

FY2010 Annual Report

# Success *to* Significance



Brain & Spinal Injury  
Trust Fund Commission



# 2010 Annual Report

## Table of Contents

Executive Director's Letter ..... 1

We Identify: Through the Central Registry ..... 2

We Assist: Through the Trust Fund ..... 4

We Advocate: As the Lead Agency ..... 7

Annual Meeting ..... 10

Chairman's Letter ..... 12

2010 Financial Information & Distribution Data ..... 13

Meet Our Commissioners ..... 14

Q&A ..... 16

**On the cover:** Marcus Baxley's TBI was caused by a drunk driver. His family was told that he would be in a nursing home the rest of his life unable to speak. Today, Marcus can not only speak volumes but has a job and is living independently in his community. His mother knew Marcus's life could be more than just wasting in a long term care facility. Determined to rise above a poor prognosis, she quit her job and became a 24/7 advocate for her son, who has surprised even her. Read their story on p. 4.

## Dear Friends:

As many of you know, the Commission has been accepting applications and making grants to Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal injuries since 2002. The Commission has awarded over \$15 million to nearly 1,700 individuals as I write. We know these awards have made a real difference, improving outcomes and bettering lives.



This is our primary purpose, but we are also guided by a broader Vision – that we will work “to ensure that all Georgians are valued, have equal opportunity and real choices.”

Behind our Vision is the all-important question, “Why?” Why was the Commission necessary? Why did Georgia voters, by an overwhelming majority of 72 percent, approve our legislation to amend the state constitution in 1998? And why is the Commission still relevant today?

The answer is simple. On our own, even the most financially secure of us cannot afford the extraordinary cost that can accompany the care and rehabilitation of a serious traumatic brain injury or spinal cord injury.

But I believe most Georgians readily understand the idea that by banding together, we can provide for those among us who have suffered terrible reversals. We see what can be achieved when the proper care is made available.

People do amazing things, humbling things, when we act in concert for the common good. And when we put our energies together to make a new beginning possible, we can often achieve

much more than we ever expected.

We all want to participate in a life of meaning and value. So when we work together to create programs that are the expression of these desires and implement them in such a way that everyone is lifted up, the Vision of equal opportunity is possible; all people are valued; and all Georgians have the freedom to choose how they want to live their lives.

“Success to Significance” is our theme for this annual report. We believe that our success is significant because it is based on a very simple principle – understanding what a better future looks like for everyone.

Best regards,

Craig Young, BSITFC Executive Director

## The mission

of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is to enhance the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. Guided by the aspirations of people with traumatic injuries, the Commission supports lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. As the state's Lead Agency on Traumatic Injuries, we:

**Administer** the Central Registry to identify those who are injured,

**Distribute** resources through the Trust Fund, and

**Advocate** for improvements in statewide services.

### Informing our Goals through Data from the Central Registry

Since 2004, the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has administered the Central Registry for Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injuries, providing annual data on traumatic brain and spinal injuries in Georgia and contacting each person with an injury to notify them of available resources. Collecting this data is a huge task – numbers come in to the Georgia Hospital Association from hospitals and emergency rooms across the state – and making sure the reported data is correct is a time-consuming responsibility but one that is absolutely necessary. The information newly-injured people receive through the Registry is vital to getting the care they need post-injury. And the aggregate data illuminates new needs and helps partners across the state know how best to provide services.

For instance, this year, we established a new partnership with Georgia Free Clinic Network, in which we sent informational materials to all member clinics. We also provided data for several other initiatives, including:

- a Parent to Parent screening project;
- Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, for a DOE webcast on spinal injury; and
- Maternal Child and Health Bureau (MCHB) Division of Public Health, on the incidence of TBI for Georgia’s children.

According to the CDC, who reports more than 135,000 sports- or recreation-related TBIs treated in emergency rooms across the country each year, these children are more likely to sustain another concussion after their first, and their injuries heal slower than adults’.

That’s why concussion legislation is so important to protecting Georgia’s children and teens. Return-to-play laws have been enacted in 34 states, and 10 states have approved additional concussion legislation. The Central Registry makes it clear that Georgia could also benefit from similar rules protecting our student athletes, along with other initiatives to address the marked rise in TBI in children and youth.



The Central Registry provides newly-injured Georgians with information on the care and resources available to them as they begin the recovery process and continue rehabilitation. One such resource, the Side by Side Clubhouse (pictured above), provides opportunities for learning life skills that pave the way for a full life post-injury.

“Thanks for all your help. People like you make life easier for people like me.” – Jorge Urrea [SCI]

#### By Age in Years

	Emergency Department TBI Only	Hospital TBI Only	Hospital TBI + SCI	Hospital SCI Only
0 - 4	9223	253	*	*
5 - 9	4113	96	*	*
10 - 14	3569	155	0	*
15 - 24	9538	1020	38	12
25 - 34	5682	900	36	45
35 - 44	4773	702	33	51
45 - 54	4331	909	29	81
55 - 64	2850	714	19	64
65 - 74	2180	628	11	28
75+	4700	1401	*	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>50959</b>	<b>6778</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>303</b>

