



# Thao Nguyen Foundation Inc. Newsletter

Volume 11, Issue<sup>#1</sup>  
July 2023

TOGETHER, WE BRING LIGHT TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

IN THIS ISSUE

## Greetings from the President

Nhung Hendy

Welcome to the first issue of the 11<sup>th</sup> Volume of our newsletter. I cannot believe that it has been ten years since we established the Foundation. Whereas there are still many goals left unachieved and/or in progress, we have accomplished a lot with respect to bringing to light the discussion of mental illness and advocating for more access and equitable treatment of mental illness in the state of Maryland. On behalf of the Foundation Board of Directors, I would like to thank all of you for your unwavering support over the past 10 years. I hope you will stay with us for the ride as we reflect on what we have achieved and chart our future for the next 10 years and beyond.

A lot has happened since our last newsletter. First, I would like to report that a Thao Nguyen Memorial scholarship (\$1,500) was awarded to Allanis Silva, an Art + Design student from Towson University on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, during the Annual Foundation Scholars Celebration. If you recall, Allanis was one of the artists whose works were accepted to the Reconciliation Juried art show last year. Second, two scholarships (\$1,000 each) were awarded to Katelyn Lighty and Gabriella Martin, graduating

senior students at Loch Raven High school at their Senior Awards Day on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

As I write this column, preparation for the marketing and promotion of the Fourth Juried Art Show is about to begin. Please mark your calendar to save the date for our next art show, which will be running for a week starting on **Saturday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 501A York Road in Towson, MD** with the Opening Reception from 6 to 9 P.M. on 10/19. Please consider submitting your works to the show next year and/or helping us spread the words to reach more artists than we did in past shows. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Deidre Aikin and her family for their generous support (as always) in letting us use their gallery space to host our show next year. I'd also like to thank Professor Jenee Mateer for her continued support as she kindly agreed to orchestrate our show next year. Please stay tuned as we have more information to share with you.

In closing, please continue to stay safe and be kind to yourself. As always, thank you all for your steadfast support and have a celebratory Fourth of July Holiday!

### Upcoming event:

**Survivors of Suicide Loss Day:  
11/18/2023**

Registration information will be posted on TNF website soon.

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**TN Foundation Board of Directors**  
Michael Biderman, Director  
Stella Coffman, Secretary and Social  
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Nhung T. Hendy, President



Kenai lake, Alaska. Photo credit: Ted Hendy

IF YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE AN ARTICLE

Contact Nhung Hendy,  
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## SAVE THE DATE!

Reflection Juried Art Show

Saturday, **OCTOBER 19, 2024**  
6 P.M. to 9 P.M. 501 York Rd.,  
Towson MD 21204



Mt. Denali at Reflection Pond, Alaska.  
Photo credit: Tim Rains

As artificial intelligence becomes integrated in our lives to help us with decision-making, and even doing the manual tasks of our jobs, concerns have been raised about the potential increase in **social isolation and anxiety** in working adults as a negative consequence of interacting with artificial intelligence in our daily lives. Please join us in **reflecting** on what we have learned in general about mental health, how artificial intelligence has transformed the business landscape from marketing to retailing, and our mental health over the past ten years, and what we can do to **leverage artificial intelligence while sustaining our mental health**.



Exit Glacier, Alaska.  
Photo credit: Nhung Hendy

## Misconceptions in adults with bipolar disorder – A clinical study

Summarized by Nhung Hendy

Misdiagnosis of mental illness such as bipolar disorder has been reported in both popular press and scholarly research journals due to potential inaccuracy in detecting their symptoms early for effective intervention and treatment. Most clinicians rely on self-reported questionnaires the responses of which can be biased due to socially desirable responding. As an example, aggression and impulsivity and their elevation can be implicated in adults with bipolar disorder. These two behavioral tendencies often lead to misconceptions with adverse consequences including stigma and suicidal ideation and attempts. A group of researchers from Yale School of Medicine and the University of Pennsylvania conducted a study (published in the *Journal of Affective Disorder* last year) to investigate the linkage between the above two behaviors and bipolar disorder using a sample of adults with bipolar disorder (N = 34, of whom 26 were female) and a healthy group of adults (N = 29, 19 females) serving as a control group. They compared self-reported scores of all participants on the Aggression and Impulsiveness scales (subjective measures) with their suicidal ideation and attempts (archival data) as well as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) gray matter volume (an objective measure). They found the following:

There was a positive association between the total self-reported scores on the aggression and impulsivity scales and suicidal attempts. In addition, there was an inverse association between the total self-reported scores on the aggression and impulsivity scales and bilateral orbitofrontal cortex and left posterior insula brain regions (higher scores →

decreased MRI gray matter volume in the above brain regions).

The above findings suggest that the brain-based domains of dysfunction in bipolar disorder of motor impulsiveness are independent or at least a separate phenomenon from emotionally dysregulated feelings that are primarily self-regulated. Further, both brain regions were found to be associated with suicide behavior and modifiable risk factors of childhood maltreatment, depression, and substance use disorders could be targeted for prevention.

One takeaway from this study for me is that in addition to controlling our thoughts and decision-making processes, our brain may also regulate our emotions as well based on this study's findings. Of course, it is still too early to make an affirmative conclusion about what the insula, the deepest level of our brain serves and subserves until more studies with larger sample sizes replicate or refute this study.

### Reference

Drachman, R., Colic, L., Sankar, A., Spencer, L., Goldman, D. A., Villa, L. M., Kim, J. A., Oquendo, M. A., Pittman, B., & Blumberg, H. P. (2022). Rethinking "aggression" and impulsivity in bipolar disorder: Risk, clinical and brain circuitry features. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 303, 331–339.



Resurrection Bay, Alaska.  
Photo credit: Nhung Hendy