



Brain & Spinal Injury
Trust Fund Commission



Annual Report FY2017

*Lives of Meaning,
Independence and Inclusion*

Introduction

Every day lives of Georgians are changed forever due to brain and spinal cord injuries. Healthy, happy, productive people find themselves instantly trapped in bodies writhing with pain and brokenness. They remember their lives before and struggle to face new limitations. They still hold onto their hopes and dreams. Their lives flash before their eyes every day and draw to the moment where life as they knew it just stopped.

When the shock wears off and their new reality sets in, they have a choice. To give up or embrace the path before them and find new purpose. They don't want to be a burden or seen less than whole. They want what we all want - lives of meaning, independence and inclusion. They want to be valued. To make a difference in the world and leave their mark.

The Trust Fund was established to enhance the lives of Georgia's 150,000+ brain and spinal cord injury survivors and help them adapt to the engulfing change they face in their lives. We stand strong alongside them on their journeys of restoration and assure them that they are not alone. We help encourage, equip and enable them with the resources they need to build a new way of life.

“The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for.”

– Fyodor Dostoyevsky,
The Brothers Karamazov



The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is Georgia's only state agency that offers dedicated funding and support for individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury. Created by Constitutional amendment, the Commission's mission is to distribute much needed resources to eligible Georgia residents via direct grants for their post-acute care and rehabilitation.

The Commission does this through three major avenues:

The Central Registry identifies newly-injured individuals and their families and enables us to reach out to each one personally to educate them about and connect them to the resources they need to rebuild their lives. The registry allows us to efficiently gauge the needs across the state and the gaps we still need to address.

The Trust Fund is funded through a surcharge on DUI and reckless driving fines upon conviction. We provide much needed monetary resources for those who simply cannot afford necessary goods and services they need post-injury or whose insurance benefits have become depleted. Estimated lifetime costs of care for a person with a severe TBI can reach \$4,000,000. Care for an individual with a severe SCI can reach upwards of \$3,000,000. Alleviating even a

small portion of financial burden or resource obstacles for those working to define a new way of life and strive for rehabilitation can leave a lasting impact across their entire lives and open the door to greater independence.

As **the Lead Agency**, we are collaborating with stakeholders across the state to make sure that Georgia has a system of care that truly meets the needs of people with traumatic brain and spinal injuries. Our State Action Plan partners are a collaboration of agencies, hospitals, schools, and service providers to improve comprehensive care. Our social media and internet outreach helps potential applicants with the application process for receiving a Trust Fund award and connects them to services in their local community. Our legislative efforts have impacted laws that will reduce injury and make available added resources for Georgians with traumatic injuries.

With the ever-changing landscape of the economy and healthcare coverage today, services and resources for individuals with traumatic injuries continue to be more expensive and harder to find. Hence, the role of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has become more valuable than ever before. We are focused each day on making a difference across our state - through public awareness, grant administration and developing new partners. For so many across our state, the Commission has proven to be a dependable resource they can count on to help them build lives of meaning, independence and inclusion.

Trust Fund Awards Change Lives.

Executive Director's Letter



This year's Annual Report well reflects the Commission's stated mission of "...enhancing 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."

Georgians with traumatic brain and spinal cord injury face complex medical and personal circumstances that are often radically different from our (and their) ordinary experience. For many, the hurdles are high with personal, family and work challenges to overcome.

I am always struck by the desire and determination of our grantees to forge ahead; overcoming doubts about tomorrow and the future. These determined individuals manifest meaning and seek to bridge that meaning with often a new sense of identity. A foundation of self and identity is further cemented by the ability to make decisions and live independently - both figuratively and literally. Trust Fund grants can be foundational to a person's independence be it a grant for assistive technology such as an automatic door opener or a van modified to accommodate an electric wheelchair. A computer can open the world to a person with a traumatic injury. And with the world comes inclusion into the community.

The community can be found back at home, in an alternative living arrangement or a personal care home. Community is safety and well-being in an environment that we belong to. It is populated with others who help and give care. For individuals with traumatic injuries caregiving is a two-way street. Both are strengthened by the empathy and compassion they give. At all stages of life we are all given the gift of care or privileged to give care. Inclusion is essential to healing the entire person.

