

# **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center:**

## **A Historical Review and Its Role in Injury Prevention in the Community**

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## **Preface**

In 1979, Dr. E. Fletcher Eyster in Pensacola, Florida treated young men with spinal cord injury. He became frustrated because he was unable to cure these young men and thought that prevention was the only cure for this devastating injury. He developed a spinal cord injury prevention program and took the program to the area high schools, and began teaching the students how to prevent spinal cord injury. The following year, Dr. Clark Watts in Columbia, MO, developed a similar program.

In 1986, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons directed Dr. Eyster and Dr. Watts to develop the National Head and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program based on their prior prevention efforts in their respective communities. The implementation of the program was successful which led to the swift establishment of chapters throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico. By 1988 the program received the Presidential Citation for Private Sector Initiatives from President Ronald Reagan and an Award for Excellence in Education and Prevention from the American Medical Association's Adolescent Health Congress in 1989.

In 1990, the name Think First was adopted and the Think First National Injury Prevention Program became an independent non-profit 501c3 organization. In 2001, the name was changed to ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation ([www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org)). The ThinkFirst Foundation (legal name) is based in Illinois.

Injury is the number one cause of death and disability among young people between the ages of 1 and 44 years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that traumatic brain injury (TBI) accounts for approximately 2.5 million emergency department (ED) visits in the United States in 2010. Among them, 87% (2,213,826 persons) were treated and released, 11% (283,630) were hospitalized and 2% (52,844) died. Currently approximately 3.2-5.3 million persons are living with TBI related disability. These numbers are far greater than AIDS, breast cancer and multiple sclerosis combined. Yet, very little attention is paid to the injury prevention by the public as well as by the medical community. M. Goldstein<sup>1</sup> called injury "a silent epidemic." Injury is a major healthcare issue today. We must make every effort to prevent injury, as most injuries are preventable.

Brain and spinal cord injuries are the most devastating types of injuries. The survivors of these injuries are profoundly affected by physical, mental, emotional and economic impact, not only for themselves, but for their families and communities as well. The economic costs of TBI were estimated at \$76.5 billion in 2010 ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).

The mission of ThinkFirst is to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through education, research and advocacy.

## **Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council (ATAC)**

My involvement with ThinkFirst began in 1994. I sponsored and initiated the ThinkFirst Injury Prevention chapter of Canton, Ohio while I was practicing neurosurgery there. The program was very successful with the support of Aultman Hospital, led by trauma coordinator, Liz Edmunds, RN and VIP (Voice in Injury Prevention) speaker, Rodney Mullen. Rodney, who sustained a spinal cord injury as a result of diving, attracted much attention from the students and public. *The ThinkFirst Program* was published in the July-August 1996 issue of “Stark” magazine (Appendix 1).

I retired from my neurosurgical practice on August 31, 1996. My wife, Cindy and I relocated to Cordillera in Edwards, Colorado, about 25 miles west of Vail, in August 1998. The main reason for this move was that we had spent our Christmas family vacation in Vail for a number of years. We enjoyed skiing and liked the mountain community.

After we moved to Cordillera, I sought part time work, as I did not want to spend my retirement life idly. I saw an advertisement in the Vail Daily newspaper on August 19, 1998 seeking a trauma coordinator for the Central Mountains Trauma Advisory Council (ATAC) by Sean Caffrey of Summit Ambulance Services. I immediately called Sean at Summit County Ambulance Services. He asked me to submit my resume. I faxed him my Curriculum Vitae. He later called and requested I come in for an interview.

I went to Summit County Ambulance Services in Frisco on August 23, 1998, and met Sean and other members of the ATAC. I briefly explained my experience in treating people with brain and spinal cord injuries and my involvement with the ThinkFirst injury prevention program in Ohio. One of the Council members, Anne Fassel, RN, a trauma coordinator of Vail Valley Medical Center, asked me about my experiences in grant writing. My answer was “I have no experience in grant writing, but I can learn.” As I left, I thought that was an inappropriate answer. I should have said just no.

A few days later, I received a call from Sean saying I was not accepted for the position. But he invited me to attend the monthly ATAC meetings as an adviser. I accepted his invitation. (Later, Anne Fassel told me that I was over qualified for the job).

At the first meeting, I met the new trauma coordinator, Lorraine Caposole. I learned from her that the job involved a lot of traveling and paper work. I was relieved that I did not get the job. I met the Chairman of the ATAC, Dr. Chip Woodland. I learned from him that he had completed his residency training in Emergency Medicine in Akron, Ohio, just 20 miles north of Canton and he was familiar with Aultman Hospital where I practiced neurosurgery. One of the emergency room doctors at Aultman Hospital, Dr. Douglas Yeakel was a good friend of his. What a coincidence! I immediately felt I had known him a long time and developed an affinity with ATAC.

At the ATAC meeting on October 8, 1998, I introduced the ThinkFirst Injury Prevention Program. After a brief explanation of the program, I stated that I could offer this program to the

community as a satellite program under the Denver chapter or we could establish our own chapter. The Council decided that further discussion would be at the top of the agenda the following month.

At the next ATAC meeting, on November 12, 1998, I presented the video “On the Edge” and discussed the ThinkFirst program again. Transcript from minutes of the meeting:

“A lengthy discussion followed, regarding the potential of adopting this program. Levels of involvement range from the formation of a new Local Chapter to becoming a Satellite program of an existing Local Chapter to Advocacy, which is someone who is interested in participating, such as an injured speaker.

Dr. Tatsumi has been in contact with the national organization. Lorraine has been in contact with the Denver and Colorado Springs Chapters.

A motion was made and seconded to investigate the program further and explore the participating options. It was decided that Lorraine Caposole, Dr. Tatsumi and Phyllis Uribe would attend the School presentation by the Denver Chapter and meet with their coordinator, Barbara Varnhagen.”

On December 1, 1998, Lorraine, Phyllis and I visited Skinner Middle School in Denver, and observed the ThinkFirst For Teens presentation by Barbara Varnhagen. After the presentation, we met with Barbara and discussed the creation of a satellite chapter in the central mountains area under the Denver Chapter.

At the ATAC meeting on January 14, 1999, I reported our observation of the ThinkFirst presentation in Denver. Transcript from minutes of the meeting:

“**ThinkFirst program:** Phyllis Uribe, Dr. Tatsumi and Lorraine Caposole went to Denver in December to attend a Middle School Program presented by Barbara Varnhagen, Coordinator, Denver “ThinkFirst” Chapter. Attendees reported the program as impressive. Adoption of the Program by the ATAC will be explored further.”

“ThinkFirst” will be revisited at the May meeting.”

At the ATAC meeting on April 8, 1999, ThinkFirst was discussed.  
Minutes of the meeting:

“ThinkFirst, Denver Chapter is willing to sponsor the Central Mountains ATAC to start-up a regional program.....

Motion/Approved: Review prevention program funding proposal at the next ATAC meeting”

On May 13, 1999 at the ATAC meeting, Primary Injury Prevention and Education was discussed. (I was absent due to my volunteer mission in Honduras)

Minutes of the meeting:

“ATAC coordinator Lorraine Caposole presented a Strategy Matrix (enclosed) and explained five options under three prevention programs; 1) ThinkFirst Denver Program/Central Mts. ATAC Satellite idea. 2) The Master Driving/Summit Prevention Alliance/ATAC regional outreach proposal. 3) The Emergency Nurses ENCARE/ATAC development. Each program idea was

examined according to 14 categories, each containing variables. The primary, overall goal is to create and maintain a culture of health promotion and safety in the community.

Barbara Varnhagen, Executive Director, ThinkFirst Denver, elaborated on that program and Kathy Cuthbertson discussed the ENCARE Program. The Council then requested both women briefly leave the room, in order that the most frank discussion could precede a strategy decision.

**Motion Made and Approved: For programming completed by June 30, 2000:** Allocate \$6,000 for conducting a regional ThinkFirst Program, adjusting down the reach and cost, as listed on the matrix. Allocate \$1,100 for 4 Master Drive's Parent Teen seminar, one each county. Allocate \$1,000 for the ENCARE Program to be supported in each county. Allocate \$900 for capital purchase/a slide projector and accessories."

## **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**

Six months after my initial introduction of ThinkFirst, ATAC finally approved it as their injury prevention program.

I returned from Honduras on May 30<sup>th</sup> and began to organize a team to start our chapter in the central mountains area that included Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit Counties. I adopted the name "ThinkFirst Central Mountains".

I submitted the application for ThinkFirst Central Mountains as a satellite chapter under the Denver ThinkFirst Chapter to the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation. I needed to find a chapter coordinator, professional health care speaker and VIP speakers. As I was new to the area, it was difficult for me to find a coordinator. I asked my wife, Cindy to be the coordinator and speaker, and she accepted. I named Cindy as the coordinator and myself as the sponsoring physician on the application form. The application was accepted by the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation.

Cindy had to complete ThinkFirst training to become a coordinator. I asked Denver Chapter coordinator, Barbara Varnhagen to train her. Later, Cindy went to Denver to observe a ThinkFirst presentation by Barbara and received the instruction to be a coordinator.

For the VIP speakers, I had two young men in my mind. Back in the morning of January 21, 1999 when I was working as a volunteer with Community Guest Services (CGS) for Vail Resorts to meet and greet skiers at Golden Peak, I saw a young, paraplegic skier coming up the ramp on a wheel chair carrying his ski. I helped him and introduced myself to him and his friend. They were Steve Ricci and Raul Martin. I told them that I was working with the Area Trauma Advisory Council to start the brain and spinal cord injury prevention program. I asked both adaptive skiers whether they were interested in participating in the program as VIP speakers. Both answered "Yes." I gave them my card and I got their telephone numbers. I told them I would get in touch when the program was ready.

I called Raul on June 11, 1999, to tell him ATAC had approved the ThinkFirst Injury Prevention Program. I asked him and Steve to meet me at Vail Valley Medical Center 11:00 am on June 23, 1999. I sent a letter to each explaining ThinkFirst For Teens and enclosed a ThinkFirst brochure. (Appendix 2)

When Lorraine Caposole and I met with Steve and Raul we discussed the role of the VIP speakers and told them VIP speakers were the core of the ThinkFirst For Teens program. The personal testimony of the injured person was a powerful message for the students and public to hear.

It was tragic and ironic that Steve died as a result of a brain injury later that year. I learned from Raul that they were training for the adapted ski championship in Winter Park, Colorado. In the early morning, Steve went to ski by himself without wearing a ski helmet before training started. He struck a tree and sustained severe brain injury. Steve usually wore a ski helmet like all other ski racers did, but on that morning, he did not wear a helmet.

Steve never had the opportunity to participate in ThinkFirst. I often wondered if he had been involved with ThinkFirst, if he would have taken precautions to save his own life. ThinkFirst promoted wearing a helmet to protect the brain in all sorts of sports and recreational activities.



Fig 1. Front, From left: Steve Ricci, Raul Martin. Back, Lorain Caposole, Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi at VVMC.

### **Brain Injury Support Group**

On Saturday, July 10, 2000, Cindy and I went to listen to the Rochester Symphony Orchestra at the Ford Park Amphitheater. There we met Ana Maria Vergara, President of the local Brain Injury Support Group. She invited us to join to the group, and asked me to give a talk at the next Brain Injury Support Group meeting. I accepted her invitation and told her I would present the ThinkFirst For Teens Program. I asked her if anyone of the members might be interested in participating in ThinkFirst as a VIP speaker.

On July 14, I called Ana Maria and received the names of potential VIP speakers, Bill Mielcuszny of Beaver Creek and Sherri Cole of Frisco. I called them and explained the ThinkFirst program and asked them whether they were interested in participating in the program as VIP speakers. Both of them accepted my invitation.

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, I took Bill Mielcuszny to ATAC in Frisco and introduced him to Lorraine Caposole. She welcomed and thanked Bill for joining ThinkFirst Central Mountains. We had lunch together at a Chinese restaurant in Frisco on the way home.

Ana Maria was a successful young woman. She worked for the Human Interface Network Connection Management Company in Silicon Valley. In 1988, she had sustained subarachnoid hemorrhage due to a ruptured intracranial aneurysm. She had brain surgery in Redwood City, California, and recovered well from the hemorrhage and surgery, but became disabled and unable to compete in her highly competitive field. She lived with her parents and her son Ryan in West Vail, in a little blue house on a hill. Her father was an avid aviator and excellent ski

instructor who influenced Ryan's interest in aviation. Her mother was a retired school teacher. Both of her parents were from Chile.

Ana Maria was partially disabled, with slight speech and memory impediments and right homonymous hemianopia, but she was very active in the Brain Injury Support Group in Eagle and Summit Counties. She organized the monthly group meeting and invited speakers. Ana Marie published the monthly *Awakening Newsletter*. She also worked with community officials on behalf of the support group. She was indeed a remarkable woman. *Awakening Newsletter*, August 1999 (Appendix 3)



Fig. 2. Ana Maria Vergara, Feb. 2000

On August 12, 1999, I attended the Brain Injury Support Group's meeting at Eagles Nest on the top of the Gondola in Lionshead. I presented the ThinkFirst Program. The transcript of my presentation is attached. (Appendix 4)

### **Establishment of a ThinkFirst Central Mountains' Team and Preparation for the Program Presentations**

ThinkFirst Central Mountains:

Sponsoring physician: Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD

Coordinator and health professional speaker: Cindy Tatsumi, RN.

VIP speakers: Raul Martin, Bill Mielcuszny and Sherri Cole.

I sent letters to the local middle school and high school Principals on August 6, 1999 explaining the ThinkFirst program and seeking the opportunity to present the program to the students. (Appendix 5)

We acquired a brain model and spine model for presentations. I contacted the Director of the ThinkFirst Foundation, Dorothy Zirkle, and received an evaluation form to be completed by students immediately following the presentation. We also made an arrangement to purchase bicycle helmets from BELL Sports in Rantoul, IL to distribute to students at each presentation. Cindy, Bill Mielcuszny and I went to Summit Ambulance in Frisco on August 4, 1999 and met Lorraine Caposole. We practiced the ThinkFirst presentation:

“Hello my name is Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi and I am here today along with other speakers. We are part of ThinkFirst Central Mountains and are here to talk with you about protecting yourself from crashes and injuries. (Introduced the next speaker)

#### **Nurse, Health Professional Speaker, Cindy**

Who can tell me what the most important part of the body is that you'd want to protect? (various answers – wait for them to say brain). Why is your brain so important? Right,

your brain controls everything. If you think about it, your brain is like the most amazing computer ever made. Actually, it's better than any computer. Not only does it control all of your movements and the things you do, but it also is who you are – your thoughts, your emotion, and ability to learn.

This is a model of a human brain; this is pretty close to what your brain looks like (showing model). It weighs about 3 lbs. and we know that the brain is made up of different parts which are each responsible for different things: For example, this part of the brain is called the frontal lobes and they are responsible things like your emotions, your sense of humor and personality.

Along here, (pointing to motor strip), is an area called the motor strip and it is responsible for allowing you to move every part of your body. Behind that is the sensory strip and it allows you to feel every part of your body.

On each side are the temporal lobes and these have areas that control speech and language. These also have areas that control your memory, but in fact, memory is controlled in a lot of different areas of the brain.

Back here are the occipital lobes and they have areas that control vision.

Down here is a part of your brain called the cerebellum. This part lets you walk and do things like run, jump, and ride your bike in a coordinated manner.

The lowest part of your brain is the brainstem and this is the part of the brain that keeps you alive. Areas here control things like your breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. This is also where nerves come out that control things like smiling hearing, or being able to swallow or cough.

Now, this is what your brain looks like, but this is a model made out of plastic. For something that is so vital to who you are, the brain is much more fragile and delicate than this.

(Pick up skull) now, lucky for us, we don't go walking around with our mushy brain hanging out, right? We all know that our brain gets protection from the bones of our skull. This is what your skull looks like, and if we look inside we can see exactly where your brain sits. It sits in here, well surrounded by bones, and for the most part this provides very good protection for our brain. We've all bumped heads, sometimes pretty hard, and we haven't suffered brain damage, right? The problem comes when you add a little more force, like when you have an accident, like falling off your bike, or getting in a car crash. You can crack your skull and injure the brain underneath. Now, you don't have to break the bones of your skull to injure your brain. Did you notice how the brain slid around the pan?? Your brain can do the same thing inside your skull. When you moving at a speed, like on your bike or in the car, or falling, and you come to an abrupt stop; your brain moves inside your skull and smacks against the sides of your skull causing bleeding or bruising in the brain. Also, if you look at the skull again, the top part is very smooth but bottom isn't. Do you see the little piece of bone that that are sticking up? When

your brain is moving inside your skull, it gets pulled over these pieces of bone and can tear the brain, or break blood vessels causing bleeding which injures the brain also.

When you injure your brain, whatever that part of your brain was responsible for, it's not going to be able to do anymore. So, depending on what part of your brain you injure, you may not be able to walk, or talk. You may not think or learn as well. You may have trouble with your memory. You might have trouble remembering little things like what you had for dinner, or you may not remember big things like your best friend, or your mom and dad. You may have a completely different personality after the brain injury. When you have a brain injury, you can have a lot of problems after and exactly what those are, depends on the parts of your brain you injure.

Now, there's another part of your body that is almost as important as your brain, who know what that is? (spinal cord) Right, if your brain is the big computer that controls everything, then your spinal cord can be thought of as big cable that lets it do what it does. Constantly, faster than you could imagine, information is going back and forth between your body and your brain. Your body is constantly sending your brain information about what is going on within it and around it and at the same time, your brain is constantly making sense of that information and telling your body what do. Most of what goes on, you're not even aware of!

What happens if you cut that cable? When the cable gets cut, like when you injure your spinal cord, no information gets back and forth between your body and your brain. That means that part of your body can't talk to your brain, and your brain can't talk to your body. So you can't feel or move part of your body. Although your spinal cord works a lot like these wires, it too is very fragile and can be easily injured, cutting that connection between your brain and your body.

Fortunately, your spinal cord has some bony protection as well. This is your back bone, or spine. (hold up spine model) You can see that the spine is made up of several individual bones called vertebrae. Do you all see where the rod goes down this spine? That is where your spinal cord goes down your back bone. For the most part, this provides very good protection for the spinal cord, it's completely surrounded by bone, and individual bones move together as we are doing things like jumping, running, bending – keeping the spinal cord safe. Again, the problem comes when you are in some sort of accident: car crash, you fall, or dive into shallow water and you get hit in a way that causes these bones to break or move in opposite ways of each other tearing spinal cord or smashing it. From the point of injury down, the connection between your body and brain is cut.

The higher on the spinal cord that happens, the more of your body you won't be able to move or feel. If the injury is very high, at the area where your brain and spinal cord come together, you would die because your brain would not be able send messages to areas that connect with your heart. But if it happens just slightly below that, you wouldn't die but you wouldn't be able to breathe for yourself or feel or move any part of your body except your face, which is what happened to Christopher Reeve, the actor who played Super Man. If you had an injury here you would have to receive rescue breathing right away or

you would die. If the injury is further down, you might not be able to feel or move your arms or your legs. Or you might not be able to feel or move from your waist down. Imagine if all of a sudden you couldn't move your legs, you couldn't fidget in your seat. Most people with spinal cord injuries lose their ability to go to the bathroom, and might have to use a catheter to empty their bladder. So you can see that spinal cord injuries can cause some pretty serious problems too.

You might think, well, if I have a brain or spinal cord injury, I'll go to the hospital and I'll have an operation or get some medicine and I'll get better and everything will be like it was before, Right? For those of you who broke apart the spaghetti, try to put it back together so that it is exactly like it was when you found it. You can't can you? You might be able to stick some strands back together, but it is not the same. Unfortunately, that's how it is with the brain and spinal cord. You can sew skin and muscle back together and they'll work as they did before. You can put casts on bones and they'll heal and be as good as new. Brains and spinal cords are different because they are made up of nerve cells that talk to each other through tiny connections, which is how they pass information, allowing you to do what you do. When you injure your brain or spinal cord, nerve cells die and the tiny connections are cut. Nerve cells do not grow back (regenerate) and often those tiny connections don't grow back either. So, whatever problem you are left with after your brain or spinal cord injury, it's permanent. Whatever you are not able to do anymore, you're not going to be able to do it forever and you then have to learn how to live with what that disability.

Now, no one leaves their house saying, "I'll go get a brain or spinal cord injury." But injuries can happen, we all know that. You can't live in a fear of what might happen to you, because that wouldn't make life very fun would it? But what you can do is take a few minutes to THINK about what you are doing and what you can do to keep yourself safe. Wear your seat belt in the car, even if you are going a short distance. ALWAYS wear helmets when you are riding a bike or motorcycle. Wear helmets when you are doing any sports where you might hit your head – rollerblading, skiing, snowboarding, etc. Don't put yourself in violent situations where you might get shot or hurt in a fight. Don't get into a vehicle with a driver who has been using alcohol or other drugs. It's up to you to THINK FIRST. Only you can protect yourself and one bad decision, one split second, and your life will, literally, change forever.

### **VIP Speaker**

Hi! My name is Bill Mielcuszny. I live in the Vail Valley. In early 1990 I was finishing my senior year of college. On February 10, 1990, my life changed beyond my wildest fears. My college roommate and I were out. He was driving. I knew my roommate drove fast and recklessly on occasion but he was a good driver most of the time. There were times when I did not ride with him because of the way he drove, but this was not one of those times. The night of the crash neither he nor I were drinking.

Everything that happened with the crash was told to me; I cannot recall any of it. My roommate was speeding down a winding country road at approximately 90 mph. He lost

control, the car rolled the length of a football field and my side hit a cement culvert. I was Life-flighted to a local hospital where I was in a coma for one month.

