

Brain Injury Press

Quarter 2, 2025, Issue 263

OUR MISSION: to improve the quality of life for brain injury survivors and their families

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1** 2025 surviveHEADSTRONG San Diego Recap
- 1** The SDBIF Brain Injury Symposium Returning in June
- 2** In Memory of Howard House Founder, Bill Smith
- 3** Message from SDBIF Executive Director, Dr. Roslyn Knox
- 8** Another Joyful Day of Art for Survivors with Lovejoy Creations
- 10** Community News
 - Howard House Updates
 - SDBIF Launches SISR Program
 - SDBIF Saturday Meeting Dates
 - Upcoming 3rd Party Events
- 15** More surviveHEADSTRONG San Diego photos



Smiles & Celebrations at the 2025 surviveHEADSTRONG San Diego Walk & Health Fair presented by Thorson Law Group

There are some days that just stand out above the rest, and this year's surviveHEADSTRONG San Diego Walk & Health Fair presented by Thorson Law Group was definitely one of them!

It was a beautiful Saturday at Mission Bay, surrounded by 700 of our closest friends, all united for one incredible *continued Page 4*



The Second Annual SDBIF Brain Injury Symposium Returning on June 21, 2025!

This year's theme is:
Cultivating Networks & Resources

We are excited to announce that our annual Brain Injury Symposium is returning to help educate and connect our brain injury community on June 21, 2025!

Though the format will be the same *continued Page 6*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Susan Biffl, M.D.

Vice President

Adrienne Dubin, Ph.D.

Secretary

Andreia Barbosa

Heike Kessler-Heiberg, MA,
SLP-CCC

Kristine Negrete, DPT, NCS

Angela Pennella

Tina Dhesi-Bawa, PT, DPT,
MBA

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mohammed Ahmed, M.D.

Dan Gardner, M.D.

Harish Hosalkar, M.D.

Amy Magnusson, M.D.

Justin Matsuura, O.D.

Mark McDonough, Ph.D.

Barbara Welsh-Osga, Ph.D.

SDBIF LEADERSHIP

Roslyn Knox, Ph.D., MBA

Executive Director

Stephanie Bidegain

Chief Operating Officer

Brianda Muñoz

Howard House Administrator

Follow SDBIF on Social Media



@SDBIF



@SDBIF



@San-Diego-Brain-
Injury-Foundation



@theSDBIF

In Loving Memory of Howard House Founder Ernest W. "Bill" Smith, 1931 – 2025



Ernest W. "Bill" Smith, 93, of Escondido, passed away peacefully on April 5, 2025.

Born in Minden, Nebraska, Bill was drafted into the U.S. Marine Corps in 1951, which brought him to California. He married Deloris "Dee" McCown in 1952 and earned a business degree from SDSU in 1957. A true entrepreneur, Bill founded the Pizza Palace restaurant chain, developed commercial properties in Escondido, opened Escondido Boat and Supply, and operated a Protea flower ranch.

Deeply active in the community, he served on the Palomar Hospital Board, Escondido Elementary Personnel Board, and was a 50-year member of Rotary. After his son suffered a brain aneurysm, he helped establish the Howard House and led over 30 charity golf tournaments supporting the San Diego Brain Injury Foundation.

Bill was a remarkable man and did so much for SDBIF and the brain injury community. In the words of SDBIF COO, Stephanie Bidegain, "He was kind, passionate, and deeply committed to the work we all care so much about. I was truly honored to know him and to have worked alongside him. He left a meaningful impact on so many of us and he will be greatly missed."

An avid outdoorsman, Bill loved golf, tennis, skiing, hunting, and traveling the world with Dee—especially to Maui.

He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Dee; children Kevin, Doug (Susan), and Sandy Trumble; and grandchildren Ryan and Jennifer Smith, and Bryce and Cassie Trumble.

In lieu of flowers, the family stated donations may be made to the San Diego Brain Injury Foundation.



A Message from SDBIF's Executive Director, Dr. Roslyn Knox

Greetings Brain Injury Community Friends!

I am filled with gratitude and excitement for everything we are accomplishing together. Your dedication, participation, and support continue to push us forward in ways that truly transform lives.

We ended the first quarter of the year with a record-breaking surviveHEADSTRONG Walk & Health Fair presented by Thorson Law Group, welcoming over 600 attendees to Mission Bay. The event was a powerful testament to the strength of our brain injury community. A heartfelt thank you to Thorson Law Group, our 2025 Title Sponsor, for their continued generosity and unwavering commitment to survivors and their families.



