A Letter From the CEO Dorothy Zirkle

Think First Granted an $800,000 Government Award!
I am absolutely elated to report that the Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation was chosen by the US Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) as the most highly qualified national organization to partner with them in conducting a 3-year demonstration project to increase booster seat usage among 4 to 8 year-old children. In the following paragraphs you will find a brief explanation of why NHTSA is embarking upon this study and how Think First intends to help them.

- Dorothy Zirkle, CEO

The Problem
Though much progress has been made in the use of child passenger safety seats for children ages 4 and under, according to preliminary studies there exists an alarming number of older child passengers who are either inadequately restrained or completely unrestrained, leading to disturbing increases in childhood death and disability.

Therefore, in 2000 Congress enacted the TREAD act, which mandated that NHTSA “…develop a 5 year strategic plan to reduce deaths and injuries caused by failure to use the appropriate booster seat in the 4 to 8 year old age group by 25 percent” See the website [http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/booster_seat/National_Strategy/index.htm](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/booster_seat/National_Strategy/index.htm)

The Solution
In response to this mandate, NHTSA invited a very select number of national injury prevention organizations to apply for funding to assist in this effort. The Think First Foundation gladly accepted NHTSA’s invitation as a unique opportunity to craft an eloquent and impressive, yet scientifically sound, research-based proposal to conduct a comprehensive national 5-year study of booster seat usage and ways in which it can be increased.

The Methodology
The Think First Foundation’s proposal outlines a program, aptly titled “Boost ‘em Up”, that will utilize the talents and resources of 4 highly committed national chapters and build upon the strength of their existing relationships with children, teachers, schools, and parents to evaluate the effectiveness of a standardized comprehensive core of student and school-based interventions in conjunction with community outreach programs to increase the use of booster seats for children ages 4 to 8.

The People and Places
The study site locations and Site Coordinators that are participating in the 5-year Boost ‘em Up! project are as follows :

- Shelly Atkinson, Think First San Diego, CA
- Virginia Corrigan, Think First Wilmington, DE
- Debby Gerhardstein, Think First Chicago, IL
- Bonnie Muntz-Pope, Think First Charleston, SC

The Final Product
The impact of the interventions will be measured using standardized methodology and will produce empirical data resulting in recommendations for Best Practices. The Think First Foundation is proud to participate in this demonstration study, which is entirely compatible with our mission to decrease childhood death and disability through education and advocacy.

In closing, I am delighted to announce that Kelli Jankens, State Chapter Director for Think First Michigan, has accepted the position of Project Manager for this project and has re-located to the National Think First Foundation Office in Chicago. For additional information about the Boost ‘em Up! study, please contact Kelli at (847) 290-8600. Many thanks to all the participants and supporters who helped make our proposal to NHTSA a success.

- Dorothy Zirkle, CEO

The Think First Boost ‘em Up! team, pictured above, on November 13, 2003 at the DOT/NHTSA offices in Washington DC. The team presented a descriptive overview of the 3-year project to NHTSA and other DOT staff to formally “launch” the project.

From left: Debby Gerhardstein, Peggy Semmins, Dr. Loanna Depue, Virginia Corrigan, Shelly Atkinson, Dr. Michael Turner, Dorothy Zirkle, Bonnie Muntz-Pope, Dr. Louise Grisham and Kelli Jankens

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.
Oklahoma receives 2003 Newcomers Award for their Youthful Drunk Driving (YDD) Program

by: Jaime Popp, YDD Coordinator
Pamela Forducey, State Director
Think First Oklahoma

Think First Oklahoma was the recipient of this year’s Outstanding Newcomer Award for their Youthful Drunk Driving program (YDD). Working very closely with their local court system, Think First Oklahoma strives to prevent serious injuries due to motor vehicle crashes by providing a sentencing alternative for judges and defense lawyers in Oklahoma County. The long-term objective of this program is to significantly reduce recidivism, thereby ensuring a substantial reduction in the number of alcohol or drug involved traffic crashes in Oklahoma County.

To do this, the Oklahoma Chapter has enthusiastically embraced a partnership with the Impaired Driving Division at NHTSA to incorporate the Think First message into the Youthful Drunk Driving (YDD) offenders program. The Think First Oklahoma component begins with the “On the Edge” video, followed by experimental role-playing that includes riding in wheelchairs and catheterizing a dummy. The final and most important session is the personal testimonies given by our Voices for Injury Prevention (VIP) speakers.

According to the program’s pre/post evaluations completed by the participants, the VIP testimonies are the most powerful aspects of the program. Although primary prevention is the main thrust of Think First, YDD has been an excellent and unique opportunity for secondary prevention for Oklahoma high-risk youth who have been arrested for DUI/DWI. The stories shared by our participants reveal that our program is effective and meaningful and hopefully will alter their future behaviors and decisions about not mixing drinking and driving. A total of 600 defendants have been referred for treatment and enrolled in the program since October of 1999. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) Crash Statistics, alcohol-related crashes killed 17,970 people in 2002, the most fatalities in a decade (www.nhtsa.gov).

Think First Oklahoma’s YDD Director, Jamie Popp, accepting the 2003 Newcomer’s Award from Board Chairman, Dr. Michael Turner.

