

HIRRS Circulator

December 2011, Issue 1

Dear Readers,

We are people with traumatic brain injuries or people with other conditions who are all a part of HIRRS, but we are more than that. That is what we're here to show you. Behind every person at HIRRS there is a life and death story because pretty much all of us nearly died. Our mission is to spread awareness of how hard it is to be a person with a brain injury, our stories, and to let others know about what we do at HIRRS. This is our first newsletter and we will continue to print the newsletter on a consistent basis. The outcomes of the HIRRS Circulator will be interviews with former clients and staff of HIRRS, stories and pictures of current clients and staff, and what we're doing with our day to day lives.

We look forward to your feedback and questions concerning this and any upcoming issues. We hope you like what you read.

Sincerely,
HIRRS Circulator Staff



*Circulator Staff: Patrick K, Nicholas M, Tim C, Horace B
Not pictured: Vicki B, Ian C, Davo H*

Welcome to the new edition of the Newsletter for Head Injury Rehabilitation and Referral Services (HIRRS)!

I first want to thank our client editors and collaborating staff for all of the hard work that went into putting this newsletter together. Given your schedules and commitments, it is amazing that you still found the time to do such a wonderful job!

Over the past twenty years, we have seen many changes here at HIRRS but some things remain the same. I am proud to be associated with such a fine group of people who, every day, devote themselves to improving their own lives as well as the lives of others. You are an inspiration and a model for all of us and we can only hope to achieve your level of dedication.

As you read through the articles, please keep in mind how you can keep yourself, your friends and your families safe. Put your seat belt on, wear a helmet when cycling or skiing, if someone is injured during a game, make sure that sufficient time has passed and there are no remaining symptoms before returning to play. Sure, it may seem like an annoyance or a burden at times but better to avoid an injury than having to manage the consequences that follow.

My best wishes to each of you and, remember, we are here to help!

Ricardo Hunter
President

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HIRRS Company Picnic

Company Picnic Review

By Horace B

The HIRRS company picnic was on Friday, September 30th, 2011. The people who attended were staff and clients. All client and staff cooked and ate hot dogs, pasta salad, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, brownies, cole slaw, and cake. People played volleyball, basketball, and chess. In my opinion everyone enjoyed themselves thoroughly and immensely and that we all enjoyed the outing immensely.



