Serving Brain Injury Survivors & Their Famlies Since 1983

SDBIF
SAN DIEGO
BRAIN INJURY FOUNDATION

Brain Injury Press

Quarter 4, 2026, Issue 269

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

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Friends OF THE FOUNDATION Drive

Click HERE make a **Life-Changing, Tax-Deductible Donation Today!**

'Tis the Season to Be the Reason Someone Feels Supported, Understood and Never Alone

The holiday season is a time for giving, connection, and reminding the people we care about that they are not alone. But for many brain injury survivors and their families, the journey of recovery can feel overwhelming, isolating, and full of uncertainty. This holiday season, you can help change that.

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Creativity, Community & Connection Celebrated at SDBIF's 2026 Friendraiser

by Xitlali "Lali" Vazquez

Having just started working at SDBIF at the beginning of 2026, this is my first time experiencing SDBIF's events and fundraisers. All year, I've helped prepare for each event before seeing it come to life, which builds excitement as the day approaches. I was especially excited about the Friendraiser because it celebrates survivor artists, and I couldn't wait to experience their creativity and see their beautiful artwork.

The evening was a wonderful celebration of the art of recovery! Our event brought together survivors, families, professionals, and supporters for an evening centered on creativity, connection,

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Be a Difference Driver—Give a Gift of Mobility, Independence & Possibility

The San Diego Brain Injury Foundation witnesses resilience every day. We also see firsthand how something many of us take for granted—reliable transportation—can make all the difference in a person's quality of life.

We are reaching out to you to consider helping the residents of Howard House, our residential facility in Escondido that provides 24-hour care and support for individuals with traumatic brain injuries. Howard House is home to 7 survivors who rely on a wheelchair-accessible van to attend their medical appointments, therapy sessions, and group outings that keep them connected and engaged with the world around them.

Unfortunately, our aging van has become increasingly unreliable, creating challenges for the residents who depend on it. We're seeking the donation of a wheelchair-accessible van to provide safe, dependable transportation and peace of mind for everyone connected to Howard House—our residents, staff, and the families who trust us to care for their loved ones.

This vehicle would be more than transportation—it would be a lifeline. Beyond ensuring access to critical medical care, it would provide access to the experiences that bring joy, dignity, and independence to individuals whose lives have already been profoundly altered by brain injury.

We would be honored to recognize your generosity on our website, social media channels, and community outreach efforts. Most importantly, your support would have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of our inspirational survivors and their families.

Thank you for considering this request. We'd welcome the opportunity to speak with you personally and share more about Howard House and the people who call it home. Please contact us at **(619) 294-6541** or **info@SDBIF.org**.



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



Greetings Brain Injury Community Friends,

What a year it's been! I'm tremendously grateful for all we've accomplished together. We met challenges with determination, strengthened partnerships, and expanded our programs, services, and community connections. Most importantly, we remain committed to helping survivors and families find support, opportunity, and hope throughout recovery and reintegration.

For more than 40 years, SDBIF has built a foundation of trusted resources, education, peer support, and community connections. Our newer programs, introduced in 2025—SISR, ALT Library, and BICN—extend that legacy. In 2026, we continued strengthening these initiatives alongside our established services. Here are a few highlights:

- **Community Engagement:** Our surviveHEADSTRONG Walk, Brain Injury Symposium, and Friendraiser brought survivors, families, practitioners, advocates, and supporters together for education, inspiration, and connection. Our talented survivor artists made this year's Friendraiser especially meaningful.
- **Survivor-Centered Programs:** Our SISR partnership with SDSU connects student advocates with survivors, while our ALT Library and workshops build everyday technology skills and independence.
- **Resource Connections:** The Brain Injury Collaboration Network (BICN) strengthens relationships among brain-injury-informed providers, complementing our established helpline, resource navigation, education, and support groups.
- **Howard House:** Our residential home is at full capacity with eight residents! Their individual goals and accomplishments reaffirm the importance of compassionate care and a supportive home.