#### By Sex

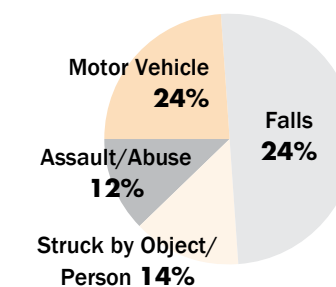
	Emergency Department TBI Only	Hospital TBI Only	Hospital TBI + SCI	Hospital SCI Only
Female	23086	2640	43	54
Male	27860	4132	131	251
Unknown	*	*	*	*

#### By Race

	Emergency Department TBI Only	Hospital TBI Only	Hospital TBI + SCI	Hospital SCI Only
American Indian/Alaska Native	510	111	*	*
Asian	616	89	*	*
Black (Non-Hispanic)	14919	1615	45	127
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	600	153	*	*
Other	2834	466	10	*
Unknown	223	33	*	*
White	31257	4311	107	162

#### Injury Causation

	Hospital/ER TBI	Hospital SCI
Motor Vehicle	12078	*
Falls	24700	20
Struck by Object/Person	7100	*
Assault/Abuse	5654	*



#### Injury/Type Totals

TBI – ED	50959
SCI – Hospital	305
TBI – Hospital	6778
TBI + SCI – Hospital	174
<b>Total</b>	<b>58216</b>

\*fewer than 10

At press time 2009 data was not yet available. Please see [www.bsitf.state.ga.us](http://www.bsitf.state.ga.us) for updated data for 2009

## Second Chances: *Marcus Baxley travels the road of recovery against seemingly impossible odds*

**A** few years ago, 28-year-old Marcus Baxley was living a normal life. He was working as the assistant shop foreman for a commercial roofing company, had his own house, lived an active life, and was an avid gun collector.

Then in one instant, his life completely changed. On October 3, 2003, he was hit by a drunk driver.

Marcus was hospitalized and diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury. He went through surgery after surgery and floated in and out of a coma. He couldn't walk or talk or communicate with his family in any way. He was completely non-responsive.

"The doctors didn't have much hope for him and suggested I put him in a nursing home," his mother, Cathy Marie Dinning, says, recalling that painful period following the wreck. But, she says, "that wasn't an option for me."

Cathy became dedicated to Marcus's recovery. "I was in the medical field for over 25 years. My first job was at a hospital where I was doing total-person care."

She says this was God's way of preparing her for what her future held.

"I knew how to take care of someone – to bathe them, feed them, change them, and all that," she says. "That's what I was determined to do and that's what I did. I took care of him and stayed with him each day. Did the therapy, range of motion, everything that I knew to do to try and get him better. Slowly, he started coming around."

The turning point came one day when Marcus's mother held up a pistol from his gun cabinet. "Marc, do you know what this is," she asked. His eyes lit up in recognition.

"It was like an awakening," Cathy says. "It was really something to see. He mouthed the words 'Colt .45.' I was so excited, I started running around the house. It was at that point I knew for sure that he knew what I was asking him."

Nine months after the accident, Marcus left the hospital and moved back home, but his house had to be modified to make it accessible for him. He was tube-fed and had to be moved from one resting place to another using a hydraulic lift.

### *On October 3, 2003, Marcus Baxley was hit by a drunk driver.*

- **In 2003 there were 355 alcohol-related fatalities, accounting for 22% of all fatalities.\***
- **Motor vehicle accidents are the cause of 17% of all TBIs each year.\*\***
- **Among all age groups, motor vehicle crashes and traffic-related incidents were the second leading cause of TBI and resulted in the largest percentage of TBI-related deaths (31.8%).\*\***

\*Georgia Office of Highway Safety

\*\*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

In late 2005 – two years after the accident – he took his first small steps. Another two years would pass before he could walk on his own.

Marcus recalls what drove his recovery. "It was wanting to be out on my own again. Me, living at home with [my mother], made me feel like a burden on them."

Cathy of course has a different view. "There's no way he was ever a burden. I was going to bring him home and take care of him."



In addition to his determination and Cathy's never-ending hope, they still needed additional resources for Marcus to achieve a full recovery. Cathy recalls the difficulty they had, since Marcus was ineligible for Medicare. "We didn't have a lot of help at that time. When the insurance ran out, he had no choice but to apply for Medicaid to have some type of coverage."

In addition to Medicaid, the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission became a much-needed source of assistance for Marcus. One of their first requests was for physical therapy.

"That was very important to me," Cathy says. "A lot of the funds went to the therapist to come into the home." Their Trust Fund grant also paid for a wheelchair lift for their vehicle as well as attendant care so Cathy could get a break once in a while from her 24/7 role as care-giver.

Once Marcus moved past his basic recovery, he was ready to start regaining his old life. Another Trust Fund grant allowed him to purchase a new computer, which his therapist suggested would help him communicate with others even in his confinement.

Through assistance from the Trust Fund, he also attended Side by Side Clubhouse, where he learned things like gardening skills, grocery shopping, using a computer, setting the table and cooking a meal. It also provided an opportunity for him to get out of the house and spend time with others going through similar experiences.

In order to fully get back out into the community, though, Marcus needed reliable, independent transportation. His final award from the Trust Fund provided the means to purchase a modified van.

Marcus currently attends Side by Side Clubhouse on a weekly basis, traveling over 50 miles each Friday to get there. He's also back to work, this time at Knuckle Up Fitness Gym in Douglasville. He attended the gym daily during his therapies, and according to Cathy, "He asked them all the time if they had any jobs for him. After a couple of years, they asked if he still wanted a job. He cleans the locker room, stuff like that."