Proudly, we are announcing the launch of our Students Invested in Survivor Reintegration (SISR) program. This initiative connects brain injury survivors with student advocates from SDSU's School of Speech, Language, & Hearing Sciences – Center for Clinical & Cognitive Neurosciences. The students offer weekly support, direct engagement, and learning through hands-on advocacy, while offering survivors a meaningful guide in their reintegration journey. It's a mutually empowering experience reflecting the very best of community collaboration.

We're eagerly preparing for our 2nd Annual Brain Injury Symposium on June 21 at the Admiral Baker Golf Club Clubhouse in Mission Valley. This event brings together survivors, families, professionals, and advocates to share knowledge, strategies, and experiences that help shape the future of reintegration and recovery.

On another note, we've welcomed new team members to strengthen and grow our services. In addition to our 24/7 phone and info@SDBIF.org helplines, we now have in-person assistance Monday through Friday, enhancing our direct support to survivors and their families.

Another key initiative is the Brain Injury Collaboration Network (BICN)—a group of qualified providers and practitioners dedicated to building a unified and comprehensive circle of care. BICN members will streamline access to critical services and therapeutic care. An example of this collaboration is our monthly reintegration workshops, facilitated by our valued BICN partner Rehab Without Walls (RWW), providing direct, practical strategies led by licensed therapists to support survivors in reclaiming their independence and self-confidence.

As we celebrate our progress, we also honor our legacy. With heartfelt appreciation, we say farewell to Bill Smith, one of the beloved founders of Howard House and a lifelong champion of the brain injury community. His dedication and vision have helped shape SDBIF into what it is today.

To our generous donors, dedicated educators, healthcare professionals, families, and every survivor—thank you. You are the reason this work matters! We are honored to walk this journey with you.

With gratitude and anticipation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roslyn Knox". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large "R" and "K".

Roslyn Knox, Ph.D., MBA,
Executive Director of SDBIF



continued from page 1

cause—to celebrate and raise awareness for brain injury recovery. It was a day that beautifully demonstrated the power of our community's strength, resilience, inspiration and hope.

We must call out and give thanks to the wonderful sponsors that stepped up to make this event the huge success it was.

- Cassandra Thorson of **Thorson Law Group** stepped up this year as the Title Sponsor! The Thorson team are passionate advocates for the brain injury community. They believe that survivors and their loved ones deserve protection, care, justice, and access to successful treatment. We are incredibly grateful for their support and commitment.
- For the FIFTH year in a row **NeuroRestorative** has sponsored that awesome canvas tote bags that we all use over and over again.
- The **DeRose Foundation** has always been a loyal supporter of SDBIF and the brain injury community, but this year, they increased their commitment and sponsored the useful lanyard keychains.
- **South Bay Rehabilitation Center** and **Paradise Valley Hospital** were once again the sponsors of the Number Cards that each participant wore throughout the event.

Our Health Fair was vibrant and informative, with 15 exhibitors sharing resources and services for brain injury survivors and their families. All the

participants were able to engage with these exhibitors to get the valuable information on their products and services.

We want to also give special thanks to:

- **DJ Jason Morris**, who kept the energy high with his fabulous tunes
- **Oliver Rhodes**, who led everyone in pre-walk warm-up exercises
- **Windmill Farms**, for donating delicious and nourishing snacks



Our 23 enthusiastic teams brought energy, inspiration, and tremendous spirit. As the countdown began, the excitement was electric—and when the walk started, it was clear: this community is strong, united, and unstoppable.

This event was covered by THREE major news channels! We've never had this sort of mass media coverage and it was wonderful to have the spirit of our community broadcast throughout San Diego.

So, to everyone who participated, donated, cheered, and celebrated: **THANK YOU**. Your passion and commitment inspire us every day. You make this day truly special. Thank you for helping us celebrate and raise awareness like no year before.

Please note that the **2026 surviveHEADSTRONG San Diego Walk & Health Fair** will take place on **March 21, 2026**. We look forward to seeing everyone there with smiles and excitement for all the achievements we have accomplished in 2025!



There are more photos on Page 15





continued from page 1

as last year, we have an exciting new line up of speakers and topics to discuss.

