



**Fall 2025**



# **Step Ahead**

## **Helmets for Kids**

It was a busy and fun season for our Helmets for Kids Program. We provided over 400 helmets to children in need. Our program has grown thanks to generous grants, sponsorships and donations from the Solcz Family Foundation, Honda Grant Foundation, and Greg Monforton Personal Injury Lawyers. We are so grateful for their support.

The success of this program also depends on volunteers who do the helmet fittings at these events, and we are greatly appreciative for their role in making this program possible.

We provided safety presentations at schools and events to educate students on the importance of helmet safety and concussion prevention. We will continue to provide safety presentations at schools throughout the year, and look forward to the Helmets for Kids program coming back into full swing next summer.



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# Annual Picnic

It was a hot one at this year's Annual Picnic. Clients, staff and volunteers gathered under the Optimist Memorial Park pavilion to share an afternoon of food, fun, games, and prizes.

Rebeca Robinet, our Social Coordinator does an amazing job of planning this event every year and making it fun for everyone. We couldn't do it without her or without the volunteers who help the day run smoothly. In typical Rebeca style, she is already planning ideas for next year's picnic.

If you've never attended the picnic, be sure to mark it on your calendar come next summer. It's an afternoon of fun and friendship you don't want to miss.





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# Annual Golf Tournament

Our annual golf tournament was September 18 at Kingsville Golf and Country Club and it was a resounding success. From the first tee-off to the final putt, the energy on the course was electric, with participants rallying not just for the love of the game, but for the vital mission of supporting individuals affected by brain injuries.

A heartfelt thank you to all the sponsors whose contributions made this event possible. Your generosity helps fund critical programs and services that make a real difference. To the golfers, your participation and support exemplify the strength of our community and the shared commitment to making a lasting impact.

We also extend our deepest gratitude to the incredible organizers who brought this event to life: Stuart Galloway, Luis Mendez, and Joanne King. Their tireless efforts, attention to detail, and unwavering dedication ensured a seamless and memorable experience. Thanks to their leadership, the tournament not only raised essential funds but also heightened awareness of brain injury. Here's to another successful year—and to many more ahead!



## A Message From the New Chair of BIAWE

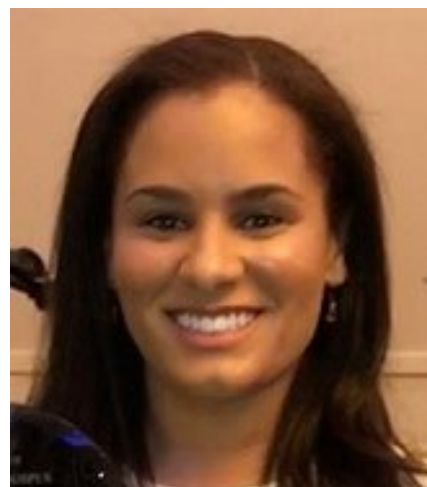
As we welcome the fall season, I'm honoured to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County (BIAWE). It is a privilege to step into this role, and on behalf of the entire board, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Joanne King for her dedicated years of leadership and service.

As someone who has supported a loved one living with a brain injury, I bring a deep personal commitment to this cause. I look forward to contributing both my lived experience and passion as we continue to raise awareness and strengthen support across our community.

We have many exciting programs and events planned for the coming months, and I'm eager to see how they will enhance the lives of our clients and families. I believe that through collaboration—across our staff, volunteers, partners, and clients—we can continue to grow, evolve, and ensure that everyone affected by brain injury feels supported and empowered.

I'm excited to close out the year with momentum and optimism, and to carry that energy into a successful and impactful year ahead.

Thank you,  
Alexandra Carson



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Thank you to our sponsors:



BIAWE extends a great big **THANK YOU** to ALSO for providing us the use of their facilities to host our programs, store our stuff and give us an office for our client services representative and other staff.

Without you we could not do as much as we do and we are truly grateful for having such a generous partner.



# Windsor Plastic Surgery





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**Monforton**  
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**INJURY LAWYERS**







