



*Helping those impacted by trauma  
not just to survive,  
but to thrive*

**Fall 2007**

## Welcome!

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are so pleased to resume our newsletter after too long a hiatus. Much has happened at the Trauma Center in the interim. The past three years in particular have been a time of great challenge, transition and ultimately, rebirth. Most notably, we have joined Justice Resource Institute, a wonderful nonprofit organization that has fully embraced our mission: "to help individuals, families and communities that have been impacted by trauma and adversity to re-establish a sense of safety and predictability in the world, and to provide them with state-of-the-art therapeutic care as they reclaim, rebuild and renew their lives." Becoming a nonprofit in structure has been a pivotal transformation for the Trauma Center, which as you know has always been one in practice and spirit. This shift has not only allowed us to

arrive on the most stable financial ground in the 25-year history of our organization, but has also enabled us to solidify and expand our programming and services for both trauma survivors and providers alike.

As you will learn in this and upcoming issues of our quarterly newsletter, our Center has welcomed many fresh new faces to our staff, while retaining the talents and commitment of many senior staff who have been with us for nearly a decade or more. Likewise, we have preserved our commitment to excellence in training, clinical research and core assessment and treatment services, while emphasizing a more holistic approach to well-



**Executive Director,  
Joseph Spinazzola,  
Ph.D.**

ness and recovery at our clinic, from the addition of yoga and improvisational theater programming for children, adults and returning veterans, to the upcoming launching of our "Fresh Start" program.

We thank you for joining us during this exciting time. Your continued interest, support and suggestions will be crucial to ensuring our success over the next 25 years in helping those whose lives have been compromised by trauma to transcend suffering, awaken possibility, and embrace joy!

Joseph Spinazzola, Ph.D.

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### In the past 12 months:

- We provided trauma-focused treatment and evaluation services to 438 adults, children/adolescents, & families.
- We were awarded 17 federal, state, and foundation grants or contracts to conduct trauma training, research, or clinical service.
- We trained 11,538 multi-disciplinary providers.
- We worked intensively with 16 agencies in 8 states to enhance trauma-informed clinical programming.

## Clients to Receive A Fresh Start

The Trauma Center is proud to announce our newest initiative, "A Fresh Start." Through this program, we will partner with community organizations, businesses, and individual donors to help trauma survivors get back on their feet in a sustainable way. Many of the individuals we serve at our clinic have made substantial progress in therapy, learning how to better cope with the painful memories, emotions and negative thoughts stemming from their traumatic

experiences, and how to keep themselves safe and make good decisions as they re-engage the world and begin new relationships. Oftentimes, however, these individuals lack the necessary tools, financial resources or support to take the next step in their recovery, as good self-care for these individuals requires more than just therapy, with needs ranging from those as basic as appropriate clothing to apply for a new job, to opportunities to feel like one is beautiful and

worth something.

A Fresh Start was featured in the August 9, 2007 edition of the *Brookline Tab*. In this article Joseph Spinazzola explained, "The idea is to help [clients] get a fresh start on their lives by giving them access to services and goods that can build a foundation for their wellness and confidence." Furthermore, he said, "People who are on their feet need breaks, need treats and basic rewards. The reward

## Staff Profile: Leticia Buonanno

Movement, silence and light have been integral aspects of Leticia Buonanno's life since early childhood. Born with an innate gift for dance, Leticia began formal study of tap at age four, progressing to ballet, jazz, contemporary, point, modern and Balinese. By age 18, Leticia was a national Gold Medal soloist. That's precisely when she decided it was time to discontinue competitive dance, as she realized it was taking her away from what she most loved about the art: uniting music and movement to tell a story.

Even more so than dance, spirituality has played a vital role in Leticia's life. Discovering early on a sense of connection to "something bigger than herself," Leticia's first introduction to mindfulness came in her regular participation in silent meetings as an elementary and secondary school student at the Lincoln School, a Quaker school for girls in Providence, RI. There she was taught to "listen for the silence," and learned to embrace and cultivate the

Quaker tradition of *inner light*, which she explains to this day "comes through in everything I do."

In 2001 Leticia worked as a milieu therapist at Bradley Hospital in Rhode Island. It was there she realized she wanted to pursue a career as a therapist, in order to "help people reconnect with mind and body." In her study and training in Clinical Psychology, she has come to observe how people's spirit "can be dimmed by trauma," and how people can learn "to be afraid to let their inner light burn... because they have lived in a world where having a light at all has been dangerous or invalidated."