The drunk driver who hit Marcus in 2003 was initially sentenced to 15 years in prison, but was released in 2008 after serving only two years. She will serve the remainder of her sentence on probation.

A little over seven years after the accident, Marcus and his mother reflect on everything that has happened. "He's made tremendous progress from such a severe head injury," Cathy says. "It's just amazing. He has surpassed all the expectations. They said he'd probably never walk again, talk again. If we'd put him in a nursing home back then, he'd probably be dead."

Marcus now bowls and plays softball for the Special Olympics. He lives in his own home a few miles away from Cathy. A caregiver comes a few hours a day through the Independent Care Waiver Program to drive him places. He has a job and goes on dates.

"My foremost thought in my head was trying to get back to doing the things I like to do, and doing whatever needed to be done to get to that point," he says. And with his determination, his mother's love and dedication, and help from the Trust Fund, that's exactly what he did.

## Everyone Benefits

This year, the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund awarded nearly \$2 million to 271 individuals with traumatic brain or spinal injuries. We are proud to offer tangible assistance to those who need it most – people who have sustained traumatic injuries and have no means of receiving the assistance they need to further their recovery and participation in the community.

Over the years, nearly 1,700 people have benefitted directly from receiving a Trust Fund grant.

Many, like Jazmin McGhee, whose Trust Fund grant provided for a home modification that allowed her greater independence and eased the work load for her caregivers, can point to their award from the Trust Fund as the thing that made the difference in their recovery.

But many others – some who receive grants and some who don't – still benefit indirectly from the Trust Fund. We help fund and support programs in the community, like the TBI camp hosted by the Brain Injury Association of Georgia, among other initiatives. In this way, we are able to put our limited resources to the best use. Our money, which we receive through a penalty on DUI convictions, goes further. More people receive help through community programs. Even those without injuries benefit through a more capable and diverse community full of neighbors and coworkers who have the best chance at independence, regardless of their situation.

But with a budget already squeezed tight, we need more resources to continue doing the most good for the most people. If you would like to be a part of our mission and help the Trust Fund in any way, please contact our office.

*March 27, 2010  
Brain Injury Trust Fund  
Travis and Yolanda McGhee for Jazmin Z. McGhee*

*To whom it may concern,*

*Our daughter Jazmin sustained a TBI on April 20, 2008. Her recovery has been long and slow. She still wears a diaper and is just beginning to notify someone when she needs to go to the bathroom. With her new bathroom addition, she has gone from not wanting to take baths or wash-ups, to walking from her bed on the walker to the new bathroom. She holds her handheld shower nozzle herself. It has been a tremendous help for her along with her caregivers, which are her mother, father, 17-year-old sister, and nurse.*

*It has made life a whole lot easier than the make-shift operation that we had going on at one time.*

*Again, thanks for the tremendous life changing convenience that your group provided for Jazmin.*

*Thanks,  
The Jazmin McGhee Family*

Since 2005, the Commission has acted as the Lead Agency for traumatic injuries in Georgia, coordinating services across the state for people with traumatic injuries.

We continue to fulfill this mission by:

- supporting legislation that improves the lives of those with traumatic brain and spinal cord injury from both a disability perspective and a systems change impact – building the Olmstead decision into a reality in our communities.
- implementing a 10-year State Action Plan prepared by the Commission in 2008 detailing how we will plan the goals and objectives that will enhance state programs – moving standards of care forward.
- supporting those around the state who are providing services to those most in need – doing the most good for the most people.

These are the behind-the-scenes stories that take the success of awarding grants through the Trust Fund to the significance of making state-wide changes that enhance the lives of all Georgians.

## Public Policy

### Successes in FY10

The State Legislature successfully passed a number of bills that the Commission supported, including:

- requirements for seatbelt usage in pickup trucks;
- restrictions on texting while driving;
- changes to the Nurse Practice Act resulting in more affordable care in the community; and
- the ability for the Commission to raise funds.

We also added a new section to our website that aids users in navigating the State Legislature's web page.

### Looking Forward

As our Central Registry Data (pg. 3) shows, concussions in children ages 5-14 are substantially on the rise. While 10 states have some kind of concussion legislation and 34 states have return-to-play guidelines for student athletics, Georgia has no state-wide regulations that protect our children and teens from incurring traumatic injuries while on the field. The Commission supports legislation that would level the playing field – so that all schools are accountable for making sure our student athletes stay safe and healthy.

## State Action Plan

In 2008, the Commission created a State Action Plan to identify ways to create a high quality system of care and to support independent living for Georgians with brain and spinal injuries state-wide.

Several key groups are now working to identify implementation strategies and to ensure the effectiveness of the State Action Plan. These groups include a Children and Youth Subcommittee, a Brain Injury Task Force, and a Spinal Cord Injury Task Force. Each work group is made up of experts and advocates who represent specific target populations. As a result of the hard work and dedication of those involved in these working groups, 2010 marked a year of many promising initiatives, including:



*Every year, members, staff and recipients gather to discuss issues of importance to the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission.*

### Children and Youth:

- A statewide education plan addressing concussion awareness and screening.
- A formal process for monitoring the transition phase with families, service coordinators, teachers, transition coordinators, and/or rehabilitation counselors.
- Appropriate and effective standardized tools for children, youth and adults with traumatic brain injury.
- A program to identify pre-school age children with traumatic brain injury for screenings.
- A hospital-based screening system for schools.
- A training program to educate rehabilitation hospitals and other providers that do not specialize in TBI or SCI.

