INSIDE—
• Anne Franke’s Happiness
• Eight Days Later
• Public Policy
• Identifying with a Butterfly
... And More
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MISSION
The mission of the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance is to raise awareness and enhance the quality of life for all people affected by brain injury.

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Welcome *Mind Matters* readers,

Another summer has come and gone and it seems like each week brought more and more changes to the world around us. Still, the weather was beautiful and I hope everyone reading this found something positive to hold onto.

We ended the summer as we always do, with the annual Walk for Thought. Each year, the Walk brings together Minnesota’s brain injury community in a morning of reunification and celebration. This year, however, we were limited by circumstance and couldn’t hold our Walk in person. But, adaptation and collaboration are key components of the work we do here and so we adapted. The 2020 Walk for Thought was held entirely online as a virtual event. Participants sent in their own photos and videos which we were able to share across online platforms so everyone could see everyone else walking, riding and enjoying the day. I have to admit, it warmed my heart to see so many familiar faces and I look forward to being with everyone in person again.

In all, the Walk for Thought brought in over $23,500 for the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance. We received 12 videos and countless photos. A big thanks to everyone who participated in our first virtual walk, whether you walked, donated, or sponsored the organization. We couldn’t have done it without you.

Speaking of adapting to new circumstances, the Alliance has been operating from employee homes for about six months now and we’re doing a great job at it. Some staff have to be in the office for paperwork, but only on a limited basis and only as needed. We never thought we’d have to operate this way, but the flexibility of Alliance employees is one of the reasons we’ve been a model organization for so many decades.

Finally, and most importantly, 2020 is an election year. I know you’re aware of that, but it bears repeating. Your vote matters. Your voice matters. Minnesota has some of the best voter services in the country, so if you need help getting your vote in, give us a call. We can help you find the resources you need to make sure your vote goes through. Give us a call at 612-378-2742 and we’ll help you find the answers you need.

Thank you all again so much for your continued support of the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance. I hope you all have a happy, healthy and safe fall.

— *David King*  
Chief Executive Officer
I read a piece by Anne Frank, the young diarist who died in The Holocaust, on finding happiness. What I read is too long to repeat here, but where I quote her directly, the “passage” will be in quotes.

One of the trite sayings that people like to trot out whenever you’re sharing your woes is that other people have it worse than you. As if that is supposed to help somehow. Either that, or they’re trying to make you feel guilty for complaining, like the only person who has a right to complain is the person who has it worse than everybody else, ever!

The main problem with this is that it assumes joy is dependent on external sources. There are plenty of times when there is no reason to be joyful, at least nothing that you can reach out and touch. Yet, there are those who manage to be happy despite their situation. How can that be?

Anne’s words are quite clear, in those dark periods, one should “think about all the beauty that remains.” Her advice was to “Go outside” and “try to recapture the happiness within oneself.” One cannot obsess on all the suffering and misery.

Her advice was to “Go outside” and “try to recapture the happiness within oneself.” One cannot obsess on all the suffering and misery.

To be happy is to regain your balance. Great misery and great joy are not sustainable states; one must constantly work at them. Simple happiness is a balanced state. Most importantly, it comes from within.

This is why clinical depression, so different from merely being in a bad mood, is so intractable. The very chemistry of happiness is missing. Words offer no balm, and the only solution is chemical. When I became clinically depressed after my accident, I needed anti-depressants to find my balance. All my usual inner thoughts and words had no currency, the despondency and despair remained.

I don’t like taking drugs, so I followed my doctor’s orders and took the prescribed dosage, exactly as required, until she weaned me off them a year later. That was the best way to take as few as possible till I was able to make it on my own.

If I focus on how bad others have it, I am focusing on, and becoming part of, the misery of the world. Seeing what is wrong is great IF I can fix it, but what about everything else. It is a false mark of wisdom to spot all the wrongs and evil in the world; such things are obvious. The trick is to see the world with wonder, like a child. If I focus on happiness, I will make others happy. Such joy is sustaining.

