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# BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS

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## BSTTW REBUILDING LIVES

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### BSTTW World Burn Congress Fund

By: Michael Appleman, CEO

**I**N 1999 I was lucky enough to receive the funding needed to attend The Phoenix Society World, Burn Congress (WBC). At that time I was still recovering from the burn injury. I was unable to walk and I could not use my left arm and hand. I took my electric wheelchair to the airport, was carried on and off the airplanes and was given special transportation during the WBC. When I first arrived at the hotel, a very special gentleman walked up to me, put out his hand, offered his friendship and any help I might need. That person was Alan Breslau the founder of The Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors and the World Burn Congress. Alan and his wife invited me for dinner that night. After dinner I began to move around and meet other burn survivors. The next morning a burn survivor who was missing most of his fingers came over and offered to help me get my breakfast. This again showed me that life was not over. I began to realize that a new life was just beginning for me. I went to many meetings and support groups at that WBC.



support family members and fire safety education,

I ask all of you reading this article to donate to the BSTTW World Burn Congress Fund and take part in funding other burn survivors who need the finances to attend the WBC.

You can mail your **BSTTW** WBC donations to:

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc..  
BSTTW WBC Donation  
16193 Lone Star Ranch Drive  
#102  
Conroe, TX 77302

If you have any questions you can contact Michael Appleman at 936-647-2256.

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### A FAMILY AROUND THE WORLD



Since that first WBC, I have attended four WBC's and started walking again. In 2001 I founded Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc. (BSTTW) and began offering the strength, hope, funding, medical supplies and medications to other burn survivors. BSTTW also offers

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## LIVING WITH A BURN TRAUMA

Individuals who are involved in impaired driving crashes often incur bruises, broken bones, and head injuries. But unlike many victims/survivors, those with burn injuries wear the scars of their trauma for the world to see. Burns can be physically and psychologically devastating. Fortunately, survival and mortality rates have improved substantially as a direct result of medical advancements. These advancements include painful and sometimes life long medical procedures. With survival comes a need for support and information to cope with the emotional, mental, and spiritual issues that remain with the physical scars.

### ABOUT BURNS

**The Experience:** There is a physical, mental, and emotional experience associated with being burned. When a person is exposed to fire, the heat is so intense that it literally takes one's breath away. Fire grabs and feeds from oxygen, so it is nearly impossible to breathe. As a consequence, there is little or no time to react.

The human body responds remarkably to any potential threat of danger with a "fight or flight" response. When this reaction is triggered, our brain sends messages to the adrenal glands, which release chemicals into the bloodstream that cause our bodies to change. These changes include increased respirations, increased blood flow to muscles and limbs, intensified awareness, enhanced impulses, and diminished pain.

Many crash victims/survivors report recognizing the need to get out or away from the fire and after doing so, remember little else about the event. Some only remember vague details such as smells and images.

Despite removal from or extinction of the fire, the burn victim/survivor remains in immediate danger. Depending upon the size and degree of the burn injury there is now the risk of respiratory failure and shock. Shock is a physiological response to trauma and a life-

threatening condition that should not be confused with the "fight or flight" response. Shock reduces blood flow to vital organs and affects a person's blood pressure, heart rate, respirations, as well as state of consciousness. Shock may also account for a victim/survivor's inability to recall details of a crash.

If you were burned as a result of a drunk driving crash you may not recall feelings of panic, fear, and anxiety often associated with burns. On the other hand, you may describe the experience as terrifying. Either way, immediately following a crash and for some time thereafter, a burn victim/survivor is faced with a potentially life threatening condition.

**Types of Burns.** A burn is an injury to the skin that damages or destroys skin cells and tissue. Burns are generally caused when skin makes contact with flames, chemicals, electricity, or radiation. Thermal burns are burns caused by intense external sources of heat, such as flames, scalding liquids, or steam. Burns resulting from an impaired driving crash are most likely thermal burns.

**Degrees of Burns:** Your skin is the largest organ of your body. It prevents infection from entering your body and it limits the loss of important fluids. Your skin "holds everything together." Once a victim/survivor with burn injuries is identified and stabilized, the burn team begins to assess and classify the burn injuries. Burns are assessed by their size in relation to the entire body and by their depth. They are rated according to how many layers of skin are damaged.

