



**Brain Injury  
Alliance**

NEBRASKA

# 2019 Annual Report

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## A Decade & Counting

**Creating a better future for all  
Nebraskans through brain  
injury *prevention, education,  
advocacy, and support.***



combined health  
agencies drive  
MEMBER CHARITY

# Board President & Executive Director Remarks



## Scot Adams, Board President

It's an honor to say I have spent the last two years serving as Board President for Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE). BIA-NE has a profound impact on those affected by brain injury and those who love them. I observed the importance of collaboration throughout my professional career in behavioral health. Collaboration is one of the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska's greatest strengths - and 2019 proved this.

For a decade, BIA-NE has collaborated with individuals with brain injury, their families, and industry partners, such as the Brain Injury Advisory Council, to advocate for the establishment of the Brain Injury Trust Fund.

Senator Mike McDonald and Senator Kate Bolz, who we thank wholeheartedly, helped make this a reality. In the spring of 2019, the State Legislature and Governor's signature created Nebraska's first Brain Injury Trust Fund. By government standards, it is modest - \$500,000. However, it establishes brain injury on the government's list of public health concerns and provides the basis for developing a more robust system of care from prevention through reintegration and beyond. Collaboration made this possible.

Also, in 2019, BIA-NE finished up an important collaboration with researchers at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, University of Nebraska Medical Center, Friendship Home in Lincoln, and the Women's Center for Advancement (WCA) in Omaha. This 18-month screening and evaluation project found 58% of participants screened by participating domestic violence programs screened positive for brain injury. These results are staggering and have caught national attention. We are thankful to the Women Investing in Nebraska (WIN) and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Injury Prevention Program for their financial support of this program.

As we move into 2020, we will continue to seek collaboration. As the old proverb goes, "If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." And so we go - together.

**Scot L. Adams, Ph.D.**  
*President*

## Board of Directors

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Brett Young Omaha

## Peggy Reisher, Executive Director

Friends, thank you for making 2019 yet another remarkable year for Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska! 2019 marked our 10-year anniversary. As you will see in this report, our staff did an incredible job expanding our outreach while strengthening our programs and services throughout the last decade. I took a moment to see how we have changed and stayed the same.



Things that remain the same:

- Our mission to create a better future for all Nebraskans through brain injury prevention, education, support, and advocacy.
- Dedicated board members, volunteers, and staff who selflessly give their time, talent, and treasure.
- The desire to build Nebraska's capacity to provide services and supports for individuals with brain injury and their families.

Things that have changed:

- Our name. We started out as the Brain Injury Group of Nebraska (BIG-N). We then changed to the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska. In 2016 we switched to Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska. I think we finally got it right!
- The ever-growing list of individuals with brain injury, their families, and professionals willing to step up to build Nebraska's capacity to better serve those with brain injury.
- The promise of the Brain Injury Trust Fund!

BIA-NE is stronger than ever due to our continually expanding community who comes together to donate time, resources, and talent to support our important mission. As we move into 2020, we look forward to the opportunities that await us and the ones we haven't even yet imagined.

Thank you for wholeheartedly being a part of BIA-NE. We are looking forward to much more in the next ten years!

  
**Peggy Reisher, MSW**  
Executive Director

## Staff

### Executive Director

Peggy Reisher, MSW Lincoln

### Resource Facilitators

Chris Stewart Omaha

Gina Simanek Lincoln

### Event Coordinator

Cindy Evert Christ Lincoln

### Project & Marketing Coordinator

Elle Stecher Lincoln



# 2019 Award Winners



## Advocate of the Year

**Tammy Storer & McKenzie Mertes** - Tammy Storer and McKenzie Mertes are voices for families experiencing brain injury. As a mother and daughter, they found hope and help after McKenzie's TBI as a teenager. When traditional treatments failed to improve McKenzie condition, Tammy, a speech therapist, reached out and researched to find alternative options. Tammy is now a brain injury survivor herself following a concussion with lasting impacts.