Looking ahead, we're exploring opportunities to expand our impact, including additional survivor residential services and a day program offering survivors meaningful activities and fellowship, while providing caregivers much-needed respite. Both initiatives are in early stages, and we intend to proceed thoughtfully.

ONE NEED IS IMMEDIATE: Our 2003 Toyota Sienna is no longer reliable for transporting ambulatory Howard House residents to appointments and recreational activities. A donated replacement van or contributions toward purchasing one would make a tremendous difference.

The upcoming **Holiday Celebration on Saturday, December 19**, will honor survivors' strength and endurance and the families beside them. We are privileged to walk alongside you through recovery and reintegration.

I invite you to support our **Friends of the Foundation Drive, November 1–December 31**. Gifts of any size—including stocks, bonds, equipment, and other valuable resources—help keep our services free. Year-end contributions may be tax-deductible as permitted by law.

Together, let's end this year STRONG and carry this momentum into a new year of possibility!

With gratitude and anticipation,

.



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


ALT Library Workshop

continued from page 1

From November 1 through December 31, SDBIF invites you to become a Friend of the Foundation through our annual End-of-Year Donation Drive. Your generosity helps ensure brain injury survivors and their families have a community where they feel supported, understood, and never alone.

Every dollar makes a difference.
Every gift can change a life.

- **$25** provides 30 minutes of telephone helpline service to survivors, family members, friends, and caregivers seeking answers, guidance, or simply someone who understands. When someone needs support, we are here for you!
- **$50** pays for one hour of personalized resource consultation, assessment, and service to help brain injury survivors navigate recovery and find the resources they need to move forward.
- **$100** funds SDBIF's community programs, including Saturday Educational Meetings, Support Groups, the Students Invested in Survivor Reintegration (SISR) Program, Day of Art, and more—creating opportunities for connection, learning, and belonging.

Whether you give $25, $50, $100, or another amount that is meaningful to you, your contribution helps remind survivors and their loved ones that they don't have to face this journey alone.

Give the Gift of Support This Holiday Season

Your donation to SDBIF is tax-deductible and may also offer an opportunity to reduce your 2026 tax burden. Tax benefits depend on your individual circumstances, so consult your tax professional to learn what options may be right for you.


Day of Art

There are also meaningful ways to be a Friend of the Foundation beyond a cash donation. You can support SDBIF through gifts of appreciated stock and securities, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from eligible IRAs, real estate, vehicles, cryptocurrency, or grants from Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs). These giving options may offer distinct tax advantages depending on your situation.

To explore a non-cash gift, contact the SDBIF team at **619-294-6541** or **info@sdbif.org**. Cash donations can be made online at **SDBIF.org/give**.


Brain Injury Symposium



SISR Workshop

Be the Reason Someone Feels Supported, Understood, and Never Alone.

Your generosity reaches far beyond a donation. It helps create connections, open doors to resources, and remind survivors and families that a caring community stands beside them. This holiday season, give the gift of hope and belonging. Become a Friend of the Foundation and help SDBIF continue changing lives—one survivor, one family, and one act of generosity at a time.

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to make a life-changing donation to SDBIF

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and community. Each of our ten survivor artists—**Michael Carini**, **Maria McClellan**, **David Ward**, **Deborah Consaul**, **Alana Shipman**, **Kurt Rotzinger**, **Ryan Olson**, **Lora Dunlap**, **Stevie McCarley**, and **Megan Hurley**—shared their unique talents through an incredible variety of artwork. From acrylic and oil paintings to greeting cards, ceramics, books, and so much more, every display offered a glimpse into the artists' creativity, experiences, and individual perspectives.

We were especially honored to have **Megan Hurley serve as this year's honorary chair**. Her inspirational speech reminded attendees of the strength, perseverance, and hope that are part of the brain injury recovery journey.