A first degree burn involves the top layer of skin called the *epidermis*. The epidermis is the outer most layer of skin made of flat, scale-like cells called *squamous cells*. Under these cells are *basal cells*, and at the deepest part of the epidermis lie *melanocytes*. Melanocytes produce *melanin*, which gives skin its color. First degree burns are labeled superficial and the body can heal itself quickly by creating new, healthy cells in a process called *epithelialization*. First degree burns are often caused by sunburn or scalds, appear pink to red, can be painful with swelling, and typically

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leave no scarring.

Second degree burns involve the epidermis and the second layer of skin called the *dermis*. The dermis contains blood vessels, lymph vessels, hair follicles, oil glands, and sweat glands. Second degree burns can range from superficial to partial thickness depending upon the extent of the damage.

While the body can heal from second degree burns by epithelialization and a process called *contraction*, scarring and thickening frequently occur and healing can take up to six months. Contraction happens when the burn is deeper and the skin cannot heal with epithelialization. The body closes the wound by drawing on the surrounding skin, or contracting. Because of these factors, doctors often recommend skin grafts for second degree burns.

Third degree burns involve all layers of the skin and are referred to as full thickness burns. Full thickness burns destroy all of the epidermis and dermis, as well as nerves, hair, glands and vessels. Because of the damage caused by third degree burn, the body cannot repair itself and skin grafts must be performed to prevent infection to the body. Fourth degree burns involve the damage of bone and muscle and are rare.

The severity of a burn injury is not only determined by burn classifications, but also by the victim/survivor's age, the victim/survivor's previous health status, the size of the injuries, how much of the injuries can be attributed to third degree burns, and other medical complications related to the fire. It is often difficult to accurately assess a burn at first glance as the injury may change over the first several days following exposure.

### **BURN TREATMENTS**

When a victim/survivor reaches a trauma unit, the medical team works to stabilize the body's vital functions. The team assesses the injured for shock and respiratory failure. Fluid replacement may be required if large amounts have been lost. Depending upon the severity of

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the burns, intravenous feeding and mechanical assistance to breathe may also be necessary. Burns are cleaned once or twice daily and then dressed with medicated creams. This cleansing with antiseptic solutions is called debridement. Debridement is necessary to remove dead skin, old cream residues, and secretions from the skin.

As skin protects the body from contamination it is easy to understand that there is serious risk of infection. This risk remains until the burns heal or are completely grafted. Because a burn victim/survivor's health is compromised, there is legitimate and ongoing concern, even when it seems their health status is improving. Along with infection, doctors and other medical personnel carefully monitor and treat pain. Burns themselves can be very painful as well as the regimens required to treat them. Pain medications, anti-anxiety medications, and relaxation techniques are often utilized to address pain issues. Some medications interfere with organ functions so doctors dose accordingly.

Skin grafting is the next crucial step in treatment for some second degree burns and all third degree burns. First the injured tissue is surgically removed if the destroyed skin does not separate naturally. Then a section of healthy, unburned skin (referred to as the donor area) is removed and attached to the area destroyed by the burn (referred to as the recipient area). Before this can be done, the area must be prepared to receive the donor skin.

At times skin donated from other people, called homograft, allograft, or cadaver skin is used. This skin donated from other sources is temporary and used when donor skin is scarce. Depending upon the extent of the injury, some victims/survivors require multiple surgeries. The area of a graft is not moved for up to five days following surgery in order for the graft to become secure. Then exercise programs, tub baths, and other activities resume. Exercise helps manage swelling, helps the burn to heal, and promotes range of motion when contraction

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occurs.

### **THE BURN UNIT EXPERIENCE**

**The Burn Trauma Victim/Survivor:** Burn victims/survivors are often heavily sedated or are in shock when they reach the burn unit, and may have little knowledge of the gravity of their circumstances. The first several days or weeks can be hazy. Victims/survivors are quickly introduced to grueling treatment regimens with little time to think or feel. Later, after interacting with family, friends, and medical personnel, they are able to develop a sense of their condition and may begin to fear what will happen to them. They may even fear that they will die as a result of their injuries.

As a burn trauma victim/survivor, you may recall spending the initial days and months after a burn injury fearing the unknown and the uncertainty of the future. You may remember being fearful of both physical and emotional pain. You may have wondered what would happen to your family, what pain and suffering they might experience as a result of your injury. Some burn victims/survivors rely heavily upon burn unit staff to meet their physical and emotional needs as not to burden their families. Because of the nature of the injuries and the treatments of burns, the hospital becomes a comfortable, protective, and insulated environment that is difficult to leave.