When I was in coma, pressure between my skull and brain got dangerously high. To resolve this problem, a four-by-six-inch piece of my skull was removed to make room for the brain swelling. (decompressive craniotomy\*) Because part of my protective skull was missing, if I were to fall or even bump my head I could die. Because of this I had to have a nurse helping me 24 hours a day for three months, when they put back the skull piece.

When I started to come out of the coma I had to re-learn everything. The most basic things were going the bathroom, walking and talking. After that, I had to learn simple skills, like how to eat again, using a knife and fork. Even after I was able to eat, it took me months before I was able to make something as simple as a sandwich. I had severe memory problems and could not remember events that happened minutes before. I did not remember my more recent friends. I spent 4 months in the hospital and almost two years in outpatient rehabilitation.

When I look back at the first two years of my recovery, I now realize that this was the most hopeful time for me in the past ten years. Although I wasn't in good shape mentally or physically I still had one thing going for me. That was the hope that things would return back to where they were before the crash. This hope slowly started to fizzle away when I tried to go back to work. When I got the chance to go back to work I needed much more help and was significantly slower than before the crash. The four jobs I had were all the same, either I was taking too much of someone's time to help me or I'd sit at my desk all day, staring at the same familiar Pittsburgh skyline. I started to realize how many of my skills were destroyed due to one bad decision. I thought, "There goes my career!"

Before my crash I was going to graduate 3<sup>rd</sup> in my major then receive a complete scholarship to graduate school from Miami University of Ohio. I was going to choose either the scholarship at Miami or Notre Dame graduate school. There were job offers, a steady girlfriend and busy social life. Suddenly all were gone.

As a result of the crash, some of the tasks that haunt me are:

- Computer jobs which were once simple are now difficult to impossible.
- I can't work fast enough to be competitive in the highly skilled and rapidly changing world of computer.
- I have short term memory problems. If I don't write things down, I forget them.
- I have to take medication daily that makes me tired and sluggish.
- I have lost physical coordination and have trouble competing in sports activities.
- It's much harder to concentrate and learn new skills.
- It's more difficult for me to organize. I used to be an extremely organized person.

I have told you some of my problems, but there are many other people who have sustained brain injuries who have much more difficult problems than I do. Don't think you are invincible and make a stupid decision that you'll regret forever. Don't let peer

pressure influence you, and push you to do something that you would normally not do. No amount of money or effort can reverse a severe brain or spinal cord injury.

\*A decompressive craniotomy is a life-saving procedure. It involves the removal of a large portion of skull to relieve high intracranial pressure. When the brain swells due to brain edema inside of a rigid cranium, there is no place for the brain to expand but downward. A portion of temporal lobe herniates through the tentorial edge (a thick membrane between the brain and cerebellum) and compresses a 3<sup>rd</sup> cranial nerve and the brain stem which causes pupillary dilatation on the same side of herniation, coma and stiffening of the arms and the legs (decerebrate rigidity). When intracranial pressure continues to rise, a portion of the cerebellum (cerebellar tonsil) herniates through the foramen magnum (a hole in the base of cranium through which the brain stem extends to the medulla and to the spinal cord). When the medulla is compressed by the herniated cerebellar tonsil, the respiration stops (respiratory arrest) and the patient dies. By removing a portion of skull temporary, the brain can expand out of the cranium, thus the downward brain herniation can be prevented.

We were all set to go. All we needed to do was to reach out to schools about presenting the ThinkFirst program. When the new school year started in September, we contacted area middle and high schools. Minturn Middle School in Minturn, Eagle High School in Gypsum, Battle Mountain High School in Eagle Vail, and Summit High School in Frisco responded and asked us to present ThinkFirst to their students.

### **ThinkFirst Central Mountains 1999 -2000**

The first ThinkFirst presentation was given to Miss Seals' Civic and Science Class at Minturn Middle School in Eagle County on October 18, 1999. Cindy and Raul Martin gave the presentation. A total of 42 students attended. Following a video and Cindy's presentation, our VIP speaker, Raul Martin spoke to the students. He used a wheel chair and spoke to the students about his injury, surgery, rehabilitation process and how his life changed due to his injury.

Raul was riding on his motorcycle one day when he was struck by a truck and thrown in the air; he landed on hard concrete pavement. He broke the lumbar spine in his back and injured his spinal cord, which resulted in paraplegia. Fortunately, he was wearing a big motorcycle helmet, which was cracked by the impact, but protected his brain. He held the helmet during the presentation and showed the students where it was cracked. He emphasized how important it was to wear the helmet. If he had not been wearing the helmet, he could have sustained severe brain injury. A brain injury in addition to the spinal cord injury would have affected his life much more severely. His message resonated with the students and held their attention. It was a very effective speech, according to Cindy. (I missed the presentation, as I was in Japan to attend my niece's wedding).

On November 8, 1999, two ThinkFirst presentations were given at the Eagle Valley High School, in Gypsum in Eagle County to Ms. Susan Scott's health class. Cindy and Raul Martin gave the presentation to the first period, and Cindy and Sheri Cole gave the second period presentation. 23 and 24 students attended, respectively.

The next day, the Vail Daily published an article about ThinkFirst, featuring Sheri Cole.

# Sharing a tragedy to help save young lives

By Tamara Miller

Daily Staff Writer

**GYPSUM** — A drive down a country road in Nebraska changed Sheri Cole's life forever.

In May as Cole, now a Frisco resident, was driving a car over a steep hill, a farmer was crossing the road on the other side of the hill, pulling a planter behind his tractor. By the time Cole saw the farmer, it was too late. Her car collided with his planter, ripping open the roof of her car.

Cole's cousin, who was in the passenger seat, suffered deep cuts and bruises.

But Cole was knocked unconscious and remained in a coma for 11 days. With severe injuries to her head and face, a broken scapula, collarbone and pelvis, her prognosis was not good.

Tuesday, five months after the accident, Cole stood in front of a group of Eagle Valley High School students to talk about the head injury that could have killed her. Her presentation was part of a "Think First" workshop at the high school. A national program, Think First is a brain and spinal cord injury prevention program targeted at students, explained Tetsuo Tatsumi, a retired neurosurgeon and physician advisor for the program.

Tatsumi told students that young people represent the largest group of victims involving head and spinal injuries. Many accidents occur while playing sports, especially high-impact sports in which the victim is not wearing a helmet.

In the United States, approximate-



**Local Journalist Sheri Cole speaks to Eagle Valley High School students Tuesday about the injuries she sustained in an automobile accident five months ago.**

Vail Daily/David Manzella

ly 500,000 people suffer head injuries each year. Of those, 56,000 people die as a result.

Cole told the group Tuesday she is lucky to be alive.

"My family was planning my funeral at one point," she said.

Now all Cole has to show for the accident are some visible injuries to

her face and some trouble remembering what she ate for breakfast that morning. Beyond short-term memory problems, though, she said she is more afraid than she was before.

"Sometimes I'm too scared to get in my car," Cole said.

The accident, however, has given her a sense of humor. She told students

the first reason she agreed to come and speak is to warn them that aliens really do exist.

"I'm joking of course," she said.

She added that she wanted to make young people more aware of how to prevent a head injury, whether it be wearing a helmet while cycling or avoiding Nebraska roads

during harvest time.

While some accidents cannot be anticipated, there are ways to prevent serious injuries. Wearing a helmet while skiing or snowboarding is a good idea, said Cindy Tatsumi, a nurse at Valley View Medical Center in Glenwood Springs. She graphically demonstrated for the class the kind of a difference wearing a helmet can make. She first dropped a helmet-wearing melon on the ground. It survived. But when an unprotected melon was dropped, it broke.

"Helmets aren't for nerds anymore," Cindy said.

Paramedics for the Western Eagle County Ambulance Service explained to the students how important it is to not move a person who could have a head or spinal injury. Instead, the paramedics said, stabilizing the head and convincing the person not to move could mean the difference between a repairable injury or being completely paralyzed.

Car accidents are a leading cause of head injuries, and driving while intoxicated and failing to wear a seat belt can increase the chances of a serious injury or death, Cindy Tatsumi said.

Before Cole ended her presentation, she told students to enjoy their lives every day.

"You never know what hill you could go over," she said.

Before her accident, Cole was an active correspondent for the Vail Daily.

*Tamara Miller covers Eagle, the sheriff's office and the combined courts of Eagle County. She can be reached at (970) 949-0555 ext. 454.*

On November 9, 1999, two classroom presentations were given in health classes at the Eagle Valley High School. Cindy and Sheri Cole gave both presentations. 20 students attended in the first period, and 27 students in the second period.

On January 11, 2000, I gave a ThinkFirst presentation to the Eagle and Summit Brain Injury Support Group at the Vail Library (Transcript: Appendix 5). At the meeting, I met Dena Walsh who was a recent graduate of the Summit High School in Frisco. She had been involved in a car crash while driving her car with her friend as the passenger; neither had seat belts on. She sustained a head injury and recovered, but her friend died as a result of the crash.

Dena was emotionally and severely affected by the tragic event. I asked her whether she could participate with ThinkFirst as a VIP speaker. She was hesitant and wanted to discuss it with her father. Sometime later, she called me and agreed to participate in the ThinkFirst program.

During this time, Cindy and I attended the ATAC meeting and reported the status of ThinkFirst Central Mountains to the council members.

November 11, 1999 minutes, ATAC meeting:

**"ThinkFirst –Central Mountains: a brain and spinal cord injury prevention program for kids presented free to the schools.** Lorraine described how the structure of the program was

related to ThinkFirst Denver; ThinkFirst Denver's parent organization of the Pediatric Neuroscience Research Foundation, founded by Michael Handler, MD, Neurosurgeon, Children's Hospital, Denver, has allowed the set-up of a new Cost Center: ThinkFirst –Central Mountains. Lorraine opened a local checking account under their federal ID number and hired Cindy Tatsumi, RN to coordinate the program and be a paid anatomy and physiology speaker. Dr. Tatsumi, retired neurosurgeon and program Physician Sponsor, and Lorraine have also been available to speak during the program, which is being planned at the Middle and High Schools, in the four counties.

Both Dr. Tatsumi and his wife Cindy attended the ATAC meeting to demonstrate the use of squishy brain model & spine models, while describing their relation to the presentation. Injured speakers, hired and trained, also present their story to the children. (Four speakers have been met with each and each is coming on board to the program as needed.) A video is shown and a "first-on-scene" discussion and demonstration are given. Paramedics, EMT's and additional Nurses and are needed to be volunteer speakers. The program has been well received, as documented by student-completed evaluation sheets, collected at the end. A Trauma Prevention "tips and what to do", wallet size card is distributed to the students. The Program, to date, has been presented at the Minturn Middle school twice and the Eagle Valley High School, four times. Several other school presentation dates are pending.

**Motion: made by Sean Caffrey that** the council thank Dr. Tatsumi and Cindy Tatsumi and Lorraine Caposole for the development and initiation of the ThinkFirst-Central Mountains satellite program. The CM-ATAC is the only one in the State with their own sponsored Injury Prevention Program, according to Sean."

On December 1, 1999, I contacted Ms. Carol Harkis, a program chair parson of the Western Eagle Valley Rotary Club, to present ThinkFirst to the club members.

On January 18, 2000, ThinkFirst was presented to the Rotary Club in Eagle. Bill Mielcuszny was the VIP speaker. We had a nice reception, but failed to obtain funding from the Rotary Club.

On February 11, 2000, two ThinkFirst presentations were given to Ms. Pat Foote's health classes at Summit High School in Frisco in Summit County. Following Bill, Dena Walsh spoke to the students. Many of them knew her well. It was quite an emotional presentation. The entire class was so quiet you could hear a pine needle drop.

On February 22, 2000, four classroom presentations were given to Mr. Kip Kuhn's science and physical education classes at Silverheels Middle School in Fairplay, in Park County. The VIP speaker was Sheri Cole.

On March 10, 2000, two classroom presentations were given to Mr. Pat Phelan's health and critical skills class at Battle Mountain High School in Eagle Vail, Eagle County. The VIP speaker was Bill Mielcuszny.

On March 24, 2000, one classroom presentation was given to Pat Foote's health class at Summit High School in Frisco, Summit County.

On April 24, 2000, three presentations were given to the health & biology classes at Lake County High School in Leadville, Lake County. The VIP speaker was Dena Walsh.

## ThinkFirst Central Mountains 1999-2000 Accomplishments

The ThinkFirst for Teens Program was presented to 17 classes at 6 schools, (3 in Eagle, 1 in Summit, 1 in Park and 1 in Lake County). A total of 474 students attended.

38 bicycle helmets were donated to Suzan Scott's aerobic classes at the Eagle High School.

### Student Responses to Pre- and Post-Presentation Evaluations

1. Students were asked to answer 10 questions before the presentation.
2. Students were asked to complete a program evaluation after the presentation.

#### Pre-presentation Questionnaire:

1.	Do you wear a helmet when you ride on bicycle?	Yes: 127 (29%)	No: 352
2.	Do you wear a helmet when you ride on motor cycle?	Yes: 274 (62%)	No: 137
3.	Do you wear a helmet when you ski?	Yes: 89 (20%)	No: 350
4.	Do you wear a helmet when you snowboard?	Yes: 85 (21%)	No: 332
5.	Do you wear a helmet when you skateboard?	Yes: 54 (15%)	No: 299
6.	Do you wear a helmet when you roller-skate or rollerblade?	Yes: 108 (23%)	No: 351
7.	Do you wear a seatbelt when you drive a car?	Yes: 393 (87%)	No: 44
8.	Do you wear a seatbelt when you ride in a car?	Yes: 438 (90%)	No: 51
9.	Do you check the depth of water before you dive in to a pool or lake?	Yes: 322 (64%)	No: 183
10.	When you see an injured person, which of the following procedure is the most appropriate?		
a.	Help the injured person to get up and take the injured person to nearest hospital:		4
b.	Remove his or her helmet and make the injured person comfortable and call 911:		20
c.	Do not remove the helmet, do not move the injured person, and call 911:		392

#### Post-program Evaluation:

Please rate the parts of the program:

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1.	Video:	126	265	45	2
2.	Healthcare speaker:	242	165	7	2
3.	VIP speaker:	370	71	3	1
4.	Demonstrations	200	192	32	1

Please list at least three messages you heard from this program:

- I. Wear helmet: 252
- II. Wear seatbelt: 181
- III. Think first before you act: 108  
Be safe, be cautious: 83  
Check the depth of water before you dive in: 47  
Don't move an injured person: 93

Make good choices: 12  
 Don't drink or drug and drive: 22  
 Don't ride with a reckless driver: 8  
 It can happen to you: 21  
 Th brain is the most important or fragile: 31  
 Protect brain: 20

Please check the answer that best expresses your opinion:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I could understand and relate to the speakers:	170	253	21	
2. I gained new knowledge:	211	189	9	
3. I will change my behavior due to the information I learned:	177	189	20	1

Please comment on the program:

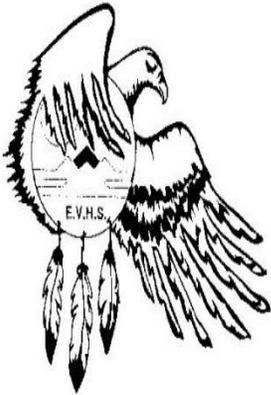
Great, very good, terrific and awesome: 318  
 Informative 62  
 Educational 45  
 Powerful, impacting 11

Please comment on the program overall:

1. Awesome, excellent, great, very good and good: 180
2. Educational and informative: 26
3. Great impact: 16
4. Injured speaker was great and had an impact: 11
5. I will change attitude, be more cautious, will think more about my action: 8
6. Liked the program, and messages: 7
7. I will wear a helmet: 3
8. I will wear a seat belt: 2
9. Powerful and influential: 2
10. Nurse practitioner was great.
11. The program made an important impact on most students.
11. Educational, change other's life.
12. Very impacting, made me to think of things in a new light.
13. Thank you helping me to make a better decision.
14. Injured speaker made me change my idea on seat belts.
15. Keep telling your story to help others.
16. I wasn't taking driver's ed., but now I am.
17. It was really different to hear about it live compared to TV, Radio, etc. and it got me much more.
18. I think the program is very effective and I am glad there is such a program.
19. Thank you for coming in, it was great and I looked at things I never thought of.

20. This program was unbelievable, it really touched me and made me realize what can happen to you.
21. I really liked it. I think it has changed me as well as a lot of others. Great presentation.
22. Thank you for bringing my perception on life to a greater safer way of looking at it.

**Responses from teachers:**



**Eagle Valley High School**

P.O. Box 188 • 641 Valley Road  
 Gypsum, Colorado 81637  
 Phone (970) 524-7511  
 Fax (970) 524-5607

<http://ecsd2.re50j.k12.co.us/EVHS/index.html>

*"Our job is student learning. We're good at our job because futures depend on it."*

<b>IVAN KERSHNER</b> Principal	<b>TODD POTESTIO</b> Associate Principal Athletic Director	<b>TOM DODD</b> Associate Principal	<b>ANNE LEAVITT</b> Guidance Counselor	<b>TAMMI BOEKE</b> Guidance Counselor
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April 6, 2000

Dear Dr. Tatsumi and Cindy,

I would like to thank you for the Bell helmets for my aerobic classes. We always do a biking unit in the spring before we bike the canyon. After you spoke about spinal and head injuries in my class I knew it was time to find funding for helmets. Your kind offer to help with this project is greatly appreciated. My students were very excited when I showed them the helmets today. Thank you for being so supportive.

Sincerely,

Susan Scott



*Battle Mountain High School*

---

*Dr. Tatsumi, Cindy and Bill,*

*Thank you for sharing the  
Think First Program with  
our students. It was an  
excellent presentation and had  
a great impact on our students.*

*Sincerely,  
Pat Phelan*

---

**From:** Kip Kuhn <kkuhn@parkcountyre2.org>  
**To:** Dr. Tatsumi <tatsumi@ctive.com>  
**Date:** Thursday February 24, 2000 3:13PM  
**Subject:** Thank you!

"Cindy, Dr. Tatsumi and Shari,

Thank you all so much for taking the time to come and speak to our kids on Tuesday. It was great. Many students are still commenting on it and are talking about getting helmets and not going anywhere without them. I've passed around the helmet discount sheet to several people so that they can take advantage of that.

Thank you again. You all did an excellent job!"

Kip

## Summary:

The helmet use in various activities was an average of 21%, which was very low. The 26% reported when bicycle riding was also extremely low. We planned to continue promoting helmet use, and to increase the number of helmets given away during the next school year.

However, the messages students stated they received from the program: wear a helmet, wear a seatbelt, think first before you act, check the depth of the water before diving in, do not move an injured person etc., confirmed the ThinkFirst messages were reaching to the students.

The overwhelming majority of the students rated the VIP speaker presentation was excellent or good. More than 90% of the students acknowledged that they gained new knowledge and stated they would change their behavior due to information they learned. This was impressive and reflected the effectiveness of ThinkFirst For Teens.

The responses from the teachers were also all good.  
Overall, response to ThinkFirst For Teens was excellent and encouraging.

## The 1999-2000 Budget

<b>1. Income</b>	
ATAC grant	<b>\$6,000.00</b>
<b>2. Expenditures</b>	
Payment to ThinkFirst Denver for administration	900.00
Coordinator fee, travel expenses, telephone expenses	1,189.60
Nurse speaker fee, travel expenses	834.98
Material and supplies	1,103.13
VIP speaker fee	350.00
<b>3. Educational Expenses</b>	
Coordinator training fee, director and coordinator conference	962.20
<b>4. Postal expenses</b>	
Postage, UPS	76.28
<b>Total expenditures</b>	<b>5,400.25</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>599.75</b>

On May 11, 2000, at the ATAC meeting, I submitted the ThinkFirst Central Mountain 1999-2000 school year activities report.

Minutes of the meeting:

“Dr. Tatsumi submitted a report of 1999-2000 school year activities report. (Copies are available from Lorraine upon request.) 17 classroom presentations were made, reaching 474 students in 6 schools in Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit counties. Student’s evaluation of the program was spelled out. Overall, response was very positive. However, no funding is available for the next school year. Dr. Tatsumi and Lorraine will look and apply for alternative sources of funding”

### **ThinkFirst Central Mountains 1999-2000 Appreciation Luncheon**

On May 30, 2000, The ThinkFirst Appreciation Lunch was held at Uptown Bistro in Frisco where we celebrated the successful conclusion of ThinkFirst Central Mountains 1999-2000 school year. Loraine, Bill, Shari, Raul, Al Mielcuszny (Bill’s father), Cindy and I attended.



Fig. 3. The 1999-2000 ThinkFirst Central Mountains’ Appreciation Lunch at Uptown Bistro in Frisco. Front, left: Al, Loraine, Raul, Bill. Back: Tat, Cindy, Shari.

Al Mielcuszny was a retired accountant who had a successful practice in Pittsburgh. He moved to Beaver Creek after he retired. After Bill was injured, Bill opened an eye glass shop in Beaver Creek Ski Plaza where Bill could work; Al and Connie ran the business. I asked Al to manage the ThinkFirst Central Mountains’ budget for the coming year and he graciously accepted. To maintain a non-profit organization, a professional financial management would be necessary and helpful in grant applications. Al was a valuable asset to ThinkFirst Central Mountains.

ThinkFirst Central Mountains concluded its first-year mission. It was a small start, but a successful one and a good beginning. Its success owed to the support of ATAC and coordinator Loraine Caposole, countless hours given by the coordinator and speaker, Cindy Tatsumi and more importantly to the VIP speakers, Shari Cole, Bill Mielcuszny, Raul Martin and Dana Walsh.

