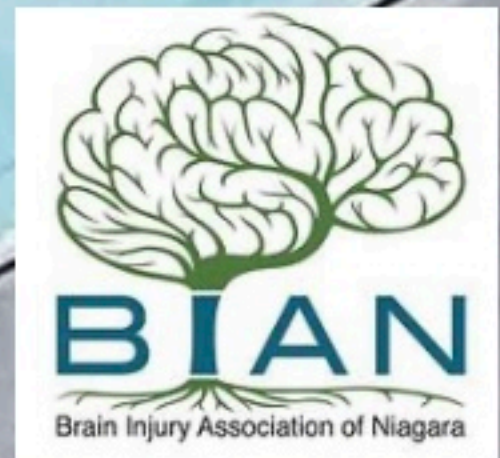


I'm NOT STRONG.
I am SURVIVING IN a
SITUATION I HAVE
NO CHOICE about.

you'RE so
STRONG.



Brain Matters Newsletter

Jan/Feb Issue 17 Vol 3



CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

March

Christine 3rd

Jamie 6th

Caroline 15th

Andrea 15th

Joanne 29th

April

Jan 2nd

Gerald 8th

Elliott 8th

Maria 13th

Celebrating our Successes one step, one day at a time!

brainmattersnewsletter@gmail.com

Looking Back on my 10th Brainaversary

Written by Christine

As the Editor of this remarkable newsletter, I've had the privilege of reading and editing countless biographies of fellow brain injury survivors. I never thought I would want to share my own journey, yet here I am. So, where should I start? It has been ten years since my accident, a milestone I now celebrate as my "Brainaversary."

Since Grade 6, my dream has been to become a Secondary Physical Education Teacher. I worked diligently to achieve that goal, and in December 1997, I succeeded. Not only did I loved teaching, but I also dedicated myself as a coach for multiple sports each year, volunteering on various local sports committees all the way to SOSSA and OFSAA. In my free time, I stayed active by playing competitive volleyball in both coed and women's leagues. Additionally, I served as a Foster Parent for FACS.



On February 15, 2015, my life took a dramatic turn. While co-teaching a senior coed Physical Education class at Stamford Collegiate with my department head, an accident occurred. A senior male student accidentally kicked an indoor soccer ball toward the wall; however, it struck my face instead, causing my head to snap back and hit the concrete block wall behind me. This incident marked my sixth and seventh major concussions as an adult. As a child, I had suffered several concussions from falls and contact during high school sports, during which I was advised to "shake it off and return to the game." As an adult, I experienced concussions from two car accidents, a skiing incident involving a tree, and various encounters while teaching, primarily from ball-related incidents or head-to-head contact with students.



Research on women's concussions indicates that the ratio of neck strength to head size, combined with increased angular acceleration of the neck resulting in whiplash, raises the likelihood of concussions. Additionally, it highlights that the cumulative effects of multiple concussions can result in longer healing times, leading to Post Concussive Syndrome.

My journey to recovery has been long and challenging. I ultimately received treatment through WSIB, which coordinated evaluations with more than 20 doctors and specialists. From May to August, I participated in the UNH COIR Program in Toronto, spending weekdays in the city and returning home on weekends to rest. The program focused on several aspects of my health, including Mental, Physical, Social, Occupational, Emotional, and Intellectual well-being. Each day, I engaged in 4–6 hours of therapies tailored to support my recovery.

I was eager to return to teaching in September 2015, but both my body and mind were not ready. I attempted to re-enter the classroom, which only worsened my condition. The school board required me to wear a Muay Thai helmet while teaching, thinking it would shield me from another concussion, despite all my doctors advising against it. My passion for teaching was strong, but the helmet led to overheating and fainting in my Special Needs class. My students were frightened, believing I had died. So later on that week, I returned to visit them and to reassure them that I was okay. I tried to go back two more times, but the headaches, migraines, anxiety, and sensitivity to noise, light, and crowds became overwhelming. In hindsight, I recognize that I was in a tough spot.

My parents were my strongest supporters, yet they didn't advocate for me regarding my post-concussion syndrome (PCS). I felt adrift, questioning my identity and purpose without teaching or coaching. I turned to the internet for help and discovered the BIAN clubhouse and BICR. There, I found my community—new friends and a sense of belonging. I also rediscovered my purpose and found LOVE!