### **The Family Member and Friend Victim/Survivor**

While the injured victim/survivor may be heavily sedated for some time after the crash, family and friends are acutely aware of the gravity of the situation. When you learned of your loved one's crash and subsequent injuries, your initial reactions may have included shock, despair, and fear that your loved one might die from the burn injury. Because many burns appear painful and horrific, you may have been fearful of how your loved one would suffer. You may still be fearful.

Depending upon the severity of the burn injury you may feel anxious, depressed, guilty, and

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worried when thinking about your future and the future of your loved one. Anger may follow after learning of the consequences of the burn.

Receiving good and reliable information can be difficult. Nonetheless, a victim/survivor's adjustment is heavily dependent upon the love and support you offer them.

If the victim/survivor has a child or children, they may be separated from them for long periods of time. Keep in mind that if the burns have caused any kind of disfigurement, children might not recognize their parent or they may be fearful of their parent's appearance. They may have been instructed by other adults not to touch the victim/survivor because touch can be painful. Children also might be fearful and anxious about their parent's ability to care for them. As an adult caregiver it is important to provide children love and support as well as ongoing information that is accurate and age appropriate.

### **GOING HOME**

The length of stay in burn units has decreased over the years yet burn victims/survivors may be reluctant to go home. Many people feel anxious about leaving the safe and insulated environment provided by the hospital and its staff. For the injured victim/survivor of a drunk driving crash, going home also means facing the difficulties associated with the crash.

The reality of disfigurement or disability may not hit until arriving home. Victims/survivors maybe confronted with altered appearances, altered selfimages, physical impairments, and psychological reactions, all of which can be scary. Many people derive self-esteem and self-image from their physical appearance, particularly women, who are raised to place focus on their looks. As a burn victim/survivor, you may not look as you did before the crash. You may not be able to operate in the same capacity you once did. When you first return home it may be difficult for you to fulfill your roles as wife, mother, husband, or father due to physical impairments.

Burn victims/survivors may be subjected to painful treatments for weeks, months, or even  
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years following a crash. Physical healing takes time, so be patient with the process. Recognize that a burn trauma victim/survivor may not be able to use limbs, digits, etc., and therefore will be dependent upon others or devices to complete tasks. While in the burn unit, the medical team cared for the many needs associated with the burn injury. Upon returning home, both victim/survivor family members must assume responsibility for burn care. Physical impairments and their subsequent treatments can contribute to emotional reactions including sadness, anxiety, and anger. Collectively, these reactions are often referred to as grief.

**GRIEF:**

Grief is not an event but a process of experiencing the emotional, mental, physical, social, and spiritual effects of a loss. During the initial weeks, months, and perhaps even the first year following discharge from the burn unit, a victim/survivor may be very emotional. You may feel tearful, overly sensitive, and anxious upon returning home. These initial reactions to your injury and to the crash itself are normal. Because of someone's reckless behavior, you must contend with an injury that cost you both function and appearance. Your grief may be compounded by the death of a loved one who was involved in the crash with you.

**Common Grief Reactions:**

- Disbelief
- Sadness, sorrow
- Fear, vulnerability
- Anger, rage
- Guilt
- Impaired concentration
- Diminished selfconcern
- Search for meaning
- Social withdrawal
- Sleep or appetite disturbance
- Decreased motivation
- Spiritual confusion

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Family and friends are also profoundly affected by the crash and your injury. They too are victims/survivors and grieve not only for your losses, but for the losses they suffer as a result. As a loved one, you may feel the fear, sadness, and anger associated with grief. You may also be grieving the death of another family member or friend who was involved in the crash.

Grief is a personal experience. A loss to one person may not be considered a loss to another. Adjustment to losses imposed by the crash hinges upon many factors, including: the coping style of the individual; the quality of the victim/survivor's support system; the nature of the trauma; the damage the trauma caused; and the presence of additional stressors. There is no time limit as to how long or short you will grieve. Your grief is your own and it is your right.

