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# ◆ BrainWaves ◆

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Volume 25 Issue 4

The Community Skills Program® Newsletter

Winter 2009-2010

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## Hot Off the Press! Our Newest Developments

In recent issues of *BrainWaves*, we have been alerting you to some of our new developments. We are very pleased to tell you about our *recent* developments; some of them were in the works and have just materialized. One of them is the office space we now have available in the greater Harrisburg area. Through an arrangement with Good Hope Psychotherapists, Inc., we have office space on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1035 Mumma Road, Suite 203, Wormleysburg, PA 17043. The office is in an excellent location—about a five-minute drive to downtown Harrisburg and with easy access by highway to nearby towns. It will be used for evaluations and testing, cognitive rehabilitation therapy, counseling, group activities, and staff meetings. For more information about services in that area, please contact Stefani Hallinger, M.S.W., LSW, CBIS, client services liaison, at (717) 668-9883.

We are also in the process of identifying new members for our Therapeutic Activities Group in the Berks/Schuylkill County area, for young adults with brain injuries. That group will meet in our Wyomissing office and the surrounding area for community-based activities. We also have a newly-formed Therapeutic Activities Group for young adults with autism spectrum disorders, that has begun meeting in our Wyomissing office on Thursdays from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m., beginning with lunch. Both of these groups will provide opportunities for more socialization and for the participants to improve their cognitive-communication and interpersonal skills. For information on these two groups, please call

Megan Rohrbach, M.S.S., LSW, client services liaison, at (610) 376-3390.

In the Bucks/Montgomery County area, we are thrilled to announce a new group for persons with brain injuries. We have collaborated with James J. Stone, Psy.D., neuropsychologist, The Center for Neuropsychology and Counseling P.C., to offer this group at his office (which is lovely) in the Katz Building, 1243 Easton Road, Suite 203, Warrington, PA 18976, with co-facilitation by Carol Bardsley, M.A., CPCRT, CBIS, neurorehabilitation specialist on our staff. This group started on March 11, 2010 and is meeting weekly from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and includes lunch. This group is off to a great start. There is space available for only a few more members in the group, but additional groups will be formed in response to the need. So, if you are interested in finding out more about this group or joining a new group, please call Dr. Stone at (215) 491-1119, or Dr. Sally Kneipp, director of Community Skills Program, at (215) 735-7603 or (610) 376-3380.

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## Update

- Welcome to our new clients—Ann Marie, Anthony, Daniel, Diane, Gerard, John K., John S., John V., Joseph, Joy B., Joy T., Kevin, Madison, Margaret, Martin, Michelle, Rosemary, Susan, Thomas, and Walter—and our new office helper in the Wyomissing, PA office—Samuel (Sam) Carr.

Our clients and staff continue to be involved in many interesting, varied activities. As usual, in each issue we mention some of them; more will be mentioned in the next issue of *BrainWaves*.

- Todd resumed working out at the gym for the first time since his acquired brain injury in 2008. He also began participating in a weekly card game.
- Adam has made good progress in performing his household chores and no longer needs therapy at his home to address those tasks. His therapy takes place during his volunteer work two days per week and he is a member of a therapeutic activities group.
- Michael desires to become a United States citizen. With the assistance of his neurorehabilitation specialist, he has been researching the citizenship test and available study resources. Michael also continues to participate in a movie discussion club at his local library, to enhance his understanding of the English language.
- Barry has been keeping his apartment clean, sorting his mail, filing his important papers, and paying his bills on Tuesdays. He exercises regularly at L.A. Fitness and continues to enjoy his volunteer work at a local hospital.

(continued on page 2)

## Hot Off the Press! continued (from page 1)

On March 9, 2010, Community Skills Program participated as committee members and as a vendor at the EmployAbility Expo organized by the Berks County Transition Coordinating Council. It was held at Penn State - Berks campus and attended by about 250 junior and senior high school students with disabilities who had opportunities to practice interviewing and learn more about the world of work. Erin Coulehan, M.S.W., one of our neurorehabilitation specialists, enlisted the assistance of her fiancé, Rusty Carter, with recruiting persons to conduct mock interviews with the students. He is the food and beverage director of The Heritage of Green Hills, a retirement community, and brought 14 retired professionals and business people to contribute their expertise to the students' interviewing experience.

