



History of OBIA

In 1980, two head injury associations emerged, one in the Niagara Peninsula and one in Ottawa. Ray Rempel, in Niagara, and Beverley Mantell, in Ottawa, were parents of children who had sustained brain injuries. These early associations consisted of people with brain injuries, care givers, professionals and friends offering self-help and support. During the early eighties, head injury associations began to develop in London, Toronto, Fort Erie, Durham and other regions of the province. Each of these associations developed volunteer boards to manage their affairs.

During the mid-eighties, Ray and Beverley directed their energies toward the creation of a provincial head injury association because health care, housing and service provision issues related to brain injury were largely provincial matters. Working with others to raise funds and encouraged by many families, care providers, professionals and friends, the Ontario Head Injury Association was founded in 1986. In 1995, application was made to officially change the name of the organization to the Ontario Brain Injury Association.

Ray Rempel served as Executive Director of the organization from 1986 until September of 1993. At that time, Rick Guinan resigned his position as President of the Board and became Executive Director until his resignation in March 1997. Barry Willer assumed the role of Interim Executive Director until August of 1998. At that time, John Kumpf accepted the position after a 38-year teaching career. John continued in the Executive Director position until he retired in 2010. Ruth Wilcock, who had been in the social services field for many years moved from the position of Assistant Executive Director of OBIA into the role of Executive Director in September of 2010.

A list of some of OBIA's major achievements throughout the years:

Celebrating 30 Years:

In 2013, OBIA partnered with Windsor Essex Injury Prevention Coalition and Sponsored by Southland Insurance and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) on the Drive Only Never Text (D.O.N.T.) Campaign. The campaign was launched at Queens Park to alert people to dangers of texting and driving.

The Acquired Brain Injury Provincial Conference, held in Niagara Falls every two years continues to grow. This conference is the largest ABI conference in Canada and is attended by over 600 people.

The Peer Support Program (originally called the Peer Mentoring Support Program) continues to grow throughout the province and is filling a gap and meeting a lifelong need for support for the people in the program.

The Board of Directors met in 2013 for a board governance meeting, highlighted by a visit to the OBIA office for a tour and to interact with staff. The board left with a greater understanding of the role each staff fulfills and how her/his expertise contributed to the overall success of the organization. A review of effective governance practices through evaluating the board's roles, responsibilities, structure and work process resulted in the update of the Board Policies and Procedures as well as ensuring that all the bylaws align with the strategic plan.

The board developed an ongoing Balanced Score Card to evaluate internal processes from a financial, business, client and learning & growth perspective

The online Brain Basics training program was launched in 2013.

In 2013 OBIA launched its presence on social media through Twitter and Facebook. Social media continues to grow and as of 2017 OBIA has added active accounts on Instagram, LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube. The rapid growth of this community engagement ensures that we continue to expand our reach within Ontario and beyond.

OBIA was asked to manage and disburse funds from the now defunct Headway Homes. A total of \$5,000 in grant funds are given to families to help to directly improve the life of their loved one living with the effects of a severe brain injury.

Beginning in 2014, OBIA has partnered with Thomson Rogers law firm to Back to School Conference (every second year, as to not compete with our ABI Provincial conference) in conjunction with the Annual Awards of Excellence in Brain Injury Rehabilitation.

In response to the growing need for information about concussion, OBIA developed two concussion booklets (one for Adults, the other for Children & Youth), which are distributed free of charge across the province.

OBIA partnered with Dayla Maisey, B.Sc. and Dr. David Y. Hwan in the dissemination of the book "A Guide to Traumatic Brain Injury: The Intensive Care Unit. This guide was distributed to trauma centres in Ontario to ensure that families have timely access to information and support.

In response to needs recognized by OBIA and identified by the community, OBIA announced the expansion of our Support Services into North Eastern Ontario through a two-year pilot project out of North Bay.

In 2015, OBIA launched a pilot project for an Online Support Group for those with concussions and/or Post Concussion Syndrome.

In June 2015, OBIA and the affiliated community associations launched the “I Am the Face of Brain Injury” province-wide campaign to raise awareness about this often invisible disability. An important component of this campaign was a unique video created by Stephanie Hutton (a brain injury survivor) from London, ON.

In 2015, OBIA announced the commencement of the annual Hospital Clinician Educational Bursary, which is sponsored by PIA Law and provided to increase support and encourage healthcare professionals working within the brain injury field to pursue professional development.

Brain Basics educational programs are continually being offered throughout the province and online.

Two new professors were introduced in 2016 to our level two training programs, Cognitive Interventions and Neurobehavioural Disorders. We had the opportunity to take the Neurorehabilitation: Assisting Recovery in Everyday Life Following Brain Injury (Level 1) program to Manitoba in 2016.

In 2016 OBIA introduced a new campaign, Concussion Hits Home, to help identify and assist staff at women’s shelters to better support women who has sustained concussions/brain injuries through domestic violence.

OBIA was an active participant in the development of Rowan’s Law – Bill 149, an initiative by Nepean-Carleton MPP Lisa MacLeod to ensure greater awareness and better treatment for concussion related injuries in Ontario.

2017 marked the 30th Anniversary of OBIA. We continue to participate in activities to keep in line with our strategic priorities to heighten awareness and develop a unified provincial voice for ABI.

25 Years:

The Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists awarded OBIA with the Provincial Territorial Citation Award.

