# "MIND YOUR BRAIN...

BIAF's new statewide public awareness initiative, "Mind Your Brain....Because It Matters," raises public awareness about traumatic brain injury (TBI) and the need for more access and support of prevention, early intervention and treatment efforts. Since November 2010, BIAF has implemented messages in targeted venues to raise awareness about the need for greater access to services and support for traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors and their families, and the necessity for quick access to TBI information, resources and support needed by Florida's growing TBI population. Activities to date are as follows:

## November 2010-January 2011

BIAF's TBI Family Advocacy Network members were the first to begin our public awareness initiative. By agreeing to present to their local legislative delegation one cohesive message combined with their personal story, we were able to reach hundreds of legislators, raising awareness about traumatic brain injury and the need for one-stop access to a vast network of information and services through our Association (see page 14 "Advocates Speak At Legislative Delegation Meetings").

#### February 2011

On February 22nd, BIAF held a press conference launching the "Mind Your Brain ... Because It Matters" campaign, informing the press of BIAF's strong support of Florida's sports concussion legislation, and the availability of BIAF's Traumatic Brain Injury Resource and Support web-based portal of TBI information, resources and support at www.ByYourSide.org. "When in Doubt, Pull Them Out" was the message

shared about sports concussion legislation. BIAF wants to thank sports concussion legislation speakers and sponsors: Senator Anitere Flores, Miami (SB 730), Representative Ronald "Doc" Renuart, Ponte Vedre Beach (HB301), Kenneth Edmonds, Director of Government Relations & Public Policy, National Football League (NFL), Nat Moore, former Miami Dolphins Pro Bowl receiver and now Vice President for the Miami Dolphins, Lawrence Dawsey, Florida



Nat Moore, Senate President Mike Haridopolos, and David Goldstein

State Assistant Coach and former NFL player, and David Goldstein, 16 year old soccer player, son of Cheryl and Adam Goldstein, President and CEO Royal Caribbean International, for their

compellingremarks and support of the sports concussion legislation and byyour side.org. The bills were developed to ensure that youth athletes, coaches and parents are educated about the warning signs for TBI, and to protect injured athletes from getting back into play too soon. At least nine states have adopted similar legislation. If Florida adopts this legislation, we will be the first state in the southeast region to have sports concussion legislation. To learn more about concussion, visit www.byyourside.org; click on Advocate; Priority Issues.

#### March 2011

## (National Brain Injury Awareness Month)

Family/BIAF advocate, Mrs. Lester Rice, BIAF staff and constituents attended the Senate Chambers on

## BECAUSE IT MATTERS"

March 6, 2011 to participate in the reading of the Resolution sponsored by Senator Michael Bennett, declaring March as Brain Injury Awareness Month in Florida. A special thank you to Senator Bennett, Representative Roberson, Lester Rice and Capitol Hill Group for ensuring that both Senate and House Resolutions were officially filed and included important TBI facts, causes, consequences and important issues.

TBI advocates Linda Stamper (Tallahassee), Cynthia Lemons (Marianna) and Lester Rice (Holmes Beach) - all three are moms with an adult child with TBI - met with several legislators on March 10, 2011 and testified at a Senate Hearing on March 11, 2011 to tell their personal stories and talk about how BIAF's support and advocacy services have helped them. A heartfelt thank you goes to these moms for taking time from work and spending two grueling days. Every story, every face, makes a real difference!

A very special thank you goes to our Chairman of the Board, Dr. Patrick Gorman and David Goldstein, 16 year old soccer player, for writing opinion editorials that were printed in the Orlando Sentinel and Miami Herald. The articles focused on the necessity for early identification and intervention for individuals with TBI, the necessity for proper assessment and management in sports concussion, and the need for services to all newly injured TBI in Florida.

Nationwide, health care costs for traumatic brain injury add up to billions of dollars each year, so investing in prevention and early intervention not only saves dollars, it saves lives.

You can access both articles by visiting www.byyourside.org and clicking on Advocacy (link to each article can be found at the bottom of the page). If you would like a hard copy of the articles please write the BrainWaves editor at 1637 Metropolitan Blvd., Suite B, Tallahassee, Florida 32308.

### April 2011 and beyond

BIAF's executive staff continues to work with legislative consultants at Capitol Hill Group to secure funding for BIAF and advocate for TBI survivors and their families on the key issues identified by our constituents.

Our focus is on the many TBI individuals in Florida

not just the few, the newly injured and those needing long term support. We thank our many supporters and advocates for their commitment to our cause, and to our organization.

"The Mind Your Brain...Because It Matters" campaign will continue messaging throughout 2011. We will keep our readers informed through our monthly e-newsletters and advocacy alerts!



Senator Anthers Flores (R-Minmi) speaking