We are honored to have neurologist, **Dr. Galina Nikolskaya, M.D.**, as this year's keynote speaker. She is dual-board certified in Neurology (American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology) and in Clinical Neurophysiology (American Board of Medical Specialties). Her expertise in Traumatic Brain Injury, neurological injury, nerve and spinal cord injuries, concussion, and post-concussion syndrome, will provide invaluable insights for our community.

We then will move onto our expert panelists that will be discussing topics like:

- **How (& Why) to Develop Your Network**
- **Family & Change Dynamics**
- **Communicating with Your Network**

Our experts will be discussing points that will be relevant to all of our participants from Brain Injury Professionals, to survivors, to family, friends and caregivers of survivors.

Then, we will finish it off with breakout sessions for each group (survivors, family/friends/caregivers, and brain injury professionals) to discuss the topic: **What are the roadblocks you have found when cultivating your network and resources?**

During breaks and lunch all participants can engage with the exhibitors of the Health Fair.

ONE CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR: This year's event will be held at the **Admiral Baker Club House**—a perfect venue for a day of learning, networking, and inspiration.

So, mark your calendar and join us for an informative and engaging day as we continue to support brain injury recovery!

San Diego Brain Injury Foundation
BRAIN INJURY SYMPOSIUM
2025

Saturday
June 21, 2025
10 am - 3pm
ADMIRAL BAKER CLUB HOUSE

Scan this QR Code to get your tickets now



WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND:

For Survivors:

Gain valuable information and skills from an expert panel with over 60 years of collective experience in brain injury recovery. Ask questions and get answers tailored to your needs.

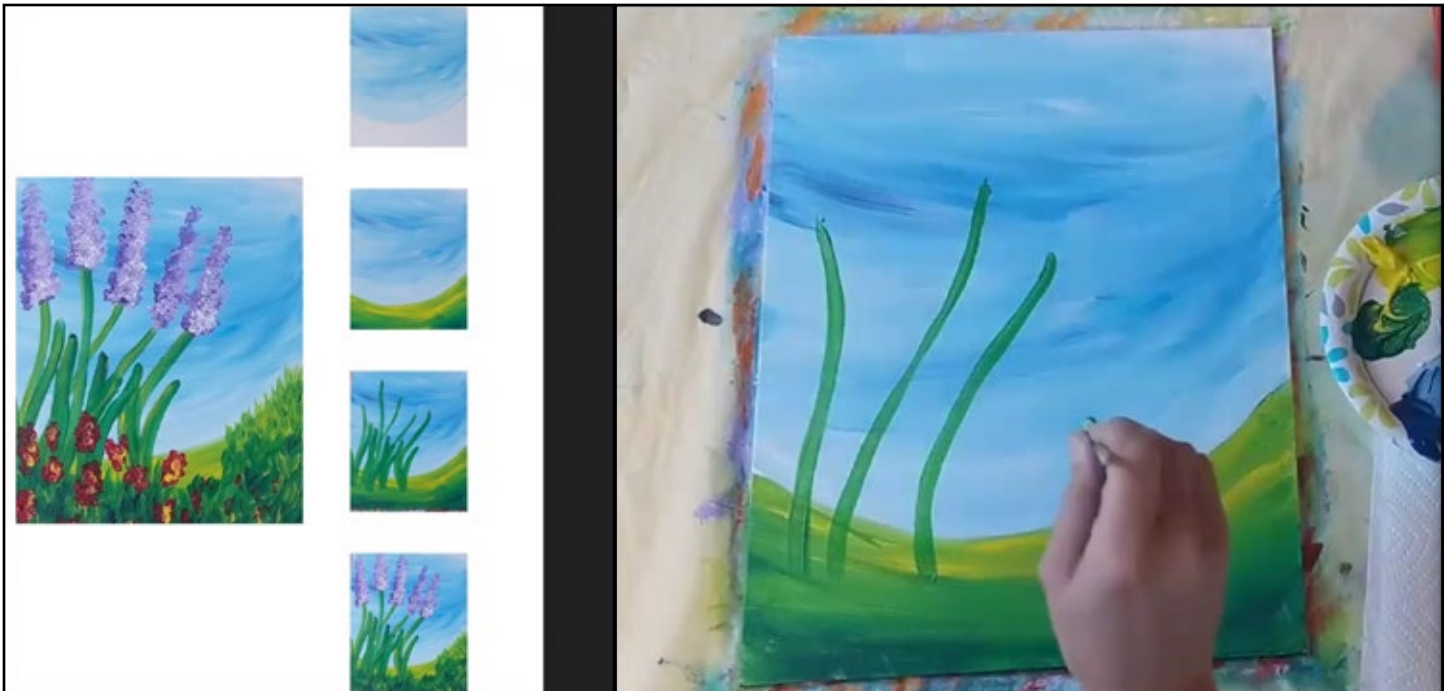
For Family, Caregivers & Friends:

Understand the challenges your loved one faces post-injury. Learn coping strategies, ask questions, and access resources to better support their recovery journey.

