



# ACBIS Announcements

A newsletter of the Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists

ACBIS Announcements, Volume IV Issue I

November 2009

## ACBIS Across the Pond

In an effort to expand ACBIS training to an international level, Board members Tom Hall and Erika Mountz were invited to train 13 staff from Acquired Brain Injury-Ireland (ABI-I) this past April. ABI-I owns and operates brain injury community-based residential and day programs across Ireland. ABI-I staff were very gracious hosts and extremely motivated students. As a result of this successful venture, ACBIS has established an international subcommittee which, along with ABI-I staff, is working to develop an Irish supplement to the Essential Brain Injury Guide, along with modified training materials and tests unique to that country. Once completed, ACBIS looks forward to expanding this model to other interested countries.



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## ACBIS ... Getting the Word Out!



With the completion of a new ACBIS brochure, a mailing was sent to over 7,000 members of ACRM, ASHA, CARF and CMSA in June. There was an immediate response to the mailing with calls and inquiries. An increase in state applications, coupled with advertising the program, resulted in a significant increase in applicants for August and a monthly all-time-record high of over 300 applications in September. We are considering a second mailing to over 12,000 members

of APTA, AOTA and ARN for the future, with hopes of encouraging more and more direct care staff to pursue ACBIS credentialing and to become aware of the benefits that certification has to personal and professional growth.

As 2009 winds down, we will participate in many national conferences, including ACRM in Denver, CO; NABIS in Austin, TX; and the BIAA State Affiliate Leadership Conference in San Antonio, TX. Projections for 2010 will expand our presence at other conferences including: IBIA 8th World Conference on Brain Injury, and ABIA Association for Behavior Analysis International 36th Annual Conference.

As you review the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation, you will find a new ACBIS ad on the inside front and back covers of all six issues this year. This same ad will be considered for print in future issues of other publications such as ACRM Outlook Newsletter.

The marketing and promotional efforts in 2010 will continue to expand current efforts, and we are hopeful that these avenues will continue to provide staff and professionals the opportunity to learn important information related to the care and management of individuals following brain injury and earn a nationally recognized credential.

### *ACBIS Applications Trends*

ACBIS is pleased to report that application trends continue to be on the rise! For the 6th straight year, the number of applications for CBIS and CBIST are on a trend to increase over the previous year. The current numbers are through September, so 2009 will also show an increase over 2008. We currently have 3643 CBIS certificants, and look to add to that number before year end. We also had a nice increase in trainers this year, adding 24 more CBISTs in 2009.

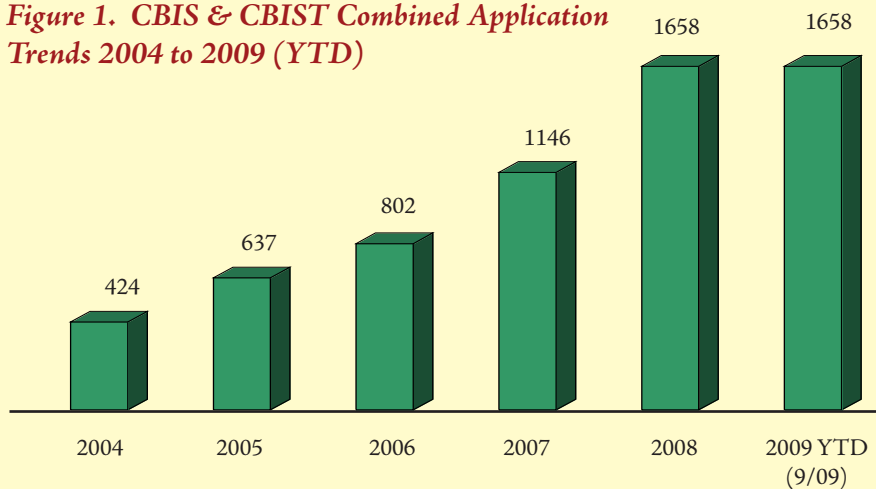
Figure 1 presents application numbers from 2004 to 2009. We had a record

year once again, with 1658 applications through September, 2009. Figure 2 highlights the overall numbers of CBIS and CBIST certificants from 2004 to 2009. Year to date for 2009 shows that we have added 904 new Certified Brain Injury Specialists. Figure 3 presents the number of renewals for the years 2006 to 2009. In 2006, we started tracking renewal numbers, while at the same time, ACBIS made a concerted effort to track down and remind certificants when their renewals were coming up. This has clearly resulted in higher response rates,

