

# Expanding Brain Awareness Week

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## INTRODUCTION

A basic understanding of science is essential to modern life. In spite of this, neuroscience is often perceived as too complicated, too esoteric, and inaccessible to the uninitiated. To encourage curiosity, The Society for Neuroscience and The Dana Foundation created Brain Awareness Week (BAW) in 1996 to promote outreach events each year. Our Mississippi Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience has partnered with these organizations to make neuroscience approachable, understandable, relevant and fun to young people in our community. Here, we show our group's most recent participation in BAW activities in 2015, followed by ideas for the future.

## CURRENT AIMS

We continue in our tradition of "edutaining" elementary-aged children through the fun exploration of the brain. Stations were developed covering a range of neuroscience concepts including:

- 1) Cortical anatomy and functional contributions to skill learning and individual interest.
- 2) Basic types and components of a neuron;
- 3) Sense of scale: visualized immunostaining of real neurons with microscope
- 4) Comparative anatomy and animal subjects role in research
- 5) Optical illusion demonstrations, understanding perception
- 6) Techniques for investigating the brain, including MRI imaging and EEG signals.

While the topics are important, it is more important that we are sharing our time and interest talking about what we love. We only need more volunteers. Awareness is all about involvement and experience!

**If you find yourself wanting to get involved...  
please find the email signup sheets below!**



**Thank you!**

## RESOURCES

The Society for Neuroscience : <http://www.sfn.org/baw/>  
The Dana Foundation : <http://www.dana.org/BAW/>  
Brain Facts : <http://www.brainfacts.org/educators/get-involved/articles-folder/brain-awareness-week-slide-show/>

And more are available at our site,  
<http://mssfn.org/baw2015>



## EVENT I



**SfN SOCIETY for NEUROSCIENCE** *Advancing the Understanding of the Brain and Nervous System*

We set up five labeled stations throughout the auditorium at Brown Elementary School and provided each child with a punch card to follow to each station. We edutained 1st and 5th grade students at each station with hands-on learning. They identified functional areas of the brain while constructing colorfully labeled anatomically correct brain hats; they modeled the structural features of a basic neuron with pipe cleaners and viewed real neurons through a microscope; they explored perception with optical illusions and viewmaster stereoscopes; they surveyed comparative anatomy of several brain specimens from mouse to monkey; and they observed technology used to investigate the human brain in the form of MRI imaging and interactive real-time EEG.



**Brown Elementary**  
*...Thinking Critically About Our Past and Present to Prepare for our Future*

## EVENT II



We set up the three most popular stations: neuro-building, brain hats, and MRI/EEG at the Mississippi Children's Museum as a part of UMMC's Graduate School's Discovery U event. We reached more kids and their parents in a great environment for engagement and teaching.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We will integrate clinical neurology with basic sciences in our "Time is Brain" campaign. We have identified other ways to engage a broader audience such as distributing brain games in local publications, trivia nights, and teaching elderly populations and caregivers about brain health and good habits. We will shift our strategy to more small events including a multitude of topics to creating a broader connection with neuroscience in a larger community.

- Contact specific target groups and venues (elderly / homeless/ drug awareness)
- Organize general public outreach events
- Incorporate brain health and overall healthy lifestyles
- Identify those with needs to provide assistance
- Change perception of mental illness to promote compassion
- Provide information that opens doors to further exploration

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### Hosts:

- Principal Serenity Luckett
- First and fifth grade teachers
- Mississippi Children's Museum

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