

# PreventionPages

SUMMER 2008

A Publication of the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation

## Spotlight on the Conference

Debby Gerhardstein, RN, MA, Executive Director

The 2008 ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention, held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, April 25-27, was once again outstanding! This year's theme: *Partners in Injury Prevention: Working Together for Success* was fitting, as invited speakers included several national organizations that are also concerned with the number of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries that occur every year. One hundred and eight attendees, including chapter directors, sponsoring physicians, staff, Board members, VIP speakers and invited faculty, learned about new ThinkFirst programs as well as the approach other organizations are taking. As we discussed, working together and supporting each other's efforts can only strengthen our mission to reduce traumatic injury.

Co-chairs Virginia Corrigan (DE) and Nena Ray (IN), along with ThinkFirst Board of Directors Chair Russell Amundson, MD, presided over the conference. Speakers presenting on their partnering organizations included Sandy Spavone, executive director, National Organization for Youth Safety (NOYS); Erin Meluso, president, RADD International, The Entertainment Industry's Voice for Road Safety; Eric Larson, COO, National Spinal Cord Injury Association (NSCIA); and Philicia Deckard, president, Brain Injury Association of Illinois.

Other industry leaders who shared their expertise on various topics included Renee Johnson, researcher with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Injury Response, who enlightened us on data collection and resources, and Rise' Jones, PhD, of Evaluation Solutions who addressed important considerations in program evaluation. John Werthwein, Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) discussed federal partnerships and government grants. Further details and highlights of the conference can be found at [www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org).

The elegant ThinkFirst Reception and Silent Auction - complete with music, food and beverage stations - raised \$8,100 for the ThinkFirst Foundation. Thank you to all who donated and

participated, as well as to all who generously sponsored the ThinkFirst conference or placed ads in our conference book.

The week included board of directors meetings, committee meetings, and meetings with hundreds of physicians at the ThinkFirst booth at the AANS convention. Even at the convention, forming partnerships was the underlying goal: linking neurosurgeons and healthcare professionals with the providers of cutting-edge products, services, education and support.

Those who work in injury prevention know the importance of building partnerships: success is realized when we combine our strengths for improved, wide-spread, educational programming. Injury should not be the leading cause of death and disability among our children, teens and young adults. Together we can make a difference!

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2008 CONFERENCE SPONSORS!

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Attendees: From left: Vicki Hill, AL & Heather Sudduth, MS



Awards Luncheon: From left: Executive Director Debby Gerhardstein, IL, Board Chairman Dr. Russell Amundson, PA, Chapter Director Cynthia Bandazzo (accepting the Chapter of the Year Award) and State Director Michelle Gibler, both from MO



Educational Presentation: Conference speaker John Hafner, MD, Children's Hospital of IL, discusses ATV related injuries.



Reception: Sponsors Dr. David and Donna Cavanaugh from Shreveport, LA at Welcome Reception Saturday night



Silent Auction: Coordinators of the Silent Auction, from left: Holly-Watson Evans, Jill Braselton, Debby Gerhardstein, Dale Spencer and Diane Ciambrone, all from IL

**ThinkFirst**  
National Injury Prevention Foundation

## 2008 Think-First Conference Award Recipients

**Physician Sponsor of the Year**  
**John C. "Jay" Wellons III, MD**  
 ThinkFirst Alabama

**Chapter of the Year**  
**ThinkFirst Greater Kansas City**

**State Chapter of the Year**  
**ThinkFirst Delaware**

**Outstanding Newcomer**  
**ThinkFirst WestCare Health Systems (NC)**

**Outstanding Community Involvement**  
**ThinkFirst Kentucky**

**VIP of the Year**  
**Dale J. Spencer**  
**ThinkFirst Central DuPage Hospital (IL)**

**Distinguished Service Award**  
**Charles H. Tator, MD**  
 ThinkFirst Canada

## Did You Know?

ThinkFirst For Kids was featured in the **Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Occupant Protection for Children: Best Practices Manual** March 2008!

## ThinkFirst Recent Publications

Gerhardstein, D.B. (2007). ThinkFirst For Teens Injury Prevention Program: Evidence-based Practice – Are We Making a Difference? *SCI Nursing*, 24.3 (October) 2007. [www.unitedspinal.org](http://www.unitedspinal.org).

Gerhardstein, D.B. (2008). Using Your Mind to Protect Your Body. *SCILife*, Jan./Feb. 2008. [www.spinalcord.org](http://www.spinalcord.org).

Governors Highway Safety Association (2008). ThinkFirst For Kids. *Occupant Protection for Children: Best Practices Manual*, March 2008. [www.ghsa.org](http://www.ghsa.org).

Turner, M.S. (2007). Pediatric Neurosurgeons Partner With Injury Prevention Groups. *AAP News*, 28(7). [www.aapnews.org](http://www.aapnews.org).

