
BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS

Volume 5 Issue 4

October 2005

BSTTW REBUILDING LIVES

President's Volunteer Award Service

By: Michael Appleman, CEO

During the first half of 2005, the **Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc. (BSTTW)** board of directors felt that it would be a positive move for **BSTTW** to join the United States of America President's Volunteer Service Award Program (PVSAP).

BSTTW has representatives in the Africa, Australia, Canada, Egypt, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Iraq, Mexico, Pakistan, Peru, Slovenia, Spain, the UK, the United States and Viet Nam.

BSTTW receives requests from individuals both burn survivors and non burn survivors from all areas around the world. Many of the volunteers hear about **BSTTW** by word of mouth.

Others find out about **BSTTW** by searching the internet, finding the **BSTTW** Volunteer information and E-Form. And the final area that people find out about **BSTTW** and volunteering is newspapers, TV, other internet sites and VolunteerMatch.org.

As many of you reading this know, in the year 2000 there were 370,000 home fires in the United States. The result of those fires was 20,000 deaths and burn injuries combined. Just think how many people from around the world die or are injured daily due to home fires. It has been shown that children and the elderly are

especially at risk in home fires. This is due to the fact that our children and the elderly are less able to escape a fire. We can improve the chances that our family will survive a home fire by installing smoke alarms and practicing fire safety and how to exit when the alarm sounds.



The PVSAP, is an initiative of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation. The PVSAP, honors individuals who volunteer with United States registered volunteer service. The PVSAP takes part in encouraging more kids, teenagers, adults and companies to volunteer, help others in need, raise funds for non profit organizations and join with non profit organizations like **BSTTW** to rebuild the lives of people who suffer a burn injury and their family members.

A FAMILY AROUND THE WORLD

BSTTW offers many areas that our volunteers can take part in.

You may want to work with children, help raise funds, be a secretary, answer phones, take part in our support group, take part in our advertising, help a family get to the hospital to see their loved on, volunteer in the USA, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, etc.. All **CONTINUED Page 2 "BSTTW VOLUNTEER"**

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CONTINUED From Page 1 "BSTTW VOLUNTEER" volunteers must keep records of their service. **BSTTW** offers a weekly, monthly and yearly report documents that must be filled out, signed and mailed to **BSTTW**.

BSTTW is the registered non profit organization that will review your volunteer records and submit the determination to the PVSAP.

To learn more about the PVSAP go to <http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/award.html>. You can also find out more about volunteering with BSTTW at <http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html>.



BSTTW Online

By: Angel Vemich

Hello everyone! It's really awesome to find another website that helps support burn survivors.

Well on May 2nd 2001 I had the worst day of my life. I woke up like any other day, I was supposed to go to work that day at a labor company with my husband so we could make some extra money for rent. My daughter was on my bed a sleep(at the time she was 3 months old)and my son was following me into the shower(he was 18 months). Before we got in I had put a shirt in the clothes dryer to dry so I could wear it that day. After I proceeded to get out of the shower, I noticed a funny smell threw out the house. The entire house was filled with gas. My son went running into the living room and my daughter was still on the bed. I was not sure what to do so I turned off the main gas line which was right next to the dryer. That was a big mistake. The entire house exploded. I had

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glass fly in my face and I was severely flash flame burned. I was not so concerned with myself but I wanted to make sure the kids were ok. I went and got the baby and when I got outside with her my son was already out with someone who heard the explosion from down the street. Thank God that the kids were not hurt. After getting outside and finally realizing what happened, I went into shock. All I kept saying is "I am burning, I am burning". A ambulance came. I went in one of them and my kids went in the other. After arriving at the hospital I was air lifted to UCSD burn unit in San Diego (I lived in Escondido). The last thing I remember after arriving there was them trying to pry my ring off my finger. I was in a coma for a month and in the hospital for a total of 3 months. The hardest part was not seeing my kids. Especially my daughter since she was so young. The whole thing became the hardest struggle of my life. I had multiple surgeries done, including skin grafts taken from my legs to repair my arms, chest, back, shoulders and hands. I was burned 53% of my body. I only had a bra and jeans on when I was burned. If I would of had a shirt on I most likely would not of had been burned as bad. I hated it. I was only 22 years old. I thought" Why me?" But now as the years have gone by I am so thankful god spared my life. I have healed up pretty good and am back to my daily routines.

My scars are my war scars reminding everyday that I fought a battle and won. And I am a survivor!



