

## 2016-2017 U Got Brains Champion Schools Program

### Faculty Advisor Survey Report

The Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey (BIANJ) is a recipient of a New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety (NJDHHS) Comprehensive Traffic Safety Grant. In 2010, to address the issue of teen driving safety, BIANJ created the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. This statewide peer-to-peer program challenges teams of students, guided by a faculty advisor, to create a teen safe driving campaign in their school and community. The Champion Schools Program has been a part of the BIANJ Comprehensive Traffic Safety Grant since 2010 and has grown every year both in the number of participating schools as well as the number of corporate and non-profit sponsors.

In 2014, the fourth year of the program, BIANJ partnered with The Research Institute at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) to create a faculty advisor survey to help evaluate the effectiveness of the Champion Schools Program. CHOP conducted a series of telephone interviews with the advisors to evaluate the 2013-2014 program from their perspective. CHOP then analyzed the results of the survey and created a report of their findings.

For the 2016-2017 program, BIANJ used an amended version of the original faculty advisor survey to evaluate the effectiveness of this year's program from the perspective of the faculty advisors. BIANJ staff posted the survey online, tallied the results and wrote the following summary report of their findings: *\*(Complete tally results are included with this summary report)*

The 2016-2017 school year was the 7<sup>th</sup> year of the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program*. 65 high schools (public, private and technical) from 18 counties participated in the program. As a prerequisite for being chosen, schools signed a participation agreement which stated that they would participate, to the best of their ability, in a survey of the Champion Schools Program. BIANJ Champion Schools technical support staff informed the faculty advisors of the survey at their 1<sup>st</sup> technical support visits, in emails to the faculty advisors and during technical support conference calls. The online faculty advisor survey was posted in May, and emails went out to the faculty advisors in May and June reminding them to complete the survey.

Responses were received from faculty advisors of 36 participating schools (55%). A total of 42 faculty advisors responded to the survey-Buena Regional, Riverside, Bergen County Academies and Pitman each had two faculty advisors respond and Henry Hudson had responses from 3 faculty advisors. The survey consisted of 17 questions. A copy of the survey along with tally results from the respondents is attached.

**Questions #1** asked for the name of their high school.

**Question #2** of the survey asked the participants ***"to respond to the ease or difficulty a series of activities based on a scale from 1-7, with 1 being very hard and 7 being very easy"***.

In response to the question, ***"communicating with the students about the project was..."*** a majority of the advisors (57%) found that was either *"easy"* or *"very easy"*, while 1 advisor (2%) found communicating with the students to be *"very hard"*.

In response to the question, ***"getting support from school administrators was..."*** a majority also stated that was either *"easy"* or *"very easy"* (62%), however 3 advisors or 7% stated that getting support from school administrators was either *"very hard"* or *"hard"*.

Schools seemed to have a more difficult time getting their communities involved, with only 33% of respondents stating that ***"getting the community involved"*** was either *"easy"* or *"very easy"* while 14% found that it was either *"hard"* or *"very hard"* to get support from the community.

Schools seemed to have an easier time managing their project finances, with a majority of respondents (60%) answering that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to “**manage the program’s finances**” while 5 advisors or 12% found that managing the finances was “very hard”.

Only 48% of respondents thought that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to “**find time to meet with student team members**”, while 3 advisors (7%) thought that it was either “hard” or “very hard” to find the time to meet with students.

The results were similar for the question that asked about “**getting student team members to take a leadership role**”, with only 50% of respondents stating that it was either “easy” or “very easy” and 14% stating that it was either “hard” or “very hard”.

Results were similar for the question that asked about “**planning the program**”, with 52% of the respondents stating that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to plan the program and 5% stating that it was either “hard” or “very hard” to plan for the program.

A majority of the respondents (69%) thought that it was either “easy” or “very easy” to “**advise the students**”, while only 2 respondents (5%) thought that it was “hard”.

