

# BRAIN POWER

2020, Volume II

## MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH

Here at BIANYS, we've been busy putting together events and activities that will raise awareness of the issues faced by brain injury survivors, caregivers and professionals. **Staff will be out in the community** to talk about BIANYS programs and services, there will be a series of social media posts you can share all month long, A free for members Professional Development Series webinar will take place (ONLY \$10 for non-members)... and so much more to celebrate Brain Injury Awareness Month! **You'll find a list of events we've booked in this issue of Brain Power**, and you can always check our events page at [bianys.org](http://bianys.org) for updates- and sign up to receive email updates while you're there.



Brain Injury Association of New York State  
4 Pine West Plaza, Suite 402  
Albany, NY 12205  
[www.bianys.org](http://www.bianys.org)  
518-459-7911 (phone)  
1-800-444-6443 (Family Helpline)

### **Registration for the Annual Conference and Medical Symposium will open on Monday, March 2.**

Members who are brain injury survivors can apply for a scholarship until April 30, with notifications going out in early May. Information can be found at [bianys.org](http://bianys.org), where you can also submit a nomination for our Annual Conference Awards - nominations will be accepted until March 30, 2020.

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### **Brain Trust, the BIANYS members-only monthly newsletter marked it's one year anniversary in January.**

Members also receive exclusive email announcements and opportunities to register for some events before the general public, such as the Professional Development Series and the Annual Conference. Don't miss out on these and other benefits- visit [bianys.org](http://bianys.org) or call 518-459-7911 to **become a member today!**



# ***Become a Certified Brain Injury Specialist!***

Our unique training program will prepare you for the exam with webinars, study tips and detailed home study information that corresponds with the course text.

Exam Information:  
June 9, 2020  
Saratoga Springs Holiday Inn  
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

For more information:  
[bianys.org/programs/cbis/](http://bianys.org/programs/cbis/)  
Karen Thomas, CBIST  
[kthomas@bianys.org](mailto:kthomas@bianys.org)  
(518) 459-7911

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION & PAYMENT IS APRIL 6, 2020**



## **BRAIN INJURY ADVOCACY DAY 2020**

*Wednesday*  
**MARCH 25th**  
*9:30am*

Join us for a day of action at the NYS Capital!

If you're a brain injury or health care professional, survivor, family member or friend and you want to increase awareness and create policy change, come to Albany for a day of community and action.

*We are Stronger Together!*

***Register at [bianys.org](http://bianys.org)***





# ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



BIANYS is pleased to spotlight Joe Vollaro, PhD, CEO of RES Company, in the Brain Injury Awareness Month edition of Brain Power. The following is his story, in his own words. We are all grateful to Joe, whose tireless work on behalf of his clients and the brain injury community has left an indelible mark. A detailed, full-length profile will be released by email on March 17, 2020. You can sign up to receive emails at [bianys.org](http://bianys.org).



I'm excited to celebrate brain injury awareness month with the brain injury community in New York State, and couldn't be happier at the timing. This year, RES Co is celebrating its 20th year serving survivors of TBIs and those with long-term care needs. While I'm grateful for the recognition BIANYS is offering me, I want to make sure it's clear that I sincerely feel this is an honor that is shared with the many individuals with whom I've had the privilege to work with over the years, at RES and in the brain injury and advocacy community. It's important to express that I could not do what I do without the support I have received from you, so thank you!!!

The journey in working with survivors of TBI has been a long and winding one. It really began when I decided to pursue my Ph.D. in Neuroscience, with a specialty in Clinical Neuropsychology. As part of my education, I completed an externship at an inpatient brain injury rehabilitation unit at Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center in Brooklyn. By the end of this program, my interest shifted towards brain injury rehabilitation as a specialty.

**"Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." -Theodore Roosevelt**

The next step came when I was introduced to an emerging program called the TBI waiver. A local company contacted the graduate program that I attended, asking if there were any students interested in working clinically with survivors of TBI. At the time, they were experimenting with a new concept: repatriating people who were in nursing homes outside New York into their home community and providing them with services at home, as opposed to keeping people in institutions. This idea was far from mainstream, but I found it intriguing. This is how I got my start in home and community-based services, as a Community Integration Counselor and Positive Behavioral Support Service Worker.

As I finished up my education, I decided to pursue a career that focused on teaching and continuing my clinical work, opening a private practice with a focus on individuals with TBI. During graduate school, I met my wife Maureen, who was studying to be a social worker, who also became interested in TBI and home and community-based work.

As we continued to work with TBI survivors, it became apparent there were significant gaps in services available to them, so we tried to expand what we could offer through our private practice to help ensure clients had access to the services they needed.

