
BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS

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BSTTW REBUILDING LIVES

BSTTW Donates A Burn Tank To The Mexican Government

By: Michael Appleman, CEO

On January 3rd, 2004, Harry Sarnoff donated a Ferno Model 700 Burn Tank, Ferno Model 729-45 Console, 2 Turbines and the Ferno Model 197 Stretcher to BSTTW. This was very exciting news for BSTTW. The medical equipment is worth \$15,000.00 and is a very important part of the recovery process for over 50% of the people that suffer a burn injury.

Many areas of the world do not have burn units in their hospitals and the medical equipment needed to treat extensive burn injuries. After receiving the donation, Michael Appleman, BSTTW's CEO, contacted government agencies and hospitals throughout the USA, Mexico, Pakistan and Viet Nam. Most of the hospitals Mr. Appleman contacted needed the burn tank. They were very interested in learning more and applying for the burn tank.

After the hospitals requested the burn tank to be donated to them, BSTTW reviewed all the requests. Each hospital and government agency had important needs for the burn tank. As I am sure you would agree, saving lives is very important. Without the funding, medical equipment and supplies, the healing process of a burn injury is limited.

After an extensive review, BSTTW decided to donate the medical equipment to the Saltillo, Coahuila Mexican Government. The Coahuila Government in Mexico informed Ariel Gonzalez, BSTTW Director – Mexico that they were very interested in building a burn unit for their children. Ariel personally spoke with the Coahuila Governor's wife about BSTTW and the burn tank. She was very interested and spoke with her husband, the Coahuila Governor. The Governor understood the need and decided to have several departments of the Coahuila Government review the need for a children's burn unit and the burn tank. After they concluded what was best for Coahuila Mexico, they were asked to bring the decision to the Coahuila Governor. After an extensive review they concluded that it would be to the best interested of the children and families in Coahuila Mexico if a burn unit was produced and the burn tank was donated to their cause. The government then contacted Ariel Gonzalez

and informed him and BSTTW of their decision.
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A FAMILY AROUND THE WORLD

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BSTTW then reviewed the needs of the children in Coahuila Mexico. BSTTW’s decision was to not only to donate the burn tank to the Coahuila Mexico Government, but to also take part in the production of the children’s burn unit.

Ariel Gonzalez then spoke with the Coahuila Mexico Government about transporting the burn tank to Mexico. After several conversations, the Coahuila Mexico Government decided to help fund the cost of storage, crating and transporting of the burn tank from California to Texas and from Texas the burn tank will be picked up by the Coahuila Government and transported to a storage facility in Coahuila, Mexico.

BSTTW is currently finalizing the crating and transportation of the burn tank from California to Texas. Once that is set up, Ariel Gonzalez will inform the Coahuila Government so they can set up transportation from Texas, USA to Coahuila Mexico.

BSTTW and the Coahuila Government are putting together a proposal in order to raise the funding needed for the children’s burn unit. If anyone is interested in taking part in creating the proposal and raising the funding the burn unit or would like to donate the funding needed you can contact Michael Appleman, CEO and Executive Director, michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org or Ariel Gonzalez, Director – Mexico, ariel@burnsurvivorsttw.org.

BSTTW is also looking for medical equipment not only for the burn unit in Mexico. We need equipment and supplies for the USA and other areas in the world. If you would like to volunteer, donate or know of anyone that would like to volunteer or donate you should contact Michael Appleman at 800-503-8058.

I Was Happy I’d Been Burned

By: Jennifer Campion

Shirin Juwaley, 24, from Bombay, thought her dreams had come true when it was arranged she marry Mubin Mulla, 28, a handsome man from a good background.

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Shirin’s happiness was not to last. Shirin found out Mubin was abusive and she decided to leave him. Within months she had walked out on her new bridegroom. Mubin was very angry; his retribution was to disfigure her for life with sulphuric acid.

Publicly shamed in Bombay for deserting her marriage, Shirin was almost grateful that Mubin scarred her pretty face. She was able to prove that Mubin was a vicious monster.



I married on St Valentines Day, 1998, full of many beautiful dreams and aspirations. My husband Mubin was an educated man with prospects and, on the two occasions we met before our wedding day, he seemed gentle and caring. I couldn’t have been happier.

Mubin had a good job as an engineer for a multinational company and I also had a successful career as a marketing executive for the computer company Compaq. The future looked so bright and full of promise. Our families, who arranged our marriage, believed we were a perfect match, but within weeks the fairytale was shattered. I discovered that my handsome husband was physically abusive.

