

TBI News & Views

Winter 2012

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTHERN NEW JERSEY TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY SYSTEM

Personal Perspective: Adjusting After Brain Injury—A Life Well Lived

Life-changing events happen every day. How we choose to react to such events determines the course of our lives. A traumatic brain injury (TBI) can be devastating to the survivors and their loved ones. What they do after the TBI determines their futures. Bob Marlin exemplifies the strength of the human spirit in the face of a great challenge.

Many of us knew Bob. He was a friend, a confidant, a colleague, and, to some, a therapist. Those in Bob's presence thought the world of him. He was always willing to lend a hand and tirelessly sought ways to help the TBI community. Bob's life epitomized the positive outcome that can come from a traumatic event.

Always thirsting for knowledge, Bob earned his PhD from Rutgers University and had a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry, serving as director of clinical research for Thompson Medical Company. On August 1, 1992, Bob sustained a TBI in a bicycle accident. He

never remembered waking up that day, getting dressed, or leaving for his usual bike ride. So many questions remained unanswered.



*In memory of Bob Marlin
1937 - 2011*

At the hospital, Bob's family stayed by his side. Would Bob survive? When would he come out of the coma? What was Bob's prognosis? Would he be able to speak? There were no answers. The Marlins just had to wait. When he awoke from his coma, he didn't remember being married. He asked for his mother, who had been deceased for two years. Bob didn't recall who he was or why he was in the hospital. He was lost.

Fortunately for the TBI community, Bob accepted the challenge of finding himself and found a 'new' Bob Marlin. The process began while he was in rehabilitation and continued on for many years. He faced new challenges every day – finding words to express a thought, remembering names, and adding numbers – common challenges for TBI survivors. Bob turned to his faith and his relationship with his family to get him through those difficult days.

Soon Bob found a new goal: to help others living with TBI. He earned a certification in psychiatric rehabilitation from UMDNJ. Using his new skills, he counseled others challenged by TBI and helped them work through the lifelong recovery process.

Determined to continue improving the lives of others, his involvement in the TBI community was extensive. Serving on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kessler Foundation for 15

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years, Bob worked tirelessly to review research protocols, challenged researchers presenting to the Board, and ensured the safety of research participants. Richard Greene, MD, PhD, former Chair of the IRB, explained, “Bob brought the special perspective of someone who lived with TBI to the IRB’s task of protecting research participants. He often was the only IRB member to see the need to clarify a researcher’s language so that potential participants could clearly understand what the study was about and could provide their informed consent to join the study.”

Kessler Foundation also benefitted from Bob’s service as a Consumer Consultant on federal research projects that examined new treatments for memory impairments following TBI. He sat on the Consumer Advisory Board for the federally funded TBI Model System, which tracks long-term rehabilitation outcomes in an effort to improve rehabilitation care. Perhaps most importantly, he was always eager to offer an opinion, help recruit patients for a study, or talk to a reporter about TBI.

For seven years, Bob worked with Opportunity Project, a program in Millburn, NJ, designed to empower people living with brain injury (see story, pg 7). As its adjustment counselor, Bob hosted individual and group support sessions with a focus on “acceptance vs. denial” of the life changes after brain injury, which increased independent living, empowerment, and life satisfaction. Opportunity Project’s Tara Kapleau explained, “Since Bob was living with a brain injury, he had a unique understanding and an ability to truly relate to the members on a deeper level. This understanding inspired members to move forward and achieve their dreams. Bob’s wisdom, grace, and sense of humor will be genuinely missed.”

Bob built special relationships with everyone at Opportunity Project, including Director Carol Albanese. “In the years that Bob was involved with Opportunity Project, he became interwoven into the tapestry of our daily lives,” she recalled. “There is a space that will not be filled because he brought an outlook and attitude toward life that was uniquely his own. These characteristics

“In the years that Bob was involved with Opportunity Project, he became interwoven into the tapestry of our daily lives”.