What appeals to me about this is it takes me out of the realm of victimhood, where things beyond my control are creating my misery. I like empowering myself to create my surroundings. In this sense, I am not talking about the physical realities, but how I react to them.

Beauty makes happiness. I must find the beauty. This takes courage and faith. I must look for it, and know it is there.
Growing up in the Northwoods of Wisconsin, Galen Schulz developed a love of physical activity which inspired her goal to one day complete the Ironman Triathlon. This focus on her own health led her to pursue a future in healthcare.

“I wanted to be there for people that are suffering,” Galen says, “I wanted to be a rapid response nurse and try to help people as best I could. And, so it was kind of interesting to switch from wanting to help people so bad and wanting to give them all I had to being the patient and needing so much from people.”

On September 8, 2019, Galen met her goal and completed the Ironman. She considered it, at that time, to be the high point of her life; she was certainly at the high point of her health. Mentally and physically she felt herself to be operating at 100 percent of her abilities.

Eight days later, everything changed.

As a cardiac ICU nurse at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, one of Galen’s duties is weaning ventilator patients off sedation to check for any undetected loss of brain function. But, the weaning process has its dangers.

“There’s always the risk when somebody is coming out of sedation that they can become violent,” Galen says, “because sedation just has that effect on people’s brains. It triggers people’s fight or flight. It triggers the survival instinct and people aren’t even present in their own brains.”

Galen was assisting in weaning a man off sedation when he became agitated and suddenly swung at his wife. Galen dove forward as the man also went to pull out his chest tube. When Galen turned away to call for help, the man grabbed her hair and slammed her head down on the bedrail. When she brought her hands up, he hit her several times in the face. By the time help arrived, it took four people to pull him off.

In the ER, Galen was diagnosed with probable whiplash and told to follow up with occupational health three days later. But, her symptoms began growing worse and worse.

“I got to the point where I couldn’t drive and I couldn’t remember things past five minutes,” she says, “and I couldn’t even find my own words to speak with my siblings and my family. I think it wasn’t until it got that bad that I realized this could be something that affects me long term. But, I wasn’t willing to accept it at that point.”

One issue Galen had in recognizing the seriousness of her symptoms was her experience with past concussions. She had experienced the dizziness and headaches before, but Galen was beginning to have problems focusing her eyes and tracking objects. She had to look past her own biases and admit that something major was going on.

“I had potentially done some damage to the part of my brain communicating with my eyes,” she says, “and I now know that this is common but people that haven’t experienced a brain injury or don’t have loved ones with a brain injury wouldn’t know this. I certainly didn’t and I’m in the medical field. So I ended up having to get prism glasses and they kind of said it’s a coin flip whether my vision ever returns to normal or not.”

But, visual issues weren’t Galen’s biggest surprise.

“I’m 25 years old. I did an Ironman. I didn’t have any heart problems. But, I just kept kind of feeling really funny. Like, I couldn’t control my heart rate. And they said that can be
normal; some meds can increase your heart rate. And it finally got to a point where I actually passed out.”

Galen’s brain injury had affected her body’s ability to automatically regulate her heartbeat, so she had to go on beta blockers which caused shortness of breath.

“And I just don’t think I’ll ever forget going in and talking with the cardiologist and having him look me right in the eyes and say, ‘This is because of your brain injury.’ Because it’s not something that you ever expect.”

Part of the reason Galen wanted to share her story was to help people understand that brain injuries don’t always manifest in ways we expect.

“With every new brain injury,” she says, “we learn something new and see things we hadn’t seen before.”

But, she also puts responsibility on a general lack of public brain injury education. This can account for some of the responses she receives to her own limitations.

Galen was able to return to working with patients, and her employers were very understanding and accommodating to her needs. Galen still requires extra breaks from the lights and noise of the hospital. She eats her lunch in isolation to allow her brain to rest. And, while most of her co-workers understand these accommodations, there are still a few who don’t.