We look forward to collaborating with school district personnel representing the intermediate units, and with staff of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, to assist some of those students to achieve their goals in the future. Through our Letter of Understanding with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, we are able to provide work readiness assessments, vocational evaluations, community-based work assessments, performance-based job coaching services, and follow-up to individuals seeking employment. Individual cognitive retraining is also indicated for many individuals who wish to seek employment, as therapy sessions may be needed to focus on important tasks such as identifying suitable job objectives; making decisions about work shifts; and designing, practicing and implementing compensatory strategies to improve the outcome of job searching (as well as job performance). For the students pursuing post-secondary training/education, academic coaching and tutoring are also available.

## Update continued (from page 1)

- Pat continues to balance his checking account consistently every week, using his bank's online banking system and telephone teller.
- Dottie is now wearing a waist pouch around the house to carry the telephone, paper and a pencil. This makes it a lot easier and faster to write down a message or notes when someone calls, since she has everything she needs readily available and does not need to walk around the house to find the items. (It's a great idea; you should try it!)
- Harris returned for his spring semester at a local community college with a positive attitude and an awareness that he needs to work harder at academics than he did prior to his traumatic brain injury. He is registered for four courses—Introduction to Computers, English Composition, History of the Western World, and Cultural Anthropology. He also registered for two non-credit evening classes at a local vocational-technical school—Basic Woodcarving and Introduction to 3-D Modeling (computer animation).
- Dean has been increasing his activity level with household tasks to approximately four hours per day, and has maintained this level over the past two months. He also has kept his weekly calendar, which is posted on his kitchen bulletin board, up-to-date. Also, Dean recently got a new laptop computer and has been learning how to use the different applications.
- Ray bought a car to replace his former show car. He plans to make some modifications and enter it into car show competitions—a long-enjoyed hobby of his which provides him with opportunities to socialize with other car enthusiasts.

- In January, Anju began crocheting—a hobby in which she has not engaged since her acquired brain injury in 1991.
- Steven continues to work on his digital photography with the intent to display his work at the 2010 *Creativity Expo*.
- Ken has been volunteering independently in the human resource department at a local hospital. He currently volunteers one day a week and plans to volunteer a second day per week. He is active in his church, where he attends Sunday services, participates in a Bible study group, co-hosts mission meetings, and plays the guitar at a local nursing home.
- In January, Kathleen began volunteering on a weekly basis at Operation Shoebox, packing care packages for soldiers overseas. She has stated that it makes her feel good to help others. In addition, with the assistance of her neurorehabilitation specialist, Kathleen participates in cooking activities; in February, she made homemade stew for her family on one occasion and roasted chicken on another occasion.
- With the assistance of his neurorehabilitation specialist, Brian volunteers at a local animal shelter. In February, he became more independent in putting the leash on the dogs and volunteered once independently and effectively.
- José continues to exercise at a local gym three days a week. His workout routine includes stretching and using the treadmill, an elliptical machine, and a weight-lifting machine, to strengthen his upper body and to lose weight. He continues to report that he is losing weight, to his satisfaction. He is also volunteering two days a week at a local food bank, where he stocks shelves, keeps the meat and bread coolers full, and sorts and wraps pallets.

## Spotlight: Paul Gwaldis, Jr.



*Spotlight: Paul Gwaldis, Jr.*

**Spotlight:** Please tell me a little bit about yourself.

**Paul:** My name is Paul Gwaldis. I have a brain injury and I am blind. I live in a senior citizen apartment building in Highland Park, New Jersey.

**Spotlight:** Are you a senior citizen?

**Paul:** No. I was born on August 19, 1964 and I am 45 years old. I live here because I am disabled.

**Spotlight:** Do you live by yourself?

**Paul:** Yes, and I have staff that helps me with cleaning and laundry, though I can do most things on my own. I also live with my cat, Fritz.