### Brain Injury:

- A training component for resource coordinators from the Aging and Disability Resource Connection statewide to screen, identify and report traumatic brain injury.
- A public service campaign featuring critical information about concussion prevention and awareness for persons with TBI and their families.
- Addition of a TBI designation on Georgia driver's licenses.
- A partnership of key agencies to develop a training curriculum with TBI resource information for direct service professionals.
- A coalition to review the traumatic brain injury service system in Georgia and determine a best practice approach to providing long term care.

### Spinal Cord Injury:

- A public service campaign featuring critical information about injury prevention and awareness for persons with SCI and their families.
- A resource guide for the prevention and treatment of common secondary conditions in persons with spinal cord injuries.
- Advocating for increased funding for home modifications and purchases, including Section 8 and Own Home vouchers.

## Advisory Committee: *Paving the way from Success to Significance*

In 2003, the Commission authorized the Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injury Advisory Committee in accordance with the federal TBI Act of 2002. The Committee is charged with providing expert advice to the Commission and producing a delivery system for the improvement of the state infrastructure of services for Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injury. Committee members work to identify needs, set priorities, and provide direction through goals and activities oriented primarily around the Commission's State Action Plan. Chaired by Commissioner Susan Johnson for the last eight years, the Traumatic Brain and Spinal Injury Advisory Committee has been responsible for many notable successes including:

- Funding for two grant proposals through HRSA for TBI service implementation in the state of Georgia.
- Securing Lead Agency status for TBI under the Commission's portfolio of responsibilities.
- Producing the first comprehensive Needs Assessment for TBI and SCI in Georgia.
- Producing the first comprehensive State Action Plan for TBI and SCI in the state of Georgia.

- Producing and writing the white paper, "Georgia's Neurobehavioral Crisis," in 2007.
- Collaborating with the legislature to create the Georgia State Senate Study Committee on Neurobehavioral Issues in 2008.
- Collaborating with the Department of Community Health to create the ICWP Advisory Committee in 2008.
- Seeking a Senate Study Committee to investigate the lack of neurobehavioral facilities in Georgia in 2009.
- Receiving approval for a full time State Action Plan Coordinator in 2010.

The Commission is pleased to announce that Juliet Haarbauer-Krupa, Ph.D. has accepted our invitation to become the new Chair of the Advisory Committee. Julie has chaired the Advisory Committee's Children and Youth subcommittee and we are delighted that she has accepted our invitation to continue the many successes this committee attained under Susan Johnson's direction.

## Contributing to Community Resources

Through its many efforts, the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is dedicated to not only improving the lives of individuals with traumatic injuries, but by extension, improving our communities as well. We believe that the better off each individual is, the better off our communities are. This year, we:

- Partnered with the Department of Community Affairs to manage our home modification program, covering the entire state of Georgia.
- Supported changes to the Nurse Practice Act to allow family members to provide essential services for a loved one such as tube feeding.
- Educated Georgia's Olmstead committee on the needs of persons with physical disabilities, especially TBI and SCI.
- Compiled handbooks for internet links to TBI- and SCI-specific information and services.

- Planned new web sites like [www.gatrufund.org](http://www.gatrufund.org) and produced a Children's Resource guide.
- Sponsored TBI respite camps and provided funding for a Georgia TBI information and referral network.
- Added an Emergency Management page to our website.
- Connected with constituents through social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter to reach a broader audience in a more timely fashion.
- Provided Gateway Database access and information and resource referral capability for the state of Georgia.
- Implemented a pilot program for personal case management follow-up for Trust Fund grant applicants who had difficulty selecting an appropriate category of goods or services. Data from this program reaffirmed that an applicant's freedom of choice is a priority.

## A Path of Discovery

Sarah Hatch's journey through life as an artist began "even before I knew it," she says. "I have always wanted to be an artist. I was always drawing, coloring, and making things. Always creating."

Originally from Manitowoc, Wis., Sarah moved to Georgia to pursue her passion, attending the Atlanta School of Art, Oglethorpe University, and the Portfolio Center. She then spent a year traveling through Europe perfecting her craft.

But in 1979, she developed a severe tremor and spent years seeing doctors, none of whom could provide her with any answers. Finally, she was diagnosed with dystonia, a neurological movement disorder. Being able to put a name to the condition that had plagued her for so long, she says, "felt great."

"I felt an immediate sense of peace within me," she says. "It was something about finally knowing what it was, that it had a name."

Then, she was involved in two car crashes, one in 1988 and another in 1994. After a serious fall in 2001, she was diagnosed with a closed head injury and mild traumatic brain injury.

Despite her medical condition and injuries resulting from the fall, she pressed on with her art. "If anything, I overcompensated," she says. "I had so much energy that I produced work as if there were no tomorrow. I was far more driven in the old days."

Sarah still continues to paint and teach art. She is currently the assistant curator and editor for the online art gallery All Things Healing. She also sells her work online through Facebook and Etsy. She created the Special Award portrait for departing Director of the Brain Injury Association, Gloria Stahle, in May 2001. The piece, aptly titled "The Silent One," refers to what some call the "silent epidemic" of brain injury.

