

Alabama Head Injury Foundation



2021
Annual Report

www.ahif.org

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Message from AHIF Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Like most of you, AHIF welcomed 2021 with a hope that we could put the uncertainty and tragedy of the pandemic-plagued 2020 behind us, with a much anticipated “return to normal.” Of course, this did not happen, as COVID-19 continued to influence and impact so many aspects of daily living. However, it was more than that, as we also started to question what exactly it meant to return to normal. It is now clear that, even when COVID is behind us, we will have a “new normal” that we adjust to in both our professional and our personal lives.



Scott Powell
AHIF Executive Director

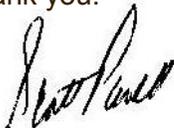
In these uncertain times, we, like others, seek to identify those elusive silver linings even in something as devastating as COVID. For us, it came in the form of tearing down geographic barriers, and embracing technology to more effectively reach our clients and caregivers, no matter where they lived in our state. We found that it made it possible to reach our clients and caregivers for support groups, to provide therapy-based camps and programs on-line, and to even provide tele-counseling to clients and caregivers with no options in their local community. In many ways, COVID was transformational to our entire approach of delivering programs and services.

As a result of being able to offer a broader array of programs and services, even in the middle of a pandemic, AHIF saw an increase in demand for services across its caseload, and provided services to **1,636** TBI survivors in Alabama in 2021, compared with **1,351** in 2020, an increase of **21.1%**. As people got out of their homes less, we experienced a diminished demand for respite care services, but we were still able to provide more than **36** families with more than **1,957** hours of free respite care. Thankfully, we were able to return to in-person TBI Camps and Bright Ideas TBI Camps. We also were able to continue providing counseling services, primarily using video conferencing, as we embraced the use of technology as a service delivery method to reach more than **28** clients and caregivers with hundreds of hours of free counseling.

AHIF has fully embraced Zoom as a delivery method for support groups, and will continue using it even when we are able to return to in-person support groups. From the beginning of the pandemic, AHIF has now held more than 190 Zoom Support Groups, with nearly 6,000 total people in attendance.

I am so thankful for the AHIF Board of Directors deep commitment to the success of AHIF, and their support throughout this trying year. I am also thankful for the AHIF staff, who have continued to think outside the box and try new things to avoid our clients and caregivers feeling left alone in these uncertain times. I am thankful to each volunteer who has taken part in one of our in-person and virtual programs, showing our clients that you are interested in their well-being. And, most of all, I am so grateful to our clients, who have followed us into unknown programs and possibilities, have been patient as we figured things out, and have brought joy to our faces being able to interact with and support them as often as we can.

Thank you!

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Mission

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for survivors of traumatic brain injury and for their families.

Vision

We envision a state where traumatic brain injury is prevented when possible, and fully understood and supported where not.

Programs and Services

Support Services

AHIF used its network of seven Support Specialists across the state to check on existing clients, to help stabilize the lives of newly injured individuals transitioning home, and to meet the long-term needs of TBI and SCI survivors as they adjust to their new reality of living with the effects of a TBI and/or SCI.



AHIF provided this ramp to make it easier for Bobby to enter and exit his house.

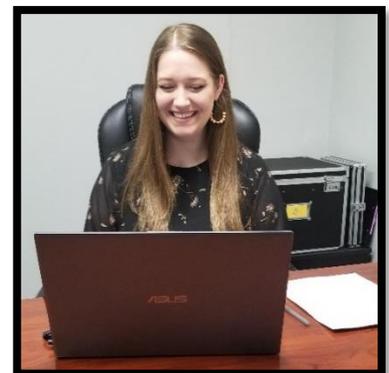


Respite Care

In a time when family and friends who typically try to help were not able to, AHIF's respite care program stayed active and gave caregivers a brief break, even if just to sleep or step outside, during a time of social distancing and quarantine when it was otherwise difficult to find. AHIF partners with home health agencies across the state to cover as much of the state as possible to provide free respite care to caregivers in the form of vouchers for service.

Mental Health Counseling

In 2021, AHIF hired Katie Beaugez as a full-time mental health counselor who, along with certified AHIF staff, expanded AHIF's caseload of clients and caregivers receiving free mental health counseling. AHIF also worked with university partners and plans to bring two counseling interns on-board in early 2022.



Katie Beaugez
AHIF Mental Health Counselor

Recreational TBI Camps

AHIF's TBI Camp programs returned in 2021. AHIF was able to hold a weekend camp at Camp ASCCA in March and its first ever weekend camp at Camp McDowell in October. AHIF looks forward to providing three camp opportunities in 2022.