My role as an advocate was something that evolved from my work as a clinician. As RES Company grew, we became more and more aware of the challenges related to resources and regulations. We found that survivors and their families had a difficult time finding a voice in such matters, and I was going to try to be that voice.

Today, there are more robust advocacy networks and professional organizations like BIANYS that are making sure everyone's voice is being heard. I also feel like the people who ultimately make the decisions recognize the importance of stakeholder feedback and are more open to it.

All and all, it's my firm belief that we've made substantial progress, and there's a wonderful network of people who will continue to work diligently to ensure it continues.

Joseph Vollaro, PhD  
CEO of RES Company



To learn more about RES  
Company, visit  
[www.reshomecareli.com](http://www.reshomecareli.com)

# **Brain Injury Awareness Month Events**

## **March 2**

Registration for the Annual Conference (June 10-11, 2020) and the Medical Symposium (June 12, 2020) opens. Go to [bianys.org](http://bianys.org) for information.

## **March 3-4**

New York State Teachers' Center Symposium at the Desmond Hotel in Albany. Michelle Kellen, BIANYS Professional Development Manager, will be on hand with information on programs and services.

## **March 4**

[National Brain Injury Awareness Day](#). [New York State Brain Injury Awareness Day](#).

BIANYS Capital District Meet & Greet. Come to our offices in Albany to meet local staff and learn all about BIANYS. Participants will have a chance to win a free one year membership. Visit [bianys.org/get-involved/events](http://bianys.org/get-involved/events) for more information.

## **March 12**

Bronx Meet & Greet, co-sponsored by NYS Senator Gustavo Rivera. Meet local staff and learn all about BIANYS. Participants will have a chance to win a free one year membership. Visit [bianys.org/get-involved/events](http://bianys.org/get-involved/events) for more information.

## **March 16-22**

[International Brain Awareness Week](#). A global campaign to foster public enthusiasm and support for brain science. Visit [brainawareness.org](http://brainawareness.org) for more information.

## **March 17**

NYU Langone Health Brain Day. 530 First Avenue @ 32nd, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Stop by and visit our staff for information on BIANYS programs & services.

## **March 17**

8th Annual Brain Fair, Mount Sinai Guggenheim Pavillion. Brain Awareness Fair for elementary, middle, and high school students and their parents. BIANYS staff will be on hand to talk about our programs & services. 1468 Madison Avenue, NYC.

## **March 18**

Binghamton University B-Healthy Health Fair. Jessica Morley, BIANYS FACTS Coordinator will be on hand with information on programs and services. East gym recreation center, 10:30 am - 1:30 pm.

## **March 18**

Professional Development Series Webinar: Using a Bullet Journal to Promote Wellness for those Affected by Brain Injury. 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm, live webinar. FREE for members, \$10 all others. Visit [bianys.org/get-involved/events](http://bianys.org/get-involved/events) for more information.

## **March 19**

Understanding Brain Injury Wellness Workshop at the YMCA of Ithaca & Tompkins Counties. Join Jessica Morley, BIANYS FACTS Coordinator, to learn the causes and effects of brain injury. Borg Warner Nutrition Center, 7pm. Visit [ithacaymca.com](http://ithacaymca.com) for more information.

## **March 25**

Brain Injury Advocacy Day. Join us in Albany at the New York State Capital to raise awareness of brain injury issues and advocate for public policy initiatives. Check in starts at 9:30 am. Free, but please register at [bianys.org](http://bianys.org). All who register receive a free lunch. **Providers and Organizations:** Help us bring survivors, family members, friends and professionals to Albany by organizing a group from your area to travel to Albany together.

**Host a Go Blue! for Brain Injury site this March to help raise funds for the BIANYS Annual Conference Scholarship Program.**



Every June, the brain injury community follows the winding road to Saratoga Springs to find the rapport of fellow brain injury survivors and up to date information on brain injury & recovery at our Annual Conference through our Scholarship Program.

**Your contribution to Go Blue! for Brain Injury makes that happen.**

Visit [bianys.org](http://bianys.org) for more information.

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# **ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2020**

June 10-11, 2020

## **MEDICAL SYMPOSIUM**

June 12, 2020

Saratoga Springs Holiday Inn

**Registration opens March 2, 2020**

**1, 2 and 3-day tickets are available.** BIANYS is recognized by the New York State Education Department's Office of the Professions as a provider for continuing competencies in the following areas: Social Work (#0539), Physical Therapy/ PT Assistants, Speech-Language Pathologist & Audiologists, Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) and Occupational Therapy/ OT assistants. We also provide CBIS continuing education credit and Certificates of Attendance.

**Sponsorship opportunities are available. Visit [bianys.org](http://bianys.org) or call 518-459-7911 for more information.**





4 Pine West Plaza  
Suite 402  
Albany, NY 12205

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