

Brain Injury

Association of

Montana

TBI News

newsletter

December 2009

A Message from the BIAMT Board of Directors

The Brain Injury Association Board of Directors met for two days in September for our annual planning retreat.

That means that we spent two beautiful, sunny days—one of them a Saturday—talking about spreadsheets and bylaws and fiduciary responsibility, making lists on big pieces of paper and scratching our heads over profit and loss statements. But here's the amazing part: It was fun. We emerged smarter, more committed, and energized. And we became a team.

We took inventory of everything the BIAMT is doing these days and we were impressed : The Resource Facilitation Service has served 766 since January 2006, some with new brain injuries, some with old injuries and new challenges. Our 800-line is staffed forty hours per week. We obtained a grant to expand the resource facilitation service to more motor vehicle crash victims. We hosted a visitor from the Minnesota Brain Injury Association, who helped us figure out how to gather better data about life after brain injury, so we can do a better job of advocating for improved services.

Every year, we train practicum students to provide resource facilitation. In the past students came from the University of Montana. This year we welcome the participation of Walla Walla. We also hire undergraduate work study students to work on projects like the annual conference. Those students go on to teach others about brain injury.

The annual conference was a great success! Be sure to check out pages 6 and 7 for a recap of the activities. Join us for the 23rd statewide traumatic brain injury conference in Great Falls on April 16th and 17th. Look on page 12 for more information.

This year we distributed two newsletters and maintained our website. Soon that website will be able to link you to a new chat room for Montanans with traumatic brain injuries, their families and their supporters.

And our future? The Board of Directors will address the single biggest problem that survivors and families have been telling us about: education. In focus groups at our 2008 conference, we heard that lack of understanding about brain injury creates obstacles at home, in schools, in workplaces and on the street.

Stay tuned.

BIAMT

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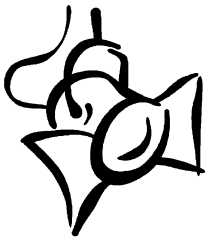
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Jordan Allen

Office Staff

Megan

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In the Spotlight

Goob West • Inspiration to Support

Goob West is originally from a small town in Pennsylvania. When he was a 20 year-old mechanical engineering student, he fell 60 feet from a tree while retrieving gear for his friends. He broke nine bones including his neck, collapsed a lung, and sustained a traumatic brain injury. He struggled to find himself again after his accident and struggled even harder to be "normal".

After he moved out west he was able to do some "soul searching" and came to peace with the person that he is now. He found strength in himself and no longer tries to hide his injury or forget it. Instead he recognizes his strength and achievement and wears it like a badge of honor.

"Just because we have a brain injury, it doesn't stop us from having fun."

Goob has become a prominent figure in the Missoula community. While attending the University of Montana where he is working on a degree in recreation management he also works on campus and for the St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church. Goob also worked for the Montana Conservation Corps.



Goob has been heavily involved in the Missoula Support Group and recognized a gap in services for young adults. To address these needs Goob started "Missing Pieces" a support group for young adults intended to be a fun, active social group. Goob aimed that the education aspect of a support group would come from learning from other group members and social networking. "Just because we have a brain injury it doesn't stop us from having fun", says West. While Missing Pieces is no longer holding meetings, BIAMT would like to recognize the dedicated effort on the part of Goob West. As Goob points out,

"a support group that is not a group gives no support." His voracious compassion for others living with brain injury prompted Goob to spend a tremendous amount of effort and time creating a group meant to offer acceptance to those who rarely feel it. Goob West continues to have a positive impact on the Missoula community.

If there is someone in your community or support group you'd like to "Spotlight", contact us at: 800-241-6442.

This is so funny that it will boggle your mind. And you will keep trying it at least 50 more times to see if you can outsmart your foot. But you can't!!!

1. While sitting at your desk, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles with it.
2. Now, while doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand. Your foot will change direction!!!



We told you so... And there is nothing you can do about it.

Senator Dave Wanzenried, a Champion for BIAMT

Have you ever heard the term “mild brain injury”? Ever wonder what “mild” means? How about concussion? Those are no big deal, right?

Here at the Brain Injury Association of Montana, we could introduce you to a lot of folks who can tell you how devastating any brain injury can be. Many who sustain a concussion (which is just another word for mild brain injury, by the way) do recover completely, but many others do not.

