

**On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009 Head Injury Association presented Portraits From Within, a unique art therapy and photography exhibit featuring artists from the Head Injury Association.**

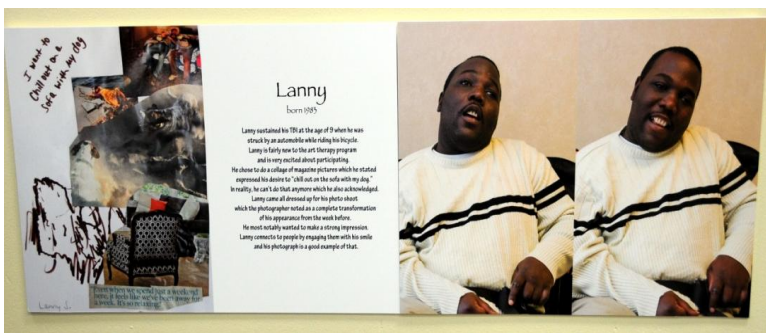
Many of the artists have lost their ability to verbally communicate, yet have created beautiful drawings, paintings and collages and self-portrait photographs. Some of the men and women have suffered with their injuries since they were children and for many, their lives were changed in an instant. It has been a long road toward recovery. Art Therapy is one of the modalities that have enabled these adults to express their emotions creatively while helping them gain awareness of themselves, improve their self-esteem, psychological well being and stimulate intellectual and cognitive abilities. Creating art becomes a language for many when there are no words and helps to assist in the release of emotions leading to emotional and physical healing.



The self-portrait project, Portraits From Within, was a collaborative effort to introduce photography to the art therapy group allowing the participants to explore and express emotions using both art and the camera lens as the vehicles for self-expression. The objectives



for this project were to enable the participants to stimulate creativity, to increase self awareness and self-esteem as well as to gain acceptance of themselves. Various questions were explored as the participants created their self-portraits including, “How do you see yourself? How do others see you? How do you wish to be seen? What would you like to change about yourself? The participants were able to really look at and see themselves, while expressing their emotions so openly in front of the lens; many enjoyed the process of being photographed. Often, individuals with traumatic brain injuries are not seen for whom they really are and this project is a rare opportunity for the public to look at and see the artists as the beautiful and courageous individuals that they truly are.



As quoted by the photographer, Laura Glabman, of Portraits From Within: “It was a great privilege to get to know this unique group of people. I found their ability to express themselves and their emotions so openly as a gift to each other and to myself. The opportunity to capture those moments in photography was truly special and bittersweet at the same time. I feel a great need to share it with the world.”

As quoted by an HIA consumer: “Art therapy is something people use to help other people express themselves.” The last time I did some of the projects we do was when I was in school. When the art therapy

program was established at the Head Injury Association I wanted to try it out. I finally got the chance on January 8, 2009. I am glad that I tried it out. It has helped me a great deal.”

The Portraits From Within exhibit was recently displayed at the NABIS (North American Brain Injury Society) 7<sup>th</sup> annual conference held in Austin, TX in October of 2009 and currently on display at the Head Injury Association in Commack. For further information please contact Susan Paradise Goodman, Licensed Creative Arts Therapist or Dr. Stanley Goldstein, VP of Educational Services at 631-543-2245 ext 229.

If you would like to donate to HIA please go to <http://www.libia.org/donor.html> and click on the donate button.