As a past recipient of a Trust Fund grant, she understands its importance and the assistance it provides. "The Trust Fund has saved me during times of great poverty when I was not able to afford medical and dental bills and treatment."



In 2004, Sarah taught an Imaginative Painting class to the Trust Fund staff during a staff retreat. She remembers it as one of her favorite experiences with the Trust Fund. Dionna Littlejohn, a director at the Trust Fund, recalls how much fun she had in the class. "It was the first time I ever tried oil painting, and I had a blast," she says. "The experience was very relaxing and allowed me to tap into a side of me I had not explored. Sarah was very encouraging and challenged us to enjoy the experience."

Sarah's piece, "Untitled Landscape," was presented to this year's Pathfinder recipient, Annette Bowling, at the 2010 Annual Meeting and Pathfinder Award Celebration.

"It has been great being able to create works of art for the Pathfinder Award, enabling me to give something back to an organization that helps so many people," Sarah says. She believes her painting relates to the Pathfinder Award because, she says, "the painting was, itself, a path of discovery."

## Award Recipients

We were honored to celebrate this year's Annual Meeting and Pathfinder Award Ceremony with our friends at the Side by Side Brain Injury Clubhouse, whose mission is to provide a "bridge of support for a person with brain injury to transition from medical patient to contributing community member." The Trust Fund has made 29 awards to 23 individuals for Side by Side Clubhouse services, and this year's Larry Huggins Award recipient, Cindi Johnson, is the Clubhouse's Executive Director. This year's other award recipients include:



**Annette Bowling (1)**, Executive Director of the Albany Resource Center, received the 2010 **Pathfinder Award** for her outstanding dedication to advancing the lives of Georgians with traumatic injuries. Annette was appointed to and served on the Commission from 1999 to 2010 as an officer in addition to many committee appointments. Annette also serves on the board of the Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition, Southwest Georgia Area Health Education Center, Southwest Georgia Easter Seals and the Georgia Budget Policy Committee. A principled, strong advocate for Georgians with disabilities, Annette has served as chairperson of the Division of Rehabilitation Services Council and co-chaired the Governor's Blue Ribbon Taskforce on Community Based Services. She was named one of the "100 Most Influential Georgians" by Georgia Trend magazine in 2008. Annette continues to forcefully advocate, both at the Capitol and in South Georgia, for vulnerable Georgians as they seek a life of inclusion and equal opportunity in their home communities. She continues her active participation by chairing the Public Policy Committee for the Trust Fund and is a respected spokesperson for our annual legislative agenda.

**Cindi Johnson (2)**, MA, CRC, received the Commission's **Larry Huggins Award** for Outstanding Contributions by a Committee Member in 2010. Cindi is the Executive Director of the Side by Side Clubhouse in Stone Mountain, GA, and is a long-time advocate for acquired brain injury services in Georgia. Cindi is a member of the Brain Injury Task Force and also lends her expertise to the TBI Facility Coalition and the Direct Service Provider Training workgroup.

**Waring Jackson (3) & Patricia Underwood (4)** received recognition for completing the 2nd Annual **Leadership Development Training Program (LDTP)**. This program immerses the selected applicants in both external and internal operations of the Trust Fund. LDTP members serve on Commission committees, workgroups and attend all Commission meetings and functions. Graduates may be recommended for service on the Advisory committee or on the Commission itself.

**Our vision is expanding in 2011-2012!**

I am both honored and humbled by former Governor Perdue's decision to appoint me as Chairman of the Commission following Rep. Kidd. Under Rep. Kidd's leadership, we successfully distributed over \$1.9 million over the last 12 months. Now, we must move from "Success to Significance." We must reach more people, make more life-enhancing awards, and raise awareness and money to do so.



secure each reliable vehicle has outstripped our collections, reduced the number of awards overall due to over 80% of our dollars going to transportation, and forced the Commission to look very hard for alternative transportation options.

For every transportation award at or near the lifetime cap currently in place, we reduce the number of people to whom we can provide other awards such as counseling, respite services, attendant

care, technology (computers), and other empowering grant categories. One maximum award for a modified van eliminates, for example, 15 awards for the average computer or counseling request. Georgia historically sees over 10,000 new SCI or TBI survivors annually who require some form of long-term rehabilitation, so reaching more people is fundamental to our legislative intent.

We average nearly 300 awards per year, so to increase the number of citizens we touch, we must move from success to significance through streamlining our Distribution and Application processes and raising awareness and money.

I look forward to continuing the Trust Fund's mission.

J.D. Frazier

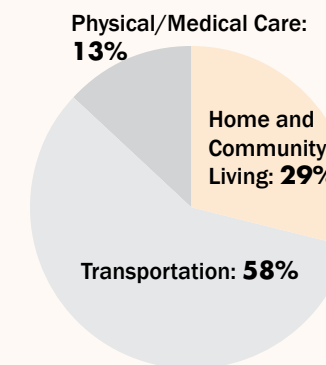
As I write this, the staff and I are meeting with Governor Deal's transition team, the Office of Planning and Budget, and various legislators to leverage our strategic efforts. We are marshalling every avenue to springboard from Rep. Kidd's success to further attain significance.

Our former Chair, Rep. Rusty Kidd, (I) Milledgeville, shepherded a fundraising bill through to law, enabling us to solicit donations to augment the resources collected through DUI surcharges. We do not receive any state revenue other than DUI surcharges and proposed fundraising.