In the privacy of our home he treated me with absolutely no respect and I felt ashamed and insulted. I knew I could not put up with his violent behavior and, after he abused me in front of some of our relatives, I moved back in with my mother.

It was very upsetting – I’d only been married two months – but I couldn’t stay any longer.

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Many women in India are trapped in miserable relationships, but I was determined not to live my life that way. Mubin was furious and deeply humiliated by my destitution and when I found the courage to ask him for a divorce, he said I'd have to pay him £2,000. There was no way I could afford such a huge amount and this made him even angrier.

Living back at mother's flat, was hard because I was now a social outcast in my own neighborhood. A woman who'd left the marital home so soon after the wedding must be evil – that was the general view – and no one would speak to me or even look in my direction. I was completely ostracized.

On the 28th of May, I was on the way home and had just reached the apartment block when I saw a figure loom out from behind some bushes. I realized it was Mubin and that he was holding a container. The next moment I felt something wet on my face and arms and then my skin seemed as though it were on fire. I know the liquid must be acid and the pain was excruciating. I screamed and screamed but no one came to help.

My face seemed as if it was melting, but I started praying: “Please God, not my eyes, save my eyes.” I forced myself to run upstairs and when my mother saw me she started screaming, too. My skin was smoking and she was terrified to move but, as I'd studied chemistry, I knew exactly what to do. I rushed to the sink and doused my face and body with water.

Mum ran to get an ambulance and I was taken to the local hospital. The wounds were cleaned, which was agonizing, and then I was covered in potato peel to help moisturize the burns. Miraculously my sight was saved, even though all the skin surrounding my eyes had been burned away.

I stayed in hospital for three months while the burns healed and then I had some large skin grafts taken from my thighs and back. My face, chest and arms were all terribly damaged, but

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at the time, I believed I'd got off fairly lightly. It wasn't until I left the hospital and the scars had darkened that I realised how disfigured I really was.

I know it sounds crazy, but in those early days I was happy that I'd been burned. Everyone had looked down on me for leaving my husband - I was the one who seemed like the bad person – but now they could see what he'd done to me. I felt vindicated. At last, I thought, they'll realise that I married a monster. No one would expect me to go back to him – in fact; I was told he'd fled the country.

I tried to live a normal life, but when I went out I frightened everyone. People would shrink away and children would run with fear, which really hurt. I wanted them to realise that I was still the same Shirin inside, even if I now looked grotesque. In the end I stayed at home all day, watching TV and eating snack after snack. If I couldn't avoid going somewhere, I'd cover my face with a burka to avoid the stares.

I knew I couldn't live the rest of my life hiding away, so after a couple of years I joined Burn Survivors Throughout the World, Inc.. I wrote my story for their website and in June 2001 I was invited to attend conference in America to talk about domestic violence in India. I jumped at the chance, even though my confidence had been destroyed. The people I met couldn't have been kinder. I started to feel so comfortable that I began going for walks without wearing the burka. It was wonderful to feel the fresh air on my face again.

I attended several seminars and one day a reconstructive plastic surgeon approached me and asked if he could repair my face. I had to explain that I had no money to pay for any operations, but told me not to worry about that. Instead of going back to India after three weeks as planned, I ended up staying for almost two years. During that time, I had five operations on my face to rebuild my nose and improve my features. The most wonderful thing of all was that I was given back my smile.

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I still shiver when I think of what happened to me that night but, despite everything, I feel so lucky. I'll always be eternally grateful to all the wonderful people who helped me and I don't feel bitter towards men. One day I'd love to get married again, but I don't know if that'll happen. It'll be hard for a man to love me now that I no longer have a beautiful face.

**Acid Attacks Are A Growing Problem**

The charity Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc. (visit www.burnsurvivorsttw.org) says the exact figures of attacks using hydrochloric or sulphuric acid in India are difficult to ascertain as many of these attacks go unrecorded in rural areas. However, evidence suggests that the number of these attacks is increasingly at an alarming rate. In 2000, 222 attacks were reported. In 2001 it was 314. In 2002, 485 attacks were recorded, an increase of 42 percent. Almost 80 percent of the victims were female.

BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS**Medications: Patient Assistance Programs**

By: Michael Appleman, CEO

Most name brand name pharmaceutical companies have Patient Assistance Programs (PAPs). Most of the companies do not publicize the programs they have. The PAPs offer free or low cost drugs to people who are low income individuals and families that do not have the insurance and/or funding needed to get the prescription medicines needed.

Most of the drug programs require that an individual applies through the doctor who is prescribing the medication. Each drug company has different eligibility and qualification requirements.

You can find out more about the different PAPs on the internet. Below are a few web sites that offer drug lists and PAP drug application forms, for some drugs, that you can download. The sites also offer valuable information regarding PAPs.