The Commission supports inclusion with grants for personal support and assistance, counseling, psychological services and respite care for caregivers. This support is available regardless of age, socioeconomic status or length of recovery. I am thankful that the state of Georgia's legislators and voters were moved to create a Trust Fund to ensure their empathy was translated into tangible gifts to restore our loved ones and neighbors to our community.

This is what we are charged to do and this report will detail how this was accomplished in 2017. I hope you will join with the Commission as we seek to find new ways to advance lives of meaning.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Young".

Craig Young
Executive Director, BSITFC

The Lead Agency

Since 2008, the Commission has been focused on its State Action Plan to help mold the state infrastructure and aid in the development of services to improve the lives of Georgians with traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries. State Action Plan activities focus on seven core areas to ensure an individual's needs are being met by our direct grants: Screening and Identification; Training and Awareness; Rehabilitation and Wellness; Service Coordination; Long Term and Life Long Supports; Independent and Integrated Living; Community Participation.

Representatives from advocacy organizations and services providers across the state as well as individuals with traumatic brain injury and spinal cord injuries and their family members serve as members of three strategic committees and multiple work groups. These dedicated members work tirelessly throughout the year to plan and assess the statewide service structure and recommend changes to ensure care needs are being met and supports are available to promote community integration and independence for all individuals.



The Trust Fund Staff

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is the lead agency for traumatic brain injuries and spinal cord injuries in the state of Georgia. We collaborate with our state and community partners to ensure that the work we do has a sustainable impact on the lives of the individuals we serve.

For more details about the Needs Assessment and State Action Plan, visit <https://bsitf.georgia.gov/media-room>

Collaboration Builds Trust

The Commission is pleased to have many partners within state and federal government as well as national, state and local nonprofits and other businesses and organizations. Some collaborations are formal with intergovernmental agreements, or grantee and grantor contracts. Others are business relationships that inform our service delivery and best practices which our vendors share with us.

The Commission is pleased to continue our collaboration for our home modifications program with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs in our current fiscal year. Commission appointees from other state agencies ensure that the voices of survivors of TBI and SCI are heard and transmitted as appropriate throughout Georgia.

Our partners are growing each year in their ability to provide the Commission with the cooperation, knowledge, tools, and resources necessary to provide effective and efficient programs that improve the lives of all Georgians. Listed below are some of the many entities we work with throughout the year:

Brain Injury Association of Georgia; Georgia Departments of Public Health, Community Affairs, Education, Human Services, Community Health, Drivers Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Transportation and Public Safety; National Association of State Head Injury Administrators; Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; The Governor's Office of Highway Safety; Injury Prevention Research Center at Emory; Shepherd Center; Georgia Concussion Coalition; Children's Healthcare of Atlanta; Georgia Hospital Association; The Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation; and the State Centers for Independent Living.

The Commission also does business with 400 vendors in Georgia such as AMS Vans, Mobility Works, Side by Side Clubhouse, Beyond Therapy, YMCA, and scores of medical, therapeutic and clinical providers that offer valuable goods, services and expertise for our grantees needs.

The Central Registry

Developing effective, focused programs to address the community needs of injury survivors requires accurate data. This was the intent of the legislation that created the Central Registry, and that's the intent of the Commission as we work with communities, local and statewide organizations, schools, and government entities to improve opportunities for Georgians living with TBI and SCI.

We use the Central Registry data to: Contact each newly-injured Georgian with information on available resources. Identify Trends - Information on increases or decreases in causes of injury and affected age groups is vital to our community partners for needs assessment and injury prevention. Educate policy-makers and community stakeholders about the incidence of traumatic brain and spinal injuries, which ultimately illuminates the needs of injury survivors.

The Commission is committed to gathering accurate and useful information that will tangibly help the thousands of Georgians coping with new injuries each year and the agencies and service providers that support them. In addition, our data is used by other state agencies, hospitals, and nonprofits to support grant requests and strategic planning for the TBI and SCI populations.