Yet, amid this journey of adversity, I have uncovered beautiful positives. I found love at the clubhouse with Brad, another member, and I've started exploring my creative side through painting. Travel has always been a passion of mine; now I adapt to my limitations, but with careful planning, it remains a rewarding and enjoyable experience. I have experienced new sports like sledge hockey and sitting volleyball and I am also able to cherish the quality time I spend with my parents and family. Although life has slowed down, it has deepened my appreciation for each moment.

One of my notable achievements since my accident has been creating this newsletter. I sought a meaningful outlet and wanted to amplify the voices of individuals with brain injuries. My passion for volunteering led me to take on a leadership role as a member of the OAC, a group of survivors and board members from across the province sharing insights about brain injuries and their associations. I also volunteer with OBIA's Peer Mentoring program, where participants are paired with a fellow survivor to discuss their brain injury and their recovery on a weekly basis over the phone.

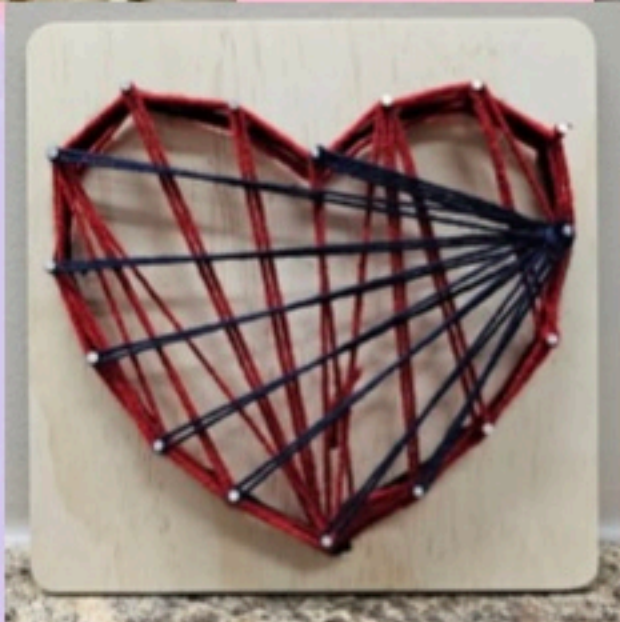
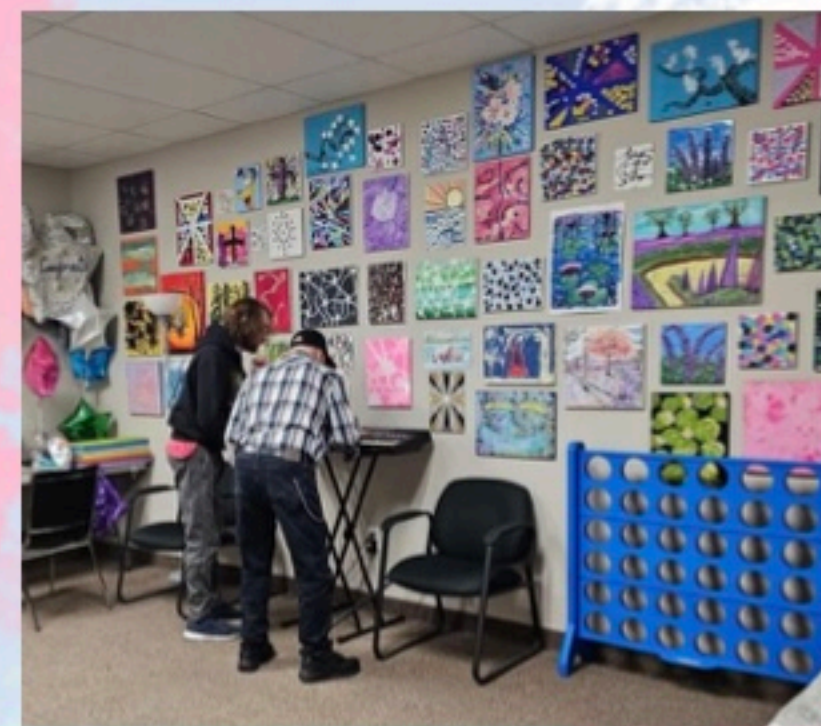
A decade has passed, and I continue to navigate the challenges of PCS. I experience Psychogenic Non-Epileptic Seizures (PNES), heightened sensitivities to light and noise, and difficulties in large crowds. Conditions like Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), along with ongoing mental health struggles, balance issues, walking difficulties, and cognitive challenges, have become part of my daily existence.

