

FOR RELEASE

March is Brain Injury Awareness Month

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Famous Brain Injury Survivors Advocate for Awareness, Prevention and Better Care

YPSILANTI, Mich., March 17, 2008 — What do an ABC journalist and a NASCAR racer have in common? At first glance, it might not seem like much, but former “World News Tonight” anchor Bob Woodruff and 1991 Daytona 500 winner Ernie Irvan are both survivors of a traumatic brain injury.

The Centers for Disease Control estimate that over a million Americans sustain a brain injury each year. Celebrities, athletes and well-known professionals are not exempt. But what sets Woodruff and Irvan apart is their decision to draw from their own personal experiences to raise awareness about the impact of brain injury on survivors and their families and to advocate for quality care. Consider their stories:

- On January 29, 2006, ABC Journalist Bob Woodruff incurred a traumatic brain injury (TBI) when an improvised explosive device was detonated by Iraqi insurgents near the tank he and the news team were riding in. Woodruff was hit by shrapnel when he tried to do a stand-up interview through the tank’s hatch. Both he and cameraman Doug Vogt sustained traumatic brain injuries. Woodruff remained in a coma for over a month. Although his recovery has been nothing short of miraculous, it has not been without challenges. His injury was in the left temporal lobe, affecting his speech and word recall — requiring months of speech and language therapy. Although he has returned to work at ABC, he was unable to return to his role as “World News Tonight” anchor due to his struggle with word retrieval. Today, he is an advocate for brain injury survivors, especially those in the military. He and his wife Lee have established the Bob Woodruff Family Fund for Traumatic Brain Injury that assists injured U.S. service members.
- Former NASCAR racer Ernie Irvan was at the peak of his career when a crash at the Michigan International Speedway in August of 1994 nearly claimed his life. He was given a 5 – 10 percent chance of making it through the night, diagnosed with critical brain and lung injuries. Through rehabilitation and hard work, he returned to race the following season, but a second accident five years later would take him out of racing permanently. He was once again airlifted from the track and was diagnosed with a mild brain injury and a bruised lung. He still struggles with double vision in one eye. In response to his experience as a brain injury survivor, Irvan began a foundation called Race2Safety, focused on brain injury prevention.

These survivor stories and more are featured in RainbowVisions magazine, a quarterly publication of Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers Inc. that covers all aspects of brain injury including clinical news, current technology, rehabilitation techniques, behavioral information and medical articles for industry professionals, patients and their families. To download a copy, log on to www.rainbowrehab.com. For additional resources about brain injury, visit the Brain Injury Association of America’s Web site at www.biausa.org or the Brain Injury Association of Michigan’s Web site at www.biami.org.

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About Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers Inc.

Rainbow Rehabilitation Centers Inc. headquartered in Ypsilanti, Michigan has been a provider of rehabilitation services for children, teens and adults with brain injuries since 1983. With more than 30 residential locations, two treatment centers, a NeuroRehab Campus and a vocational center, our organization offers services that span nearly every aspect of brain injury recovery and rehabilitation. Our residential settings include adult homes, child and adolescent homes, townhouses and semi-independent living apartments. Day treatment and outpatient services are also available.

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