

# THE BRAINY BUGLER

Volume 16 Issue 1

Winter 2015

## A Special Celebration!



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Gary M. recently had something to celebrate- a whopping 17 years of sobriety! When asked for some wisdom on staying healthy Gary said 'keep it simple'. Congratulations Gary!



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# Meet The Board of Directors

*In every issue of the BBN we will be featuring some of our Board Members. Each member answers questions that were formed by some of the clients.*



**Stephen Randall** is the Chief Financial Officer of a company called Titan Medical Inc. They are a company listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. They are developing a robotic surgical platform called SPORT that will allow surgeon to do minimally invasive surgery using a robot. Stephen is responsible for all accounting and financial reporting and the raising and management of finances.

***What made you get involved with CHIRS? How long have you been involved?*** I have previously been involved with community groups, primarily related to my kids and sports. My kids have grown up and I wanted to get involved with an organization, in a volunteer capacity that was more substantial than what I have been doing. I have been involved with CHIRS for 5 years.

***What do you feel your role is being a part of the board?*** My role is to bring my business and financial background and experience to the Board for the benefit of CHIRS.

***How many times a year do you have the opportunity to interact with clients?*** Not as often as I should or would like to but normally only when there is a Board related function or a seasonal event like the Christmas party.

***If you had one wish for CHIRS what would it be?*** That we had enough resources, both financial and human, to provide service to all clients that wanted to be part of CHIRS, or, we run out of clients.

***Anything else you would like to share?*** On a personal note I have exceeded my expectations of what I might learn from being part of CHIRS. I have learned much more than I ever thought I would. I have met some truly amazing people and seen how their life has been impacted and they have benefited by being part of CHIRS.

# Out and About

## The Terry Fox Run/Walk 2014

Our CHIRS team the 'Quiet Butterflies' participated for the fourth consecutive year in the Terry Fox Foundation Run/Walk. This year our team was: David, Amanda, Desmond, Rob, Mike, Keith, Azra, Shannon and Lorraine. Our co-captain from years past, Marcy, was unable to make it this year. We raised \$256 this year, which was the most we have raised to date. The weather was nice and we all had a great time. The Terry Fox Run/Walk annual Marathon of Hope to end cancer raised \$8000 this year, which was \$1000 more than last year. Hope to see you next time for the Terry Fox walk and maybe add few more new members to the Quiet Butterflies.



*A few of our Quiet Butterfly participants in action at the Terry Fox Walk  
Amanda, Desmond, Keith, and Shannon.*

## BIST RUN/WALK 2014

Thank you to everyone of the CHIRS team that came out to support the BIST Run this year. We had beautiful weather and lots of fun.

Top CHIRS runners this year:

**Wayne Willis #1** - (I don't exactly remember his time from last year but I think he shaved off somewhere between 3-4 minutes from his time - the training paid off Wayne!).

**Carolyn Lemsky #2**

**Sarah Szpilewski #3**

(hmmmm Mud Hero top finishers – there is no stopping these three)

*Judy M.*



# Articles of Interest

## Inspiration

The definition of this word by Webster's Dictionary says "*Something that makes someone want to do something, or that gives someone an idea about what to do or create; a force or influence that inspires someone; a person, place, experience etc. that makes someone want to do or create something; a good idea*".

In my life to get ahead and move forward in a positive direction, inspiration has been a big part of my life.

There have been times I have been depressed and I have taught myself to pick myself up and live right. To have someone look you in the eye and say that they admire you when that person is in a wheelchair is a great boost but if in turn you know that person loves to write stories on a computer even though it takes them a long time to complete due to their disability... that is inspiring.

When I was younger I swam laps in a pool to raise money for people with intellectual disabilities and I happened to talk to a man from Ireland who was in a wheelchair. My parents are from Ireland. He told me we was planning on doing 100 laps. It caused me to reevaluate how many I was going to do and inspired me to go farther than I was used to. He inspired me.

To finish, I just want to leave you with a poem one of my friends wrote that makes me happy and inspired.

For Lindsey:    Feeling Blue  
                       I've cried for you  
                       Like an open petal that catches the rain  
                       I've felt your pain  
                       and like the Sun  
                       You've made me smile again.

Why this inspires me is because I feel what she feels and am able to be in that moment.

