

Spring 2024

www.unmasktheinvisible.org

# Newsletter



**MARCH IS BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH**

**A Traumatic Brain Injury occurs about once every 9 seconds in the U.S.**

## Paint it Forward Program – Request YOUR Art Kit TODAY

During our daughter Sierra's recovery, we identified "gaps" in services. This motivated us to create programs to support these "gaps" making it our passionate mission through Unmask the Invisible.

In the past decade, more and more research has shown the vast benefits of art therapy, creativity, and art on the health and wellness of the brain. One study discovered up to a 10% increase in blood flow to the brain when looking at art that was pleasing to the subject.

The Sierra Project houses programs that promote creativity and resiliency for traumatic brain injury survivors, their siblings, and their caregivers via art: Paint It Forward, Weighted Paintbrush Project and This is Your Brain on Art Events (get-togethers, classes, retreats).

Your artwork holds the power to convey emotions, tell stories, and inspire change. By sharing it with us, you are contributing to a cause that seeks to empower and uplift those affected by Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

Together, we can shed light on the challenges faced by survivors, siblings, and family caregivers, and work towards building a more supportive and understanding community.

Your creativity has the potential to spark conversations, raise awareness, and foster a sense of unity among us all. Thank you for entrusting us with your art - let's join hands in our mission to *Unmask the Invisible* and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those impacted by TBI.

Order your Complementary Art Kit today!

## 2024 UI Board of Directors

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*Amy Longmoore*

Vice President & Programs  
*Justin Putnam*

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*Jerry Serra*

Director of Marketing  
*Maria Dailey*

Board Member, RN  
*Alexandria Giesing*

### **Advisory to the Board**

Jeffrey Cohen, MD  
Ali Thompson, OT  
Beth Pastor, PT  
Sharon Miller Dombroski  
Liza Sivek, Marketing

## President's Message



I would like to highlight a UI program that is currently in development, and very near and dear to my heart - Siblings of survivors. We want to illuminate this invisible group who many times may often feel lost and overlooked in the process.

It's important to remember that each person copes with trauma differently, and some may struggle more silently than others. Checking in on siblings who may have been overshadowed during a difficult time can be a powerful way to show them that they are seen and heard. Offering support, a listening ear, or even just a kind gesture can make a world of difference in helping them feel acknowledged and valued. Remember, kindness and compassion can go a long way in healing unseen wounds.

Many siblings “take on” the identity of the survivor which plays a significant role on how they are seen by others. This suggests that people are often recognized or perceived based on the connections and relationships they have with the survivor. This concept highlights the indirect judgement that accompanies the trauma the sibling often feels but is invisible.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Charles Degeneffe, Professor at San Diego State University, who has conducted research mostly on adult siblings of survivors. He writes “Sibling relationships are not subject to individual choice. Except for adoption, siblings derive from the same genetic pool and possess common cultural and environmental characteristics. Given that sibling relationships start from birth and continue until death, and may symbolically last even after the death of one of the siblings, this sibling relationship can be longer than all other family connections.” The gap in support for siblings is valid and we hope to help them through our programs and services.

# Upcoming Events

06/01/24 - This is Your Brain on Art Class - For Survivors, Caregivers, and Siblings

06/19/24 - Hartford Community Coalition Event

07/20-21/24 - UI 1st Annual Softball Tournament - Lebanon, NH

Visit [www.unmasktheinvisible.com](http://www.unmasktheinvisible.com) for additional information on these events!



## Kindness Crusade



**UI Unmask the Invisible**  
Illuminating Traumatic Brain Injury

In July 2020, Sierra was a victim in a horrific car crash. She miraculously survived and wants to fill the world with kindness and faith. Kindness is contagious! By doing one act of kindness, you could inspire others to do the same, creating a chain reaction of compassion and generosity.

Share Your Act of Kindness With Us

*Kindness Crusade*

*“The smallest Act of Kindness can make the biggest impact.”*



**WHO WE ARE**  
Unmask the Invisible (501c3) was created to assist families faced with traumatic brain injuries. Do you or someone you know need support?

**OUR MISSION**  
To teach resiliency and inspire those adaptively living with Traumatic Brain Injuries through art, education, and advocacy.