## **ThinkFirst Central Mountains, 2000-2001**

### **Grant applications**

As there was no funding from the ATAC for the 2000-2001 school year for ThinkFirst Central Mountains, so we needed to raise funds. It was essential for a non-profit organization to have an Internal Revenue Service Code, under the section 501(c)(3) to qualify for tax exempt status. Since ThinkFirst Central Mountains was a satellite program under the ThinkFirst Denver Chapter, we thought it could qualify for tax exempt status. I called the sponsoring physician for the Denver Chapter, Dr. Michael Handler, and confirmed the status. The Denver Chapter was under the Children's Neuroscience Research Foundation which was a 501 (c) (3) organization.

On May 15, 2000, I contacted the Vail Valley Foundation and requested a grant application. This was my first attempt at writing for a grant. After I completed the application, I sent it to Loraine to review and edit. She made edits and added a few lines, but she was satisfied with the grant application. I submitted the application to Vail Valley Foundation on May 30, 2000 (Appendix 7).

I also worked on other grants. The following grant applications were submitted:

Wal Mart Foundation, June 9, 2000  
Slifer Smith and Flampton Real State, June 21, 2000  
Beaver Creek Merchant Association, June 26, 2000  
Vail Resorts Community Giving, June 27, 2000

I left for Honduras on July 7, 2000 on a FIENS volunteer mission and returned home on August 6, 2000.

On August 17, 2000, Cindy and I attended the RETAC meeting at Vail Valley Medical Center. (ATAC had changed to RETAC, Regional Emergency & Trauma Advisory Council).  
Minutes of the meeting:

**“VIII. Prevention Program- ThinkFirst:** Dr. Tatsumi and Cindy discussed the program's current status.  
Five grant applications have been submitted to local and national foundations. So far, only Wal-Mart has committed to provide a \$2000.00 matching grant. Meanwhile, ThinkFirst Program isn't funded. Still, the idea of expanding the program to all six counties was discussed. Pitkin and Chaffee would be new. Pitkin is interested. Chaffee has a Teddy Bear Clinic and car seat program and probably would not start a ThinkFirst program. Lorraine suggested that counties, who are currently in the process of budgeting their county subsidy plans, look at supporting the program with \$1,000 to \$1,500 per county. A possibility of other funding could credit counties back. Lorraine is to suggest a motion at the next month's meeting, to address ThinkFirst needs.”

Between August and October, 2000, the following grant applications were submitted:

The Summit Foundation  
Eagle County EMS Council  
Eagle County Health & Human Services

Summit County EMS Council  
Colorado State University, Colorado Injury Control Research Center  
Vail-Eagle Valley Rotary Club  
Aspen Ambulance  
Aspen Medical Foundation

I completed the grant application to the Summit Foundation and mailed it to the Foundation on August 21, 2000 (Appendix 8).

On October 5, 2000, I attended the EMS council meeting at the Eagle Ambulance Station in Edwards and received a \$3,388.00 grant for ThinkFirst Central Mountains from the Director, Mr. Thomas Kelly.

Eagle County Health & Human Services requested I come for an interview. I met the Director of Human Services, Kathleen Forinash on November 9, 2000 at the county office in Eagle. I emphasized the tragic consequences of brain and spinal cord injuries and the importance of preventing these catastrophic injuries.

“Once the brain or spinal cord is injured, the damage is permanent. Even with today’s advanced medical science, these injuries are incurable. Most of those who injure their brain or spinal cord become permanently disabled and become dependent on their family or community.

If a child sustains a brain or spinal cord injury, the parent’s high hopes and dreams for their child vanish. The family’s primary focus becomes taking care of their injured child. Their lifestyle has to be adjusted and the emotional and financial tolls are enormous. Even preventing one child from these devastating injuries is worth this undertaking”.

On December 19, 2000, I received a telephone call from Deb Edwards, secretary of The Summit Foundation, informing me that The Summit Foundation awarded a grant of \$5,400.00 to ThinkFirst Central Mountains and we were invited to attend the grant award ceremony in Keystone on December 28, 2000.

Lorraine, VIP speaker Jeremy Greene, Cindy and I attended The Summit Foundation Grants Award Ceremony at the Convention Center in Keystone. A total amount of \$412,912.00 was awarded to 37 local nonprofit organizations as well as scholarship awards to help funding for high school students to attend college and travel abroad. We received a grant check for \$5,400.00 from the Board of Trustees member Mr. Bret Barrett. The photo of our acceptance of the grant was published in the newspaper, The Summit Daily News, on December 30, 2000 (next page).

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains received the following funds for the year 2000-2001:**

Beaver Creek Merchant Association	500.00
Colorado State University	1,500.00
Eagle County EMS Council	3,388.00
Eagle County Health & Human Services	500.00
Summit County EMS Council	1,500.00
Vail Resorts’ Community Giving	1,000.00

The Summit Foundation	5,400.00
Aspen Ambulance	250.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 14,038.00</b>

With the 1999-2000 budget of \$599.05 rolled over, interest of \$31.05 and the new grants, a total fund for the ThinkFirst Central Mountains' 2000-2001 year was \$14,668.80.

**The Summit Daily News, Saturday December 30, 2000-Page 5**

# Foundation gives county soul

**Shauna Farnell**  
Daily News Staff Writer

KEYSTONE — There are several facets that make a community tick. Living in Summit County wouldn't be much to write home about if it wasn't for local art and culture, health and human service, education and scholarships, future initiative funding, and of course sports and the environment.

The Summit Foundation's mission is to keep such facets thriving. Thanks to Thursday's post-Christmas grants totalling \$412,912, the foundation is continuing to do just that. The second of its bi-annual grant-award ceremonies proved to be another success.

"If you want to see what makes a community tick," said Brett Barrett of the Summit Foundation's Board of Trustees while introducing the foundation's staff. "This is the heart and the soul of the Summit Foundation right here."

Deb Edwards, Kim DiLallo, Jennifer Bergeron and Holly Resignolo of the Summit Foundation arranged Thursday's



Summit Daily/Brad Odekirk

**Jeremy Greene, Lorraine Kaposule and Dr. Tatsumi accept an award for Think First, a brain and spinal injury prevention group, from Brett Barrett (left).**

grants for 37 local and neighboring nonprofit organizations as well as scholarship awards to help with funding for high school students to attend college and to travel abroad.

Since 1986, the Summit Foundation has awarded \$3,581,155 to hundreds of local organizations through fund-raising efforts and

contributions from Summit County residents.

The Summit Historical Society, the Backstage Theatre and the Breckenridge Music Institute were among the recipients of the \$60,000 awarded to support and enhance the county's art and cultural opportunities.

See **Awards, 7**

## **Brain Injury Association of Colorado (BIAC)**

The Annual BIAC Conference was held at Vail Marriott Hotel on October 5-7, 2000. The President of the Eagle-Summit Brain Injury Support Group, Ana Maria Vergara invited Cindy and I to attend the conference. Ana Maria introduced us to the President of BIAC, Helen Kellogg.

At the conference, a neurosurgeon, Dr. Stewart Levy from St. Anthony Hospital in Denver, presented "Helmet Use for Skiers and Snowboarders: Injury Prevention Through Intervention. It Ain't Brain Surgery"

For the study, Dr. Levy and his group, Inter Mountain Neurosurgery and Central Trauma Services, purchased 200 ski helmets and offered them as free loaners to the skiers in all three Ski rental shops in Winter Park Ski Resorts in Colorado. His group studied the helmet usage, head injury trends and exit survey.

### **Ski/Snow Board Helmet Use Among Renters**

Number of total rental packages: 15,567 at the participating three stores of which 1,961(12.6%) rented helmets. Compared to 23,997 rental packages at the nonparticipating four stores of which 277 (1.15%) rented helmets. A total of 265 helmets were sold in the participating stores and 90 helmets were sold in the nonparticipating stores during the same period.

### **Ski/Snow Board Helmet Use On The Slopes**

A total of 6,918 skiers, 516 (7.5%) wearing helmets were counted. Among 1,375 snowboarders, 382 (27.8%) wore helmets.

### **Head Injury Trends In Skiers and Snowboarders**

A total of 10-40 head injuries/year among the skiers, 4-18 head injuries among the snowboarders during the 1990-1999 ski seasons.

Head injury as a percentage of the total ski/snow board injury: Skiers: 12-39%  
Snowboarders: 23-58% during the same period.

395 skiers and snowboarders admitted with a head injury to St Anthony Hospital during 1982-99. 78% male, 38% female. Of those, 5 patients were wearing helmets, all young male, 4 out of 5 were diagnosed with concussion (80%) and 1 with mild diffuse axonal injury (DAI) (20%). Among those who were not wearing the helmets, concussion: 69%; contusion: 20%; skull fracture: 20%; epidural hematoma: 6.6 %; subdural hematoma:7.1%; and DIA:5.7%.

### **Ski/Snowboard Survey Results**

128 surveys were completed at time of rental return: 59 skiers, 61 snowboarders, 7 both.

98 (77%) accepted free/loner helmets.  
51% reported falling and hitting their head; 91% of those thought the helmet made a difference.

Endorsers/Supporters of Ski Helmet Use:

Colorado Neurosurgical Society, Rocky Mountain Neurosurgical Society, AMA, Brain Injury Association, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Those Not Endorsing Ski Helmet Use:

National Ski Area Association, National Ski Patrol and Colorado ski Country USA

After the presentation, I met Dr. Stewart Levy (I had met him at the UC conference on several occasions) and asked for his collaboration with ThinkFirst Central Mountains to promote helmet use among skiers and snowboarders.

At the conclusion of the conference, Cindy and I attended a conference dinner at the Marriott Hotel. The president, Helen Kellogg asked me to take a group photo, since she forgot to bring her camera. Later I sent the photo to her. I received a letter from her on November 2, 2000, thanking me for sending her the photos, stating the photos would be published in their up-coming newsletter.

### **ThinkFirst Aspen and Roaring Fork Valley**

At the January 13, 2000 ATAC meeting, a formation of the Regional Emergency and Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Councils (RETAC) was discussed.

Minutes of the meeting: ----

The State's Medical Services & Prevention division – Prehospital Care Program, have announced the CDPHE Year 2000 Grant – A new Systems Development Grant. “Now the opportunity exists to combine the regional programs.” The State, Pre-Hospital Care and Trauma Programs are taking steps necessary to combine funding already available for ATAC's and EMS regions, thus allowing the integration of EMS and Trauma Regions statewide. The System Developing Grant will be offered to these new Regional Emergency and Medical and Trauma Services Advisory Councils.

The Summit and Eagle County EMS council adopted a resolution to participate in the new RETAC.

Lake, Park and Pitkin counties conducted a telephone poll of their EMS participants, who also agreed.

I discussed the expansion of ThinkFirst in Aspen with Lorraine, since Pitkin County was now incorporated in the RETAC.

### **Dr. Bill Rodman, President of Aspen EMS**

When I began my neurosurgical practice with Dr. Francis Boyer in Canton, Ohio in 1966, we rented an office in Alliance, about 20 miles east of Canton, and one of us went to see patients in

the Alliance office every Friday. After Dr. Boyer retired in 1976, I continued to maintain the office in Alliance. I often saw patients in consultation and sometimes performed surgery at Alliance Hospital.

Some years later, a young surgeon, a son of one of the professors at the Mount Union College in Alliance, began surgical practice at Alliance Hospital; his name was Dr. Bill Rodman. I met with him often at the hospital and sometimes he referred his patients to me.

After I retired and moved to Edward, Colorado, I heard from one of my colleagues that Dr. Bill Rodman relocated his surgical practice in Aspen. I learned at the ATAC meeting that Dr. Rodman was the president of the Aspen EMS Council. The ATAC president, Dr. Chip Woodland, was from Akron, Ohio, and now Dr. Bill Rodman from Alliance, Ohio was the president of Aspen EMS council. What a coincidence; it's a small world!

I called Dr. Rodman and renewed our friendship. I discussed ThinkFirst with him. He was interested in starting the program in Aspen. He referred me to a trauma nurse, May Shelton and also suggested that I apply for a grant from the Aspen Valley Medical Foundation. I sent a ThinkFirst manual to Dr. Rodman on October 26, 2000.

Lorraine suggested I ask for funding from the Aspen Ambulance. I wrote a letter to Hilary Smith at the Aspen Ambulance and requested funding for ThinkFirst in Pitkin County and mail the letter on October 27, 2000.

I completed the grant application to the Aspen Valley Medical Foundation and mailed it on November 3, 2000.

I was invited by Mary Shelton to meet the ThinkFirst team in Aspen. I went to Aspen Valley Hospital on August 17, 2001 and met Dr. Bill Rodman, Mary Shelton and Amanda Bostell, a VIP speaker who had paraplegia due to a fracture of the thoracic spine from a ski injury. She had been participating in Challenge Aspen. We went over the ThinkFirst for Teens presentation and prepared to start the program.

Mary Shelton assembled the ThinkFirst team in Aspen, partnering with Challenge Aspen:

Coordinator: Mary Shelton, RN

Sponsoring physicians: Dr. Bill Rodman and Dr. Steve Ayers

Health professional speakers: Sandra Morris RN, Melinda Sangren RN, Janice Martin RN, Abby Nims, RN and Alice Brouhard, RN.

VIP speakers: Bill Moriarty, Leah Potts, Sam Ferguson, Judy Bruwell and Amanda Bostell.

EMT participants: Flint Smith, Rhonda Cole, Steven Stefferud, Eric Hansen, Judy Botinovich, Dan Walsh.

## **New Recruits**

A physical therapist, Melanie Smith from Eagle Vail volunteered to be a speaker for the ThinkFirst program. On November 2, 2000, Melanie, Ana Maria and I attended the Eagle-Summit Brain Injury Support Group meeting in Frisco. Ana Maria introduced Melanie to the members and Melanie gave a brief speech.

We met a new member, Jeremy Greene and his mother Kim. Jeremy had sustained a brain injury as a result of a car crash about one year prior and was recently discharged from Craig Rehabilitation Hospital in Denver. Jeremy's injury seemed to involve the brain stem. He had a slight speech impediment (articulation), spasticity of the limbs and impairment in his coordination. I discussed the ThinkFirst program with him and his mother. I asked him whether he was interested in participating in the program as a VIP speaker. He accepted the offer. I outlined the role of the VIIP speaker and asked him to submit a transcript of his speech.

I received an e-mail from Jeremy, his narrative "Destiny in The Day" on December 19, 2000:

"My name is Jeremy Greene and I sustained a traumatic brain injury on Sept.7 1999. I had just finished practicing with my band, Punk Vicious. Punk Vicious played some of the best punk you have ever heard. The three of us, Rocco Pellerin, Anthony Dalarosa, and I just finished practicing, we didn't feel like sitting in Anthony's house so we all hopped in my mom's 1989 Volvo station wagon. We were heading toward Bubba Gump Shrimp to meet our friends Don Logan, and Nick Wolford. We were one block away from Anthony's house when my world turned around.

Our car hit a tree. I always wore my seatbelt, but this is one time I forgot. Rumor has it I was trying to put my seatbelt on when the car accident happened, it is said that I was reaching for my seatbelt, I hit a rut in the road, lost control of the car, the car spun, and hit a tree. We all survived.

Rocco sustained minor or no injury. He was sitting front passenger seat, right where the car hit the tree. Rocco was the only one in the car with his seatbelt on. If Rocco wouldn't have had a seatbelt on he wouldn't be here. It took the emergency team around one I hour 45 minutes to cut Rocco out of the car, the Jaws of Life were used to cut him out of the car. When my dad was driving down to Denver one week after the accident he saw the roof of our car in the middle of I-70. Rocco had a very minor injury to his knee. He did not hurt his knee bad enough to affect his walking. Because of the seatbelt, Rocco was fortunate enough to walk away from the accident.

Anthony suffered a minor injury to the head. After the accident, Anthony had a very heavy addiction to drugs; what happened to me affected Anthony's head so much that he just was out of commission for a while because he started taking heavy drugs. Anthony was physically there for me but just didn't think before he acted. Anthony is in rehab now and is recovering. I knew one day that Anthony could turn to the dark side of the force. At one point in time I was really concerned about Anthony's well-being, and mine too. Anthony had such a big influence on how I lived my life; I would've believed anything he said. He listened to hard-core Oi punk, heavy metal, and how he saw things scared me

sometimes. Anthony was in the middle of the back seat; the rescue squad thought Anthony was driver because he was ejected from the back into the driver seat. Anthony was lucky enough to keep his life, and he was fortunate enough to walk away from the accident scene.

I was driving the car. You know I may have been injured severely but I think it was a change for the better. I will never wish this on anyone, but I am walking, talking, going to the restroom, eating and even showering on my own. I remained in a coma for 80+ days. The process of recovering from a head injury takes years and years; luckily, I am so positive. I have learned that my world may not ever return to its original state, that it takes a lot of time to recover, and I may never fully be where I was before.

I was in three different hospitals in 80-90 days. (a) St. Anthony's, where I was airlifted to from the scene of the accident. (b) Nextcare, an acute care hospital. (c) Craig, where I woke up on my seventeenth birthday in 1999. The only hospital I can remember is Craig, because that is where I woke up and lived for two months. At St. Anthony's I was in SICU for three weeks, I am lucky I survived. Nextcare was a rest stop between St. A's and Craig, so not much happened to me there, except for the occasional Vail bed and various tests. I came to Craig on Nov. 1, 1999, and remained unconscious until my birthday Dec. 26, 1999. At Craig, they taught me how to dress myself, tie my shoes, write, read, use the bathroom and function on my own. It was there that I met one of best people I have ever met in my life, Dan Droy, the OT. If it wouldn't have been for Dan I would not be where I am today.

The first day that I was in my coma my arm was brought up into a locking position. My wrist was at a negative one hundred degrees, but my hand has done a 180. My hand is currently at positive 80-90 degree. My foot slowly over that three-month period curled, turned in, and dropped. My foot was in such bad condition that I had to have surgery on it. If I hadn't had surgery on my foot I would not be walking today. The contractions that I had were so severe that I had to wear splints of all sorts when I went bed at night. The outside of my body did not get hurt at all, but with the contraction I had, I had to wear eleven casts. Two for my foot, and nine on my wrist. My wrist was in such bad shape that they had to serial cast it. One cast after the other to gain five degrees. It worked!!

I have learned that things take time and that they cannot change in one day. Like one of my nurse aid said, "slow and easy, time and patience." Therefore, I have done that, I have taken it slow, given it all my time, and I am just waiting patiently for the day that I am better. It doesn't just happen overnight, but it is said that it takes at least two years to recover from a brain injury. In my case it should take several years more but I am so determined to get better. I have been working on my speech and balance for about a year now; it may not be falling into place as fast as some of my friend hoped, but I know it takes time, lots of time. The hardest thing about readjusting to life after having something like this happens to you is the adaptation to society. Your friends remember you as you were before the accident, but you have changed. You are no longer the same! Your characteristics may be the same, but you are not judged on your personality. You are judged on how you walk, talk, and how different you truly are. You are looked at as a freak if you have changed. People do not adapt to change!

People look at you funny, and it makes you want to say to them, “I hope you got a good picture.” You want the respect, so you don’t. I have been wanting to say that for around a year now, but it doesn’t matter how you look or talk, it’s the fact that you are still alive. With a handicap, color of skin, or ethnicity you want look at that dumb person, and say, “Look where I am and look where you are.”

You might ask, “How could this kid have saved himself?” To tell you the truth I feel that I did not suffer, I learned from this experience! This whole thing has placed my life in a much more positive light. I have gone from punk and not caring, to an average person who cares about the world he lives in. Just remembering one simple thing, putting my seatbelt on, could have prevented the whole thing I have dealt with. Anthony was in the back seat and did not have seatbelt on, but Rocco was in the front where the cat hit the tree and had his seatbelt on. Think before you drive; even if you are just going a block or two, buckle up.

I still get weird looks from ignorant people, but I just don’t care anymore, it’s not my problem that they are so prejudiced. I have a very severe handicap, so give me the time, have the patience, and remember I’m just like you. It could happen to you! So think before you act. You just might thank yourself for all of the time and energy you have put into being safe.”

### **The 2000-2001 ThinkFirst Presentations**

On November 13, 2000, Cindy contacted Minturn Middle School, Basalt High School, Berry Creek Middle School and Eagle Middle School by phone and made arrangements for the ThinkFirst presentations.

On November 16, 2000, the ThinkFirst program was presented at the Basalt High School. Basalt was located in the far south-western part of Eagle County, near Pitkin County. It would take at least one and a half hours to drive from Edwards. We picked up Bill Mielcuszny at 6:15 am at his home in Beaver Creek and drove to Basalt. The first presentation started 8:15 am, Cindy and Bill spoke. The 2<sup>nd</sup> presentation was 10:15 am, Alice Brouhard, RN, and Bill made the presentation. Aspen EMT, Flint Smith participated and demonstrated how to move an injured patient (Fig. 4). A total number of 44 students attended. We donated 4 bike helmets.



Fig. 4. Aspen EMT, Flint Smith demonstrating safe transfer maneuver of the injured patient at Basalt High School.

On November 29, 2000, I called Berry Creek Middle School, Eagle Valley Middle School, Christian Academy and Vail Mountain School, and set up the dates for the presentations.

On December 7, 2000, Raul Martin and Melanie Smith presented the program in two classes at the Eagle Valley Middle School. A total number of 37 students attended. Four bicycle helmets were given to the students.



Fig. 5, VIP speaker, Raul Martin at Eagle Valley Middle School.

On December 8, 2000, Bill Miencuszny and Cindy made presentation at Berry Creek Middle School. A total number of 16 students attended. Two bike helmets were given to the students.

On December 15, 2000, Bill and Cindy presented the program at the Berry Creek Middle School. A total number of 9 students attended. Two bike helmets were given to the students.