As a practicum student at the Trauma Center, Leticia has brought her unique apprecia-

tion for movement, mindfulness and silence into her work with children and adults. Here Leticia has been learning to incorporate yoga postures, body awareness, drawing and movement to help clients "tell their stories, access a piece of their story, or help put the pieces together."

Leticia teaching dance to a promising young student.



We could not be more proud to have Leticia among us as the "greenest" member of our clinical team. Her success over the past year has affirmed our commitment to the often challenging task of training graduate practicum students to work effectively with complexly traumatized individuals. Leticia epitomizes the promise that new trainees at times possess. We are enhanced as an organization by the subtle ways in which Leticia illuminates our Center, from her bright smile to her thoughtful gentle presence. Most rewarding of all, it has been our privilege to witness -- in

supervision as she describes her clinical work, in clinical team meetings as she intently listens, and in our waiting room and hallways as she greets and engages her clients -- the way Leticia's inner light dances.

**Position:** 2nd-Year Graduate Practicum Student

**Responsibilities:** Individual therapy and evaluation with children and adults; co-leads Coping Skills Group for Women; coordination of adult Yoga Groups

**Education:** B.A. in Psychology from Holy Cross; 4th Year Graduate Student at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP)

*"I've learned in my personal life and education different parts of what it is to be a human in this world. It is amazing when you get to help someone find a little piece of that, helping them regain some of their life that had been taken away from them." —Leticia Buonanno*

## The Cutting Edge

Studying the psychological impacts of traumatic life experiences helps to clarify many issues of human suffering. The legacy of traumatic life experiences, particularly in childhood, is expressed in bodily reactions such as chronic physical discomfort and illness; unmodulated emotions; and failure to fully, *physically and mentally*, engage in the present. In order to gain a sense of control over one's physical reactions, it is necessary to mobilize the body. Unless we *physically* come to terms with the remnants of fear and defensiveness lodged in our physical reality, the imprints of the past may permanently alter whether we feel at home in our bodies or are paralyzed in our capacity to be open to and learn from new experiences.

Mainstream therapy helps people by providing insight into the origins of our misery, often in the context of an understanding and supportive relationship. When done correctly, such understanding and support can give people the courage to face previously intolerable realities and help give voice to what was felt to be unspeakable. Working with bodily states is relatively recent in western psychology. In contrast, most cultures around the world have ancient traditions, such as yoga and tai ch'i, that emphasize working with bodily states to affect the mind. These body-oriented methods hold in common the notion that in order to change, people need to have *physi-*

*cal* experiences that directly contradict past feelings of helplessness, frustration and terror.

Founder & Medical Director, Bessel van der Kolk, MD



Neuroscience research shows that there is little connection between the various brain centers involved in understanding, planning and emotion—we simply are not capable of understanding our way out of our feelings. In fact, our logical selves tend to run behind our emotional urges and may function primarily to rationalize our loves and hates. Psychological conflicts, while often having origins in the past, become rooted in our internal sensations, which have become blunted, exaggerated or "stuck."

**The Cutting Edge (Con'd from p. 2)**

Hence, the process of psychological change fundamentally concerns regaining a healthy relationship with our *internal* feeling states. In contrast to *understanding*, paying close attention to one's internal life and the flow of physical sensations, feelings, internal images and patterns of thought can make an enormous difference in the ways we feel and act.

The pathway in the brain from the conscious self to the emotions (i.e., the only way that people can effectively influence how they feel) links areas in the conscious mind that convey the sense of being in touch with oneself and one's bodily states (the medial prefrontal cortex and insula), to the emotional centers of the brain (centering on the amygdala), to the arousal centers and, finally, to the hormonal and muscular output centers. In this way, working with deep sensations and feelings has the potential to attain a sense of internal equilibrium and balance. Only after being able to quiet down and master one's inner physical experiences do people regain the capacity to use speech and language to convey to others in detail what they feel and "remember."

