

# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

## "...A Dollar a Day for THINK FIRST"

*Editor's Note: Today's special message speaks directly to America's neurosurgeons.*



*THINK FIRST Chairman, Thomas G. Saul, MD*

My Fellow Neurosurgeons,

In the last issue of these "PAGES," I discussed the new directions our Foundation is taking. THINK FIRST's educational programs are now being implemented in elementary schools and we are reaching out to other medical specialties, offering them a chance to embrace and sponsor our educational programs, as well.

In a similar fashion, we are redirecting our fund-raising efforts in a way that will allow us to reach a broader base of future financial supporters. Dr. Michael Caron is leading the Resource Development Committee, which is composed of several sub-committees. Collectively, these sub-committees execute the fund-raising strategies developed by the Executive Committee of the Foundation, in consultation with James D. Yunker, EdD, of Smith Beers Yunker, Inc., the Foundation's fund-raising consulting firm. These strategies call for some significant changes in our approach: We are reaching beyond Neurosurgery for financial support. In the near future we will solicit major national corporations for funding and offer opportunities for them to partner with the THINK FIRST Foundation to spread our prevention message. We also are hoping to institute a direct-mail solicitation to the general public. This, however, is dependent on our ability to procure several highly visible, immediately recognized spokespersons for our Foundation.

Another change is how we are approaching our fellow neurosurgeons for financial support for their premier brain and spinal cord injury prevention program. This year we are implementing our first Annual Fund Drive. While we certainly recognize that we must seek funding from sources beyond Neurosurgery, we still know that the neurosurgeons in this country have more reason to support our Foundation than any other segment of our society. Here's why:

- Neurosurgeons founded THINK FIRST!
- The two national Neurosurgical organizations solely supported THINK FIRST from 1986 to 1990 and continue to provide support.
- Neurosurgeons see the devastation and heartbreak of brain and spinal cord injury every day.

- Neurosurgeons know the benefits that the THINK FIRST Program offers to our society.

When we neurosurgeons look at the solicitations we receive for various causes throughout the year, THINK FIRST stands out as the most logical cause to which a neurosurgeon can contribute.

The THINK FIRST leadership understands today's economic realities and the ever-changing status of our healthcare environment. We know that neurosurgeons' reimbursement is dropping precipitously. Therefore, our solicitation of you must be realistic. We should ask neurosurgeons to contribute an amount that we know all neurosurgeons can afford to contribute comfortably. Too often we are hesitant to contribute to a cause where we think the expectation is that we must pledge a large sum of money over a multi-year period. That is why we started the Annual Fund Drive. That is why we are now asking every neurosurgeon in the United States to give . . .

**... a "Dollar a Day" for THINK FIRST!**

*continued on page 2*

### *In This Issue...*

THINK FIRST Receives Grant from American Legion .....	2
Program Pride .....	2
THINK FIRST Introduces Its New Web Site .....	3
Surfing in the Name of Prevention .....	3
National Youth Sports Safety Foundation Injury Fact Sheet .....	3
Making It Happen .....	4
Neurosurgeon Donates Expert Witness Fee to THINK FIRST .....	4
Russia Hears the THINK FIRST Message .....	4
Every 15 Minutes .....	5
THINK FIRST of Mexico .....	5
Air Bag Safety .....	6

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# THINK FIRST Receives Grant from American Legion

The THINK FIRST Foundation recently received a \$25,000 grant from The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, Inc. This grant was received for a project entitled "THINK FIRST For KIDS: A Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program."

With the \$25,000 grant, THINK FIRST will be able to distribute 125 THINK FIRST For KIDS curriculum packets throughout the U.S., which will be divided into five regions receiving 25 packets each. Based on a conservative estimate, one THINK FIRST For KIDS packet reaches at least 150 children. Consequently, during the 1996-97 school year, distribution of 125 packets will have an impact on 18,750 or more first-, second- and third-grade children. Considering the timeless nature of the message, THINK FIRST For KIDS

materials can be used again and again, reaching thousands of children year after year.