Fig. 6, VIP speaker, Bill Miencuszny at Berry Creek Middle School

On January 2, 2001, Jeremy and Cindy presented ThinkFirst For Teens at Summit High School; 18 students attended. Two ski helmets were given to the students. This was Jeremy's first presentation, and he gave an excellent presentation, incorporating his sense of humor as he explained how he turned his tragic injury into a positive life. He made the students aware that disabled persons are sometimes looked at as "freaks" by others, but they were people, just like the students, and that an injury could happen to anyone. He emphasized how important it is to wear seatbelt, saying, "it could have prevented this whole thing".

On January 3, 2001, Jeremy and Cindy made two classroom presentations at the Summit High School. A total number of 39 students attended. Summit paramedics participated. Four ski helmets were given to the students. His presentation was reported in the Summit Daily News by a staff writer, Shauna Farrell on Jan.4, 2001 (Page 37).

On January 10, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave an assembly presentation at Vail Mountain School. A total number of 65 students attended. Four ski helmets were given to the students.

On January 11, 2001, Bill and Melanie gave an assembly presentation at Vail Mountain School. A total number of 65 students attended. 1 ski helmet and 3 bike helmets were given to the students.

On January 18, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave an assembly presentation at Minturn Middle School, A total number of 65 students attended. Two ski helmets were donated to the students.

On January 24, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave an assembly presentation at Eagle Charter Academy. 57 students attended. Six ski helmets were given to the students.

On January 31, 2001, ThinkFirst was presented to the Vail Eagle Valley Rotary Club.

On February 6, 2001 Jeremy and Cindy gave two assembly presentations at Summit Middle School. Deb Edwards (Fig. 7) from The Summit Foundation came to observe the presentation. A total number of 90 students attended. Four ski helmets were given to the students.

On February 15, 2001, Jeremy and Melanie gave an assembly presentation at the Summit Middle School. 31 students attended. 2 ski helmets were given to the students.



Fig. 7. Deb Edwards from the Summit Foundation attended ThinkFirst at Summit Middle School. Left to right, Jeremy, Deb, teacher and Cindy.

On February 15, 2001, Jeremy and Melanie gave an assembly presentation at the Summit Middle School. 31 students attended and 2 ski helmets were given to the students.

On February 20, 2001, Jeremy and Cindy gave an assembly presentation at Summit Middle School. 56 students attended and four ski helmets were given to the students.

On February 23, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave two classroom presentations at the Battle Mountain High School. 53 students attended. Four ski helmets were given to the students.

On March 2, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave two class room presentations at the Battle Mountain High School, 53 students attended. Three ski helmets and one bike helmet were given to the students.



Fig.8



Fig. 9. Fig. 8 & 9. Happy students winning helmets

# Greene is back on his feet

**Shauna Farnell**  
Daily News Staff Writer

BRECKENRIDGE — At this time last year, Summit High School student Jeremy Greene was just emerging from the coma he'd been in for more than 80 days.

On Sept. 7, 1999, Greene sustained a serious head injury after hitting a tree with his car while driving to Breckenridge after band practice. Greene awoke from the coma on Dec. 26, 1999 — his 17th birthday.

His rehabilitation included re-learning how to walk, eat, go to the bathroom and tie his shoes. He also underwent surgery on his foot which had curled under and turned in, as had his wrist, which at one point had bent to the point it was touching his forearm.

Having transcended from that phase, Greene is now finishing up classes as a senior at Summit High. And with four normal-looking healthy limbs, he is sharing his story with younger students at SHS.

"I'm happy, I'm walking and talking ... and I'm glad to be here today, alive and talking to all of you," Greene said Tuesday to a SHS freshmen health class. The students listened fixedly as Greene told the story of his accident, the struggle of his recovery, and the importance of wearing helmets and seat belts. Greene visited the class along with former neurosurgeon Tetsuo Tatsumi and his wife Cindy on behalf of Think First, a local brain and

## SHS student mesmerizes peers with personal tale of recovery from head injury, coma

spinal injury support group.

"He's not just teaching (the students) safety," Cindy said. "But respect for those who have a disability."

Greene's sense of humor is still clearly intact and, as he pointed out, even improved since before his accident. He cracked jokes and answered the students' questions in a very relaxed, intelligent manner, despite his sometimes strained speech and slow movements.

"That's one of the hardest things about coming back to society is having people look at you like you're a weirdo," Greene said. "My speech is still kind of slurred and some people think because I speak slowly I'm dumb. But I'm not. I'm just like you."

Greene refers to the time since his accident as "the best 16 months of my life."

"It's been really hard, long and painful," he said. "But I've turned that suffering into the best year of my life."

Greene said his accident helped put mortality into perspective and has made him a more positive person.

"My band and I used to be really hardcore punks," he said. "We hated the world — hated society, hated the government. I think I'm much happier now. I have this disability, but otherwise, I'm just like everybody else."

Greene is about to embark on

his final semester of high school, and plans to attend Colorado State University next fall. Over the winter break, he even hit the slopes on his snowboard, and is beginning to play the drums again.

"I remember how to do everything," he said. "It's just my coordination is kind of slow. I knew to hold my shoulders square (on the snowboard) and to put my weight on my front foot — I was making turns, no problem. I'm not as good on drums, but I think I can get better."

Even though the other band members have moved away, Greene intends to continue practicing on his drums until he returns to the level he was at before the accident. He still loves to draw and says his art has improved since he now takes more time with it and pays closer attention to detail. Greene also has high hopes for future endeavors.

"Just because I had this setback last year doesn't mean I can't do things," he said. "I want to be an art teacher. I'm going to college next winter — you wouldn't think so, having a disability like mine. But I can and will go to college. And I can and will be successful."

Shauna Farnell covers social services, nonprofit organizations and feature pages. She can be reached at 668-3998, ext. 236 or at [sfarnell@summitdaily.com](mailto:sfarnell@summitdaily.com).



Jeremy Greene evokes laughs and awareness during a visit to a Summit High School health class Tuesday with Think First members Cindy and Tetsuo Tatsumi. Summit Daily/Brad Odekerk

On March 20, 2001, we delivered four ski helmets to the Battle Mountain High School and 25 bike helmets to the Summit High School. We then picked up Jeremy at his home and went to the Lake High School in Leadville in Lake County where Jeremy and Cindy gave the presentation to 12 students. 10 ski helmets were donated to the school.

Leadville is about 38 miles south from Vail on Route 24 passing through Tennessee Pass. The town was seated at the highest altitude in the country, 10,150 feet elevation. It was once a booming silver mining town in the 1870s, and created a fortune for some of the well-known people such as Horace Tabor, Meyer Guggenheim, David May and J.J. Brown. There were Victorian architectural buildings remaining on the main street, Harrison Avenue. The Tabor Opera House was the finest theater of the time between St. Louis and San Francisco.

On April 4, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave an assembly presentation at the Eagle Charter Academy. 60 students attended and four ski helmets were given to the students.

On April 5, 2001, Bill and Melanie gave one classroom presentation at Eagle Valley High School to 19 students. Two bike helmets were given to the students.

On April 6, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave two classroom presentations at Eagle Valley High School, where 59 students attended. 20 bike helmets were given to the students.

On April 9, 2001, Bill and Cindy gave two classroom presentations at Basalt High School; 50 students attended. Four bike helmets and 2 ski helmets were given to the students.

On April 11, 2001, two bike helmets were donated to the Eagle Charter Academy.

On April, 18, 2001, Jeremy and I gave three classroom presentations at Silverheels Middle School in Fairplay in Park County; 83 students attended and ten ski helmets were given to the students. When we finished the presentations, we were asked by South Park High School to present the program to their students. We gave two classroom presentations to 47 students.

It was a productive, but exhausting day. Fairplay was a remote mountain town, about 30 miles south from Frisco on the Route 9, passing through Breckenridge and Hoosier Pass. It took nearly two hours to drive from Edwards.



Fig. 10. Physical Therapist, Melanie at Vail Mountain School

On April 25, 2001, on the front page of Vail Daily there was a large photo “Pedal Power,” of a group of the Eagle Valley High School students riding bicycles, wearing helmets donated by ThinkFirst Central Mountains.

**Vail Daily, Wednesday, April 25, 2001**



Vail Daily/David Manzella  
Eagle Valley High School's aerobics class takes a pedal Tuesday up Valley Road in Gypsum. Physical education instructor Susan Scott's students are warming up for a May 4 ride through Glenwood Canyon. The girls received bike helmets through a grant from the Think First program.

On May 15, 2001, Jeremy and Cindy gave a classroom presentation at the Summit High School, 20 students attended. Four bike helmets were given to the students.

On May 30, 2001, Jeremy, Carlos Santos and Cindy gave a classroom presentation at the Summit High School; 20 students attended and four bike helmets were given to the students. Carlos was a quarterback on the Summit High School football team. He sustained a fracture of the cervical

spine during a game and became paralyzed. After lengthy rehabilitation, he was very fortunate to recover sufficiently to ambulate with an assistant. He gave his first presentation in front of his peers, which was a courageous thing to do. Carlos graduated from the Summit High School in 2001 and enrolled at the University of Hawaii. His mother, Dr. Christine Ebert-Santos was a pediatrician and a graduate of the University of Michigan. She had provided public service in Guam where she was married to Mr. Santos. She later became a member of the Board of Directors of ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center, where Carlos continued to participate as a ThinkFirst VIP speaker.

On June 1, 2001, Carlos and Cindy gave a classroom presentation at Summit High School; 20 students attended and four bike helmets were given to students.



Fig. 11. VIP Speaker, Carlos Santos at the Summit High School

### **The 2000-2001 ThinkFirst for Kids' Program**

ThinkFirst For Kids was a program for children in elementary school. Now that we had ThinkFirst For Teens established we began expanding to reach younger children.

On October 20, 2000, five ThinkFirst for Kids Curricula were donated to the Eagle County School District Director, Nellie Hamner.

On January 18, 2001, a ThinkFirst for Kids workshop for teachers was held at St. Clare Assisi School, in Edwards. A ThinkFirst for Kids curriculum was donated to the school.

On May 23, 2001, Cindy presented the Bicycle Safety Module to Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> graders at a Bike Rodeo at the Frisco Elementary School in Frisco. 100 bike helmets were donated. The next day, on May 24, The Summit Daily News published the event's photos on the front page. "Rodeo with Spokes," featuring the children in their helmets (next page).

## Educational activities

On June 20, 2000, Cindy completed her Child Passenger Safety Seat Certification through NHTSA in Colorado Springs. She was now certified for child safety seats.

On October, 5-7, Cindy and I attended the Annual conference of the Brain Injury Association of Colorado at the Marriott Hotel in Vail.

On April 21-22, 2001, Cindy and I attended Annual ThinkFirst Director Workshop in Toronto, Canada.

On May 2, 2001, Cindy attended a Safety Seat Check by NHTSA in Colorado Springs.

## Summit Daily News, Thursday, May 24, 2001



## ThinkFirst Central Mountains Appreciation Reception

On June 30, 2001, a ThinkFirst Appreciation Reception was held at our home in Kensington Green in Cordillera. Lorraine Caposole, Bill Mielcuszny and his parent, Al and Connie, Raul Martin, Jeremy Greene and his parents, Kim and Gary, Carlos Santos, Melanie Smith, Alice Brouhard and her daughter attended.



Fig. 12. ThinkFirst Appreciation Reception at Kensington Green in Cordillera. Back, from left: Jeremy, Carlos, Melanie, Bill, Alice. Front, Tat, Raul, Cindy



Fig.13. From left, Connie, Al and Bill Mielcuszny at Kensington Green

## ThinkFirst Central Mountains 2000-2001 Activities Report

### I. ThinkFirst for Teens

#### 1. School Presentations

Number of Schools: 13  
 Number of Classroom Presentations: 28  
 Number of Assembly Presentations: 9  
 Number of Students Attended: 1128

#### Eagle County

Number of Schools: 8  
 Number of Classroom Presentations: 15  
 Number of Assembly Presentations: 5  
 Number of Students Attended: 669  
 Number of Helmets Donated: 22 Ski Helmets, 50 Bicycle Helmets

<b>Date</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Classroom (CP) or Assembly (AP) Presentations</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>	<b>Helmets Donated</b>
11-16-2000	Basalt High School VIP: Bill Mielcuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Alice Brouhard, RN	2 CP	44	4 Bike Helmets
12-7-2000	Eagle Valley Middle School VIP: Raul Martin HPS: Melanie Smith, PT	2 CP	37	4 Bike Helmets
12-8-2000	Berry Creek Middle School GS: Bill Mielcuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN	1 CP	16	2 Bike Helmets
12-15-2000	Berry Creek Middle School GS; Bill Mielcuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN	1 CP	9	2 Bike Helmets
1-10-2001	Vail Mountain School VIP: Bill Mielcuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN	1 AP	65	4 Bike Helmets
1-11-2001	Vail Mountain School VIP: Bill Mielcuszny HPS: Melanie Smith, PT	1 AP	65	1 Ski Helmets 3 Bike Helmets
1-18-2001	Minturn Middle School	1 AP	65	2 Ski Helmets

	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
1-24-2001	Eagle Charter Academy	1 AP	57	6 Ski Helmets
	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
2-23-2001	Battle Mountain High School	2 CP	53	3 Ski Helmets 1 Bike Helmet
	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
3-2-2001	Battle Mountain High School	2 CP	70	4 Ski Helmets
	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
3-20-2001	Battle Mountain High School			4 Ski helmets
4-4-2001	Eagle Charter Academy	1 AP	60	4 Bike Helmets
	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
4-5-2001	Eagle Valley High School	1 CP	19	2 Bike Helmets
	GS: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Melanie Smith, PT			
4-6-2001	Eagle Valley High School	2 CP	59	20 Bike Helmets
	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
4-9-2001	Basalt High School	2 CP	50	4 Bike Helmets 2 Ski Helmets
	VIP: Bill Miencuszny HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN HPS: Health Care Professional Speaker			

### Summit County

Number of Schools: 2

Number of Classroom Presentations: 7

Number of Assembly Presentations: 4

Number of Students Attended: 317

Number of Helmets Donated: 16 Ski Helmets, 39 Bicycle Helmets

Date	School	Classroom or Assembly Presentations	Number of Students	Helmets Donated
1-2-2001	Summit High School	1 CP	18	2 Ski Helmets
	VIP: Jeremy Greene HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN			
1-3-2001	Summit High School	2 CP	39	4 Ski Helmets
	VIP: Jeremy Greene			

2-6-2001	HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Summit Middle School VIP: Jeremy Greene	2 AP	90	4 Ski Helmets
2-15-2001	HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Summit Middle School VIP: Jeremy Greene	1 AP	31	2 Ski Helmets
2-20-2001	HPS: Melanie Smith PT Summit Middle School VIP: Jeremy Greene	1 AP	56	4 Ski Helmets
3-20-2001	HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Summit Middle School			25 Bike Helmets
5-15-2001	Summit High School VIP: Jeremy Greene	1 CP	20	2 Bike Helmets
5-29-2001	HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Summit High School VIP: Jeremy Greene	1CP	20	4 Bike Helmets
5-30-2001	HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Summit high School VIP: Jeremy Greene Carlos Santos	1 CP	23	4 Bike Helmets
6-1-2001	HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN Summit High School VIP: Carlos Santos HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN	1 CP	20	4 Bike Helmets

### Lake County

Number of School: 1  
Number of Classroom Presentation: 1  
Number of Students Attended: 12  
Number of Helmets Donated: 10 Ski Helmets

Date	School	Number of Classroom or Assembly Presentations	Number of Students Attended	Number of Helmets Donated
3-20-2001	Lake County High School VIP: Jeremy Greene HPS: Cindy Tatsumi, RN	1 CP	12	10 Ski Helmets

## **Park County**

Number of Schools: 2

Number of Classroom Presentations: 5

Number of Students attended: 130

Number of Helmets Donated: 10 Ski Helmets

<b>Date</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Number of Classroom or Assembly Presentations</b>	<b>Number of Students Attended</b>	<b>Number of Helmets Donated</b>
4-18-2001	Silverheels Middle School VIP: Jeremy Green HPS: Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.	3 CP	83	10 Ski Helmets
4-18-2001	South Park High School VIP: Jeremy Green HPS: Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.	2 CP	47	

## **II. ThinkFirst for Kids**

### **Eagle County**

10-20-2000 Donated 5 **Think First for Kids** curricula to Eagle County School District Curriculum Director Nellie Hamner.

1-18-2000 **Think First for Kids** workshop for teachers was held at St Clare Assisi School. One **Think First for Kids** curriculum was donated to the school.

### **Summit County**

5-23-2001 Presented Bicycle Safety Module to Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Bike Rodeo in Frisco, and donated 100 bicycle helmets.

## **III. ThinkFirst Presentations to The Civic Organizations**

### **Eagle County**

1-31-2001 Vail Eagle Valley Rotary Club in Vail

### **Summit County**

11-2-2000 Eagle/Summit Brain Injury Support Group in Frisco

## **IV. News-Media Exposures**

12-30-2000 Summit Daily News: **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** was awarded a grant from The Summit Foundation.

1-03-2001 Vail Daily: **Think First Central Mountains** received a grant from Eagle County Health and Human Services.

1-04-2001 Summit Daily News: **Think First** presentation at Summit High School.

5-24-2001 Summit Daily News: **Think First**, Bicycle Safety Presentation at Bike Rodeo in Frisco.

## V. Helmets and Curriculum Donation

Ski Helmet: 58

Bike helmet: 189

ThinkFirst for Kids Curriculum: 6

**Eagle County:** 50 Bicycle Helmets, 22 Ski Helmets.

6 **Think First for Kids** Curricula.

**Summit County:** 139 Bicycle Helmets, 16 Ski Helmets.

**Lake County:** 10 Ski Helmets.

**Park County:** 10 Ski Helmets.

## VI. Educational Activities

6-20-23-2000 Coordinator Cindy Tatsumi, RN received Safety Seat Certification by NHTSA in Colorado Springs.

9-5-7-2001 Coordinator Cindy Tatsumi, RN attended Annual Meeting of the Brain Injury Association of Colorado in Vail.

4-21-22-2001 Coordinator Cindy Tatsumi, RN attended Annual Think First Director's Work Shop in Toronto, Canada.

5-2-2001 Coordinator Cindy Tatsumi, RN attended Safety Seat Check by NHTSA in Colorado Springs.

## ThinkFirst for Teens' Program Evaluation

### A. Responses to Questionnaire: A total number of students responded: 1113

	<b>Eagle</b>	<b>Summit</b>	<b>Lake &amp; Park</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Bicycle riders	591 (90%)	288 (90%)	108 (81%)	987 (89%)
Helmet users	311 (47%)	198 (69%)	26 (24%)	535 (54%)
Public Schools	367/126 (34%)			
Private School	224/185 (83%)			
2. Motorcycle riders	138 (21%)	71 (22%)	59 (44%)	268 (24%)
Helmet users	107 (78%)	58 (82%)	39 (66%)	204 (76%)
Public Schools	86/63 (73%)			

	Private Schools	52/44 (85%)			
3.	Skiers	297 (45%)	170 (53%)	44 (33%)	511 (46%)
	Helmet users	161 (54%)	106 (62%)	11 (25%)	278 (54%)
	Public Schools	144/45 (31%)			
	Private Schools	153/16(76%)			
4.	Snowboarders	431 (66%)	199 (62%)	62 (46%)	692 (62%)
	Helmet users	200 (46%)	137 (69%)	28 (45%)	365 (53%)
	Public Schools	297/82 (29%)			
	Private Schools	152/118 (78%)			
5.	Skateboarders	144 (22%)	121 (38%)	49 (36%)	314 (28%)
	Helmet users	78 (54%)	81 (67%)	14 (29%)	173 (55%)
	Public Schools	77/22 (35%)			
	Private Schools	67/71 (76%)			
6.	Rollerskaters	134 (22%)	79 (25%)	30 (22%)	243 (22%)
	Helmet users	53 (40%)	37 (47%)	8 (27%)	98 (40%)
	Public Schools	92/19 (21%)			
	Private Schools	42/34 (81%)			
7.	Rollerbladers	405 (62%)	189 (59%)	73 (54%)	667 (60%)
	Helmet users	187 (46%)	118 (62%)	20 (27%)	325 (49%)
	Public Schools	254/82 (32%)			
	Private Schools	151/105 (70%)			
8.	Seatbelt use				
	Drivers	274/267 (96%)	102/91 (89%)	66/50 (76%)	442/408 (92%)
	Passengers	653/564 (86%)	320/298 (93%)	137/106(77%)	1110/968 (87%)
	Intended to take	379/355 (94%)	218/192 (88%)	71/50 (70%)	668/597 (89%)
	Driver's education				
9.	Do you check the depth of water before diving into a pool, river or lake?	Yes: 608/369 (61%)	284/175 (62%)	109/66 (61%)	1001/610 (61%)
10.	Bystander-behavior at the scene of accident:				
	a. Help the injured person to get up and take the injured person to the nearest hospital.				
	b. Remove his or her helmet and make the injured person comfortable and call 911.				
	c. Do not move the helmet, do not move the injured person, and call 911.				
	a.	597/11(2%)	301/11(4%)	107/3(3%)	1005/25(2%)
	b.	597/55 (9%)	301/21 (7%)	107/14 (13%)	1005/90(9%)
	c.	597/530 (89%)	301/269 (89%)	107/90 (84%)	1005/889(88%)

## B. Responses to Program Evaluation

Please rate the parts of program:

### Eagle County (A total number of students responded: 545)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Video	225 (41%)	294 (54%)	20 (4%)	2 (0.4%)
2. Health Care Professional Speaker	295 (54%)	219 (40%)	1 (4%)	1 (0.2%)
3. Injured Guest Speaker	447 (82%)	97 (18%)	1 (0.2%)	
4. Demonstrations	259 (48%)	228 (42%)	42 (8%)	3 (0.6%)

### Summit County (A total number of students responded: 229)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Video	49 (21%)	139 (61%)	36 (16%)	3 (1%)
2. Health Care Professional Speaker	107 (47%)	109 (48%)	10 (4%)	1(0.4%)
3. Injured Guest Speaker	216 (94%)	9 (2%)	2 (0.9%)	
4. Demonstration	102 (45%)	109 (48%)	11 (5%)	

### Lake & Park Counties (A total number of students responded: 123)

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Video	44 (36%)	64 (52%)	13 (11%)	3 (2%)
2. Health Care Professional Speaker	56 (46%)	55 (45%)	5 (4%)	
3. Injured Guest Speaker	112 (91%)	11 (9%)		
4. Demonstration	48 (39%)	57 (46%)	5 (4%)	

### All Counties

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Video	36%	56%	8%	0.9%
2. H-P Speaker	52%	44%	4%	0.2%
3. Injured Guest Speaker	87%	13%	0.3%	
4. Demonstration	47%	46%	7%	0.3%

### Which parts of program had the greatest impact on you?

	Eagle	Summit	Lake & Park	Total
1. Video	69 (13%)	7 (3%)	3 (2%)	79 (9%)
2. H-P Speaker	51 (9%)	23 (10%)	12 (19%)	86 (10%)
3. Injured Guest Speaker	447 (82%)	184 (80%)	105 (85%)	736 (82%)
4. Demonstration	36 (7%)	6 (3%)	1 (0.8%)	43 (5%)

**Please list at least three messages you heard from this presentation:**

	<b>Eagle</b>	<b>Summit</b>	<b>Lake &amp; Park</b>	<b>Total</b>
1. Wear helmet:	320	121	82	523
2. Wear seat-belt:	211	128	90	429
3. Think first before you act:	201	59	35	295
4. Be safe, or cautious:	87	52	26	165
5. Check the depth of water before you dive in:	69	24	6	96
6. Don't move injured person:	51	25		76
7. Make a good choice, decision:	51		3	54
8. Don't drink, or drug & drive:	43	6		49
9. Don't ride with reckless driver:	38	1		39
10. It can happen to you:	13	14	4	31
11. Brain is the most important, or fragile:	18	4		22
12. Protect brain:	17		3	20
13. It takes only one time:	1	9	4	14
14. Call 911:	12			12
15. You are not invincible:	3	3		6
16. Don't matter what you look like:		6		6
17. Don't follow others when you know it's bad, or gang:	5			5
18. Use your mind to protect body:		3		3
19. Drive slow, follow speed limit:	3			3
20. Keep head up, don't tuck while doing sports:	3			3
21. Don't judge people:	1	1		2
22. Treat everyone equal:	1			1

**Please check the answer that best express your opinions:**

**Eagle County**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
1. I could understand and relate to the speaker	213 (40%)	304(57%)	11(2%)	1 (0.2%)
2. I gained new knowledge	250 (47%)	276 (52%)	7 (1%)	1 (0.2%)
3. I will change my behavior due to the information I learned	190 (36%)	323 (62%)	16 (3%)	1 (0.2%)

## Summit County

1.	94 (44%)	110 (52%)	11 (5%)
2.	119 (54%)	96 (44%)	5 (2%)
3.	110 (52%)	95 (45%)	7 (3%)

## Lake & Park Counties

1.	60 (50%)	58 (48%)	2 (2%)
2.	56 (46%)	64 (52%)	2 (2%)
3.	48 (40%)	66 (53%)	7 (6%)

## Please comment on the program overall:

### Eagle County

Great, Very Good, Excellent, Terrific and Awesome: 175

Informative: 57

Educational: 32

Powerful, Impacting: 9

### Students' comments:

I don't care how I look anymore when wearing a helmet. I want to be able always to use my 4 limbs!

I will start skiing again with a helmet.

I learned a lot and to always wear a helmet.

I think it was very good and it changed the way I think about things. It also had a big impact on me when the injured speaker spoke.

I learned a lot and I know I am going to wear a helmet every time.

I will definitely think before I take action.

I think the injured person brought me a realization of how important safety really is.

It affected me and changed what I am doing.

It was a good program and it could maybe save a kid from getting paralyzed someday.

Injured speaker really influenced me and made me think a little more.

This program was very good and got me thinking about all of the dangers I am in with my every day activities.

It was great and I will never get in a car with a reckless driver.

It was great and the injured speaker really influenced me. Thanks.

Kids need to be told this sort of things more than once. This did it!!

Injured speaker was better than excellent.

It was very touching and it put in perspective how brain injuries can change your life.

I really enjoyed it. I learned a lot of things and changed some of my opinion.

I have total respect and all the thanks in the world of Bill, receiving his speech changed my way of acting! Thanks Bill!

This presentation actually made me realized that a helmet can really help. I think this is wonderful thing, and you keep teaching people.

This is a wonderful thing for (teen-agers, especially!), because I know I think that nothing can happen to me, and it's a wake-up call that everyone needs to realize.

I thought the program was very good and it made me want to change my ways and be safe.

I think this presentation helped change my mind about wearing a helmet.

The guest speaker was excellent and big impact.

My best friend is a very reckless driver, and I am going to make sure she drives safer when I am in the car!!

The program really hit the spot and will change my life.

This program is very inspirational, and I learned a lot. Thank you for your time and effort.

I thought it was good and teaches young people important things that could ruin their lives.

I learned a lot, I will change my action.

I think you should go to all schools you can.

### **Summit County**

Great, Very good, excellent, and awesome: 90

Educational: 13

Interesting: 6

Informative: 2

Powerful, Impacting: 2

### **Students' comments:**

This was a great presentation. I will definitely learn and respect everything that Jeremy and the lady said.

This was a very good program, don't stop doing it.

I have now realized that Jeremy is a great person, and my new role model.

The injured speaker really made me want to wear my seat belt.

Good program. I think it will make people change their behavior.

I learned a lot and what to do in a spinal/ brain injury. I really enjoyed listening to Jeremy Greene and his story. The program was put together well and it was interesting.

I thought it was really good when Jeremy spoke to us because I think that it made People think more about helmets and driving. It was very good overall. The accident role was very good too.

Jeremy was inspirational.

It made me think and respect life a lot more.

It had a big impact on me.  
Jeremy and nurse taught me a lot today.  
I liked hearing Jeremy talk, because it was “first hand”.  
It was very good, I really enjoyed Jeremy Greene, you were great and interesting to learn from.  
It was really good, Carlos’s speech was really good.  
I thought that most of the stuff, we knew, but this made us aware.  
I think it is very good that you came and talked to people so that they don’t get injured.  
This is a very important message here. You guys are making a huge impact on lives.  
Very good program, it does make you think first.  
I thought that the program was great and now I think I will think twice.

### **Lake & Park Counties**

Great, Very good or Excellent: 53  
Informative: 3

### **Students’ Comments:**

I think Jeremy made a strong impact on my life. Before I felt that couldn’t happen to me. but now I knew better.  
Very good. My best regards to the creator of this program and injured speaker!  
I learned a lot and I really felt strong about seat belt and helmet thing especially after the injured speaker.  
I do now know to put a seat belt.  
I liked Jeremy, King of the world.  
Excellent, really makes you think!  
I think the injured speaker really got me and opened my eyes.  
I think this will make people think.  
I liked when Jeremy stood and talked because it made me think.  
I really liked it and it can have a strong impact on other people.  
The injured speaker is great because he has patience and whatever it takes to go his dream.  
It was the best program ever.  
The injured speaker was great. He had a huge impact on our entire class.  
It was really good. It changed my mind about a few things.  
I thought this program had a great inspiration on kids.  
I think it was great that Jeremy can get up in front of people and talk about what. I rally admire that. The whole program was good!!  
This was a great opportunity to learn about brain safety and health.  
Worth listening to, changed my outlook on life!  
I think Jeremy gives hope for those who think there’s none at all.  
Great, please come back.

## Responses from teachers

### *Vail Mountain School*

January 18, 2001

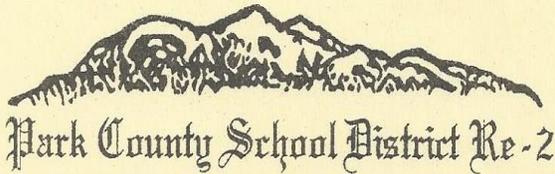
Dear Dr. Tatsumi,

Thank you for bringing "Think First" to Vail Mountain School. Just yesterday one of our more reckless students mentioned to me that the presentation had a significant impact on him. Your generosity and wisdom will most likely have positive repercussions for many, many years.

Sincerely,



Robert A. Bandoni  
Assistant Headmaster  
Director of Upper School



P.O. BOX 189, FAIRPLAY, COLORADO 80440

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE (719) 836-3114

SOUTH PARK HIGH SCHOOL (719) 836-2006

EDITH TETER ELEMENTARY (719) 836-2949

April 18, 2001

Dr. Tatsumi,

Thank you for coming to our school to present *Think First for Teens*. Your presentation and Jeremy's talk was excellent. I know that this experience will impact our students in a positive way and cause them to think first before acting.

I also want to acknowledge your generous donation of 10 Giro ski/snowboarding helmets. Thank you for this wonderful contribution. The Park County School District's Winter Activities program will greatly benefit.

Thanks again for your time and donation to our school. We greatly appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Kip Kuhn  
Silverheels Middle School Teacher

**From:** Kip Kuhn <kkuhn@parkcountyre2.org>  
**To:** Dr. Tatsumi <tatsumi@ctive.com>  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 25, 2001 2:18 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Thank you!

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Dr. Tatsumi,  
Thanks again for coming to our school. I greatly appreciate your flexibility in moving from room to room. Jeremy was a great hit and inspiration to the students. Many of my students have continued to talk about it this week. What a great impact it made.

I do have a student who is interested in a bike helmet. I have her 5.00 but she doesn't know what size she would take. Any help? Also, should I just send you a check for the helmet? If so, who should I make it out to?

Thanks again,  
Kip

A letter from the Silverheels Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher, Kerry Bergstrom

Jeremy,  
Enclosed are letters from  
the sixth grade here in Paisley.  
You "touched" each & every one of them.  
Thanks for sharing your incredible  
experience with us!

Kerry Bergstrom

**Selected letters from the Silverheels Middle School six graders:**

4-19-01

Dear Jeremy,

your speech worked. Last night I found myself putting on my seat belt thinking about what you said. My dad asked me why I was buckling up, because we were just going to the end of the street, and I told what happened to you and he put on his seat belt too. Before I knew it the whole family was putting on their seat belt.

Thank you for coming to our class  
Sincerely, Julius A. Colbaugh II

Dear Jeremy,

4-19-01

Your presentation was very nice. I really enjoyed it and I can tell everyone else liked it too. After school was over that day, I went home and I told your whole story to my family. You changed my mind about the whole safty thing and a seat belt. After that crash you had, then in a coma, then you were talking in our class, it was just amazing about your sense of humor and your personality. I enjoyed your presentation and I am glad you visited us.

Sincerely,

P.S.

Smell the ink, It smells like Blueberrys

Chelsea S

Jeremy

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for coming and educating our class on ~~the~~ safety when writing a bike, a horse, putting on a seat belt ect.... I thought your story was great and made a big impact on me. If I was your friend before your accident I'd still be your friend. So I just wanted to thank you for making us think about our actions.

Silverheels Middle School

Daniel Peltor

P.S. You're one of the most humorous people I've ever met.

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for coming in and talking with our class. Your speech changed my mind about not wearing my helmet, or putting on my seatbelt. I thought your speech was great. It really changed my mind. Since your speech, I have been putting on my seatbelt all the time, I've even encouraged my dad to put his on, too. Once again I thank you for talking with our class.

Sincerely,

Chaz Magnusson

## ThinkFirst Central Mountains 2000-2001 Year Budget

### Revenue: (Grants and Donations)

Aspen Ambulance	\$250.00
Beaver Creek Merchant Association	500.00
Colorado State University	1,500.00
Eagle County EMS Council	3,388.00
Eagle County Health Human Services	500.00
Summit County EMS Council	1,500.00
The Summit Foundation	5,400.00
Vail Resorts, Inc.	1,000.00
Interest	31.05
1999-2000 budget roll over	599.75
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>14,668.80</b>

### Disbursement:

Helmets	\$ 3,027.49
Professional Fees	4,147.87
Speaker Fee	1,380.00
Think First for Kids Curriculums & Guide	1,066.88
Supplies and Postage	1,670.71
Mileage Reimbursement	954.61
Travel and Conference	886.00
Meals and Award Dinner	570.83
Speaker Gifts	285.28
Accounting Service	300.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	232.00
<b>Total disbursement</b>	<b>\$14,566.67</b>
<b>Balance As of 7/31/2001</b>	<b>\$112.13</b>

## Revenue and Disbursement by County

	<b>Eagle</b>	<b>Summit, Lake &amp; Park</b>	<b>Pitkin</b>
<b>Revenue: (Grants &amp; Donations)</b>	<b>\$ 5,388.00</b>	<b>\$ 8,400.00</b>	<b>\$ 250.00</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>			
Helmets	1,132.27	1,940.22	
Professional Fees	1,893.87	2,140.40	113.60
Curriculum	1,032.83		34.05
Speaker Fees	710.00	670.00	
Supplies & Postage	291.41	1,227.14	102.16
Mileage Reimbursement	317.21	607.40	30.00
Travel & Conference	221.50	664.50	
Meals & award Dinner	190.25	380.58	
Speaker Gifts	95.10	190.18	
Miscellaneous Expenses	116.00	116.00	
Accounting Service	150.00	150.00	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>6,150.44</b>	<b>8,136.00</b>	<b>279.81</b>
<b>Balance As of 7/31/2001</b>	<b>(762.44)</b>	<b>264.00</b>	<b>(29.81)</b>

**Total Balance: 70.50**

At the conclusion of the year 2000-2001, the ThinkFirst Central Mountains Activities Report and 2000-2001 Fiscal Year Budget Report were sent to funders and the RETAC.

### Summary:

The ThinkFirst Central Mountains concluded its second year successfully. We were able to significantly expand our program. Compared to the first year, we increased the number of the classroom presentations from 17 to 28, added 9 assembly presentations, and increased the number of schools from 6 to 17. The number of student attendees increased from 474 to 1,128. We took the first step to start the ThinkFirst For Kids program. The number of helmet donations increased to 180 bike helmets and 58 ski helmets.

There was a significant increase in the use of a helmets in various sport activities: Bicycling: 54%, Skiing: 54%, and Snowboarding: 53%. It was interesting to note there was a significant discrepancy in the helmet use by the students in different counties, for example, the ski helmet use in Eagle county was 54%, Summit, 62% and Lake/Park, 25%. This trend was noted in other sport activities.

It was also noted that the use of helmets was much higher with the private school students compared to the public-school students. It seemed the use of helmets by the students was a reflection of the wealth of families and counties.

The responses from students were similar to the first year. Comments on the VIP speakers dominated the students' responses. Jeremy, especially, received an outpouring of responses from 6th graders at Silverheels Middle School.

The overwhelming majority of students rated the program excellent or very good and stated the ThinkFirst messages they got were to wear a helmet, wear a seatbelt, check the depth of the water before diving, and not to move an injured person. The majority of students acknowledged they gained new knowledge and would change their behaviors.

The responses from teachers were also excellent. I felt confident the program was effective and changing the lives of the students.

## **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center (VVMC) 2001-2002**

In 2001, the ThinkFirst Denver Chapter became inactive due to a lack of funding. ThinkFirst Central Mountains could no longer be the satellite program under the Denver Chapter. To continue our program, we had two choices: 1) apply for 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Services, and become an independent nonprofit organization or 2) join with an established nonprofit organization.

The first choice would be time consuming and expensive. I elected to take the second choice. The first thing that came to my mind was to work with Vail Valley Medical Center (VVMC).

I composed a letter to the president of VVMC, Mr. Clifford Eldridge and mailed it on February 13, 2001. (Appendix 9)

Mr. Eldridge answered to a meeting with me, and we met at VVMC on March 6, 2001. I gave him a ThinkFirst brochure and explained ThinkFirst Central Mountains, its mission, accomplishments and our current circumstances: ThinkFirst Central Mountains lost the parent chapter, ThinkFirst Denver, which was a 501(c)(3) organization. I expressed my wish to continue ThinkFirst Central Mountains, the injury prevention program in the central mountains communities. I asked Mr. Eldridge to support ThinkFirst Central Mountains under the auspice of VVMC, pointing out that Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs was sponsoring a ThinkFirst chapter. He wanted to know more about ThinkFirst in Colorado Springs before he made a decision.

On the next day, I provided the name of a contact person, Ed Arangio with Mr. Eldridge's secretary. Ed was the director of the public relations department, who was involved with ThinkFirst at Memorial Hospital in Colorado Springs. I mailed the 2000-2001 ThinkFirst Central Mountains' Activity Report and the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 Budget Reports to Mr. Eldridge.

April 20-24, 2001, Cindy and I attended the ThinkFirst Chapter Director Workshop and Annual Meeting of the American Association of the Neurological Surgeons (AANS) in Toronto, Canada.

Anne Fassel, a trauma coordinator at VVMC asked me to send her ThinkFirst brochures. I mailed a package containing ThinkFirst program brochures, ThinkFirst for Kids brochures and ThinkFirst newsletters to her on April 26, 2001.

On July 11, 2001, I met Anne Fassel, at VVMC to discuss the ThinkFirst program.

On July 24, 2001, I met Mr. Eldridge, Sara Moody, RN and Anne Fassel, RN at VVMC. Mr. Eldridge said he wanted VVMC to run the program instead of just supporting ThinkFirst Central Mountains, and requested complete control of the program. This would be good for the growth

of the program, so I welcomed his offer and handed over ThinkFirst Central Mountains to VVMC. The name was changed to ThinkFirst VVMC and a trauma nurse, Mary Salmi, RN was appointed as a chapter director. I was asked to remain as the sponsoring physician and serve on the Executive and Advisory Board.

On July 27, 2001, I met Suzanne Salon and Scott Beaver at the VVMC Development Office in Edwards to discuss fund raising strategies.

On August 6, 2001, I met with Sara Moody, Anne Fassel, Scott Beaver and established the ThinkFirst VVMC Advisory Board.

### **ThinkFirst VVMC Advisory Board**

#### Executive committee:

Mary Salmi, RN	Eagle County	Director
Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi	Eagle County	Sponsoring Neurosurgeon
Scott Beaver	Eagle County	Secretary, Development
Al Mielcuszny	Eagle County	Treasurer
Sara Moody, RN	Eagle County	VVMC VP

#### Advisory Board:

Kathie McNeill, RN	Eagle county	Teens Program
Alice Breslin, RN	Summit County	Teens program
Dr. Christine Ebert-Santos	Summit County	Pediatrician
Dr. Bill Rodman	Pitkin County	Trauma Director AVH
Mary Shelton, RN	Pitkin County	Aspen, Pitkin Roaming Valley TF Coordinator
Kelly Rau, RN	Summit County	Trauma Coordinator BMC
Anne Wardrop Fassel, RN	Summit County	Trauma Coordinator, VVMC
Dian Schmidt, RN	Eagle County	Kids program
Cindy Tatsumi, RN	Eagle County	Former TFCM Coordinator
Kim Greene	Summit County	Volunteer
Dr. Reg Franciose	Eagle County	Trauma Director VVMC
Dr. Chip Woodland	Eagle County	Medical Director VVMC
Sue Torres, RN	Eagle County	Kids program
Lorraine Caposole	Summit County	RETAC Coordinator

The first Advisory Board meeting was held in the VVMC Level Zero conference room on August 13, 2001. After the introduction of the Board members, we discussed the strategies for the 2001-2002 year.

On September 10, 2001, ThinkFirst volunteers' meeting was held at Diane Schmidt's home to discuss strategies for starting the ThinkFirst for Kids program.

### **September 11, 2001**

On the morning of September 11, 2001, I witnessed the tragic terrorist attack on the twin towers in New York City on TV. I did not know what was going on when the trade center building was hit by a plane. Then the second plane hit the other tower. Then, the newscaster realized it was a terrorist attack. I saw the collapse of the twin towers, horrified images on the TV screen, and succeeding attacks on the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania. The entire nation was thrown into a state of shock.

Following the attacks, all air lines were shut down and the airline industry was paralyzed. Cindy and I were scheduled to attend the World Medical Tennis Association's meeting in Fukuoka, Japan on October 5-11, 2001, where we would also present the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Program on October 6, 2001. We had to cancel the trip.

For the abstract of the scheduled presentation (Appendix 10).

### **Aspen Valley Medical Foundation Grant**

On September 26, 2001, I received a letter from the Executive Director of the Aspen Valley Medical Foundation, Kristin Hoegh Marsh, informing me they were awarding ThinkFirst Central Mountains a grant, \$2,400.00 for 2001. The Director and Board members were invited to attend the Award Luncheon on Thursday, October 11, 2001 at the Hotel Jerome Ballroom in Aspen.

On October 11, 2001, I attended Aspen Valley Medical Foundation's Award Luncheon and accepted a check for \$2,400.00 and a letter of congratulations from Kristin Hoegh Marsh. I met Dr. Bill Rodman and Amanda Bostell at the Award Luncheon.

On October 18, 2001, ThinkFirst VVMC received a grant for \$2,500 from Vail Resorts Community Giving. I handed the check to Scott Beaver along with a guideline for the grant application for Vail Valley Foundation and The Summit Foundation.