**Spotlight:** Tell me about Fritz.

**Paul:** I have had him for five years. When he was a seven-week-old kitten, I adopted him from a friend who didn't want him. I tell people he is my seeing eye cat.

**Spotlight:** Tell us how you got injured.

**Paul:** I wasn't wearing a seatbelt and fell out of a moving pickup truck that ran over my head. That was in Irvington, NJ in 1996.

**Spotlight:** Where did they take you for emergency medical treatment?

**Paul:** University Hospital in Newark, NJ.

**Spotlight:** After University Hospital, where were you transferred for rehabilitation?

**Paul:** A rehabilitation center in Mountainside, NJ, called Manor Care. When I got there, I couldn't walk or make sense. They got me back on my feet and sent me home. No one knew I had a brain injury then.

**Spotlight:** Then what happened?

**Paul:** I got involved with the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. They trained me at the Joseph Kohn Center how to do daily activities even though I was blind. It was a 10-week program.

**Spotlight:** What happened after the 10-week program?

**Paul:** I was living at home but had trouble getting along with my family. I had trouble comprehending some of the things that they did and said. I know now that was probably due to my brain injury. I moved out on my own and was living in hotels and then rooming houses. In one of the rooming houses, I met a senior citizen named Bertha Sippel. She was my roommate when I first moved to Highland Park. She passed away on December 30, 2008, and I've lived on my own since then.

**Spotlight:** Did you get any other training or rehabilitation?

**Paul:** The Commission sent me to a six-month training program to become a chef.

**Spotlight:** Did you have any previous training or experience cooking?

**Paul:** Yes. Starting when I was 16, I worked in a diner that my family partly owned. I also worked as a cook in a Mexican restaurant in Florida.

**Spotlight:** When did you find out you had a brain injury?

**Paul:** I was doing an internship through the cooking program and my behavior led to my being sent to JFK [JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute, Center for Head Injuries] for an evaluation. I met JoAnn [JoAnn Hardy, M.S.W., LCSW] and Dr. Trott [Charlotte Trott, Ph.D.] there. JoAnn has retired, but I still see Dr. Trott once a week. They helped me a lot. JoAnn helped Bertha and me get into the apartment building where I live now. Before living here, I was living in a rooming house in a bad neighborhood in Elizabeth, NJ. The muggers used to toss a coin to see whose turn it was to take my money. On one occasion, I was shot in the leg. While I was at JFK, a tutor from the Commission started teaching me Braille. She had no experience working with someone who had a brain injury and it did not work out. Dr. Trott took over and taught me grade one Braille. I'm now working with a great tutor from the Commission, Samara Shakeel, and learning grade two Braille. Dr. Trott also got me started taking correspondence courses from the Hadley School for the Blind, so I can get my high school diploma. She taught me how to take notes and study. I'm still working on this with you [Phillip Brandt, B.A., CBIS, neurorehabilitation specialist with Community Skills Program, who conducted this interview].

**Spotlight:** What else happened at JFK?

**Paul:** They explained that I had a brain injury. I went through the intensive cognitive rehabilitation program and they taught me to control my temper.

**Spotlight:** How did they teach you to control your temper?

**Paul:** They taught me about my CES. It's from 1 to 5 with 1 being tired, 3 okay, and 5 out of control. They

*(continued on page 4)*

## Spotlight continued (from page 3)

taught me to be aware of my CES and to do things like ask for more information or take timeouts before it gets out of control. [Note: CES, to which Paul referred, is the acronym for the *Cognitive Energy Scale* developed at JFK. The purpose of the scale is to help individuals understand better the relationship between their emotions and cognition, and learn to monitor their emotions to improve their cognitive efficiency.]

**Spotlight:** Tell me about your family.

**Paul:** Before I knew I had a brain injury, I said things to them that I regret. Things are getting better now. I visit with my 24-year-old son, my brother, and my father regularly.