**Question #3** asked the participants to “**describe any advantages or ‘good things’ associated with having a Champion School Project at their school**”. Answers varied, but many respondents stated that having the opportunity to get students involved, getting the message out, and saving lives were advantages of the project. Several respondents stated that their project brought their community together and caused a heightened awareness about the issue of teen safe driving in both their school and town. Some advisors stated that the program was a nice complement to other programs and it tied in with their health curriculum. The program provided an opportunity for the faculty advisor to have a serious discussion with the group most affected by teen crashes. Some respondents stated that the project helped to connect students and staff and allowed them to collaborate to spread the message about teen driving safety, pedestrian safety, and the GDL law. Several faculty advisors stated that the cash stipend and the Awards Showcase at Six Flags Great Adventure Theme Park were motivating to their students. Other respondents talked about how the program fostered student leadership and empowerment and how it allowed the students to care for and help fellow students. Some stated that the program provided the opportunity for the students to set goals. One advisor attributed the fact that there were no driving incidents at their prom this year to the program and another noted how their project helped to improve traffic control on the school campus. One advisor from a Special Education School stated that their students lead very challenging lives and have been told over and over again that they don’t have what it takes to be successful. The Champion Schools Program allowed them to work as a team and succeed in their goal of helping save lives on the road. Several advisors noted that the speakers that the program brought into their classrooms were excellent. Others commented on the advantages of students’ teaming up with each other to conduct their own research and peer-to-peer education.

**Question #4** asked the participants to “**describe any disadvantages or ‘bad things’ associated with having a Champion School Project at their school**”. Forty percent of the respondents said that there were no disadvantages to having a project at school; in fact one respondent replied that “*There are no disadvantages, every little bit helps. If we save one life or prevent one accident the whole program is ‘Win, Win, Win’ for all involved.*” Eight of the respondents stated that not having enough time to meet with students was a disadvantage. They stated that “*it was difficult to coordinate meeting times*” and that it was difficult to “*get students together who are involved in sports and other activities*”. One

respondent stated that they were a regional school and it was difficult coordinating meeting times. A few advisors said that they were from small schools and lacked resources to help spread their messages. Several advisors stated that sometimes students are “stretched too thin”. Two advisors cited the lack of student involvement and one stated that “*students were afraid of backlash*” from their peers. One new advisor stated that it was difficult knowing what to do and how to get the messages out since it was her first year in the program. Another advisor stated that she had difficulty with meeting deadlines for the project. Three respondents stated that the stipend did not even cover the cost of transportation to the Awards Showcase and that left no money to buy supplies for their projects. Two advisors commented that their district requires them to use their vendors and it was difficult to get a PO from them and some did not have items that students requested to help spread their message. One respondent did not answer the question.

**Question #5** asked the participants “***what kinds of things made it easier for you to have the program at your school?***” According to the advisor responses, support seemed to be the biggest factor in ease of implementing their programs. A majority of the respondents stated that support for the program from their administration and principal made it easier for them to have the program. They also mentioned support from the other faculty, other school clubs, students, parents, community, local police departments and BIANJ. One respondent noted that they have a very strong driver education program that helped to support their project. Another respondent remarked on how student interest in the topic and student leadership made the process of implementing the program easier. Another respondent remarked on the overall teamwork of students and staff and support from their community. Seven respondents commented on the support they received from their technical support advisors at BIANJ. They highlighted the importance of the on-site technical support visits and the on-going online and telephone support and communication. Another respondent noted that the “*online communication and accessibility is great*” while others mentioned that the stipend given by BIANJ to help defray the costs of the campaign and the guest speaker lists provided by BIANJ made it easier to implement their programs. Respondents noted that “*access to students*” made it easier to implement their programs with one advisor stating that they had access to the junior and senior classes which made the process run smoothly. Schools who had participated in earlier years noted that they now “*possessed knowledge of how to get things done*” and could build on the success from their last project.

**Question #6** asked participants “***what kinds of things made it harder for you to have the program at your school?***” Six advisors answered “*none*” to the question and two respondents did not answer. Lack of time was the biggest factor noted by the advisors. Many commented that students and teachers “*wear many hats*”, students “*have so much on their plates-especially seniors*” and are “*spread so thin*” that it is hard to schedule meetings. One advisor noted that they were a first year school and it was hard to get the program going because they started late. One advisor stated that it was hard to implement the program because they taught semester classes and it was different groups of students each semester. One advisor noted that this year the weather was a factor in making it harder to implement the planned activities for the project. One respondent commented on how hard it was to get permission for different pieces of the project including signing up, how and when to spend the money, Board approval and who gets to attend the Awards Showcase. One advisor said that they were a small school and lacked a media department and access to technology; another advisor commented on the lack of resources to purchase additional giveaways. A few advisors commented that the stipend did not cover all of their expenses-most of the stipend had to go to the cost of transportation to the Awards Showcase.

