues of concern to the brain injury community that you would like your senator/assemblymember to be aware of.

### Some talking points are:

- Support efforts to amend NY law to create an Office of Brain Injury.

- Creating a Brain Injury Trust Fund in NYS to provide more funding for brain injury services.
- Creating a brain injury registry to better capture the number of New Yorkers who sustain a brain injury, and to better link them with services.
- Implementation of Affordable Care Act must address needs of individuals with brain injury and the chronic nature of brain injury.
- Express concern that New York State is not living up to their statutory requirements as set forth in the TBI Act of 1994. Note the lack of a statewide call center addressing the needs of the brain injury community.
- You hope you can count on their support.

### Ending the call

- Be sure to thank them for their time and interest. Send a follow up thank you email or note.

Please share information about your efforts and any responses with the BIANYS staff.

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## SENIORS LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY THEY CARE ABOUT AND CAN AFFORD

People Inc. Senior Living provides affordable and safe housing for independent seniors ages 62 and up and who meet income guidelines at 19 locations throughout Western New York. For those who want to learn more, apartment tours are encouraged.

Monthly rent is based on the tenant's income, which includes some utilities. To help families and tenants feel at ease, there is a day-time manager and live-in caretaker for building emergencies. The one-bedroom apartments include a kitchen with appliances. A small pet is welcome, too! Service coordinators are available to provide tenants assistance to supports and services at no extra charge. Group transportation to grocery stores and a variety of activities are provided for tenants who wish to participate.

Serving Erie, Niagara and Genesee counties, many locations are accepting apartment applications. There is a short wait to join our community. Friendly staff will explain more about eligibility and direct you to a specific location's manager to set up an apartment tour. For more information, call 716.817.9090.





“  
I've learned how reading  
and the arts can help us  
deal with pain.  
”

## HEADWAY PARTNERS WITH ECMC IN ADMINISTERING NEW QUALITY OF LIFE GRANT THROUGH THE CHRISTOPHER AND DANA REEVE FOUNDATION

Headway of WNY invites local veterans who have PTSD, brain injuries and/or orthopedic injuries to participate in a new reading therapy program based on bibliotherapy, an expressive therapy that uses an individual's relationship to the content of books and poetry and other written words as therapy.

*Wordplay - compassionate healing, one page at a time*, will be offered on the first and third Wednesday of each month, beginning in May. Sessions will tentatively run from 6 to 7:30 p.m. and will be held at either Headway of WNY or a location yet to be determined. Please check our Facebook page for updates as we move forward with these details.

Each participant will receive a Kindle Fire for use during the six-month long program, and afterwards those who have successfully completed all sessions will be permitted to retain the device for their own personal use. For more information or to volunteer as a facilitator of the group, contact Shannon Deans, veteran outreach specialist, at [sdeans@headwayofwny.org](mailto:sdeans@headwayofwny.org) or by calling at 716.408.3110.

For more detailed information about the program and/or bibliotherapy, contact Dr. Ken Sroka at [sroka@canisius.edu](mailto:sroka@canisius.edu) or by calling 716.674.5876.



## BRAIN INJURY SUPPORT GROUP IN CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY

### FAMILY - FRIENDS - CAREGIVERS

**Do you care for someone with a brain injury?  
Are you looking for information and support?  
You are not alone.**

Brain injury support groups provide emotional, educational and social support for family, friends and caretakers of individuals with brain injuries.

- Learn more about life with brain injury.
- Share successful strategies and achievements to help others develop coping skills.
- Brainstorm ideas on how to achieve a better quality of life for those we love.
- Feel supported by having peers who have gone through similar situations.
- Our goal is to make better lives for those we love with brain injury.

This group is intended for family, caregivers and friends of individuals who have sustained a brain injury (traumatic or acquired) in the Western New York region. For more information, call 716.720.5510 or visit us on Facebook at [facebook.com/braininjurysupportwny](https://facebook.com/braininjurysupportwny) and "Like" our page.



[facebook.com/braininjurysupportwny](https://facebook.com/braininjurysupportwny)

## THE RESOURCE GUIDE FOR BRAIN INJURY 2015

Thank you to the following organizations for making it possible for Headway to reproduce *The Resource Guide for Brain Injury*. This guide is a great resource and we are so pleased to be able to continue providing it as source of support in the community. Thank you!

Aftercare Nursing  
Blackburn's Dove Medical  
ECMC  
Feroletto Law

Health Force  
Our Lady of Victory  
The Resource Center  
Venture Forthe

**Headway sends our condolences to the family and friends of  
Clifford Schmitz, who recently passed away.**

**We appreciate the donations to Headway that were made  
in memory of Clifford Schmitz.**



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  
6:30p.m. to 8p.m.

#### CARE GIVERS SUPPORT

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

#### WOMENS SURVIVOR'S SUPPORT

Enter at Suite E  
First Tuesday  
1p.m. to 2:30p.m.

#### YOUTH SUPPORT BY PHONE

Direct contact with  
youth counselor.  
Call 716.408.3100

DeGraff Hospital  
Administrative Board  
Meeting Room  
**PEER SUPPORT IN  
RURAL COMMUNITIES**  
Third Tuesday  
4:30p.m. to 6p.m.

**VETERANS/  
CARE GIVERS  
SUPPORT BY PHONE**  
716.408.3100

St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
4007 Main Street  
Egbertsville, NY  
**COMPLEX REGIONAL  
PAIN SYNDROME SUPPORT**  
Fourth Monday  
7p.m.

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

[HEADWAYOFWNY.ORG](http://HEADWAYOFWNY.ORG)

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