As Rep. Kidd pointed out in his 2005 letter, transportation is a remarkable need, but in our current economic crisis, collections are down significantly. As chairman of the Distribution Committee since 2007, I have listened intently to applicants and staff regarding overwhelming transportation needs and shrinking collections. Further, the money needed to

*"Thank you so much for the award of \$5,000 so I can continue my education! I am very excited to be finally earning my degree this spring, and as of yesterday I have already been asked to interview at Georgia State for post graduate consideration. Your decision is a vote of confidence to me, and I shall do my best in honor of your support." - Lindsey Bush. [TBI]*

Most Georgians who sustain brain and/or spinal cord injuries have extensive costs for rehabilitative care beyond what the average insurance will pay. The state's Independent Care Waiver Program only provided funding for 1,002 Georgians, most of whom have paraplegia, tetraplegia or traumatic brain injury. However each year over 10,000 more Georgians will need hospital treatment, rehabilitation, and/or long-term care. This means a large number of Georgians receive very limited care for their many needs.



The Trust Fund is often the last resort for these Georgians, but our funds – which come from a penalty on DUI convictions – are declining while the cost of medical care is skyrocketing. The limited funds that are available for care and rehabilitation now purchase much less.

But there is hope. The Trust Fund is committed to being the best stewards of our precious resources that we can be, so we keep our operation and administrative costs at a minimum in order to return a greater portion of our funds to the community in the form of Trust Fund awards and support for other community programs and services. Also, this year, the Georgia legislature granted us the right to raise funds to supplement what we receive from DUI convictions. We are cautiously optimistic about this new revenue opportunity – statistics show that fundraising itself can be expensive and might only pay off five or more years down the road.

So for now, we are working with what we have and ensuring that our limited resources go to those most in need. This year, we were able to grant almost \$2 million to 271 Georgians who needed it most. See the breakdown of this year's awards in the following charts.

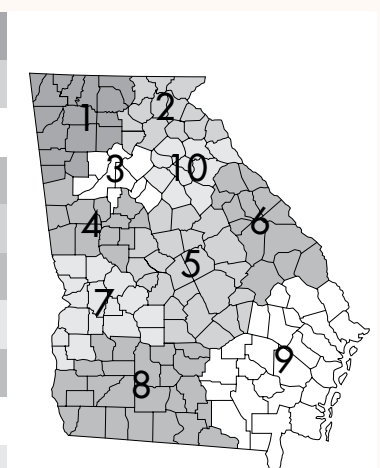
If you would like to partner with us in sustaining this critical resource, contact our office. There are many ways we can use your help to stretch our dollar and extend our reach.

**Awards by Category**

Category	Percent	Award Amount
Assistive Technology	2.42%	\$48,051.50
Computers	2.28%	\$45,173.99
Day Support Services	1.72%	\$34,164.00
Dental Services	0.38%	\$7,594.00
Durable Medical Equipment	5.52%	\$109,493.65
Health & Wellness	1.50%	\$29,800.00
Housing	0.27%	\$5,291.00
Home Modifications	9.98%	\$198,091.26
Medical Care	2.90%	\$57,456.00
Neurobehavioral Programs	0.96%	\$19,040.00
Personal Support Services	10.58%	\$209,889.00
Psychology/Counseling	1.38%	\$27,335.50
Recreation/Hobbies	0.77%	\$15,256.05
Speech Services	0.18%	\$3,648.00
Transportation	58.10%	\$1,152,946.05
Vision/Hearing Services	0.31%	\$6,068.00
Vocational Support	0.77%	\$15,211.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$1,984,509.00</b>

**Awards by Region**

Region	Awards Amount
1	\$214,359.75
2	\$111,478.80
3	\$763,888.90
4	\$211,719.75
5	\$119,136.60
6	\$105,321.00
7	\$58,473.00
8	\$106,859.75
9	\$161,863.75
10	\$131,407.70
<b>total</b>	<b>\$1,984,509.00</b>



\*non-adjusted



## Meet Our Commissioners



Our Commission Members are a dedicated, diverse group of individuals from around the state. Each one is committed to improving the effectiveness of the Trust Fund by overseeing its operations and disbursements.

The Governor appoints 15 members for two-year terms, although many of our members serve longer. To ensure a breadth of experience and opinion, the Commission consists of: four individuals or family members with traumatic brain injury, four individuals or family members with spinal cord injury, and representatives from medical professions and relevant state agencies.

**Mary Alice Bullock (1)**, was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2006. Her son, Ben, was injured in a vehicle accident in 2004 and sustained both TBI and SCI. Mary Alice is a former teacher in the Madison County School System and is involved with several local civic organizations and garden clubs.

**Henry Craig (2)** was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2010. His son sustained a TBI in a motorcycle accident. A retired Air Force and airline pilot, Henry still fills in when needed at American Airlines. He is active in local civic organizations, and chairs the Distribution and Application Revision Committee for the Commission.

**Andrew Dennison, MD (3)**, Vice Chairman, was appointed by the Governor in 2010. Andrew is the Medical Director of Brain Injury Rehabilitation at Augusta's Walton Rehabilitation Hospital. A native of Marietta, Dr. Dennison attended medical school at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and completed a residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the Baylor College of Medicine/University of Texas-Houston. He also completed a fellowship in Traumatic Brain Injury at Carolinas Rehabilitation in Charlotte, NC. He is board certified in

physical medicine and rehabilitation and is an active member in the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine. He is a member of the Commission's Executive Committee.