- Carol Albanese

had a strong impact on us all, but mostly our members, who so closely identified with him. Upon hearing of his passing, many of our members commented that there will never be anyone like him.”

Shortly after his injury, Bob attended a meeting with religious leaders in the community and asked a rabbi, a minister, and a priest why he survived that fateful August day. They replied, “God wants you to be here.” These words resonated with Bob as he found the good in a terrible accident by improving the lives of so many living with TBI. He reminded us that there is always value in life – no matter how great the challenge.

Sadly, Bob passed away on October 31, 2011 following a stroke. This issue of “News & Views” is dedicated to Bob’s memory. On behalf of the TBI community, thank you, Bob. Your tremendous drive and dedication to bettering the lives of people with brain injury continues to inspire us all.



Bob Marlin pictured with his wife Joyce

ASK THE EXPERT:

An Interview with David Scarisbrick, PhD

TBI News & Views sat down with David Scarisbrick, PhD, Director of Neuropsychology at Progressive Health of Pennsylvania. His main interest is in sexuality and how romantic relationships change after traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Q: Tell us a little about your job, your training, and why you chose your career path.

A: Neuropsychology at Progressive Health of Pennsylvania is a community-based program for individuals who sustained a TBI. I've been involved with this program since its inception in 1994. I became interested in the field of Neuropsychology while taking an undergraduate course in physiological psychology at Stony Brook University. I earned my doctoral degree in neuropsychology from the City University of New York.

My work with individuals with TBI and their families has ranged from the acute phase to greater than 20 years post-injury. Since adolescence, I have enjoyed learning about sexuality and relationships and I continue to conduct research on the subject. This remains a major focus of my work today as I try to help people live their best possible lives post-injury.

Q: What unique relationship challenges do individuals face after TBI?

A: The types of difficulties experienced with relationships and sexuality after an acquired brain injury depend on many variables, including: (1) **Age** at injury; (2) **Gender**; (3) **Relationship history** prior to injury; (4) **Personality traits** prior to injury; (5) **Type of injury**; (6) **Brain regions** affected; (7) **Illnesses** or other chronic conditions; (8) the **Settings** in which the individual resides; and (9) **Medications**. There is no simple answer to the types of difficulties with relationships and sexuality that occur.

Q: How do roles change within relationships after injury?

A: When a family member sustains a brain injury, the family's income and assets may be adversely affected. In addition, familial roles such as who is the primary "breadwinner" and who is the main caregiver, may change. These changes are additional stressors that can significantly impact a relationship. I find it useful to refer to 'Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love' to illustrate the changes in Intimacy, Passion and Commitment that may occur. (see figure below)

Q: What are some common ways TBI impacts sexuality?

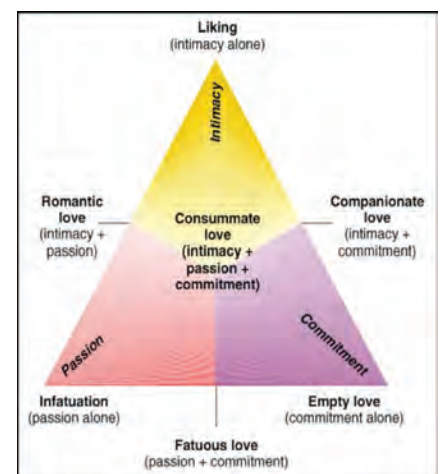
A: This is a complex question because relationships and sexuality involve others. You need to explore how the individual with TBI has been affected, including changes in physical, cognitive, and psychosocial functioning, as well as the changes in the working relationship, and the history of the relationship. In my experience, one of the greatest impacts occurs when the individual, due to the nature of the injury, is not aware of his or her deficits and their impact on functioning.

Q: What is the best way to deal with problems with sexuality and relationships?