27,243 Georgians were impacted by Brain & Spinal Cord Injuries in 2015

TRAUMATIC BRAIN & SPINAL INJURIES Total Injuries: 27,243 (2015)

	Emergency TBI	Hospital TBI	Hospital SCI	Hospital TBI+SCI	
By Age in Years	0-4	1187	229	*	*
	5-9	1224	97	*	*
	10-14	2299	109	*	*
	15-19	2922	348	30	*
	20-24	1779	476	50	19
	25-29	1323	415	33	*
	30-34	1201	336	26	*
	35-39	1018	307	22	*
	40-44	907	348	26	*
	45-49	860	358	23	12
	50-54	895	486	58	*
	55-59	801	511	55	*
	60-64	575	469	40	*
	65-69	592	475	44	*
	70-74	452	496	34	*
	75-79	370	507	20	*
	80-84	389	558	21	*
	85-89	311	452	19	*
	90-94	138	240	*	*
	95-99	49	62	*	*
	100+	10	12	*	*
Total	19302	7403	523	94	
By Sex	Female	8684	2800	143	22
	Male	10617	4517	380	72
	Unknown	*	*	*	0
	Total	19301	7317	523	94
By Race	White	10679	4564	252	57
	African American	5258	1925	218	28
	American Indian/ AK native	60	*	*	*
	Asian	170	95	*	*
	Native Hawaiian/ Pac island	37	*	*	*
	other	1301	378	33	*
	refused	1787	349	12	*
	unknown	201	*	*	*
	blank	10	*	*	*
	Total	19302	7311	523	94

*fewer than 10
2015 data includes Quarters 1-3 using ICD-9 injury codes and Quarter 4 ICD-9 injury codes. Unspecified head injury not included in ICD-9 codes.
*Note: some columns may not add up to correct total because we do not report fewer than 10 individuals in a group for privacy reasons.

The Distributions

The primary purpose of the Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is to fund direct grants for Georgians who have survived neurotrauma i.e. traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. (OCGA 15-21-140). The Commission was created and authorized in a Constitutional Amendment ratified by voters as approved by the state's General Assembly and Governor's office.

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 we will foster lives of meaning, independence and inclusion. Our 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 our applicants to apply for: home modifications, transportation, medical services and therapies, personal support and respite, vocational training and supports, durable medical equipment, health and wellness activities are just some of the areas that the Commission routinely funds.

2017 Grant Distributions

Category	Award Amt	Award
Assistive Technology	\$10,550.00	1.73%
Computers	\$18,200.00	12.72%
Day Support Services	\$5,000.00	0.58%
Dental Services	\$12,000.00	6.94%
Durable Medical Equip.	\$23,586.00	6.36%
Health & Wellness	\$56,768.00	8.67%
Medical Care	\$44,150.00	4.62%
Neurobehavioral Prog.	\$10,000.00	0.58%
Personal Support Svcs.	\$183,286.00	13.29%
Psychology/Counseling	\$10,000.00	1.16%
Speech Services	\$5,000.00	0.58%
Transportation	\$668,564.13	41.62%
Vision/Hearing Svcs.	\$4,500.00	0.58%
Vocational Support	\$5,000.00	0.58%
Total	\$1,056,604.13	100.00%



A NOTE OF THANKS:
Thank you so very much for all your help. We truly appreciate all the hard work you put into helping us acquire our new mobility vehicle. It has truly been a blessing. We were able to get our 2003 Dodge Grand Caravan for the amount of the grant plus sales tax... paid in full no note... we are off to a great start. I am so grateful to be independent again.

Warmest Regards,
Daisy A Davis

The Commission has approved over \$23 million dollars worth of direct grants to Georgians with traumatic brain and/or spinal cord injuries.

For many recipients of our direct grants the Commission is the only funder available. (The Commission reviews all requests to be sure that there are no other funders or programs that an applicant can take advantage of). The Trust Fund can augment existing funding sources; insurance (either private or public), waivers from state and federal programs, and applicants own resources. The Commission accepts applicants from all Georgians who are medically eligible. With costs of lifetime care in excess of \$4.5 million for the most severely injured (SCI high tetraplegia) the Commission is composed of individuals who have first-hand knowledge regarding cost of care for post-acute care and rehabilitation over the lifespan.