“I can’t fault anybody,” she says, “But, when people see me working and having a conversation like this, in their mind they’re like, ‘Oh, she’s fine. It can’t be as bad as she’s saying. She’s just got to get over it. Or, she’s milking it.’ But what they don’t see is that I need to decompress in order to be able to handle the rest of my day. And so they don’t see that I sit in a dark conference room and eat by myself.”

Galen acknowledges the support she received from her care team at Abbott through Courage Kenney’s Brain Injury Clinic, as well as the support she received from her family and friends, helped her get where she is today. However, even the strongest support can lack an element of understanding.

“I’d see friends and everybody wanting to be there for me,” she says, “but in the end, there were certain things that they just couldn’t understand. And why would they?

Why would they be able to? And so it can be very isolating. My family at least I felt, they’re right here with me. They’re seeing the day to day. They’re seeing the good; they’re seeing the bad; they’re not going to second guess anything.

“When I got down to the ER, my sister was already waiting for me because my mom had sent out the Bat Signal and let the whole family know. And then the rest of my gigantic family was waiting at my apartment when I got home with pizza. So I mean, they’ve just been incredible. And, every step of the way, my boyfriend who I’ve been with for six years has driven me to all of my appointments. He’s seen the nitty gritty, raw side of recovery through a brain injury. But I think that unless you’ve been through it yourself, either personally or directly with a loved one, it is so hard because there isn’t the education out there.”

Today, Galen says that anyone going through what she went through should know they’re not alone, that they’re not a burden and that what they’re experiencing is real.

“You know, you kind of start to think, well, am I just imagining it? Or, am I just anxious? And so, to have somebody look me right in the eyes and say, ‘This is absolutely a real problem. This is actually what you’re experiencing. And it’s very real. And it’s from your brain injury.’ Almost in a way, a weight came off because that was the most straightforward answer I could have ever gotten, you know, and ever asked for. And it was just a validation that this was a very real thing I was experiencing.”
2020 Elections, by Zack Eichten

November 3, 2020 is Election Day in the U.S. and I know everyone is excited to engage in democracy and vote! Fortunately, Minnesotans have many accessible voting options to keep themselves safe during the pandemic.

In Minnesota, you can vote absentee by mail for any reason. This option has been available for years, and is perfect if you do not feel comfortable going to the polls in person. Visit www.mnvotes.org. This is the website of the Minnesota Secretary of State - the office charged with running elections in a secure and accessible way for Minnesotans.

At mnvotes.org, first follow the link to check your registration status. If you're already registered at your current address, great! You do not need to do anything else to register. If you do need to register or change your registration you can do that right there online. Once you are registered correctly you can then click the link to request an absentee ballot if you do not want to vote in person for any reason.

Additionally, you can see exactly who is on your ballot by clicking the “What’s On My Ballot” link. You can view your sample ballot as a list or download the exact copy of the ballot as you would see it in person. You can print out that list or ballot and mark who you want to vote for. Then, when you get your mail-in ballot you have an easy guide to help you fill it out.

If you decide to vote in person you can bring that marked sample ballot into the voting booth with you to help remember who you intend to vote for.

Finally, in Minnesota we have excellent voter accessibility laws. If you need accommodations to help vote, such as a separate accessible machine, voting curbside so you do not have to leave your car, wanting a caretaker or poll worker to assist you, those accommodations can be provided for you. Accessibility is paramount to safe and secure elections for people with disabilities and those accommodations will be provided to any who ask.

Let us know how we can help you vote your values.

2021 Legislative Advocacy, by Mollie Clark

Because of COVID-19, and measures taken to prevent its spread, Minnesota politics look a lot different now than they have in past years. Here at the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance we’ve been grappling with how to remain effective policy advocates with the unique challenges of social distancing. We know that Minnesotans affected by brain injury continue to need just as many (if not more) services and supports to stay healthy and live independently. It is now more important than ever that the community has a voice in policy decisions.