Ron T, Robert C, Andrew M, & Horace B



Carrie N

Interview with Carrie Noonan

By Horace B

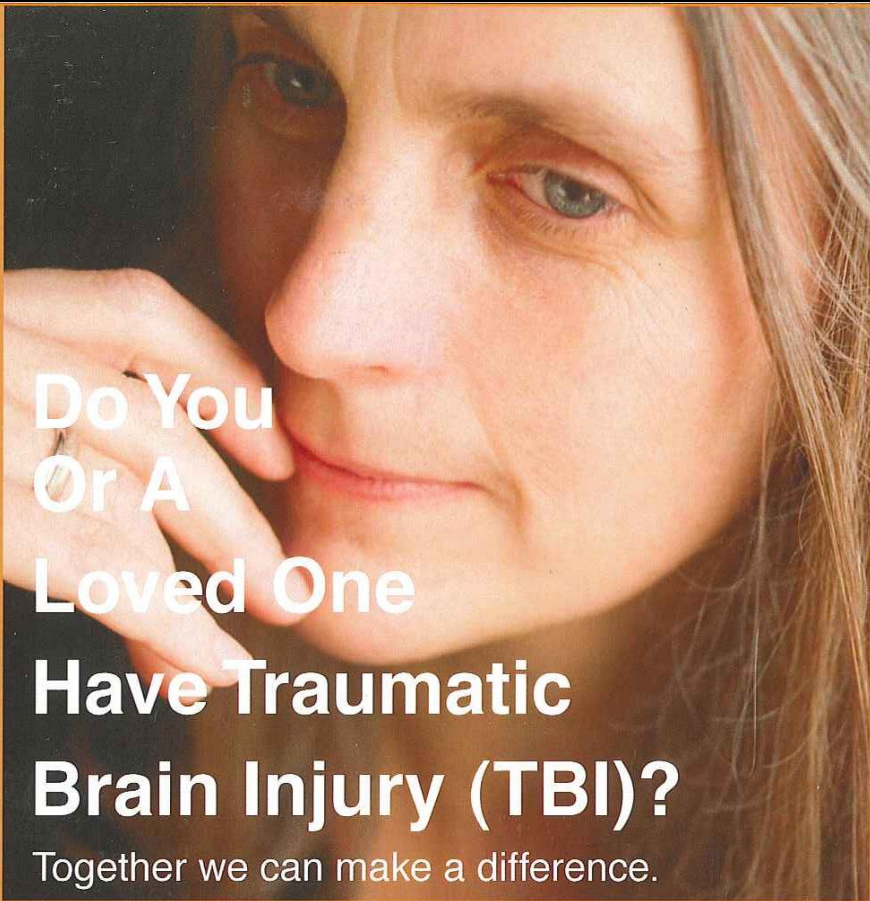
In my interview with Ms. Carrie Noonan, I interviewed her about her organization of the HIRRS company picnic. The HIRRS company picnic allowed Ms. Noonan to get out of the work setting and to enjoy others' company in a more laid back setting. In my conversation with Ms. Noonan, she explained that she enjoyed organizing the HIRRS picnic. I asked her how long it took to plan and coordinate the picnic and she responded that it took two weeks to cook and coordinate. Ms. Noonan served cocktail shrimp, hamburgers, hot dogs, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, cole slaw, potato salad, pasta salad, brownies and cake. She also stated that she has worked at HIRRS for about three years since April 2008. Her position is Training Coordinator. Ms. Noonan's hobbies are that she likes to travel, organize parties, and cook different types of cuisines. I thoroughly enjoyed my interview with Ms. Noonan and would certainly look forward to interviewing her again hopefully under similar circumstances.

In case of snow, please call the HIRRS main number at (301) 309-2228 around 7:30am to find out if the Day Program will be closed.

HIRRS Holiday Schedule 2012

| Date | Holiday |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Monday, January 2 nd | New Year's Day |
| Monday, January 16 th | Martin Luther King Jr.'s Day |
| Monday, February 20 th | President's Day |
| Monday, May 28 th | Memorial Day |
| Wednesday, July 4 th | Independence Day |
| Monday, September 3 rd | Labor Day |
| Thursday, November 22 nd | Thanksgiving Day |
| Friday, November 23 rd | Day after Thanksgiving Day |
| Tuesday, December 25 th | Christmas Day |
| Tuesday, January 1 st | New Year's Day |





**Do You
Or A
Loved One
Have Traumatic
Brain Injury (TBI)?**

Together we can make a difference.

The Center for Neuroscience and Regenerative Medicine (CNRM) leverages the talents of top clinicians and scientists at the U.S. Department of Defense and the National Institutes of Health to improve the understanding of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Our primary purpose is to assist in the recruitment of patients for participation into CNRM research studies taking place at the NIH and other national capitol area facilities on traumatic brain injury and related symptoms and conditions. Your participation will help us learn more about Traumatic Brain Injury.

We need YOUR help!

We are seeking volunteers to participate. You may qualify if:

- You are 18 years of age or older
- You have symptoms or diagnosis of TBI or post-concussive syndrome
- You are able to read and understand English

If you qualify, you may be scheduled for an outpatient, 2 hour visit at the NIH Clinical Center in Bethesda, MD for a physical exam, a blood test, electrocardiogram (ECG) to check the health of your heart, and a questionnaire.

All study-related procedures are provided at no cost to you and compensation for your time is provided.

For more information,
call The CNRM

at 1-855-TBI-CNRM
(1-855-824-2676)

Visit: www.clinicaltrials.gov



Protocol Title: Evaluation and Diagnosis of Potential Research Subjects with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
Principal Investigator: Raymond Dionne, DDS, PhD | Protocol # 11-NR-0084



Where Are They Now?

Where current members of HIRRS interview former members of HIRRS!

Interview with Josh Rouch

By Dave H

I'm writing an article on where are they now? an article in the HIRRS Circulator.

What is Josh Rouch doing now? He's working at the Freedom Center. What did Josh do at HIRRS? He followed his schedule, went to college.