**Spotlight:** How has Community Skills Program helped you?

**Paul:** You worked with me in May of 2007, but for only five months because it was funded by the TBI Fund [New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury Fund] and money ran out. You helped me become familiar with my neighborhood, find a doctor, a dentist and a bank, and get a gym membership through the TBI Fund. You helped me find landmarks that didn't move, like mailboxes, fire hydrants and driveways, so I could find my way around. [Please note: Paul later received funding through the TBI Fund for services from Sarael Glover, LCSW.]

I started up with Community Skills Program again in February 2009, with funding from the New Jersey Medicaid Waiver Program for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury, and we are still working together. You have helped me set up a lot of things to make me more independent.

**Spotlight:** Like what?

**Paul:** We put Braille labels on my medication and made a Braille calendar and phone book. You also helped me

work with the Commission. I recently finished a vocational evaluation and should soon be getting help finding a job, funded by the Commission. [Marianne Maisonette at the Commission referred Paul for the evaluation.]

**Spotlight:** We have also been working on finding some volunteer activities in your local area.

**Paul:** Yes. We found the Better World Café at the Reformed Church of Highland Park. It serves lunch during the week to people who pay what they can or volunteer if they don't have any money. I've done one shift so far. I cleaned and prepared lettuce for salads and made burritos. Because I'm blind, everyone was surprised how easy this was for me. Chef Rachel [Rachel Weston] made me feel very comfortable because she has worked in kitchens with people who can't see. I'm looking forward to going back there.

**Spotlight:** What else have I helped you to do?

**Paul:** You helped me with my money. In 2007, money was stolen from my bank account and the bank manager gave me a cash advance until it was returned. After that, I got into the habit of taking cash advances. I didn't realize that, each time I overdrew my account, they charged me \$35. I was \$285 in the hole when you started with me the second time. It took a couple of months, but now I have extra money.

**Spotlight:** How did you manage that?

**Paul:** We shopped regularly so I always have food in the house and order out less. I also plan how I will spend my money. I've been able to buy a lot of things I wanted and still not overdraw my account.

**Spotlight:** What things have you purchased?

**Paul:** I bought lava lamps, curtains, a comforter and sheets for my bedroom, all in purple. I also got a Pittsburgh Steelers jersey with my favorite player,

Jack Lambert's, number on it, #58. I had them write PERSEVERE on the back.

**Spotlight:** Why did you put persevere on the back?

**Paul:** In one of my meetings, Nina [Nina Geier, M.S., M.P.T., PT, CBIS, program coordinator for Northern New Jersey, Community Skills Program] used it and I liked it. I've made it my goal to persevere.

**Spotlight:** What have you learned through your life experiences?

**Paul:** Don't do drugs or drink, and keep your seatbelt on. Seriously, have faith and you will persevere.

**Spotlight:** What are some of the challenges you still face?

**Paul:** Being blind, crossing the street is a challenge. Also, drinking is a problem for me because I can't control myself that well when I drink. I know I shouldn't drink because of my brain injury and the medication I'm taking, but sometimes I just want to fit in and forget.

**Spotlight:** Is there anything else you'd like to add?

**Paul:** I appreciate all the help I've received along the way.

\* \* \* \* \*

*[Editor's Note: Many people and providers have been, and continue to be, supportive of Paul's rehabilitation efforts. Paul's treatment was initially funded by the New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury Fund. He now has funding through the New Jersey Medicaid Waiver Program for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury. Paul's case manager, Ann Hawkyard, M.S.W., LSW, with Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey, is to be recognized for her understanding of Paul's rehabilitation needs.]*



# Creativity Corner



## Word Search: Spring Cleaning

Winter is coming to an end, and what a snowy winter it was! As beautiful as the snow was, what followed was a sloppy mess. So, with spring coming, we naturally think of **spring cleaning**, when we usually do thorough cleaning of our homes and look forward to the warmer temperatures and sunshine.

We've included a list of things you do or things you use for **spring cleaning**. Those words are hidden in the block of letters below. They may be written vertically, horizontally, diagonally, forwards or backwards. When you find them, circle them. *After (not before)* you have found and circled as many as you can, turn to page 7 where the solution to the word search is, to see how well you did. Good luck!