## Spotlight on a Program: ThinkFirst Canada

Midori Miyamoto, ThinkFirst Canada

The ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada recently celebrated 15 years as a leading national brain and spinal cord injury prevention organization dedicated to keeping Canada's kids safe. Our goal is to teach children and youth more about preventable injuries and their risk factors, so they can use their brains to protect their bodies. Established in 1992 by renowned neurosurgeon, Dr. Charles H. Tator, today we have 18 chapters across the country. Our work at the chapter level is carried out by dedicated volunteers, some of whom are neurosurgeons, nurses, teachers, and injury survivors. In addition, our small but mighty team of staff at our Toronto-based national office is hard at work designing and disseminating educational initiatives, growing and strengthening our chapters, heightening public awareness through advocacy, and fundraising.

Some of our innovative and engaging school and community based programs include:

- **TD ThinkFirst for Kids** curriculum, designed as a teacher resource for kindergarten to grade 8 classrooms. This award winning curriculum is available free of charge to all Canadian schools and public health agencies with over 11,000 full sets distributed to date.
- **Brain Day**, a national outreach program involving university students, community volunteers and thousands of school children from across Canada. Our volunteers visit classrooms where they use hands-on techniques and fun experiments to elevate students' interest in neuroanatomy and teach brain and spinal cord injury prevention.
- Our **Give-a-Kid-a-Helmet** program provides children identified as facing financial constraints with helmets so they can participate in fun childhood activities. We know that wearing the right gear is a key step in preventing injuries in many popular sports and physical activities, but when costs are prohibitive, children often play unprotected. Through this program, and related initiatives, we've given away over \$700,000 in helmets, supplying 35,000 kids across Canada with this vital protective gear.

To learn more about what we do, please visit our website at [www.thinkfirst.ca](http://www.thinkfirst.ca)!

## Spotlight on a Physician: Dr. Charles H. Tator

Midori Miyamoto, ThinkFirst Canada

In 1992, renowned neurosurgeon Dr. Charles H. Tator founded the ThinkFirst Foundation of Canada. Dr. Tator admired the ThinkFirst model and perceived a real need for such an organization in Canada to reduce the incidence of devastating brain and spinal cord injuries in Canadian children and youth. ThinkFirst Canada is now considered a leader in its field and continues to bring public awareness to the epidemic of preventable injuries. Under the leadership of Dr. Tator, ThinkFirst Canada has developed a number of prominent educational programs and initiatives, including Brain Day, Wal-Mart Helmet Fitting Clinics, Concussion Education and Awareness campaigns, and sport-specific programs focusing on safe play techniques.

In 2007, ThinkFirst Canada celebrated its 15th anniversary and marked the milestone by establishing the Dr. Charles Tator Annual Lecture Series on Injury Prevention. Inaugurated in November 2007 with the ThinkFirst Summit on Head Protection, a full-day symposium on the state of head injury and protection in Canada, we brought together a distinguished panel of 10 experts to take 140 participants through issues from head injury incidence reporting and research to legislation and risk behaviours. We look forward to many more years of notable topics and speakers in what is sure to become a celebrated Canadian lecture series. Dr. Tator is a professor in the Department of Surgery at the University of Toronto and a neurosurgeon at Toronto Western Hospital and has participated in many clinical studies on the epidemiology, prevention and treatment of brain and spinal cord injuries.

Dr. Tator also served on the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation's Board of Directors from 1992 – 2008 during which time he served on committees and assisted in the global development of ThinkFirst. Dr. Tator retired from the Board of Directors as the longest serving member; he was honored for his dedication to ThinkFirst with the Distinguished Service Award at the 2008 ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention in Chicago, Illinois.

In recognition of his commitment to the community through his ThinkFirst work, in 2000 Dr. Tator received the Order of Canada, considered Canada's highest civilian honour.



TF Ottawa helmet fitting



Brain Day booklet



## ThinkFirst Board of Directors

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Founder Dr. Charles H. Tator



Dr. Tator with kids on Brain Day

## ThinkFirst Missouri Receives International Safety Media Award!

ThinkFirst Missouri received the prestigious Silver Award (2nd place) from the International Safety Media Awards (ISMA) Committee during a ceremony at the 9th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion in Merida, Mexico. ThinkFirst was honored for its innovative print campaign, "We'd Like to Crash Your Party." The creative media services of local ad agency Woodruff Sweitzer were utilized for the development of the campaign. The project was funded by a grant from Missouri Department of Transportation. The purpose of ISMA's international media awards program is to honor powerful injury prevention media campaigns worldwide. Over 150 entries of print, audio, and video media materials were submitted to ISMA for consideration. Winning entries can be found at [http://www.teachingstory.com/isma/2008\\_selections/winners.html](http://www.teachingstory.com/isma/2008_selections/winners.html)

## ThinkFirst Marathon Team Debuts in Chicago!

The Bank of America Chicago Marathon is October 12, 2008 -- and ThinkFirst runners will be among the 40,000 participants from around the globe!

Team runners have committed thousands of training hours to raise \$25,000 for ThinkFirst. Help them reach their goal by logging onto <http://www.active.com/donate/thinkfirst> and selecting a runner to support. Every dollar you donate goes to the ThinkFirst Foundation for educational injury prevention programs for kids. Go Team!