FLUFF! What is Josh like as a person? He's a very nice, smart guy.

What allowed him to do that? Going to college when he was here @ HIRRS, and going to MC, he went to help him with his future. I asked him if while coming here did it help him to follow his schedule?, he said "Of course."

In his spare time, Josh enjoys a game or two of the game "Modern Warfare" on the X-Box 360.

Interview With Brenda Tjaden

By Jason L

I think back to when I first got to HIRRS all but a couple are filled with memories (I have a brain injury so that is not many) of this young lady. I called her Brenda Thaden but it really was Brenda Tjaden. I think she said the J is silent. But even with me messing up her name on a regular basis she was nice to me anyway. When I had the chance to interview her I jumped at it. Here is my interview with Brenda Tjaden.

How long did you work here at H.I.R.R.S?

I worked at HIRRS for a total of 7 wonderful years.

Was this your first time working with people who have brain injuries?

This was my first time working with younger individuals who had head injuries. Prior to my work at HIRRS, I had worked in a long term care facility and had the opportunity to work with a few older individuals who sustained head injuries due to a fall or neurological causes.

How was your experience at H. I.R.R.S?

I would say my experience at HIRRS was wonderful. I loved the work that I was doing. The people that I worked with were more like a family to me than coworkers and I still fondly miss each and every one of them. The clients that I worked with challenged me and I in turn tried to challenge them. I was working with people who really wanted to overcome the difficulties of their head injuries and over my time at HIRRS, I was privileged to see some remarkable recovery. I had the opportunity to assist with college coursework, go to doctor visits, work with individuals at their job site to set up accommodations and I even helped

someone to do their grocery shopping. Some of the most functional treatment tasks that I can think of with the best outcomes and rewards to the individual.

What year did you leave this job?

In 2006 my husband was transferred to Egypt where we were to spend the next three years. I'm glad to say we were long gone before the turmoil happened there but it was an experience we will never forget and lasting memories to cherish as well.

Has this job influenced your way of living and what job are you doing now?

I think my job at HIRRS helped me further my patience and to always see a different point of view. Another valuable lesson I learned is the importance of planting a seed and waiting for it to grow. Sometimes we as therapists can suggest something but time is what will make it grow. Or just taking baby steps instead of always focusing on the big picture- but seeing the progress that was made along the way. HIRRS also taught me the importance of spending time with your family. Because of this, I now spend my time volunteering at my son's school in the classroom and library.

Would you like to work in this field again?

I've kept my license in speech language pathology current and I am always taking courses online to further my knowledge so one day I can work again. I keep hoping Rick will get a satellite office out here but then he would have to transplant all the staff as well so maybe that isn't quite economical. I see it in my future sometime.

What was the best part of working here?

Hands down all the people! The clients, staff, Dr. Bolea, the families of the clients. I still can reflect on them every day. When Halloween rolls around, I think about the costumes that people used to wear and the movies we used to watch. Holiday shopping at the Montgomery Mall and the party we would have. In the Spring it would be the HIRRS Picnic and even the Golf Tournament. Such fond memories will never go away.

What are you doing with your life at the moment?

I'm a full time mom and part time volunteer at my son's school. I love it too. Working with children on their reading in the classroom was fun plus they have some cool field trips and holiday parties as well.

Last, do you miss H.I.R.R.S?

Yep, and I wish everyone there all my best and warmest regards.

It was a great interview with a great lady. When I think back I can still see and hear her laugh. Thank you for letting me find this very special lady. Until next time be safe!

A Parent's Perspective

A Parent's Perspective

By Ellen Duggan

Traumatic Brain Injury. What on earth does that mean? When will she be cured? When can I bring her home? When can she go back to school? How do I begin helping her get back to her old self? These were just a few of the questions running thru my mind when I was told this was the diagnosis for my 17 year old daughter, Trish, in November of 1992. She had survived being struck by another car because she was wearing her seat belt, but that was just the beginning of the story.