- |              |         |        |         |           |        |
|--------------|---------|--------|---------|-----------|--------|
| broom        | dust    | paint  | scrub   | sweep     | vacuum |
| bucket       | dustpan | polish | spackle | trashcan  | wash   |
| disinfectant | mop     | rag    | sponge  | unclutter | wax    |

D	C	U	X	T	I	Q	D	I	S	B	E	I	I	J
T	S	A	N	O	E	U	R	C	L	G	O	W	F	Y
R	G	B	D	C	S	K	R	I	N	Q	J	Q	K	Q
A	A	T	R	T	L	U	C	O	U	P	L	M	Y	M
S	R	A	P	O	B	U	P	U	V	A	C	U	U	M
H	F	A	N	L	O	S	T	C	B	I	B	V	J	D
C	N	V	D	X	J	M	V	T	F	N	H	M	B	E
A	X	O	H	H	I	E	W	L	E	T	N	W	K	P
N	G	O	X	L	U	T	H	H	C	R	Q	X	L	B
W	E	L	K	C	A	P	S	P	E	E	W	S	B	P
Y	M	V	U	C	E	A	I	T	W	Q	B	L	A	S
C	Y	X	F	P	W	P	L	V	S	A	Y	I	K	I
B	L	V	P	N	G	E	O	X	B	U	X	Q	G	E
B	L	L	V	P	R	R	P	S	K	Z	D	Q	H	M
D	I	S	I	N	F	E	C	T	A	N	T	M	O	P

Turn to page 7 for the solution.

## Tips On... Getting Organized

Spring is just around the corner. This time of year starts us thinking about spring cleaning and getting our homes organized. As part of their cognitive rehabilitation therapy, clients of Community Skills Program are often assisted with improving their organizing skills, through the development and implementation of compensatory strategies, such as checklists, planners, and weekly schedules. Recently, we have been helping a client organize his home and discovered some great websites with useful information. We thought we would share them with you.

The website [hgtv.com](http://hgtv.com) offers extensive advice on organizing one's home. Once on the website, click on the "Organizing" tab at the top of the page. You will see a blue box that says, "Inside Organizing." Here, you can navigate to different web pages that cover topics such as kitchen storage, organizing the garage, keeping your craft supplies and photos organized, and basic home organization. If you click on "Quick Tips for Troubled Rooms," you will find recommendations for organizing *every* room of your home, including the living room, kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, laundry room, and home office. This web page offers great tips on: organizing the bedroom to lead to better rest; creating an organized office space, no matter what room it's in; making the most of your bathroom, regardless of its size; maintaining an organized and clutter-free living/family room; and more.

The website suggests adding a wastebasket in your living room, to cut down on clutter, and keeping tabletops (coffee tables, end tables) free from clutter. The website suggests using a two-drawer file or cart that will act as a "household information center." Papers, books, brochures and magazines should be stored in the drawers rather than on tabletops, and sorted and purged on a regular basis. Tangled cables and cords behind your entertain-

ment center or home computer can be contained with nifty devices such as a Cableyoyo (available at [cableorganizer.com](http://cableorganizer.com)) or a Cable Zipper (available at [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com)). If scattered toys in your living room are a problem, the website suggests designating an unused corner of the room as a play area. You can add a small bookcase and a child's table, and use rolling bins for toy storage.

The website suggests utilizing rolling or under-the-bed storage bins in the bedroom, to make the most out of horizontal space. An expanding, tiered shoe rack can easily be stored in your closet on the floor below your clothes. If your jewelry has outgrown its jewelry box, hanging jewelry organizers (with plenty of clear pockets) can be hung in your closet. There are also tips for organizing a child's bedroom.

We also found some great organizing ideas on [containerstore.com](http://containerstore.com). Once on the website, click on "Get Organized" and select "Expert Tips and Ideas." Clicking on each category (e.g., bathroom, garage, home organization, kitchen) will open a list of sub-categories. Here, you can get help with many different topics, like drawer organization, closet makeovers, getting ready for a garage sale, kitchen cabinet organization, organizing holiday decorations, and many, many more.