**A Change of Face:** Burn injuries can change or disfigure the body and face. If you have burns on your face and /or exposed parts of your body, you may be using emotional and mental energy to deal with situations the rest of us take for granted. You may feel ashamed, fearful of being devalued or being uncovered, which results in diminished self-esteem. It may be useful for you to discover new ways to present yourself, to prepare for the staring, comments, and questions of others. It may be easier to have a family member or friend go with you the first couple of times you decide to venture out. Accept that it will be difficult at first, but in time will become easier.

**Depression:** An impaired driving crash can cause multiple physical, psychological, and social losses. A victim/survivor may also suffer secondary losses that stem from those primary losses. While grief reactions such as sadness, anger, and fear are normal, a more serious



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psychological complication can develop over time. As a result, relationships with family and friends may be in jeopardy.

If grief becomes intense and interferes with functioning, depression and anxiety may be present. Depression that is left untreated can lead to thoughts of suicide or death and if so, it is time to ask for help immediately. Clinical depression and anxiety can be debilitating but are treatable.

**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:**

Today, you may be driving in your car and suddenly have thoughts of the crash or perceive sensations (images, smells) that "bring you back" to the crash. You may wake-up in the middle of the night in a panic due to a nightmare. Moments such as these may come without warning, and over time can cause you to avoid situations that you connect with the crash or these recurrences. You may feel on edge, anxious, always ready to react. Recollections can feel so painful and scary that they disrupt your normal activities and relationships.

Some people experience recurrent and ongoing recollections of a trauma, which can obviously lead to distress. These intrusive thoughts can be triggered by things you see, things you hear, things you smell, things you taste, and things you feel. Sometimes the intrusive thoughts seem so real that you feel that you are reliving the traumatic event. Because you are always anticipating the next intrusion, you may be hypervigilant and easily aroused. On the other

**Signs and Symptoms of Depression:**

- Frequent crying spells
- Persistent feelings of helplessness or hopelessness
- Inappropriate feelings of guilt
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Sleep and/or appetite disturbance that affects overall health
- Social withdrawal
- Suicidal thoughts

hand, you may have found ways to avoid feeling anything at all. Trauma victims/survivors who consistently experience all of these symptoms for at least one month or longer may be suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is an anxiety disorder that is diagnosed by mental health professionals. If you believe you may be suffering from PTSD it is important to seek professional help as PTSD is treatable with a combination of therapies.

**Understanding the Trauma:** The world is forever changed when someone experiences a trauma. Safety, security, predictability, and sense of control are all distorted. In order to regain a more accurate perspective of the world around you, it is helpful to work toward an understanding of the crash. This search for meaning involves acknowledging your trauma and asking questions. At times there are no answers but it is nonetheless important to get answers to those you can. Asking specific questions about the crash and obtaining a copy of the crash report are ways to begin.

**HOW TO COPE:**

The methods of coping you choose to employ after your crash can be either productive or self-defeating. Dealing with physical changes and emotional pain may make you feel like you are on a roller coaster ride with many highs and lows. Coping is an attempt to adapt new circumstances into existing life; you may try a variety of means to achieve this, some that work and others that do not. Despite the hurdles most people recover from their burn injuries and adapt well.

**Tips for the Burn Trauma Victim/Survivor:**

- Take things one day at a time. Set simple goals and develop a daily routine. Learn to accept responsibility for your own physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual healing. Allow others to help you as you learn.

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- Follow the instructions of your doctors and therapists to insure proper rehabilitation. Attend regularly scheduled medical appointments for continued therapies and follow-up.
- Keep the lines of communication open between friends and family. Tell them how you are feeling and what you are thinking. Remember that they are hurting, too.
- You may experience feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, and/or fear. Acknowledge these feelings by sharing them with family and friends, a counselor, a support group, or by writing them down in a journal if you can.
- Employ the use of resources specific to burn trauma if you require them, such as corrective cosmetics and occupational devices.
- Pursue the professional help of a psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor, social worker or other mental health provider if your feelings of sadness, anxiety and/or anger persist.

**Tips for the Family Member and Friend Victim/Survivor**

- Take things one day at a time. Set simple goals and develop a daily routine. Acknowledge to yourself that the burn victim/survivor is responsible for his/her own physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual healing, but he/she needs your support in order to do this. Pushing the burn victim/survivor before he or she is ready may produce undesired results. Each victim/survivor's healing and adaptation is highly individual.
- Take shifts in caring for the burn victim/survivor in order to provide much needed respite to one another. Keep a written schedule.
- Help the burn victim/survivor follow the instructions of medical personnel. This

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may include offering encouragement or agreeing to transport the burn victim/survivor to scheduled appointments. Make certain that the burn victim/survivor is involved in making decisions about his/her treatment.