The THINK FIRST Foundation will call upon its coordinators to distribute the packets directly to state boards of education and/or school administrators, depending on the state, and to target inner city school districts and others serving large numbers of economically disadvantaged children who need to hear the safety message. Often, schools within these districts have limited funding and cannot afford to purchase the THINK FIRST For KIDS curriculum packets.

For more information on this grant, or if you are interested in participating in this "giving" program, please contact THINK FIRST at 1.800.THINK.56.

**GREAT JOB!**

## Program Pride

Cincinnati  
Receives Finalist  
Award!

The THINK FIRST Program of Cincinnati, Ohio, received a Finalist's Certificate for Education and Prevention from the National Commission Against Drunk Driving (NCADD). Program Coordinator Sherry Owens received notice of this outstanding award October 18 and announced that the program was one of the few selected to receive it during NCADD's Twelfth Annual Awards Program. This awards program is sponsored jointly by NCADD and the Farmers Insurance Group.

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### CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE from page 1

Think about it. I know that I personally drop \$3-\$5 a day at Starbucks Coffee. I ask each of you to consider your own daily and weekly "spending routine." When you do that exercise, it becomes apparent how, without even thinking, we drop a dollar here or a dollar there. It also becomes clear how easy and unburdensome it would be to write one check each year to the THINK FIRST Foundation for \$365.

Consider how much that would mean to your Foundation. If there are a approximately 3,000 neurosurgeons in the United States and each one gave a "Dollar a Day" to THINK FIRST, that would be \$1,095,000 (\$365 x 3,000)!

With that money, the leadership of the THINK FIRST Foundation could—each year—provide for its annual operating budget,

continually revise and develop new educational programs, put money into its endowment, and begin to develop mechanisms to funnel money back to the local chapters. With a yearly influx of contributions from America's neurosurgeons, the THINK FIRST Foundation could then concentrate most of its fund-raising efforts on major corporations and the general public and this incredible program—founded by neurosurgeons—could be well on its way to self-sufficiency and self-perpetuity.

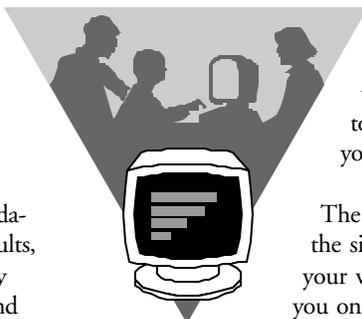
It's easy, it's tax-deductible and it's the right thing to do!

**Think about it . . .  
a "Dollar a Day" for THINK FIRST!**

# THINK FIRST Introduces Its New Web Site

**A** THINK FIRST Foundation Web Site is under development and soon will be up and running. Thanks to the hard work of THINK FIRST board members Paul Bremer and Albert Buscaino (with the assistance of AdTech Communications) this unique and innovative site will feature a wealth of knowledge on THINK FIRST and its programs and, best of all, it will be accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year!

The site will feature general information on the Foundation, news, facts, information for teens and young adults, THINK FIRST For KIDS, "hot links" to other injury prevention or related organizations and companies, and



sponsor and donor information. Also to be included is a catalog of THINK FIRST merchandise complete with pictures, samples and an order form. Interested visitors to the site can post memos, bulletins and correspondence in a special section that only registered users can access. If you do not presently subscribe to the Internet, we encourage you to do so. Otherwise, you can visit the site via your local public library.

The web site domain "*thinkfirst.org*" has been reserved for the site's use. The THINK FIRST Foundation welcomes your visit to the site and looks forward to interfacing with you on the World Wide Web.

## Surfing in the Name of Prevention

The following World Wide Web sites can be utilized by any Internet user. These sites highlight organizations, agencies, products or people who have some relation to our work and an interest in injury prevention. If there are sites you would like to share with fellow readers, submit your suggestions to Susan Morton at the THINK FIRST Foundation via e-mail. Our address: [thinkfirst@aans.org](mailto:thinkfirst@aans.org)

-  Center for Injury Prevention – [www.bucklebear.com](http://www.bucklebear.com)
-  The Dana Alliance for Brain Initiatives – [www.dana.org](http://www.dana.org)
-  Pacific Center for Violence Prevention – [www.pcvp.org](http://www.pcvp.org)
-  Citizens for Reliable and Safe Highways – [www.trucksafety.org](http://www.trucksafety.org)
-  Emergency Medical Services for Children – [www.emsc.com/nera](http://www.emsc.com/nera)