## Support a Bank of America Chicago Marathon ThinkFirst Runner!

[www.active.com/donate/thinkfirst](http://www.active.com/donate/thinkfirst)

## International Spotlight: ThinkFirst at World Conference - Mexico

ThinkFirst Missouri Chapter Director Michelle Gibler, PhD, recently represented the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation at the 9th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion in Merida, Mexico, in March 2008. Over 120 countries were represented at this landmark conference sponsored in part by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control.

The central theme of the conference was "Globalization: Challenges and Opportunities for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion." The purpose of the conference was to showcase existing programs and research endeavors, enhance expertise, facilitate national and international partnerships, and stimulate prevention organizations to launch research and program initiatives to address the global epidemic of injury.

During the conference, Michelle delivered a presentation entitled "Elements of a ThinkFirst For Teens Media Campaign" alongside international colleagues from Spain, Iran, Brazil and South Africa. The panel of speakers discussed the role of media and safety from their perspectives as world leaders in injury prevention. We are extraordinarily proud to have had our own Michelle Gibler represent the United States and ThinkFirst at this world event!



ThinkFirst Missouri Chapter Director, Michelle Gibler, PhD, accepting International Safety Media Award during 9th World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion in Merida, Mexico



## Educational Spotlight: ThinkFirst Programs

### ThinkFirst! For Kids

**ThinkFirst for Kids (TFFK)** is a comprehensive school-based curriculum that teaches kids about traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries. The curriculum is designed for students in grades 1-3 and includes six classroom lessons featuring "StreetSmart-the Safety Superhero" and his friends. The first lesson covers anatomy of the brain and spinal cord, followed by vehicle, water, bike, playground, and gun safety. Each lesson incorporates animated video and song, hands-on activities, classroom posters, comics, worksheets, parent letters, and more. This award-winning program offers schools an evidenced-based course that helps them meet health and safety standards in a fun and memorable way.

### ThinkFirst! For Youth

**ThinkFirst for Youth (TFFY)** is an innovative applied-learning curriculum designed for students facing adolescent and pre-teen years. Curriculum binders for grades 4-5 and 6-8 provide teachers with core content covering the areas of greatest risk for unintentional injury among youth. The lessons are offered at varying degrees of difficulty to improve cognitive decision-making skills. Topics include functional anatomy of the brain and spinal cord, vehicle and passenger safety, violence and weapons prevention, creative problem solving, sports and bike safety, shallow diving prevention and seasonal recreational safety. Evidence-based research shows that exposure to similar messages over time enhances learning and behavior change, thus making TFFY a program of choice for schools. The TFFY curriculum meets national science education content guidelines and follows recommended national health education standards.

### ThinkFirst! For Teens

**ThinkFirst For Teens (TFFT)** is an award-winning educational program for teens and young adults about personal vulnerability and the consequences of risk-taking.

This middle and high school program combines multi-media with compelling personal testimony to stress the realities of permanent damage to the brain or spinal cord. The message is that you can have an active and exciting life without hurting yourself if you think first and use your mind to protect your body. Most compelling is the open dialogue between the students and a VIP speaker (Voices for Injury Prevention) who discusses life after paralysis or brain injury. Students rate this as the most memorable and effective component of the program.

ThinkFirst Foundation  
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Founded by the American  
Association of Neurological  
Surgeons and the Congress of  
Neurological Surgeons

## Spotlight on a Donor

Thank you to the AANS/  
CNS Joint Section on  
Neurotrauma and Critical  
Care for their generous  
donation to the ThinkFirst  
Foundation!

## MISSION **ThinkFirst:** Leading injury prevention through education, research and policy

### Spotlight on a VIP: Kerry Barcus *Lucy Ranus, RN, BSN Phoenix, AZ*

Kerry always wore her seatbelt. But just this one time, because she was only going two blocks, she didn't think she needed one. A car going the other way ran a red light and hit her car. The impact made the door fly open and she was thrown from the passenger seat. She was in a coma for three months. One minute she had her whole life ahead of her with dreams and ambitions - the next she was struggling with basic daily activities and coping with being treated differently. During ThinkFirst presentations, Kerry shares with students how her life changed after suffering a brain injury. Today she is independent and drives her own car, which is designed with adaptive equipment. Kerry is an inspiration to all who hear her story.



Dana and Christopher Reeve



Kerry Barcus, VIP Speaker, ThinkFirst Arizona



StreetSmart during Walk Your Child to School day



Lucy Ranus, RN, BSN

### Spotlight on a State: Arizona

*Lucy Ranus, RN, BSN, Phoenix, AZ*

Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, Arizona is the site of the state chapter for ThinkFirst Arizona. Barrow also serves as the ThinkFirst training site for Arizona.

The state director is Lucy Ranus and the sponsoring physician is Dr. Volker K.H. Sonntag. Each year,

ThinkFirst Arizona reaches over 8,000 students and community members. Jim Boomer and Kerry Barcus serve as the two VIP speakers. Currently, ThinkFirst Arizona is partnering with the Maricopa

County Department of Transportation and Valley Metro on two Safe Routes to School grants.

Various middle and elementary school children will use the ThinkFirst curriculum to learn about safety, develop safe routes to and from school, and to "think first - use your mind to protect your body" - a message kids share with their families.