Another highlight was our **table filled with incredible silent auction items** generously donated by our community of supporters. It was exciting to see which items captured everyone's attention and watch attendees return to place their bids. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the enthusiasm of our guests, the auction was a success! Most importantly, every dollar raised through auction sales directly supports SDBIF's mission to keep our programs, services, and resources free of charge for brain injury survivors and their families.

We are deeply grateful to our event sponsors and supporters: **De Rose Foundation**, **Thorson Law Group**, **Collage Rehabilitation Partners**, **Ludwig Speech Therapy & Support Services**, **Charito & Keith Richenbacher**, and **Dr. Dan Gardner**. Their generosity helped make this special evening possible and demonstrated the power of a community coming together to support brain injury recovery.

Throughout the event, I moved between directing volunteers, talking with artists about their work and personal stories, and connecting with attendees—including survivors, loved ones, and professionals. These conversations helped me understand just how much the Friendraiser means to our brain injury community. **It was inspiring to witness so many people coming together to celebrate survivors, recognize their accomplishments, and support the resources that help them move forward**.

The **photo booth sponsored by Thorson Law Group** was another crowd favorite! Guests enjoyed choosing props and posing for fun pictures with friends and family. My colleagues and I couldn't resist joining in, too! It was also wonderful to see attendees sharing their experiences with our photographer and videographer, helping capture what makes the Friendraiser so special.

And, of course, the **music by Garza and the Strays**, the wine, and hors d'oeuvres made the evening even more enjoyable. The wonderful entertainment, meaningful conversations, remarkable artwork, and an incredible community of supporters, the Friendraiser was an experience I won't ever forget.



My first Friendraiser was a powerful reminder that recovery is not a journey anyone should have to navigate alone. Thank you to our survivor artists, sponsors, donors, volunteers, and everyone who attended and helped make this event such a success. Your support ensures that brain injury survivors and their families can continue accessing the services and resources they need—free of charge.

I had a wonderful time sharing this evening with our community, and I already look forward to next year!





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RESIDENTIAL NEWS

Making Every Day Special at Howard House







Welcome to Howard House, Terry!
We're excited to welcome Terrence "Terry" Kirkpatrick, who joined our Howard House family on October 1! Over the coming months, Terry will be working toward improving his mobility and walking more independently. Our team is committed to encouraging and supporting him as he continues to work toward his goals!

WE NEED YOUR HELP—Van Donation Needed
Howard House is still in need of a van to help support our residents with transportation and community outings. Having a reliable vehicle would make a HUGE difference in helping our residents participate in activities and enjoy opportunities outside the home.

Do you know someone who may be willing to donate a vehicle? We would be incredibly grateful for any leads, referrals, or information about potential donations. Please send any information to Brianda Munoz, **info@sdbif.org**.

Thank you for helping us spread the word and support our Howard House community!

Spooky Season at Howard House!
We had a blast at our Annual Halloween Party! It brought everyone together for an afternoon of fun, laughter, festive decorations, games, treats, and Halloween spirit. These special moments allow our residents and staff to create memories, enjoy time together, and celebrate as a community.

Birthday Celebrations | October – November
Birthdays are a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the amazing individuals who make our home special. Please join us in wishing our residents and Staff Members a very happy birthday!

OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
Terry Kirkpatrick	Jose Hernandez
Jennifer Smith	Cristina Aniag
	Justin Pak

Getting Ready for the Holidays!
As we move into November, we are looking forward to the warmth and excitement of the holidays. From decorating the house to baking holiday treats, we will be creating a cozy and joyful environment for our residents. The holidays are a wonderful time to celebrate togetherness, share smiles, and make meaningful memories.

Message from Howard House
A home is more than just a place to live. It's a place to feel supported, build connections, celebrate milestones, and enjoy life's meaningful moments. We're grateful to EVERYONE who makes Howard House special. Thank you for being part of our journey and helping us continue to create a caring and welcoming home.

SDBIF Program Updates

Updates from SDBIF's Student Invested in Survivor Reintegration (SISR) Program

As we've mentioned before, the SISR program has been getting some major updates. A lot of those changes are being implemented now with the Fall 2026 SISR Program Cohort, and we have been able to see the improvements. Within the first month of this cohort, we can already see progress from the survivors who joined the program. This is a great opportunity to receive the help you need while also helping students become better advocates and professionals.