*Rob A.*

## Being a Grandma

I am a new grandma and suddenly what was becoming a bit dull and disheartening is as bright and shiny as a prairie sky. Little Betty is here and her parents are head over heels in love with her, she's just about the best baby there ever was they secretly tell themselves every day. But, Betty is smilingly oblivious to it all, she has renewed and refreshed and energized everyone who has held her in their arms.

Yes, it is an amazing thing to be a grandma; all my love to the wee baby who will inspire us to hold onto everything that is dear to us. She is the best of the best and I can't help but be relieved to know that Betty will be nothing but loved by her family, with all their hearts.

*Jill H.*



## Articles of Interest

### Jill's Movie Review- American Sniper

**American Sniper.** I recently saw the movie, American Sniper, which was very good and more than deserves 7 out of 10 rating. The movie stars Bradley Cooper and Sienna, Miller is his wife. Cooper plays a Navy Seal who is known for his skill as a sniper in the war in Iraq. He is steady and accurate, and gains a reputation, as well as several promotions, for his calmness under fire. I liked the movie because there was no gratuitous violence in it. Even the inevitable battle scenes were no longer than necessary and the acting was solid throughout. The only argument I have with American Sniper is that it jumps ahead of events, such as the births of his children; suddenly they're about eight and five years old and he's on his fifth tour of duty. Although American Sniper is not the kind of movie I usually go to, it turned out to be a thoughtful, intelligent two hours and is sure to become a memorable movie in its own right.

*Jill H.*



### How to Achieve Your Goals

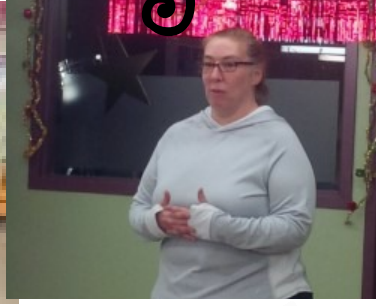
*From the clients who attended the CHIRS Positive Psychology workshop 2014*

- Focus—especially on the Positive and the successes even if they are small
- Do not give up or quit, and if you do, don't let that stop you from trying again.
- Think positive
- Have a clear and concise plan
- Initiate—develop a routine
- Do one thing at a time—no multitasking!
- Get motivation—find your own strength from friends, family, other people with similar goals
- Feel responsible for the good things that happen to you
- Have someone to be accountable to

*Submitted by Amanda and Roby*



# Holiday Party



Although our Holiday party wasn't quite what we had planned, it turned out to be a great afternoon filled with lots of great entertainment and goodies. Even Santa came to visit us! Hope to see you all next year!



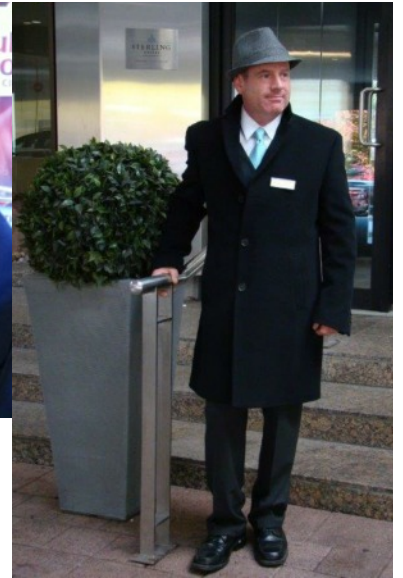
# Out and About



*Nancy S showing off the new scarf  
she made in Hobby Club*



*Francisco and John enjoying a coffee  
before going down to the boardwalk  
for a stroll*



*Chris B. showing off  
his uniform  
for his new role as  
Concierge at the  
Toronto DVP Hotel*



## Thrill of the Chase

“Besides hosting our annual party, have you any other plans for the holidays,” asks Hazel’s best friend Jamie. “No plans, just keeping it low-key,” begrudgingly says Hazel. Jamie instantly knew what that meant, but if Hazel was content only revealing a smile then Jamie wouldn’t reveal anything further. Throughout the years Hazel has endlessly confided in Jamie, including a lingering attraction for a man she’d meet tonight for the first time. The two had only previously exchanged E-mails, but now to Hazel’s delight he’d been invited by Jamie to tonight’s annual party. “Are you free tonight?” asked a hopeful Jamie. “Depends what you have in mind?” said the man “Meet me at this address at this time,” challenged Jamie while pointing to a map. He responded with a simple nodding of his head. “Each holiday is precious,” said the man matching the description given to Hazel by Jamie. Next Hazel’s mystery man ordered a drink in a curious fashion. Rather than stating the drink request to the bartender he asked that same bartender guess what drink he was about to order, but when no guess came from the bartender Hazel interrupted with, “He’ll have a scotch and water!”