As I enter this new chapter, I welcome all the adventures and experiences that lie ahead with an open heart. Here's to the journey and the growth it inspires.

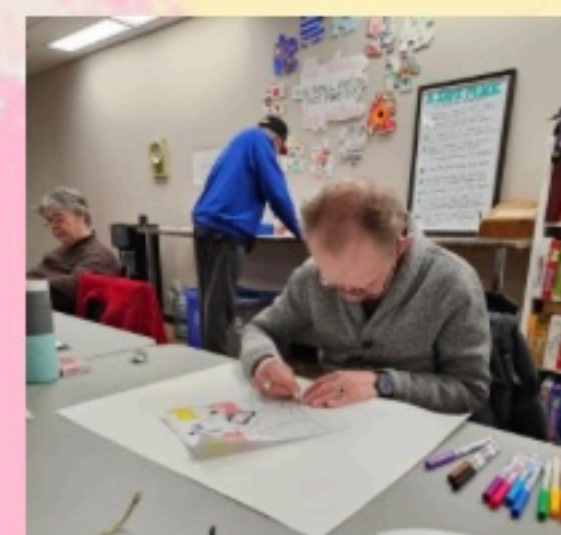
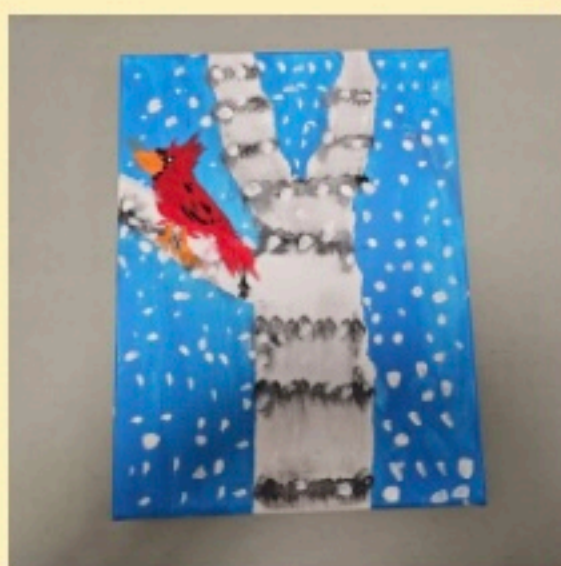


Christine





ART



FRIENDS FROM CAMP DAWN

\$300 All-Inclusive Camp Includes:

3 nights accommodations!

All meals/snacks/beverages!

All activities!

Round-trip transportation from

Hamilton/London/Kitchener!

Priceless friendships and memories to last a lifetime

Thursday, September 11, 2025-
Sunday, September 14, 2025
at Campfire Circle in Waterford, ON



Upcoming *Fundraisers*

August
11



Charity Golf Tournament

📍 Legends on the Niagara

Join us for a day of fundraising and friendly competition on the greens.

September
18



Cheers Niagara Mix & Mingle

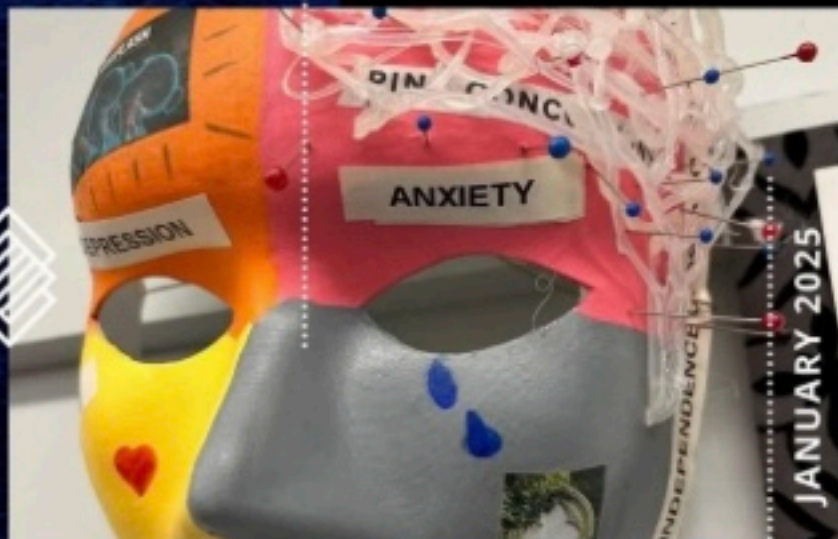
📍 Château des Charmes

Embrace the harvest season in Niagara by coming together to support BIAN this Fall.