- Keep the lines of communication open between friends and family and the burn victim/survivor. Tell them how you are feeling and what you are thinking in a sensitive manner.
- You may experience feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, guilt and/or fear. Acknowledge these feelings by sharing them with family and friends, a counselor, a support group, or by writing them down in a journal if you wish.
- Pursue the professional help of a psychiatrist, psychologist, counselor, social worker or other mental health provider if your feelings of sadness, anxiety and/or anger persist.

**HOPE AND HEALING:**

**The Burns:** Immediately following a burn injury the body begins to heal itself. For portions of the skin that cannot heal on their own, medical teams provide treatments to further facilitate the process. After the body has adequate time to develop mature scar tissue, a burn victim/survivor may undergo cosmetic surgery to either correct functional problems or disfigurement. Waiting for the scars to mature may be frustrating, but during this time you have the opportunity to undergo rehabilitation and work on emotional healing.

**Your Changed Self:** In grief we learn to identify our losses and define our changed selves. The physical and emotional healing that follows can be a long, involved journey. As you acknowledge your burn injury and give yourself permission to experience the thoughts and feelings that coincide, you begin to assign new meaning to your life. The roles, behaviors, relationships, needs, goals, and expectations

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you once held will inevitably change. With each new role you assume, each changed relationship you nurture, and each new behavior you adopt, you are reinforcing your changed self.

The love and support of family and friends are crucial in this healing process. As a loved one, it is important to listen to the thoughts and feelings a victim/survivor expresses about the drunk driving crash and about the burn injury. They may need to tell their story over and over again as they work toward reorganizing the world around them.

Regaining physical independence is equally as important and your encouragement will aid in their healing. Life after a drunk driving crash is redirected, whether or not you were involved in the crash. Burn injuries have the power to change appearances, functioning, and identities. As victims/survivors, you have the power to choose how to incorporate those changes into the rest of your lives.

**FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH BURNS**

The love a parent has for their child is special. Parents want to care for their child, to solace them, and to help them find happiness. Parents feel their child's joy and find it almost intolerable to see a child in pain yet be unable to help. In no other relationship is the protective urge as intense or compelling as in the parent/child relationship.

When a child sustains a burn injury, it is not uncommon for parents to feel extremely guilty for what has happened. Feelings of guilt, sadness, anger, and rage are all to be expected. However, if parents harbor inappropriate feeling of guilt, they may inadvertently encourage helplessness and dependence in their child. When a child experiences a traumatic event, he or she is likely to regress or exhibit other undesired behaviors. When parents establish limits while offering love and support, the child burn victim/survivor is empowered to thrive, in spite of periodic setbacks.

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Like their parents, children who have burns experience feelings of grief. Some kids show signs

of difficulty coping, while others seem to take their burn injuries in stride. Children rely on their parents to model adaptive coping behavior that will carry them through their treatments and subsequent healing. The key seems to be the unconditional acceptance of family friends in the wake of something that is life changing.

Children of different ages have different concerns. Younger children take their cues from their parents. Older children and teens are heavily influenced by input from their peers. Teens, in particular, struggle with self-esteem and body image under the most normal of circumstances. Helping kids with burn injuries to identify things that are special about them may help to rebuild and strengthen their self-concepts. Creating an environment of normalcy is important so that the child burn victim/survivor will not feel so different from their peers.

If your child is a burn victim/survivor, going back to school can be a source of fear and anxiety for him or her. It may be useful to reintroduce them to their peers by asking a few close friends for a visit before returning to school. Burn Foundations throughout the country have developed school reentry programs for children suffering from burn injuries. These programs help prepare and educate teachers, counselors, and peers. During these programs, children with burn injuries answer questions and feel empowered in the process.

As teens rely so much upon their peers, teen burn victims/survivors may benefit from support groups with other teens, or from attending a burn camp. Burn camps are located throughout the United States. You can find information about them by searching the Internet or by requesting information from the burn/trauma unit that treated your child.