One of the ways we are doing this in the era of COVID-19 is by hosting our regular Citizen Advocate Academy and other events over Zoom. This is key to getting both old and new advocates up to speed and ready to shape brain injury policy in the coming year. While technology is certainly a hurdle at times, it also gives us the opportunity to reach out to people affected by brain injury who traditionally haven’t been able to make it to the in-person training sessions held at our Roseville office.

It is unclear whether the Minnesota State Capitol will be open to the public when legislators come back to session in January, 2021. Nevertheless, our engagement and action is absolutely essential. After elections wrap up in November, we will be tasked with welcoming dozens of new lawmakers to the Capitol and teaching them about brain injury and the impact it has on so many families in our state. In addition, 2021 is a budget year and as our state faces a projected deficit of $4.7 billion we need to protect against cuts to programs that provide healthcare, housing, and transportation for thousands of Minnesotans.

Whether we are in-person at the Capitol or not, we are committed to making Minnesota a better place for people with brain injuries by connecting advocates with lawmakers to talk about the importance of these services and supports. Whether you’re sharing your stories through emails and phone calls or participating in online hearings, digital policy can increase access for those who can’t regularly make it to the Capitol.

Let us know how we can help you vote your values.
STAYING CONNECTED IN TIMES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING

Everyone needs human contact in one form or another. Of the many things our brains are wired for, being connected with other people - like knowing when we are hungry or running away from danger - is high on the list. We do better when we feel connected to others or feel we are part of a group. The benefits of contact seem invisible because we take them for granted but they include greater health, happiness, productivity and maybe even longer lives.

However, being with or around others doesn’t guarantee connection and some people can have a lot of contact but not feel connected. Everyone has experienced feeling lonely in a crowded room. During this time of social distancing it’s more important than ever to have a sense of community by sharing thoughts and interests in a meaningful way with people we care about and feel valued by. Even introverted people, who can sustain themselves for a while without contact, need regular doses of contact to stay connected and healthy. While we are asked to maintain physical distance for our health, we need to find ways to sustain relational health through connections in our life and contact with others.

Without contact we begin to experience health problems from the direct effects of loneliness, sadness and anxiety, as well as the indirect effect of losing supports for getting help and meeting our needs. Professionals and people who support individuals with brain injury should be aware of signs that a person may be disconnected by looking for changes in emotions like increased worry or anxiety, tearfulness and sadness, not going out or enjoying activities even when permitted or encouraged.

Making connections in meaningful ways through social media and even gaming is helpful for many people but we can’t forget those who need more direct involvement. We need to include them in our lives and communities to help them stay well. Our core human need is knowing that people care about us and that we matter to someone else. The more we tend to our basic need for connection the healthier we ALL are.

— by Erwin Concepcion

CONTACT

Contact. It seems so simple, yet is so critical to our daily lives.

Even the introverts and agoraphobes of the world still need contact. Whether it be in-person, over the phone, or on a zoom call.

Those of us living with brain injury have long been experts at self isolation; however, it’s always been on our terms. We have been able to choose when and where to go out in public. At the beginning of the pandemic, we didn’t have a choice — we were told to stay home.

Now that we are almost six months into the chaos of a historic pandemic, many of us are craving contact — particularly in-person, face-to-face contact. But it’s hard, we still have to be safe and respect the safety of others who are immunocompromised (such as myself, caregiving to my mom who is going through chemo).

Contact. It’s something we’ve always taken for granted. When we needed it, we could seek it out and fill that void.

We’ve had to get creative. I’ve done more zoom calls in six months than I think I’ve done combined in the last few years. But you know what? I’ve had some of the most meaningful conversations and new friendships that were built.

The silver lining of the pandemic is that it has allowed us to slow down a notch, to self reflect and figure out what (and who) is really important to us. We’ve been given the chance to filter out what is no longer serving us, and really focus on that circle of people who “get” us and are there for us.

