

2019 ThinkFirst Awards

The ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation presented their 2019 awards at this year's ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention, held at the Wyndham Bayside in San Diego on April 14th. Through the annual awards program, ThinkFirst honors exceptional individuals and chapters demonstrating excellence by delivering outstanding prevention programs that support the three primary components of our mission: education, research and advocacy. We are pleased to announce the following:

The **Chapter of the Year Award** recognizes a high-performance chapter demonstrating exemplary service and productivity supporting each of the core components of the ThinkFirst mission.



2019 Chapter of the Year Award

ThinkFirst Missouri, University of Missouri School of Medicine, Columbia, MO

ThinkFirst Medical Director and neurosurgeon, Dr. Clark Watts, established ThinkFirst Missouri in 1979 as part of a federal research and demonstration grant awarded to the University of Missouri School of Medicine. Since then, Think-First Missouri has become a well-known, trusted provider of injury prevention education in Missouri. It has a demonstrated track record of providing excellent programs and outstanding service to schools, worksites, parents and community organizations, reaching approximately 25,000 people each year. In addition to its robust program delivery effort, this chapter conducts program research, is involved with statewide public policy efforts, and active on the national level. ThinkFirst Missouri is one of the two founding chapters of the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation. In 2019, ThinkFirst Missouri will celebrate its 40th anniversary as a ThinkFirst chapter (1979-2019).

The **International Chapter of the Year Award** honors a chapter outside of the United States demonstrating excellent service and productivity.

2019 International Chapter of the Year Award

ThinkFirst Pakistan, Northwest School of Medicine, Peshawar, Pakistan

ThinkFirst Pakistan was established in 2018 when ThinkFirst Chapter Medical Director Tariq Khan, MD, Chapter Director Javaid Hasan and other chapter members completed training online with the ThinkFirst Foundation. Their support for ThinkFirst started a year prior within the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS) Neurotraumatology Committee when Dr. Khan formed the WFNS- ThinkFirst Taskforce on Neurotrauma Prevention. The mission of the taskforce is to promote global improvement in injury prevention research, program development and educator training in providing community outreach on preventing brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries for the benefit of individuals and society. Activities include global organization, support, program resources and training for injury prevention outreach. One of accomplishments of the taskforce was the agreement by the WFNS NT Committee to include injury prevention at all courses they sponsor.

The **VIP of the Year Award** honors an outstanding VIP speaker, Voice For Injury Prevention, who works to promote the mission and programs of ThinkFirst by reaching beyond the classroom to assume additional roles of leadership.



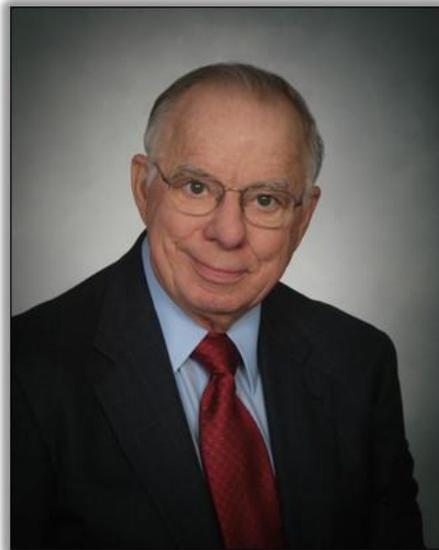
2019 VIP of the Year Award

Rusty Burris - ThinkFirst Missouri, Columbia, MO

On June 3rd, 1990, Rusty Burris fell asleep at the wheel only 90 seconds from home. Not wearing his seatbelt, he was ejected and paralyzed instantly. Rusty began working for ThinkFirst Missouri and ThinkFirst of the Ozarks in 1992, traveling to hundreds of schools and businesses statewide. The National Sleep Foundation learned about Rusty's work with ThinkFirst and recruited him to become a national spokesperson on the issue of drowsy driving. In addition, the National Road Safety Foundation featured Rusty in the award-winning drowsy driving

prevention video titled, “Almost Home.” Rusty has traveled to Washington DC to speak on behalf of the issue of drowsy driving and was featured on a panel discussion aired on C-SPAN. Rusty’s prevention work has been featured in the Washington Post, Ladies Home Journal, St. Louis Post Dispatch, Parade Magazine, the T.V. show, “Extra-NBC New York,” and numerous additional outlets. Rusty contributes his expertise beyond the classroom by testifying at traffic safety legislative hearings at the Missouri State Capitol.