Support, Education & Rebuilding Lives

A Letter To The US Consumer Product Safety Commission

By Delores Gempel Lekowski
Author of The Hurting Angels

The Honorable Harold Stratton, Chairman
US Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, DC 20207-0001

Dear Chairman Stratton:

Picture this: a CPSC safety demonstration in which a sparkler is touched to the clothing on child-size mannequins. In seconds, the clothes go up in flames.

This should sound familiar, because I am referring to your June 28 "media event" to highlight the dangers of consumer fireworks. But there was a tragic irony in the event, because that same demonstration could also have been used to highlight the extreme flammability of children's clothing - indeed, almost all clothing worn by every man, woman and child in this country. I don't need to tell you that the US Consumer Product Safety Commission is also responsible for administering this country's standard for clothing fabrics used in general wearing apparel - and the sad fact is that most clothing sold in this country is highly flammable, which is unknown to the public and puts us all in needless danger from fire hazards.

You don't need a very hot sparkler to ignite clothing. Brushing briefly past a candle is enough to cause a very destructive clothing fire. Some fabrics used in clothing will melt when ignited, stick to the skin and continue burning. The healing process can be worse than the fire. I would gladly bring you to a burn center to talk to the people who are now living through it. I happen to know first hand.

By way of background, I am a burn survivor. In 1951, when I was 10 years old, my dress ignited from a spark that flew from burning trash. I was severely burned over 86% of my body. I have been told that someone burned so extensively has a 2% chance of surviving in 2005. In 1951, the life expectancy was 0%. Somehow - through God's grace, an inner

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strength, my family's love, and the expert healthcare at Marymount Hospital in Garfield Heights, Ohio - I pulled through after a year in the hospital and countless surgeries, and have gone on to live a full life in spite of my physical and emotional scars. As part of my healing process, I have dedicated myself to helping burn survivors find meaning in their lives, and keeping others from having to suffer from burns, which are the most painful types of injuries that can be experienced.

I wonder how many consumers are aware that the CPSC's wearing apparel flammability standard (16 CFR 1610, the "Standard for the Flammability of Clothing Textiles") is so weak that a single sheet of newspaper and tissues can easily pass the tests and be rated "Class 1, normal flammability." How many consumers realize that this standard - first developed by the textile industry, which had no interest in being regulated - has not been improved in the 50+ years since it was first established. How many consumers have a reasonable belief that the clothing they buy for their children is safe - when, in fact, it need only resist a tiny flame applied for one second's time. That does not represent the real-life situations where clothing ignites, and legions of consumers over the last half-century - many of them children - have been and continue to be killed and horribly disfigured in clothing fires. Scores of fire protection experts, safety organizations and families of burn victims and survivors have

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Proud participant in the
Combined Federal Campaign

**BSTTW is a
proud part of the Local
Independent Charities of America Combined
Federal Campaign and the United Way of Lee
County Florida.**

CONTINUED From Page 3 “PRODUCT SAFETY” called for the CPSC to strengthen this inadequate, obsolete standard, to no avail - yet. CPSC does anything to the standard, it will consist of minor, meaningless tweaks that will not result in safer clothing. The standard needs a wholesale Unfortunately, all current indications are that if the revision and upgrade. Technological advances in fabric construction, finishing and test method development in recent decades make this possible. This is not a matter of “it can’t be done.” It can and must be done if the CPSC is serious about its mission.

I recently visited the Shriners’ Hospital in Cincinnati and spoke with many young burn patients and their parents. One child that especially tugged at my heart was an 8-year-old boy whose clothing had ignited in much the same way mine had. With sadness and pain in his beautiful brown eyes, he said, “I don’t want to be burned anymore, I don’t like being burned.” Of course, being burned is a “life sentence” for a burn survivor, and as I left his room fighting back tears, I felt angry to know that this boy’s clothing was no safer than mine was over half a century ago. Chairman, you appear to be making progress in *****ing the fire safety of certain consumer products such as mattresses, bedclothes and upholstered furniture - and for that you should be recognized. However, you are missing a golden opportunity to accomplish what your predecessors could or would not: please initiate a rulemaking to improve 16 CFR 1610 in a way that will save lives and prevent the most horrible, agonizing injuries imaginable.

One more suggestion: taking a cue from your recent media event, why not use a sparkler as the ignition source.



BSTTW Rebuilding Lives Auction

The **BSTTW** Rebuilding Lives Auction on eBay is from November 15th through December 15th, 2005.

We will be auctioning offer donated autographed items and art work. The funds raised will be used to help rebuild the lives of our current and future burn victims. You might want to bid and give the items to yourself or a loved one for Christmas or Hanukkah.

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TAKE PART WITH **BSTTW** AND RAISE THE FUNDS NEEDED TO REBUILD THE LIVES OF OUR CURRENT & FUTURE BURN VICTIMS AND BURN SURVIVORS.

