

Fall 2021

STRIDES

NEWSLETTER FOR THE BRAIN INJURY ALLIANCE OF MONTANA



INSIDE:

Summer Recap

Helmet giveaways, fundraisers, and more

Support Group Spotlight

Get to know "Coffee With Survivors" in Kalispell!



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MISSION:

"To create a better future for those impacted by brain injury through awareness, support, advocacy, community engagement, and prevention."

Volunteer:

For volunteer opportunities, reach out to us at info@biamt.org or visit our website at biamt.org

Information published in **Strides** is for informational purposes only and should not be considered professional advice.

Donate:

Visit our website at www.biamt.org/donate or mail checks to the address listed below.

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VISION

"A world where all preventable brain injuries are prevented, all unpreventable brain injuries are minimized, and all individuals who have experienced brain injury maximize their quality of life."



**Brain Injury
Alliance**

M O N T A N A

Associate Member of the United States Brain Injury Alliance

Greetings from BIAMT

Hello, and happy fall!

It was a busy summer at the BIAMT office.

After postponing all helmet giveaways during summer 2020, we were back at the ballparks this summer, fitting helmets, answering questions, and enjoying the time we were able to spend in communities throughout Montana. As always, we are incredibly grateful to the Montana Trial Lawyers Association for their generosity in purchasing all the helmets given away at the games.

We were also excited to connect with community members from across the state during our Big Sky Challenge Hikes. There was a great turnout at both events. We raised a record amount of funds at our Missoula hike, and we were thrilled with the participation at our first Bozeman Hike.

We wrapped up the summer with a helmet giveaway and open house at our Missoula office. For those of you who were unable to get a helmet this summer or know of kids who could use a sturdy, new helmet, please reach out or stop by our office. We have several helmets remaining in youth sizes toddler through large.

As the leaves change and the weather turns colder, we are reminding you of the presence and importance of your community. Shorter days and inclement weather can make winter feel especially isolating. Even if you cannot leave the house, there are still opportunities for growth, hope, and change. Whether you are looking for resources, social connections, or support groups, please reach out to us. We are only a phone call away, and would be happy to connect you with opportunities in your local area.

For now, take care, bundle up, and keep in touch.
Sincerely,

- The Brain Injury Alliance of Montana

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Outreach Coordinator

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Resource Spotlight

Centers for Independent Living

After a brain injury, a survivor often finds that their previous way of life is permanently changed. Independent living programs can help arrange the services, equipment, and training necessary to achieve a survivor's desired way of life after brain injury.

Montana has four Centers for Independent Living that create a statewide support network for people with disabilities. These centers do not provide housing, but rather facilitate referrals for services, housing and equipment, provide skills trainings and peer mentoring opportunities, and advocate for individual rights and systemic change.

Services and Resources offered by Montana Centers for Independent Living:

- *Information and Referrals*: Provides basic information about equipment, financial assistance, recreation, housing, attendant care, support groups, and legal rights.
- *Independent Living Skills Training*: IL training in areas such as budgeting, socialization, leisure planning, and community resources.
- *Legal Representation and Legislative Advocacy*: Provides services spanning negotiation and research to litigation and class action lawsuits.
- *Housing*: Coordinates transitions, affordable housing, and accessibility modifications.

To find which independent living center serves your area, visit <https://dphhs.mt.gov> or call 1-877-296-1197



Book Spotlight

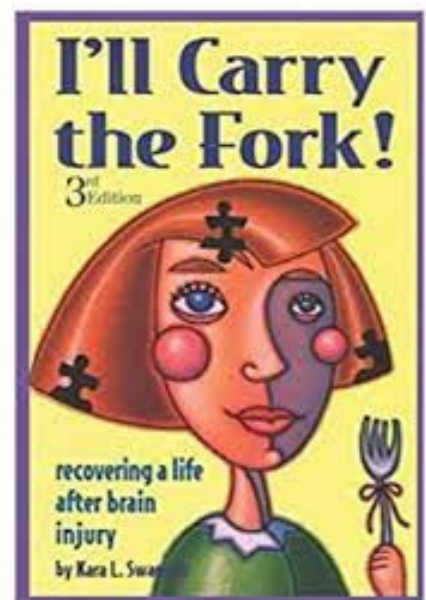
I'll Carry the Fork!

