

## AHIF Returns to Pre-COVID Normal... With a Twist

With each day giving us all more confidence that COVID-19 is finally in the rear-view mirror, AHIF is strategically thinking, like so many others, about what the “new normal” will be post-COVID.

### Bringing Back What We Lost

AHIF is eager to bring back many of the programs we placed on hold during COVID, especially those most missed by those we serve. This includes bringing back our in-person support groups, returning to Camp ASCCA and Camp McDowell, and returning to visiting with clients and their families in their homes.



(Top) AHIF Support Group Coordinator Nicole Asbill and AHIF client Larry at the re-boot of the Mobile In-Person Support Group

(Right) AHIF’s successful Zoom support groups will continue in conjunction with the return to in-person groups

### Incorporating What We Learned

AHIF is also eager to incorporate the new services, along with the new ways to provide existing services, that we learned during COVID. This includes our Zoom support groups, our Zoom caregiver support groups, on-line therapy programs, and our tele-counseling program for clients and caregivers.

Brain Injury Caregiver  
Support Group



### Back To Normal?

As we reflect on the last two years of unprecedented change, AHIF is proud of how it quickly pivoted and explored new and creative ways of continuing to serve the TBI survivors, and their families, that we are so proud to serve. We believe that any organization, including AHIF, that returns to exactly how it was before COVID, never challenged itself to truly think outside the box, or to build a better mousetrap in accomplishing its mission. We look forward to returning to normal...with a “lessons learned from COVID” twist.





## A note from AHIF Executive Director Scott Powell

It will be years from now before we all truly process the consequences of the last two years in dealing with COVID-19. The lives lost...the lives changed...the families affected...few were spared its impact.

For our AHIF family, it meant that we were not given the opportunity to properly recognize the years of service of a special AHIF employee, and sadly also that she was taken from us before COVID ended and we could appropriately thank her for all she meant to AHIF, to our clients, and to our caregivers.

Janice Waters passed away in September 2021. She retired from AHIF in early 2020, after a 20 year career where she faithfully served our clients and caregivers in her own special way. Working mainly with our respite care program and our camp program over the last several years, her health prevented her from attending camps, support groups, and so she rarely met in person those she served.

But, for many across our state, Janice was AHIF. She was the voice on the phone, that always listened...always cared...and always offered support in whatever way possible. For those dealing with TBI, she was a constant...a rock they could count on to always be there and always be willing to help.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to her sweet family, as we thank them for sharing Janice with us...and with our clients and caregivers for so many years.



## AHIF Welcomes Back In-Person Support Groups



Throughout 2022, AHIF will be bringing back its in-person support groups across the state.

- March 2022** - Mobile and Jacksonville Support Groups
- June 2022** - Birmingham and Roanoke Support Groups
- August 2022** - Tuscaloosa and Dothan Support Groups
- September 2022** - Montgomery Support Group

## AHIF Offers Two Distinct Caregiver On-Line Opportunities

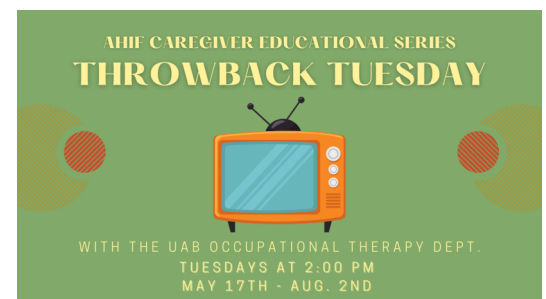
AHIF is pleased to offer a Zoom Caregiver Support Group, held on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month. If you are interested in joining this group, please e-mail

[caregiver@ahif.org](mailto:caregiver@ahif.org).



AHIF is also pleased to partner with the UAB Occupational

Therapy program to offer two special five-week series this summer, covering specific topics regarding the role of a caregiver. These include home safety, cooking, technology, healthy relationships and more. For more information on these programs, please visit our website at [www.ahif.org](http://www.ahif.org).



# Alabama TBI Survivor has a “Crowning” achievement

In 2021, young teenager Graci Pennington was performing a flying stunt in cheerleading, when she fell to the ground and hit her head, leaving her with a traumatic brain injury. Although she had a great recovery, her TBI did cause her to require a special education plan throughout middle and high school, a sign of the lasting impact of her injury.

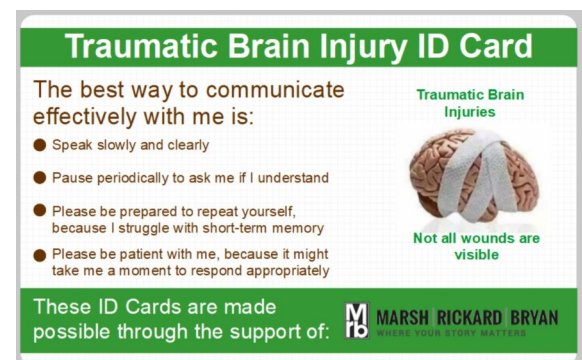
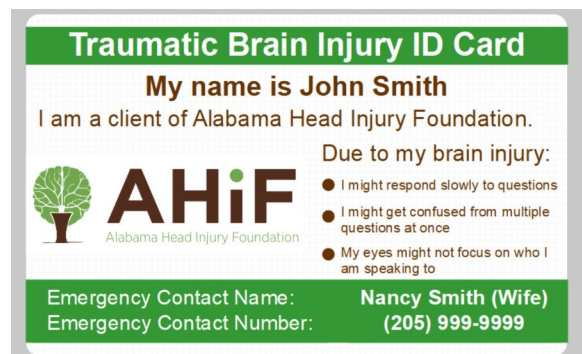
As Graci got older, she began competing in pageants, and in April 2022 was crowned Miss Alabama United States! Graci’s platform, throughout her pageant career, has always been traumatic brain injury awareness through her Heads Up For Head Injuries platform.