1. www.needymeds.com
2. www.rxassist.org
3. www.medicare.gov
4. www.rxhope.com
5. www.phrma.org/pap
6. www.Qdrug.com/sf/

If you don't have a computer, libraries in the USA have computers and the internet.. You will need to know the brand name of the drug you need to apply for, a prescription from your doctor, the name of the company that manufactures the medication, and the company's toll free phone number. You can ask you doctor and your pharmacist for the information needed to apply. Once you get all the information needed, you will have to call the drug company and ask if they have a PAP for your drug. If they do, inform the company representative that you want to find out if you

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qualify for their program. You may be able to find out over the telephone, by sending in the application and all other documents needed or by checking information on the internet site. Qualification depends on the company rules.

Dearest Friends

By: Shirin Juwaley

Note: In this article I have used burn victims instead of burn survivors. I have done this consciously as many burn survivors in India still consider themselves as victims.

How are you all? It's been really, really long since I've written something as I had really nothing special to write about.... but just recently I had my burn anniversary which I completely forgot! For many of us burn survivors the date we got burned gets etched in our memory. Many of us want to forget the whole incident, pack it in a box and just throw it away in a deep ocean...but unfortunately it does not happen that way, we are constantly reminded of our scars in the eyes of others.

Ok... now back to me...I actually forgot that I had got burned six years ago, when my 'dear' husband threw acid on my face due to rejection. He just could not bear the thought of me being happy with some other man. Anyways, that's history as he forgot that though he could ruin my face he did not have the power to destroy my soul!

I thought of going back to memory lane, analyzing my six years as a burn survivor and how I transformed from a victim to a survivor. My face was very grotesque when I was released from the 3-month stay in a hospital. I was safe and protected in the hospital and was surrounded by many other burn victims...in some ways I was happy, as I was amongst my 'own'. As my days of release from the hospital came closer I was very nervous, I was afraid, I was enshrouded with many questions. Would I be accepted? Would people be scared of me? Would any man like to touch me? Would I get

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my job back? Will I ever be beautiful again? Would I be able to face rejection?

All my questions were answered immediately when I reached home.... though my family accepted me, I was rejected by society, people were afraid of me, no man came close enough to me as many were just afraid to touch, No pretty face, no job of my choice, I will never go back to my old face and above all it **hurt** to have so many rejections in life.

Two years of my life I spent in isolation, at home, watching TV, eating and reading. Two years of my life I wasted, for people who care a damn about me! It was time to face the world, it was time to get up and take a stand, and I did! I made people accept me for what I was inside and outside! It was difficult, it was very painful but I realized that people were very sympathetic once they knew what horrors you've lived through. I got involved in helping other burn victims. I gained confidence slowly, step by step, though I achieved all this in a 'burkha' a cloak with a veil that hid my body and face. I was still not strong to show the world my face.

One day by God's grace I got his wonderful opportunity where I was invited at the World Burn Congress 2003, Grand Rapids, MI, held by Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors. I was invited to speak on "Domestic Violence in India". It was great to know that your experiences were valued and people actually considered it important.

My stay in the United States, which was meant to be 3 weeks, extended to nearly two years! At the conference I got an opportunity to meet Dennis Gardin, and through him I got this great opportunity to undergo reconstructive surgery in Detroit at no cost! I would like to express my experiences in United State in just one single line....."I was a closed flower bud before entering the United States; became a fully blossomed flower when I left United States."

When I landed India, there was no looking back for me. Till today I face rejection but its OK, Can't blame people who don't know what it

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is to be a burn survivor and to deal with scars. Today I'm very proud of my scars and love to show them off. It is my scars that have made me what I represent today, how can I even think of hiding them????

My dearest fellow burn survivors, life is full of pitfalls, with scars or without, live every moment and give a chance to people to understand you better.

Love you all,
Shirin

Survival

By: Michael Appleman

**After the burn injury did I want to
survive?
Was life worth the changes I could not
hide?**

**Surgeries, pain and always stuck in the
bed.
Would it be better just to be dead?**

**Will you support me
And tell me the path you took**

**Will this help me
To close this horrible book?**

**These questions I asked myself every
day
I could not find the help to show me
the way**

**If you can answer them please let me
know
Then maybe I will understand the path
I have to go**

Michael Appleman

BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS**Hotel Fire Safety: Taking Steps to Ensure
Your Own Safety**

By Delores Gempel Lekowski

Greenville, South Carolina. At 4:00 am a fire broke out on the third floor of a five-story Comfort Inn. The 46 registered guests were awakened by the shrill sounds of blaring fire alarms. As they tried to leave their rooms, they were greeted by a thick, smothering, blinding smoke. Six people died: four in the hallway and two in separate rooms. Twelve were injured, five critically.

