

Working Progress

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Former Client Success Story

In 1990 the Regional Epilepsy Center at Harborview Medical Center had developed a program to help people with epilepsy find and keep employment. The question was raised "would that program work for people with brain injury?"

To test the idea, they selected Ron Finlay Jr. of Des Moines to try to place and see how the program would work. He was placed with the QFC Manhattan Village store in Normandy Park.

After the 6 month "trial period" the store decided to hire Ron Jr. on a long term basis as a part time courtesy clerk. On October 1 Ron completed 15 years working with the QFC store. In a short award ceremony with Ron and his parents, store manager John Reese presented Ron his 15 year pin and said that he has made a big contribution to the store.

Ron plans to continue with QFC for the foreseeable future.



Photo: Ron Finlay, Senior. Used with permission.

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Brain Injury Awareness Month: March 2006

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Brain Injury Can be Prevented!!

Many of the brain injuries that occur annually in this country can be prevented. Each year 140,000 persons die from brain injuries and 70,000 persons sustain severe brain injuries.

A brain injury is an insult to the brain caused by an external force, which may impair cognitive, physical, behavioral, and emotional functions.

Brain injury rehabilitation is a long process that is measured in years rather than months. Many persons with severe brain injuries face a wide range of lifelong problems. These problems, in turn, can dramatically affect an individual's ability to live independently, care for a family, and work.

The true extent of brain injury is conveyed by numbers. Lives, hopes, dreams, families, and friendships are often altered in the wake of a brain injury. Research, rehabilitation, public awareness, and PREVENTION can help to lessen the occurrence of brain injuries in our society.

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<http://www.biawa.org/prevention.htm>

Stroke - What You Need to Know

Know the signs. Act in time.

Stroke Symptoms

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg (especially on one side of the body)
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

What should you do?

Because stroke injures the brain, you may not realize that you are having a stroke. The people around you might not know it either. Your family, friends, or neighbors may think you are confused. You may not be able to call 911 on your own. That's why everyone should know the signs of a stroke — and know how to act fast.

Don't wait for the symptoms to improve or worsen. If you believe you are having a stroke - or someone you know is having a stroke - call 911 immediately. Making the decision to call for medical help can make the difference in avoiding a lifelong disability.

National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke
http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/stroke/stroke_needtoknow.htm#signs

Why doctors tread carefully when it comes to concussions

By Warren King

Seattle Times medical reporter

When doctors took a few days to conclude this week that Seattle Seahawks running back Shaun Alexander had recovered enough from a concussion to play in this Sunday's NFC championship game, they weren't being overly cautious.

If Alexander hasn't fully recovered, a second concussion could leave him with lifelong disabilities, including problems with memory, reasoning, speech, vision, hearing or movement. Or even kill him.

So as doctors do with all concussion patients, the Seahawks physicians went on brain watch: They checked his memory and decision-making, his balance and movement, and other factors to assess how his brain fared when a knee hit his helmet during last Saturday's game against the Washington Redskins.

Then they observed whether all those factors still held together when he exercised.

"You look for whether the [patient] can go back to what they were doing before" the injury, said Dr. Richard Ellenbogen, chief of neurosurgery at Harborview Medical Center and a consultant to Seahawks physicians.

Traumatic brain injuries are a major public-health problem. Nationwide, 1.4 million people a year receive them. About 75 percent of those injuries are concussions.

And repeated concussions have ended the careers of some of the country's top athletes, including quarterbacks Steve Young of the San Francisco 49ers and Troy Aikman of the Dallas Cowboys.

Some 50,000 people a year die of brain injuries, and about 90,000 others have long-term disabilities, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A concussion is generally considered the most minor form of brain injury. Technically, it occurs when someone loses consciousness, however briefly, after a blow to the head. But experts also consider it to be any temporary loss of awareness.

Athletes and coaches simply call it "getting your bell rung."

Sports of all kinds lead to about 300,000 mild to moderate brain injuries a year. But the biggest cause - with more than 700,000 cases - is accidents involving autos, motorcycles, bicycles or pedestrians. Falls and violence such as assaults cause most of the rest.

Experts say the riskiest sports for head injuries are football, boxing and ice hockey, though other sports such as soccer, rugby, gymnastics and skiing also pose risks. Helmets are the most recommended protection.

No one knows exactly what happens in a concussion, when the brain, which is normally suspended inside fluid, hits the side of the skull. But many experts believe that the basic chemistry of the brain is disturbed: Neurotransmitters, substances that convey impulses between brain cells, are jostled.

"It is an extraordinarily complex and precise system," said Dr. John O'Kane, University of Washington team physician. "If there is a [jarring] it makes it more fragile."

So physicians emphasize that receiving a second blow to the head before fully recovering from the first concussion is very dangerous.

People younger than 20 are most at risk for a relatively uncommon complication of concussions called "second-impact syndrome," in which even a relatively minor bump to the head can set off devastating, sometimes fatal, swelling of the brain.