A: **Educate Yourself.** Read and talk to as many people as you can to search for answers. **Get Support.** Enlist the assistance of any and all professionals, whether medical, nursing, psychology, or social work. Find one who is knowledgeable and willing to help **Maintain an Open and Honest Dialogue.** It is essential that all parties find a way to talk and a common language for discussing issues regarding sexuality. Last but not least, **Maintain a Sense of Humor.** Humor can decrease tension between all parties and is a wonderful stress reliever. Which reminds me, stress does not lead to good sex! So, the outcome can be very different from our initial expectations.



David Scarisbrick, PhD, received his PhD in Neuropsychology from the Graduate School of the City University of New York. His ongoing areas of interest include Awareness, Memory, and Social Pragmatic Skills after acquired brain injury. He has worked in both acute and long-term settings and is currently working with individuals in a community-based neuro-rehabilitation program.



Dr. Scarisbrick refers to this triangle to help describe different types of relationships and show how they may overlap and change.

RESOURCE Refresh: Finding Employment through DVRS

Although there are many services available to people with disabilities, dealing with large agencies can be overwhelming. Speaking with someone who has successfully utilized those services can be very helpful. *TBI News & Views* sat down with Berry Vonce, a patient of Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, who has taken advantage of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). He shared the story of his journey of self-improvement after an assault 25 years ago left him with a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Berry's first step toward recovery was treatment for substance abuse. While in a drug rehabilitation program, he benefited from positive criticism and embraced the advice to take the pathway to independence. With renewed self respect, he opted to sign up for DVRS—a federal service that assists people with disabilities in finding suitable employment.

To begin the process, Berry was interviewed by his assigned Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Clifford Jacob of the Passaic County DVRS. Determined to make a good first impression, Berry was careful to be on time, bring the necessary paperwork as instructed, and express his goals to improve himself and get a good job. To identify his areas of interest as well as his strengths and weaknesses, the counselor referred him to the Career Guidance Department of Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation for a vocational assessment. Based on the results, Mr. Jacob and the Career Guidance Department determined that Berry would benefit from Kessler's Cognitive Rehabilitation Program (CRP). While they offered assistance with enrollment, he had to show active involvement in the process. "I had to prove that I was dedicated and responsible," Berry explained. "If you are willing to do the legwork, they will be there to help you. I had to be determined, patient, humble, open-minded, and open-hearted, but, most of all, willing to change."

In the CRP, Berry learned to arrange his own transportation and use the tools needed to express himself quite eloquently. "Communication is the key," he said. "Being honest and open in answering questions is important. People need sufficient information in order to help you." Berry also learned to keep records and track his appointments. He made sure he was either on time or notified counselors if he had to cancel

or was running late. He showed he was ready for the challenges of what could be the lengthy process of finding employment.

The fact is, DVRS counselors respond positively to individuals who demonstrate responsibility in their dealing with others. Because these are the people likely to succeed in the workplace, counselors focus their time and attention on them. Berry consistently showed his dedication to the plan he developed with DVRS counselors. "There are services available to help you move forward in life," said Berry, "but the outcomes of these programs depend on your efforts."

To further help Berry in his job search, Mr. Jacob authorized the assistance of Supported Employment Services. Berry is working with a job placement specialist who provides individualized assistance in learning about job

requirements and employer expectations. Berry and his job placement specialist are exploring positions with local businesses where he can work for a trial period. He is sampling several positions and plans to transition to a permanent position soon.

To view the process from another perspective, *TBI News & Views* spoke with Jim Fasciani, clinical manager of the Career Guidance Department at Kessler Institute. Jim provided the following tips for individuals working with DVRS:

1. Once you make an initial appointment with your DVRS counselor, plan to arrive 15 minutes early. Only reschedule if it's absolutely necessary.
2. Dress in a neat, business-like manner. Conduct yourself as if you were going on a job interview.
3. Throughout the first interview, emphasize your motivation to return to work. Even if you need extensive training, emphasize that you are excited and passionate about working.
4. Be open and honest about any past difficulties, but also state what you have done to address those difficulties.