Even a mild brain injury can affect short term memory, long term memory, moods and personalities, among other things. It can cause seizures, vision problems, and speech impairments. Even a mild brain injury can end jobs and relationships and interfere with sports and other interests. Even mild brain injuries can be profoundly life altering.

Brain injury survivors do get better, though. In fact, we now know that they never stop getting better. But on the road to recovery, survivors need a lot of help, in the form of information, treatment, education and support.

Years ago, the Brain Injury Association of Montana saw a need to help the thousands of Montanans with brain injury equip themselves with the facts, phone numbers, referrals and other support they were going to need on “recovery road”. We knew that the challenges are often life long, so the need for good information and support is too.

We worked with the state to get federal grant money and implemented a program that helps brain injury survivors for two years after the injury. We called it Resource Facilitation. We work with hospitals to give information about brain injury to patients while they are still in the hospital, and with the patient’s permission we continue to call and send information over the next two years.

We help survivors find support groups, locate providers, understand the healthcare system do research, know their legal rights, and advocate for themselves and their families.

We provide this kind of assistance to anyone seeking help for dealing with a brain injury, soldier or civilian, no matter when or how they were hurt. Resource Facilitation is free, statewide, and open 40 hours per week, year round. (Call 1-800-241-6442 or visit our website, www.biamt.org to find out more.)

The Federal start-up money ended awhile ago, and we needed a champion to help us secure funding for our free, statewide public health service. We’re proud to say that Senator Dave Wanzenried was that champion. He identified the funding source and made the pitch to his fellow lawmakers at just the right time. During the stress and heat of the Legislature, remembered our small and valued program.

Traumatic brain injury has been called a silent epidemic. You can’t see a closed head injury, so it is basically invisible, and invisible problems can be easy to ignore.



State Senator Dave Wanzenried
(D) SD 49, Missoula

Senator Wanzenried, thank you for seeing traumatic injury as both a health crisis and an opportunity. We look forward to serving your constituents and the rest of Montana in the years ahead.

Pharmacy Compounding

Contributed by Linda K Roers ~ Juro's Home-Medical Pharmacy, Billings, Montana

Specially trained professionals prepare customized medication dosage forms that are just what the patient needs.

Pharmacy compounding may be helpful for traumatic brain injury patients to help with compliance and decrease adverse side effects that some commercial medications may cause.

If the medications you are currently taking are causing you some undesirable side effects or if you are having trouble taking them by mouth, ask your healthcare provider to work with a compounding pharmacist to help bring you some relief!

Customized Medication Offer Alternatives

Change in Dosage Form – If a patient is unable to swallow medications, or oral medications are causing problems with the digestive track, numerous options exist. The needed active ingredient(s) can be compounded into a different dosage form, such as a transdermal gel that allows medication to be absorbed through the skin. Other choices include suppositories, troches, lozenges, lollipops, or lip balms.

Change in Route of Administration – A medication may only be commercially available as a pill or capsule product. A compounding pharmacy can simplify home administration for someone who is unable to take medications by mouth by making an alternate dosage form.

Combination Preparations – A compounding pharmacy can combine compatible drugs into a single dosage form to simplify a medication administration schedule, and improve compliance.

“Unavailable” Medications – When a commercial medication is out of stock or temporarily unavailable, a compounding pharmacy can usually obtain the needed drug as a bulk powder and compound a suitable preparation.

Flavoring – Often, patients are unable to tolerate sweetness, but would prefer a medication with a bitter flavor, - like coffee, or if the medication is bitter, it can be flavored with fruit or marshmallow to combat the bitterness. A compounding pharmacy can flavor each medication to please the individual's palate, and eliminate aftertastes.

Elimination of Problem Causing Ingredients – If you are allergic to gluten or cannot tolerate some of the fillers in commercially produced medications, a compounding pharmacy can make your medication free of dyes, sugar, lactose, alcohol, and preservatives.

Dosage Modifications – Some commercially made medications come in strengths that are not suitable for every patient. A compounding pharmacy can compound a preparation that contains the most appropriate strength of medication to provide the needed benefit but avoid adverse effects.

Most medications are manufactured in a limited number of strengths and dosage forms. If you are experiencing negative side effects or are finding that you are not being compliant with taking your commercial medications, please consider talking to your health care provider about compounding.