A traumatic injury is not a one-time event like a broken arm that is treated and returns to more or less pre-injury function. Brain and Spinal Cord injury is disease causative and accelerative. Those with severe injury have recurring issues with the original injury and often, shortened life-spans. Even mild brain injury can, over time, cause cognitive and functional deficits that negatively impact the individual and their family.

In the Spotlight

“My Trust Fund Grant enabled therapy that trained my brain to find new pathways, to think in new ways, so I could get on with my life.”



A Second Later – *Molly's Story*

At 21 years old, Molly Welch of Alpharetta had big hopes and dreams for her life. She was studying to be a journalist at Auburn University. In her junior year she was starting to dive into her major studies and the assignments were getting more and more rigorous, yet exciting.

On a cold February afternoon in 2008 Molly was driving back to school from a weekend visit home. She wanted to get a jump on a story she was working on for the student newspaper, so she reached for her tape recorder to play back some interviews she had recorded. A second later, the world went dark.

That one moment of distraction caused Molly to veer into the oncoming lane and she hit a pick-up truck head on. The tape recorder captured it all: the song on the radio, a man's voice assuring her help was on the way, and the sounds of approaching sirens. Molly remembers none of it.

Molly doesn't remember many months around that day. She doesn't have any memory of lying in a coma in the East Alabama Medical Center with friends and family holding prayerful vigil, willing her to stay alive. She doesn't remember being transported from Opelika to Atlanta's Shepherd Center and where traumatic brain injury specialists treated her for a month. She doesn't remember coming home, lying in her own bed in a semi-conscious state.

Her family worked diligently to continue with therapy at home as they were trained to do. One day, as her dad exercised her stiffened right arm, she emerged from her coma. She began to mouth words to communicate and slowly Molly was awakened to a new life.

The injury to the left side of Molly's brain left her right arm paralyzed and stiffened her right leg. The young, aspiring student now focused on learning to walk, talk and write again on her non-dominant side. Molly spent months enduring numerous surgeries and hundreds of hours of inpatient occupational, speech, and physical therapy. She was driven and determined to reclaim as much of her life as she could.

When Molly was released from inpatient care, she spent the next seven years seeking out other therapies that would give her as much strength and mobility she could gain. The Trust Fund awarded Molly a grant that enabled her to participate in a rigorous, activity-based therapy program called Beyond Therapy®. This focused therapy is uniquely designed to help people with neurological disorders improve lifelong health, minimize secondary complications and get the most from any new neural links to their muscles. Because Molly had hemiparesis paralysis, it was imperative that she continue to exercise her muscles, because if paralyzed or weakened limbs



Follow Molly's Work
@asecondlater



are neglected, it can eventually cause the brain to forget how to use that limb altogether. Molly shares, “My ongoing therapy is so important. It allows me to stay strong and keep improving. I've worked too hard to go backwards.”

Thanks to Molly's therapy she has pushed forward. She has gone from a wheelchair to a walker, to a four-prong cane and now a single cane. She still has no use of her right arm, but she can stand tall and bend her right leg. She was able to go back to college and, after three extra years, she successfully completed her journalism degree. With the help of her brother's steady hand, Molly walked across the commencement stage to accept her diploma before a standing ovation.

My ongoing therapy is so important. It allows me to stay strong and keep improving. I've worked too hard to go backwards.

Now Molly has a new life before her. It's not what she once pictured it to be, but it is a life full of great purpose and meaning. Molly has made a conscious decision to not give in to idleness and isolation that so often comes with a traumatic brain injury. She has worked too hard to do nothing with this journey. She says, “I hate the way I walk and talk. It's a poor reflection of my mental ability. I'm smart and have a lot to give to this world.”

Today Molly uses her journalism training to share her testimony about distracted driving. She has launched a non-profit, called A Second Later, focused on educating people about the dangers of distracted driving. Molly conducts media interviews, gives speeches, and produces public service announcements to discourage distracted driving. She is also a powerful advocate for more impactful legislation to help increase penalties for distracted driving.

Molly hopes her story will inspire others to drive safe and save lives. She shares, “When I look back I realize, wow, I'm a completely different person. A lot of good has come from this. I want people to learn from me, to envision my face when they turn the key to their car. I want them to think of the struggles I've had and not want to repeat it. If I could go back and change that day I would, in a heartbeat.”