Jim Fasciani, Clinical Manager
Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation

(Continued from previous page)

5. Be open-minded and cooperative. Try to comply with the suggestions of your DVRS counselor.
6. Be polite and respectful. Thank your counselor for his or her time and express your gratitude for anticipated assistance.
7. After the interview, keep in touch with your DVRS counselor and continue to emphasize your commitment to the program to return to work.



Berry learned to arrange his own transportation and use the tools needed to express himself quite eloquently. Berry also learned to keep records and track his appointments.

RESOURCE Refresh - Fatigue after TBI

Cognitive fatigue or mental fatigue makes thinking and concentrating more difficult. You have to focus and work harder to understand and learn new information. The more you have to concentrate, the more mentally fatigued you may feel. Because this common symptom affects everyday activities, this is an important area for research. Kessler Foundation scientists are working hard to discover where fatigue comes from in the brain and how to effectively treat it.

DID YOU KNOW:

Up to **70%** of individuals report feeling fatigued even years after their brain injury.

What you can do about cognitive fatigue:

- Talk to your doctor. Make sure your doctor is aware of your fatigue. Make sure it is not associated with other treatable conditions, such as depression or anxiety.
- Arrange your schedule. If you notice you feel more cognitively fatigued later in the day, try to schedule some tasks that require the most concentration earlier in the day.
- Get plenty of sleep. Report any sleeping issues you have to your doctor. Be sure that sleep problems aren't contributing to your fatigue.
- Allow for breaks when you are doing tasks that require longer periods of concentrating. Try breaking up difficult tasks over several periods rather than trying to accomplish them all at once or in one sitting.

Interested in participating in a research study that examines cognitive fatigue in individuals with TBI? **Contact Angela Smith 973.324.8448**

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Opportunity Project: Empowering People with Brain Injury

Founded in 1993, Opportunity Project in Millburn, NJ, bridges the gap in community services for individuals with brain injury through community support and empowerment. This unique, community-based program started by serving just five members and rapidly grew to serve more than 500 members and their families. The program is open to all persons with brain injury, over 18 years of age, regardless of finances.

As a TBI research assistant at Kessler Foundation, I was interested in learning more. Program Director Tara Kapleau, LPC, invited me to their Millburn facility, where my visit began with a tour by two Opportunity Project members. Ed and Mark, who were giving their very first tour, were pleased to hear I was from Kessler Foundation, which has provided funding to the Project through Kessler Foundation Program Center.

Ed and Mark explained the profound effect that Opportunity Project has had on their lives as individuals with brain injuries. They enthusiastically discussed every detail of the facility, starting with the kitchen. Because a healthful diet promotes healthy recovery, the Project offers cooking groups and tutorials, which are run by a professional chef and nutritionist.

Next was the community area, which is used for presentations, group sessions, and large meetings. Here, I met the counselors, administrators, and staff who work so hard to help Opportunity Project serve people in need. An important resource is the project's adjustment counselor who helps members cope with the difficulties in living with brain injury through one-on-one and group sessions.

Then, we headed to the Resource Unit, where members have access to computers, mail services, printing, publishing, and a consumer library stocked with brain injury information. "This is where members learn about available resources and services," noted Ed. Mark added that members seeking to re-enter the workforce find the Resource Unit helpful for "rebuilding

resumes, sending job applications, and polishing work skills."

Because members are encouraged to achieve as much independence as possible, employment is a major focus of the Project. Through the Vocational Unit, members work with the vocational counselor to determine the best application of their interests and skills to the workforce.



Opportunity Project, Millburn, NJ

Opportunity Project's Supported Employment Program offers job matching and job sampling. Job coaching begins with a Work Evaluation by a vocational counselor who identifies the individual's strengths, job skills, and need for skills training. Members develop resumes and distribute them to various employer partners affiliated with Opportunity Project.

Members work at and volunteer at a number of local businesses, including Whole Foods, the Red Cross, NJ Transit, Sam's Clothing, La Strada, Saint Barnabas Hospice and Palliative Care Center, and the Montclair Art Museum. Through job sampling, members can test jobs in various fields. Ed and Mark shared numerous success stories of members who found employment as a result of Opportunity Project's encouragement and support.