*Zia L.*

# The Mentor Page

## Mentors of the Month

**OCTOBER 2014**

**SHAYNA B.**

“You were given this life because you're strong enough to live it.” ~Unknown~

“Everything happens for a reason. Sometimes things fall apart so they can fall back together, but in the end, what's meant to be will be.” ~ Unknown ~

***Mentor Duties***

Thursday Afternoon Murder Mysteries

Tuesday Afternoon Club Coverage

Book Club Mentor



**February 2015**

**Mark C.**

“The best way to not feel hopeless is to get up and do something. Don't wait for good things to happen to you. If you go out and make some good things happen, you will fill the world with hope, you will fill yourself with hope.”

~ Barack Obama

***Mentor Duties***

Wednesday Morning Club Coverage

Kitchen Safety Mentor

Thursday Afternoon Bingo Caller



## Mentor Appreciation Lunch

The Annual Mentor Appreciation was held on November 13, 2014. The program space was transformed for the grand gala event, complete with a red carpet. This year staff from all across the agency collaborated on a video celebrating each and every mentor. Thanks for all you do Mentors!





# Articles of Interest



*Peter (our health and safety mentor)  
repairing the club oven door*

“ The birch tree represents the members of CHIRS, though we are all bent for the rest of our lives, we still continue to grow with the help of people”. “Magoo”



## Fitness Benefits

The Community Fitness (aka ‘comfit’) program at CHIRS provides opportunities to reengineer my body. It is a great program because it is inclusive of all individuals regardless of their age or disability. The program offers a chance to enjoy social interaction with friends along with improving one’s physical condition. The activities I take part in are a combination of cardio and strength training exercises which include steppers, bikes, walks, weight machines, free weights and stretching. Thanks to the variety of equipment available at the YMCA and the opportunity for me to use it, I get the chance to develop and strengthen every detail of my body. The YMCA comfit program has helped me in many different ways. It has improved my range of motion, flexibility and cardiovascular efficiency. Specifically, my left arm and shoulder have increased range of motion compared to when I first started the program, and I am sure that the left hand will follow this pattern and improve as well. Many of my buddies at my nursing home need a lot of assistance and don’t have the type of independence I have and I believe that this program has helped me greatly in becoming independent. At the comfit program, I enjoy observing my capacity for endurance and strength which improves from one week to the next. I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to use various machines and learn new exercises along with discovering my body’s potential through the CHIRS comfit program.

*Kerry M.*



# Toastmasters

*CHIRS has started a chapter of Toastmasters, a group that promotes the art of public speaking. Every issue of the BBN will have something from our Toastmasters' group.*

## Mike's Icebreaker Speech

My fifty years of life can be described as twenty years of childhood and youth and thirty year's post injury. I will talk today how the interests developed in my early years helped to carry me through a devastating accident and beyond.

Those of us with ABI can pinpoint the moment our lives changed to a specific second. For me this occurred on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1984 on a stretch of highway in Michigan. It was a snap shot of time, one frozen blink that changed everything.

Before I start I don't want anyone to take pity on me. I like to say that I am no longer on the expressway but am instead taking the back roads. I may be going a little slower but this has allowed me to take a few extra seconds to check out my surroundings. Anyway, back to my interests and passions.

I will talk specifically about my love of the outdoors, skiing and music.

My love of the outdoors started soon after I came into this world, in Calgary, in 1964. In my childhood, my family went on many camping trips into the Rocky mountains. I remember crying when we had to leave the mountains. In 1969 my family moved to Markham where I continued to be involved in camping, canoe trips, and scouts. During my teens, I tried my hand at whitewater rafting and even became a scout cub leader.

My love for the outdoors did not abate after my accident. I continued to go on canoe trips in Killarney Park, Algonquin Park and Quetico Park, which is a park located near the Ontario and Minnesota border. As well, I became an avid sailor at the Queens Quay sailing club. Being outdoors brought energy to my soul.

My passion for skiing started at a very young age: six to be exact. In those early years I went on a lot of ski trips with my family. During that time my favourite ski slope was Devils Elbow which was, and still is, located near Peterborough.

After the accident I continued to ski and in fact became a member of the Ontario Disabled Ski Team. As a member of the team I participated in competitions across Canada, from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. One of the highlights was winning medals at Marble mountain. Through skiing and later swimming I was able to maintain my active lifestyle.