A compounding pharmacist, working together with you and your healthcare provider, can increase the effectiveness of your medical treatment by exploring the compounding alternatives presented here.

This article was brought to you by Juro's Home-Medical Pharmacy in Billings, MT.

406-869-0123 Toll Free 1-800-523-7404 Pharmacy: 869-0100

To locate a Compounding Pharmacist visit www.iacprx.org or call the referral hotline at **1-800-927-4227**

Exercise Your Brain!



Apple Crumb Pie:

- ◆ 5 to 7 tart apples
- ◆ 1 cup of sugar
- ◆ 1/3 cup margarine
- ◆ 3/4 cup flour
- ◆ 1 9 inch pie shell
- ◆ 1 tsp. cinnamon

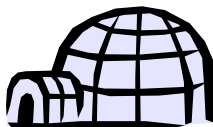
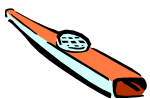


Put pared apples in pie shell. Mix 1/2 cup sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over apples. Combing 1/2 sugar, 3/4 cup flour and 1/3 cup of margarine until crumbly. Sprinkle over apples. Bake in in hot oven 400 degrees for 40 minutes or until done. Enjoy!

Winter Word Search



- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| CANDY CANES | NEW YEAR |
| CELEBRATION | RESOLUTION |
| COAT | SLEDDING |
| COLD | SLIPPERS |
| CONFETTI | SNOW |
| FOOD | SNOWFLAKE |
| GOAL | STAR |
| HOCKEY | START |
| ICE SICKLES | TINSEL |
| IGLOO | TREES |
| KAZOO | WINTER |
| MITTENS | |



Check out the solution on page 11

Thank you for making the 2009 Annual Conference A Big Success

The BIAMT would like to thank everyone who attended the 2009 Annual Conference in Billings, Montana. Rather than having conference participants sit in lecture rooms and listen to presentations the conference gave attendees the opportunity to engage in multiple unique hands-on activities. Such as a fire extinguisher training session with a simulated fire, a 3-D art activity, and a creative writing session. The annual conference is an event where individuals, family members and friends increase their awareness of brain injury, build new friendships, and take home practical tools and resources that can immediately be applied to their lives. Local businesses and service providers supported the conference by being vendors and speakers. The Keynote speaker Marilyn Lash, of Lash & Associates Publishing/Training Inc., presented on Grief, Loss, and Coping and 6 Essential Skills for Family Case Managers.

Centre for Neuro Skills sponsored a day and a half of sessions for service providers where Dr. Lisa Kreber presented information on Pharmacotherapy and TBI, Impairment after TBI, Introduction to TBI Rehabilitation, Cognition and Communication, Anger and Depression, and From Aggression to Compliance. This conference was also an excellent opportunity for service providers to network, learn of current treatment and rehabilitation, and develop new skills for working with individuals and families living with brain injury.

During Friday's lunch the BIAMT honored Ty and Scotty McLeod. After their son suffered a severe brain injury, Scotty and his wife became deeply immersed in the medical community in Billings looking for anything available to support people with disabilities. They found that many programs for individuals with disabilities were not available to the brain injured. Through their strength of character, determination to help others, and a handful of other dedicated individuals the Brain Injury Association of Montana was born. Scotty and Ty had the state office in their home for more than four years, not counting the time leading up to the formal recognition of the association in 1987. Scotty and Ty (deceased) devoted their lives to individuals living with brain injury. In recognition of their commitment BIAMT has placed a 9' multi-stem Canada Red Choke Cherry Tree to Liberty Place; a 12 bed "Home" devoted to the brain injured, where the philosophy is that each individual with a brain injury has the right to live out the best life possible. BIAMT would like to thank Chris Wagner of Wagner's Nursery in Whitehall, Montana who donated a rock on which Bernie Brophy of Butte Granite Works blasted the following inscription.

In honor of Ty and Scotty Macleod, your tireless efforts and dedication to individuals and families affected by brain injury will be forever appreciated. ~Brain Injury Association of Montana 2009~

BIAMT would like to express our appreciation to the 2009 Conference Sponsors

Department of Public Health and Human Services

Community Medical Center

Centre for Neuro Skills

PhRMA

Juros Home Medical

Kalispell Regional Medical Center

Benefis Health System

Easter Seals of Great Falls

Liberty Place, Inc.