Together, this duo continue to work with the Eastern Engagement Committee and co-facilitate the "Teens and Twenties Support Group".



## Professional Advocate of the Year

**Dr. Matthew Garlinghouse** - Dr. Garlinghouse understands that in neurological sciences, individuals don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care.

Dr. Garlinghouse and his colleague, Dr. Chiou, have applied for grants and offer community presentations to increase awareness of brain injury in the state. They collaborated with brain injury support groups and vulnerable individuals to offer neuropsychological assessments and treatment, specifically focusing on domestic violence survivors in our state.



## Above and Beyond

**Shir Smith** - Shir Smith of North Platte shares both her personal and professional experiences to help increase brain injury awareness. Since a car accident caused her TBI, Shir has collaborated with the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska to offer presentations about the lasting effects of concussions and implementing TBI screenings for the prison populations she serves as an Incarcerated Victim Advocate.





# Blazing Trails

for Brain Injury

## 5k Run/1mi Walk or Roll

Teams Welcome!

Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 | 9am-Noon

Chalco Hills Recreation Area | 8901 S 154th St, Omaha, NE 68138

Early Registration: \$40 | Day-of Registration: \$50

[Register Here](#)

*Fundraising Event:* Your donation supports Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska (BIA-NE), a statewide nonprofit organization working to create a better future for all Nebraskans through brain injury prevention, education, advocacy, and support.



**Brain Injury Alliance**

N E B R A S K A

### Questions?

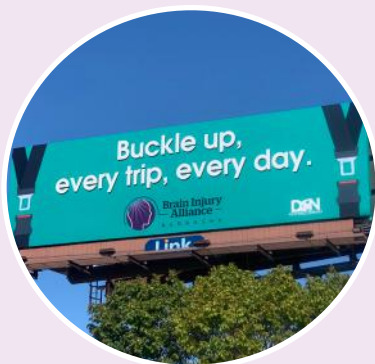
Elle Stecher, Project & Marketing Coordinator  
Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska  
elle@biane.org

*Only registrants signed up before 7/11/20 will be guaranteed a tshirt*

Race timed by:



# Our Programming



## Prevention

### Stopping brain injuries before they happen

- **1.6 million views** of “Forever Shaken,” a powerful 30-minute documentary for childcare advocates, schools, hospitals, showing the lifelong challenges of Abusive Head Trauma on YouTube
- **7 billboards with over 1.6 million views** of “Buckle up, every trip, every day” encouraged seatbelt usage



## Education

### Training professionals & increasing public awareness

- **27 trainings for 1100+ trainees** focused on brain injury and domestic violence, juvenile justice, aging, corrections, veterans, and behavioral health
- **220 conference participants** gathered to learn about brain injury, innovative treatments and support options
- **1400 participants** engaged in awareness and fundraising efforts at the annual Blazing Trails for Brain Injury and Beer and Bagel Run



## Advocacy

### Empowering our community for statewide action

- **\$500,000 Brain Injury Trust Fund Established** Successfully advocated the establishment of Nebraska’s first Brain Injury Trust Fund through the Nebraska State Legislature
- **2 advocacy events, Proclamation Day and Disability Pride Day,** were advocacy opportunities for **143 individuals** with disability and their family members to have their voice heard
- **18 support groups facilitated by volunteers** met regularly in 16 locations throughout Nebraska



## Support

### Lifting up Nebraskans with brain injury

- **2,800 individuals** received BIA-NE monthly e-newsletters, which highlight new survivor stories, news, and events each edition
- **609 unique clients were served by a resource facilitation specialist** who assists in building personalized support teams providing information, resources, and referral services to individuals and their families from July 2016 to December 2019 and **155 new referrals were made in 2019.**

# Survivor Testimony



## BIA-NE's Mission Matters to Me

**Steve Martin** - I have spent my career working to help people access quality health care as a health care professional early in my career followed by helping people finance their health care needs through health insurance. I also have personal experience with brain injury.