Bright Ideas TBI Camps



AHIF was able to hold two in-person Bright Ideas TBI Camps, one at Samford University and its first ever camp at Auburn University, in partnership with Tuskegee University. AHIF also held a fully virtual Bright Ideas TBI Camp with The University of Alabama. More than 40 total clients attended these three camps, featuring students from various disciplines working together to assess and create "at-home" plans for clients to aid with their continued recovery and improve quality of life.



We Can Do It Program

AHIF was also once again honored to work with UAB as 26 AHIF clients took part in the "We Can Do It Program," where students from PT, OT, Kinesiology and Nutrition worked with clients once a week for nine weeks to help identify areas where they can lead a healthier life through increased activity and a better diet.





VIRTUAL SUPPORT GROUPS

Recreational Support Groups

Beginning March 2020, AHIF switched all of its support groups to Zoom. Since that time, we have held at least two Zoom Support Groups each week. The response has been tremendous, and we are committed to providing Zoom Support Groups on a regular basis moving forward!

Informational Sessions – AHIF offered support groups aimed at providing important information to clients through a game or other engaging format!

- Occupational Therapy students from UAB facilitated a range of support groups including meditation, home safety, memory, cooking and sleep.
- Melissa Sizemore from the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency spoke about safety in severe weather situations.
- Claire Roberts, MSW Intern from Auburn University, conducted a multi-week session on individual strengths.



UAB OT Students created a virtual cookbook for AHIF Clients!

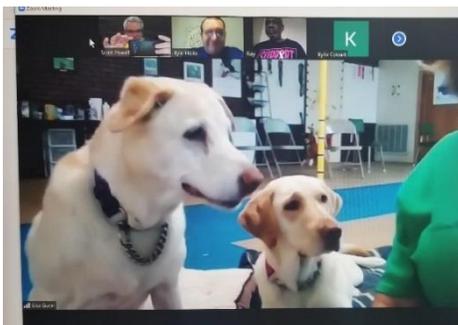
Socialization Sessions – AHIF offered support groups aimed at encouraging our clients to share with one another, and to learn from one another’s experiences!

- Two Truths and a Lie
- Expressing Gratitude
- AHIF Poetry Slam
- AHIF Karaoke Night

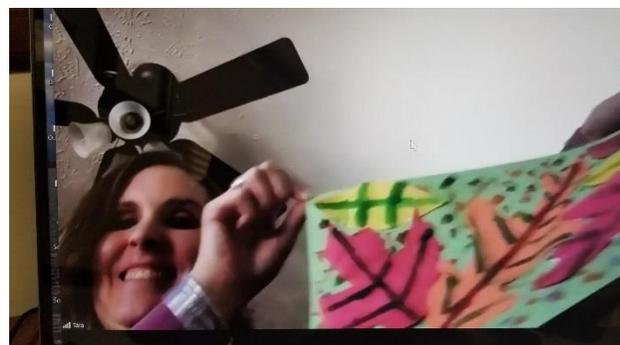


Recreational Sessions – AHIF provided numerous sessions that, although they also had a deeper purpose, offered the chance to interact and just have fun!

- Jeopardy
- Wheel of Fortune
- Family Feud
- Disney Escape Room
- AHIF Murder Mystery
- Therapy Animals
- Beat Shazam!!
- Charades
- The Price is Right
- Star Wars May the 4th
- Art Projects with the Wiregrass Museum of Art



AHIF clients enjoyed a “virtual” visit from therapy animals!



AHIF clients made art through the instruction of Brook McGinnis, with Wiregrass Museum of Art!

Client Spotlight - Mike

Mike sustained a serious traumatic brain injury three years ago when he was involved in a motor vehicle accident. He spent five weeks at UAB, most of it in the Neuro ICU, after which he spent an additional six weeks at UAB's Spain Rehab Center. It was after he returned home that discussions focused on positive ways to fill Mike's day with meaningful activity.

Mike first came to AHIF's Zoom Support Group in late Summer 2020. We are deeply grateful to Lisa Miles, with the Alabama Department of Rehab Services, for encouraging Mike to come.

There were two things you immediately noticed about Mike. First...was his wonderful smile. He smiled from the moment support group began, until the moment it ended. The second thing you noticed...was that Mike did not share at Support Group. He did not volunteer answers or input, and if you called on him, even as part of a game, he would quickly say "pass" and encourage you to move on.

What a difference a year makes! Mike still has that smile...but he also has opened up and talks with us at support group. His wonderful use of self-deprecating humor, and clever mind, leave us all smiling with him, and thankful for each meeting he joins! He loves the friends he has made through his involvement with AHIF, and is encouraging to new attendees.