**Question #7** asked, *“What aspects of the program worked really well and why?”* Many respondents remarked on how well the program was run and structured. Advisors noted that the technical support visits by BIANJ staff really helped the students understand the program and allowed them to brainstorm ideas for their projects while the ongoing online and telephone support helped to answer any questions from the students. Advisors also cited the UGotBrains website that housed the application, midterm and final report forms and how easy it was to apply for and report on their projects. They also mentioned the videos and other resources that were on the website and how helpful they were to their students. The stipend and speakers provided by the program were also factors that helped to make the program run well. Many respondents remarked on the support and collaboration that they received from the community and parents. Social media was cited by several advisors as helpful to spreading their messages and also as a way of communicating and holding meetings. Other advisors remarked on the successful involvement of the students and their excitement for the program. Several advisors felt that the program was successful because it was a peer-to-peer program and it empowered the students to work together to create successful projects. One advisor stated, *“Friendships were formed, leaders developed, communication skills improved, students learned how to interact with agencies and businesses, and they understood the importance of following through on a commitment.”* One respondent did not answer.

**Question #8** asked participants, *“What aspects of the program did not work so well and why?”* Nine of the respondents answered either *“none”* or *“N/A”* to the question and 4 respondents did not answer. Once again, lack of time was listed as the biggest factor in the program not working well. Advisors commented that there was not enough time in the day, that it was difficult to find the time to schedule meetings due to too many other activities that students were involved in, that the length of the meetings was too short and the frequency of the meetings needed to be increased. One advisor stated that they were slow to get meetings started and did not have enough time to complete all of their activities. Another advisor stated that their driver education classes were only for one semester and he did not see the students for the second half of the year. This made it hard to keep in touch with students and to follow-up with planned activities. Other respondents commented on the difficulties they had with the student team members: they had great ideas, but could not use all of them; they had difficulty getting students to follow-up on their excellent ideas while some student leaders had trouble giving up control of the project or designating tasks to other team members so that they did not finish tasks in a timely manner. One advisor stated they had trouble getting local businesses and their community involved and their students had a difficult time talking to local leaders to ask them for help. First year schools said that being new to the program made it hard and the lessons they learned in the first year would make it easier for them moving forward. A few advisors commented that it was difficult getting students interested in the program and keeping their interest for the entire year. Some commented that it was difficult to get approval to attend the Awards Showcase and that the distance to the Showcase was too far. One advisor would like to know the details of the Showcase sooner and another would also like to have the online student evaluations posted earlier in the year when he still had the students in his class. This year, one advisor reported that they received push back from parents after they conducted a seatbelt check of student drivers and their passengers as they were leaving school.

**Question #9** asked participants, *“How did you get student members to participate in the program?”* Advisors employed a variety of strategies to get students to participate in the program. Their students set up display tables to promote their program at lunch and after school; they promoted the program on morning announcements, with flyers, emails, posters and sign-in sheets; and they spread the program

by word of mouth. Advisors said that all they had to do was ask-the students were really excited to be a part of the program because the topic was relevant to them and they wanted to help keep their friends and themselves safer on the roads. They also wanted to be a part of a good cause. Other advisors said that students volunteered. Another advisor stated that their students recruited members and built their own teams. Some advisors talked about building on the success of the previous year's project. It encouraged students to come back. Many of the advisors stated that recruitment was helped by making it a school-wide project involving many subjects-they collaborated with various other classes including Media/TV, Art, Civics, Graphic Design, English, Physical Education and Health. Advisors also promoted the program in the Driver Education classes and some made the campaign part of the curriculum or a class project. One respondent stated, *"We involve students during Drivers Education class! We have to turn students away because we cannot bring more than 20! It has become quite an honor to participate in UGotBrains at our school."* Some schools partnered with SADD students and advisors. Some promoted the program as a college resume builder and some gave extra credit or community service hours for students who participated. Several advisors stated that the end of the year Awards Showcase at Six Flags Great Adventure theme park was a great motivator.