Advanced Imaging of Missoula

Bee Hive Homes of Great Falls & Missoula

Creativity at the 2009 Brain Injury Conference Action Potential



Several individuals participated in creating personal three dimensional assemblage art pieces at the 22nd annual Brain Injury Conference: Action Potential.

For some of the participants the projects that were created were to be delivered as gifts to family members. For others their creations were designed as memorials to family members who were no longer with them. And to others it was an opportunity to experience creative techniques with a variety of materials.



Specific comments included:

" I was told I wasn't artistic, I have never created *art* before.

" I am going to use this project idea at home for our support group. It's very healing."

" I made this for my daughter in law for her birthday."



BIAMT would like to express our appreciation to the speakers who volunteered their time, knowledge and talents. Thank you~~

Dr. David Gumm

Bev Beck-Gluckert

Dr. Kerry Sanchez

Bob Snizek

Dr. Robert Merchant

Michelle Pickell

Tracy McLuskie

Tim Laskowski

Heather Keller

Jackie Kofoid

Dorothy Worrell

Byron Erickson

Eric Kettenring

Jon Gjersing, RN

Reg Gibbs

John Keebler

Tana Ostrowski

Avitus Group

Billings Athletic Club

Ian Elliot

Jim Mickelson

Be sure to check out page 12 for information on the 2010 Annual Conference!

Emotional and Physical Recovery Are Two Different Things

Jeffrey Kreutzer and Victoria Powell, the National Resource Center for Traumatic Brain Injury, Virginia Commonwealth Model Systems of Care.

Many different kinds of problems develop after brain injury. You want them all to get better and go away. Understanding more about brain injury problems can help you get better more quickly. One of the most important things to understand is that recovery can be divided into at least two categories, **physical and emotional**.

Physical recovery means getting the body to work right again. Physical recovery is the biggest focus of most rehabilitation programs, especially hospital-based brain injury programs. When people talk about physical recovery, you may hear them saying things like...

"He wants his headaches to go away."

"I'm tired all the time. I can't work for more than 30 minutes without taking a break."

"He wants his coordination to come back so he can play the piano at church again."

"She'd like the ringing in her ears to stop."

"He wants the dizziness to go away so he can jog again."

On the other hand, the injured person and their family members are often emotionally affected by the injury. When talking about their emotions, you may hear people say things like...

"Since the accident, everyone in the family has been worried and upset."

"I'm emotionally drained. I'll settle for just one good day."

"We've done everything we can to help her. I'm not sure our lives will ever be the same."

"His older sister cries all the time and I'm afraid she's going to fail in school. On the other hand his younger brother acts as if nothing has happened."

Each person will be affected differently, and each will have a different rate of emotional recovery.

Emotional recovery means feel good about yourself and your life. When people have trouble with emotional recovery, you may also hear them saying things like...

"I wish our lives could be back to normal."

"He wants to feel like his life means something."

"She wants to feel like she's as good as everyone else."

"She wants to have a reason to get up in the morning."

"He'd like to feel good about himself."

Here are some things that you should know about physical and emotional recovery. Knowing more about each one can help you do better and feel better.

- Physical recovery is usually faster than emotional recovery. In fact, many people don't have noticeable physical problems 6 or 12 months after their injury.
- Though family members have not had a physical injury, most will feel some emotional pain. How and when each person shows emotions differs greatly. One family member might seem to sleep "all the time", while another may have problems sleeping. One might be jumpy and argue with everyone, while another may be quiet and stay by herself. One family member might be upset for two months and then feel fine. Another may show no reaction for two months and then suddenly start crying a lot and report feelings of helplessness.

- Emotional recovery for the patient and family members can take a very long time, five or ten years or longer.
- More serious physical problems can mean more serious emotions problems.
- Getting better physically or emotionally isn't necessarily a smooth process. Sometimes people stop getting better for a time (plateau) and then make progress again. Sometimes people take one step back for every two steps forward.

New problems and stresses can affect emotional recovery. These may include illness of another family member and problems at work or school. Most people have a pretty good understanding of their physical problems and what they need to get better. Many people have trouble thinking about and talking about their feelings. Try to understand your feelings and talk to others you trust about them. Doing so can help you feel better about your life and your recovery.