The hotel was built in the mid-1980s, before national guidelines for sprinkler systems went into effect. While the hotel was not required to have a sprinkler system, it did have three fire extinguishers on each floor and fire hoses at the end of each hallway.

The hotel met all of the minimum fire safety *requirements*, and yet lives were still lost. This reminds us that ultimately we all are responsible for our own safety.

How many of you, when traveling, have checked into your hotel rooms and immediately checked to see where the ice machine is located? Now - How many of you have looked at the exit escape maps attached to back of our hotel room door and really studied it? After you located your room, did you look for the nearest exit to your room? Did you count the doors between your door and the exit? (Remember, if there is a fire, the hallways may fill with black smoke and you will not be able to see.) Did you check to make sure the exit was not blocked and that it led to the outside? Did you develop a mental escape plan? Did you notice where the fire alarms are and how close they were to your room? Did you think about what action you would take if a fire were to break out?

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) offers these valuable tips for surviving a hotel fire:

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1. Before going to bed, place your room key on the nightstand. If you have to leave because of a fire, *always* take your room key with you. If you are forced back because of flames or smoke, you will be able to get back in your room.
2. A flashlight can help others to find you in a dark or smoky room or hallway. While packing for a trip, get in the habit of putting a small flashlight in your suitcase. When you go to bed at night, put the flashlight on the nightstand next to your room key.
3. If you hear a fire alarm or smell smoke, take action!! Grab your keys and flashlight. Don't waste time looking for your wallet, purse or anything else you can live without. Before opening the door, touch it with the back of your hand. If the door feels warm, don't open it. A warm door means there is a fire on the other side. If the door feels cool to the touch, very slowly open the door a crack. If smoke comes rolling in, slam it shut. Get towels, sheets and clothing and stuff them under and around the door.
4. If, after touching the door, it feels cool, slowly open the door and enter the hallway. Close all doors behind you and make your way to the nearest exit. If there is smoke or flames outside your room, stay put.
5. If the hallway fills with smoke, find another escape, if there isn't one, crawl under the smoke on your hands and knees with your head one or two feet above the floor. If your escape becomes blocked by fire, return to your room.
6. Again, put towels and other articles around and under the door. If the

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windows open from top to bottom, open them. If this causes smoke to enter your room, shut them. Do not break the windows.

7. Shut off all fans and air conditioners, as these can suck smoke into your room.

8. Call the fire department, even if you can see them outside your window. Tell them where you are located (room number) and use your flashlight or wave something white - such as a towel or pillowcase - in front of the window. Stay put until rescuers can get to you.

While it has been proven that fire sprinkler systems can prevent injuries and deaths from fire, many public buildings are not required to have sprinkler systems installed. Since state codes may not require the installation of sprinkler systems in existing hotels, it is time for customers to take responsibility for their own safety. When you make hotel reservations, ask if the hotel has a fire sprinkler system installed. If it doesn't, tell the hotel manager that you will book your reservation elsewhere.

Your life-saving checklist:

- ♣ After settling into your room, familiarize yourself with your surroundings.
- ♣ Study the escape plan on the back of the door. Then, go into the hallway and find the nearest exit.
- ♣ Count the number of doors between your room and the exit.
- ♣ Check to see if the exit door leads to the outside.
- ♣ Notice where the fire alarms are located.

Becoming pro-active in your own safety while
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you have a clear head and are not in a state of panic is your best defense. These safeguards only take a minute and can save your life.

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/emergemail.html or the BSTTW Support Team E-Form at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/supportemail.html

To contact BSTTW by telephone by dialing 941-364-8457 or toll free at 800-503-8058. 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**
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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

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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.

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 or 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.
650 N Beneva Road #305
Sarasota, Florida 34232

DONATE ON LINE

To learn more about donating on line go to:
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html

If you have any questions call us at 941-364-8457, toll free at 800-503-8058 or by email at:
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 Profile &

Membership E-Form at:

www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/membership/memform.html,

Next fill out the BSTTW Volunteer E-Form at:

www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html

If you are not a burn survivor or family member you can skip the BSTTW Profile & Membership 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, and by telephone at 941-364-8457 or toll free at 800-503-8058.

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

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

or

www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/donations/donations.html

BSTTW ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBERS:

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Toll Free: 800-503-8058
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Feel free to contact BSTTW if you have any questions and/or comments by using the BSTTW E-Form at:

www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eform/emailform.html