## National Youth Sports Safety Foundation Injury Fact Sheet

**B**rain injury is one of the most common causes of death among athletes. The recognition of a brain injury is vital because if a concussed child is allowed to continue playing and receives another blow to the head, the child could go into a coma or even die. To provide current educational information on the issue and create public awareness, the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc., (NYSSF) has published a fact sheet entitled, Head Injuries, which includes citations on the following: the most hazardous sports to the head, statistics, consequences of head injuries, recommendations for injury prevention, symptoms of head injuries, cost of injuries, return to play and resources.

The information has been compiled from journal articles, national medical organizations, books,

newsletters and experts in the field. The publication has been written especially for parents, health professionals, program administrators and coaches. Copies of the publication are available from the Foundation for \$2 each. Write NYSSF, Dept. H2, 10 Meredith Circle, Needham, MA 02192.



The National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, Inc., formerly the National Youth Sports Foundation For The Prevention Of Athletic Injuries, Inc., is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to reducing the number and severity of injuries youth sustain in sports activities. It serves as an educational resource and clearinghouse for information on safe sports participation for parents, coaches, athletes, health professionals and program administrators.

# Making It Happen

Dr. And Mrs. David Cavanaugh  
Ark-La-Tex Chapter  
Shreveport, Louisiana



While attending the 1995 American Association of Neurological Surgeons' Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, I noticed from the information I picked up at the THINK FIRST exhibit booth that there was not a local program in the northern half of my state, Louisiana. My wife and I wanted to bring this worthwhile program to our community and, after being trained in Columbia, Missouri, we began to work out the details for establishing a chapter. We first elicited the support of the eight neurosurgeons in our area. With each hospital I approached wanting to fund the program, I realized the limited scope the chapter would have in our metropolitan area of 500,000 if only one institution was to be involved. A worse scenario would be competing programs in our area—making marketing a primary goal instead of the THINK FIRST mission.

My wife, Donna, began to work through a committee made up of representatives from institutions in our area that offered rehabilitation services. We held a training seminar attended by more than 45 people including physicians, nurses, Emergency Medical Services technicians, therapists and administrative personnel from the different hospitals. We gave the history of the program, showed the different components, had an experienced handicapped speaker discuss his role, and then identified a contact person for each institution. We explained our concept of a Team Approach, where each group would support a presentation team, with Donna overseeing and coordinating the activities. Each institution could invest as many or as few resources as desired. With the Team Approach, we felt that more students could be exposed to the program, no schools overlooked, and that the hospitals could receive the marketing value they understandably desired. We established a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation status for the chapter to avoid potential loss of donations if it were tied to any single hospital or physician. This has been well-received, fostering cooperation over competition, and our Teams are anxious to begin school presentations this fall.

## Neurosurgeon Donates Expert Witness Fee to THINK FIRST

In July 1996, Richard L. Weiner, MD, was asked to serve as an expert witness on behalf of an insurance company in a trial before a potentially hostile jury. Dr. Weiner was to be paid \$3,000 for his expert testimony, a fact that the prosecution used to imply that the doctor merely might be offering an opinion in exchange for payment.

Dr. Weiner effectively diffused the prosecutor's argument by telling the jury that his entire expert witness fee would be donated to the THINK FIRST Foundation.

"I noticed an immediate change in their attitude toward me and what I was saying after they realized that I had nothing to gain personally," said Dr. Weiner. "Based on my experience, I believe other physicians may be wise to consider donating expert witness fees to charity. Not only does it benefit those who receive the gift, but it also lends credibility to the doctor's testimony by removing suspicion of having been paid to take a certain side in a court case."

Dr. Weiner is a partner in Southwest Neurosurgical Associates of Dallas, Texas, and Clinical Associate Professor of Neurosurgery at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School.

## Russia Hears the THINK FIRST Message

Julie Philbrook, THINK FIRST Model Site Training Coordinator from Minneapolis, Minnesota, took the THINK FIRST message to a *really* new audience when she traveled to Viadivostok, Russia. The conference was hosted by the American International Health Alliance (AIHA).