Think First Hawaii

by: Beth Freitas, RN, MSN
& Cheryl Hammond, RN, B.Ed.
Co-Chairs, Think First Hawaii

Each year in Hawaii over 2,000 people sustain brain and spinal cord injuries. After vehicle crashes, the second highest cause of death and disability for young people in Hawaii is drowning and near drowning events.

With our water-sports based lifestyle, water safety education is high on our list of priorities. With this in mind Think First Hawaii held a beach event on July 19, 2003 at Sandy’s Beach, one of the islands’ most popular surfing beaches. The event was supported by volunteers from the Think First Hawaii partners: -The Queen’s Medical Center Neuroscience Institute and Trauma Program, HMSC/Blue Cross, Blue Shield of Hawaii, Hawaii Department of Health, Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition SAFE KIDS Hawaii, Emergency Medical Systems City and County of Honolulu, Ocean Safety City and County of Honolulu, Hawaiian Lifeguard Association, Honolulu Police Department, Honolulu Fire Department, and Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific.

Over 100 people, mainly young surfers, came to the Think First Hawaii tent to receive information about ocean safety and injury prevention. Local radio station 101.9 FM provided music and announcements free of charge. They also ran competitions with prizes donated by local surf and water sports retailers. Winners had to successfully answer injury prevention questions. This year’s success ensures that this will be an annual event.

In addition, Think First Hawaii, in partnership with the Hawaii Department of Education, has translated the TFFK parental letters into several languages, including: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Laotian, Samoan, the Filipino dialects of Llocano, Tagalog, Visayan and the Micronesian languages Marshallese and Chuukese.
Arizona State Director Recently Appointed PTA State President

The Think First Foundation is proud to announce that Lucy Ranus, Arizona State Chapter Director, was recently elected as the new State President of the Arizona Parent Teacher Association (PTA), a volunteer post she will hold for two years. The Arizona PTA is part of the National PTA, a non-profit, child-advocacy organization for parents, teachers and students.

Ranus, a Phoenix native, had her first brush with the PTA when she was entering high school. She won a PTA scholarship to help pay for her high school books and supplies at Carl Hayden High School. She didn’t know it then, but PTA would become an integral part of her life. Then, in 1975, when her oldest child was starting kindergarten and Ranus wanted to know what was going on at the school, she joined the PTA. Lucy jokingly refers to herself as a “nosy parent.”

Lucy was elected PTA President at Bicentennial Elementary School in 1976, the year the school opened. In 1989, she joined the state PTA board of directors, serving as the health and welfare chairwoman. “As a PTA member, you really get to understand the climate of the school,” she said. “As president of the 27,000-member organization, one goal Ranus is striving towards is increasing the number of dads and Hispanic parents involved in PTA.

Lucy Ranus, RN, is Program Coordinator of Community Education, Outreach and Prevention at Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix Arizona. Lucy has been a Think First Chapter Director since 1996. She has been Arizona’s State Chapter Director and training site coordinator for several years and is also a newly appointed member of the Think First Board of Directors. Congratulations Lucy!

Field Neurosciences Institute (FNI) Hosts Think First State Conference in Michigan

by: Kelli Jankens
Michigan Think First State Director

On Friday, August 22, 2003, Michigan Think First Chapters convened for their first annual statewide conference. Seventeen Think First chapters located throughout Michigan were invited to attend the conference, hosted by Field Neurosciences Institute, namesake of sponsoring neurosurgeon, Dr. E. Malcolm Field.

Saginaw Chapter staff Kelli Jankens and Brian Sheridan coordinated the event by inviting attendees to share information, create partnerships, develop new ideas, and meet fellow Think First team members. Special guest speaker was Jeff Spitzley, Michigan’s SAFE KIDS Coordinator.

The morning business meeting was followed by a luncheon at the Atrium Restaurant in downtown Bay City, graciously hosted by the institute’s Executive Director, Dr. Verne D. Hulce. The day culminated with a scenic 3-hour riverboat cruise aboard the Princess Wenonah.

The goal of the conference was to further enhance statewide efforts to significantly and successfully reduce the rates of unintentional childhood injury and death. Invitations were sent to all chapter and satellite directors, VIP’s, sponsoring neurosurgeons and board or committee members affiliated with Michigan Think First Chapters.

Blues Assist Safety Partnership

From left: Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Michigan operations manager Kathy Harrington and regional sales director Ron Crofoot present a check for $20,000 to Upper Peninsula Partnership for Safety (UPPS) board president Darrell Dettman and director Karen Teichman in Marquette, MI. The grant will be used by UPPS to expand their Think First programs into the cities of Republic, Michigamme, Negaunee, Superior, and Ishpeming. Last year, UPPS brought the Think First message to over 2,500 students in Houghton, Baraga, Marquette, Iron and Alger counties.

Welcome New Think First Chapters!

cont’d

Erin Hanson, Cleveland, OH (216) 844-5725
Karen Holland, Knoxville, TN (865) 541-4945
Wendy Dunevant, Danville, VA (434) 799-2399
Kathy La Favor, Milwaukee, WI (414) 805-5112

New Training center

Stephanie Lambers, Cincinnati, OH (513) 745-1742

PARTNER IN PREVENTION

Blues Assist Safety Partnership
Prevention Pages Articles Wanted!

We welcome you to submit an article for publication in Prevention Pages. The submission deadline for the spring 2004 issue is February 29th. Articles should be directed to 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.

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