



## Uniting for Brain Injury

### NASHIA Celebrates March Brain Injury Awareness Month: Spotlight on Georgia Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund

During the month of March, the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA) has featured stories about the impact of brain injury on individuals and families and the resources and initiatives developed to provide supports and assistance. This week, NASHIA features the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission, which provides grants to Georgians for their post-acute care and rehabilitation with traumatic brain (TBI) and spinal cord injury, including individuals like Brian featured below.

*Are you a NASHIA member?* If you have yet to join, we welcome you to the organization that provides an avenue to network with peers and national leaders, and promotes the work and needs of States and public service delivery systems among national and federal policymakers. If you are interested in learning more, please click on our [website](#).



### Meet Brian and How Therapeutic Horseback Riding Helped Him

Meet Brian, featured on the Georgia Brain and Spinal Injury Trust fund [webpage](#) as a testament to the program. Injured at the age of 16 due to a car crash, just two months after receiving his driver's license, Brian has found that therapeutic horseback riding has been instrumental to his ongoing recovery from a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

"Eighteen months after his injury, he had to be cued three times per minute to stay on task," says his mother, Sue. "Today, he can work for as long as 50 minutes sequencing information." Brian recently used his Trust Fund award to continue therapeutic horseback riding, an activity he loves for its athleticism and competition -- and its results.

After the injury, Brian says, "I went from accelerated classes to special education; from running track to physical therapy; from being a popular guy to being someone people did not know how to react to." And that's also why therapeutic horseback riding has been instrumental to his ongoing recovery from a TBI when he was just 16.



In addition to his love for horseback riding, he has found he has an affinity to all animals. His canine assistant, "Lilly," is

The horseback riding and cognitive therapy seem to complement each other in addressing attention, memory, and posture.

featured on his business cards for the "Golden Graphics" design business he runs out of his apartment.



Last year, the Georgia Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission celebrated twenty years of service to Georgians with



traumatic brain injury (TBI) and spinal cord injury. Craig Young has served as the Executive Director for the past eleven years. Since its creation, the Commission has been responsible for over \$25 million in grants awarded to Georgia residents from surcharges imposed on DUI fines and reckless driving convictions, added in 2014.

The mission of the Commission is threefold: to administer the Central Registry to identify the injured, distribute resources (grants) through the Trust Fund and support improvements in state services. The Commission believes that by supporting home and community based services for the care and rehabilitation of those injured they will foster lives of meaning, independence and inclusion. Their vision is a Georgia where people with traumatic brain and spinal injuries are valued, have equal opportunity, and real choices.

Applicants to the Commission choose the type of assistance they need to get on with their lives. The Commission has a very wide range of categories of goods and services available for applicants including home modifications, transportation, medical services and therapies, personal

## Celebrating 20 Years: Key Highlights

### 1998

- Georgia's General Assembly created the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund via SB 110, ratified by an overwhelming 73% of voters in a referendum during the November general election.

- The General Assembly established a 15-member Authority (later called the Commission) to act as the Trust Fund's board of directors.

### 1999

- 10% surcharge on DUI fines began to fund the Trust Fund.
- First Authority members were sworn in by Governor Roy Barnes.

### 2001

- Legislature appropriated \$150,000 to the Trust Fund for administration and implementation.

### 2004

- Commission began management of the Georgia Central Registry for Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injuries, previously operated by the Division of Rehabilitation Services through its Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation.

### 2005

- Within the first year of the Commission's management of the Central Registry, more than 51,000 new incidences of TBI were identified.

### 2007

- The Commission funded statewide Information and Resource facilitator position for the Brain Injury Association of Georgia.

### 2010

- Executed a state-wide concussion prevention education campaign.

support and respite, vocational training and supports, durable medical equipment, health and wellness activities. For many recipients the Commission is the only funder available.

If you have questions regarding the Commission's TBI grant process, please contact Kenisha Tait, MEd, at [Kenisha.Tait@dph.ga.gov](mailto:Kenisha.Tait@dph.ga.gov).



**If you have a concussion  
We can help!**

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission provides grants for individuals with post-acute care and rehabilitation for traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries.

Learn more online:  
[bsitf.georgia.gov](https://bsitf.georgia.gov)

### 2016

- Grant awards top \$23 million.

### 2018

- The Commission received a federal ACL Traumatic Brain Injury State Partnership Grant to improve screening and identification, information and referral, partnerships, and outreach.

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For further information contact the Brain & Spinal Injury Commission at:  
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