For TBI Professionals, Providers & Advocates:

Gain insights from the brain injury community, enhancing your understanding of survivors' & their support system's needs. Network with fellow providers, share best practices, and explore opportunities to improve and streamline services.





It was Another Joyful and Creative Day of Art with Lovejoy on April 18! Next one is in July!!

We had the pleasure of welcoming Lovejoy on Friday, April 18 for our virtual Day of Art—and what an inspiring afternoon it was!

Eight survivors joined us via Zoom to explore their creativity and connect with one another. Lovejoy has a special gift for making everyone feel comfortable, and her kind, patient guidance helped bring out the best in each participant. It wasn't just an art class—it was a celebration of expression, support, and community.

The results? Eight unique and fabulous works of art, each reflecting the artist's individual interpretation of the same picture. It's always amazing to see such diversity of thought and style come to life.

July's Day of Art will be an In-Person Event!

Mark your calendars! Our next Day of Art will be in person on Friday, July 18th at Liberty Station. To make sure that we have the right number of painting stations set up, **participants need to register by July 7, 2025.**

No experience? No problem! With expert guidance from Lovejoy, you'll be amazed at what you can create. All you need is a desire to explore, express, and enjoy!

LIMITED SPOTS AVAILABLE—REGISTER TODAY!

Please note that **only 15 spaces are available**. If you register, we kindly ask that you honor your commitment. If you register and then learn you will be unable to attend, we ask that you let us know as soon as possible so that way we can release a seat to someone on the wait list. **To Note:** If a participant repeatedly registers and doesn't attend (and doesn't let us know) it will affect that participant's ability to continue to register.

JULY 18—In-Person (Liberty Station)

15 spaces available—**Register by July 7**

OCTOBER 17—VIRTUAL

20 spaces available—**Register by October 6**

Keep an eye out for our emails so that you can register and join us for some fun!




July 18 is an In-Person Day of Art for Brain Injury Survivors

Scan the QR Code to Reserve Your Spot by JULY 7




San Diego Disability Law Group, APC

Helping brain injury survivors and their families for over 35 years

1901 First Ave., Ste 104, San Diego, CA 92101

sandiegodisabilitylaw.com

Personal Injury

If you or a loved one has suffered a traumatic brain injury, you may have legal remedies available to you. These can include money for medical expenses, long-term medical care and rehabilitation, lost wages, pain, suffering and emotional distress. Brain injuries are often difficult to prove, and require the experience and expertise of a qualified brain injury attorney.

Social Security Disability

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is governed by complicated rules and regulations. To understand them, you need to speak SSA language. In California and across the country, the SSA denies more than half (about 65%) of all initial applications for disability benefits. We understand how important it is to present a claim correctly from the outset, and your chances of obtaining benefits improve with the help of an experienced disability attorney.

**To receive a FREE case review from an experienced attorney, please call:
(619) 338-9000 or toll-free (877) 700-3994**

COMMUNITY NEWS

Springtime Joy at Howard House!



Here at Howard House, we're feeling incredibly grateful and excited about everything happening in our home. Our residents and staff alike have been thriving, creating a positive and uplifting environment that we're proud to be part of every day.

The house itself is nearly done with the last touches of its renovations, and we couldn't be happier with the improvements. It's becoming more of a warm, welcoming space than ever before. We currently have two rooms available



and are taking our time to find just the right individuals to join our Howard House family. We know the right fit will come along soon, and we're excited for what's ahead.

Our residents have been keeping active and engaged, both inside and outside the house. We've enjoyed outings to the Safari Park and the bowling alley, which brought a lot of smiles and great memories. One recent highlight was participating in the annual SDBIF

surviveHEADSTRONG Walk & Health Fair presented by Thorson Law Group. It was a meaningful and exciting experience for everyone involved.

In-house, we've stayed busy with group activities and special events. Our Easter lunch was a big hit—filled with laughter, delicious food, and community spirit.