For the last three years the AIHA has coordinated several partnerships with United States hospitals and several countries in the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union. Hennepin County Medical Center, where Ms. Philbrook's THINK FIRST program is housed, has been working with Moldova, (a; NIS near Romania) to assist them in establishing an Emergency Medical Service system. The purpose of this conference, September 30-October 2, 1996, was to bring together eight partnerships to share their success stories and plan for the future.

With the assistance of an interpreter, Ms. Philbrook presented injury prevention information to the diverse, enthusiastic audience which included representatives from Estonia, Moldova, Ukraine, Kazakstan, Georgia, Armenia and Russia.



Julie Philbrook, (Right) presents THINK FIRST to conference participants while Russian representative translates (Left).

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## Every 15 Minutes

On May 15–16, 1996, THINK FIRST of Chico/Northern California participated in one of the most innovative and highly successful programs addressing teenage drinking and driving. Entitled “Every 15 Minutes,” this project brought together a broad coalition of interested agencies with a goal of reducing the incidence of alcohol-related traffic deaths among the Chico community. The program’s title reflects the sobering statistic that across the United States every 15 minutes someone dies in an alcohol-related traffic crash. Initially developed in the Spokane, Washington region, local Chico groups collaborated to expand the program, integrating a variety of successful approaches piloted elsewhere.

Local THINK FIRST coordinator, Molly Terrano, RN, joined the Chico Police and Fire Departments, the California Highway Patrol, the California Alcoholic Beverage control commission, local schools, businesses and service clubs to present this extensive two-day experience to more than 3,000 area high school students and their families. On day one of the program at each of the two local high schools, a student was “extracted” from class every 15 minutes by the grim reaper. These individuals then were quickly transformed into the living dead by covering their faces with white makeup and return to their classrooms for the remainder of the day, unable to communicate with their peers.

“The program’s title reflects the sobering statistic that across the United States every 15 minutes someone dies in an alcohol-related traffic crash.”

During lunch hours, a mock traffic crash was set up on each campus, again starring students who served as victims, as well as perpetrators. The Fire Department performed a jaws of life extraction, Enloe FlightCare and Ambulance responded to the call and transported the victims from the campus to Enloe Hospital, local police arrested, handcuffed and removed teenage offenders and the local coroner removed, in a body bag, one of the teenage fatalities, all in front of the observant eyes of the student body. Parents of the classroom “dead” then were notified by the police department of their children’s deaths and, that evening, each of the 48 victims spent the night at a

local retreat house to discuss the impact of alcohol and driving on themselves, their families and their friends.

The next morning, in front of each student body, an assembly was convened where the “dead teenagers” were reunited with their loved ones. At the assembly, a panel of speakers addressed the students and their families on the impact that drinking and driving has on the community as a whole. These individuals included students, parents, policemen, medical personnel (including THINK FIRST’s medical director, Jeffery M. Lobosky, MD) and school administrators. A poignant conclusion was the introduction of six local individuals who have actually lost loved ones as the result of an alcohol-related traffic crash. The entire community of students, administrators, parents and the local media agreed that “Every 15 Minutes” was the most powerful program ever presented to the Chico community. Unanimous praise was echoed from every group exposed to this unique experience and requests already have come in from outlying areas to reproduce the Chico experience in other communities. Attesting to the success of “Every 15 Minutes” was the fact that following this year’s graduation, there was not a single alcohol-related traffic incident or arrest for the first time in recent memory.

For more information on “Every 15 Minutes” and how it can be implemented in your community, contact Molly Terrano, RN, at Enloe Hospital, (916) 891-7434.



(L to R) THINK FIRST Medical Director, Jeffrey Lobosky, MD, THINK FIRST Coordinator, Molly Terrano, RN, Enloe Hospital’s Trauma Service Team

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## THINK FIRST of Mexico

In early November, THINK FIRST CEO Fred Grubbe and Program Development Coordinator Susan Morton were visited by representatives from THINK FIRST of Mexico (Piensa Primero). Representatives included the sponsoring physician and his wife, Dr. and Mrs. Roberto De Leo Vargas; program coordinator, Lic. Jorge Font Ramirez; and THINK FIRST For KIDS program coordinator, Lic. Teresa Corona Lopez. Their headquarters office is housed at Hospital ABC in Consultorio, Mexico. PP has been busy translating into Spanish the THINK FIRST For KIDS and high school instruction manual materials. This will enable PP to reach a greater portion of students in Mexico and Latin America. PP will participate in the THINK FIRST For KIDS program beginning in January 1997.