## Our Support Team

**Executive Director** - Rachel Olsen - info@biawe.com, 519-981-1329

**Client Services** — Lisa Gaspar—clientservices@biawe.com 226-344-0986

**You Are Not Alone Facilitator**- Danielle Bridges—goals@biawe.com

**Under 40 Support Group Facilitator** - Rebeca Robinet—social@biawe.com

**Caregiver Support Group Facilitator** - Danielle Bridges—goals@biawe.com

**Peer Support Program Coordinator** - Lisa Gaspar —connect@biawe.com

**Social Coordinator** - Rebeca Robinet—social@biawe.com

**STAR Program and Education Coordinator** - Rachel Olsen - info@biawe.com, 519-981-1329

**Volunteer Coordinator** - Debbie Boose—volunteer@biawe.com

**Art Class Facilitators**—Christine Paris, Rachel Olsen—art@biawe.com

**Art Workshop Facilitator**— Lisa Gaspar, clientservices@biawe.com

**Music/Singing Facilitator**—Alice Chiu—music@biawe.com

**ABI Parent Peer Support Facilitator**—Lauren Fields —psg@biawe.com

**Children's ABI Support Facilitators**– Rune Bland, Caitlyn Lebert, Lisa Gaspar psg@biawe.com

**Senior's Program Facilitators**– Lauren Fields, Rune Bland– seniors@biawe.com

## Bingo Dates 2025



Our volunteers work these sessions and help raise money for BIAWE.

If you're interested in volunteering, contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Debbie Boose at volunteer@biawe.com or complete the application at [How you can help – BIAWE](#) to take the on-line course and become one of our bingo volunteers. It's easy and it's fun. Do it with a friend.

If you're a bingo player, consider playing at All Star Gaming Centre at 1385 Walker Road (corner of Walker and Ottawa Streets). Play anytime—we all share in the proceeds.

BIAWE Volunteers will be there at these times:

Saturday Oct. 4: 12:00pm-2:00pm

Sunday Oct. 19: 4:00pm-6:00pm

Wednesday Oct. 22: 10:00am-12:00pm

Sunday Oct. 26: 4:00pm-6:00pm

Sunday Nov. 2: 2:00pm-4:00pm

Sunday Nov. 9: 12:00pm-2:00pm

Saturday Nov. 22: 10:00pm-12:00am

Saturday Dec. 6: 10:00am-12:00pm

Saturday Dec. 20: 8:00pm-10:00pm

Sunday Dec. 28: 10:00am-12:00pm

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## **Coffee Chat**

This weekly social is for those living with a brain injury. It's a good way to keep in touch with friends and acquaintances you've made attending support groups. It helps in reducing the social isolation and keeps you up-to-date as to what's going on at BIAWE. Talk with old friends and make new friends. It's unstructured and you can talk about whatever you like. Each week is different.

### **VIRTUAL - Every Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. through zoom**

Call for an invitation if you are not on the email list. 519-981-1329  
info@biawe.com. No need to register.



### **VIRTUAL - Every Friday at 2:00pm through zoom**

Call for an invitation if you are not on the email list. 519-981-1329  
info@biawe.com No need to register.

**IN-PERSON - Kingsville 12:30 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month**—Kingsville Community Church 1860 Division Road, Kingsville. Drop in when you can. Refreshments provided.

## **Evening Art Classes**

There is increasing evidence that art enhances brain function by impacting brain wave patterns, emotions, and the nervous system. Making art helps produce the neurotransmitter dopamine which stimulates the creation of new neurons and boosts your focus and learning process.

Join **Christine Paris and Rachel Olsen** in creating your own masterpiece.

Classes are held at 7:00pm at 1100 University Ave. W. (3 blocks east of Crawford).

Email: **art@biawe.com to register.**

### **Session dates:**

**October 16, November 20, December 18**

## **Afternoon Art Workshops**

Join **Lisa Gaspar** at this open studio style workshop. Various supplies are provided and you can make whatever you like— be inspired from a reference piece or create something on your own.

Workshops are held at 1:30pm at Riverside Public Library 6305 Wyandotte St. E.

Email: **clientservices@biawe.com to register.**

### **Session dates:**

**October 28, November 25, (none in December)**

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## **You Are Not Alone Peer Support Group– zoom**

This is a free support group for individuals living with acquired brain injury aged 18+ years and their family and friends. Talk with others about things you care about and get information and support that can help you.

### **The benefits of joining a support group include:**

- ♦ Feeling less lonely, isolated or judged
- ♦ Reducing distress, depression, anxiety or fatigue
- ♦ Talking openly and honestly about your feelings
- ♦ Improving skills to cope with challenges
- ♦ Enhancing self-esteem
- ♦ Promoting lifelong good mental health



Join Danielle Bridges MSW on zoom at 7:00 pm. Email [goals@biawe.com](mailto:goals@biawe.com) for more information and to get a reminder message. (second Tuesday of the month)

**Session dates: October 14, November 11, December 9**

## **ABI Parent Peer Support Group**

As a parent of a child living with an acquired brain injury (ABI), you play a key role in helping others understand your child. Your involvement is pivotal to their recovery and return to home and school activities. Your child's ability to cope with their brain injury depends on many factors, including their skills, intellect and personality. Learn from other parents who can understand some of what you are going through. Free. \*Parents must attend if their child is in the children's program.