On October 27, 2001, I sent a letter thanking Vail Resorts and the Aspen Valley Medical Foundation to The Vail Daily and The Aspen Times to be published (Appendix 11).

On October 29, 2001, I met the Aspen ThinkFirst team at Aspen Valley Hospital and gave an orientation for preparation in starting the ThinkFirst Program.

## **Melissa Eckdahl**

When we moved to Cordillera, we joined the Homestead Tennis Club in Edwards and played tennis at the club regularly. In the fall of 2001, Jerry Nemanic, from Las Vegas joined the club. I frequently played tennis with him. During a conversation with him, I learned that he and his wife came to Eagle to take care of his wife's daughter, Mellissa Eckdahl, who became paralyzed as a result of an automobile crash. I told him about the ThinkFirst program, and asked him to convey a message to her that I would like to meet with her.

I discussed the ThinkFirst program with her husband, Dr. Eckdahl, who had been practicing Chiropractic in Edwards. I delivered the ThinkFirst brochure to him on October 8, 2001.

I visited Mellissa Eckdahl at her home on October 18, 2001. Mellissa was a teacher at the Colorado Mountain College with two young daughters and she had recently married to Dr. Eckdahl. One day she was driving back from the college, and hit an icy spot on I-70, causing a roll over crash. As a result of the crash, her cervical spine was fractured, causing quadriplegia. She went through extensive rehabilitation and learned to maneuver a wheelchair using a mouth piece.

Mellissa accepted my invitation to become a VIP speaker for ThinkFirst VVMC. Her first presentation was at Eagle Valley High School on February 1, 2002 (Fig. 13). Despite her physical difficulty, she gave an excellent presentation and profoundly impacted the students.

## **Tom and Jan Harris, The Neighbors**

When we moved to Cordillera, we purchased a red Tacoma Toyota pickup truck, as Cindy's Infiniti M 30 Convertible was impractical for driving in Colorado winters. We had a two-car garage and wanted to rent a garage to store the Infiniti during the winter. Since our neighbor, Tom and Jan Harris were part timers and their garage was empty most of the time, Cindy called Tom in Dallas, Texas, and introduced herself. She told him she was interested in renting his garage space during the winter and Tom said she was welcomed to park her car in his garage. This initial contact with Tom made led us to becoming lifelong friends.

Tom and his wife, Jan were both very warm, friendly, nice people. They owned an imaging company, Visual Impact, in Dallas, Texas. Jan also owned an antique furniture business. They completely renovated the interior of their Kensington Green house, decorating it with beautiful antique furniture. They stayed here for the holidays and summer with their two dogs, Robbie and Dexter, that Tom took for walks past our house daily.

Tom and Jan were both tennis players. The first year, we played tennis with the Vail 50 tennis club members in Vail. Since that first year, we played tennis with them often when they stayed at the Kensington house.

In September 2001, I asked Tom and Jan if they would make colored slides for the ThinkFirst presentations. Visual Impact made 38 beautifully colored slides. They donated the cost of the slides, \$2,420.00, to ThinkFirst VVMC as a gift. I sent a thank you letter to Jan (Appendix 12). At the Advisory Board meeting on October 31, 2001, I motioned to approve the Visual Impact's gift as a tax deductible in-kind donation. It was approved by the Board.

The President of VVMC Foundation, Arthur Kelton, Jr., and Suzanne K. Sloan, Director of Development & Marketing at VVMC, acknowledged the Visual Impact's donation of \$2,400.00 and a letter of the official receipt was sent to Jan on November 8, 2001.

Tom and Jan sold their Kensington house in September 2002. Although they lived in Dallas, we have continued our friendship.



Fig. 14. VIP speaker, Melissa Eckdahl (center)

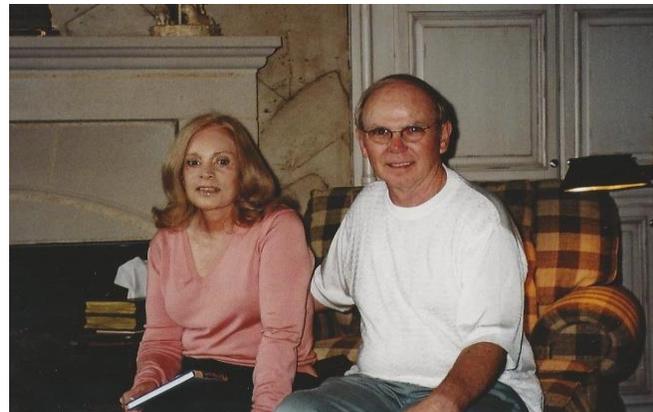


Fig. 15. Tom and Jan Harris at their home

On November 10, 2001, I received an e-mail from Roque, husband of Dr. Christine Ebert Santos requesting a ThinkFirst presentation to the Summit Rotary Club on January 29, 2002.

I used the new slides for the ThinkFirst presentation at the Summit Rotary Club on January 29, 2002. Carlos was the VIP speaker and Dr. Chris Ebert Santos also attended.

On November 12, 2001, an application to change Chapter Director, Mary Salmi was filed to the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation.

On November 26, 2001, letters requesting donations to TF VVMC were mailed to Cindy Callicrate, President of the Vail-Eagle Valley Rotary Club and Phil Hancock, President of the Western Eagle Valley Rotary Club.

### **ThinkFirst VVMC 2001-2002 Presentations**

The 2001-2002 presentation kicked off on October 1, 2001 at St. Claire of Assisi.

The following school presentations were given in the 2001-2002 school years:

<b>Date</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Bike Helmets</b>	<b>Ski Helmets</b>	<b>HPS/VIP</b>
10/1/2001	St Claire Assisi, gr.1-3	60	6		S. Torris/ D. Schmidt
11/6/2001	BMHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	33	3		C. Tatsumi R. Martin
11/6/2001	BMHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	37	3		C. Tatsumi R. Martin
11/13/2001	BMHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	35	3		J. Ernst B. Mielcuszny
11/13/2001	BMHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	42	3		J. Ernst B. Mielcuszny
11/16/2000	BCMS 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	100	3		K. McNeil B. Mielcuszny
12/5/2001	Lake County HS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	60	6		T. Yun C. Santos
12/12/2001	SHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	28	3	1	J. Magorian C. Santos
12/17/2001	SHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	25		3	A. Breslin J. Greene
1/8/2002	SHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	25		3	A. Fassel J. Greens
1/10/ 2002	SHS 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade			3	J. Magorian J. Greene
1/28/2002	SMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	37		3	A. Breslin C. Santos
1/28/2002	SMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	45		3	C. Tatsumi J. Greene
1/29/2002	SMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50		3	M. Salmi

1/31/2002	SMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	50		3	J. Greene J. Magorian C. Santos
2/1/2002	EVHS 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Grades	25	2		M. Smith J. Greene
2/1/2002	EVHS 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Grades	20	2		M. Smith B. Mielcuszny
2/1/2002	EVHS 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Grades	20	2		M. Smith B. Mielcuszny
2/1/2002	EVHS 9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> Grades	23	2		M. Smith M. Eckdahl
2/19/2002	MMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	28		1	M. Salami B. Mielcuszny
2/19/2001	MMS 7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grades	41		2	M. Salami B. Mielcuszny
2/19/2001	MMS 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	25		1	M. Salami B. Mielcuszny
2/20/2002	MMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	30		1	M. Salami M. Eckdahl
2/20/2002	MMS 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	16		1	M. Salami B. Mielcuszny
2/20/2002	MMS 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	30		2	M. Salami B. Mielcuszny
2/14/2002	Rifle Elementary gr. 3	150	10		R. Whitenous
2/15/2002	Kindergarten vehicle safety	30			
Total		1,037	48	30	

(BMSH: Battle Mountain High School, SHS: Summit High School, SMS: Summit Middle School, EVHS: Eagle Valley High School, MMS: Minturn Middle School,)

### **ThinkFirst VVMC 2001-2002 Accomplishments**

#### **ThinkFirst for Teens School Presentations:**

Number of Schools: 10  
 Classroom Presentations: 38  
 Assembly Presentations: 1  
 Number of Students: 1359

#### **Eagle County:**

4 Schools, 15 Classroom presentations; 505 students

Supported “Project Graduation” both high schools by providing Trauma Prevention Tips Cards, bicycle safety information and bicycle helmets for distribution at their events, donated 48 bicycle helmets and 9 ski helmets to the students.

**Lake County:**

Established volunteer county coordinator  
1 school, 1 assembly; 60 students  
Donated 6 bicycle helmets to the students.

**Summit County:**

Established county coordinator  
Provided brain, skull and spine models and 2 ThinkFirst videos for presentations.  
Provided one box of Trauma Prevention Tips Cards and 500 ThinkFirst pencils.  
2 Schools, 11 Classroom presentations; 363 students  
Donated 17 bicycle helmets and 27 ski helmets to the students.

**Pitkin County:**

Established county coordinator  
Provided 20 ski helmets, 4 multi-sport helmets and bicycle helmets, one box of Trauma Prevention Tips Cards and 500 ThinkFirst Pencils  
3 schools, 1 youth program, 12 classroom presentations; 217 students

**Civic Organization Presentations:**

Aspen Ski Professionals: 11/13/01, 12/05/01, 12/21/01; 105 participants.  
Summit Rotary Club: 01/29/02.

**ThinkFirst For Kids:**

**Eagle County:**

ThinkFirst For Kids Curriculum implemented at St. Clare of Assisi School, grades 1- 3, 60 students.  
Presented Bicycle Safety Chapter to Avon Elementary students, 25 students.  
Presented Bicycle Safety Chapter to Vail Mountain School 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 14 students.  
Presented Bicycle Safety Chapter to Vail Christian Academy 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 5 students.  
Provided helmet fitting at the kid’s Back to School Health and Safety Fair September 2001, Cinco de Mayo Festival in Edwards May 4, 2002 and at the Avon Bike Rodeo June 15, 2002.

**Lake County:**

Donated one ThinkFirst for Kids curriculum.

**Summit County:**

Donated one ThinkFirst for Kids curriculum.

The Kids program was presented at Dillon Valley Elementary School to 36 students.

**Pitkin County:**

Donated one ThinkFirst for Kids curriculum.

Elementary School Bike rodeo, 14 students

**Garfield County:**

1 school, Chapter 1 of Kids Curriculum was presented to 150 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, collaborating with Colorado Mountain College nursing students.

Vehicle Safety Chapter of the Kids curriculum was presented to 30 kindergarten Students, collaborated with Colorado Mountain College nursing students.

Donated 10 bicycle helmets to the students.

**Total Donations:**

3 ThinkFirst for Kids curricula

81 bicycle helmets, 56 ski helmets

4 multi-sport helmets.

**ThinkFirst Aspen and Roaming Fork Valley**

ThinkFirst presentations to Ski Pros kicked off at Aspen Middle School on November 13, 2001.

**A report from Mary Shelton:**

“We have successfully kicked off our ThinkFirst Injury Prevention Program in the Roaring Fork Valley in December 2001. In a partnership with Aspen Challenge, an organization of the potential of disabled persons, we made three presentations to the Ski Pros. This is the group of ski instructors for all four ski areas in Aspen valley. Our goal was to raise the consciousness of that group and increase their awareness of their ability to influence new skiers and snowboarders to encourage safe practices in that population. Challenge Aspen presented their program and their equipment to the ski instructors. The group was comprised of approximately 50 adults.

The first week of January we started to present the program in the Aspen High School Health Classes. We were well received and will continue to work with the teachers in the school.

There are many questions which are not covered in the ThinkFirst literature. I would like to ask those with more experience for assistance with this aspect of the program. Some of the questions we have encounter in our limited experience with the brain anatomy section are:

What is cause of headache?  
 Why do we get ice cream headache?  
 Is it true that dead brain cells turn into hair cells?

We have managed to be accurate in our information and focus on the importance of headaches in conjunction with head injury but any additional hints for this novice group will be appreciated!  
 Kids are great and we hope to do several more presentations in the Basalt Middle School the end of February.

From the western slope ThinkFirst group, this is Mary Shelton reporting.”

**Roaming Fork valley ThinkFirst Activity Report**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>Age Grade level</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Nurse</b>	<b>EMT</b>	<b>VIP</b>
11/13/2001	35	Ski Pros	AMS	Abby Nims	Dan Walsh	Leah Potts
12/5/2001	30	Ski Pros	AMS	Mary Shelton Janice Martin	Eric Hansen Rhonda Cole	Amanda Boxtell Leah Potts
12/19/2001	15	Mixed Class	AHS	Mary Shelton	Flint Smith	Bill Moriarty
12/21/2001	40	Ski Pros	SMV Conf.Ctr.	Janice Martin Mary Shelton	Flint Smith	Amanda Boxtell Bill Moriarty
1/3/2002	17	Mixed Class	AHS	Janice Martin	Dan Walsh	Leah Potts
1/7/2002	20	Mixed Class	AHS	Mary Shelton	Eric Hansen Dan Walsh	Bill Moriarty
2/28/2002	26	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	BMS	Janice Martin Obs. Melinda Sangren, Eric Guthman	Dan Walsh	Leah Potts Bill Moriarty
2/28/2002	10	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	BMS	Melinda Sangren Eric Guthman	Dan Walsh	Leah Potts Bill Moriarty

3/2/2002	21	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	BMS	Abby Nims	Flint Smith	Leah Potts Bill Moriarty
4/29/2002	22	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	AMS	Abby Nims Mary Shelton	Dan Walsh	
4/29/2002	21	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	AMS	Abby Nims	Dan Walsh	
4/29/2002	22	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	AMS	Melinda Sangren	Dan Walsh	
4/30/2002	17	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	AMS	Janice Martin  Eric Guthman	Dan Walsh  Damian Coniglio	Bill Moriarty
4/30/2002	16	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	AMS	Janice Martin Eric Guthman		
5/3/2002	10	Colorado West Youth Program	CO. West	Eric Guthman		
<b>Total</b>	<b>322</b>					

## Evaluation

C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\My Briefcase\Think First\Questionnaire Results.wpd	Yes	No	N/A	No ans.
1. Do you ride a bicycle?	184	9		
Do you wear a helmet?	141	43	2	
2. Do you ride a motorcycle?	35	159		
Do you wear a helmet?	31	6	83	
3. Do you ski?	118	78		
Do you wear a helmet?	98	21	40	
4. Do you snowboard?	105	90		
Do you wear a helmet?	86	20	47	
5. Do you skateboard?	47	147		
Do you wear a helmet?	36	11	80	
6. Do you rollerskate?	43	150		
Do you wear a helmet?	28	14	69	
7. Do you rollerblade?	84	102		
Do you wear a helmet?	68	17	35	
8. Do you drive a car?	32	157	2	
Do you wear a seatbelt?	33	4	68	2
Do you intend to take Driver=s Ed?	149	10	14	3
When you ride in a car, do you wear a seatbelt?	182	6		1
9. Do you check the depth of water before you dive into a pool, river or lake?	155	33		1
10. When you see an injured person which of the following actions is most appropriate?				
Help the injured person to get up and take the injured person to the nearest hospital.	A	3		
Remove his/her helmet and make the injured person comfortable and call 911.	B	9		
Do not remove the helmet, do not move the injured	C	173		

Rate the parts of the program	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Film	85	90	6	
2. Nurse Speaker	105	70	6	
3. Injured Speaker	98	30	2	No speaker-49
4. Demonstrations	101	66	6	
Which part had the greatest impact on you?				
1. Film	59			
2. Nurse Speaker	21			
3. Injured Speaker	90			
4. Demonstrations	23			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Strongly Disagree
I could understand and relate to the nurse speaker	50	123	6	
I could understand and relate to the injured speaker	112	62	5	4
I gained new knowledge	122	71	1	
I will change my behavior due to the information I learned	85	79	15	(1 maybe)

**Responses to the statement: List 3 messages heard during  
the presentation**

Think first/make good choices	118
Helmets can save your life/wear a helmet	119
Don=t think that this can=t happen to you	22
Disability is permanent	19
Wear a seatbelt	36
Accidents/injuries are predictable and preventable	9
What to do when someone is injured	48
See the disabled as people, look beyond disabilities	7
Don=t push yourself/be careful/take your time	12
Trust your instinct/intuition	5
Brains are very fragile	6
What disabled people miss	4
Spinal injury and paralysis	9
Make the right choices	6
Wear protective gear	3
Know your limits	2
The brain and spinal cord are most important	2
How to protect yourself	1
Don=t dive into shallow water	5
Prevent injury	1
Be aware of your surroundings	1
Expect the worst, hope for the best	1
You can break a bone without feeling pain sometimes	2
Play, have fun-but be safe	1
Stem cell research controversy	1
Listen to elders and friends	1
How it=s possibility to adapt to disability	1
How fast injuries can happen	1
Injuries can change your life but it (life) is still a gift	1
Stay in control	1
Be safe, take safty precautions, be careful	19
Be responsible for yourself	2
Injuries can be serious	1

### Overall program comments

Excellent----6 Great----18 Very good----19 Good----50 Loved it-1 OK or all right-2 Cool-1

Liked it- 1 Scary-2 Enjoyed it-1

Found information useful	5	
Very informative	3	
Think before you act	3	
Learned what to do in an emergency	4	
Learned about anatomy		2
Made me more aware	2	
Interesting	1	
New information	1	
Start wearing a helmet		3
It can happen to me	3	
All the speakers were wonderful	1	
The injured speaker was wonderful	1	
Learned the importance of awareness when doing sports activities		1
Why helmets are important		4
Helps me understand about different disabilities		1
It was fun		5
It was helpful		4
Well presented/organized		2
Learned a lot		26
Interesting		7

Despite a transitional year from ThinkFirst Central Mountains to ThinkFirst VVMC, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of the ThinkFirst chapter made significant advances in the number of the classroom presentations, students reached, helmet donations, and VIP participations. With the support of VVMC and Aspen Valley Hospital, the number of the healthcare professional volunteer speakers also increased significantly.

	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002
Number of Schools	6	13	13
Classroom Presentations	17	36	39
Assembly Presentations			
Total Students Attended	475	1,128	1,359

Bike Helmets Donated	38	189	81
Ski Helmets Donated		32	56
Number of VIPs	4	4	8

### ThinkFirst VVMC 2001-2002 Appreciation Reception

The 3<sup>rd</sup> ThinkFirst Appreciation Reception was scheduled to be held at Shaw Cancer Center in Edwards on August 28, 2002. I sent an invitation to the Chairman of the Board of VVMC, Mr. Ed O'Brien, on August 18, 2002 (Invitation letter, Appendix 13).

On August 28, 2002, the 3<sup>rd</sup> ThinkFirst Appreciation Reception was held at Shaw Cancer Center, Shaw Pavilion. Attendees included Mary Salmi, Lorraine Caposole, Melanie Smith, Kim Greene and her daughter, Mikaela, Dr. Bill Rodman, Bill Mielcuszny, Melissa Eckdahl and her husband, Dr. Eckdahl, her daughters, mother and step father, Jerry Nemanic, and Cindy and I. Mary Salmi welcomed everyone, reviewed the 2001-2002 program report and thanked everyone for participating in the program. I gave a speech explaining the brief history of the ThinkFirst Central Mountains, and VVMC.

We celebrated successful the conclusion of the 2001-2002 year, the first year of ThinkFirst VVMC. It was a congenial evening of camaraderie. Everyone enjoyed talking about our common goals and sharing a meal together.



Fig. 16. Mary Salmi welcoming TF members and guests at Shaw Cancer Center Pavilion

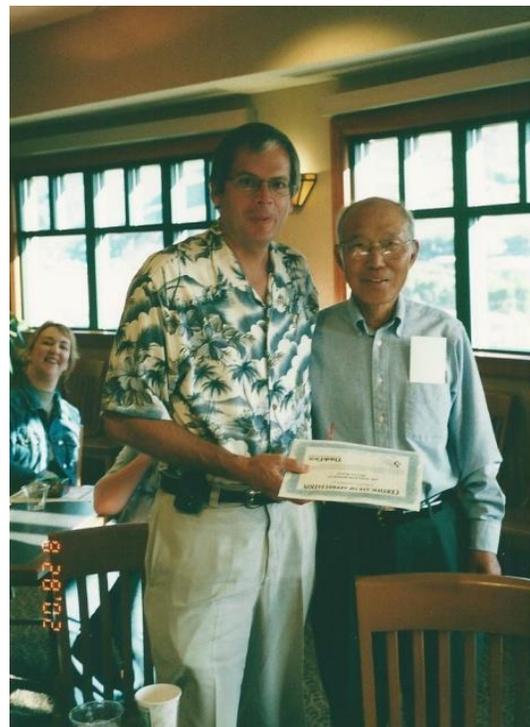


Fig. 17. Dr. Bill Rodman accepting TF Award.



Fig. 18. Melissa Eckdahl and her family at the reception



Fig. 19. Cindy Tatsumi greeting TF members and guests



Fig. 20. RETAC Coordinator, Lorraine Caposole

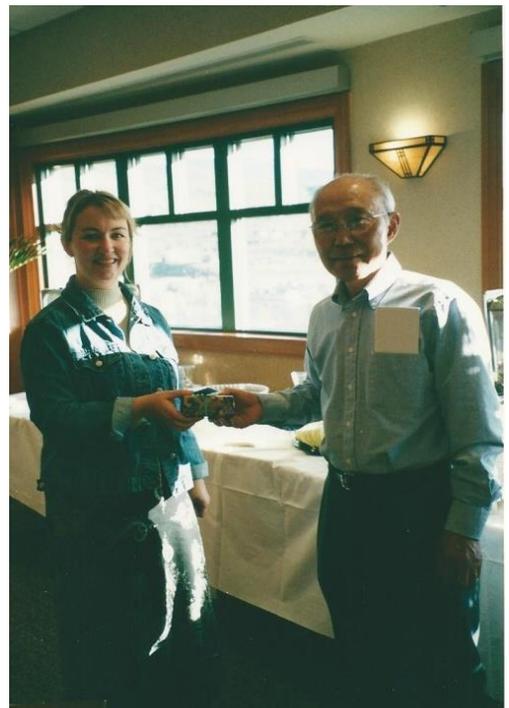


Fig. 21. Kim Greene accepting a gift for Jeremy

### **ThinkFirst VVMC 2002-2003**

Mary Salmi took a sabbatical after a grueling year of double duties as the trauma coordinator and ThinkFirst VVMC coordinator. The Vail Valley Medical Center started Sally Ann Bluhm RN, also a trauma coordinator, as the new ThinkFirst VVMC chapter director. Under the leadership of Sally Ann and the support from VVMC, ThinkFirst VVMC continued to expand. I continued to serve as the sponsoring physician and Executive Committee and Advisory Board member.