Since March 15, 1995, PP has reached more than 7,000 people in Mexico City and seven states within Mexico with the THINK FIRST high school message. The program utilizes the expertise of five spinal-cord injured people, three Neurosurgeons, a Neurofiologist, a Physical Therapist, a Psychiatrist and a Physical Therapy student.

The delegation’s enthusiasm was evident throughout their two-day visit to the U.S. Their plans to grow the program are rock solid and on track. For more information, please contact Sr. Font Ramirez at 91(5) 230 8000 or Ms. Morton at the National Headquarters office.

**WARNING!**

## **AIR BAG SAFETY: BUCKLE EVERYONE CHILDREN IN BACK**

### **AIR BAGS WORK – THEY SAVE LIVES**

**They do their job best when everyone is buckled and kids are properly restrained in the back seat.**

Air bags saved almost 500 lives in 1995 alone. However, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that tragically several children have been killed or injured by the force of a deploying air bag.

An air bag is not a soft, billowy pillow. Rather, to work effectively, an air bag comes out of the dashboard at rates of up to 200 miles per hour – faster than a blink of an eye. Drivers can entirely eliminate any danger to children from a deploying air bag by placing kids properly restrained in the back seat. With or without an air bag, the back seat is the safest place for children to ride.

As the number of motor vehicles equipped with air bags increases, the risk to improperly restrained kids will also increase. That is why we must all work to educate people *now* that air bags save lives and work best when everyone is buckled and kids are in back, properly buckled up.

### **Air Bag Safety Tips**

- ▼ **Kids ride in back** Infants in rear-facing child safety seats should **NEVER** ride in the front seat of a vehicle with a passenger side air bag. Little kids, typically age 10 and younger, should also ride buckled up in the back seat.
- ▼ **Child safety seats** Young children and infants should always ride in age and size appropriate child safety seats. The safety seat should be held properly in place by the vehicle's safety belts and the child should be correctly buckled in the child safety seat. A child who has outgrown a convertible child safety seat will need to ride in a booster seat in order for the vehicle's safety belts to fit properly.
- ▼ **Wear both lap AND shoulder belts** The shoulder strap should cross the collarbone, and the lap belt should fit low and tight on the hips. The shoulder strap should never be slipped behind the back or under the arm – this is a dangerous habit, especially in cars with air bags.
- ▼ **Move the front seat back** Drivers should position the seat as far away from the dashboard as is practical to operate the vehicle. Drivers should also make sure that the front passenger seat is pushed back as far as possible.

The National Automotive Occupant Protection Campaign is a public/private partnership of automotive manufacturers, insurance companies, occupant restraint manufacturers, government agencies, health professionals, and child health safety organizations. The goal of the Campaign is to increase the proper use of safety belts and child safety seats and to inform the public about how to maximize the lifesaving capabilities of air bags and minimize the risk.



Now Available!!



Packet Price: \$249

Discounts available.  
Packet components  
sold separately.

Call for Details

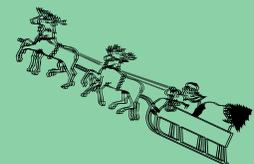
**THINK FIRST Foundation 1.800.THINK.56**

## 1996 THINK FIRST Holiday Greeting Cards

**Order Yours Today!**

Holiday card illustrations were created by two young men who sustained spinal cord injuries and speak for their local THINK FIRST programs. One card depicts beautiful red cardinals in the wintertime and the other card is a jolly Santa Claus.

Pack of 12 cards with accompanying envelopes  
(6 of each card)  
\$17.00/pack



All proceeds from holiday card sales  
go to the development of THINK FIRST injury prevention materials.

Call **1.800.THINK.56** to place your orders for the 1996 Holiday Season!

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