Chairman's Letter



My Fellow Georgians,

It's a humble pleasure reporting to you at the close of another busy year. Another year of dedicated work from both Trust Fund commissioners and staff has again positively changed lives for many Georgians facing the struggle of living and adjusting to new lives after traumatic brain injury (TBI) or spinal cord injury (SCI). It's truly a gratifying experience being part of the commission, witnessing the work that takes place, and hearing stories from those whose lives we touch month in and month out. We enjoy this opportunity every year to share some of those stories with you to demonstrate the value of our work, and remind you that trust fund grant recipients come from every community in Georgia, including yours!

TBI & SCI, by nature of their direct and indirect effects on an individual's physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing, can have devastating lifelong effects on the lives of those injured, their family, and friends. Following my own injury 5 years ago (high level SCI resulting in quadriplegia), I experienced first-hand the fear of waking up one day and suddenly not knowing the answers to questions I'd taken for granted throughout my life. Where will I go home to, how will I get there, how will I support myself, and who will take care of me if I cannot take care of myself? Trust Fund grants have incredible power to alleviate the burdens of those affected by TBI & SCI and make direct, lasting, and positive impacts on their lives. Grants deliver hope and real tangible solutions often when few or no other resources exist.

Our ability to change lives in this manner is what makes our work special and allows us to accomplish our guiding mission: to enhance the lives of Georgians living with TBI and SCI by supporting lives of meaning, independence, and inclusion. As healthcare coverages and rehabilitation cost continue to change and remain in varying states of uncertainty, the role BSITFC plays in the network of care for Georgian's with TBI and SCI remains critical.

We appreciate your support in fulfilling our mission and invite you to keep up with us throughout the year at our updated website (www.bsitf.georgia.gov). Explore its contents for news updates, useful resources for those living with TBI and SCI, and stories shared from Georgian's in whose lives we've made a difference.

Until next year – buckle-up, wear your helmet when appropriate, avoid distracted or impaired driving, and never dive head first!

Best regards,

Chase Jones

Chase Jones
Chairman
C-5 Quadrapalegic-Spinal Cord Injury Survivor

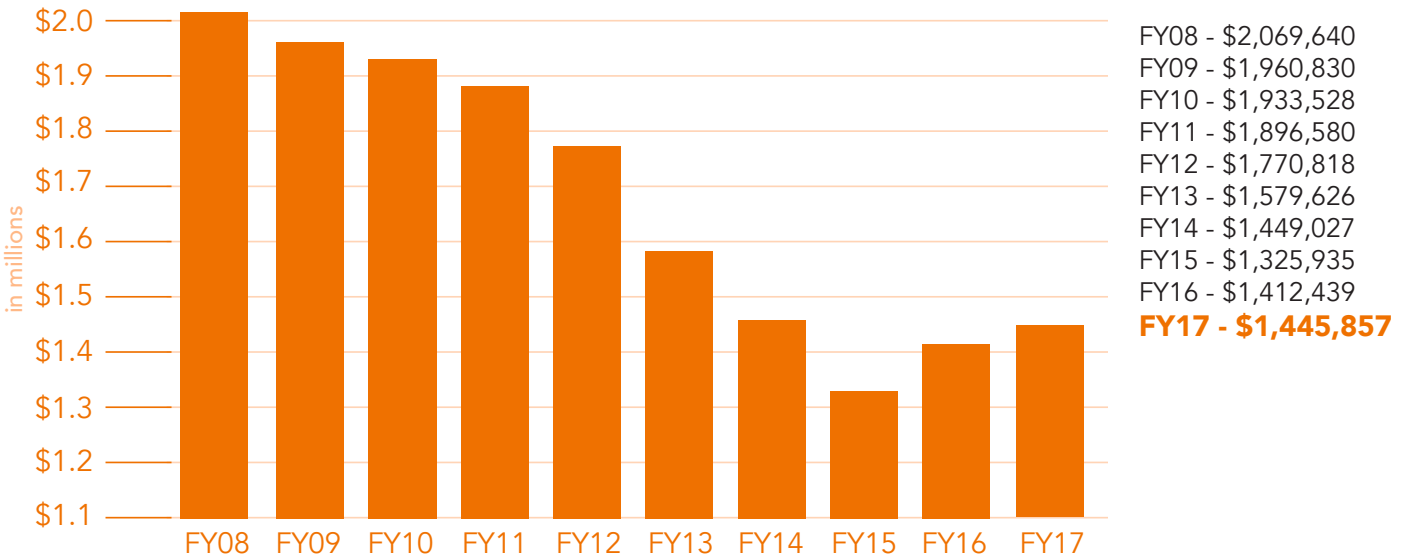
As healthcare coverages and rehabilitation cost continue to change and remain in varying states of uncertainty, the role the Trust Fund plays in the network of care for Georgian's with TBI and SCI remains critical.