A brain injury can happen to anyone, at any time, at any stage in their life. In my case, it started with a bump on the head just before Labor Day in 2015. I stood up and hit the top of my head on the edge of an open cabinet door. I have hit my head many times and suffered from a few concussions while playing college football.

After the short-term pain subsided no other symptoms occurred, so I went about my life as usual. Over the next month, I experienced a Chronic Sub-Dural Hematoma and began to have repeated seizures on the left side of my body. I was hospitalized, and it took several days for the seizures to be stopped and controlled with medication, leaving me paralyzed on the left side of my body. After a week in the hospital I was discharged, but it was not the hospital who guided me to my next treatment.

I was admitted to QLI in Omaha and after a month of intense rehabilitation was walking without assistance and working part-time. In two months, I was recovered and back to work full time. It is important to note, that the best treatment for brain injuries is often not expensive. In my case, my two months of rehabilitation cost less than one day in the hospital.

I was fortunate to have had expert recommendations guide me to the best chance of a full recovery. I know currently there are individuals with brain injuries who are not given appropriate guidance and support. Delays in treatment of post-brain injury conditions can slow or limit the long-term recovery potential or cause individuals to suffer from more long-term problems. Over my 42 years working in health care, time and time again, the best care done at the right time and the right way results in the lowest cost.

I urge you to support the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska's work to help fellow Nebraskans who suffer from brain injury understand and engage the resources they need to achieve their maximum potential recovery.

## Brain Injury Trust Fund

### A Decade of Advocacy in Action

Omaha Sen. Mike McDonnell, with help from Sen. Kate Bolz, championed LB 642, which passed as LB 481 in May of 2019 on a 41-1 vote. **The bill creates the Brain Injury Trust Fund**, which consists of general fund appropriations of \$500,000 annually from the Nebraska Health Care Cash Fund, beginning in fiscal year 2020-21.

### The Brain Injury Trust priorities include:

- Expanded resource facilitation
- Brain injury training for service providers
- Improved follow up with individuals on the brain injury registry
- Public awareness activities
- Support for brain injury research
- Evaluation of quality brain injury services



# Financial Supporters

## Corporations, Foundations, and Sponsors

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### Lori Jarko

Chris Jarko

### Gaylord L. "Gary" Robb

Brenda Bland

### Olivia Grieser Living Tribute

Wilson & Company  
Mike & Cheryl Polmantier

## Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska in the News

### Brain Injury & Domestic Violence Research

"Brain Injury and Domestic Violence: Making the Connection and Improving Care" was funded by an \$85,000 grant from the Women Investing in Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services Office of Injury Prevention. ***The study found more than half (58%) of the victims of domestic violence screened positive for a brain injury.***

The study group included Peggy Reisher, executive director of the Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska; Shireen Rajaram, Ph.D., University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health; Matthew Garlinghouse, Ph.D., UNMC College of Medicine Department of Neurological Sciences; and Kathy Chiou, Ph.D., Department of Psychology and Kathryn Higgins, Ph.D., Nebraska Athletic Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The group worked with the Friendship Home in Lincoln and the Women's Center for Advancement in Omaha to complete the project. ***Read the full report here.***



## Donors

### \$6,000-\$3,000

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Donald & Rebecca Vonseggern  
Neal & Ardis Vonseggern  
Bob & Peg Weisenberg



# Financial Statements

## Financial Position

### Current Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$130,487
Grants & Pledges Receivable	\$7,825
Total Current Assets	\$138,312
Total Assets	\$138,312

### Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$5,486
Accrued Vacation	\$5,256
Total Current Liabilities	\$10,742

### Net Assets

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$126,085
Restricted Net Assets	\$1,485
Total Net Assets	\$127,570
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$138,312

## Financial Activities

### Revenues & Support

Contributions	\$144,054
Grants	\$49,521
Fundraising Events	\$24,872
Conference & Training Fees	\$25,696
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$1,002
Total Revenue & Support	\$245,145
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$15,345