What are some ways YOU have shifted the way you think about contact??

— By Amy Zellmer

THANK YOU FOR PRACTICING

SOCIAL DISTANCING

6 FEET
Zorina Anderson’s first concussion was in middle school, around 2011. Like most of her early concussions, it came from playing soccer. “At that time sports regulations were if you get hit in the head, if you’re okay to play, keep playing,” she says. “Otherwise, put an ice pack on it for 15 minutes. If you see stars, maybe sit out for 20 minutes until you kind of regroup and rebalance. So I never really thought of them as major ordeals. I was still able to do schoolwork; I just had a headache all the time. I saw an eye doctor and got glasses and they didn’t really connect it to the concussion. They were like, ‘Oh, this is eye strain from reading too much.’ I met with a couple neurologists and talked about the headaches and they were like, ‘Oh, these are migraines or tension headaches. So manage stress levels and manage food and stay away from these things and you’ll be fine.’ And by the time I was 18 and went to college, I’d had five concussions.”

When we talk about the importance of brain injury awareness and concussion protocols, it’s stories like Zorina’s that come to mind. Zorina was studying to become a math education teacher at the University of Minnesota in Duluth. She had always had a head for numbers and sequential logic, but her repeated injuries were slowly eroding her brain’s ability to function. However, her youth and energy allowed her to overcome those limitations and function as a student.

Ten years ago, Zorina’s father, _____, fell off a ladder while doing housework. Zorina witnessed his fall and saw the changes brain injury brought about in his life and the lives of his family. But, contrary to expectations, this didn’t prepare Zorina for her own experiences. “I had this definition of brain injury as this traumatic event,” she says, “Like, you lose consciousness, you’re in the hospital, you can’t function for a while. So I was looking for this one occurrence. You know, like it happened at this time on this day, not like, over a course of years.”

And then, in September of 2016, her freshman year, Zorina hit her head on a bunk bed and spent four days in and out of the ER. “I had to withdraw from school,” she says, “I moved back in with my parents, did physical therapy and occupational therapy and all that stuff and was on the road to recovery. I enrolled back in school for the spring semester and was doing online classes while still doing physical therapy and occupational therapy. And then I got two more concussions within a very short timeframe.”

Each concussion Zorina received made her brain more susceptible to injury and compounded the effects of the previous concussions. “And that grouping has kind of messed me up for the long haul,” Zorina says, “Since then I’ve been doing vision therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and I’m working with TRIA Orthopedics in their concussion program. And I’ve seen a lot of success with the group effort and the team effort.”

In addition to her multiple therapies, Zorina has received a lot of support from her family. Living with her parents has taught all of them about their ever changing relationships. “My mom has been a huge rock for the whole thing. She and I are super close. She’s a special ed teacher so she has been incredibly helpful in terms of finding resources or being an advocate for my needs. And, some of my doctors were like, ‘Oh, yep, there’s your mom again.’ And I’m like, ‘Oh, yeah, cuz she’s gonna understand what you say way better than I do.’ And my dad and I are constantly evolving in our relationship. I witnessed his injury ten years ago, and that was hard to work through. But also as my symptoms grew, he was trying to figure out how to manage life with his symptoms. While we could relate to each other really well with some of the stuff we were going through, we also had a hard time communicating, because we couldn’t really formulate thoughts quickly. Our time to process was slower. So
it’s taken time for us to learn how to work with each other and accept each other’s weaknesses, but also build each other up and help foster strengths and stuff like that. We’ve definitely grown a lot. We’re still growing. There’s still things that we can improve on as with any relationship. But, they’re a huge support, and I couldn’t do this process without them for sure.”

As for her social life, Zorina has observed that a long-term injury takes a certain toll on friendships, as many of them diminished while others grew stronger.

“Originally, my friend group was super supportive,’ she notes, “They were helping me have places to stay and then over the next week or so they were checking in and texting and calling and that kind of stuff. And then as the weeks turned into months and the months into years it was harder for them, you know.”