**THE TRAUMA CENTER'S 25th ANNIVERSARY GALA  
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library  
Wednesday, November 7, 2007  
6:00 — 9:30pm**

Please join us for an evening of live music, food and cocktails. Honorary Lifetime Achievement Awards will be presented to individuals who have played critical roles in promoting the health, recovery and empowerment of victims of trauma in the areas of Public Policy, Clinical Practice, Research and the Arts. Artwork by TC-JRI staff, including Bessel van der Kolk, Fran Grossman, and Joel Kershner will be featured. Proceeds will support the creation of an endowed Applied Research Chair at the Trauma Center and the establishment of the Edward M. Kennedy Unsung Hero Award.

**Schedule of Events:**

- Registration. 6-6:30pm.
- Cocktail reception. 6:30-7:30pm. Cash bar, passed hors d'oeuvres, hot and cold stations, live music and an art display featuring artwork by TC-JRI Staff.
- Evolution of a Field & Lifetime Achievement Awards. 7:30-8:30. Hosted by Bessel van der Kolk, MD. Awardees will include Senator Edward M. Kennedy, author Richard Rhodes, Judith Herman, MD, and Frank Putnam, MD.
- Entertainment with Dessert & Coffee. 8:30-9:30. Live music provided by Eli's All-Stars, featuring Bob Winter of the Boston Pops on piano, Bo Winiker of the Winiker Orchestra on trumpet, Dan Fox of Made in the Shade on trombone, Jimmy Mazzy of Jimmy's Last Minute Men on banjo and vocals, Ted Casher on clarinet and tenor, and band leader Eli Newberger on tuba. <http://www.elinewberger.com/music.html>

**Advanced tickets are required.**

**Register on-line at [www.traumacenter.org](http://www.traumacenter.org) or use the mail-in form below.**

**Fundraiser Registration**

- I would like to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ # of seats at \$150 per seat.
- I would like to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ table(s) at \$1500 per table of 8.
- I would like to be a sponsor at the Level of: (See website for information.)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100,000+ Emerald    \_\_\_\_\_ \$25,000+ Diamond    \_\_\_\_\_ \$10,000+ Platinum  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$5,000 Gold    \_\_\_\_\_ \$3,000 Silver    \_\_\_\_\_ \$2,000 Bronze    \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 Copper
- I would like to make a donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**Send to:**

ATTN: Sara Moore  
MAIL: Trauma Center at JRI  
1269 Beacon Street  
Brookline, MA 02446  
PHONE: 617-232-1303, x201

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
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Reservations will be held under this name, unless additional guests are specified: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Payment:**

- Check enclosed in the amount of: \$\_\_\_\_\_
- Make checks payable to the Trauma Center at JRI, Federal Tax ID# 042-526-357.  
Your check is your reservation.

*Please note: You may also pay by credit card via Pay Pal on our website ([www.traumacenter.org](http://www.traumacenter.org)) rather than using this mail-in form.*

**We thank you for your support and hope you will join us.**

**A Fresh Start (Con'd from p. 1)**

can't just be "You get to survive."

This program will provide selected clients with individually-tailored "Fresh Start Kits" that consist of services (such as nutritional counseling, tai chi sessions, computer classes) that will make a huge difference in helping them to build skills that will ensure they succeed on their road to recovery, as well as with goods (such as gift certificates to restaurants, spas) that will reinforce them for all their hard work through opportunities to treat themselves that they otherwise likely could not afford for months to come. As one current client stated (quoted from *Brookline Tab* article), "I have my up days and my down days, but sometimes the down days can get really heavy. To be able to sit at a restaurant and have a nice meal—it takes the edge off and makes you feel less overwhelmed."

*For more information, including how to become A Fresh Start Sponsor, please contact Sara Moore, Program Coordinator, at 617-232-1303, x201 or [smoore@jri.org](mailto:smoore@jri.org).*



**UPCOMING EVENTS...**

**OCTOBER**

Tuesday 2nd & Wednesday 3rd, 8:45am-3:45pm:  
Training Institute Workshop—Yoga & the Traumatized Body

**NOVEMBER**

Wednesday 7th, 6-9:30pm, at the JFK Presidential Library:  
The Trauma Center at JRI's 25th Anniversary Gala

**MONTHLY**

1st Thursday of every month: FREE! No registration necessary.  
Bessel van der Kolk, MD's Lecture Series at the TC. See website for topics.

**CURRENTLY ENROLLING**

Trauma-sensitive Men's and Women's Yoga Classes for trauma survivors who are currently in therapy (at the TC or elsewhere).

*For more information or to register, please visit our website at [www.traumacenter.org](http://www.traumacenter.org)*



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