You can find out more at <http://www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/auction/rebuildlives.html>

Emotionally Healthy

By: Michael Appleman, M.S.

Many of the top researchers suggest that emotional stability and being energetically engaged in life are the key factors in gracefully and joyfully growing older. In order to accomplish this, you will need to remain socially related. It has been shown that people who get involved with social support groups move towards better mental health and better health related quality of life. This helps you to have a more positive idea in life and allows you to move forward in a way that helps you, your family, friends and others who need your support.

People who engage in significant activities by keeping active with a job, volunteer work, family and friends, tend to have fewer depressive symptoms, and it is suggested that they may take improved care of themselves and others. You may also look at your feelings towards marriage. Being married has it’s pros and cons. Both individuals must be willing to love each other, be responsible to the families needs, work together and raise their children in a healthy, happy and positive environment. A stable marriage that is free of serious problems allows you to remain emotionally and physically in better health. Too much stress can cause our emotions to be unstable and lead to physical medical illnesses.

The way that you cope with troubles that arise is a very important part of your emotional stability. When life gets bumpy try to preserve your sense of humor, foresee other people’s responses and when needed, you should swing into your problem solving mode. This should help you to deal with the rough situations that arise. With your problem solving mode and a **CONTINUED Page 5 “HEALTHY”**

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positive attitude you may even help your loved one, college, friend or neighbor to deal with the negative thoughts and move forward in a more positive way.

We all need to relax and unwind. Without that, we may feel that life is not enjoyable. A pleasurable time can help you to have a better sense of joy, it can help you to gain the strength needed to continue your daily work chores and help your loved ones. By helping others can help to open up gratifying experiences and feelings.

Finally, it is very important for all of us to look at the positive side of all situations. No matter how negative a situation may be, if you learn from the situation, you can gain the information needed to help you in the future and also allow you to walk away from the situation with positive thoughts and feelings. By being optimistic in any situation no matter if the situation is good or bad, may help to offer you a shielding result that will protect you from becoming or increasing your depression and possibly help to not increase medical issues.

BSTTW suggests that you speak with your primary doctor about any medical and/or emotional issues that do arise. Your primary doctor will help you to decide if you need support and/or medication.

**BSTTW COMMUNITY NEWS****BSTTW POEMS****Though We Hardly Knew
Each Other**

By: Mariam Mababaya

Though we Hardly Knew Each Other

Though we hardly knew each other,
Although I never knew him well,
Even though we barely chatted –
I'm sure he had a lot to tell.

There were those days when we argued,
Times I refused to look at him,
Weeks when we acted like strangers,
Hours when I fell as his victim –

But I know that – within his soul,
Inside him laid a tender heart.
He bore that love all fathers have,
That love which never did depart.

He had always defended me
And was frequently on my side.
Aware of my likes and dislikes,
Dad could always tell if I lied...

Wise, respected and self-assured –
My qualities, he helped amend.
I love him so, he loves me too.
He is my father and my friend.

Mariam Mababaya

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. Remember that BSTTW has a support team that is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can contact the **BSTTW Support Team** at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/supportemail.html or if this is an emergency you can fill out the **CONTINUED Page 5 “HEALTHY”**

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 BSTTW Emergency E-Form at
www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/emergemail.html
 or by telephone at 800-503-8058.

I found the help I needed during my recovery and that is what allowed me to not only recover but to start **BSTTW** in order to help other burn survivors and family members.

Michael Appleman, CEO

If you would like to submit a poem or story to **BSTTW** you can do so by email at poems@burnsurvivorsttw.org or 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 and your full poem at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/poems/poemmaker.html

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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 or the **BSTTW Support Team E-Form** at www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/eforms/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**
michael@burnsurvivorsttw.org

Nguyễn Thi Diêu Trân: **Director- Việt Nam**
tran@burnsurvivorsttw.org

Ariel Gonzalez: **Director- Mexico**
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*, *BSTTW Viet Nam Fund* and the *BSTTW 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**, you should fill out the **BSTTW Membership & Profile Registration E-Form** at: www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/membership/memform.html,

Next fill out the **BSTTW Volunteer E-Form** at: www.burnsurvivorsttw.org/volunteer/volunteer.html

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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, and by telephone at 941-364-8457 or toll free at 800-503-8058.

BSTTW ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBERS:

Burn Survivors Throughout The World, Inc.
650 N Beneva Road #305
Sarasota, Florida 34232
(941) 364-8457
Toll Free: 800-503-8058
Fax: (941) 364-8441

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