These meetings are held on Saturdays at 10:30am at U of W Medical Education Building, 401 Sunset Ave.

Email Lauren Fields at [psg@biawe.com](mailto:psg@biawe.com) to get a reminder message and for more information.

**Session dates: October 18. On Nov. 15, Helmet Giveaway Event at ALSO. Details to follow. (none in December)**

## **Children's ABI Peer Support Group**

This Social Worker led support group is for children who live with an ABI and their school aged siblings. Children will be with others who understand them. They will learn to cope and develop strategies for dealing with changes as a result of their brain injury. They will be supported by other children and a social worker. Play is involved. Refreshments are provided. Free.

These meetings are held on Saturdays at 10:30 am at U of W Medical Education Building, 401 Sunset Ave.

Email Lauren Fields at [psg@biawe.com](mailto:psg@biawe.com) to get a reminder message and for more information.

**Session dates: October 18. On Nov. 15, Helmet Giveaway Event at ALSO. Details to follow. (none in December)**

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## **Skills for the Journey**

This program is designed to help you learn, cope, and connect. Join Toni-Marie Taylor, O.T. & Therapist to learn coping skills and strategies to help manage symptoms of brain injury. Discover resources that can assist you in your journey to better mental health.

This program takes place virtually on zoom on the first Monday of the month at 2:00pm. If the first Monday falls on a holiday, the group will take place on the second Monday. A zoom link will be emailed on the morning of the program. To be added to the email list and receive an invitation, email [info@biawe.com](mailto:info@biawe.com) or call 519-981-1329

**Session dates: Oct. 6, November 3, Dec 1**

## **Music Program**

Sing, connect, and heal. Join Alice Chiu at our uplifting music class where you'll sing songs of all genres alongside peers in a supportive, joyful environment. Research shows that group singing boosts mood, memory, and overall brain health—so come harmonize your way to wellness. No experience needed, just your voice and a willingness to have fun!

Email Alice to register at [music@biawe.com](mailto:music@biawe.com)

Meetings are at 1100 University Ave W. at 7:00pm

**Session dates: Oct. 21, Nov. 18 (none in December)**

## **Survivor Socials**

Research shows that strong social ties stimulate attention and memory, and help to build neural pathways. You may be laughing and talking, but your brain is hard at work. This increase in mental activity pays off over time.

Email Rebeca at [social@biawe.com](mailto:social@biawe.com) to register .

Meetings are at 1100 University Ave. W at 7:00pm unless otherwise noted.

**Session dates: Oct. 27, Nov. 24 (none in December)**



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## Under 40 Peer Support Group (formerly Young Adult Group)

Young adults ages 18 to 40 meet to discuss their experiences, share ideas and provide emotional support for each other.

Participation can help you develop new skills and learn to deal with problems and issues related to your brain injury. Socialize with others who understand and are non-judgmental.

Everything that takes place within the support group is confidential.

Second Wednesday of each month 7:00 on zoom except where noted.

Email [social@biawe.com](mailto:social@biawe.com) to get on the email list for the zoom link.



**October 8, 2025**  
**November 12, 2025**  
**December 10, 2025**

## Caregiver Peer Support Group

This group is for parents, siblings, spouses, and friends who care for someone living with an acquired brain injury. This is a drop-in in-person program.

Why come to this group?

1. Improve your coping skills
2. Enhance your sense of empowerment and control
3. Reduce your stress and rate of clinical depression
4. Learn more realistic expectations
5. Access to practical advice
6. Facilitate your loved one staying at home longer

These monthly group meetings are held at 1100 University Ave. W. at 7:00 pm. (the same time as the Survivor Social– 4th Monday of each month). Email [goals@biawe.com](mailto:goals@biawe.com) to register .

**In-person 1100 University Ave. W.**

**October 27, 2025**

**November 24, 2025**

**(none in December)**



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## **Peer Support and Mentoring Program**



**Partner** - You will have the opportunity to learn from someone “who has been there” and can offer you guidance and support based on their own personal experience living with ABI.

Support is provided to you via the telephone or internet, based on your preference so you can participate in the comfort and privacy of your home.

**Mentor** - You have the opportunity to help others by sharing your experience by providing support and information to your partner who has a similar lived experience. You will have comprehensive training in your community to match with a Partner.

This is a free program available to any person with an acquired brain injury (ABI) and to a caregiver (family or friend) of a person with an ABI.

To register, email [connect@biawe.com](mailto:connect@biawe.com) for a short intake to match you up with someone who has your shared experience.



## **Sunshine Callers**

This program consists of regular brief social contact and talk therapy – a mental first aid. This is meant to be short term and does not require any formal contract.