For the first months and perhaps the first couple of years following a burn injury, both children

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and parents will naturally struggle with treatments, rehabilitation, and healing. Over time, children with burn injuries will undergo multiple surgeries because their grafts will not grow as they grow. Healing is therefore an enduring and ongoing process. When parents foster independence but balance this with an appropriate level of support, their children seem to respond positively and adjust to their circumstances.

- **Source:** MADD [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)

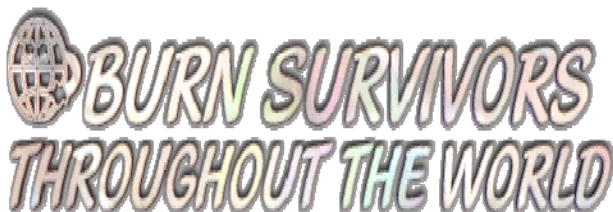
**Five Guidelines for Reducing Stress**

By: Dr. Debra Moore

1. Treat your body with respect. This isn't a foreign object here, it's you. We're used to artificially separating our "mind" from our "body", but the two are an interlinking system. We can't expect our moods or our thinking to be in top shape if our bodies are neglected. Ask yourself some questions. Are you feeding your body quality food? That's the fuel your body relies on to carry out the countless tasks that confront it daily. You don't expect your car to run well on an empty tank or contaminated gas and oil.

Are you giving your body enough rest? We need consistent sleep patterns that don't change drastically on weekends or holidays. We also need consistent breaks during the day to recharge between tasks. Listen to your body. If you need a brief nap and can fit it in, good for you. If not, can you just close your eyes for five minutes and let your body be still? If you can't find the time for this, see the next stress buster.

2. Quit pretending you don't have choices. You may have many demands on you. Most of us do. But if you are overwhelmed by running from one task to another all day, ask yourself a

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simple question. Let's say we videotape your typical day. We show the video to Oprah's studio audience. Let's offer them a thousand dollars if they can make workable suggestions for better managing your life. Think they could do it? You bet! From an

objective perspective, choices are easier to see. Periodically stop and evaluate whether you really are utilizing all your options. Sometimes we tell ourselves we can't do it differently when we really mean we're afraid to try.

3. Learn to say no. Both to yourself and others. We all have limits, and exercising them is an act of accountability. Let's face it. Most people who constantly say yes to everything that comes before them are not doing it in the sincere spirit of Mother Teresa. They're doing it because they feel guilty when they say no. They're doing it because they have not learned that they don't have to buy love or acceptance with sacrifice. They're doing it because they're following the family tradition of martyrdom.

Saying no also applies to ourselves. Do we just have to have one more trinket? Do we have to try to be someone we're not? To keep up with the folks next door? The advertisers and media would love us to think so. But maybe, just maybe, we can say no to them as well.

4. Realize that even after we make our choices and learn to say no, there will be many things in life we can't change or control. Some will be small inconveniences. We find a line of 20 people at the bank. We stew. We look at our watch. We sigh. We get angry at bank management and just know that if we ran the place it would operate better. So we wait an extra five minutes - five minutes we probably need to slow down anyway. And instead of accepting it, we compound the stress with our harsh reactions.

And some will be major events. We lose someone we love. We aren't ready. We won't accept it. We turn our natural grief into a stubborn refusal to adjust. We didn't want this and we just won't have it! It's not fair! We hang

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on to our fantasies and miss the real live opportunities in front of us. And our stress level in the meantime is off the charts.

5. Realize everything looks worse under three conditions. At night. When we're tired or run down. And when we're alone. Don't let yourself dwell on problems in the middle of the night. They will seem worse and you'll feel more depressed. We even have some scientific evidence that the chemicals that influence our sense of well-being are at a lower level in the middle of the night. It explains the old saying that everything will look better in the morning. Often it does.

And know that reflecting on your problems without the benefit of input from others is a recipe for emotional disaster. So you're a private person. What exactly does that really mean? Perhaps it means you haven't had much practice sharing yourself with others. Maybe earlier in life others hurt you if you showed your real feelings. But then isn't now, and there are people who would listen. Consider seeking them out.

### **The Trailer That Could Save Your Child's Life - and Yours, Too!**

By Delores Lekowski

Burn Survivor and Fire Safety Advocate

Some fire departments have safety trailers that could save your child's life - and that of your entire household! These trailers have a small living room, kitchen and bedroom. In each room there are staged fire hazards. As the kids walk from room to room, they are asked to point out the fire hazards and to talk about how the hazardous situations could be made safer.