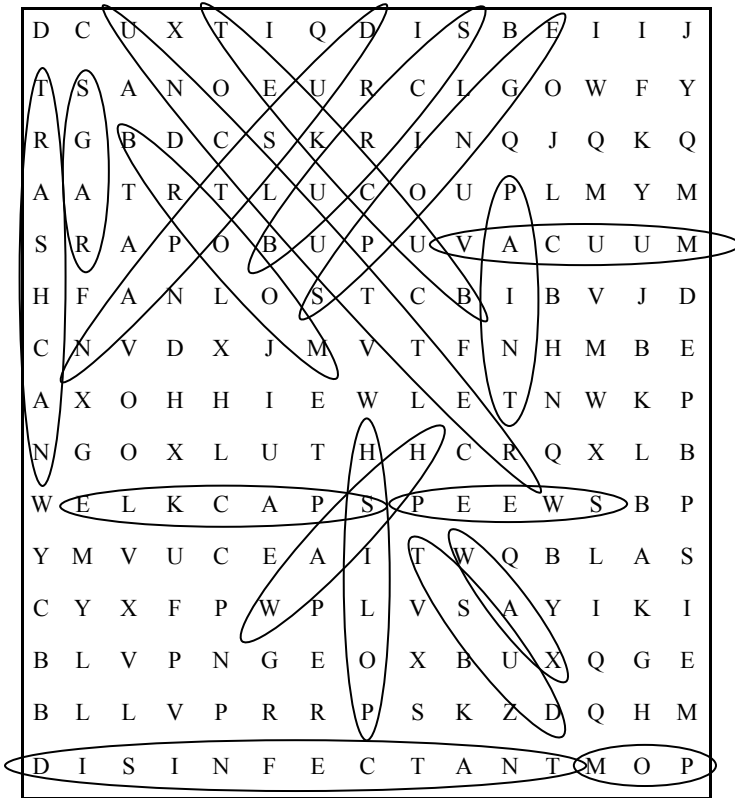
Finally, check out the photos on [ikea.com](http://ikea.com) for some great organizing ideas.

Once you've gotten everything organized, you will probably want to keep it that way. Under the "Organizing" tab on the [hgtv.com](http://hgtv.com) website, there is a house cleaning guide on how to keep every room of your home neat and tidy. It provides detailed information on what tasks you should do daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually, in *every* room of your home. Be sure to check it out.

## Upcoming Events

- The 2010 Annual Seminar of the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc. (BIANJ) will be held on May 19 and 20, 2010 at the Sheraton Eatontown Hotel and Conference Center in Eatontown, NJ. The program on Wednesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, entitled, "Research and Medical Advances in the Acute Treatment of Traumatic Brain Injury," was developed for trauma physicians and surgeons, nurses, psychiatrists, neurologists, physiatrists and rehabilitation professionals. The program on Thursday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, entitled, "Brain Injury: Meaningful Connections and Innovative Choices," was developed for individuals with brain injury, their family members, and rehabilitation professionals. Topics of the seminar include functional MRIs, social networking, volunteering, legal matters, substance abuse, research, creative expression, sports concussion, gaming technologies, assistive technology, and meditation. For more information, please contact Joanna Boyd, BIANJ, at (732) 745-0200, e-mail her at [jboyd@bianj.org](mailto:jboyd@bianj.org), or visit the BIANJ website, [www.bianj.org](http://www.bianj.org).
- The Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania, Inc. (BIAPA) will hold its 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, entitled, "Navigating A Changing Community: Resources for Brain Injury," on June 21 and 22, 2010 at the Lancaster Marriott and Convention Center in Lancaster, PA. Lee Woodruff, wife of ABC news anchor, Bob Woodruff, and co-author of the book, *In an Instant: A Family's Journey of Love and Healing*, will be a keynote speaker on June 21<sup>st</sup>. For more information, please contact Kara Dohrman at (866) 635-7097, e-mail BIAPA at [info@biapa.org](mailto:info@biapa.org), or visit their website, [www.biapa.org](http://www.biapa.org).

Word Search Solution: Spring Cleaning



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