It consists of empathetic conversation, referrals for higher risk situations by providing evidence-based therapy to people with mild symptoms of depression or anxiety. It is designed to improve outcomes for our clients who live with an acquired brain injury by providing early intervention opportunities, improve their knowledge, reduce stigma and boost confidence, combat loneliness, improve mental health, recognize when people may need a referral to more formal treatment, help survivors keep medical appointments and stay in therapy.

It will bolster skills of leaders and mentors already trusted in the community and build a compassionate community by training people who may be invested in a person’s recovery and can help with treatment. If you’re interested in having someone call you regularly, or if you want to be a sunshine caller, please contact [clientservices@biawe.com](mailto:clientservices@biawe.com).

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# Step Ahead Newsletter

**Step Ahead** is published four times each year and is circulated primarily in Windsor and Essex County. A copy of the current newsletter is posted on the website. Older newsletters are archived on the website.

**Advertising revenue helps cover the cost of this vital means of communication about brain injury with our members, professionals in the brain injury field and the general public.**

By choosing to be an advertiser your ad will appear in two newsletters per year.

	<u>SIZES</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
A)	Newsletter Sponsor (for the year)	\$500
B)	Full Page (8 1/2 in x 11 in)	\$150
C)	1/2 Page (8 1/2 in x 5.5 in)	\$75
D)	1/4 Page	\$50
E)	Business Card	\$30

**DEADLINES: September 15 (for fall newsletter), December 15 (for winter newsletter) March 15 (for spring newsletter) and June 15 (for summer newsletter)**

The best format for ads is electronic (GIF, JPG, TIF BUT NO PDF), sent as an e-mail attachment. Camera ready black and white material is also acceptable. We do not accept faxed documents. If you choose business card size, please ensure your card with larger version of graphics can be scanned clearly into the computer.

Thank you for your order and for supporting the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County.

**Full payment is due with your order. Order and pay on-line at [www.biawe.com/newsletter](http://www.biawe.com/newsletter) and email your ad to [info@biawe.com](mailto:info@biawe.com).**

## Disclaimer

## Advertising Policy

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The opinions expressed herein are those of the respective authors and advertisers and not necessarily those of the Brain Injury Association of Windsor & Essex County. (BIAWE). BIAWE will not be liable for any damages or losses howsoever sustained, as a result of the reliance on or use by the reader or any other person of the information, opinion, or products expressed, advertised or otherwise contained herein. Where appropriate, professional advice should be sought.

To unsubscribe to the newsletter send email to [info@biawe.com](mailto:info@biawe.com)

## Volunteer Opportunities

**Committees**—Board Committees include Education and PR/Fundraising Committee

**Exhibits and Expos**—Represent BIAWE at various events, exhibits and expos throughout the year

**Sunshine Callers**—Make a friendly check up call to those living with ABI.

**Bingo**—Received training by the province if you're 18 years of age or older and provide two hours of volunteering at All Star Bingo for a session. Sign up for dates your are available.

**High School Students**—receive hours

These often occur during the daytime and requires your own transportation.

To volunteer go to [volunteer@biawe.com](mailto:volunteer@biawe.com) or visit our website and complete the application on-line.

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## Membership Benefits

For one annual membership fee , individuals and families can become members of both the Brain Injury Association of Windsor and Essex County (BIAWE) and the Ontario Brain Injury Association (OBIA).

Application forms can be found online at: <http://obia.ca/dual-membership-application-form/>

### Why should you become a member of BIAWE?

- You can vote at the annual meetings for BIAWE and OBIA and run for the Board of Directors
- You will receive a one year subscription to the "OBIA Review" - the official publication of the Ontario Brain Injury Association. It's full of information about the latest in brain injury research, stories and supports.
- You will have free access to OBIA's resource library.
- You will be eligible for a discount on most of OBIA's training programs.
- Your voice will be heard both locally and provincially.
- Discounts on some BIAWE sponsored events and socials where there is a cost.
- Invitations to special events

### Annual Fees for Dual Membership

Individual	\$30
Family (2 or more at same address )	\$50
Subsidized (please enquire)	\$5
Complete the OBIA online survey	Free

**Survivors** can participate in an on-line survey - **Membership free for one year** -go the OBIA home page to find the survey

[Ontario Brain Injury Association](#) | [Education, Awareness, & Support](#) | [OBIA](#)



## OUR MISSION

To enhance the lives of residents of Windsor and Essex County affected by acquired brain injury through education, awareness and support.

Phone: 519-981-1329  
E-mail: [info@biawe.com](mailto:info@biawe.com)  
[www.biawe.com](http://www.biawe.com)