Revenue Generation

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission is one of just a few state of Georgia agencies that does not receive any funding through the state's General Fund. Only funds that are collected from convictions for Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol or Drugs (1998) or convictions for Reckless Driving (2014) are remitted to the Commission. In both cases a surcharge of ten percent of the original fine can be collected. In many cases however, less is collected due to the inability of individuals to pay the entire fine or if the fine is reduced or waived by the court.

The Commission receives funds via local courts who remand these collections to the Georgia Superior Court Clerks Cooperative Authority (GSCCCA). The state of Georgia has a priority list (in statute) of surcharge collections and the Trust Fund is near the last – 12th in priority. This means that as fines are collected for different state programs or entities the Commission has a greater chance of collecting only fractions of the original fine levied. The greatest single reason for the decline in collections remitted to the Commission is the overall decrease in DUI convictions.

Collections Data Chart



FY2008 Monthly Grant Budget: \$165,000

FY2016 Monthly Grant Budget: \$85,000

Like the survivors we serve, we are constantly working to adapt to the changes around us. 2017 has been a year of careful analysis and evaluation for the Trust Fund about where we are and where we need to head. The healthcare and legislative landscapes are in constant flux, causing continual adaptations and modifications to how we work. Though incoming revenues continue to fall, we remain diligent in our mission and are working hard to promote and support survivors. We are seeking new partners, exploring new methods and enhancing strategic planning to stay abreast of changing trends in rehabilitation and information technology, ride-share access and autonomous vehicles to name a few. These market disrupters have policy implications that will affect us and our stakeholders in the future.

Commission Members

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 10 members for two-year terms, although many of our members serve longer. To ensure a breadth of experience and opinion, the Commission's Governor appointees must consist of: seven individuals or family members with traumatic brain or spinal cord injury and three representatives from medical or other relevant professions. Six Commissioners are appointed by state agencies.

Bob Bauer, PhD, Treasurer (1) - Valdosta - was appointed by the Governor in 2011. Bob is a retired chair of the Dept. of Psychology & Counseling at Valdosta State University and a former Peace Corps volunteer. Bob is a board member of Georgia Family Connection, chair of the Lowndes/Valdosta Commission for Children and Youth, and a board member of Elderhostel, Inc. Bob is Chairman of the Commission's Advisory committee.

Barbara Means-Cheeley, MSW (2) - Atlanta - was appointed to the Commission as a representative of the Georgia Department of Community Service. Barbara is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Independent Care Waiver Program which serves

individuals with disabilities and those who have sustained a traumatic brain injury. Barbara has over 30 years experience in community-based services working in state government with elderly, maternal child health, physical disabilities and behavioral health populations. Barbara volunteers with the March of Dimes and other church and community charities that serve the disadvantaged.

Henry Craig (3) - Milledgeville - was appointed by the Governor in 2010. Henry's son sustained a TBI in a motorcycle accident. Henry is retired from the United States Army and Continental Airlines. He is active in local community organizations and is a Baldwin County Commissioner. Henry chairs the Commission's Distribution Committee and is a member of the Executive Committee.

Lisa Dawson, MPH (4) - Atlanta - was appointed to the Commission as the representative of the Georgia Department of Public Health. Lisa is the Director of Public Health's Injury Prevention Section and is active as a member of the Governor's Office of Highway Safety - Safety Advisory Board, Emory Center for Injury Control, and SAFE KIDS Georgia.