REGISTRATION AND SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES OPENING SOON. STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS!

ART

Visit the Port Colborne Library this month to check out BIAN's Unmasking Brain Injury Exhibit promoting awareness of the prevalence of brain injury.




IN THE ATRIUM

310 King Street, Port Colborne

BIAN was excited to be featured in the Art in the Atrium exhibit at Port Colborne's Library this past January. The Unmasking Brain Injury Exhibit by BIAN aims to raise awareness about the prevalence of brain injuries.

#unmaskingbraininjury
#braininjuryacrosscanada



 Great news from the Government of Canada! We are excited to announce that the Canada Disability Benefit will come into effect on May 15th, 2025.

This new benefit will provide low- and modest-income working-age persons with disabilities with up to \$200 per month in financial support.

This is a great step forward towards greater inclusivity and financial support for those who need it!

Starting in June 2025, residents between 18–64 years old can qualify for the benefit if they have been approved for the Disability Tax Credit.

#braininjuryawareness #braininjury



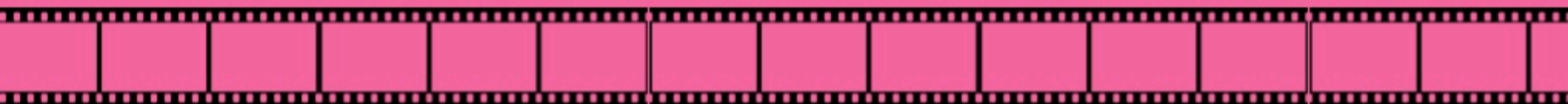
Reporting by Rebecca

MOMENTUM CHOIR PART 2 ARTICLE

Happy 2025 ❤️



On December 7th 2024, I went with Momentum Choir to the Salvation Army Mountain Citadel Church In Hamilton. I was picked to sing a solo with Phillip for our Christmas Concert. We also sang with Shawna, who is also member of our Oasis Clubhouse. I was able to choose my solo from the following songs; Frosty The Snowman , Jingle Bells, And Rocking Around The Christmas Tree. I chose Rocking Around The Christmas Tree and I did an amazing job, Mendelt said.



WICKED Movie Review

I knew going into the film that I was just watching Part 1 of Wicked but what I didn't expect was to absolutely fall in love with Cynthia and Ariana's interpretation of Elphaba and Galinda! Their journeys together and separately, and how their choices set them up for their inevitable futures. All the songs were recorded live and were fantastic and I cannot wait to see the second half of Wicked!

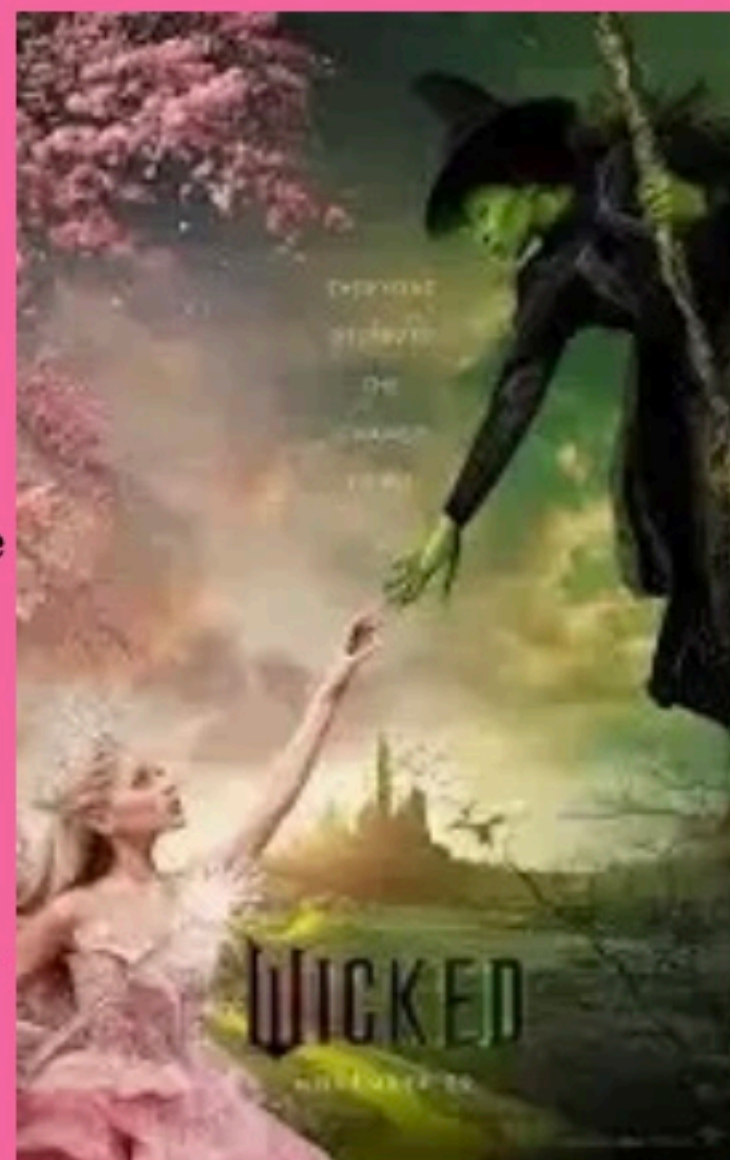
Kristen Chenoweth And Idina Menzel also made an appearance during the film.