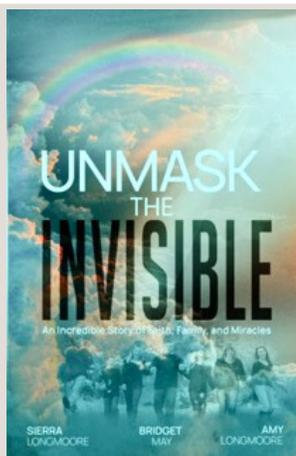
**SAMPLE OFFERINGS**

-  **The Sierra Project**
-  **Reintegration**
-  **Spiritual Support**

**CONTACT**  
802.432.8931  
Info@unmasktheinvisible.org

Complementary cards available for your businesses, schools, and outpatient centers. Get yours today! Email [info@unmasktheinvisible.org](mailto:info@unmasktheinvisible.org)

## Unmask the Invisible Book



*“This book is one of those that I just couldn’t put down and didn’t want it to end. This book is written in a very personal way, bringing you into some very special moments of Sierra’s recovery and the entire Longmoore family’s journey, alongside the prayer warriors (I was one of them) who prayed and trusted God to fully heal Sierra. This book will change your life and give you hope and fill you with love and amazement in the power of God!” - Brenda ★★★★★*

**Get your copy today**

# Impact Stories



Yale Pediatric Grand Rounds.....

Dr. Boyvat from DHMC submitted “Sierra’s Prayers” which was her experience while being the overnight doctor assigned to care for Sierra for a month while she was in a coma. Her story was selected to be read by her at the Yale Pediatric Grand Rounds, was accepted, and is set to be published.

Deborah from Norwich, VT writes...

“This \$200.00 donation is from me for my 14-year-old grandson who likes donations in his name: Benjamin Gentine, instead of Christmas presents. Instead of doing the virtual silent auction for Peter Dailey, a communicant at our church, I had decided to just make a donation. Virtual activities are too hard for me (lol). So please accept this check for Unmask the Invisible! Keep us your excellent work!



## Resources

Resources play a crucial role in supporting and enhancing various aspects of the brain injury journey. Whether it's educational resources to expand our knowledge, financial resources, emotional resources to navigate challenges, or even therapeutic resources to assist, each type of resource serves a unique purpose. We are continually building our resources to educate you on the healing journey. There is not a “one size fits all” answer as every brain injury journey is unique in and of itself. Check out the resources on our website: [www.unmasktheinvisible.org](http://www.unmasktheinvisible.org) and check back frequently as we are always searching for new and innovative education and therapies for you to explore.

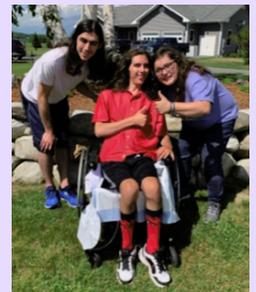
## Become a Volunteer



You can make a positive difference in the lives of so many through volunteering. We have "hands on" opportunities as well as "behind the scenes". Service to others is what life is all about!



[Be Someone's Hero](#)



The undergraduate engineering students from the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth team took what they learned from our prior meetings and created some additional prototypes to test and met with us a second time.

This time we were joined by our Board Vice President, Justin Putnam. Justin is an engineer himself and was able to provide valuable insight.

The focus gravitated to the mechanism by which the brush would tighten into the weighted sleeve and grip. The students took lots of notes as they received feedback, and we will be meeting with them again to test some revised designs.

What fabulous work!



## Dartmouth Health HOBSCOTCH Program

*What is HOBSCOTCH?* (HOME Based Self-management and COgnitive Training CHanges Lives in Post Traumatic Epilepsy)

HOBSCOTCH is a self-management program designed to help people with epilepsy find ways to manage and cope with their memory and thinking problems in order to lead happier, more productive lives. A virtual version of the program (by phone and online) is now being studied for Veterans and civilians who have a history of a traumatic brain injury, epilepsy and memory or thinking challenges.

*How can I participate?*

Right now, HOBSCOTCH is being offered at no cost as part of a research study that helps us learn more about how we can help Veterans and civilians with post-traumatic epilepsy and cognitive challenges. To receive the program, you will have to meet with a study coordinator by phone to see if participating is right for you. There is opportunity for caregivers of people with PTE to participate in this study.

Contact: (603) 650-4225

HOBSCOTCH-PTE@hitchcock.org

Visit [www.hobscotch.org](http://www.hobscotch.org) to learn more about HOBSCOTCH