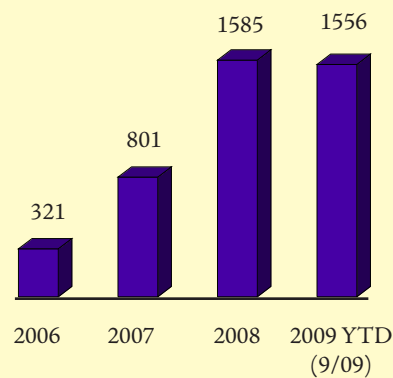


and thus better rates of renewals. Figure 4 shows the total number of CBIS and CBIST certificants to date, for those who have kept up their certifications.

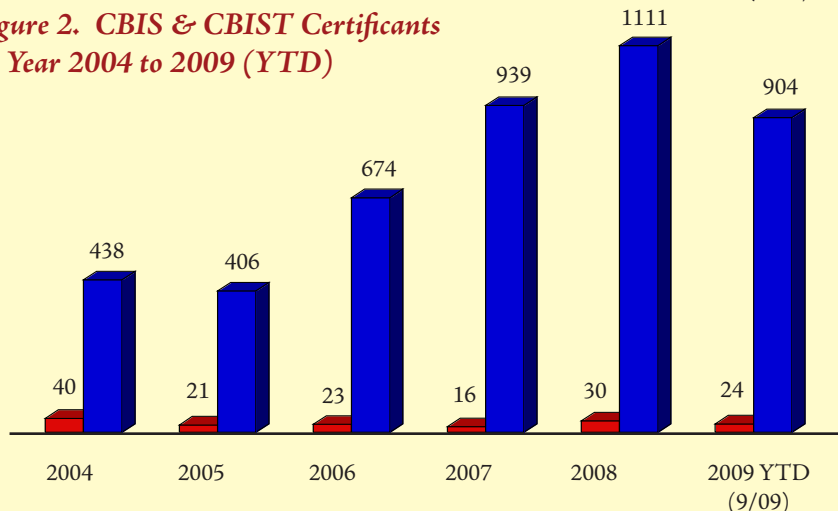
**Figure 1. CBIS & CBIST Combined Application Trends 2004 to 2009 (YTD)**



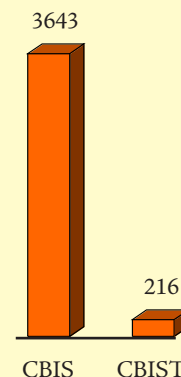
**Figure 3. Renewals 2006 to 2009 (YTD)**



**Figure 2. CBIS & CBIST Certificants by Year 2004 to 2009 (YTD)**



**Figure 4. Total Current CBIS & CBIST Certificants**



## In the ACBIS Spotlight

By Michael Mason

**Tracy Angstadt, BA, CBIST**  
**Clinical Specialist,**  
**ReMed Recovery Care Centers**

She's living proof that one person can make a tremendous difference.

In less than three years as a trainer, Tracy Angstadt has helped over forty people achieve certification through ACBIS.

"Becoming a CBIST has given me the opportunity to routinely and formally



educate others on all aspects of brain injury," says Angstadt. "It also allows me the opportunity to further assist the clients and families through the injury, and it encourages all of us who work within the brain injury field to take a step back and put ourselves in their shoes."

As a clinical specialist for ReMed, Angstadt oversees the clinical and medical programming of twenty clients who participate in ReMed's residential support and community-based rehabilitation apartments in Pennsylvania.

She's also responsible for supervising and training ReMed coworkers-no small task considering ReMed's commitment to brain injury education.

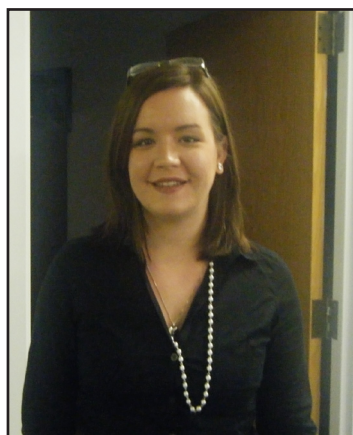
According to Angstadt, having a well-informed staff keeps ReMed's medical and clinical programming sharp, but the education helps matters far beyond the walls of the workplace.



