

# PREVENTIONpages

A Publication of Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation

## Spotlight on the National Office

by: Dorothy Zirkle, CEO

Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation

In reflecting on my first year in the role of CEO, I can't imagine that I could be more proud of the 257 Think First chapters throughout this nation, the dozens of chapters supported by our neighbors Canada and Mexico, or the 9 chapters representing nations around the globe. Our accomplishments are many, our reach is expanding, our resources are multiplying, and our energy is escalating. To paraphrase one of America's most celebrated writers, our bell tolls not just for one, but for all the children of the world.

At this year's annual conference in Orlando, I am going to be presenting a State of the Union report. With help from the National Office teams (Chicago and San Diego), we will provide updates on the progress being made by our remarkable organization. In just 75 short minutes we will bring you up to speed on the growth and development of our office and our programs, so grab your seats and be prepared to hang on. Until then, believe me when I tell you that we have made astounding strides in our efforts to reduce unintentional injury over the last 12 months and the strength of the Think First organization is burgeoning.

According to the results of last year's annual survey, ThinkFirst averaged 40 presentations per school day compared to 34 the year before. We reached over 675,000 students in 2003, up from 520,000 in 2000. Our combined annual budget is over 3 million dollars and more than half of our chapters implement both the kids and teens programs. Physicians actively participate in 3/4 of our chapters and the voices of our VIP speakers are growing louder every day. We have 40 potential new chapters in the US and 8 interested in starting abroad. In June I will be attending the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual World Conference on Injury Prevention to present the results of a Think First 3-year longitudinal study.

In the past year we have made extraordinary efforts to update and renew many of our products and tools. We have developed a new look that is bolder, brighter, and lends itself to further identifying, or branding, our message to "Think First". We have a new teen video, a new booster seat video, new press kit folders, new pins, a VIP speaker's directory, a new resource directory, new training manual, new database software and a Board of Directors handbook. Not only have we modernized our phone and computer systems, but we are extremely excited to announce the total re-design and update of our Think First website.

Lastly, I would like to recognize and thank some very special organizations that have funded our initiatives and programs this past year.

- The Alcoa Foundation has made it possible for us to continue Phase II of our development of the Think First for Youth curriculum for grades 4-8 with a donation of nearly \$30,000.
- NHTSA has awarded Think First \$800,000 to complete a 3-year Booster Seat Demonstration Project at 4 of our most active chapter sites around the country.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided funds from their Public Health Conference Support Program for our 2004 annual conference.
- The Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation has awarded ThinkFirst a \$5,000 Quality of Life Grant to provide travel scholarships to our VIP speakers.
- Distribution of TFFK curriculum to underserved areas was funded in part, by The Silberman Family Fund of The Pittsburgh Foundation.
- The Frankino Foundation, for its generous contribution of \$10,000 towards the furtherance of our mission.

To the many other Think First contributors, partners, volunteers, and staff, I offer my sincerest gratitude. You make the lives of our children safer every day. See you in Orlando!

### Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation Staff

#### National Satellite Office San Diego, CA



Dorothy Zirkle  
CEO, Think First Foundation



Standing: Jennifer Buckel  
Special Projects Coordinator  
Sitting: Caroline Roberts  
Operations Manager

#### National Office Rolling Meadows, IL



Standing, from left: Kelli Jankens, Project Manager and Margie Schroeder, Office Coordinator. Sitting: Gigi Thomas, Web Site & Database Administrator



## Think First Foundation's Mission

The mission of Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation is to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders and the creators of public policy.

## Chapter Spotlight

by: *Laura Ahola, Chapter Director*  
Madison, Wisconsin



The Madison chapter of Think First is focused on sharing injury prevention with elementary school students one classroom at a time. They teach kids about safety by using hands-on, tactile, group

learning activities. They simulate crashes using toy cars with eggs as passengers and falls from bikes with melons wearing bike helmets (demonstrated in the picture above by Laura Ahola). Students participate in experiments in which eggs crash without duct-tape seatbelts and melons fall without helmets. By comparing those results to what happens when the food takes proper precautions (i.e. wearing seat belts and helmets), the kids see the positive difference that thinking first and injury prevention can make.

Sponsoring physicians, Dr. Bermans Iskandar and Dr. Tim Corden of University of Wisconsin Children's Hospital assist Laura Ahola, the chapter director with planning and directing the Madison area chapter. Iskandar, a neurosurgeon, and Corden, a pediatric intensivist, bring direct knowledge of injuries that could be prevented with a few simple steps.

Although the program just began, the team already has many ideas for expanding the scope of Think First within the Madison chapter. Partnerships wait on the horizon, including the Madison Police Department, the Department of Transportation and the University of Wisconsin organ procurement team.



left: The result of an egg crash with no seat belt.



right: Chapter Director Laura Ahola getting ready to release a car with an egg seat-belted inside.

## Sponsoring Physician Spotlight

by: *Joe Davis, Chapter Director*  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dr. Richard H. Kaplan is a board certified Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation specialist who has generously given both time and funds to the Magee Rehabilitation Hospital's Think First program in Philadelphia, PA.

In the last three years Dr. Kaplan has donated more than \$8,000 to the Think First program. According to Joe Davis, Chapter Director since 1997 and VIP since 1993, the money has been used to expand the program in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties, entering more than 70 schools per year and over 10,000 students.

In addition to funding more than seventy presentations, Dr. Kaplan has also been a very popular speaker. When a patient speaks about spinal cord related issues, Dr. Kaplan can honestly say, yes I know what you mean. Dr. Kaplan is a C5-C6 incomplete

quadriplegic that walks. He sustained his injury in 1965. He was a senior in high school and the passenger of a vehicle whose driver ran a stop sign.