It's a wonderful season at Howard House, and we're looking forward to what the next few months will bring!





SDBIF Launches SISR Program: A New Chapter in Survivor Reintegration

The San Diego Brain Injury Foundation is proud to announce the successful launch of our newest and most personalized support initiative to date: the **Students Invested in Survivor Reintegration** (SISR) program. Developed in partnership with San Diego State University's School of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences – Center for Clinical and Cognitive Neurosciences, this innovative program brings together future healthcare professionals and brain injury survivors in a unique advocacy model designed to empower both.

During this pilot quarter, six SDSU students have been matched one-on-one with six survivors, kicking off what will become an ongoing, quarter-by-quarter expansion of the program. Each

student-survivor pair engages in weekly check-ins focused on navigating the survivor's individual recovery journey. Survivors receive customized support through individualized action plans that include advocacy for access to services, technology support, guidance in working with community agencies, and connections to medical and therapeutic providers. In addition, participating survivors are given priority access to reintegration workshops, transportation assistance, and other direct support resources that help meet their goals in real time.

This program is deeply collaborative. Dr. Stephanie Reis, an SDSU professor, serves as the coordinating representative for the university, while Dr. Dan Gardner, M.D., a renowned Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis expert, specializing in brain injury *continued Page 14*

Brain Injury Attorney helping families of those who suffer the devastating effects of traumatic brain injuries.



Compassionately helping to find therapies for traumatic head injuries.



SanDiegoBrainInjury.com | 866-824-3476



COMMUNITY NEWS

Upcoming 2025 Saturday Speaker Series Meetings

**SATURDAY,
MAY 17,
2025** ***In-Person & Zoom**
SDBIF Hub Programs &
Activities Updates with
Special Guests*

**SATURDAY,
NOV 15,
2025** ***In-Person ONLY**
Game Day!!! Join your
friends for a day of fun
and laughter*

**SATURDAY,
JUL 19,
2025** ***In-Person ONLY**
Game Day!!! Join your
friends for a day of fun
and laughter*

**SATURDAY,
DEC 20,
2025** ***In-Person ONLY**
HOLIDAY PARTY!!!
LOCATION TBD*



**SATURDAY,
AUG 16,
2025** ***In-Person & Zoom**
ABI Program Updates &
Information*

**SATURDAY,
OCT 18,
2025** ***In-Person & Zoom**
Outpatient Occupational
Therapy for Adults*



Want to see all of
SDBIF's videos?

youtube.com/@sdbif

Subscribe to get notification of newly
posted videos

***Join Us In-Person for the
Saturday Meetings &
Stay After for an HOUR of
Socializing with Friends
and light bites!***

IN-PERSON LOCATION

SD Writers Ink Office
Liberty Station Arts District, Barracks 16
2730 Historic Decatur Rd #204
San Diego, CA 92106



GreatNonprofits
REVIEWS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**Have a story you want to share with
SDBIF and the brain injury community?**

SCAN THE QR CODE to write a review of your experience with
SDBIF and in the process help us remain a Top-Rated Non-Profit!



COMMUNITY NEWS

SDBIF & Community Upcoming Events

SDBIF EVENTS

sdbif.org/events

MAY ZOOM Family & Friends Support Group

Friday, May 9, 2025 from 2-3:30 pm (PST)

Only 15 spaces are available—[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

MAY ZOOM Survivor Peer Support Group

Friday, May 30, 2025 from 2-3:30 pm (PST)

Only 15 spaces are available—[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

JUN ZOOM Family & Friends Support Group

Friday, June 13, 2025 from 2-3:30 pm (PST)

Only 15 spaces are available—[REGISTER ONLINE](#)



JUN ZOOM Survivor Peer Support Group

Friday, June 27, 2025 from 2-3:30 pm (PST)

Only 15 spaces are available—[REGISTER ONLINE](#)

JUL ZOOM Family & Friends Support Group

Friday, July 11, 2025 from 2-3:30 pm (PST)

Only 15 spaces are available—[REGISTER ONLINE](#)



