



Unmasking Brain Injury is proudly presented by



in association with



The mission of Unmasking Brain Injury is to **promote awareness** of the prevalence of brain injury; to **give survivors a voice** and the means to educate others of what it's like to live with a brain injury; to show others that **persons living with a disability due to their brain injury are like anyone else**, deserving of dignity, respect, compassion and the opportunity to prove their value as citizens in their respective communities.

For more, visit <http://unmaskingbraininjury.org/alaska/>



Name: Danielle G.

City: Anchorage

Brain Injury: Machete to head hospitalized for 1 week.

Explanation of Mask: Ex boyfriend in 2012 didn't want me to break up with him we were together 2 years. I'd rather not get into the whole story in writing.



Name: Rae F.

City: Anchorage

Brain Injury: Brain Tumor

Explanation of Mask: Please
God bring back my smile
and I promise you I will never
see another "ugly" person.



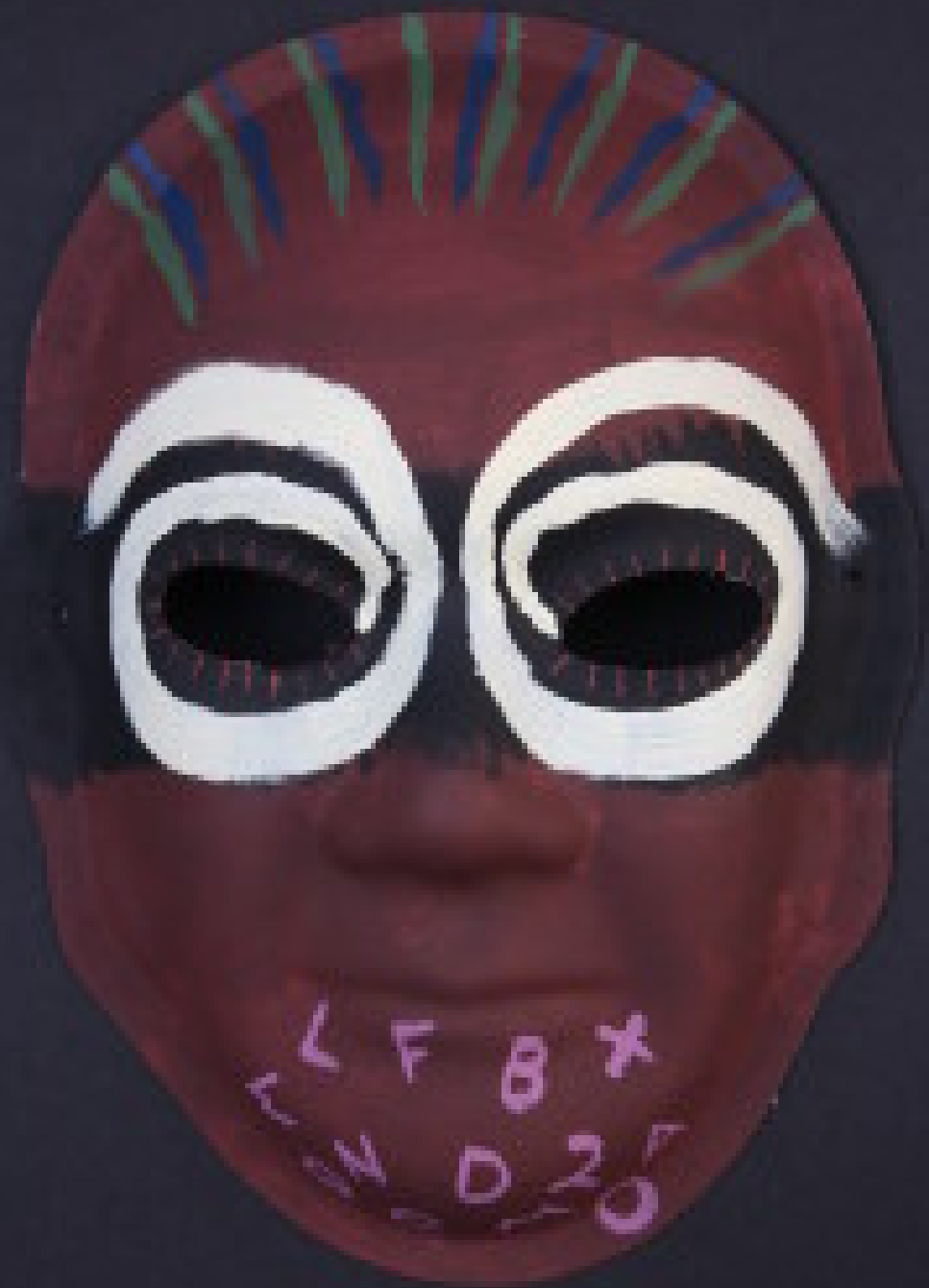
Name: Nathan + family

City: Eagle River

Brain Injury: Our son and brother has FAS

Explanation of Mask: "Orange is happy and red is mad."

Sometimes we are so happy but having a family member who has a lot of needs leaves us feeling isolated, frustrated, alone, scared. It can be a confusing dynamic having so much love but also contradicting emotions.



Name: Katie M.

City: Anchorage, AK

Brain Injury: My mom was in multiple car crashes resulting in permanent neck and shoulder damage and a brain stem injury.

Explanation of Mask: I tried to represent the world my mom lives in. The black band across the eyes is her changed perception, both physically and in the fog of frustration I know she always feels. The swirls are vertigo, the small red marks pain. The blue and green lines are the outside world invading and overstimulating. The jumbled letters represent all her difficulties communicating, and specifically aphasia and word salad. I chose the darkened base tone because this trauma is like a shadow over my mom - as much as it is part of her now, it's not who she feels she really is.



Name: Cheri M.

City: Anchorage

Brain Injury: TBI – Repeated car accidents visual/ perceptual damage, chronic vertigo, aphasia; memory loss