Our treasurer, Al Mielcuszny resigned at the end of 2002. I asked Chuck Taylor, a Vail 50 Club member and retired accountant, to be the ThinkFirst VVMC treasurer. He accepted my invitation and became our new treasurer, overseeing the budget beginning January 2003.

### **Bill Jensen, Chief Mountain Operation Officer, Vail Resorts, Inc.**

I first met Bill Jensen on November 10, 2001 at an orientation meeting for Community Guest Services (CGS), a volunteer organization to help assist ski guests at the Vail ski mountain. He explained to us the 2001-2002 Vail Resorts' ski operations. At the end of his talk, when he asked us for questions, I asked about promoting the use of ski helmets to the ski guests, resort employees, ski instructors and patrols. His answer was "The helmet only helps skiers skiing under 25 miles per hour." Bill did not think helmets were helpful. "Helmet use is an individual choice".

Sometime later, I spoke with Anne Fassel about Bill's response on ski helmet use. She told me the attitude of Vail Resorts was "they are afraid of giving the impression to the public that skiing is a risky sport."

I met Bill again on February 6, 2002 at the mid-season CGS party in Eagles Nest at the top of the Gondola. He came to greet us. I asked him about presenting the ThinkFirst program to the Vail Resorts' employees. He asked me to send the program information to him. I sent him the information and the activities of ThinkFirst VVMC with my letter (Appendix 12).

I did not hear from him for the rest of ski season. On October 31, 2002, prior to the 2002-2003 ski season, I sent him the following letter:

Dear Bill:

It seems we are getting a good start for the new ski season. I would like to take a moment from your busy schedule to remind you of **ThinkFirst**.

As you recall, I sent you information about the **ThinkFirst** National Injury Prevention Foundation in February, 2002.

Before the ski season starts, we would like to present **ThinkFirst** to the ski professionals and employees of Vail Resorts, Inc. Last November, we presented **ThinkFirst** to the ski professionals of Aspen Ski Co. and received good responses from them.

Vail is recognized nationally as the number one ski resort, and therefore should lead the other ski resorts on skier safety, and focus on injury prevention. This goal can be achieved through education and safety awareness by the employees and ski professionals of Vail Resorts, Inc. They are the role models of the ski community. Injuries are not accidents, they are predictable and preventable. Let us work together to make Vail the number one ski resort in safety.

**ThinkFirst** is a nationally recognized injury prevention program. I have no doubt that it will make a difference in the lives of people involved.

I would appreciate your response at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

Encl: ThinkFirst, ThinkFirst Central Mountains, and ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center.  
cc: Anne Fassel, and Sally Ann Bluhm

He accepted my offer and made the arrangement for us to present the program.

The ThinkFirst program was presented to the Vail Resorts' employees, ski instructors, patrols and management staff on December 19, 2002 at Marriott Hotel in Vail. Sally Ann, Bill Mielcuszny, Cindy and I participated in the presentation. Following my opening remarks (Appendix 13), Sally Ann and Bill gave a presentation.

### **Ski Injuries Change the Perspective on Ski Helmet Use**

In 2002, a 5 years old girl died by striking a tree while skiing in Aspen. She was not wearing a helmet.

The following year, a prominent Vail resident, the founder and owner of the Peppy Ski retail store, had a ski crash. He fell, lacerating the temporal artery when the ski edge hit is temple. Luckily, one of the CGS personnel was at the scene and applied first aid to stop the bleeding. He could have easily died on the slope. He was wearing a helmet, but it was improperly fastened, causing the helmet to fly off when he fell. This could have been avoided if he had worn the helmet properly.

These incidents prompted the ski resorts to change their attitude and stance on ski helmet use. The Aspen Ski Company made it mandatory for the ski school children to wear a ski helmet. The Vail Resorts followed their lead.

Sometime later that year when I was in Lionshead, Bill Jensen approached me and told me that he purchased a ski helmet. Good for him – he was finally convinced to wear a helmet!

In 2006, Vail Resorts made a ski safety video, “It Won’t Happen to Me.” Bill Jensen sent me a copy. It was focusing on ski safety codes by showing actual images of tragic ski crashes on the ski slopes, and was an excellent production. I sent the following letter to Bill Jensen:

March 11, 2006

Dear Bill:

Thank you for the copies of the Ski Safe Video, “It Won’t Happen to Me”.

As an advocate of injury prevention and Sponsoring Physician of ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center, I would like to congratulate Vail Resorts, Inc. for creating this excellent video to promote ski safety. I am certain that this video presentation will make a positive impact upon ski safety awareness among many skiers.

It was a courageous effort on the part of Vail Resorts, Inc. to promote ski safety by exposing the tragic ski accidents on its own ski slopes. This proves that Vail Resorts, Inc. is seriously committed to ski safety and truly is the number one ski resort on ski safety.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Vail Resorts, Inc. for their continuing support of ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

Cc:

Sarah Moody, RN, VVMC Senior Vice President

Sally Ann Bluhm, RN, Director, ThinkFirst VVMC

I sent a letter to the Editor of The Vail Daily, referencing the Ski Safety Video. It was published the following week on The Vail Daily (Appendix 15).

In January 2007, Cindy and I moved from Vail, CO to Indio, CA. But, I kept contact with our CGS friends. On April 17, 2009, I received an email from one of our friends, Werner Bruggemann saying “you would be pleased to hear that Vail Resorts made it mandatory for all of their employees and volunteers to wear a helmet. CGS volunteers were provide with ski helmets as their uniform.”

Since I first spoke with Bill Jensen about ski helmets in 2001, Vail Resorts gradually changed their attitude toward ski safety, and began focusing even more on the prevention of ski injuries in recent years. I am proud to say that ThinkFirst played a significant role for the changes. Like

many other sports, skiing poses the inherent risk of brain injury, but they can be prevented by the use of helmets. I give credit to Vail Resorts for making it mandatory for their employees to wear helmets. The ski instructors and the ski patrols are the role models for skiers; seeing them wear helmets will motivate other skiers to wear helmets also.

### ThinkFirst VVMC 2002-2003 Accomplishments

ThinkFirst VVMC concluded the 2002-2003 school year on a number of positive notes. Sally Ann Bluhm performed excellent work in her first year succeeding Mary Salmi as chapter director. A total number of 1,815 students attended the ThinkFirst presentations, which included four ThinkFirst for Kids programs – at Dillon Valley Elementary School, Summit Cove Elementary School, Vail Mountain School K-5, and Avon Elementary School. A total of 131 ski helmets and 603 bike helmets were donated to students.

### ThinkFirst VVMC 2002-2003 Accomplishments

	DATE	SCHOOL	# KIDS	SKI BIKE		PRESENTER	VIP
				HELMET	HELMET		
1	12/2/2002	Summit MS-7th and 8th	100	10	0	Anne W. and Kim G.	Jeremy Greene
2	12/9/2002	Dillon Valley ES- 1st	50	2	0	Kim Green	Jeremy Greene
3	12/10/2002	Vail Mtn School- K to 5	100	0	0	SallyAnn B.	
4	12/15/2002	Le Mesa-car seat ed.	400-est	0	0	SallyAnn B.	
5	1/6/2003	Summit Cove ES-fitting	121	14	7	Anne Wardrop	
6	1/13/2003	Summit HS	100	10		Julie C. and Kim Greene	Jeremy Greene
7	1/18/2003	Beaver Creek-Saftey b	Multi	0	0	SallyAnn B. and Scott B	none
8	1/22/2003	St. Clare's 6-8th Grade	42	3	0	SallyAnn B. and Diane S.	Bill M.
9	1/28/2003	Charter School-5th	31	3	0	SallyAnn B.	Bill M.
11	2/3/2003	Dillon Valley-Hel fitting	143	17	8	Anne Wardrop and Kim G.	none
12	2/3/2003	Battle Mtn HS 10th gra	143	15	0	Teri Walker	Jeremy Greene
13	2/10/2003	Vail Mtn School- MS	69	3	0	SallyAnn B.	Jeremy Greene
14	2/10/2003	Vail Mtn School-HS	69	4	0	SallyAnn B.	Jeremy Greene
15	2/10/2003	Vail Christian HS 9-12	75	8	0	SallyAnn B.	Jeremy Greene
16	2/19/2002	Basalt Middle School	100		4	Mary Shelton	
17	2/27/2003	Eagle Valley HS- 9th	87	5	3	SallyAnn B.	Mellissa Echdaul
18	3/4/2003	Avon ES 2nd and 3rd	85	22	10	SallyAnn B., Anne W., Diane S.	Bill M.
19	4/14/2003	Minturn MS	70	0	0		Sarah Will
20	5/1/2003	Eagle Valley MS- 6th	87	5	3	Teri W.	Sarah Will
21	5/3/2003	Cinco de Mayo	Multi	0	100	SallyAnn, Anne, Diane	none
22	5/19/2003	Aspen High School	42		4	Mary Shelton	
23	5/20/2003	Summit HS	94	8	7	Anne W. and Alisha B.	Sarah Will
24	5/22/2003	Meadow Mtn ES 2nd	40	0	9	SallyAnn B.	Sarah Will
25	5/28/2003	Edwards ES 2nd	72	0	20	SallyAnn B.	Sarah Will
26	5/3/2003	Cinco de Mayo	Multi		100	Anne W., Diane S	
27	7/25/2003	Rescue Rangers	Multi		100	SallyAnn B, Roy	
28	7/29/2003	Camp 911	95		15	Anne W, Alisha B	
29	9/13/2003	BTSHSF- Edwards	Multi		100	SallyAnn B, Roy	
30	9/14/2003	BTSHSF- Breck	Multi	0	50	Alisha, Kim G	Jeremy Greene
31		Aspen Health Fair	Multi	0	20	Mary Shelton	
32		Basalt Bike Rodeo	Multi		20	Mary Shelton	
33		Aspen Bike Rodeo	Multi	0	20	Mary Shelton	
34	3-May	Summit MS Donated H	0	2	3	No presentation	Donation for auction
35	Total		1815	131	603		
36							
37		Eagle County Totals	970	68	490		
38		Summit County Totals	608	63	15		

39		Pitkin County Totals	142	0	68		
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In addition to the school presentations, ThinkFirst VVMC involved various safety activities: Le Mesa: car seat education; Beaver Creek Ski Safety Fair; Cinco de Mayo: helmet fitting and distribution of 100 helmets; Summer Camp 911, BTSHSF – Edwards and Breckenridge; Aspen Health Fair; Basalt Bike Rodeo; and the Aspen Bike Rodeo.

It was noted that the ThinkFirst presentation for the Vail Resorts employees and management staff played a significant role in its development of ski safety initiative.

### **ThinkFirst VVMC 2002-2003 Appreciation Reception**

On June 25, 2003, the ThinkFirst VVMC Appreciation Reception was held at the new VVMC atrium, 4:00 pm. I was preoccupied with Foundation for International Education in Neurological surgery Inc. (FIENS), making travel plans and getting airline tickets and totally forgot about the reception. Anne Fassel called me and reminded me of the reception. I hurried and drove to VVMC, arriving at 5:30 pm. There were still many new participants there from the VVMC staff in addition to our regular staff. Sarah Will, a new VIP speaker was among them. She participated in the program over the past year, but I never had the chance to meet her. She was paraplegic as a result of a ski injury. I heard from Sally Ann that Sarah was a dynamic speaker, and was also an active adaptive skier.

## **ThinkFirst VVMC 2003-2004**

On July 18, 2003, I attended Cliff Eldridge's retirement party at the Evergreen Hotel in Vail. I thanked him for his support of ThinkFirst and wished him a happy retirement. He was succeeded by Greg Repetti from Chicago. Mr. Repetti was aware of ThinkFirst and continued to support the chapter.

### **Philanthropy Days**

"Mountain Philanthropy Days" was held at the Vail Marriott Hotel on September 29-30, 2003, sponsored by the Community Resource Center (CRC) in Denver.

Beginning in 1990, CRC and the Anschutz Family Foundation have worked with rural communities throughout Colorado to hold Philanthropy Days events. The overall goal of Philanthropy Days is to increase the number of grants and the total dollar amount of the grants that are made to nonprofit organizations and public agencies in rural communities. (Steve Graham, CRC)

The Philanthropy Days event was a workshop offering both grant makers and grant seekers an opportunity to discuss the application processes and common interests for their mutual benefit. I attended the workshop to learn about the grant seeking processes and Colorado's funding community.

I met one of the speakers, Lisa Pease, for the first time at the meeting. She later became an Advisory Board Member and another valuable asset to ThinkFirst VVMC.

Round table session with funders and participants were held on the second day. There were 32 tables, each occupied by a foundation. I selected the following foundation tables to visit, each interested in giving funds according to their specific giving goals, such as youth education, public health, etc.:

Table 4, Bacon Family Foundation  
Table 6, Bonfils-Stanton Foundation  
Table 7, Bright Mountain Foundation  
Table 8, Caring for Colorado  
Table 10, Daniel Foundation  
Table 13, El Pomar Foundation  
Table 18, Helen K and Arthur E. Johnson Foundation  
Table 20, Kenneth Kendal King Foundation  
Table 22, Temple Hoyne Buell Foundation

It was a good learning opportunity, and opened the door for ThinkFirst VVMC to seek grants from these various foundations.

## ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation's Golf Outing

The Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) Annual Meeting was held in Denver on October 18-23, 2003. On October 18, 2003, in conjunction with the CNS meeting, the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation held a golf outing at The Ridge at Castle Pines North Golf Club in Denver as their fund-raising event. I volunteered to assist the Golf Outing event. A number of neurosurgeons and sales personnel from different medical vendors participated in the golf tournament. It was a successful fundraising event. I enjoyed working with the CEO, Dorothy Zirkle and the national office staff. I received a thank you letter from Dorothy and Dr. Adelson:



And its programs:

Think First! for Kids and  
Think First! for Teens

5550 Meadowbrook Dr.  
Suite 110  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008

Tel: 847.290.8600  
Tel: 800.THINK56  
Fax: 847.290.9005  
email: thinkfirst@thinkfirst.org  
[www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org)

November 29, 2003

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD  
P.O. Box 2858  
Edwards, CO 81632

Dear Partner in Prevention,

The Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation wishes to express our sincere appreciation for your recent participation at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Radionics/Think First Golf Outing at The Ridge at Castle Pines North Golf Club in Denver, Colorado. Your involvement helped to make our event an enormous success! Please remember that \$250 of your entrance fee/sponsorship/donation is tax deductible.

Your support of Think First and our mission will actively change the lives of individuals across the nation and around the world. The proceeds from this event will further the mission of the Think First National Injury Prevention Foundation to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders and the creators of public policy.

As 2003 comes to an end and you review your charitable budget, please keep the National Injury Prevention Foundation in mind when making future charitable donations.

**Save the Date, Save a Life!**  
5<sup>th</sup> Annual Think First Golf Outing  
Presidio Golf Course  
San Francisco, California  
October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004

To sign up for next year's tournament or to sponsor a portion of the event, please visit the Think First website at [www.thinkfirst.org](http://www.thinkfirst.org). You can also obtain tournament information by calling the National Office at 1-800-THINK-56.

Once again, thank you for your participation and support. We look forward to seeing you at next year's event!

Sincerely,

Dorothy Zirkle  
CEO, Think First  
National Injury Prevention Foundation

David Adelson, MD  
Tournament Director

## **ThinkFirst Presentation at the American Medical Tennis Association**

I submitted the following abstract to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Medical Tennis Association (AMTA) at Kingsmill Resort in Williamsburg, Virginia on November 2-7, 2003.

### **ThinkFirst Central Mountains Comprehensive Community Based Injury Prevention Strategies**

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD. and Cindy Tatsumi, RN.  
Edwards, Colorado

#### **Abstract:**

ThinkFirst is a National Injury Prevention Foundation established by the National Neurosurgical Organizations to help reduce the incidence of brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders, and creators of public policy. ThinkFirst Central Mountains is a local chapter serving the central mountains region of Colorado.

The purpose of this presentation is:

1. To promote injury prevention by introducing and informing the audience what ThinkFirst is?
2. To demonstrate its effectiveness as an injury prevention strategy by analyzing the responses from 1,128 students who attended ThinkFirst presentations during the 2000-2001 school year.
3. To inspire the participants to consider implementing ThinkFirst in their own communities.

The abstract was accepted by the president of AMTA, Dr. Alonzo Olsen, on September 18, 2003.

On October 30, 2003, Cindy and I flew to Cleveland, Ohio. From there, we rented a car, drove to Akron and stayed at the Cindy's mother's house. When I arrived in Akron, I felt dizzy but felt better by the next afternoon.

On November 1, we drove to Williamsburg, VA. The next afternoon, we played a Round Robin mixed doubles tennis match.

On Monday, November 3, 8:00 am, I presented ThinkFirst at the CME meeting, using the slides made by Jan's Visual Impact company. The presentation went well. I received a complimentary letter from Dr. Olsen afterward.

Following the CME meeting, the tennis tournament started. I played a single match at 11:00 am. My opponent was rated 4.5; I was easily defeated. Double and mixed doubles followed. I lost both, but the doubles match was a tiebreaker. The next morning I felt dizzy again with a benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) attack. I rested in the hotel room and missed the rest of the tennis tournament.

We left Williamsburg November 4, 1:00 pm and drove back to Akron. We stayed at Cindy's mother's house and visited her sister Linda and her daughter, Jennie, then returned home on November 8.

In January 2004, Chuck Taylor resigned and Lisa Pease, an expert on non-profits, joined the board as the new treasurer. She was extremely helpful to the Executive Board.

On April 14, 2004, Cindy and Jeremy presented ThinkFirst For Teens at Battle Mountain High School. A new VIP speaker, Travis Hanbarger came to observe Jeremy's presentation. Travis was an Eagle Valley High School student who sustained a brain injury when he was driving a jeep with some of his friends on I-70. He was driving too fast and rolled the jeep. He had been recently discharged from the Craig Rehabilitation Hospital.

A total of 106 students attended, 15 ski helmets and 5 bike helmets were given to students.



Fig. 21, From left; Kim, Jeremy, Travis, Travis' Mom, Cindy, Pat and a teacher at Battle Mountain High School

On April 14, 2004, Cindy and Travis presented TFFT at Gypsum Middle School. A total of 94 students attended; 5 ski helmets and 5 bike helmets were given to students.

## ThinkFirst VVMC 2003-2004 Accomplishments

ThinkFirst VVMC had a successful 2003-2004 school year. A total of 3,611 students attended programs, including the Dillon Valley Elementary School, Meadow Mountain Elementary School, Edwards Elementary School, St Claire Elementary School and Avon Elementary School.

ThinkFirst VVMC participated in the following events:

Cinco de Mayo helmet fitting and giveaway, Silverthorne Safety Fair, Drivers Education; “You Hold the Key” at the Battle Mountain High School and Eagle Valley High School, (400, 200 students respectively participated); Vail Mountain School Fair; Camp 911 and BTSHSF-Edwards and Breckenridge. The number of attendants by counties was 2,616, 711, 63, 55, and 91, in Eagle, Summit, Pitkin, Lake and Park County respectively. A total number of 82 ski helmets and 506 bike helmets were distributed to the students.