### Expenses

Program	\$129,883
Management	\$128,578
Fundraising	\$3,477
Total Expenses	\$261,938
Decrease in Unrestricted Assets	\$1,448

### Restricted Net Assets

Grants	\$14,625
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	\$15,345

### Year Summary

Increase in Restricted Assets	\$720
Total Decrease in Net Assets	\$2,168
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$129,738
Net Assets at End of Year	\$127,570

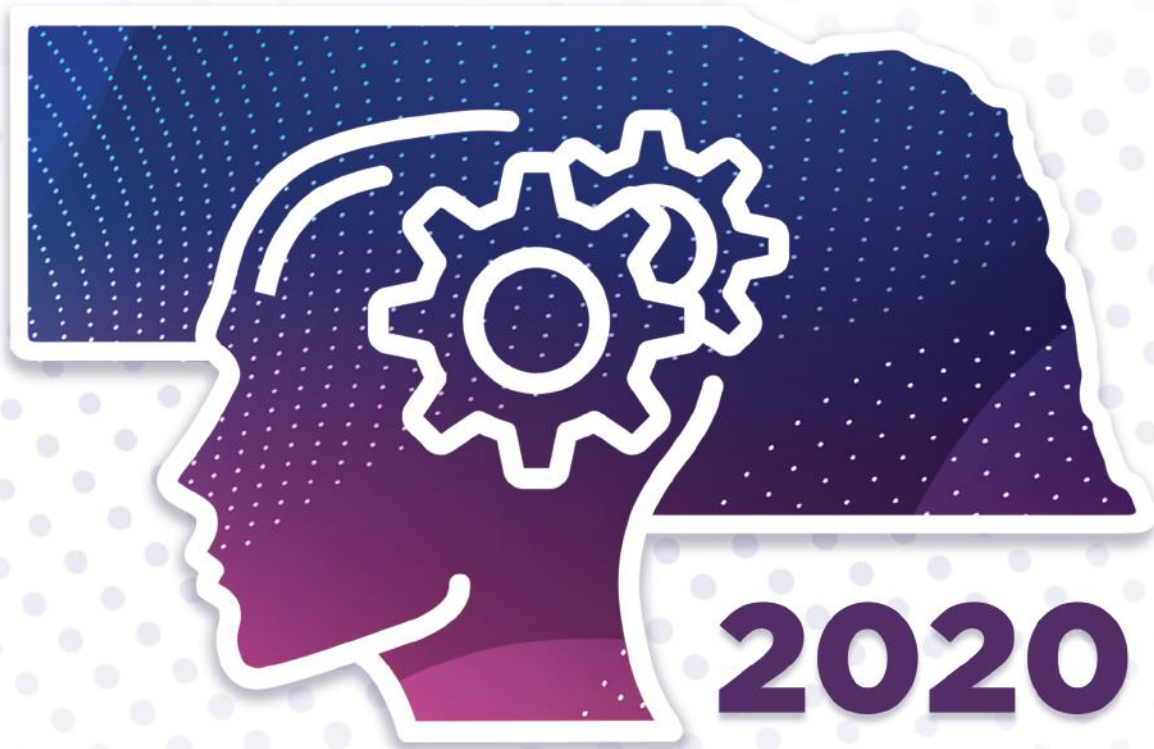
## Your Support Matters

### Now More than Ever

We have sincerely appreciated your support in 2019 - your gift has not just been about making a donation, it has been about making a difference. Your continued support in 2020 is vital.

Please, choose one of the following ways to give now:

- *Make a one-time donation through our website*
- *Contact us to set up a recurring gift*
- *Make us your charity of choice and shop via Amazon Smile*
- *Add Brain Injury Alliance of Nebraska to your end-of-life planning*



## Nebraska Brain Injury Conference

September 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Younes Conference Center | Kearney, Nebraska

[Register Here](#)

Sponsored by:



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nebraska  
total care.



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