Almost 20 years later I still have my lovely daughter close by and so much of her is still the same; her humor, her courage, her fierce loyalty, her determination in all things, her fashion-sense, her love for her family, friends and those around her, and her joyful heart. She has been fighting a long and constant battle against a disability that has changed her daily life and her future. Most of her friends, except for a special few, have gone on with their lives, as they should. Trish is fortunate to have a family that loves her dearly and wants to be with her and encourage her in her fight as much as possible. But, in the end, it has been a lonely struggle in her rehabilitation. Much has been learned about TBIs since her accident, but there is still much more to learn. The good people at Head Injury Rehabilitation and Referral Services (HIRRS) do their part and I am so grateful that she has a provider in them.

As for me, life has changed in many ways. When Trish had her accident I was divorced and single. Still am both and I find it works best in allowing me the time and privilege of seeing and caring for her. I found at the beginning that my friends were uncomfortable around me if I seemed depressed or overwhelmed, so I worked hard at seeming upbeat. It worked, and I eventually actually began to feel that way! It was, and still is, difficult though, as brain injury is little understood in the world of non-brain-injury. I have been fortunate in having professionals along the way who truly cared about Trish and took the extra time to get to know and understand her, and not just as a person with a TBI. Many of my friends have been generous in giving their time to her when I couldn't be there, and others have been equally generous in helping me provide for her in many ways. I, too, feel like I can claim a "before TBI" life and "after TBI" life though. There is hardly a moment in any day when I am not wondering how she is doing, whether or not she is safe, how she is being treated by those around her, how she is feeling about herself and what else I could be doing to help in her recovery. I worry about her future. I want it to be a happy one, where she feels confident in all things. I worry about her health and hope that she is well-cared for by the professionals who treat her. I worry that her deafness will always be a detriment to her moving forward. I worry that I worry too much.

I have three grown children and two perfect grandchildren. My two older children are happily married and they and their spouses give me all the room I need to attend to Trish. She adores all of them, her father and me. My greatest wish is that she will always feel their love and caring, and that she will be able to "pay it forward" with those around her. And, of course, that brain injuries will be treated with the very best that modern medicine and training can offer.

But, what I really want to talk about is Trish herself and the other clients being serviced by HIRRS. Never have I met a group more unique, more sensitive, more aware of their own potential, or more loyal to each other in their own way. Not one of them has chosen this life for themselves and the memories persist of having lived a life before TBI or MBI. They have all been placed in a situation where they must live and/or spend the better part of their days with people they haven't chosen for themselves. They are constrained in so many ways in their daily life due to their brain injuries; many depend on others for transportation, their daily schedules are planned for them, they have only so much money to spend on everything and their social lives are definitely lacking. Yet they forge ahead, each in their own way, determined to better themselves in any and every way they can. The way they watch out for each other and support each other shows a sensitivity and intelligence lacking in so many of the rest of us. I have never met a group of people who have touched me or affected me so very much. More power and blessings to them!

I tip my hat to all those who show up at #11 Taft Court every day. More power to all of you!

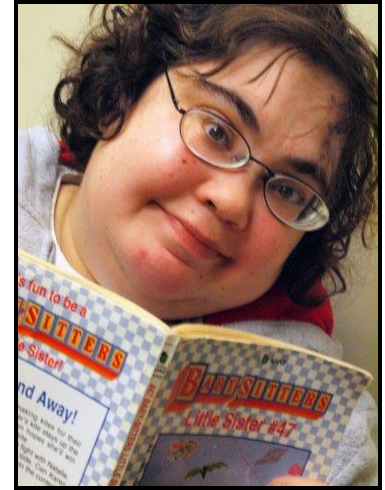
For more information on brain injury, go to <http://synapse.org.au/> for fact sheets on issues surrounding traumatic brain injury, acquired brain injury, and challenging behaviors and rehabilitation.

Spotlight On...