I recently went through one of these trailers at a fire department's Safety Fair. In the kitchen there was aluminum foil in the microwave oven. When the microwave oven was turned on, sparks bounced around and popping sounds could be heard. A firefighter asked the kids if they knew this could cause a fire, most said no. I asked him if people ever put foil in a microwave oven, and he said "You would be

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surprised at the number of fires caused from this." Also in the kitchen, we saw paper towels near the stove burners, the handle of a pot on the stove pointing outward so that it could be knocked or grabbed and pulled down and a towel sticking out of the oven. Any one of these situations could start a fire or cause a severe burn.

In the living room we found newspapers lying on the floor in front of a fireplace without a screen. The firefighter explained to the kids that a screen should always be placed in front of a fireplace while a fire is burning to keep sparks from jumping out, landing on the floor and causing a fire. Candles were placed around the room, one very close to the curtains. The kids were asked what was wrong with the candles sitting where they were. Matches were lying next to one of the candles, and the kids were told never to light candles or matches, because that should always be done by an adult.

When the children went into the bedroom, the door was shut and smoke was pumped into the room. The kids were shown how to crawl on the floor so they would be under the smoke and how to touch the door for heat before opening it. There was a door to the outside in this room and the kids escaped through this door. In my opinion, this lesson in fire safety was the most valuable! Too many children hide under the bed or in a closet when there is a fire. If this is the only thing they remember from their lesson, then the safety trailer has done its job.

Many fire departments are getting these safety trailers, and they are valuable tools to teach children about fire safety. Check with your fire department to find out if they have one and make it a point to have your child go through it. If you are unable to have your kids tour one of these trailers you could set up your home with some of these hazardous situations and go through the house with your children, asking them to identify and correct the problems. This would be a fun way for your kids to learn about fire safety and to remember what they learn. And it just might save some lives!

# The Book Survivors

By: Alish D. Pierce

The book SURVIVORS is a testament of human will. It's focus is on individual stories of perseverance in the face of tragedy. With the help of the non-profit organization Burn Survivors Throughout The World (BSTTW) writer Alish D. Pierce and photographer Neil A. France are able to contact a diverse group of people. All proceeds from the sale of SURVIVORS will benefit BSTTW.

SURVIVORS is a collection of interviews with burn survivors living in various parts of the globe. Their stories will serve to inform the public about burn safety, inspire other survivors still facing recovery and move any reader to appreciate and value life. Freelance writer Alish D. Pierce comes to this project from the health and beauty industry. She is a regular contributor to the BSTTW Newsletter as well as trade publications for the beauty industry. Alish's 22 years of combined experience as a professional makeup artist and esthetician trained her to connect with each individual on a very personal level; in a short amount of time. It is this skill that enables her to sift through the very traumatic, graphic experiences to salvage the gems of truth that will touch and educate the reader.

If you would like to have your story and pictures in the book, you can contact Michael Appleman, BSTTW CEO at 936-647-2256, michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org or Alish Pierce at 310-892-3352, aliesh@alieshpierce.com.

Anyone who offers their story and pictures to the book will receive a print out of their story and an autographed copy of the book upon its publication.



Proud participant in the  
Combined Federal Campaign



### BSTTW POEMS

I began writing poems during my recovery in order to not only help himself, but to offer support and positive thoughts to all burn survivors and family member who are going through a rough time. I ask you all to never give up and continue to do what I and so many others have done during and after recovery...find the support needed to work through the rough time and continue moving forward in your life.

If you would like to submit a poem or story to **BSTTW** you can do so by email at [poems@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:poems@burnsurvivorsttw.org) or [stories@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:stories@burnsurvivorsttw.org). **BSTTW** also has a program on our internet site that allows you to submit your stories and poems electronically. You can submit the full story at [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/stories/storymaker.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/stories/storymaker.html) and your full poem at [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/poems/poemmaker.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/poems/poemmaker.html)

*Michael Appleman, CEO*

### **Friends**

By: Michael Appleman

A burn survivor needs the support of friends  
Even after the recovery ends

The way we look is not an easy thing  
True friends will stay in the ring

Your love can keep me strong  
The recovery time can be very long

The courage you have will help me  
To continue the path and become free

So remember how important a friend can be  
All burn survivors need a friend to see