Can I Have Some More Please?



After gaining a comfort with support group, Mike has expanded his horizons, engaging with AHIF in other programs. He took part in the UAB "We Can Do It Program," where UAB students from PT, OT, Kinesiology and Nutrition work with him once a week for nine weeks to offer suggestions for exercises and a healthier diet. He also attended our first camp ever at Camp McDowell at the end of October. As you can imagine, and see in the pictures on this page, the whole time he was at camp he never stopped smiling.

"My TBI changed my life...for the better."

- Mike

Mike now has his own apartment, and a wonderfully supportive family. He is still receiving outpatient Physical Therapy, helping with his balance, and attends yoga class twice a week.

Caregiver Spotlight – Denise Jenkins

An AHIF Caregiver shares her personal story as a TBI Caregiver

My son Anthony had just turned seven years old when he acquired his TBI. He had multiple strokes and lost 50% of his vision. He also lost use of his right side, but thankfully regained that over time. He is now 17 years old and my husband and I are overjoyed to have him in our lives. He looks just like his dad, but is now an inch taller because his dad has shrunk a little with age!



Following his TBI, Anthony had outpatient therapy near our home, and went to PT, OT and Speech Therapy five days a week until he was released a few months later. We had been living in Florida, and our whole family felt like we had no outside support until we found Cindy, AHIF's South Alabama New Client Support Specialist. We had not been involved with any agency before. I didn't even know they existed!

Zoom Virtually Made Things Possible

This all took place during COVID lockdown...and strict social distancing for everyone's safety. When Cindy first told me about the Caregiver Support Group, I don't know if I would have joined if it wasn't on a Zoom platform. The travel time, arranging meals around the meetings...and let's face it...just getting dressed up enough to go out...were all a challenge.

When I joined the Caregiver Support Group, I felt instantly welcomed and that my thoughts and feelings were validated. Not only my thoughts...but everyone was asked to share and get to know one another. This helped me not feel alone anymore. Everyone in the meetings were respectful, and they honestly get it. It seems that most TBI's are different, but our struggles remain the same.

So often I didn't realize the essential part that I played in navigating life's struggles for my TBI loved one, and continuing to advocate for them in their health, education, and pursuit of rejoining society to their fullest. I have learned that we have to first take care of ourselves so that we have plenty to give our loved one. The meetings have challenged us that we first need to understand their challenges so that we can be respectful and supportive.

After being part of the caregiver support group, I don't feel that my son would get the well-rounded care he is now receiving if not for the group. It's like when you are on an airplane and the flight attendant tells you to put the mask on yourself first, and then help others around you. I'm learning to put my own mask on first.

“Thanks to AHIF for the Caregiver Support Group. It means the world to me and I think I'm a better caregiver since I joined about a year ago!”

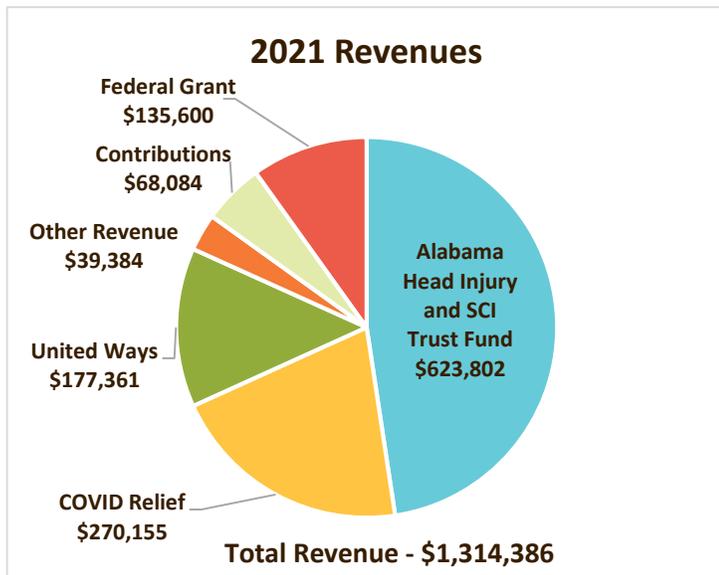
- Denise Jenkins

Resources & Financial Management

AHIF takes seriously the responsibility that comes when a supporter makes a financial gift. We strive to keep administrative expenses low, efficiently using the funds to further our mission in direct support of the clients and caregivers we are privileged to serve. AHIF currently has an 7.2% administrative overhead rate.

Revenues and Expenses

The charts below represent the sources of revenue for AHIF in FY'21 and the use of expenses by AHIF in FY'21.