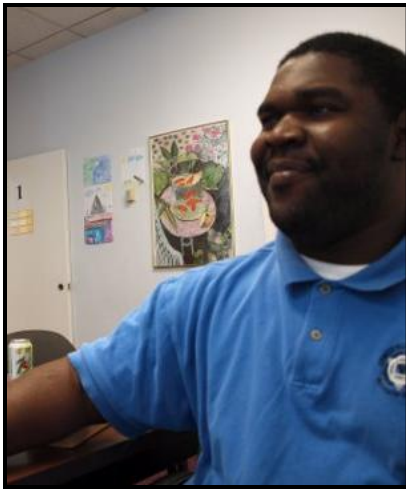
The GTP Program

By Liz K

Have you ever heard of the GTP or Graduate Transition Program? If not let me tell you about it. It is a program at Montgomery College Rockville. It is a two year program. At the end you get a cap and gown and graduate from the program. You get to take classes like science, history, math, reading, and art. The teachers are great. I would like to tell you about the Challenge Program. It is a program with different classes you can take. I'm in an art class right now. I highly recommend this program to anyone with a disability. I made a lot of friends. My experience at the GTP Program was great. Now that you know about it if you are interested, contact Karla at Montgomery College.



Liz K



Desmond O

Sunrise Assisted Living

By Desmond O

Sunrise assisted living is a place where people over the age of 80 live and have no one to visit them. I started as a volunteer in the summer of 2009 and since then I have loved doing it. The staff love having me there and I enjoy calling bingo for them. The head boss said I was a godsend because her plate was really full, so the help that I do I feel is really good. I have built a lot of friendships. I will tell a little bit of what I do. I sign in. I pass out cards and chips and I mix the bowl where I call the letter and number for bingo. I start at 9:30 and end at 12:00. I am ready whenever the clients are. They tell me that I do a really good job and I am happy to stay there. They even say that they prefer me over someone else and I am glad to give my time to them.

Patrick K and His Guitar Playing

By Dave H

I asked Patrick K about his playing of the guitar and the history behind it...

"What inspired you to start to play the guitar?" and he replied "In 5th grade, they had clubs in NY in school, and I wanted to be in the guitar club." Next I asked Patrick if he had any siblings and he said "No, the only person in my family with any musical talent was my grandfather." I then asked him what other things do you like to do, and he told me that he likes to cook, and play basketball, but could no longer do that because of his hip replacement. I was very curious to find out what other instruments he plays. He plays the harmonica, piano, and the drums. On average he practices for an hour and a half every day. I enjoyed interviewing Patrick, and one day we'll sit down, and have a jam session.



Patrick K

Photos by Ian C

Creativity Section

Paul M, Payman J and Art Enables

By Ian C

For the last four years two HIRRS clients, Paul M and Payman J, have been participants of Art Enables, an organization that provides an atmosphere for people with developmental disabilities. Art Enables' goal is not to teach art but rather to spawn encouragement to its clients as they tackle their new ways of expression.

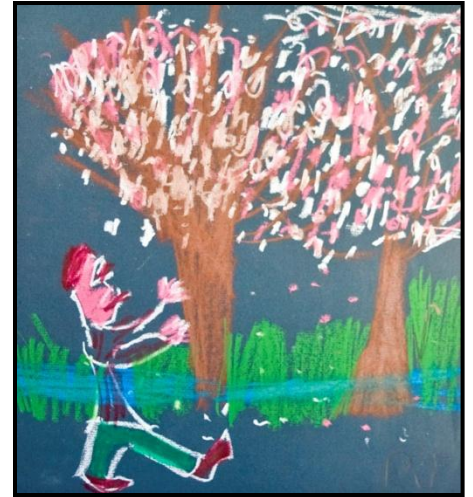
Paul attends Art Enables every Tuesday and Thursday, which Payman attends every Tuesday and Friday. Paul speaks of how his favorite part next to the drawing itself is when the artists can sit around a table and talk about each others' work. "We say to each other what we like and what we don't like and that makes us better at what we do."

"I love to take photos too. They really give me ideas for my paintings."

He says since he has been at Art Enables his work has become much better due to the advice the employees have given him. But Paul has made it clear, the staff doesn't teach art. They offer encouragement, give advice and guidance. But their involvement stops there.

And Art Enables goes beyond just the ability for clients to express themselves. All clients are given the opportunity to sell their work in a gallery. Paul made it clear however..."I thought that would be all great at first. But doing the painting is definitely the best part."

For more information on the Art Enables program, visit art-enables.org.