By: Kara L. Swanson

From *I'll Carry the Fork!*: "The curious thing about the auto accident that ended my life was that I lived through it. On January 31, 1996, Death sneaked through a red light disguised as a minivan going 50 miles an hour. 'Course, nobody told me that when they finished pulling me out of my car, they

were putting me right on the bus.... That's what I call the process of recovering from traumatic brain injury: getting on the bus". So writes Kara Swanson in her wickedly funny and honest memoir about living with a brain injury.

An audio version of this book is available on Amazon.com, and is narrated by the author to accommodate the listening styles of TBI survivors .



Summer 2021 Helmet Giveaway



Summer 2021 Big Sky Challenges Review

Missoula and Big Sky Hike for a Cause

This summer, we decided to host not one - but TWO - Big Sky Challenge Hiking fundraisers. The first took place at Montana Snowbowl on July 11, and the second was held at Big Sky Resort in Big Sky, Montana on August 7.

Montana Snowbowl, Missoula:

This was our fourth year hosting the Big Sky Challenge Hike at Montana Snowbowl in Missoula. We couldn't have asked for a better day, with a great turn out, a lovely July morning, and familiar faces from across the state in attendance.

It was our best fundraising year yet in Missoula, with a gross total of \$43,843 raised. We couldn't have done it without the generous support of community members who donated money, time, and raffle items, as well as the continued support of our corporate sponsors, listed in full on page 8.

Big Sky Resort, Big Sky:

We were thrilled to host our first ever Bozeman Big Sky Challenge Hike at Big Sky Resort on August 7. At the event, we connected with folks from Bozeman, Billings, and Gallatin Gateway who have been unable to make the drive to Missoula for the Snowbowl hike. We had a great turnout for our first year, and we are looking forward to growing the event in the coming years.

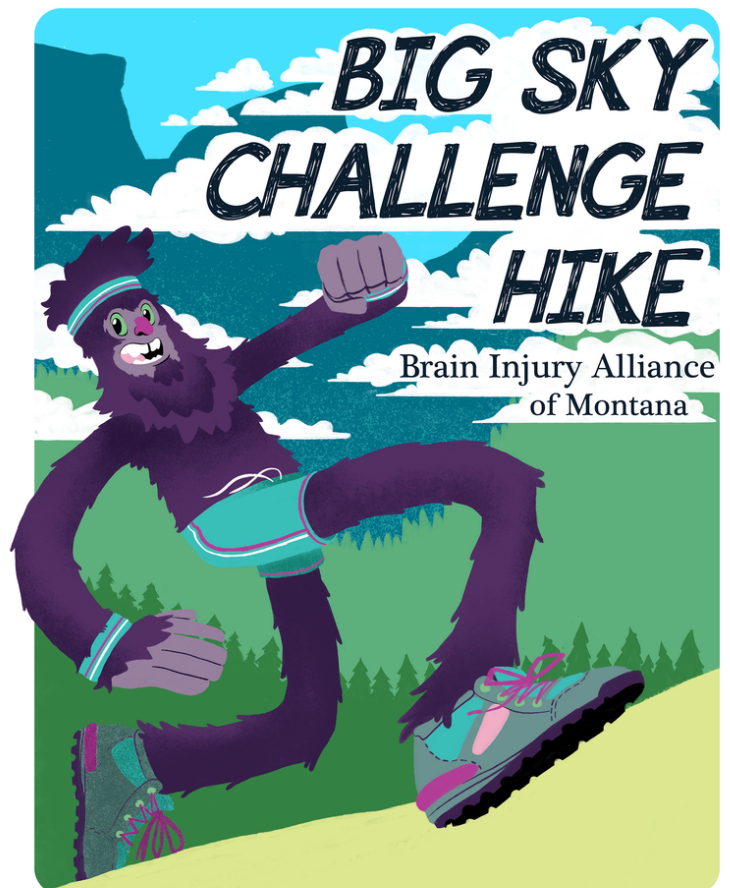
We raised a total of \$15,415 for our Bozeman Challenge. We can't wait to see what we can do next year!

Volunteer:

As always, if you are interested in volunteering to help organize and host our fundraising events, please reach out to us via phone or email. We are always looking for more volunteers, and would love the opportunity to get to know you in person!

Sponsorship:

Interested in being a sponsor for next year's hikes? Reach out to us at 406-541-6442, or email Sarah at sarah@biamt.org. Sponsors receive several great perks, including free registrations, recognition in BIAMT publications, and logos featured on event swag and advertising.