Tracy Angstadt

"CBIS certification and daily work within the field gives me a better appreciation for the lifelong challenges ahead," says Angstadt. "But it also offers the hope that systems and forums will assist in preventing and treating brain injury."

## New ACBIS Coordinator



Jessica Kerney, our ACBIS Coordinator, has been with the Brain Injury Association of America since May of 2009.

She has 9 years of experience working with individuals with TBI and ABI, specializing in sub and post-acute rehabilitation. Most recently, Jessica worked as the Program Manager at The Crumley House, a non-profit brain injury rehabilitation center in Limestone, TN. She's also worked with the Brain Injury Association of TN to increase awareness amongst the community and engage residents inside and outside of the TBI Community in legislative issues across the state.

Jessica is thrilled to have the opportunity to advocate for TBI survivors on the national level. She's also excited to educate and recognize excellence and knowledge

in TBI Professionals through the ACBIS Program as ACBIS is integral in the education of the TBI community.



## *Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialist - Certification Disclaimer*

The Academy of Certified Brain Injury Specialists provides a certification program that intends for individuals to become familiar with a broad range of issues relevant to the care of people with acquired brain injuries. The training material and testing requirement was developed for unlicensed, non-professional staff to help raise their skill level and contribution as an integral part of interdisciplinary rehabilitation teams. This training material has also proved helpful to professionals who do not have a background in brain injury rehabilitation or rehabilitation professionals who wish to broaden their education in their efforts to adequately serve this population. This certification also assists consumers in their efforts to identify facilities and professionals committed to maintaining a basic level of skill and knowledge as regards the needs of those recovering from a brain injury. However, it does not confer or imply the acquisition of advanced training or expertise in brain injury rehabilitation. As such, this certification does not inherently expand a professional's scope of practice but might be part of their continuing education or post-academic development. Professionals from disciplines that might serve brain injury survivors must follow the practice guidelines as set forth by their oversight licensing and academic organizations.

Certification as a Brain Injury Specialist or Brain Injury Specialist Trainer is a designation that indicates the following:

1. The individual has met the minimum application standards for certification.
2. The individual passed the certification examination.
3. The individual is in good-standing as

regards renewal costs and continuing education requirements.

4. The certificant is familiar with a broad range of issues important in the care of brain injury survivors which may inform their work with these consumers.
5. And, in the case of a Trainer, is qualified to provide training to others seeking this certification.

Certification as a Brain Injury Specialist or Brain Injury Specialist Trainer neither implies nor warrants:

1. That the certificant is an expert in brain injury rehabilitation.
2. That the certificant is qualified to offer professional services without the appropriate license or provide unsupervised treatment.

Misuse of the certification as noted above would be in violation of the ACBIS Ethics Policy and could result in revocation of the certification.

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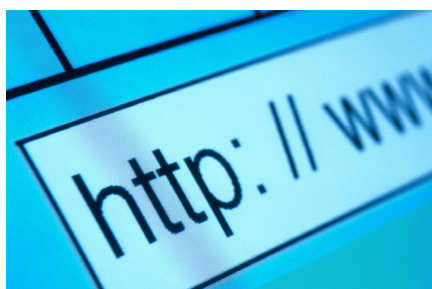
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*Disclaimer, Continued on Page 6*

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6. provide a list of members of committees and the Board of Directors.

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### *ACBIS Announces Plans for a Provisional Certification for Students in Allied Health*

In response to the growing demand for Certified Brain Injury Specialists (CBIS), the Academy for the Certification of Brain Injury Specialists (ACBIS) is offering students in allied health care and psychology a Provisional Certification. The program offers students a provisional certification as brain injury specialists (PCBIS) where they will be eligible for full certification after they reach the required supervised work hours (500 hrs). The PCBIS offers students interested in

neurorehabilitation an advantage over other potential employees and a way to speed certification.

Students wishing to apply will be charged a reduced fee of \$150 which includes the training book, *The Essential Brain Injury Guide*. The Provisional Certification is good for 3 years after it has been awarded to allow students to graduate and find a position in neurorehabilitation. After the PCBIS has completed 500 hours of su-



pervised work they can activate their full certification (CBIS) for a nominal fee.