Alexander is 28. But for anyone, a second brain trauma increases the risk of blood clots or other damage that can cause permanent disability, O'Kane and Ellenbogen of Harborview warn.

One recent study of about 2,900 college football players suggested that those who suffered a concussion at any time are more likely to have future concussions than those who have not had any. Players who had previous concussions may recover more slowly, the researchers concluded.

Typically, a person with a concussion won't remember the blow, or events just before and after. Some symptoms may take days or even weeks to appear.

(continued next page)

Concussions (continued)

Generally, the longer someone is unconscious or continues to have other symptoms, the greater the risk of a more serious second injury with lingering complications, Ellenbogen said.

In the National Football League, all players are given a cognitive test at the beginning of each season. Then, if they receive a concussion and symptoms linger, they are given the test again, even after there are no outward signs of injury, to see whether there are any subtle deficiencies. High schools and colleges also sometimes use such tests.

Concussion patients are told to get plenty of rest, both physically and mentally, to allow the brain to recover. Often that even means avoiding reading and watching television.

"A concussion is an injury to the brain," O'Kane said.

"And if the brain is not working, nothing else really matters."

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Signs of a concussion after a blow to the head

Loss of consciousness
Feeling dazed or "not yourself" for days or weeks
Headache
Confusion
Lightheadedness
Dizziness
Blurred vision or tired eyes
Ringing in the ears
Bad taste in the mouth
Fatigue or lethargy
Change in sleep patterns
Behavioral or mood changes
Trouble with memory, concentration, attention or thinking

Source: National Institute of
Neurological Disorders and Stroke

March 2006 is Brain Injury Awareness Month.

For more information, check the following sites:

Brain Injury Association of Washington <http://www.biawa.org>

Brain Injury Association of America <http://www.biausa.org/>

CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) <http://www.carf.org>

Neurological Vocational Services

Helping people with neurological conditions gain independence
one person, one job, at a time

Gala Dinner & Auction Spring Fling 2006

May 13, 2006

Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center—Arnold Building

- New Location with more space for auction items in the award-winning Arnold Building on the Fred Hutchinson campus.
- Hosted bar.
- Hors d'oeuvres and dinner with complementary wine.
- Bid on Gala Auction items: boat trips, vacation packages, hotel packages, pro sports team packages, Fund-A-Client, art, etc.
- Expedited Auction Checkout.
- Meet Bob Blackburn, our auctioneer and "The Voice of the Sonics."

Please call NVS at 206.744.9130 if you have not yet received your invitation to our 2006 Spring Fling Gala Dinner and Auction. Or check <http://nvsrehab.org> for the Spring Fling 2006 PDF, then print out and return the Reply Form with payment to NVS. Complete information can be found on the Reply Form itself.

Donor News

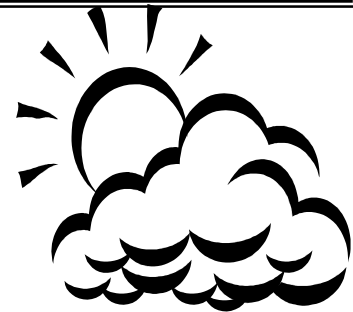
The NVS Board has focused over the past 2 years on cutting our fundraising costs. Please check the Combined Fund Drive site in early April 2006 for our percentage for 2005. Reducing fundraising costs further is a high priority for 2006 and beyond: watch our percentage continue to shrink.

<http://www.cfd.org>

Donate to NVS through these secure sites:

Combined Fund Drive - <http://www.cfd.org>

Local Independent Charities - <http://www.lic.org>



New !! - Donate a Vehicle to NVS

Vehicles may now be donated NVS through our Vehicle Donation program. . You can donate **online** or call **866-332-1778** to make your donation.

Check the "car" on our site for complete information on this free, convenient service:
<http://www.nvsrehab.org>.

Thank you for Exceptional Donations in 2005:

Tom Martin

Jan Pelroy

Peter and Beverly Vander Lugt

NVS Board of Directors—2005

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NVS thanks these outstanding former officers, directors, and staff for their leadership and commitment to our organization and clients. Without you, NVS and the last 30 years would have been just a dream.

Join NVS - On the Board or on the New Business Advisory Council

The need for NVS vocational services grows each year.

The non-profit NVS Board needs to grow as well: NVS Staff cannot provide these vital services without the support of a committed, dynamic and diverse Board. In recent years, the Board has been instrumental in determining policies, supporting fund-raising events, and gaining recognition for NVS.

The Board wants to do more. To do more, we need more Board members.

In addition, we are seeking advisors for a new Business Advisory Council (BAC) to work with the non-profit Board. Watch this space for further information on the NVS BAC and its meeting schedule (to be announced).

For both the Board and the Business Advisory Council, we are looking for people with sound business acumen. Experience in hiring, fund raising or marketing is helpful. Participation is critical.

Consider committing your time, passion and energy to one of the best charities in America. Call NVS at **206.744.9130** for directions to our next Board meeting or to a Business Advisory Council meeting. Join us—find out what all the passion and energy is about at NVS.