~Onward & Upward~

Ready, Get Set, Let Go By Rebecca John Hiza

“The seemingly imminent is always at war with the truly important.”

– Pierre Trudeau

After my alarming diagnosis, it seemed that my newly rearranged brain stole a lot of my thoughts. Some of that was having to learn to function with a modified “thinker”; a lot of it was emotional gyrations. Over time, as it became increasingly obvious to myself and others that my previous life was history, I became obsessed with what I had lost. A turning point for me was deciding not to “live in the injury,” to the best of my ability.

By stating this, by no means do I intend to negate the genuine and obvious needs of brain injury. We all have our own unique obstacles to overcome when “releasing our injury”... This becomes a balancing act between dealing with the realities of it, while setting out mind’s eye on healthiness, where we want to be - where we see ourselves as whole. None of us has the same experience as another, so each of us will do this in our own way, and at our own time. Of course, as they say, the goal is heading in the right direction, not perfection.

I am learning that language can have enormous power; in particular, words we use to describe ourselves have resounding effects in our lives. Therefore, I am NOT “disabled” – I experience “challenges.” I am no longer “brain injured,” either, my brain is just “different” now, or “modified.” (This feels so much better, doesn’t it?) When an institution sends me things from a “disability office,” I call it a “support office,” as I don’t want the word “disability” repeating out my mouth and into my ears because somebody says so. Nowadays, (barring mitigating circumstances like a support group), I don’t delve into my accident or injury with others, as that keeps me “living in the injury” – as opposed to focusing on my wholeness, where I want to be.

See? Instead of saying “focusing on my recovery,” which would imply that I need to get well from an injury, I said “focusing on my wholeness.” You get the idea. Carry on!

To contact Rebecca email her at biaw@tribcsp.com or send a letter to:

Montana Brain Injury Support Groups

<p><u>Big Timber</u> Meetings To be Announced Contact: Dulcie Bue (406)780-0052</p> <p><u>Billings</u> 3rd Tuesday 7:00 p.m. MCD in MSU Billings College of Education Building Contact: Ian Elliot (406) 656-2744</p> <p><u>Bozeman</u> 3rd Wednesday 4:00 p.m. Bozeman Health & Rehab Center; 321 North 5th (formerly called Evergreen Nursing Home) Contact: Mary DeBernardis (406) 763-4268</p> <p><u>Crow Agency</u> 2nd Thursday at Noon Awe Kualawaache Care Center Contact: Dean Bird (406) 638-4073 (w) (406) 860-1440 (cell)</p> <p><u>Eureka</u> 3rd Monday 5:30 p.m. Senior Citizen Center Contact: Laura Wilde (406) 295-9753 Don Walker (406) 293-6518</p> <p><u>Fort Peck</u> 4th Wednesday 12:00 p.m. Faith Lutheran Home in Wolf Point Contact: Ruby Clark (406) 768-3488</p>	<p><u>Great Falls</u> 2nd Tuesday 7:00 p.m. Benefis West: Clark Room Contact: Mike or Charlene Sullivan (406) 453-6028</p> <p><u>Helena</u> 3rd Wednesday 7:00 p.m. Disability Rights Montana Contact: Karen Cyr (406) 449-2538</p> <p><u>Kalispell</u> 2nd Monday 6:00 p.m. The Summit - Hwy 93 N. Contact: Sue Crawford (406)756-4725</p> <p><u>Lame Deer</u> 2nd Tuesday 5:30 p.m. Chief Dull Knife College Contact: Esther Littlewolf (406) 477-3641 ext. 21</p> <p><u>Lewistown</u> 4th Thursday 6:30 pm First Presbyterian Church 215 5th Ave. South (enter from the NE door just off the parking lot) Contact: Lorelei Miksch (406) 538-3608</p>	<p><u>Libby</u> 3rd Tuesday 5:30 p.m. Families in Partnership Contact: Laura Wilde (406) 295-9753 Donovan Walker (406)293-6518</p> <p><u>Miles City</u> 3rd Thursday 5:30 p.m. 1st Methodist Church Contact: Molly Christianson (406) 232-4255</p> <p><u>Missoula</u> 3rd Monday 6:30 p.m. St. Patrick's Hospital Lower level conference room Contact: Jim Mickelson (406) 544-6629</p> <p><u>Troy</u> 3rd Wednesday 6:00 p.m. Senior Citizen Center Contact: Laura Wilde (406)295-9753 Donovan Walker (406)293-6518</p> <p><u>Whitehall</u> 3rd Thursday 7:00 p.m. Liberty Place-1173 MT Hwy 55 Contact: Ann Geiger (406)533-5102</p>
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An Idea from the Helena Support Group