From left: Chapter director Joe Davis and sponsoring physician, Dr. Richard H. Kaplan

### New Chapters Spotlight

by: *Gigi Thomas, Web Site & Database Administrator*  
Rolling Meadows, Illinois

### New Local chapters

Tracy Roberts, Anchorage, AK  
(907) 729-2714  
Rick Kyle, Bentonville, AR  
(479) 273-1220  
Anna Zacher, San Francisco, CA  
(415) 206-5952  
Melinda Gonzalez, Imperial, CA  
(760) 355-4393  
Vicki Cassabaum, Denver, CO  
(303) 629-3788  
Susan Johnson, New Haven, CT  
(906) 249-9457  
Beth Weibel Munz, Fort Wayne, IN  
(260) 403-6890  
Sue Crawford, Kalispell, MT  
(406) 756-4725

### State chapters

Shelly Atkinson, San Diego, CA  
(619) 644-4661  
Sandy De Leon, W. Orange, NJ  
(973) 243-6927  
Jennifer Northway, San Antonio, TX  
(210) 575-0553  
Tammy Wilber, Seattle, WA  
(206) 521-1778

### Director Changes

Shelly Atkinson, San Diego, CA  
(619) 644-4661  
Toya Hill, Washington, DC  
(202) 877-1529  
Gloria Thompson, Pensacola, FL  
(850) 416-2596  
Kelly Hargadon, Pensacola, FL  
(407) 351-8500  
Carolyn Jenlink, Wichita, KS  
(316) 946-5046  
Cynthia Randazzo, Kansas City, MO  
(816) 276-4218  
Denise McKinney, Canton, OH  
(330) 363-6186  
Noreen Molek, Middlesbury, OH  
(440) 816-8878  
Donna Wehner, Johnstown, PA  
(814) 534-3072  
Blaine Wilson, Houston, TX  
(713) 533-5408  
Tammy Wilber, Seattle, WA  
(206) 521-1778

# Spotlight On A VIP = Voice for Injury Prevention

by: Humberto Gurmilan, VIP Speaker  
San Diego, California



**Pre-Injury Information:**  
**Interests/Activities:**  
Surfing, sports, friends  
**Goals/Dreams:**  
Get married and have family,  
Air Force Pilot, "be famous"  
**Best Description:**  
Active, outgoing, independent

**Injury Report:**  
**Date:** September 25, 1995  
**Time:** 10:30 a.m.  
**Location:** Playas de Tijuana, B.C.  
**Patient:** Humberto Gurmilan  
**Cause/Factors:** Dove into shallow water  
**Initial Prognosis:** Quadriplegic  
**Result:** C-5, 6 spinal cord injuries

Humberto works with Sharp on Survival and the Think First San Diego chapter because, "I want to help educate the community and hopefully prevent anyone from experiencing what all of the VIP's have experienced."

**Post-Injury Information:**  
**Interests/Activities:**  
Speech, music  
**Goals/Dreams:**  
Teaching communication  
**Misses the Most:**  
Running, swimming, jumping



## State Chapter Spotlight

by: Michelle Gibler, State Chapter Director  
Columbia, Missouri

Think First Missouri was recently recognized for their outstanding contribution co-coordinating a community safety day with the SAFE KIDS Coalition. Think First Missouri, as part of the team that made this event successful, received a prestigious National SAFE KIDS Campaign award.

Think First Missouri staff and VIP's played a central role in planning and hosting the event, which was attended by over 1,500 Mid-Missouri children and families. Michelle

Gibler, in her dual capacity as State Chapter Director for Think First Missouri and Board President for the Columbia SAFEKIDS Coalition, chaired the event. Think First Missouri also donated 500 bike helmets for fitting and distribution. The event featured interactive health and safety exhibits, radio broadcasts, music, food, entertainment, and mascots as well as serving as a venue for the City of Columbia to unveil its new municipal helmet ordinance, one of only two in the state of Missouri!



Award recipients in Washington, D.C.: Michelle Gibler, Think First Missouri, C. Everett Koop, M.D., Former U.S. Surgeon General, and Steve Sapp, Columbia SAFE KIDS Coalition Coordinator

## PARTNER IN PREVENTION

### Spotlight On A Partner

by: Laura Ahola, Chapter Director  
Madison, Wisconsin

Thanks to a generous gift from Kohl's Department Stores and the Kohl's Cares for Kids program, the ThinkFirst Madison, Wisconsin chapter began classroom visits last October! Reaching well beyond the city to include schools throughout south central Wisconsin, the chapter has spoken to more than 550 kids thus far. Medical students and medical residents make the visits to classrooms as part of their public health rotation. Pediatric and neurosurgery staff nurses also participate as instructors.



From left: Glen Kristensen, District Manager for Kohl's Department store presenting a check for \$50,000 to David Berry, Vice President of University of Wisconsin Children's Hospital and Laura Ahola, Think First Madison Chapter Director.



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*Founded by:*

The American Association of  
Neurological Surgeons &  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons

## Prevention Pages Articles Wanted!

We welcome you to submit an article  
for publication in *Prevention Pages*.

**The submission deadline for  
the summer 2004 issue is June  
29th.** Articles should be directed to  
[kmj@thinkfirst.org](mailto:kmj@thinkfirst.org) and can be up to  
300 words in length. If possible,  
please try to include at least one  
captioned photo with your article.  
Call (847) 290-8600 for questions.

## Prevention Pages

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National Injury Prevention Foundation

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