- The Fall 2026 SISR cohort is the first to receive **1 academic unit at SDSU** for participating in the program.
- Active survivor participants in the program can apply for a **direct support stipend** starting this semester.
- We have a full cohort with **12 students and 11 survivors**.
- We recently **implemented an orientation** for the program, so this was the first semester to receive the presentation. The initial orientation was a big success!
- **Our monthly SISR workshops, facilitated by Rehab Without Walls, are available to all survivors both in person and via Zoom**. If you want to join a workshops, email us to register. We can send you the zoom link once confirmed.
- The Fall 2026 Student Advocate Cohort **met with Dr. Dan Gardner monthly** to learn how to best communicate with survivors. The first meeting was a success, giving students firsthand insight into life after a TBI with a survivor sharing first-hand experiences.
- We are **working on feedback forms** for participants to let us know how SDBIF is doing and how the SISR program helped them.
- We will be having a **closing ceremony on December 4th to celebrate the end of the semester**. There will be food, socializing, and end-of-semester presentations showing what everyone learned.
- **We are accepting people to our SISR program waitlist to apply for next semester.** Please email **info@SDBIF.org**.



COMMUNITY NEWS

Brain Injury Collaboration Network

BICN Connects with the Community at Healing Waves Aquatic Therapy's 15th Anniversary

The Brain Injury Collaborative Network (BICN) was proud to exhibit at Healing Waves Aquatic Therapy's 15th Anniversary Celebration! This milestone event provided an opportunity to recognize Healing Waves' contributions to the community while advancing BICN's mission of strengthening connections among brain injury survivors, families, service providers, and community organizations.

What Did BICN Accomplish?
By exhibiting at the celebration, BICN increased its visibility within the disability and rehabilitation community, introducing attendees to its work, the importance of coordinated brain injury support, and connections to community-based resources.

Participation also strengthened relationships with organizations serving individuals with disabilities. Connecting with providers such as Healing Waves raises awareness of services that may benefit survivors. Aquatic therapy, depending on individual needs and treatment plans, can support mobility, balance, strength, and physical functioning in a supportive environment. Highlighting these options reinforces the value of a comprehensive approach to recovery.

BICN's presence also brought brain injury awareness into a community setting where rehabilitation professionals, individuals with disabilities, and service providers could connect. These interactions help build a stronger support network and increase awareness of resources available.



Strengthening Community Connections
BICN builds relationships across the brain injury community to encourage collaboration, increase resource awareness, and strengthen connections between providers. A well-connected network provides better support to survivors addressing their acute and long-term needs.

Community events like Healing Waves' anniversary celebration advance these goals by increasing BICN's visibility and creating opportunities for collaboration. As the network grows, BICN remains committed to connecting organizations, sharing resources, and helping survivors and families access available support.

Thank you to Healing Waves Aquatic Therapy for 15 years of service and for including BICN in this special celebration!





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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 corectly 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

Upcoming 2026/27 SDBIF Meetings & Workshops

NOVEMBER 2026

TUE 3 — IN-PERSON ALT Library Workshop—Using Digital Calendar Apps to Help with Everyday Tasks
from **2-4 pm** (PST)
FOUR (4) spaces available

FRI 13 — HYBRID SISR Workshop for Survivors & Students
from **10 am-12 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

FRI 13 — ZOOM Family & Friends Peer Support Group
from **2-3:30 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

FRI 20 — ZOOM Survivor Peer Support Group
from **2-3:30 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

SAT 21 — HYBRID Saturday Mtg—Narrative Medicine: The Healing Power of Storytelling
from **10 am-12 pm** (PST)

DECEMBER 2026

TUE 1 — IN-PERSON ALT Library Workshop—Using Digital Calendar Apps to Help with Everyday Tasks
from **2-4 pm** (PST)
FOUR (4) spaces available