Sources of Revenue

AHIF's revenue streams were drastically impacted by COVID-19, like so many businesses across our state. AHIF was able to secure both rounds of the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) Loans, and also received \$20,000 from the Alabama COVID Relief Fund. AHIF is thankful for these one-time sources of support in a time of such uncertainty.

AHIF is a proud partner agency of the **United Way of Central Alabama**, **United Way of West Alabama**, and **United Way of Lee County**. We are deeply thankful to these United Ways for the work they do in supporting agencies across the state, and for connecting generous donors in our state with worthy causes. Our overall funding from United Way decreased in FY'21, primarily due to the difficulties of raising United Way dollars during the COVID-19 pandemic.



AHIF 2021 Board of Directors

AHIF is thankful for each Board Member who, throughout 2021, offered their time, passion and resources to ensure AHIF fulfilled its mission throughout the year. AHIF could not provide its programs and services without the leadership and support of each of the Board Members who volunteer their time to support AHIF.

Bowden Sarrett – President

Ty Brown – Vice-President

Mark Andrews – Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Andrews

Devan Byrd

Kayla Fezell

John Gordon

Melissa Pangelinan

Michael Parker

Brandy Robertson

Jack Sellers

Kim Vice

Cam Ward

Derek Woessner

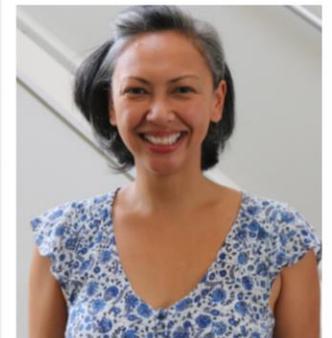


“With AHIF, I serve with talented and inspiring people devoted to helping survivors and caregivers cope with the emotional, social and financial impacts of a TBI. As a most basic level, AHIF is a group of people helping people, and it is heart-warming to see the positive impact AHIF’s programs and services have on the lives of its clients. Because of AHIF, TBI survivors in Alabama are not alone.”

- Ty Brown (Marsh Rickard Law Firm)

“From Day 1, I was impressed by Scott and the AHIF team – their level of professionalism, vision and action-orientation. Over the last 18 months, I have had the pleasure of working with several AHIF clients through our virtual exercise program in Spring 2021 and the Bright Ideas Camp at Auburn. I am committed to the AHIF mission and am so thankful for the opportunity to contribute as a Board Member.”

- Dr. Melissa Pangelinan (Auburn University School of Kinesiology)



“Following the death of my niece from a TBI I wanted to be involved in some capacity with AHIF to honor her memory. I know that had she survived her injuries she would have needed the services of AHIF. Through my involvement the last few years, I’ve realized that AHIF is a very special organization. I have been blessed to attend camp, karaoke night, support groups and I love being able to interact with the clients and hear their stories.”

- Brandy Robertson (Heninger Garrison Davis Law Firm)

Client Spotlight - Jamaar

For those who attend AHIF's Zoom Support Groups regularly, you could actually close your eyes, and still know when Jamaar has logged on. His laugh is uniquely his, and 100% contagious. As strange as it sounds, it can literally fill up a room, even if that room is "virtual" through Zoom.

Meet Jamaar

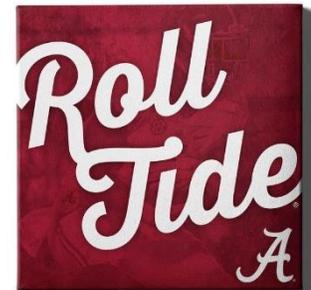
Jamaar sustained his TBI through a motor vehicle accident in 2013, when he was 25. It left Jamaar with significant physical limitations, and also some cognitive impairments as well. Jamaar openly shares at support group that he struggles with the knowledge of all that he lost, and the incompleteness of his recovery.



You Can't Keep Me Down

Jamaar has obviously been given his share of challenges in life...and then some. There are certainly times it gets him down, but Jamaar recognizes it is not something to shy away from or deny, and embraces his struggles and emotions. His raw sharing inspires others, reminding them they don't have to hide what they are feeling, and that AHIF Support Groups are the safest place there is to truly let go and share.

Although he actively participates in the support group activities, you can't sleep on Jamaar, and have to keep your eyes on the Chat Box as well. Throughout AHIF Support Group meetings, Jamaar shares deep thoughts, his own poetry, and clever jokes that reveal the range of skills and emotions he possesses. Jamaar also never misses a chance to join in with the other Alabama fans who attend support group in celebrating a recent victory by the Crimson Tide!