My tour guides shared their experiences, including their treatment at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation. They emphasized that physical and

(Continued from page 6)

occupational therapy, though difficult, were crucial to their respective recoveries. Ed, who is new to Opportunity Project, is working on his resume in preparation for his job search. Mark is sampling jobs and participating in the Speakers' Bureau," an Opportunity Project program, through which members inspire others through motivational speeches and accounts of their recovery.

Ed and Mark are just two people who are rebuilding their lives at the Opportunity Project.

Opportunity Project is located at 60 East Willow Street, Millburn, NJ 07041, Telephone 973-921-1000.

At www.opportunityproject.org, you'll find more information, including guidance for employers interested in partnerships with Opportunity Project.

Article written by Tim Edquilag, BA

IN THE COMMUNITY:

Rep. Pascrell Supports Affordable, Accessible Cognitive Rehabilitation



Jane Concato speaks with a reporter at the press conference.

In October, Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ-8), co-founder and co-chair of the Congressional Brain Injury Caucus, joined Jordan Grafman, PhD, director of Traumatic Brain Injury Research at Kessler Foundation, and Jane Concato, a former patient at Kessler Institute, called for steps to close the "treatment gap" among individuals with brain injuries. This press conference, moderated by Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD, was the topic of a report in *The Star-Ledger* on October 19, 2011.

"As someone who has worked with Vietnam Veterans for most of my 30-year career, I recognize the key role that rehabilitation plays in evaluating and treating patients with traumatic brain injury," said Dr. Grafman. "Rehabilitation is essential to having people return to work or adjust back to family life. It is critical that patients with brain injury have access to these irreplaceable individually tailored rehabilitation therapies."

Jane Concato, a member of the TBI Consumer Advisory Board, spoke of the challenges of recovery from brain injury. "Without cognitive rehabilitation, I would not be here talking to you today," said Concato. Concato was in the Cognitive Rehabilitation Program at Kessler Institute and has participated in the TBI research studies at Kessler Foundation. Neil Jasey, MD, and Monique Tremaine, PhD, provided information on clinical programs at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation.

The Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) requires that certain insurance plans offer a package of diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic services and products that have been defined as "essential" by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Dr. Bruce Gans, chief medical officer at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, testified before HHS in Washington, D.C. and recommended that the ACA's essential benefits cover rehabilitative care, including treatment for brain injuries.

"Now is the time to ensure that rehabilitative services essential to recovery from disabling injuries and illnesses are included," said Rep. Pascrell. "While Kessler has been performing miracles for their patients and helping to restore their lives, it is sad to know that people with TBI across this country and even in this state do not have access to treatments that could help them to live more independent lives," said Pascrell. "Patients nationwide should get the same care that patients at Kessler receive here and at other facilities around the nation."

RESEARCHERS ON THE MOVE...

In Washington DC:



In June 2011, the Third Federal Interagency Conference on Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) took place in Washington, DC. Sponsored by a consortium of Federal Agencies, this conference met the needs of the media, with its ongoing focus on TBI, as well as the need for researchers, clinicians, and policy makers to “get out” the “latest and greatest” advances in research and clinical care. Several Kessler Foundation researchers presented their work:

- **Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD**, presented a study examining the changes shown on functional neuroimaging (fMRI) after cognitive rehabilitation. The fMRI shows what parts of the brain are active when performing thinking tasks before and after cognitive rehabilitation sessions.
- **Jeannie Lengenfelder, PhD**, presented a study examining the impact of organizational strategies on learning and memory performance using neuroimaging. Organizing information in a meaningful way is a common learning tool used to aid memory.
- **Denise Krch, PhD**, made several presentations on topics ranging from cultural issues in cognitive rehabilitation to the cognitive reserve theory in TBI.
- **Glenn Wylie, DPhil**, presented a study examining what cognitive fatigue looks like in the brain. While fatigue is often reported by individuals with TBI, this neuroimaging study is the first step toward scientifically studying and measuring fatigue.