Explanation of Mask: How to describe what it's like to live in a world where almost every visual stimulus is an attack – running the gamut from mildly disturbing to dropping me to the floor in a state of overwhelmed vertigo and confusion. The aphasia? Well sometimes it's just plain funny. Remember – an eggplant is NOT an elephant. The memory loss = scary. My ace in the hole -> MY FAMILY. Which mostly understands; always supports; never fails to make the joke about how absurd life can be. Above all – it's exhausting.



Name: Jessica B.

City: Anchorage

Brain Injury: Brain Tumor –

Hemangioblastoma in brain stem

Explanation of Mask: Left side represents life before -> had everything I always wanted – wife and mom.

Middle section -> grey for brain tumors where everything changed -> could have lost it all 😞

Right side -> all the parts of my identity (good and bad) now – feel like I am a jumble of pieces that don't fit all together. Faith is the key!



Name: Jos G.

City: Ketchikan . AK

Brain Injury: A car accident in Anchorage where the car was demolished. I woke up 3 days later in the hospital It took me about 5 years to get usable help.

Explanation of Mask: The black is the loss of memory that comes and goes.

The white is what was/is left over. The gray is what has been relearned and recovered.



Name: Janice B.

City: Anchorage

Brain Injury: Post Concussion Syndrome for 7 month from Closed Head Injury in winter when I slipped on ice and knocked out.

Explanation of Mask: My mask should be plain – looks like nothing different from the outside – that's why people cannot tell anything is wrong. But I have made it show what is underneath a padlock for the things I cannot remember. Then blue sky and sun for happy that I am getting better and for time I now get to spend with my family. But then red and lightening bolt for anger and frustration that strikes unexpectedly because my brain is "overloaded". Dark circles under eyes from tired feeling that comes from too much brain activity. My mask has half smile because I am getting better but half frown because it makes me sad when I am treated like a child. And a single tear for the career I lost. But also for the family and friends that had TBI before me but how sad I am now that I did not understand what they were going thru.



Name: Carter Family

City: Anchorage

Brain Injury: coma 1980 car rollover with friends.

Explanation of Mask: This describes a mask that is made for my father who sustained traumatic brain injury (TBI) in 1980 that left him in a coma for several weeks. Luckily he was able to take his mask off returning back to us all.