The **Medical Director of the Year Award** honors a physician who has advanced the mission and programs of ThinkFirst by demonstrating a high level of leadership and involvement on local, state and national levels.



2019 Medical Director of the Year Award

E. Malcolm Field, MD, ThinkFirst Saginaw, Saginaw, MI

Dr. E. Malcolm Field and his brothers created Field Neurosciences Institute in Saginaw, Michigan in 1988. He received his medical education from the University of Michigan and served his residency at Henry Ford Hospital. Dr. Field has been the Medical Director for ThinkFirst Saginaw since 1999 and ThinkFirst Gratiot since 2001. He was also the Medical Director for ThinkFirst Isabella for nearly a decade and sponsored 4 satellite chapters, as well. Dr. Field helped ThinkFirst Saginaw grow by serving as an unwavering advocate for its staffing, operational budgets, grants and fundraising. Dr. Field actively supported his chapter director to recruit and train new chapters throughout Michigan. At one point in time, his involvement and advocacy helped establish a record-breaking twenty ThinkFirst chapters across the state!

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The **Outstanding Community Involvement Award** recognizes a chapter for conducting creative ThinkFirst initiatives at the community level.



**2019 Outstanding Community Involvement Award
ThinkFirst Boston, Boston, MA**

ThinkFirst Boston conducts numerous creative prevention initiatives throughout the state of Massachusetts. Over the past several years, this chapter expanded its prevention programs to reach a greater number of low-income families in need. The Safe Shelter Program, focused on safety in family homeless shelters, has thrived over the past year. Through this program, members of the prevention team assessed, educated, and installed child-safe materials at thirty local shelters. The team also distributed home safety bags for families to use after transitioning to permanent housing. The addition of a program van helped this chapter nearly triple its reach and participate in numerous large community events. During these events, ThinkFirst staff fitted and distributed thousands of helmets and car seats and hundreds of lock boxes for medications.

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The **Dr. David and Donna Cavanaugh Distinguished Service and Partnership Award** is bestowed upon those who exemplify the Cavanaugh's spirit and commitment to the Foundation, as well as demonstrate significant accomplishment and length of service.



2019 Dr. David and Donna Cavanaugh Distinguished Service and Partnership Award

Debby Gerhardstein, RN, BSN, MA

Executive Director, ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation

Debby Boy Gerhardstein has been a devoted supporter and leader of ThinkFirst and its mission for more than 25 years. Her work with injury prevention and ThinkFirst began at Central DuPage Hospital (CDH) in Winfield, IL, where she served 13 years as the Director for the ThinkFirst Illinois State Chapter and Training Center, as well as the Manager for Community Education. As a Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician, she acquired IDOT funding to develop an extensive hospital-based Child Passenger Safety program and developed a CPS Guidebook for the staff and physicians at CDH.

Debby began serving on the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation Board of Directors in 2001 and became Executive Director in 2007. As Executive Director, she is responsible for all operations, including fundraising, development of educational program materials, marketing, conferences and chapter training for national and international chapters. She is active on national injury prevention committees, an author on several injury prevention articles and studies and has presented on injury prevention topics at numerous state and national conferences over the past twenty years. During her leadership, ThinkFirst programs for concussion, falls prevention and infant safety were developed, expanding ThinkFirst's outreach from students to people of all ages.

Debby has demonstrated a deep commitment to the mission and programs of ThinkFirst for 25 years. Her passionate, capable and devoted service has made a significant and enduring impact on the Foundation and entire ThinkFirst family.

About ThinkFirst:

ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy. The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) founded ThinkFirst in 1986 for the purpose of providing their injury prevention programs promoting safe behaviors, including basic safety, road safety and concussion awareness for students, falls prevention for older adults, and infant safety for new parents. ThinkFirst chapters, based in hospitals and healthcare centers throughout the U.S. and internationally, provide more than 7,000 presentations annually to schools and community groups. ThinkFirst's transportation safety programs are funded, in part, by grants from General Motors and the Illinois Department of Transportation. For more information, visit www.thinkfirst.org.