- **Helen Genova, PhD**, and colleagues presented work on how executive functions—planning, sequencing, mental flexibility, reasoning, and problem-solving—activate the brain’s white matter or bundles of nerve cells that relay messages between brain regions.
- **Yael Goverover, PhD**, and colleagues presented findings of functional assessments based on performance in real-world activities of daily living and the impact of self-awareness and their belief in their abilities on activity limitations and community participation.

“**Assessing the Efficacy of Cognitive Rehabilitation: Factors for Consideration**” was the focus of a symposium held at annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in August in Washington, DC. John DeLuca, PhD, vice president for research at the Foundation, led the discussion:

Dr. Krch, discussed the importance of considering cultural factors in cognitive rehabilitation. **Dr. Lengenfelder** explained the impact of executive abilities on cognitive rehabilitation. **Dr. Chiaravalloti** discussed the role of cognitive skills on treatment outcomes. For example, how the speed of brain processing impacts a person’s ability to benefit from memory training.

In New Jersey: Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD



Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD

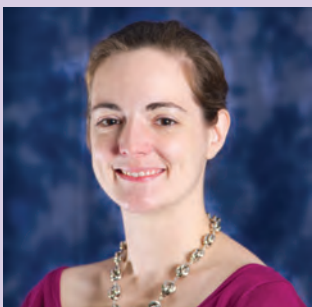
Because government officials need current information when determining priorities for spending on health care and research, Foundation researchers keep legislators informed about their progress. On August 31, 2011, members of the New Jersey Commission on Brain Injury Research and NJ State Senator Loretta Weinberg (D-37) toured Kessler Foundation's research labs. Research scientists explained the different areas of cognitive research and how these advances are being applied to clinical care and rehabilitation for brain injury. At their return visit on December 15, 2011, members of the Commission heard presentations on current and future brain injury research by Dr. Chiaravalloti, director of Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Research, and Dr. Grafman, director of TBI Research.

In the News: Jordan Grafman, PhD and Helen Genova, PhD

Jordan Grafman, PhD, director of TBI research at Kessler Foundation, received a Humboldt Research Award. The Humboldt Award acknowledges the lifetime achievements of scientists whose research endeavors have significantly advanced knowledge and understanding of their disciplines. Dr. Grafman's investigation of brain function and behavior contributes to advances in medicine, rehabilitation, and psychology, and informs ethics, law, philosophy, and health policy. This prestigious award encourages collaborative research between German

scientists and renowned investigators like Dr. Grafman.

Dr. Grafman presented the second annual Mark Cilo Memorial lecture at the 2012 Brain Injury Summit in Englewood, Colorado on January 6. Dr. Grafman's talk, "The Believing Brain: The Neuroscience of Knowledge and Human Beliefs" reflects his broad expertise in the investigation of brain function and behavior. The Cilo Lecture honors Mark P. Cilo, MD (1944-2009), who was a TBI rehabilitation specialist at Craig Hospital for many years.



Helen Genova, PhD, research scientist in Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Research, is the recipient of the 2012 Women of Excellence Award in the category of Health Sciences. Dr. Genova was selected for the award by the Union County Commission on the Status of Women for her valued expertise, hard work, and her positive impact on the community. Dr. Genova's research in cognitive rehabilitation in patients with TBI and MS focuses on correlating brain function and changes seen on neuroimaging.

MEET THE STAFF



Meet **Phlagun Nori, MD**, staff physiatrist at Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation at the Chester Campus. Dr. Nori is the latest addition to the Institute's Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) Department.

A graduate of the University of West Indies, he completed internships in internal medicine and PM&R at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, NY. He also chose the college for his residency in PM&R. Interested in the challenges faced by people recovering from brain injury, Dr. Nori then completed a fellowship in traumatic brain injury (TBI) at the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute in Edison, NJ.