Andrew Dennison, MD, (5) - Atlanta - is a Governor's appointee. Andrew is a physician at Atlanta's Shepherd Center. 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.

Major Henry Fielding (6) - Atlanta - is the appointee of the Georgia Department of Public Safety where he has served over thirty-six years with the Georgia State Patrol and is currently Headquarters Adjutant.

Rajaunnda D. Gandy (7) - Atlanta - has served in the field of Rehabilitation of people with disabilities for over 21 years. Raj began her career at Goodwill industries as the Facility Based Work Transition Manager. Raj was selected as a Business Enterprise Program Counselor for the Georgia Department of Labor where she also served as Program Manager and was then appointed as the Director of the BEP for 20 years.

In January 2016, Raj began work with Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency's (GVRA) Project Horizon. Raj was subsequently selected to be the agency's first Chief of Strategy & Innovation as of June 2016. Raj received a MS in Rehabilitation Counseling from Mississippi State University, and a BA from the University of Alabama.

Cheryl Harris, M. Ed. (8) - Atlanta - is a Certified Information & Referral Specialist for Aging/Disabilities through the Alliance for Information and Referral Systems (AIRS). She is employed by the Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services (DAS) and serves as the Section Manager for Access to Services (AtS). Programs under her management include the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), Money Follows the Person (MFP), GeorgiaCares, and Elder Legal Assistance Program (ELAP). Previously Cheryl worked in the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman as the Training Coordinator. Cheryl served as a Long Term Care Ombudsman with the Atlanta Ombudsman Program from 1988-2006. She was appointed by DHS to serve as a Commissioner for Georgia's Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund Commission in 2012 where she served as Vice Chairperson for two years and currently serves on the Communications Committee. Cheryl has over 30 years experience in the field of Aging Services.

Chase Jones, Chairman (9) - Carrollton - is a native of Carrollton, Georgia where he currently resides and works in real estate investment and property management. Chase has previously worked for the Georgia Department of Public Safety and Georgia House of Representatives focusing on government affairs, project management, and budget analysis. He is a proud graduate of the University of Georgia's School of Public and International Affairs, and holds additional certification from Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies.

Chase is a spinal cord injury survivor, and advocate for the disability community. He has served as a Governor's appointee to Georgia's Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission since 2014. In addition to currently serving as Commission Chairman, he is a member of the Commission's Executive, Public Policy, and various Ad Hoc Committees.

Susannah Kidwell, Vice Chairman (10) - Atlanta - is a Governor's appointee from Fulton County. Susannah is Director of Rehabilitation Services at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, where she has worked for the past 15 years. Kidwell has worked in the field of brain injury rehabilitation for more than 25 years. Kidwell received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Speech Language Pathology from Florida State University. She and her husband, Jeffery, have one child. They reside in Atlanta.

Gwen McKee (11) - Savannah - is a Governor's appointee from Chatham County. Gwen currently serves as Chair of the Brain Injury Association of Georgia and also serves on numerous non-profit organization boards in the Savannah area. She is a tireless advocate for individuals with physical and mental disabilities. Gwen is a member of the Commission's Distribution committee and Traumatic Injury Advisory committee.

Randy Owens (12) - Gainesville - is a Governor's appointee from Hall County. Randy is currently employed at Gainesville Internal Medicine. He serves as a board member of Challenged Child and Red Rabbit Transit and is an advisor to Northeast Georgia Medical Center. He is co-founder of Our Neighbor Inc., a nonprofit that serves the needs of those with limitations and enables them to be active in the community. Because of Owens' permanent injury that resulted from a car accident, Challenged Child and Friends was founded. He has been an impactful advocate for young adults with disabilities.

Timothy Wall (13) - Brooklet - was appointed by the Governor in 2010. He is a Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist with a BS and MS in Sport Psychology. He is a wheelchair tennis enthusiast, having competed in regional championships since his spinal cord injury in 2001. Tim's brings valuable recreation/respite background to the Commission and first-hand experience working with organizations that provide recreational opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Tim serves on the Distribution committee.

Jane Warnock, Secretary (14) - Eastman - is a Governor's appointee that 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 Finance and Public Policy Committees.



