

## **CHIC Is A Win-Win Situation for its Members and the Brain Injury Community**

“Win-win” is a type of negotiation whereby both parties come out of the negotiation satisfied, knowing that neither has taken advantage of the other, and that both have benefited personally and professionally. The Council for the Head Injured Community (CHIC) is a committee committed to a win-win outcome for its members and the brain injury community.

The mission of CHIC is to champion and publicize the advocacy, rights, and needs of people who have survived a brain injury. This is done through advancing the Association’s views on legislation, raising awareness of brain injury amongst elected officials, and partaking in educational events such as Mike-at-the-Mike, a panel discussion developed by CHIC to educate others about issues related to brain injury at the Association’s annual seminar.

Being a member of CHIC is a win-win situation for long-time members such as Joe Caminiti, who says, *“Being involved with CHIC has empowered me to function better in the world. I have not only been able to only help myself, I have been able to help others. I have been involved with the Association’s advocacy program as well as the Mentor program. None of this would have been possible without the support of CHIC. Thank you.”*

Cheryl Weber, who was very active with CHIC until life circumstances changed her schedule, saw much value in CHIC. *“Over the past four years my involvement with CHIC has provided me with many benefits. I have learned how to advocate for myself and others through CHIC organized events in Trenton with the state legislature. These activities have also given me the self-esteem that comes from knowing that I am making a difference for myself and for others, rather than simply letting other people do things for me. CHIC has also provided me with a community of people who are dealing with the same issues I face on a daily basis. The monthly meetings and other activities planned by CHIC provide me with a place to go and enjoyable people to do things with. I also take great pride in the work CHIC does to educate the community about brain injury,”* said Cheryl.

Jesse Clark, another current and longtime member of CHIC has played an instrumental role in the Association’s government relations efforts. Referring to his efforts to realize full-funding for the federal Traumatic Brain Injury Act, Jesse said *“I was able to go to Washington, D.C. to promote the need for full-funding of the TBI Act. I cannot begin to say how good I feel about having the opportunity to make a positive difference for brain injured individuals on such a large scale. I would not have been able to do so without the help of CHIC.”*

There are others like Joe, Cheryl, and Jesse who value CHIC and want to address important issues related to brain injury. To do this effectively, the collective voice of people with brain injury must be heard by elected officials. It is imperative that this collective voice become stronger and louder. We need for more people to join CHIC and, as a result, develop the same sincere viewpoint as Joe, Cheryl, and Jesse. If this is the case, then strides are being made in fulfilling the mission of the Brain Injury Association of New Jersey: *to support and advocate for individuals affected by brain injury and raise awareness through education and prevention.*