Both actresses played the original roles of Elphaba And Galinda. ❤️

I have to mention Ariana Grande played Glinda very well. I was very impressed by her. ❤️

Cynthia Erivo who played Elphaba stole the show! ❤️

A notable mention goes out to Elphaba's younger sister in, Nessarose. She played a person with a disability. She used a wheelchair on set in the movie ❤️



Karri's Korner

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL FOR 2025?

Wayne - Be healthier

Andrew - Take things I do wrong and learn how to get better.

Carolyn - Lose some weight and be more healthy.

Rebecca - Be more outgoing.

Brad - Keep planning and scheduling days.

Christine - work on weight and physically work on my hips.

Curtis - Stay on top of my physical health.

Natasha - Taking care of my body and eating better.

Max - Write more haikus (3 line poems) for the newsletter.

Karri - Read a book or listen to an audiobook everyday.



BRAD'S JOKE OF THE MONTH



I don't trust stairs.
They're always up to
something.



Did you hear that laughing too
loudly is illegal in Hawaii?

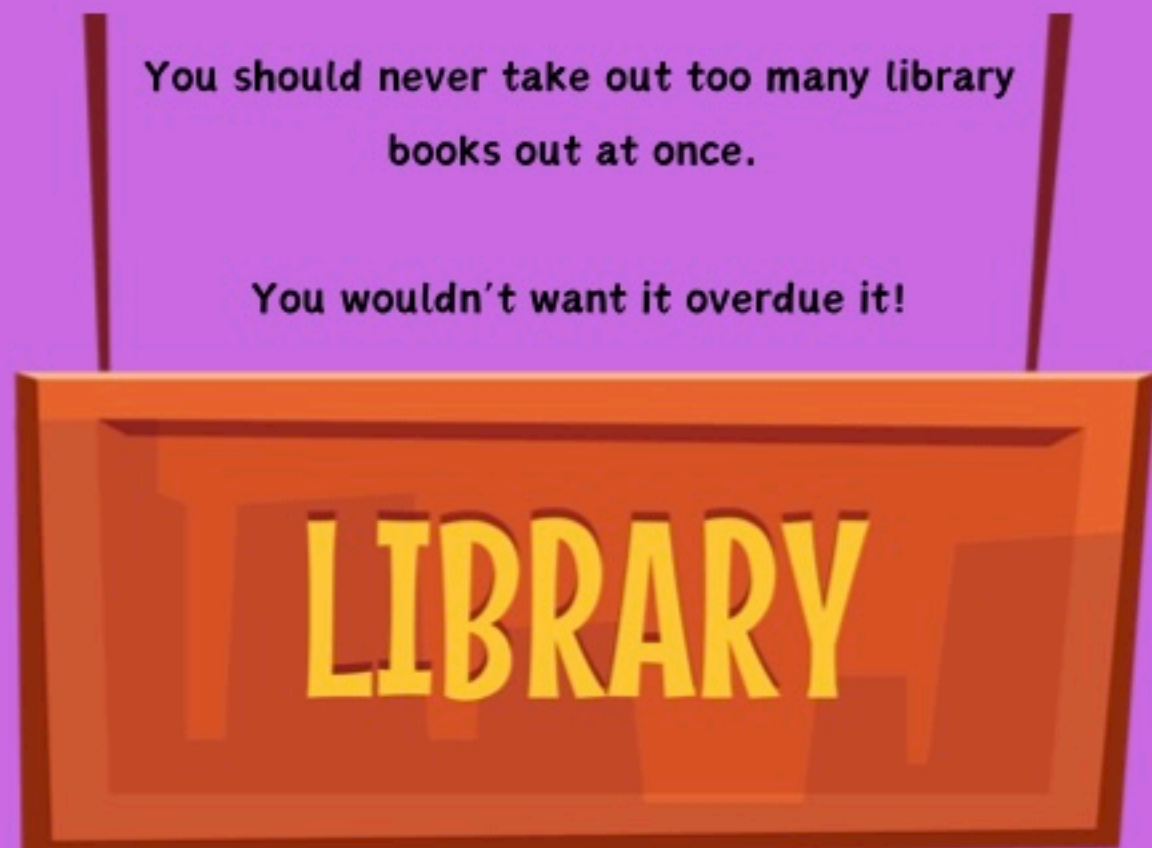
They only permit a-low-ha!