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ReMed Recovery Centers: Massillon, OH

*ACBIS board members are accomplished professionals in brain injury rehabilitation. They have varied educational backgrounds and professional expertise.*

## New Board Members

### Cynthia Boyer

Cynthia Boyer, Ph.D. serves as Senior Clinical Director for Brain Injury Programs at Bancroft NeuroHealth. She has worked in the field of neuropsychology and brain injury rehabilitation for more than 20 years. She has adjunct faculty appointments at Rowan University (Department of Special Education), Widener University (Department of Clinical Psychology), and Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (Department of Clinical Psychology). Dr. Boyer has an-

cillary privileges in the Dept. of Neurology at Cooper University Hospital and is a medical rehabilitation surveyor for the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). She has a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Delaware with a specialization in neuropsychology and is licensed as a clinical psychologist in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

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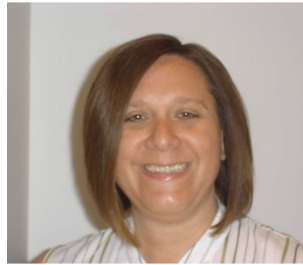


*New Board Members - Continued from Page 7***Caroline Feller**

Caroline Feller, M.S., OTR, CCM, CBIST has demonstrated a passionate commitment toward individuals directly affected by brain injury and their families for nearly 25 years. This passion was awakened early in her career as an occupational therapist while she was working with a client who had sustained a traumatic brain injury. Subsequently, her vocational pursuits have been consistently focused in the area of brain injury. Her work history includes positions as a cognitive specialist, clinical supervisor, case manager, program director of post acute services, and director of brain injury services. In addition, Ms. Feller has extensive background in program development, quality assurance, and grant deliverables with CDC and the Federal TBI Grant Program. She served as the first executive director of the Brain Injury Association of Wisconsin, past board member of the Brain Injury Association of America, and as the Director of Affiliate Services for the Brain Injury Association of America. Ms. Feller's advocacy has focused on the local, state and federal levels to promote quality, accessible services for individuals with brain injury and their family members. Ms. Feller is currently the Director of Brain Injury Services for MENTOR ABI Wisconsin.

**Angie Jackson**

Angie Jackson, MS-CCC/SLP, MBA, CBIST holds master's degrees in Speech-Language Pathology and Business from Missouri State University. She has

**Bud Elkind**

practiced in multiple settings and has been at Pate Rehabilitation in Dallas, TX for the last six years focusing on her area of greatest interest, brain injury. She initially came to Pate Rehabilitation as a Program Manager for the Residential Program which included managing, training and providing on-going education for the residential staff. She now works in the Marketing Department doing assessments and insurance negotiation for pending patients to admit to Pate. As a CBIST, she has also been instrumental in the training and certification of 60+ staff as CBIS, and that number continues to rise. Outside of work, Ms. Jackson enjoys traveling the world to soak up as many cultures as possible.

**Eric Spier**

Bud Elkind holds an MS in Human Service Management, has a certificate in Applied Behavior Analysis, and has worked in clinical and administrative brain injury settings since 1985. His work experience includes A-typical Sub-acute, Dual-diagnosis-Neuro-behavior and Residential Treatment and Rehabilitation. Bud is currently the Director of Clinical Operations at Robin Hill Farm, Inc. a brain injury specific Residential Treatment and Rehabilitation company with six programs operating in three New Hampshire com-

munities. In addition, Bud is in his second term as President of the NH Brain Injury Association, he chairs the Wings of Hope Foundation and is in his fourth year as chair of the NH Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Advisory Council.

**Michael Mason**

Michael Mason is a brain injury projects manager at the Neurologic Rehabilitation Institute at Brookhaven Hospital and serves as the president of the Brain Injury Association of Oklahoma. He also writes and reports about brain injury issues.

Eric T. Spier, M.D. is currently practicing as a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation physician. He serves as a medical director of Acquired Brain Injury at Highlands Regional Rehabilitation Hospital, and with the Mentis post-acute Traumatic Brain Injury program. He is also an adjunct professor at the University of Texas at El Paso, and at The Paul Foster School of Medicine in El Paso. Dr. Spier attended medical school at the University of Texas in Houston Texas. His medical residency training occurred between the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven Connecticut and the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston Texas. Dr. Spier is currently working to coordinate a spectrum of resources that will serve Acquired Brain Injury patients in the El Paso community.