Today, Zorina has reached a point where she finds herself living in the moment but taking tentative steps towards her future.

“When I walked into TRIA a year ago, I said, ‘Okay, I’m giving this six months if I don’t get better help me file for disability.’ I couldn’t read. I couldn’t work longer than a couple hours at a time. And I felt sick to my stomach all the time from dizziness and vertigo and stuff like that. And so they totally agreed to it. They were like, ‘We think you’ll be better but if you’re not, we’ll help you file for disability.’ And so now that I’m a year out from that, I’m still readjusting to not being on the track to disability. But I’m also getting to the point where I can go, ‘Okay, what do I want to do now? And what kind of things do I enjoy? And do I want to go back to school; do I want to work; what kind of life things do I want to accomplish?’”

Zorina did go back to school over the summer, taking an online course to see how her abilities met with the challenge of college level work. While she found the class to be a bit too intense it was also doable and she managed to finish the course. She has also found online employment and is working to learn to drive again. These are all small steps, but they are small steps towards a larger future.

Ironically, part of what helped Zorina take these steps was the slower pace of a world on lockdown.

“I felt like everybody else’s lives were slowing down to the point where I could catch up,” she says, ‘And so people were working from home and so I was like, ‘Okay, I can do phone calls from home. I can do zoom calls, I’m totally fine with catching up with people from the comfort of my own home.’ And then to be able to do school online was something that was way more in my comfort zone because the class took so much energy out of me that if I had to drive and walk around campus and do the class and do the relationships and the noise of people and stuff like that it would have like tipped me over. Now it’s definitely weird that I’m getting to a place where I’m like, okay, I want to get back into life and life is different than what I know it to be. So figuring that out is a learning curve for everybody. But, me included.”

In March, Zorina participated in her first Alliance event when she accompanied her father to a mask making event.

“I actually found it really helpful to sit down and go, ‘Okay, what am I learning in this process? And what am I getting out of all of this? And how can I take something that could be traumatic and turn it into something really beautiful?’ And that’s where I came up with the metaphor of the butterfly. Working with some of my doctors, they’ve always talked about choosing a metaphor that you want your journey to look like. And, something that has a beginning, a middle and an end so that you can like go look, there’s growth. There’s a lot of trial and a lot of work that a caterpillar does and a lot of discomfort it goes through. And so that got put on my mask and it was really cool to draw it out and paint it out and then also write about it. And it’s been something that I’ve written about a lot over the last six months and I’m dabbling with writing a book about it, but that’s still in the process of being worked on.”

Since her first concussion, Zorina Anderson has gone from an analytical problem solver to a more paced artistically minded person. She’s seen her relationships grow and evolve as the world has slowed down to meet her pace. She’s a different person than she was and she credits that with meeting each challenge as it comes.

“I can take this moment right now. And then when the next moment comes, I can do that. And then it becomes a day at a time. And then soon those days turn into weeks and things just go from there.”
EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH IN THE YEAR OF COVID-19

The year of 2020 will be remembered as a year of a global pandemic and national civil unrest. But, these challenges to our daily lives have shown us that most people are not only generous, resilient, supportive, and concerned citizens; they have also shown us that there are many people who are willing to organize and lend a hand to people in need.

Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance staff have continued supporting our consumers by calling them, connecting them to resources, and making sure they know they can count on us. However, uncertainty, fear, and anxiety can be overwhelming and paralyzing for the people we serve; and necessary actions like social distancing can make people feel isolated and lonely. Additionally, the civil unrest in Minneapolis and its surrounding cities caused heightened anxieties in many of our underserved communities. Our Education and Community Outreach Department (ECO) staff all speak Spanish which allowed ECO staff to more easily reach out to our Latino consumers. ECO staff were able to connect with and provide support and information about resources to those communities as well as other communities of color. The department also partnered with Mujeres Latinas Expo and participated in a food distribution event on Lake Street in early June.

