



BRAIN INJURY SERVICES

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Brain Injury Services Celebrates 10th Anniversary of Child and Adolescent Case Management Program

Brain Injury Services, Inc. celebrates the 10th anniversary of its Case Management Program for Children and Adolescents. According to Teresa Hammond, whose son benefited recently from the nonprofit organization's services, "If it weren't for Brooke [a case manager at Brain Injury Services, Inc.] none of this would have been possible. My son wouldn't be home with his family and he wouldn't be going to school for the first time in his life. Brooke said she'd stand by me and we'd do this together, and we did." Brooke Annessa is one of BIS INC's talented and dedicated case managers who works with Program Director, Betsy Zeigler.

Brain injury is the most frequent cause of disability and death among children in the United States. More than one million children sustain brain injuries every year and approximately 165,000 require hospitalization. "BIS INC recognized early on that a specialized pediatric case management program was a needed addition to our adult services, which had been offered since the organization opened its doors in 1989," states Karen Brown, Executive Director. After searching for funding for years to develop the program, BIS INC was awarded a Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI) Fund grant in 2001 to establish the first community-based case management program for children and adolescents in Northern Virginia. In 2004, BIS INC was successful in obtaining state funding to continue the program on a permanent basis. BIS INC also receives private and corporate donations to support child and adolescent services.

“It was critical to hire the right staff to implement this innovative program. We are thankful for an extraordinary staff of dedicated professionals and community supporters that have contributed to our success,” said Betsy Zeigler, the program’s director. According to Zeigler, “Families definitely appreciate having a case manager to travel with them along this difficult journey. Our program has empowered parents to feel more confident in raising their child or adolescent who has sustained a brain injury, as well as strengthened the ability of schools and community programs to serve childhood survivors. With a small staff and very limited resources, we feel we have really made a difference!”

In the last 10 years, the program’s services have expanded to include prevention and advocacy, family support, education for professionals in identifying children and youth with brain injury, as well as training of staff/teachers in appropriate interventions and supports. The creation of long-term community partnerships with schools, medical professionals, hospitals, trauma centers, rehabilitation centers and other relevant organizations serving children occurred in the first year of this grant and continues today.

Brain Injury Services, formerly Head Injury Services Partnership, was established in 1989 as the result of family advocates who requested that the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors commission a study on the need for services. The report, *Community Based Long Term Services for Head Injured Adults*, was completed in November 1988 and recommended that a model system be developed to meet the unique and specific needs of individuals who had experienced a brain injury. In addition, the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) was recommended - and later identified through legislation - as the lead agency to coordinate services for Virginians with brain injury.

BIS’ ADAPT program is located on the Route 1 Corridor across from the South County Government Center. The day program for individuals with brain injury was originally established in 1994 in partnership with Fairfax County Therapeutic Recreation Services. In the last few years, it has developed into a Clubhouse and is an active member of the International Coalition of Brain Injury Clubhouses. The model is based on providing survivors the opportunity to practice and develop important life skills in a supportive work ordered day. BIS opened its’ second Clubhouse in Fredericksburg in 2007.

Since its inception, the organization has been recognized numerous times for its services, including establishing Virginia’s first specialized case management system for people with brain injury, a supported living program, day programs, and a unique volunteer program. In 2009, BIS received the 20th Anniversary “Years of Excellence” Award from the Civil Justice Foundation. In 2012, BIS INC will offer an innovative community-based neurobehavioral program for individuals with brain injury and mental health issues with a grant from the Potomac Health Foundation.