Payman J's *Cherry Blossoms in a Storm*



Paul M's *Washington Spring*



Desmond O's *Color Knit*



Ian C's *Giraffe in the Clouds*



Tim C's *My House, My Castle*

Color Grey

The older man's hair on his face looked like
Color of ashes you see in people's homes
Or in public places
But the color blends perfectly
With his skin tone
So, I guess, he is just one of the few
Lucky people that can have grey hair
That is really hard to notice
Until you get face to face with him
Or unless you are his barber.
He doesn't need to go buy "Just for Men".
-Jermaine L

Color Green

When you are Irish
It looks like St. Patrick's Day in my sister's
backyard.
Her yard SCREAMS March 17th.
-Trish D

Recent & Upcoming Events

Outings Overview

By Davo H

This section entails a few activities that us folks here at HIRRS went to and participated in whilst having a good ole time. On November 2nd, we all went to Bowl America and we had a ball while throwing them down the lanes. We also went to the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial on Wednesday, November 9th and we all walked and had a great time commemorating the late great Martin Luther King Jr. November 22nd we went to see Breaking Dawn Part I which I happen to be reading. This following week we went to the Maryland Buddhist Temple and then on November 30th we ventured off to Dave & Buster's to relax and eat and play video games.



Patrick K, Davo H, and Jason P at Perils of the Lost Jungle

Past & Upcoming Outings

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| November 22, 2011 | Movie: Breaking Dawn Part I |
| November 30, 2011 | Dave & Buster's |
| December 2, 2011 | Maryland Buddhist Temple |
| December 7, 2011 | Wheaton Mall Holiday Shopping |
| December 9, 2011 | HIRRS Holiday Party |
| December 15, 2011 | Wheaton Mall Holiday Shopping |
| December 21, 2011 | Old Country Buffet |

Keep an ear out for upcoming outings to the National Air & Space Museum, SilverWorks Studio & Gallery, and Bauer Dr. Community Center!

Perils of the Lost Jungle – Outing Review!

By Patrick K

The day was chilly but sunny. It was early afternoon and we were going to the golf course, "Perils of the Lost Jungle" in Herndon, VA. It was clean there and had waterfalls and statues of animals like cows and pigs. I wish it was larger, then again it was 19 holes. It seemed like you could just go through it pretty easy.

The people at the miniature golf course were kind. They also had soda machines but they weren't really well stocked. I wish they had better vending machines and a concession area which would have better things to eat like hot dogs, hamburgers, and maybe French fries.

It cost \$10.00 to go to the golf course but there is a group rate of \$8.50 per person. I thought it was affordable. I would go there again if I had the right person to go with me.



HIRRS Holiday Party Photos!

Top Row: Kerem K & Susie P; Claudia B; Horace B & Susie P; Lisa N & Tim C

Bottom Row: DJ & Davo H; Mr. D, Trish D & Desmond O; Jessica W & Jason L; Jason P, Nathan A & Desmond O

Jason L's Big Article

Don't Steal

By Jason L



My name is Jason Leonard and I have a brain injury. It was a long time coming, but the day I did not want to come was here. I cannot tell you what I was thinking, or if I was thinking at all, but I stole a car. I had the whole world in my hands but I made a mistake. Like other teenagers, I took life for granted. That night was the beginning of a new chapter in my life and the end of my old one. I was unprepared for what was going to happen.

To start the story, I will begin by telling my old life (some of it). I had many adversities, but I always seemed to conquer them through time and perseverance. I will skip through my childhood and get to the accident. I was 18 years old and living at my friends' house. We were always playing paper, rock, scissors to see who would have to get up off the couch to change the channel on the T.V because he had no remote. When I think back on those days I laugh because it was funny to me. But I digress.

Myself and two other people went out looking for a good car for me to steal. Out of nowhere we found it. I will not say the model, but I will say it was white. Then we planned how I would steal the car. It was my first car that I had stolen so I was happy, excited and whatever else. Then after all was done it was time. I did all the things I needed. I had the car! I was happy to steal the car! I must have thought "I am on top of the world."

I would like to stop now but I am being forced to tell my whole story now. So I am back, reluctantly.