*Michael Appleman*

## BSTTW CONTACT INFORMATION

### EMERGENCY CONTACTS

**BSTTW** has a support team that is on call 24 hours a day 7 days a week to help a burn survivor, family member or firefighter deal with a burn injury and fire related emergency. You can contact **BSTTW** on the internet or by telephone. On the internet go to the **BSTTW Emergency Email E-Form** at [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emergemail.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emergemail.html) or the **BSTTW Support Team E-Form** at [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html)

To contact **BSTTW** by telephone by dialing 936-647-2256 or toll free at 866-712-6164. If we are not in the office or it is after hours, you can leave us an emergency message in our voice box 44 and a support team member will respond to you within 24 hours.

#### **BSTTW Directors**

Michael Appleman: **Executive Director**  
[michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

Nguyễn Thi Diêu Trân: **Director- Việt Nam**  
[tran@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:tran@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

Ariel Gonzalez: **Director- Mexico**  
[ariel@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:ariel@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

#### **DONATIONS**

As a 501 (c)(3) Non Profit Organization, **BSTTW** depends on donations from corporations, organizations, families and individuals. All donations, big or small are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the United States government tax laws. **BSTTW** has several different funds that you can donate to. The **BSTTW** general fund, the **Bishop Peter Nguyen Van Nho World Wide Burned Children's Fund**, the **"Dwight Lunkley Racing To Victory" fund**, **USA & Asian Burn Camp funds**, **BSTTW Healing Weekend Fund**, and the **World Burn Congress Fund**.

## **BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS**

Your donations will help **BSTTW** to do what is needed to help a burn survivor, family members rebuild their lives. It will also be used for public awareness on fire safety and how the community can help a burn survivor reenter their community.

**BSTTW** also offers people that donate \$25.00 or higher to a free copy of the **BSTTW Music CD**. To learn more about this you should go to [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donatecd.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donatecd.html) or [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html)

Remember your donations can be money, clothes, a used bicycle etc.. All will help burn survivors and their family. Many families loose their homes and property. Please personally think about and talk to your family and friends about donating to **BSTTW**.

#### **MAKE DONATIONS PAYABLE TO & MAIL TO:**

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.  
16193 Lone Star Ranch Drive #102  
Conroe, Texas 77302

#### **DONATE ON LINE**

To learn more about donating on line go to: [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html)

If you have any questions call us at 936-647-2256, toll free at 866-712-6164 or by email at: [donations@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:donations@burnsurvivorsttw.org)

#### **VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME**

There are many children, adults and families around the world that need support and other help. You do not have to be a burn survivor or family member to become a **BSTTW Volunteer**. All you need to do is become a **BSTTW** member and then apply to become a **BSTTW Volunteer**. If you are a burn survivor or family member, in order to become a **BSTTW Member**, fill out the **BSTTW Membership & Profile Registration E-Form** at: [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/membership/memform.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/membership/memform.html),

Next fill out the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form** at: [www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html)

If you are not a burn survivor or family member you can skip the **BSTTW Membership & Profile Registration E-Form** and go directly to the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form**.

By volunteering with **BSTTW**, you will be taking part in rebuilding lives and helping burn survivors reenter their community.

If you have any questions, you should first review the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form**, after that if your questions have not been answered, you can contact **BSTTW** by email at [volunteers@burnsurvivorsttw.org](mailto:volunteers@burnsurvivorsttw.org), and by telephone at 936-647-2256 or toll free at 866-712-6164.

### **PURCHASES**

**BSTTW** has an online store where you can purchase Skin Care Products, Books and Video Tapes. To learn more go to:  
[www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/sales/sales.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/sales/sales.html)

**BSTTW** also offers a free copy of the **BSTTW Music CD** to people who donate \$25.00 or higher to **BSTTW**. To learn more about this you should go to

[www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donatecd.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donatecd.html)

or

[www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html)

### **BSTTW ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBERS:**

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.  
16193 Lone Star Ranch Drive #102  
Conroe, Texas 77302  
(936) 647-2256  
Toll Free: 866-712-6164  
Fax: (936) 647-2257

Feel free to contact **BSTTW** if you have any questions and/or comments by using the **BSTTW Comment & Question E-Form** at:  
[www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emailform.html](http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emailform.html)