**Ayo Fadeyi (4)** was appointed to the Commission as the representative of the Georgia Department of Labor where she is the Assistant Director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Division. Starting her career as a Rehabilitation Specialist, Ayo previously was a Director for the New York WeCARE (Wellness Comprehensive Assessment for Rehabilitation and Employment) Program. Ayo was awarded a Master's degree from Hofstra University. Her passion is for vocational rehabilitation and assisting individuals with disabilities, especially when they are confronted with accessibility barriers related to finances, family life, assistive work technology needs, recreation and employment issues.

**Joseph D. Frazier (5)**, is the President and CEO of Para/Quad Services, Inc. He was originally appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2007. J.D. has been the recipient of numerous honors and awards; was the Immediate Past President of the

Kennesaw State University Alumni Association (2009-2010); is the treasurer of the Georgia Association of Community Care Providers; and is a registered peer supporter for Shepherd Center and a certified Medicaid Peer Supporter. He endowed a scholarship in 1996 for students with disabilities at KSU. He speaks publicly about diversity awareness and is an advocate for disability rights. In addition to serving as Commission Chairman, he also serves as Chair to the Distribution and Executive Committees.

**Griffin Garner (6)** was appointed to the Commission by the Governor in 2007. After serving on the staff of U.S. Senator Zell Miller in Washington, Griffin returned to his native Georgia where he has managed Governmental Affairs for the Southwire Company until 2009 when he formed his own consulting business. He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and he and his wife, Emily, reside in Carrollton.

**Gina Gelinas (7)**, joined the Commission in October of 2007, and serves on the Children & Youth Committee. She is the Program Manager of the Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT), a special project of the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Supports. Certified in speech-language pathology, she provides learning and technical support services to local school system personnel who work with students who need assistive technology. Gina is a member of the Commission's Executive Committee.

**Allan Goldman (8)**, Treasurer, was appointed to the Commission by the Department of Human Services (DHS) in 2009. Allan is special assistant to the Director of the Division of Aging Services. He works to foster collaboration among state agencies that serve the aging and disabled citizens of Georgia to create a comprehensive system of care throughout the state. Allan is chairman of the Commission's Finance Committee.

**Catherine Ivy (9)** has worked in the field of aging and disability services for 20 years, specifically in care management, homecare, service planning, and policy development. In October 2008, she joined the Georgia Department of Community Health as Director of the Long Term Care Section, Medical Assistance Plan, where she develops policy and oversees Georgia's long term care programs including the Medicaid waiver programs, nursing homes, community mental health services, home health, hospice services, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, and the Money Follows the Person demonstration grant. Catherine was selected to represent the Department of Community Health as its Commission appointee in October 2008. Catherine is a member of the Commission's Distribution committee.

**Susan Johnson (10)**, was appointed by the Governor in 2002 and served as past Vice Chair. She served as the Chair of the

Statewide Traumatic Injury Advisory Committee and was instrumental in the initiation and development of the Neurobehavioral White Paper and State Action Plan. Susan is a speech language pathologist who works at the Shepherd Center as the Director of Brain Injury Services. She has over 30 years of experience working and developing programs for people with brain injuries. She is a member of the American Speech and Hearing Association, and has held leadership positions at the Brain Injury Association of America and the Brain Injury Association of Georgia. Susan lives in Alpharetta with her husband Mark, who is a C-5 quadriplegic and nationally-recognized advocate for people with disabilities.

**Julia Mikell, MD, (11)** was appointed by the Governor in 2010. Dr. Mikell is a neurologist practicing in Savannah, GA. Dr. Mikell attended Georgia Medical College and was appointed to a Neurology Residency and Fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in 1980. Currently Dr. Mikell is director of rehabilitation at Candler Hospital. She and her husband are long time residents of Savannah.

**David W. Renz (12)** was the first Chairman for the Commission, having been appointed by the Governor in 2000. David brings a wealth of personal (he has a T-8 spinal cord injury) and professional experience to the organization. He has held positions as Dalton Whitfield Disability Awareness Chair and Deacon at First Presbyterian Church.

**Dan Roach (13)** is the Director of Human Resources for the Georgia Department of Public Safety, where he has served since 1999. Dan joined the Commission in 2008 as the DPS representative. He holds a Master of Public Administration (M.P.A.) degree from Indiana University, and has more than 19 years of human resource management experience, all of which have been served in the public sector.

**Timothy Wall (14)** was appointed by the Governor in 2010. He is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist with a BS in Recreation and is currently seeking a graduate degree from Georgia Southern University. He is a wheelchair tennis enthusiast, having competed in regional championships since his spinal cord injury in 2001. He brings his personal experience working with organizations that provide recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities and a recreation/respite background to the Commission. Tim is serving on the Commission's Distribution Committee.

**Jane Warnock (15)** was appointed by the Governor in May 2010. She has been an advocate for people with disabilities since her daughter, Christy, sustained a traumatic brain injury in a car crash in 2002. Jane serves on the Commission's Public Policy and Finance Committees.