Due to the pandemic and issues associated with it, the Education and Community Outreach department had to cancel all our in-person outreach events including our monthly visits to churches and centers that serve the homeless population, our Conference for Professionals in Brain Injury, and other training sessions. But we have been able to offer some training options online via zoom. For example we held a 90-minute conference for TBI survivors and family members in June, our Lunch and Learn sessions and several other training opportunities. We are also planning our second Consumer and Family Conference via Zoom will be held November 14. More information can be found on our website.

Our communities may be facing new challenges and changes to their lives that were completely unexpected. But with changes also come new possibilities and the ECO team will continue to innovate and create new ways to assure our communities continue to receive the education and support needed for all people affected by brain injury.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

always an option and are exploring ways to ensure that all of our advocates are able to share their stories and make an impact on policy!

Public Relations, by Katrina Meyer:

One thing COVID-19 hasn’t changed is the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance’s dedication to supporting its community. While we haven’t been able to meet in person, that hasn’t stopped us from doing virtual education classes, training sessions, and awareness walks. While many activities have shifted, through it all our Resource Facilitators continue to be on the phones helping our community find and navigate resources in new ways while providing a listening ear and emotional support.

If you know someone affected by brain injury who is struggling or could just use an addition to their support system, help them connect with a resource facilitator by calling 612-378-2742 or 800-669-6442 or by visiting the Resource Facilitation tab on our website www.braininjurymn.org

If you are a healthcare professional looking for support or resources to provide to those you serve, our Public Relations staff can help you connect them to us. Contact Katrina Meyer, katrinam@braininjurymn.org for more information.

Be safe, and stay connected!
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In memory of Lynda Petersen
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Tributes

In honor of Dylan Jergenson
Ms. Catherine Leppa

In honor of Tom Theis
Ms. Bonnie L. Theis

Donations made June 16, 2020 through September 15, 2020
“When you can’t do what you do, you do what you can.” - Jon Bon Jovi

The Walk for Thought has been called a “giant family reunion” for many years now and 2020 was no exception. Due to state mandates on gatherings and social distancing family reunions couldn’t happen in person as they did in prior years. People reunited over Zoom and Skype or Social Media and the Walk had to go virtual as annual family reunions did.

But that didn’t stop walkers, teams, media and sports celebrities that have become part of our family and community from taking part. Everyone wanted to help. Voice of the Minnesota Vikings and KFAN Radio’s Paul Allen and Fox 9’s Tim Blotz did multiple videos to promote the Walk and got together to do our regular Pre-Walk Program. NFL Hall of Famer and fan favorite Randall McDaniel also recorded his own videos. Wild Hockey and Jordan Leopold did radio interviews to promote the Walk. Brain injury awareness stories were seen in the Twin Cities and Duluth of survivors Galen Schultz and Paul Deputy.

We missed the hugs, hearing your stories and seeing everyone face to face, but we did get to connect through photos, videos and updates on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. We walked in solidarity for brain injury awareness and to honor the people we serve and their loved ones, in our neighborhoods, parks and even outside Minnesota.

Thank you to those who could donate for raising money to help those we serve and to provide programs that keep the Alliance strong.

It’s tough not being in one place but we’ll get back there and we’ll be walking together again, taking one step at a time to a better tomorrow. The brain injury community and its supporters are resilient and not even a pandemic could stop the camaraderie we feel for each other, even at a distance. You showed how important the Walk for Thought is and we are grateful for YOU, our walkers, our donors and our sponsors. We couldn’t do it without you!
The FNC team works with patients from around the world. They are experts in Neuro-Recovery and experienced in working with:

* Complex Concussions
* Dysautonomia
  * POTS
  * Vertigo
* Dizziness
* Balance
* Migraines
* Whiplash
* Chronic Pain
* Brain Fog

Call to schedule your consultation.

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FOR JOINING US FOR THE 2020 VIRTUAL WALK FOR THOUGHT—WE COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT ALL OF YOU!