Dr. Nori brings a broad range of expertise to his new position at Kessler Institute. Caring for patients with TBI requires diagnosing and managing both cognitive and physical effects of the injury. These impairments differ across the spectrum of brain injury, from mild TBI to more severe injuries complicated by spasticity and behavioral disorders. He contributes to research efforts as well, studying the cognitive deficits that occur after brain injury, as well as a physical syndrome called dysautonomia, a loss of the ability of the nervous system to regulate basic bodily functions. People with dysautonomia may experience sudden severe episodes of sweating and elevated heart and breathing rates, body temperature, blood pressure, and sweating.

Dr. Nori's engaging personality is an asset in his clinical and scientific endeavors. It's evident that he truly cares about patients and their families. Understanding that brain injury is a life-altering event, he shows compassion while encouraging them to move forward with their lives. They, in turn, feel comfortable sharing their problems and concerns. "Working in the field of brain injury is very challenging," Dr. Nori admitted, "but it is also very rewarding and gratifying when patients have good outcomes." With the addition of Dr. Nori to the Kessler staff, we are likely to witness many more such outcomes.



Meet **Lauren Henning, BS**, research assistant (RA) at Kessler Foundation. Lauren's position is split between two of Kessler Foundation's six research laboratories: Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Laboratory (NNL) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Laboratory. In

both labs, Lauren works with individuals who have Traumatic Brain Injuries. For NNL, she recruits and enrolls patients in two studies. In one study, Lauren administers various neuropsychological tests to examine the impact of aging on the cognitive deficits commonly seen after TBI. The second study involves conducting neuroimaging of the brain to track the progression of cognitive deficits and brain changes. Patients undergo imaging at 3-6 months and 6-12 months post injury. "The majority of individuals I've worked have been extremely positive about participating in research studies Kessler Foundation," she exclaimed. "Knowing that my job is helping individuals with disabilities live more productive and satisfying lives is very gratifying."

Lauren also collects research data for the Northern NJ TBI Model System (NNJT BIS), a large federally grant funded project aimed at finding ways to improve the treatment, care, and outcomes of individuals with TBI. Based at Kessler, the NNJT BIS is one of 16 centers in the U.S. that submit key data on TBI to the National TBI Database. Lauren gathers specific follow-up information from participants who are one, two, five, and ten years post-injury. "As a team member of the Model Systems, I meet study participants a few weeks, or even days, after their brain injuries, a time when their cognitive problems are most evident," Lauren said. "I also get to speak with the same participants or their loved ones a year or two later. It's incredibly rewarding to hear how well they are doing and how much progress they have made in just one short year."

Save the Date...

Stay tuned for updates on our popular consumer conference coming Sept. 27-28, 2012



Need an email reminder about this important event for people with TBI? Email us at info@KesslerFoundation.org and we'll add you to our list!

Brain Game

Here's a puzzle that can test your mental agility: What third word follows each of the first two words to complete a compound word or a familiar two-word phrase?

Example: If the clue words are "BRAIN" and "THUNDER," the word that completes both compound words or phrases might be "STORM": Brainstorm and Thunderstorm.

Reprinted with permission from the Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives

- Think / Army _____
- Head / Jump _____
- Thought / Hot-air _____
- Intelligence / Talent _____
- Mind / Speed _____
- Mental / San Francisco _____
- Smart / Chocolate-chip _____
- Memory / River _____
- Rational / Phone _____
- Brain / Micro _____

Answer Key: Compound Words

- Think / Army..... Tank
- Head / Jump Start
- Thought / Hot-air..... Balloon
- Intelligence / Talent..... Agent
- Mind / Speed..... Reader
- Mental / San Francisco.. Giant
- Smart / Chocolate-chip.. Cookie
- Memory / River..... Bank
- Rational / Phone..... Number
- Brain / Micro..... Wave



Are you interested in participating in TBI research?

Kessler Foundation Research Center is looking for persons with TBI to participate in research studies in the following areas:

- Memory Rehabilitation
- Sleep Difficulties
- Problem Solving
- Aging with TBI
- Fatigue after TBI
- Depression in persons with TBI

For more information, please contact:

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