*Andrew Dennison,  
Vice Chairman of  
Brain and Spinal  
Injury Trust Fund  
Commission*

The Trust Fund Commission welcomed five new Commissioners this year, as well as a new Chairman, Joseph D. Frasier. We asked our new Commissioners to discuss their impressions so far, and where they see the Trust Fund headed in the coming years. You can read the letter from our new chairman on pg. 12.

**What are your impressions so far in working with the Trust Fund?**

**Timothy Wall:** Nothing less than positive. Everyone is welcoming and very receptive to any new insight brought to the group to be better able to serve the applicants.

**Andrew Dennison:** I was aware of the Trust Fund as a potential source of funding, but I was unaware of the role the Commission played in working to improve awareness of the gaps in care for those with neuro-behavioral issues. The Trust Fund employees and Commissioners are working hard to balance the needs of the brain injury and spinal cord injury communities in the face of a progressively more austere financial position.

**Ayo Fadeyi:** Serving as a Commissioner has been an effective tool for information exchange and dialogue. The Trust Fund board meetings serve to demonstrate the need for a continuing and ongoing relationship between it and Vocational Rehabilitation on behalf of our mutual clients.

**What do you think the value is of the Trust Fund? Where do you see it going in upcoming years?**

**Timothy Wall:** The value of the Trust Fund is immeasurable. It provides hope and resources for those who have exhausted all other resources or do not have any other resources available to them. With the support of a great staff and continued funding, the Trust Fund can provide many individuals with the opportunities they once thought to be unobtainable.

**Jane Warnock:** The Trust Fund is not only here to help people with their immediate needs but also to guide the state and our residents in making changes that will affect people's lives forever.

**Ayo Fadeyi:** The financial challenges facing the Trust Fund are enormous. The work of the Trust Fund is highly important and valuable, and I hope that additional appropriate funding and resources will be dedicated in other areas to meet the continued and enormous needs.

## Applying For a Trust Fund Award

The Trust Fund welcomes applications from all Georgians who have sustained a traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injury.

**To qualify, we ask that applicants:**

- submit medical documentation stating the nature and cause of injury
- show proof of Georgia residency
- supply one quote each for all services and goods requested
- complete the application's daily living survey
- supply an applicant's statement of annual income
- explain how an award will increase your independence, have long-term benefits and promote inclusion in your community
- sign and forward all release forms to the Commission

Applications are reviewed every month.

We are committed to improving the quality of life for the more than 58,000 Georgians who sustain a TBI/SCI each year. So, call us (1-888-233-5760) if you are unsure about applying. We are happy to help you find the resources you need.

**Four Steps to an Award**

**Step 1:** Apply online at [www.bsitf.state.ga.us](http://www.bsitf.state.ga.us) or call toll-free (1-888-233-5760) for an application. As soon as your application is complete (i.e., has all supporting documents), it is sent to the Distribution Program staff.

**Step 2:** The Distribution Committee reviews applications for greatest need and makes a recommendation to fund or not to the Commission.

**Step 3:** The Commission votes to adopt the recommendations made by the Distribution Committee, approximately six to eight weeks from the receipt of a completed application.

**Step 4:** The Commission sends funding recommendations to the Governor's Office for approval as required by our legislation. Applications that gain approval from the Governor are notified by a letter to you from the Commission.

## Our Staff



left to right: Craig Young, Executive Director; Sonia Sharan, Executive and Finance Assistant; Leslie McNely, Director of Finance and Operations; Stephanie Lotti, Director of Data and Public Policy; Dionna Littlejohn, Director of Application Management; Keisha Pighee, Application Associate; Dionne Braxton, Application Review Specialist.

## The Commission At-A-Glance

**We Have Popular Support.** In November 1998, Georgia voters overwhelmingly approved (by 72%) a constitutional amendment to create a Trust Fund for traumatic brain and spinal injuries, paid for by a surcharge on drunk driving fines. This landmark legislation won by a margin of greater than 2-to-1.

**We are Guided by Those with First-hand Knowledge.** The idea of the Trust Fund and the advocacy efforts on behalf of the founding legislation was driven by people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and spinal cord injury (SCI). Because of their first-hand experiences, they knew what was most important for people with these traumatic injuries – and what was missing in the range of services and resources available. They dreamed of an agency that understood the lifelong needs of people with traumatic injuries and that was committed to supporting injured individuals at different stages in their life – not just in the critical moments after the injury occurs.

Additionally, more than half of the people who serve on the Commission must have a brain or spinal cord injury or be a family member of a person with an injury. Other members are specialists in the field, or work with organizations that provide services to people with traumatic injuries. Their collective knowledge and experience governs our day-to-day decisions, guides our recommendations for award distributions, and informs our public policy agenda.

**We Connect People To Their Communities.** Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal injuries deserve lives of independence and inclusion, lives rich with vision and possibilities. Trust Fund awards assist individuals with injuries in reaching these goals.

*Trust Fund awards change lives.*



**Brain & Spinal Injury  
Trust Fund Commission**

**Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission  
2 Peachtree Street NW, Suite 26-426**

**Atlanta, Georgia 30303**

**Phone: 404-651-5112**

**Fax: 404-656-9886**

**Toll-free: 1-888-233-5760**

**[www.bsitf.state.ga.us](http://www.bsitf.state.ga.us)**

**[www.gatrustfund.org](http://www.gatrustfund.org)**

