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The ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation is about to turn 30! ThinkFirst will be celebrating this milestone throughout 2016, starting in Chicago, in conjunction with the AANS Annual Meeting, and continuing to the CNS Annual Meeting in San Diego. The 2016 ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention will take place May 1-3 in Chicago and will feature a not-to-be-missed fundraising event on Monday evening at Chicago's legendary House of Blues.

The ThinkFirst Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization, originally founded by the AANS and CNS in 1986, whose mission is to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injury through education, research and advocacy. Educational programs teach the importance of the brain and spinal cord, how vulnerable they are to injury and how safe actions can help to prevent injuries. Research on ThinkFirst programs has helped determine program revisions throughout the years and has demonstrated programs to be evidence-based. Along with education, ThinkFirst chapters advocate for safety-related legislation, which has helped to strengthen laws for seat belts, child passenger safety, texting and driving and others.

There are 150 chapters in the US, and 36 chapters in 16 countries, each with a sponsoring physician, injury prevention coordinator and VIP speaker – Voice for Injury Prevention. VIP's are the heart of ThinkFirst programs, as they share their personal story of how one decision led to a brain or spinal cord injury and changed the course of their life. Collectively, chapters in the US give an average of 6,000 presentations a year.

Programs have been developed for all ages, utilizing classroom presentations to help students learn the importance of making safe choices to prevent injuries. Topics covered include vehicle safety, bicycle and roller sports safety, pedestrian safety, playground safety, water safety, violence prevention, including shaken baby syndrome, and falls prevention. ThinkFirst For Kids utilizes the animated character 'Street Smart' to engage elementary children. Curricula with 6-8 weeks of teacher lesson plans are available for grades 1-8. A concussion program for teens was added in 2014, and falls prevention program for older adults is in development.

Several published studies demonstrate that ThinkFirst programs increase knowledge about brain and spinal cord injuries, influencing positive changes in behavior and attitudes regarding use of seat belts and helmets, driving safe and sober, reducing driver distraction and other safety habits. Programs promote awareness of the consequences of high risk behavior, and reinforce safety and prevention messages. Fast Facts handouts provide useful information for anyone accessing the website.

ThinkFirst has received numerous awards, including the Excellence in Prevention Education Award by the AMA in 1989, Best Practice as a Comprehensive Community Based Prevention Based Prevention Strategy by the University of Toronto in 2000, and recognition as research-validated program by the California Department of Education, 2002. ThinkFirst was also

awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the CNS in 2009, and has received numerous awards for program videos.

Neurosurgeons can easily get involved by starting a chapter at their hospital or practice and serving as the sponsoring physician, or medical director. ThinkFirst chapters are established in neuroscience, rehabilitation and community education centers, as well as in trauma centers for providing their required trauma prevention education. Programs are popular in neurosurgery teaching programs, offering residents and students educational, research and community opportunities. Private practice chapters can increase their profile in the community by offering ThinkFirst programs. Chapter applications and information can be found at [www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org).

Finally, ThinkFirst is a valued organization founded and supported by neurosurgeons. Please become a supporter by making a tax deductible donation to the ThinkFirst Foundation.

For more information please visit [www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org).

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