Bless the so-called bureaucrats

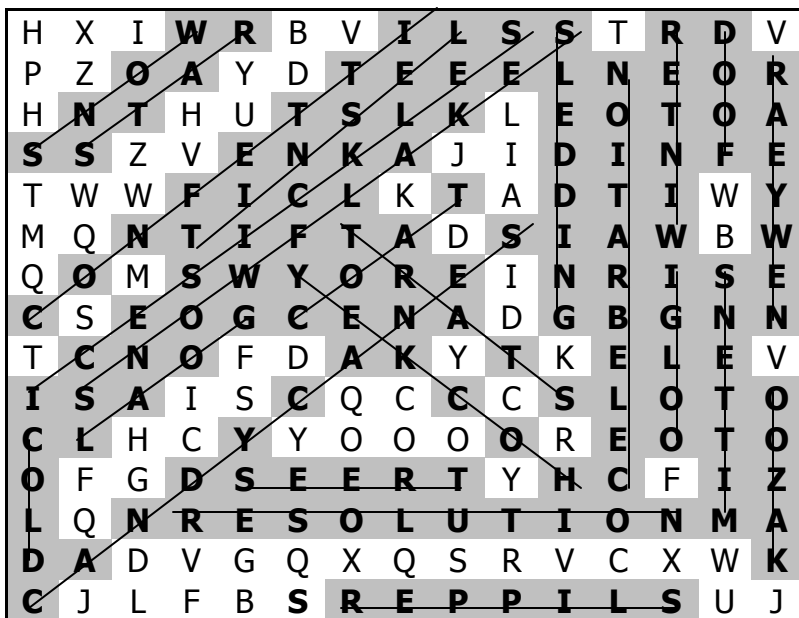
The Helena Support Group has been around for a long time. In fact, the group feels more like a family than anything else. So we were surprised to discover a long-lost family member at the September meeting.

Here's what happened. At the August meeting, the discussion included many questions about Medicaid—what it funds, how to get on it, what spend-downs are, and so on. So facilitator Karen Cyr agreed to line up a Medicaid expert for the next meeting.

The Medicaid expert Karen found was Fran O'Hara, who runs the Medicaid durable medical equipment program. She brought three other experts with her to our September meeting. Fran was the long-lost support group member. She told us that twenty years ago, she came to the Helena support group as the mother of a brain-injured daughter. She remembered her own confusion about Medicaid and other insurance issues and how grateful she was to have a place where she could find others willing to share information and experience.

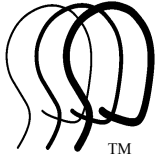
Our September meeting was great. Fran and her fellow Medicaid experts were knowledgeable but understandable. They stayed for more than two hours, answering questions and listening to our stories. In fact, they seemed reluctant to leave. That's because, one of them told us, "It's really great to come out and meet our clients."

So we wanted to pass that along to other support groups: Don't be shy about inviting your community experts to come to your support group meetings. Besides making the support group a whole lot smarter, hosting these "bureaucrats" and other experts will make them part of the family. Reaching out into your communities may even turn up some long-lost survivors, thrivers and friends.



Check your answers here!!





Brain Injury Association of Montana, Inc.
1280 South 3rd Street West, Suite 4
Missoula, Montana 59801

Nonprofit org
US Postage pd
Missoula, MT
Permit # 569

2010 Annual Brain Injury Conference

April 16th and 17th in Great Falls, Montana

The 2010 conference is for Survivors/Thrivers and Family Members.

Please help us plan for a great conference by pre-registering.

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

- I am interested in attending the Friday night Social event
- I am interested in attending the Saturday Conference Sessions
- I am interested in attending both days

* Please indicate the # of people who will be attending: _____

Please mail your completed pre-registration form to the BIAMT office at:

BIAMT

1280 South 3rd Street West, Suite 4, Missoula, Montana 59801