

Hollis Resident Receives the Ellen Hayes Award 2006

The Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire is pleased to announce that this year's recipient of the Ellen Hayes Award for outstanding contributions in the field of brain injury was presented to Paul Van Blarigan of Hollis, NH at the 23rd Annual Brain Injury and Stroke Conference held on May 18, 2006 at the Courtyard Marriott and Grappone Conference Center. The award was presented by the Honorable John Lynch, Governor of New Hampshire.

The Ellen Hayes Award is presented annually by the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire in recognition for outstanding service in support of the brain injury community. It is the highest award given by the Association and has been given out each year since 1985. The award is named in honor of Ellen Hayes of Wakefield, NH. Ellen was one of the original founding family members of the Association and became deeply involved in the early 1980's following her son's traumatic brain injury. Ellen was a tremendous role model who gave generously of herself to help families challenged by traumatic brain injury.

Paul Van Blarigan, 2006 award recipient, suffered an aneurysm at age 23. After acute treatment and several surgeries, his parents were encouraged to place him in a nursing home. His father and mother refused to do so and instead brought him home, where his engineer father developed a rehabilitation routine that had marvelous results. The young man successfully adapted to his new life and the limitations it placed on him.

Paul later married and began a twenty plus year career in sales and raised three children. He did this in addition to spending thousands of hours working with, encouraging and supporting newly injured brain injury survivors and their families. Paul has provided hope and encouragement by sharing his own journey, his struggles and ultimately his successes as an ambassador of hope and possibility for those who are struggling in the darkest moments of their lives.

Paul also assisted in organizing the New Hampshire Chapter of the Brain Injury Association and has served as a member of the Board of Directors and on the Executive Committee. He has gone on to work with others in the state disability community and last year was named chairman of the New Hampshire Governors Commission on Disability.

"Paul is a tremendous role model and advocate for the brain injury community, and tirelessly works to raise awareness about brain injury in the State of New Hampshire," states BIANH Executive Director, Steven Wade.