October saw the launch of the biennial Provincial Acquired Brain Injury Conference which was a project of OBIA, the Brain Injury Association of Waterloo-Wellington (BIAWW) and the CSN. The conference was sold out with 368 delegates in attendance. The conference netted over \$68,000. These monies were divided between OBIA, BIAWW and 9 participating community associations.

OBIA became an intricate part of the Alliance for Action on Brain Injury which was funded by ONF. The Alliance’s mandate was to create public awareness as well as gaining the attention of the Government.

The Dual Membership Program and the Online Directory of Services were launched. Gluckstein & Associates, Henderson Structured Settlements and James Wegg & Associates were the exclusive development sponsors of the projects.

The new level one program Neurorehabilitation: Assisting Recovery and Function in Everyday Life Following Brain Injury was launched in St. Catharines with 125 in attendance. A second program was held in Winnipeg, with 105 attending.

Two more community associations were added to the Community Support Network.

12+ community associations are now involved in the Peer Support Mentoring Program.

2012 saw the much-anticipated release of The OBIA Impact Report, a 136-page full colour statistical snapshot of Acquired Brain Injury and its effects on survivors and caregivers. The Impact Report is a culmination of quantitative and qualitative data that was collected through the Ontario Brain Injury Survey (formerly known as the CISL) that was produced with the intent of shedding light on the challenges and experiences of those whose lives were impacted by an ABI.

20 Years:

The Fund Development Committee hosted a fundraising event at the Famous PEOPLE Players theatre in Toronto which netted over \$14,000.

Was awarded a grant by the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (ONF) to research Best Practices in the delivery of programs and services in acquired brain injury. Primary objectives were to provide feedback on structure, governance, programs, services, and resource development for not-for-profit brain injury associations, as well as investigating potential models and relationships between local, provincial, and national levels of organization.

Approved a revised mission statement for OBIA, to enhance the lives of Ontarians living with the effects of acquired brain injury through education, awareness, and support.

Received approval of funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$360,000 over two years. Outcomes of this funding were: the design and implementation of a new membership program; updated sustainability plan for OBIA; development of 4 new community associations (Toronto, Thunder Bay, North Bay and Kingston).

Ms. Hayman left a \$375,000 legacy to OBIA to be used to provide training and education in the assessment and treatment of persons with acquired brain injury.

The manual for teachers entitled Educating Educators about ABI, co-authored by Dr. Dawn Good and Dr. Sheila Bennett from Brock University and OBIA's Executive Director, John Kumpf was published. The book has raised the profile of ABI in schools and resulted in the writing team putting on numerous workshops for regional special education conferences, individual boards and individual school staff.

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care granted \$266,000 to fund the first year of the Peer Mentoring Support Program.

The Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation offered to fund an independent evaluation of the Peer Mentoring Support Program.

15 Years:

Guidelines for Return to Play after Concussion developed

Publication of research papers and articles based on OBIA Training Programs

Partnered with Rick Hansen Institute, Ontario Neurotrauma Initiative, Canadian Paraplegic Association and the Spinal Research Organization to form the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation (ONF)

Received ONF Grant to develop educational materials to promote Return to Play Guidelines

Held public hearing on Bill 59 and published the report entitled Adding Insult to Injury

Participated in Ministry of Health ABI committees

Received approval for ONF Educating Educators project

Return to Play guidelines adopted by International Ice Hockey Federation and International Olympic Committee

Participated in revisions to Form 1 for Attendant Care and redefinition of the term catastrophic

Remember Me awareness campaign conceived, developed and successfully launched during June, Brain Injury Awareness Month

Received a Trillium Grant for \$109,500 to develop the strategic plan and fund the development plan

Responded to a request from the Ministry of Finance for recommendations on modifications to Bill 59, the legislation that governs automobile insurance in Ontario

10 Years:

Participated in ComaCon 92 – a conference examining research and innovations in coma treatment

Assisted in the development of the Canadian Head Injury Coalition

Actively worked to influence legislation on: Bicycle Helmet Private Members Bill, Bill 108- Substitute Decisions Act, Bill 109- Consent to Treatment Act, Bill 74- Advocacy Act

Bonehead awareness campaign developed

Co-Chair and facilitator by appointment of the Minister of Health of the Task Force on the Continuum of Opportunity – to develop a model system for services in Ontario

Established Resource Library

Shaken Baby Syndrome Awareness Program

Jeremy Rempel inducted into the Terry Fox Hall of Fame

Brain Injury – the Perspective from the Other Side of the Looking Glass was published

Worked towards the repatriation of ABI survivors from treatment facilities in the US

5 Years:

Initiated Status of Wellness Public Hearings which led to a dramatic increase in funding for people with traumatic brain injury in Ontario

Get This Through Your Thin Skull poster was developed

ABI Directory of Services developed

Selected by the Ministry of Community and Social Services to conduct the North Eastern Research Project

Building a Lifetime of Growth Conference co-sponsored with Chedoke McMaster Hospital

Participated in prevention projects Drive Sober, Wear Helmets and Wear Seatbelts

Influenced the drafting of Bill 68 No Fault Auto Insurance Plan

Developed Procite database of brain injury related articles

Project Head Gear was developed including the Heads Up activity booklet

Hearings held and Report Card on the 1989 Status of Wellness Hearings published