**Question #10** asked participants *"to rate your response to each statement using a scale from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree"*

In response to the question, *"student team members worked cohesively together"*, a majority of the respondents (64%) either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement and no one (0%) *"disagreed"*.

Twenty-six of the advisors (62%) either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement that *"student leaders held regular meetings that I attended"*, while 2 respondents (5%) either *"disagreed"* or *"strongly disagreed"* with that statement.

A majority of the respondents (69%) also either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement that *"students had all the materials and resources that they needed"* while none of the schools (0%) *"disagreed"* with that statement.

In response to the question, *"I had enough time to advise the students"*, 48% of the respondents either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement while 3 advisors (7%) either *"disagreed"* or *"strongly disagreed"*.

In response to the question, *"I felt supported by my school's administration"*, 83% of the respondents either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement, while 5% of the schools either *"disagreed"* or *"strongly disagreed"*.

In response to the question, *"I felt supported by BIANJ staff"*, 95% of the respondents either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement, while one advisor (2%) *"strongly disagreed"*.

A majority of the respondents (62%) either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement, *"I felt supported by my fellow teachers"*, while only 1 of respondents (2%) *"disagreed"*.

A majority of the respondents (66%) either *"agreed"* or *"strongly agreed"* with the statement, *"The program activities went as I had planned"*, while 2% *"disagreed"* with the statement.

In response to the question, ***“I collaborated on the mid-year report with my students”***, 69% of respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, while 7% either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

A majority of respondents (69%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“I collaborated on the final report with my students”***, while 2% *“strongly disagreed”*.

74% of the respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“Student team members were engaged with the program”***, while no one (0%) either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

Only 48% of respondents either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“The community was engaged with the program”***, while 10% either *“disagreed”* or *“strongly disagreed”*.

A slightly larger number of respondents (52%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement that ***“The student body was engaged with the program”***, while 2% *“disagreed”*.

A large majority of the respondents (86%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“My interactions with student team members were positive”***, while 2% *“strongly disagreed”*.

Results were mixed with responses to the statement, ***“Being an advisor helps my career”***, with 52% of respondents either *“agreeing”* or *“strongly agreeing”* with the statement, while 10% either *“disagreed”* or strongly *“disagreed”*.

A majority of respondents (88%) either *“agreed”* or *“strongly agreed”* with the statement, ***“Overall, I’m happy with my advising experience this year”***, while 2% *“strongly disagreed”*.

Several advisors responded to **Question #11, “What would make things better next year?”** by stating that getting more involvement and commitment from students would help to make things better. Others commented that starting the program earlier in the year would help. Other respondents commented that moving forward they would plan better, both with the students and with the administration and that they would try to work more with their communities. Several first-year advisors stated that they will be better prepared next year because now they have experience with the program. Some advisors had advice for BIANJ in how to better run the program including: creating a new video clip to explain the program to students, starting the technical support visits earlier in the year, increasing the stipend amount and making the money easier to access by giving debit cards instead of checks, and better communication about details of the Awards Showcase-including how many students schools are allowed to bring. Several advisors thought that everything went well and that Champion Schools is a great program. Four advisors did not respond to the question.

**Question #12** was a set of questions that asked respondents ***“about how unhelpful or helpful certain resources are. Please rate each resource on a scale from (1) Extremely Unhelpful to (7) Extremely Helpful. If you did not use the resource please select ‘Did Not Use’ ”***.

In response to the question, ***“my interactions with the BIANJ staff were...”*** a large majority of the respondents (81%) stated that they were either *“very helpful or extremely helpful”*; 3 participants (7%)

responded either “*very unhelpful*” or “*extremely unhelpful*”. Three respondents (7%) responded “*did not use*”.\*

\* (*BIANJ staff had interactions with at least one advisor from all of the participating schools*)

In response to the question, “***the first technical assistance visit (where a representative from the Champion School Program presented information) was...***” a majority of the respondents (69%) stated that the visit was either “*very helpful or extremely helpful*”; 2 respondents (5%) replied that the visit was “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 9 (21%) responded “*did not use*”. \*

\* (*Technical visits were made to all of the participating schools*)

In response to the question, “***the (optional) 2<sup>nd</sup> technical visit was...***” 24% of the respondents stated that the visit was either “*very helpful or extremely helpful*”; 1 respondent (2%) answered “*extremely unhelpful*” while 81% responded, “*did not use*”.