We are so proud of Graci for her accomplishment, and for bringing attention to TBI across the nation. We are also so thankful she took time out of her schedule as a senior at Auburn University to visit with our clients at our 2022 Auburn Bright Ideas TBI Camp!



# AHIF Introduces a New TBI Identification Card in Brain Injury Awareness Month

So often, TBI survivors share with AHIF staff the difficulties of explaining to others what it is like to live with a TBI. This is especially true with first responders, including law enforcement. Often, effects of a TBI can cause suspicion that the individual might be under the influence or non-compliant to instructions, which can lead to escalation of a situation. As part of March and Brain Injury Awareness Month, AHIF introduced a new TBI ID card that it will offer all clients for free, allowing them to personalize a list of items unique to them as a result of their TBI, promoting understanding for those they might encounter. AHIF will also conduct trainings with law enforcement agencies across the state to increase awareness about these cards. If you are interested in an ID card, please e-mail us at [info@ahif.org](mailto:info@ahif.org). AHIF is grateful to Marsh Rickard Bryan Law Firm for sponsoring this wonderful initiative.

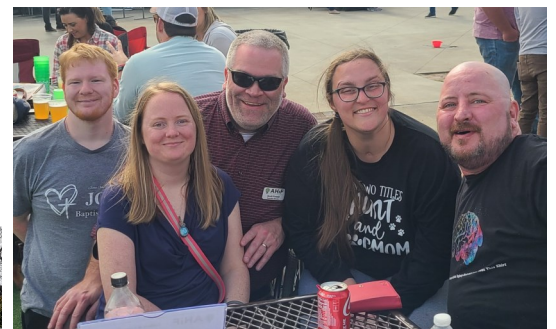


# AHIF Brings Back Beer, Band & BBQ

After COVID forced a two year absence, AHIF held its 6th Annual Beer, Band & BBQ on March 19, 2022, at Avondale Brewery. The AHIF Birmingham Regional Board hosted this fundraising and awareness event, which offered guests great food from Saw's BBQ, excellent live music from The WD Band, and a time to increase the awareness of TBI.

This year's event featured excellent weather, a great turnout, and a special treat of a large number of AHIF clients in attendance.

AHIF is thankful to our sponsors whose support made this a tremendous success!



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# AHIF Partners with Auburn and Tuskegee Universities for Bright Ideas TBI Camp

On April 6-8, 2022, fourteen AHIF clients came to Auburn University to work with students from Auburn and Tuskegee in the fields of Occupational Therapy, Kinesiology, Social Work, Speech Pathology and Audiology.

Over the three days, students conducted assessments, introduced activities and strategies, and helped formulate an “at-home” action plan for clients to continue for the next six months.

We are deeply thankful to the wonderful students and faculty from these two outstanding universities, and the impact they made on the lives of our clients and their caregivers. We are also thankful to Aubie, who made a special visit to our camp as well!



# TBI Survivor Forms Foundation To Support Others Who Are Living With TBI

AHIF client Kearria sustained a traumatic brain injury in 2015, at the age of 20, while attending a social gathering in Panama City, FL. Someone starting firing a gun at random, and struck her in the head.

Her recovery has been an inspiration to so many, and Kearria has now completed her undergraduate degree, and has moved into a graduate program in Rehab Counseling, so she can help others living with TBI. She has also created her own Foundation, and received a grant to put together TBI kits to help those living with TBI deal with the social isolation it brings.

In May 2022, Kearria delivered her special TBI kits to the attendees of AHIF’s Mobile Support Group! Everyone was thankful for her thoughtful gesture, and we look forward to

welcoming Kearria to our USA Bright Ideas TBI Camp in June, where she will deliver more of her special kits!





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**Our Mission:** *To improve the quality of life for survivors of traumatic brain injury and for their families*

**Our Vision:** *We envision a state where traumatic brain injury is prevented where possible and fully understood and supported where not.*

AHIF is a proud partner of:

United Ways of Central Alabama,  
 Lee County, Etowah County,  
 Marshall County, and West  
 Alabama



## AHIF Welcomes a Counseling Intern in Its Mental Health Counseling Program

When AHIF initiated its mental health counseling program in 2019, we knew that demand for this service would continue to grow as more and more learned about its availability. Initially, AHIF contracted with Katie Bee Counseling for services, then brought Katie Beaugez on-board part-time, and then converted her role to full-time. As demand continued to grow from both clients and caregivers, AHIF assigned caseloads to certified AHIF staff members Chandraia Whitted, Bethany Leonard and Jenn O'Dell. But, AHIF was also fortunate to bring on Miguel Torres as a counseling intern from the University of Montevallo. Miguel has a special interest in family and group counseling, and is also a military veteran. So often, a traumatic brain injury can have a profound, long-term impact on marriages, and entire family units.

If you are an AHIF client, or a caregiver to an AHIF client, and you feel you could benefit from speaking to someone, please contact AHIF at [counseling@ahif.org](mailto:counseling@ahif.org).



AHIF Counseling Intern Miguel Torres