HAHAHA



What do you call a
fake noodle?

An impasta!



You should never take out too many library
books out at once.

You wouldn't want it overdue it!

What did the hat
say to the hat
rack?

"You stay here;
I'll go on a head!"



I TELL DAD
JOKE
PERIODICALLY



Brand



Uploads



Draw



Projects



Apps



Magic Media

March 2025 | BIAN Program Calendar



| Monday 10AM - 3PM | Tuesday 10AM - 3PM | Wednesday 10AM - 3PM | Thursday 10AM - 3PM |
|--|---|--|--|
| 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Mini Chicken Pot Pies 1-2:30 Music with Ashleigh  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Tortellini Bake 1-2:30 Sports Trivia  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Panzerotti's 1-2:30 Newsletter Meeting  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Nacho's 1-2:30 DIY Marble Coasters with Sam  |
| 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Poutine 1-2:30 Game of Things  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Grilled Cheese & Tomato Soup 1-2:30 Music with Andrew  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Spaghetti & Meatballs 1-2:30 Charades  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Hot Dogs and Salad 1-2:30 Men's Peer Support 1-2:30 Board Games/Cards |
| 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Mini Pizza's 1-2:30 Baking Rice Krispies & Shamrocks painting  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Chicken Fingers and Salad 1-2:30 Bee Happy Jars  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Pierogi Bake 1-2:30 String Art  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Chili 1-2:30 Family Feud  |
| 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Cheese Burger & Fries 1-2:30 Scattergories  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Taco Tuesday 1-2:30 Strengthen and Stretch  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Chicken Caesar Wraps 1-2:30 Meditation with James  | 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Borrito Bowls 1-2:30 Women's Peer Support Group 1-2:30 Board Games/Cards |
| 10 Opening Peer Social 11 Meal Preparation Group 12-1 Chicken Stir Fry 1-2:30 See What I Mean  | | | |

March 2025 | Important Communication

NOTES:

- Sign-up is required Monday through Thursday. Due to capacity, you may be denied access if you have not registered. Contact Tamara at 905-646-2426 extension 1 or tamara@bianiagara.org to sign-up.
- Monday - Thursday Lunches: Active participation in preparation is required as part of BIAN's Clubhouse model. The cost is \$3.00. Please make arrangements in advance if you have an allergy or dietary restriction.
- Email Brain Matters newsletter submissions to brainmattersnewsletter@gmail.com due by April 15th.
- A green highlight on the calendar indicates when a specialized program is running with a guest facilitator.
- A pink highlight on the calendar indicates Women's Group.
- A blue highlight on the calendar indicates Men's Group.



ACTIVITIES /SPECIAL EVENTS:

- Welland Friends Helping Friends Support Group: Friday, March 7th *Sign-up is required. Contact Tamara for more details!

Editor's Comments

Well, another one bites the dust. Another issue has been put to bed! Each time I put together this newsletter I learn new things about my journey and my recovery.

It was my 10th Brainaversary this year in February and I never thought I would be the person who I am now. I really looked back and saw so many improvements and accomplishment that I achieved over the past 10 years. I am thankful for my friends and family both near and far who have stuck by me during my journey of recovery. Now its time to continue to be creative, adventurous, and live life to the fullest!