In response to the question, “***The technical assistance calls were...***” 31% stated the calls were “*extremely helpful*”, one school (2%) found the calls to be “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 64% responded, “*did not use*”.

In response to the question, “***NJDriverEducation.com was...***” 57% stated that the website was either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, 2 of the respondents (5%) found the website to be “*extremely unhelpful*”, while 24% responded, “*did not use*”.

In response to the question, “***NJTeenDriving.com was...***” 55% stated that the website was either “*very helpful*” or “*extremely helpful*”, 3 of the respondents (7%) found the website to be either “*not helpful*” or “*extremely not helpful*”, while 19% responded, “*did not use*”.

**Question #13** asked, “***How often did you visit the U Got Brains website to access the “Tools for Schools?”***” 2% stated they accessed the website “*0 times*”, 24% responded “*1-2 times*”, 36% responded “*3-5 times*”, and 38% responded “*6+ times*”.

**Question #14** asked, “***About how often did the student team members meet?***” 2% responded that they met “*0 times*”, 0% responded “*1 time*”, 2% responded “*2-3 times*”, 12% responded “*4 times*”, and 83% responded “*5+ times*”.

**Question #15** asked, “***How often did the student team members meet with you?***” 0% responded “*0 times*”, 0% responded “*1 time*”, 7% responded “*2-3 times*”, 5% responded “*4 times*”, and 88% responded “*5+ times*”.

**Question #16** asked, “***In general, do you think students are safer drivers because of your project of the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program? Please rate your response from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree.***” None of the schools responded either “*disagree*” or “*strongly disagree*”, 79% responded either “*agree*” or “*strongly agree*”.

**Question #17** asked, “***In general, do you think students are safer passengers because of your project of the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program? Please rate your response from (1) Strongly Disagree to (7) Strongly Agree.***” None of the schools responded either “*disagree*” or “*strongly disagree*”, and 79% responded either “*agree*” or “*strongly agree*” with the statement.

## **General Conclusions from the Faculty Advisor Survey Evaluations:**

### **Advantages of the Champion Schools Program**

- A large majority of the faculty advisors think that their students are safer drivers and safer passengers because of their U Got Brains Champion Schools Project.
- Champion Schools Program brings the school and local community together around the issue of teen driving safety.
- Champion Schools Program offers the opportunity to discuss and promote safe driving practices.
- Champion Schools Program helps to get the message out and heighten awareness of teen driving safety.
- Champion Schools Program helps to bring about a change in both student and community behavior when it came to teen driving safety.
- Champion Schools Program is a student-centered and student driven peer-to-peer program.
- Students are given the opportunity to speak as advocates for teen driving safety.
- Students experience a sense of pride that comes from accomplishing something important.
- The End of the Year Showcase at Great Adventure was a great reward for students' hard work.

### **Aspects of the Program that Worked Well**

- Returning school advisors commented that it was easier to get students involved with their project because they knew the Champion Schools Program
- Cash stipend made it easier to fund the program
- Faculty advisors who felt supported by their administration, parents and local community stated that this support helped their project go well.
- Faculty advisors overwhelmingly felt supported by BIANJ technical support staff.
- A majority of faculty advisors felt that they were happy with their advising experience.

### **Challenges of the Champion Schools Program**

- New Champion Schools struggle with the process of the program more than schools who are returning Champion Schools (although the process seems to be easier with each returning year).
- Finding the time to meet with students and plan for the program was challenging for many schools.
- Finding the time to fit the program into the existing school calendar was challenging for some schools. Many students were involved in multiple activities and the state testing schedule hindered meeting times.
- Lack of student involvement and getting students to follow-up on ideas was challenging for some schools.
- Getting the community involved was challenging for some schools.

Overall, the U Got Brains Champion Schools Program was found to be an effective tool to engage students to help raise awareness in their schools and communities about teen driving safety and to help change both teen driver and teen passenger behaviors. Feedback from the participating faculty advisors and students will help the Brain Injury Alliance of NJ to continually improve the *U Got Brains Champion Schools Program* and allows us to offer a proven, effective statewide peer-to-peer teen driving safety program. By partnering with the NJ Division of Highway Safety and our corporate sponsors, we can continue to help keep our roadways safer for New Jersey's newest drivers and their passengers.