Community Engagement

The Brain and Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission held its annual meeting in October and was pleased to recognize and honor the following individuals for their outstanding contributions to the Commission and the citizens of Georgia:

The Commission's **Pathfinder Award**, which is bestowed to an individual who has made significant contributions to the work of the Commission, was awarded to former BSITFC Director of Data and Public Policy, **Stephanie P. Lotti**. Stephanie served Georgians with disabilities both at the Commission and the Department of Community Affairs for 12 years. She is the Emeritus Director of Policy for the Georgia Dental Association.

The **Larry Huggins Memorial Award**, given to an outstanding committee member, was presented to **Henry Craig** for his many years of outstanding leadership as Chair of the Distribution committee during his seven year tenure as a Commissioner.

The Commission also presented **Outstanding Service Awards** to the following individuals for their contributions to the Trust Fund and the disability community: **Cele Locke** - former member of the Distribution committee and Shepherd Center DME manager. **Minna Hong** - former member of the Distribution committee and Shepherd Center Peer Support Coordinator.



2017 AWARD WINNERS

From left to right: Henry Craig, Huggins Award Winner; Chase Jones, Chairman; Craig Young, Executive Director; Minna Hong, Service Award; Cele Locke, Service Award; Todd Rehm, accepting on behalf of Stephanie Lotti, Pathfinder Award.

Great New Community Resources

Thanks to the Trust Fund's Children and Youth Committee a dynamic series of **educational webinars** have been recorded to provide valuable information to families dealing with traumatic brain injury.

Topics Include:

- Basics of Brain Injury
- Anatomy of a Growing Brain
- Impact of Concussion on Learning
- Challenges After Brain Injury
- Medical Issues Related to Brain Injury
- Family Issues After Brain Injury
- Transition from Hospital to School
- Adapting Instruction for Impairment



Visit the Trust Fund's YouTube Channel via the link on their Resource Page to access these great presentations.
bsitf.georgia.gov



In 2017 Gwinnett Medical Center brought online the country's first **Sports Medicine and Concussion Care-A-Van** in an effort to expand education, awareness and prevention of concussion. This new mobile unit allows Gwinnett Medical Center to take its specialized care on the road, expanding their reach across Georgia. The Care-A-Van offers concussion baseline testing, athletic training services, education, first aid, injury prevention, physical therapy, wellness programs, telemedicine, and more. This Care-A-Van is helping to expand care, improve outcomes and advance the very science of concussion. To learn more about the Care-A-Van services and how to bring them to your community, visit www.gmcconcussion.org.

Applying for an Award

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

Four Steps to an Award

Step 1: Apply online at www.bsitf.state.ga.us or call toll-free (1-888-233-5760) for an application. As soon as your application is submitted and all supporting documents have been received, your application packet is sent to the Distribution Program Staff. After final completion the application will be reviewed in order of date stamp and as budget becomes available.

Step 2: The Distribution Committee reviews applications to ensure they conform to distribution policy and makes a recommendation to fund or not to fund to the Commission.

Step 3: The Commission votes to adopt the recommendations made by the Distribution Committee.

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

To qualify, applicants are asked to submit:

- medical documentation stating the nature, cause and date of their TBI/SCI
- Proof of Georgia residency and U.S. citizenship
- At least one quote each for each service and/or item requested
- A completed application, including a daily living survey and statement of annual income

Additionally, applicants are asked to:

- explain how an award will increase their independence, offer long-term rehabilitation benefit and promote inclusion in their 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 30,000 Georgians who sustain a TBI/SCI each year. Applying for an award can be easily done online. For additional support, call us toll free at 1-888-233-5760.

We are happy to help you find the resources you need.



Community Engagement

We Have Strong Citizen Support

In November 1998, Georgia voters overwhelmingly approved (by 73%) 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. Nearly 70% of voters approved an additional fine on reckless driving convictions in 2014 that is directed solely to the Trust Fund.

We Are Guided by Those with Firsthand 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 and spinal cord injury and those that serve them. 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.

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 their chosen goals.

We Cast Vision

Our Vision is a Georgia where people with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries are valued, have equal opportunity and real choices.

Trust Fund Awards Change Lives.



Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission

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