3RD-PARTY PARTNER EVENTS

NEUROLAB 360

MORE INFO: neurolab360.com/free-services
(760) 704-8237

In-Person CogFit Group—Wed, 5/7 @ 10:45 am

In-Person Adaptive Yoga—Wed, 5/7 & 21 @ 12 pm

In-Person Stroke Support Grp—Wed, 5/14 @ 4 pm

HYBRID Aphasia Group—Fri, 5/9 & 23 @ 11 am

UCSD PALS MEETINGS

MORE INFO: mmw002@health.ucsd.edu

In-Person Art Class—Wed, 5/7 & 21 @ 2 pm

ONLINE Aphasia Class—Thur, 5/8, 15, 22, 29 @ 10am

In-Person Support Group—Fri, 5/2 @ 11am

SCRIPPS STROKE & BRAIN INJURY

MORE INFO: Deborah Pimstone, 760-633-6709
pimstone.deborah@scrippshealth.org

In-Person Brain Masters—Wed, 5/7, 14, 21, 28
@ 2:30-3:30 pm

HYBRID Stroke & TBI Support Group—Tue, 5/13 & 27
@ 2:30-3:45 pm

SHARP EVENTS

MORE INFO: Grace Latimer or Jim Lizardo,
619-740-4683

Online Gentle Fitness—Tue, 5/6, 13, 20, 27 @ 9:30am

SD PARKS & REC OUTINGS

MORE INFO: Alicia Bianchi at 619-525-8247

In-Person Spring Training Softball Game—FRI, 5/30
@ 11:30 am @ Park de la Cruz Community Center.
Stretching exercises, baseball skills, and a baseball
game modified to be safe, successful, and fun!

DOR DEPARTMENT of
REHABILITATION
Employment, Independence & Equality

Select programs funded
by a grant from the
Department of Rehabilitation

SDBIF is updating our database!

Scan this QR code to update your preferences and profile information, so that you are only receiving the information you want. No spam from us!





continued from page 11

consultation, contributes his expertise in brain injury as the program's student advisor. He meets monthly with the students to review their progress and help guide their engagement with survivors. From the SDBIF side, our Program Coordinator works closely with each survivor to complete assessments and build their personalized navigation plan, while our Consumer Navigator helps ensure that survivors are connected to the right resources to bring their plan to life.

What makes SISR so exciting is the dual benefit it creates. Survivors receive hands-on support from a passionate advocate, someone they can count on week to week as they face challenges and pursue new goals. Meanwhile, students gain an unparalleled learning opportunity—real, firsthand insight into the experiences of those living with brain injury. These shared journeys build empathy, shape future clinicians, and contribute to a more informed and compassionate standard of care.



As the SISR program continues to grow, we invite survivors to sign up early to join the waiting list and be considered for upcoming program cycles. This is your opportunity to work directly with someone who is not only learning from you but also walking beside you as a source of encouragement, assistance, and advocacy.

We're proud to bring this level of innovative, one-on-one support to the SDBIF community. SISR is a movement toward deeper understanding and more empowered recovery.

More Photos from the 2025 surviveHEADSTRONG San Diego presented by Thorson Law Group













P.O. Box 84601
San Diego, CA
92138-4601

Return Service Requested

Share your brain injury recovery story and how SDBIF has played a part of it!

If we use your video to teach the public about brain injury recovery, you will get a gift card!

[CLICK HERE](#)
to send SDBIF your video

"The San Diego Brain Injury Foundation really helped me recover it all...They saved me from the isolation that some people actually experience."

Christina Hardy, brain injury survivor



LAW OFFICES OF
KROGER-DIAMOND & CAMPOS
APC

PERSONAL INJURY—ACCIDENTS

Automobile | Cycle | Dog Bite | Wrongful Death | Pedestrian | Slip & Fall

Serving the community for over 30 years

University Avenue
3180 University Avenue, Suite 220
San Diego, CA 92104 | (619) 682-5100

Poinsettia Village
7220 Avenida Encinas, Suite 203
Carlsbad, CA 92011 | (760) 931-2900

www.kdcinjurylaw.com

A Professional Corporation

-Free Consultation | No Recovery, No fee-

**Saturday
June 21, 2025
10 am - 3 pm**

San Diego
Brain Injury Foundation
**BRAIN INJURY
SYMPOSIUM
2025**

Cultivating Networks & Resources

ADMIRAL BAKER CLUB HOUSE

Register today for an interactive & engaging day of learning at the 2nd Annual SDBIF Brain Injury Symposium as we discuss navigating the reintegration journey after brain injury.

To learn more go to: **SDBIF.org/symposium**

**Scan the QR Code
to REGISTER**



**Scan the QR Code
to DONATE**