I woke up in the hospital. Come to find out I stole a car and I ran into a tree. I would like to tell you I think the tree darted in the middle of the road. (I know trees do not move but please let me believe what I want to.) I was at about 5 hospitals and 2 retirement homes. The funny thing was I was unaware of all the changes, but I remember seeing lights changing and this elderly woman. Plus, my best friend telling me that I took a car trying to get some money in return. He has been my friend since sixth grade. That is rare. Do not ask me how I remember his phone number or that he is fat (he is fat yeah) or that he tickled my feet in the hospital but I do. My best friend that fat guy. He! He! He!

Then I came home a couple of months later and that whole thing was just a blur because of my brain injury. I do remember this one thing though, while sitting at home in my room I would watch the same show over and over and over again, not knowing that I'd already seen that show, but I had. Darn brain injury.

My parents began looking for a place that was more suitable to my needs. It was hard but they found H.I.R.R.S. I started out at Flower Hill where I began to figure things out slowly. I moved from Flower Hill 2 or 3 years later because of an incident that happened. Then I moved to Park Avenue. That was a nice place to live but something happened there also. But I digress. I like that word digress. It sounds so good. I just wanted to use that word again. Now I am semi aware of what is going on, but I am still not fully there at all times (as you can tell).

Skip through it all to present day. I look at it all and do not tell the people at H.I.R.R.S. (especially Robert) but if I did not have H.I.R.R.S. something would have happened to me (I think they know now darn). H.I.R.R.S. has helped me out by showing me that having a brain injury is not the end of the world even though it feels like it is. I can still do most things with some time. They have taught me that I can do a lot of things on my own because they're always telling me to do things on my own (and for real that mess gets on my nerves). So I ended up where I am today. I still struggle, but I get through it all. I was in a great deal of denial until I reached H.I.R.R.S. but I have come to realize that I have a brain injury. That is where I meet people with head injuries just like me every day. While there I have seen some funny and weird things such as others in denial and acting out. H.I.R.R.S. has shown me that having a brain injury is not the end all be all...but it sometimes feels like it is. It feels this way because as soon as you get a brain injury that's the end of your old life and the beginning of your new life. If you keep an open mind, the new life you have can be hilarious at times but sad at other times. It has been hilarious for me. So stay tuned and be safe.

I would like to thank GOD for helping me get through it all thus far. Plus, all the people at H.I.R.R.S. Beverly Whitlock for starting this program and Elissa for doing some of the typing because I hate typing. My doctors and the most important person you the reader be safe now on to my next hurdle!!! Oh Yeah my fat friend. I will be wealthy!!!

Strategies & Goodbyes

The Reading Log

By Vicki B

Strategy: a conscious plan for doing an activity or thinking through a process. The *Reading Log* is the written record of readers' work in a composition book; it contains a record of what is read and the sequence of reading strategies used during reading, reflecting, and discussing. The reader writes strategies prompts for reading, reflecting, and discussing and writes a response to the prompts. Completing the prompts and writing a response for all phases helps readers better understand what they read. Keeping the log helps readers check their understanding and improve their memory.

The elements of the *Reading Log* follow:

During Reading (strategic reading) write

Key words (nouns, adjectives, adverbs related to the topic; also any unknown words to the reader)

Important points and quotations

Connections to self

During Reflecting (critical analysis and evaluation) write

What did I think I'd learn?

What did I learn?

What was important?

What was my favorite part, least favorite part, and why?

What do I think the author wants the reader to learn?

Is there anything else?

During Discussing (synthesis) write a summary

What were the important ideas?



Robert C, Tom K, Jessica R, and Lindsay K

Many thanks to our Speech Pathology interns, Jessica R and Lindsay K! We really appreciate all the hard work, care, and dedication you've shown in your time here working with individuals and running exciting groups. We will miss you and wish you the best of luck in school and your careers! Thank you!

Brain Injury Association of Maryland Annual Conference April 19-20, 2012

The Brain Injury Association of Maryland's annual education conference provides attendees the opportunities to learn more about brain injury from experts in the field and to connect with other brain injury professionals and advocates.

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HIRRS would like to begin providing notifications, updates, and other information via email. If you haven't already supplied an email address to us, please contact Elissa (eisrael@headinjuryrehab.org) or Daria (dmartineau@headinjuryrehab.org).