

2018 Brain Injury Alliance Award Recipients

ADVOCACY AWARD

Awarded to an individual or organization who demonstrates outstanding effort that has resulted in the increase of public awareness of brain injury and prevention

Melinda Montovani, LSW, CBIS

Melinda Montovani worked as a brain injury specialist for BIAC for more than a decade. Her devotion and commitment to those affected by brain injury is unparalleled. Whether she was working with a hospital discharge planner, a DSS social worker, a family member or a survivor who had been calling BIAC for over 20 years, Melinda was always able to have a positive impact on the person reaching out in need. She consistently went above and beyond, tirelessly and with perseverance, determination, and integrity, on behalf of the person in front of her. Perhaps it was a major issue, requiring significant resources, or a survivor who she checked on regularly just because she knew there was no one else to do it, she truly was everyone's advocate. The positive impact that she has had on so many people cannot be adequately conveyed with words. Melinda is an advocate in the purest form, and she is commended for her years of service to the brain injury community.

AYERS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Awarded by the BIAAC Board of Directors for service on the BIAAC Board of Directors

Greg Bubnash

Greg Bubnash learned about BIAC when his son, Mike, sustained a brain injury in 2007 and joined the Board of Directors in 2013. An avid bicyclist, Greg first participated in the Bike for Thought in 2013 and by 2014 was serving on the planning committee. By sharing Mike's story with his friends and colleagues, Greg has raised \$24,000 over the past 8 years, through both the Bike for Thought, the Golf for Thought and through his participation as a board member and other events. This year, when BIAC was without an events planner, Greg stepped up and agreed to become the "staff" person responsible for the event, handling all the logistics. Greg is an accountant and retired from his role as Director, Investment Advisory Group at Hartford Mutual Funds. His finance and auditing experience are of significant value in his role as Treasurer of the Board since 2015.

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CATHERINE BONTKE MEMORIAL AWARD

Awarded to those who have made a significant contribution to the field of brain injury through clinical services or research

Tracey Sondik, PsyD

Tracey Sondik, Psy.D is a licensed clinical psychologist and director of the behavioral intervention service at Connecticut Valley Hospital, providing consultation to the hospital's 28 inpatient units as well as other inpatient mental health units throughout the state of Connecticut. She has spent most of her professional career working in inpatient and outpatient behavioral health settings with clients that have a wide-range of brain-based disorders including traumatic brain injury, stroke, neurocognitive disorders, depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorders, PTSD, and schizophrenia. Dr. Sondik is a Certified Brain Injury Specialist (CBIS) Trainer and has presented throughout the country on a range of topics. Tracey's commitment to integrative medicine, including mindfulness and yoga, improves the quality of life for those she serves, including reducing anxiety, depression, stress and aggressive behaviors. Dr. Sondik is co-chair of both the integrative medicine committee at Connecticut Valley Hospital as well as the recently created state-wide integrative medicine collaborative.

PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Awarded to an individual or organization for outstanding support of BIAC events and promotion of brain injury awareness and prevention

Anthony Alan Sheffy (Tony)

Tony Sheffy has been a tireless advocate for the Brain Injury Alliance of CT. His passion and support has been demonstrated through his incredible support of BIAC programs & services, as well as the Annual Conference & multiple fundraising events. A former board member & volunteer, Tony has been a tremendous ambassador for BIAC, building awareness and advancing the organization's mission of brain injury prevention & recovery. His generous & optimistic philanthropic spirit has helped sustain BIAC over the years and he is a special member of the BIAC family. Tony is the founding partner of Sheffy, Mazzaccaro, DePaolo & DeNigris. Tony is a member of the American Bar Association, the Connecticut Bar Association and the Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association. Recently, Mr. Sheffy was inducted into the Litigation Counsel of America (LCA).

**VOLUNTEER
AWARD**

Presented to an individual for outstanding service to BIAC through their volunteer efforts

Rayna Segelman

Rayna Segelman has been part of the BIAC family for almost 11 years. Rayna never let the stroke she sustained at a very early age present as a barrier in her passion for life, community and giving back to others. Throughout the years, Rayna has been one of BIAC's strongest cheerleaders, advocates, and volunteers. Over the years Rayna has raised almost \$5000 in support of BIAC, through the Walk and community fundraisers. As a volunteer at the Golf Tournament, she helped golfers with little connection to BIAC better understand the people we serve. In addition to her engagement activities with community and businesses in support of our fundraising events, Rayna has also volunteered in other ways, including helping at the BIAC retreat and through video/tv programs sharing her story in support of BIAC. Rayna is the utmost example of a volunteer who gives without expecting anything in return.

**VOLUNTEER
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Presented to an individual for outstanding service to BIAC through their volunteer efforts

Marissa Stein

Marissa Stein first became associated with BIAC as a volunteer while an undergraduate at Trinity College. BIAC quickly learned that Marissa was one of those people you could give anything to and be confident it would get done. In the past year alone, she volunteered at the Walk for Thought, Valentine's Dance, Trinity Retreat and the Music for Thought. Marissa also served as an intern at BIAC, where she helped secure some of the most sought after auction items for our events, and provided critical backup to our events manager. When BIAC's Office and Events manager left in January, Marissa didn't hesitate to agree to help out until we could hire someone. For two months, she has been truly invaluable and was an important part of the planning of this year's conference. Marissa graduated as a Psychology major from Trinity College in 2016 and is soon moving to California to pursue graduate study.