FRI 11 — HYBRID SISR Workshop for Survivors & Students
from **10 am-12 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

FRI 11 — ZOOM Family & Friends Peer Support Group
from **2-3:30 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

FRI 18 — ZOOM Survivor Peer Support Group
from **2-3:30 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

SAT 19 — HOLIDAY PARTY
In-Person, **1-3 pm** (PST)
@ Mission Valley Library

JANUARY 2027

TUE 5 — IN-PERSON ALT Library Workshop—Topic to be announced soon. Check SDBIF.org for updates
from **2-4 pm** (PST)
FOUR (4) spaces available

FRI 8 — HYBRID SISR Workshop for Survivors & Students
from **10 am-12 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

FRI 8 — ZOOM Family & Friends Peer Support Group
from **2-3:30 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

SAT 16 — IN-PERSON Saturday Mtg—Building Vision Boards to Set the Right Tone for 2027!
from **10 am-12 pm** (PST)

FRI 29 — ZOOM Survivor Peer Support Group
from **2-3:30 pm** (PST)
15 spaces available

The Assisted Learning Technology (ALT) Library offers monthly workshops. But you don't have to wait for a workshop to get help!

- **Quarterly Themes:** Each quarter features a general theme, with monthly workshops exploring related topics.
- **One-on-One Assistance:** Need extra help or hands-on support using technology? We're happy to help!
- **Need More Help? Email** info@SDBIF.org to schedule a time and discuss how we can support your needs.

To get more information, or to register for these events, go to **SDBIF.org/events**

Upcoming FREE Community Events & Programs

NeuroLab 360 Rehabilitation and Wellness

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

In-Person Adaptive Yoga—**EVERY Wed** @ 12 pm
In-Person CogFit Group—**1st Thurs** @ 2 pm
In-Person Aphasia Group—**2nd & 4th Tues** @ 11 am
In-Person Stroke Support Group—**2nd Wed** @ 4 pm

SHARP

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

Online Gentle Fitness—**EVERY Tues** @ 9 am

Scripps

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

In-Person Brain Masters—**EVERY Wed** @ 2:30 pm
HYBRID Stroke & TBI Support Group—**2nd & 4th Tues** @ 2:30 pm

UC San Diego Health

MORE INFO: ***mmw002@health.ucsd.edu***

In-Person Art Class—**1st & 3rd Wed** @ 2 pm
In-Person Support Group—**1st Fri** @ 11 am
ONLINE Aphasia Class—**3rd Thurs** @ 9 am

The City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department

MORE INFO: **Alicia Bianchi, 619-525-8247**

In-Person Coaster to Carlsbad—**FRI, 11/20/26**
11 am - 4:30 pm @ Old Town Transit Center (4005 Taylor St., 92110)

In-Person Karaoke & Table Games—**FRI, 2/26/27**
11:30 am - 1:30 pm @ Park de la Cruz Community Center (3901 Landis Street, San Diego CA 92105)

If your company provides a **Free-of-Charge Service** / **Program** and want to be considered for this section of our newsletter, send an email to **info@SDBIF.org** and one of our team members will reach out for more information!

Check out SDBIF's brain-injury-related informational videos

youtube.com/@sdbif

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Building Better Routines Through Assisted Learning Technology (ALT)