Thank you to our Big Sky Challenge 2021 Sponsors!



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BOZEMAN HEALTH



Montana Online Puzzle Club

Join us for our virtual brain injury support group!

The Montana Online Puzzle Club is designed to offer peer support to Montanans who have been impacted by brain injury, regardless of their geographic location. The Puzzle Club meets every other Wednesday via Zoom. It is facilitated by Jim Mickelson, a TBI survivor and the founder of the Missoula Puzzle Club. All brain injury survivors, caregivers, friends, and family members are encouraged to attend.

Visit BIAMT's website (www.biamt.org), give us a call at 406-541-6442, or visit our Facebook page to learn more.

Zoom Information:

Login: <https://zoom.us/j/99769452328>

Call in: +1 669 900 9128

Webinar ID: 997 6945 2328



Puzzles

Puzzle #1

		2		6	1			9
8		5	4				7	6
6		4						
		3		5	2			
			8		7			
			9	3		2		
						1		2
3	6				8	4		7
2			1	4		9		

Puzzle #2

6		2				8	4	
				1	3		2	
		7		4				
3	2	4					6	
	7		5		2		9	
	1					3	7	2
				9		4		
	4		8	6				
	5	3				7		6

Support Group Spotlight

Coffee With Survivors - Kalispell, MT

Gateway Community Center, 1203 US-2, Kalispell, MT // Saturday at 10:00am

Below is a brief interview with Donovan Donald and Destiny Russell, the facilitators of Kalispell's 'Coffee With Survivors' support group.

BIAMT: *Share with us a brief summary of your story/involvement with the brain injury community.*

Don & Destiny: "Don acquired a brain injury in 2006 from a car accident.... (he) was in a coma in the Kalispell hospital for 2 weeks and then was taken to Missoula for almost a year in rehab. Jim Mickleson (the facilitator of the Missoula Puzzle Club) helped Don get involved with the Brain Injury Community. He introduced Don to a lot of people and Don also joined the Puzzle Club at the time...After a year in Missoula, Don moved back to Kalispell and began his life as a brain injury survivor. Don's speech pathologist introduced Don to Sue Crawford, who worked in the Inpatient Rehab Department at the hospital where Don volunteered. He became involved in the hospital's brain injury support group. In spring of 2019, Don started his own weekly support group. Having a brain injury gave Don an advantage of starting all over again from scratch. Learning everything again was hard, but worth it with the people he has met along the way. Don will recover the rest of his life. That's the advantage of having a brain injury."

BIAMT: *What is something that you'd like newcomers to know about your group?*

Don & Destiny: "Our group is a very private group. Don likes to write down the names and



Coffee With Survivors is facilitated by Donovan Donald and Destiny Russell. They started the group in 2019.

numbers of the people that come to our group, but nobody has access to them. Don likes people to be able to talk about what they want, what's going on in their day, how they've been challenged by certain situations and how they overcame these situations... That's the main reason for our group - to be able to talk about our feelings... and have people that can relate to somewhat of the same subject. Our group is full of accepting people who like to help others any way we can. We listen without judgement. We share knowledge from each other about the situation that the person is dealing with at the time. The main objective of our gathering is to learn from one another and figure out how to positively deal with the situation at hand."

Support Group Spotlight, cont.



Puzzle Solutions

Puzzle #1

7	3	2	5	6	1	8	4	9
8	1	5	4	2	9	3	7	6
6	9	4	7	8	3	5	2	1
1	8	3	6	5	2	7	9	4
4	2	9	8	1	7	6	3	5
5	7	6	9	3	4	2	1	8
9	4	8	3	7	5	1	6	2
3	6	1	2	9	8	4	5	7
2	5	7	1	4	6	9	8	3

Puzzle #2

6	3	2	7	5	9	8	4	1
4	8	5	6	1	3	9	2	7
1	9	7	2	4	8	6	5	3
3	2	4	9	7	1	5	6	8
8	7	6	5	3	2	1	9	4
5	1	9	4	8	6	3	7	2
2	6	8	3	9	7	4	1	5
7	4	1	8	6	5	2	3	9
9	5	3	1	2	4	7	8	6

Keep in Touch!



Brain Injury Alliance of Montana



@braininjuryallianceofmt

For advertising opportunities and article submissions, email Sarah at sarah@biamt.org or call our office at 406-541-6442. We look forward to hearing from you!