Yes, I was no longer on the expressway. Maybe I was going a little slower. But I certainly wasn't standing still! As a child I always loved music. From an early age I was a classic rock fan. When I was in high school I played in the school band.

After my accident, my passion for music increased quite a bit. For ten years I was part of a barbershop quartet. A barbershop quartet contains four males singing four part harmony. As part of this group I attended many conventions and performed in a variety of venues.

Also during this time I joined the Men of Note. My work with this choir allowed me to go on four concert tours that took me to England, Germany, Ireland and the Maritimes. I love music. I love listening to it and I love performing. It gives me energy and strength.

In conclusion, my life changed a lot on that day in May in 1984. It changed but did not stop. The destination may have altered but I never stopped moving forward. My accident broke bones but did not break my spirit. As I rehabbed from my accident and came to grips with my new reality, I reacquainted myself with my passions. I reconnected with the outdoors, skiing and music.

With the support of my parents, siblings, friends, family and my girlfriend Lisa I was able to continue in my pursuit of happiness and fulfillment.

*Mike V.*

# Articles of Interest

## TTC Presentation with Andrey B. and Mary B.

Mary Burton and I had excellent adventure one day. Mary and I made a speech to the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit (ACAT), which is the volunteer board which is overseeing accessibility issues at the TTC, which includes Wheeltrans. The reason we were there was the sudden removal of the TTC stop at Kensington. Many of the CHIRS clients don't have access to Wheeltrans. TTC removed the stop to speed up service on Finch and to start using accordion buses on the Finch route. The two current stops (Bellwood and Talbot) are the "allowed" distance between stops according to TTC policy. The issue with the removal of the stop is that it will reduce accessibility to CHIRS for the clients travelling west on Finch Ave. and their quality of life would be diminished .

Our speech was only for 10 minutes but hopefully we made a good impression and convinced the ACAT board to replace the bus stop at Kensington. We all hope that this made a good argument and the situation will improve.



*Mary and Andrey looking for the bus stop that was suddenly removed*

## Stretches in the Club

For those of you who happen to find yourself in The Club on a Monday and Tuesday morning before programs, or on a Friday at lunch, you are sure to have worked out some 'kinks' by participating in our mini stretching program. We started this last fall in the hopes of giving clients an opportunity to be exposed to some exercise in a relaxed atmosphere. Those of you who know me, know I love to share my passion for exercise and health and I have been overwhelmed by the positive response the stretching has received. While not quite a drill sergeant (although I have been called this by some 😊) we do turn off the music, close down the kitchen and ask all those passing through to participate. It's become such an expectation that if I walk through the Club for another reason, the 'regulars' ask "is it time to exercise?". The goal is to be able to offer daily stretches and perhaps even have a morning and afternoon sessions . So next time you're in the Club and you see us stretching, don't just walk by, surely you can spare a few minutes to join us and put a little health in your day!

*Cathy H.*



Copy your cat!

Learn to do stretching exercises when you wake up. It boosts the circulation and digestion and eases back pain!

# THE BACK PAGE

## CardSharks Special Guest Artist



Inspired by his distinct one of a kind art work, CardSharks+ partnered up with Artist Gilles Arseneault to create a limited line of blank all-occasion cards featuring original pieces of his work designed exclusively for CardSharks+. The collection “For CardSharks+, by Gilles” has been well received and has been a positive way to promote Gilles’ collection of artwork and sculptures. Gilles Arseneault hails from Arcadia, born near Dalhousie New Brunswick. He came to Toronto in the 1980’s to work as a carpenter.

Gilles has always been an enthusiastic labour and environmental activist both in his work and his art. In 1997, a near fatal fall resulted in a serious brain injury. Gilles has made a partial recovery and has renewed his focus on painting; Gilles had to teach himself to use his right hand to paint (having formerly been left-handed).

Gilles has been a CHIRS client since 2000. Gilles has shown his work in a variety of venues around Toronto, and some are hanging in the CHIRS boardroom as well as in the Brain Injury Association of Ontario calendar. For more info visit Gilles’s web page: [www.gillesart.net](http://www.gillesart.net).

If you are interested in purchasing one of the few remaining cards, please contact us at [CHIRS@CHIRS.com](mailto:CHIRS@CHIRS.com)

2015 marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CardSharks+ program, stay tuned for further promotions and events celebrating this achievement.