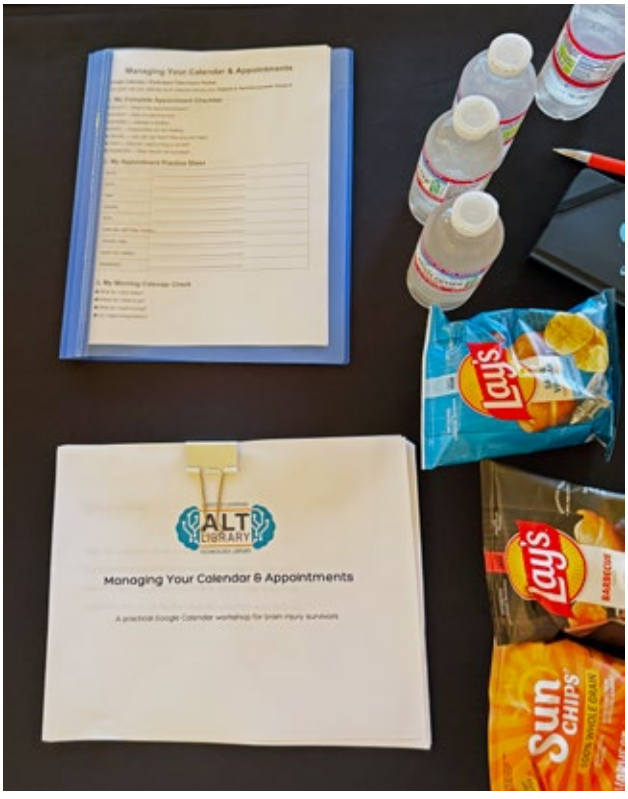
Managing appointments, important dates, and daily responsibilities can be challenging after a brain injury. To help survivors build practical skills and independence, SDBIF hosts Assisted Learning Technology (ALT) workshops on the first three Tuesdays of each month, focusing on digital tools that help organize schedules and routines. Workshop topics change each quarter. Because brain injuries can affect memory, attention, and organization, technology can reduce the mental effort required to remember and manage everyday tasks.

Participants learned to create and edit calendar events, set reminders, schedule recurring appointments, and plan upcoming responsibilities. They also explored habits such as entering appointments immediately and checking calendars each morning to prepare for the day. These strategies create a reliable organizational system that reduces dependence on memory alone.

Take-home materials and practical exercises support continued learning beyond the workshop. The goal was not simply to teach Google Calendar, but to help survivors identify how technology can meet their individual needs and support daily routines.

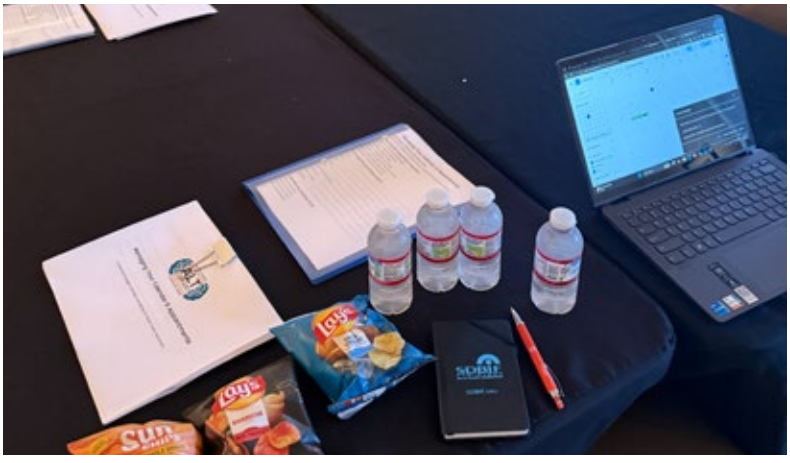
Why Is This Important for Survivors?

ALT bridges the gap between knowing what needs to be done and having a practical system to follow through. Tools like Google Calendar can improve time management, reduce the stress of forgotten appointments, and help survivors feel prepared for daily activities. With practice, these strategies can build confidence, self-advocacy, and independence.



Through ALT workshops, survivors discover accessible tools, develop personalized strategies, and strengthen skills that support their goals and quality of life.

To learn more about the workshops and to register, email us at **info@sdbif.org**.



More Photos from the 2026 SDBIF Friendraiser















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"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

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SDBIF.org/GIVE



CHAMPION $25

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Donate



HERO $50

Covers 1 hr of individual resource consultation and assessment service for brain injury survivors.

Donate



LEGEND $100

Funds SDBIF's community programs: Saturday Meetings, Support Groups, Day of Art & more!

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