"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.' When I am feeling down and sad, I gain motivation to continue on from this passage and through my faith."

- Jamaar

Jamaar was 100% ready to attend the Samford Bright Ideas TBI Camp in Summer 2021, but sadly car trouble made the drive to Samford impossible. But, AHIF is working to make sure Jamaar is able to attend the same camp in 2022. He was able to take part in the UAB We Can Do It Program, and Jamaar is always thankful and appreciative for all programs and services he is able to take part in. He also bravely sought out counseling to help work through the emotional components of living with a TBI. And, through it all, his laugh brings joy to all his AHIF family.

Client Spotlight - Brittany

Brittany was struck by a car in 1997, when she was just six years old. It was in a small, quiet neighborhood, and something you never thought possible. It was devastating to the whole family, but also a situation where everyone knew that they had to surround Brittany, never leaving her side and continually work with her on her recovery.

Now 30 years old, Brittany began with AHIF this year by getting involved with AHIF's Bright Ideas TBI Camp at Samford University in Summer 2021. By attending this camp, Brittany was able to also find out about other AHIF opportunities, including AHIF's recreational camps at Camp ASCCA and Camp McDowell. As you can see in the photos, Brittany was very focused on what the students and professionals shared with her throughout the Bright Ideas TBI Camp.



Brittany is someone who never meets a stranger. She quickly formed friendships with the other campers at Samford, which motivated her to also start attending AHIF's Zoom Support Groups. Now, she rarely misses them. She loves to make everyone on support group feel welcome and included. She even goes out of her way to ask about attendees who are not present, making sure they are okay. She loves giving compliments to others, and loves sharing her love of eating chicken to all who will listen!

Brittany has also taken advantage of AHIF's counseling program. She attends counseling sessions weekly with one of our counselors and has found counseling to be an outlet to share the emotions she is struggling with. Everyone at AHIF is so excited to work with Brittany, and we look forward to her continued progress in her recovery.



“AHIF has been so important to Brittany and me since the very beginning. They have helped us so much and we still continue to rely on them.”

- Brittany and Kay (her mom)

Meet Our Team

Administrative Staff



Scott Powell
Executive Director



Amy Eng
Program Director



Donna Huckestein
Bookkeeper

New Client Support Specialists



Briana Reed
North Alabama



Jenn O'Dell
Central Alabama



Bethany Leonard
Central Alabama



Cindy Woodcox
South Alabama

Long-Term Client Support Specialists



Marilyn Davis
North Alabama



Pat Motley
Central Alabama



Aimee Lott
South Alabama

Program-Specific Staff



Chandraia Whitted
Camp Coordinator



Nicole Asbill
Support Group
Coordinator



Katie Beaugez
Mental Health
Counselor

Volunteer and Donate

AHIF never charges for any of the services it provides, and thus relies on the generosity of individuals, businesses and foundations to provide the array of support services it does. We are deeply grateful for this support. If you would like to support AHIF, please consider the following ways you can help:

Help Us Do More With 84

Consider the impact that a gift of \$84 can have to the clients AHIF serves.

**Help Us Do
More With 84**

- It can provide 5 hours of respite care to a caregiver in desperate need of a break, especially when many family members are not able to assist due to COVID-19.
- It can provide 3 hours of mental health counseling to a TBI survivor or a caregiver who needs to work through some issues, especially in this time of COVID-19 isolation.
- It can help offset the cost of using Zoom each month to provide support groups in this challenging time.

Please consider joining our **Brain Trust**, a group of annual supporters giving at least \$84 to AHIF. You can go to www.ahif.org, and click on the “Help Us Do More with 84” tab on the homepage to set up a recurring monthly contribution of \$7 or more, and make possible one or more of the programs mentioned above. You can also mail your gift to the following address:

**Alabama Head Injury Foundation
500 Chase Park South Suite 130
Hoover, AL 35244**



Other Ways To Help

There are other, easy ways that you can help AHIF. Please consider using AmazonSmile when you shop online at Amazon, and Amazon will donate 0.5% of what is spent to AHIF when you select AHIF as your charity of choice. This can also be done with a variety of other online sites if you choose to use iGive as well.



You can also use your Facebook page to hold a fundraiser for AHIF, perhaps as part of your birthday celebration. For more information about this, or other ways you can support AHIF, please call our office at (205) 823-3818 or e-mail us at info@ahif.org.

Volunteer and Help Make a Difference

Please visit our website at www.ahif.org and fill out the volunteer form if you would like to volunteer at an AHIF support group, camp or with AHIF in some other way.



AHiF

Alabama Head Injury Foundation

Connect With Us!



 **YouTube**

www.ahif.org

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