## ThinkFirst VVMC 2003-2004 Accomplishments and Student Evaluations

THINKFIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2003-04

DATE	SCHOOL	# KIDS	SKI BIKE		PRESENTER	VIP
			HELMET	HELMET		
10/29/2003	Vail Mountain School- health F	Multi	0	0	SallyAnn Bluhm	none
12/12/2003	Eagle Valley Middle School	83	5	4	Melanie Smith	Sarah Will
12/15/2003	Summit Middle School	200	12	8	Anne Wardrop - Kim Greene	Sarah Will
1/6 and 1/7	Aspen High School	63			Mary Shelton and Melinda Sangren	Amanda Boxtell an
1/9/2004	Summit High School	75	3	4	Dr. Julie Colliton	Sarah Will
1/13/2004	Summit High School	50	3	3	Anne Wardrop	Sarah Will
1/13/2004	Dillon Valley E.S.	28	6	8	SallyAnn Bluhm, Kim Greene	Jeremy Greene
1/15/2004	Eagle Valley High School	128	7	7	Melanie Smith, SallyAnn, Simone	Bill Mielcuszny
1/26/2004	Leadville High School	55	2	3	Kim Greene	Jeremy Greene
1/28/2004	Meadow Mountain ES	40			SallyAnn Bluhm	
2/4/2004	Meadow Mountain ES	40			SallyAnn Bluhm	
2/4/2004	Meadow Mountain ES	40	1			
2/10/2004	Charter School - 5th grade	32	2	1	Teri Walker	Sarah Will
2/10/2004	Vail Christian High School	28	2	1	Teri Walker	Sarah Will
2/11/2004	Meadow Mountain ES		1			
2/20/2004	St. Clairs and VCHS		3			
2/18/2004	Meadow Mountain ES	40			SallyAnn Bluhm	Sarah Will
2/25/2004	Meadow Mountain ES	40	8	9	SallyAnn Bluhm	
3/1/2004	Charter School - 2nd grade	32		3	SallyAnn Bluhm	Travis Hanbarger
4/6/2004	Vail Mountain School - 2nd Gr	18	0	0	SallyAnn Bluhm	Sarah Will
4/6/2004	Vail Mountain School - 6th Gr	21	0	0	SallyAnn Bluhm	Sarah Will
4/12/2004	Battle Mountain HS	106	15	5	Cindy Tatsumi	Jeremy and Travis
4/14/2004	Gypsum Creek MS	94	5	5	Cindy Tatsumi	Travis Hanbarger
4/16/2004	Edwards ES 2nd grade	58	3	33	SallyAnn Bluhm	Sarah Will
4/19/2004	St Clares - 2nd grade	19	2	0	SallyAnn Bluhm	Sarah Will
4/19/2004	St. Clares - 6th grade	17	0	2	SallyAnn Bluhm	Sarah Will
4/20/2004	BMHS - You hold the Key	400	0	0	SallyAnn and ED Nurses	Travis Hanbarger
5/3/2004	Avon ES - 2nd grade	47	0	34	SallyAnn ans Simone	Travis Hanbarger
4/28/2004	VMS and VCHS - You Hold the	200	0	0	SallyAnn and ED Nurses	Travis Hanbarger
4/30/2004	EVHS - You Hold the Key	570	0	0	SallyAnn and ED Nurses	Travis Hanbarger
5/4/2004	Minturn MS - 6th grade	43	2	4	Simone Horness	Travis Hanbarger
5/7/2004	Summit HS	50	0	4	Anne Fassel	Jeremy Greene
5/8/2004	Cinco de Mayo Celebration	200	0	125	SallyAnn and Bike racing team	
5/10/2004	Fairplay MS - 6, 7, 8th grade	91		10	Kim Greene	Jeremy Greene
5/24/2004	Summit HS	58		9	Teri Walker	Jeremy Greene
5/29/2004	Silverthorne Safety Fair	200			Kim Greene	Jeremy Greene

6/11/2004	911 Camp	75		6	SallyAnn Bluhm	none
6/26/2004	Eagle Flight Days	125		100	SallyAnn, Sarah M, Diane P. Sandy B., Courtney and K	
7/9/2004	911 Camp Eagle	75		2	Jenn Witt	
9/11/2004	BTSHSF - Edwards	120		120	Diane, Shanny, Meridith, Sandy	
9/12/2004	BTSHSF - Breckenridge	50		50	Anne Wardrop	
	Totals	3611	82	560		
	Eagle County Total	2616				
	Summit County Totals	711				
	Pitkin County Totals	63				
	Lake County Totals	55				
	Park County Totals	91				

**ThinkFirst VVMC 2003-2004 Students' Evaluation:**



**THINK FIRST STUDENT EVALUATION RESULTS**

<b>Rating System:</b>	Always	5
	Most of the Time	4
	Sometimes	3
	Rarely	2
	Never	1
	Not Applicable	0

	<u>Prior to Attending Think First</u>	<u>After Attending Think First</u>
Wore a seat belt	4.10	4.80
Wore a helmet while bicycling	2.07	4.07
Wore a helmet while skating or skateboarding	1.69	4.30
Wore a helmet while skiing or snowboarding	2.43	4.55
Wore a helmet on a Motorcycle	3.32	4.78
Obeyed speed limits	4.05	4.65
Refused to drink and drive	4.95	4.98
Encouraged others not to drink and drive	4.41	4.825
Checked depth of water before diving	3.11	4.62
Considered safety with sports	3.59	4.52
Avoided violent situations - i.e. guns, gangs and road rage	4.42	4.83

Prepared by Lisa M. Pease  
February 24, 2004

<b>Overall Program Ratings:</b>	Excellent	4
	Good	3
	Fair	2
	Poor	1

Program Content	<b>3.82</b>
Video	<b>3.48</b>
Medical Presentation	<b>3.70</b>
Injured Speaker's Presentation	<b>3.94</b>
Speaker's Responsiveness to questions	<b>3.80</b>
Length of Program	<b>3.40</b>
Overall Experience	<b>3.74</b>

**Demographic Information:**

Number of Participants:	50		
Grade:	High School	Age:	14 - 18
Sex	Male - 15		
	Female - 35		

Prepared by Lisa M. Pease  
February 24, 2004

## ThinkFirst VVMC 2003-2004 Appreciation Reception

On June 17, 2004, at 4:00pm, the ThinkFirst VVMC Appreciation Reception was held at Bagali's Italian Kitchen in West Vail. VVMC CEO, Greg Repetti and Vice president, Sara Moody attended and expressed their appreciation.



Fig. 22. ThinkFirst VVMC Reception at Bagali's.  
From left, Jeremy, Kim, Sally Ann and Dr. Tatsumi



Fig. 23. ThinkFirst VVMC Reception at Bagali's. Back, from left, Bill, Travis and Jeremy. Front, Sally Ann, John, Sarah

## **ThinkFirst VVMC 2004-2005**

As the program was developing and expanding, the medical community began to recognize ThinkFirst VVMC as an important community service. In October 2004, ThinkFirst VVMC received a donation of \$50,000.00 from the Vail Valley Surgery Center, LLC (VVSC). This was the largest donation ThinkFirst VVMC had ever received. VVSC was an outpatient ambulatory center that was owned by physicians – a well-known orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Richard Stedman and his associates.

The news of the donation was published in The Vail Daily, “Surgery Center Donated \$50,000 to ThinkFirst” on October 22, 2004.

I sent the following thank you note to VVSC:

November 2, 2004

Governing Council  
Vail Valley Surgery Center  
P.O. Box 1270  
Vail, CO 81658

Dear Members of the Governing Council:

As one who has been so involved in establishing ThinkFirst at Vail Valley Medical Center, I am very grateful to you for the generous gift to our endeavor. As you know, the more children we can reach with our message of safety and support, the more children we can help to enjoy life safely.

Thank you for giving us this opportunity. We will be sure to let you know of the impact of your giving in a report to you at this time next year.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD  
CC: Sarah Moody, Senior vice president  
Sally Ann Blum, Director of ThinkFirst VVMC

## **ThinkFirst Presentation at The Aichi Medical University in Japan**

I was invited to attend my niece, Asako’s, wedding in Tokyo on December 19, 2004. I took this opportunity to promote ThinkFirst in Japan. Before leaving for Japan, I contacted Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurosurgery at the Aichi Medical University,

Dr. Hiroshi Nakagawa, who was one of my tennis friends. I had met him at the AANS Annual Meetings on several occasions. He had shown an interest in ThinkFirst, so I proposed to present ThinkFirst to the Neurosurgery Department. He welcomed my offer and invited me to come to Aichi. After the wedding, I went to Nagoya and visited the Aichi Medical University. My daughter, Juliet and her friend, Eric Berg accompanied me. I presented ThinkFirst to the Neurosurgery Department on December 22, 2004.



Fig. 24. Professor Hiroshi Nakagawa and his associates at Aichi Medical University

### **Cerebral Concussion in Sports and ImPACT.**

On November 30, 2004, the US Ski team held a Concussion Management Conference at Charter Lodge in Beaver Creek. Sally Ann, Dr. Reginald Franciose, the Trauma Director of VVMC and I attended the conference.

Mark Lovell, PhD, Director of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Sports Medicine Concussion Program, presented ImPACT, Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Neurocognitive Testing, as a tool to determine when a concussed athlete can return to play. His presentation attracted my attention. After the conference concluded, I spoke with Sally Ann and Dr. Franciose about implementing the ImPACT Test to our area student athletes through ThinkFirst VVMC.

In recent years, concussion, or minor traumatic brain injury (MTBI), had become recognized as a threat to the athletes. It had become evident that repeated concussions would cause serious consequences more than previously expected by the medical community as well as the public.

As early as in 1973, Richard Schneider<sup>2</sup> reported two young athletes who had experienced initial concussive symptoms and subsequently died after a relatively minor second impact. In 1984, Sanders and Harbaugh<sup>3</sup> reported the case of a 19 years old college football player who had experienced a brief loss of consciousness. The player returned to play while complaining of a mild headache on the fourth day after the injury. He collapsed following a minor collision and became unresponsive and subsequently died. They named this injury “second impact syndrome.” The syndrome was defined as “a catastrophic head injury occurring in an athlete who sustains a concussion, sustains a second minor head injury before symptoms associated with the first have cleared.”

Recently, it has become apparent that the cumulative effect of repeated concussions often exhibited an impairment of cognition, memory and planning capability in athletes.

While these findings on concussion became evident, the coaches, athletic directors and team physicians began to seek a guideline to determine when the concussed player could return to play safely.

As a matter of history, in 1991, the Colorado Medical Society published the Guidelines for the Management of Concussion in Sports. The American Academy of Neurology adopted a revised version “Practice Parameter: The management of concussion in sports” in 1997<sup>4</sup>.

Concussion was defined as “trauma-induced alteration in mental status that may not involve loss of consciousness” and divided concussion into three grades, Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3, depending upon the severity. The management guidelines were set in each grade of concussion. The article also established a side-line evaluation to assess the status of athlete suspected of having a concussion. The evaluation consisted of three tests:

1. Mental status testing
  - Orientation
  - Memory
2. External provocative tests
  - 40-yard sprint, 5 pushups etc.
3. Neurologic tests
  - Pupils
  - Coordination
  - Sensation

The guidelines for the concussed athletes to return to play were based on athletes’ self-report of being symptom-free at rest and exertion. However, self-reporting was unreliable because some athletes intentionally denied the symptoms in order to get back to play. Also, even though the concussed athlete became symptom free, the physiological and chemical recovery of the brain lagged behind symptoms, and the brain remained susceptible to further severe injury.

In order to establish an accurate and objective method for determining the timing of the brain's recovery from concussion and guide athletes to safely return to play, Mark Lovell, PhD, and his colleagues at the UPMC Sports Medicine Concussion Program developed Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Neurocognitive Testing (ImPACT)<sup>5</sup>. ImPACT involves a 30-minute battery test that athletes complete on a lap top or desk top computer. It can precisely measure even the subtle effects of a concussion, such as decline in memory, visual motor skills, information processing speed and reaction time. Athletes can take an individual pre-season baseline test that is stored for comparison to the post-injury test scores, should an athlete sustain a concussion during the season. The developers of ImPACT state that a concussed athlete should not be cleared to return to play until ImPACT scores return to pre-injury base line scores and reported symptoms have resolved both at rest and at exertion.

ImPACT has been utilized nationwide by high schools, colleges, universities and professional sports teams, including the NFL teams.

At the ThinkFirst VVMC Executive Board meeting on January 11, 2005, implementation of the ImPACT test to the area school athletic teams was discussed. The Board decided to explore the feasibility and incorporation with VVMC Trauma Director, Dr. Reginald Franciose.

At the following ThinkFirst VVMC Executive Board meeting on February 8, 2005, ImPACT and Concussion in Sports and Return to Play was discussed again. Minutes of the meeting:

“ImPACT: Discussed what our understanding of ImPACT’s different “per/ use licenses” and their rates. Pending a reply from ImPACT to clarify several doubts regarding fees and licenses.

Concussion in Sports and Return to Play: Chapter is considering sponsoring a high school as a pilot. We have the support of Dave Honda to invite his contacts.

Conference details:

- a. Date: To be held late Spring – early Summer (school is out May 25, 2005). We believe that catering to the school year calendar will facilitate teachers’ attendance.
- b. Time: Evening.
- c. Duration: some 2 hours
- d. Speakers under consideration: i. ImPACT designer, Dr. Lovell from the University of Pittsburgh Hospital as main speaker to present program’s advanced concussion management tools. ii. VVMC Trauma Director, Dr. Reginald Franciose to present a 20-minute blurb on the Valley’s head injury statistics and its need for ImPACT program.
- e. Participants: i. Physical therapy groups and Trainers, ii. Recreation Districts (Silverton, Breckenridge, Vail), iii. WECMR, iv. Coaches, v. Private Clubs (soccer, hockey, La Cross. Rafting, Kayaking, Ski, Skating), Elementary, middle and high school health care and gym staff.

- f. Possible Location: i. Mountain School: They have offered to donate their new auditorium. ii. Vilar Center,
- g. Fee/Donation: To be determined.”

The ThinkFirst VVMC Advisory Board meeting was also held at VVMC on February 8, 2005. Concussion in Sports; Return to Play and ImPACT was brought up and the strategies to implement ImPACT was discussed. Minutes of the meeting:

“In regards to who the consulting physician could be:

- a) despite interest, Dr. Franciose would not be available due to schedule.
- b) It is important that consulting physician understand that the turn-around of evaluation tests is a key factor that will determine the success of ImPACT in our community. Coaches, families and players will want to know this time frame before committing the ImPACT program.
- c) Dr. Colliton and Rehabilitation Occupation Therapist Dr. Sorenson have been suggested for position.

Actions: Still pending Dr. Lovell’s response regarding fees and availability to speak at conference.

Sally Ann to contact Dr. Julie Colliton and Dr. Schmitz regarding consulting physician.”

ThinkFirst VVMC invited Stephen Schmitz, PhD, a neuropsychologist at The Brain and Behavior Clinic in Denver, to give a lecture at the VVMC Journal Club. Dr. Schmitz presented “Sports Concussion Injuries: A Structured Management Program” on March 22, 2005, 7:00-9:00 pm, to a group of physicians at the VVMC. Concussion in sports was thoroughly discussed and ImPACT was also explained to the audience in detail.

ThinkFirst VVMC also coordinated the conference, “A Lecture on Concussion in Sports and Returned to Play,” sponsored by the Vail Valley Surgery Center on May 10, 2005, 7:00-9:00 pm at the Vail Marriot Hotel. The main guest speaker, John Kirk PhD, a pediatric neuropsychologist from Denver, discussed the risk of concussion in sports and the effects of repeated concussion in young athletes. Dr. Reginald Franciose presented statistics of the head injury in the Valley. Dr. Julie Colliton presented Helmets and head injury. A wide range of participants as mentioned in the Executive Board meeting were invited.

On October 4, 2005, at the ThinkFirst VVMC Executive Board meeting, Sally Ann reported “Vail Mountain School and Vail Christian High School both joined the Return to Play Program”

On November 1, 2005, at the ThinkFirst VVMC Advisory Board Meeting, ImPACT test was discussed. Minutes of the meeting:

“Regarding Return to Play Sally Ann gave the following update:

Vail Mountain School – Not yet implemented, but will work with Ski Club Vail.

Eagle County High Schools – Battle Mountain, need to set up the program, but willing to implement.

Vail Christian High School – has implemented the program, and has tested some football players.

Summit County High Schools – Has implemented”

On December 6, 2005, at the Executive Board meeting, Sally Ann reported:

Minutes of the meeting:

“Diane Schmitz had discussed the results of the implementation of the Return to Play program with the athletic director at Vail Christian High School. She indicated that there was an unanticipated charge by Dr. Schmitz’s group of \$100 per concussed child to read the test and give recommendations. It also would require the athlete to travel to Denver to be evaluated because Dr. Schmitz is only in Vail once a month.... Sally Ann indicated that Summit County has purchased, but not implemented the program due to these complications.”

At the Executive Board meeting on February 7, 2006, the Board decided to revisit Return to Play after the ski season and to resolve the problematic issues of implementing the program.

### **ThinkFirst VVMC 2004-2005 Accomplishments**

A total of 22 classrooms and 2 assembly presentations were given at nine high schools in Eagle, Summit, Lake and Park County.

A total of 6 classroom presentations were given at five middle schools in Eagle, Summit and Lake County.

A total of 11 classrooms and 5 assembly presentations were given at 11 elementary schools in Eagle, Summit and Park County.

ThinkFirst VVMC participated in the following activities:

Skier Safe weekend in Beaver Creek Mountains

MMSE Buddies Program

Cinco de Mayo; Helmet Giveaway

Eagle Flight Days; Helmet Giveaway

Silverthorne Summer Days; Helmet Giveaway

Keystone Fair; Helmet Giveaway

Back to School Health

Breckenridge back to School Fair

Wild West Days; Helmet Giveaway

ThinkFirst VVMC reached a total of 3535 students, 2,715, 508, 108, and 181, in Eagle, Summit, Lake and Park counties respectively.

A total number of 277 ski helmets and 720 bike helmets were donated.

ThinkFirst VVMC began to initiate the ImpACT program for the student athletes. ThinkFirst Aspen departed from ThinkFirst VVMC, and became an independent chapter. I anticipated that this would eventually happen in considering the competitive nature of health care markets.

**ThinkFirst VVMC 2004-2005 Appreciation Reception**

The ThinkFirst VVMC Appreciation Reception was held at Bagali’s Italian Kitchen in West Vail on June 21, 2005. The Chairman of the VVMC Foundation, President of VVMC, VIP speakers, volunteers and advocates were invited.



Fig. 25, President Greg Repetti and Vice president Sara Moody



Fig. 26, Cindy and Lisa Pease at the Reception



Fig. 27, Sally Ann and Kim Greene



Fig. 28, Bill and Danna at the Reception

**ThinkFirst VVMC 2004-2005 Advisory Board**

**Executive Committee**

Sally Ann Bluhm, RN  
 Christine Ebert-Santos, MD  
 Lisa Pease  
 Dana Bassock

Eagle County  
 Summit County  
 Eagle County  
 Eagle County

President  
 Vice president  
 Treasurer  
 Secretary

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD	Eagle County	Sponsoring Neurosurgeon
Sarah Moody, RN	Eagle County	VVMC Senior VP
<b>Advisory Board</b>		
Kathie McNeil, RN	Eagle County	Teen Program
Alicia Breslin, RN	Summit County	Teen Program
Kelly Lau, RN	Summit County	Trauma Coordinator-BMC
Anne Wardrop, RN	Summit County	Teen Program
Diane Schmidt, RN	Eagle County	Kid's Program
Cindy Tatsumi, RN	Eagle County	Past Coordinator
Holly Adnan, RN, Coordinator	Summit County	Summit County
Cathy McRory, EMT	Eagle County	ECDA
Scott Beaver	Eagle County	VVMC Marketing
Sarah Will	Eagle County	VIP Speaker
Kim Greene	Summit County	Community Advocate
Roy Pickavance	Eagle County	Physical Therapy
<b>Advocates</b>		
Reginald Franciose, MD	Eagle County	Trauma Director- VVMC
Chip Woodland	Eagle County	Medical Director-VVMC
Julie Colliton, MD	Summit County	Rehab Specialist

**ThinkFirst VVMC 2004-2005 Budget (9/1/04 – 8/31/05)**

**Income**

Grants	22,300
Contributions	52,840
In Kind Contributions	2,870
VVMC In-kind Contributions	1,035
VVMC Donated Personnel	23,160
Net Interest Income	2,048
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>104,252</b>

**Expenses**

Program Supplies (Helmets)	20,583
Salaries	24,352
General Promotion & Fundraising	1,035
Miscellaneous	721
Meeting and Convention	1,134
Travel and Entertainment - Travel	2,260
Meals	171
Event Expenses	1,124

Contact Labor	2,859
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>54,239</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>50,014</b>

## **ThinkFirst VVMC 2005-2006**

ThinkFirst VVMC continued to expand its programs. During 2005-2006, a total of 12 classrooms and 5 assembly presentations were given at 12 elementary schools.

A total number of 5 classroom presentations were given at 4 middle schools.

A total number of 20 classrooms and 4 assembly presentations were given at 13 high schools.

The ThinkFirst For Teens program was also presented to Western Eagle Valley Rotary Club and Edwards Rotary Club.

ThinkFirst VVMC participated in the following activities:

Ski Safety in Beaver Creek Mountains

Youth Foundation Helmet Giveaway

Silverthorne Safe Fair

Camp 911-Eagle

Camp 911-Avon

Free Family Fun Fair

Eagle Flight Days

Early Head Start (Car Seat Check)

ThinkFirst VVMC reached a total number of 5,779 students; 3,898, 1,522, 159, 180 students in Eagle, Summit, Lake and Park County respectively.

A total number of 365 ski helmets and 616 bike helmets were donated to the students.

## **ImPACT Program**

Four physicians from the VVMC took a four-hour course for ImPACT training and became certified to evaluate the test. Dr. Ebert-Santos is planning on taking the course.

ThinkFirst VVMC sponsored the ImPACT program in public schools in Eagle County providing \$1,500 for 300 tests at \$5 each (per Advisor Board Meeting minutes, September 12, 2006).

## **ThinkFirst VVMC 2005-2006 Budget**

### **Income**

Grants	50,000
Contributions	5,000
In Kind contributions	2,000
VVMC In-kind contributions	15,000

VVMC Donated Personnel	23,160
Program Supplies	5,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>100,160</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Program Supplies (Helmets)	18,000
Salaries & Benefits	40,240
Printing & Reproduction	1,500
General Promotion & Fundraising	6,000
Miscellaneous	500
Meeting & conventions	1,500
Reference Materials	2,200
Travel & Entertainment- travel	1,500
Meals	500
Contact Labor	5,000
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>76,940</b>
<b>Net Balance</b>	<b>23,220</b>

### **Change in Executive and Advisory Board members**

ThinkFirst Advisory Board member, Roy Pickavance resigned from the Board in November, 2005. Lisa Pease resigned from the Executive Board in May 2006, and was replaced by Sandra Knuth from the VVMC Foundation Accounting Office.

### **The ThinkFirst VVMC 2005-2006 Appreciation Reception**

The reception was held at Bagali's Italian Kitchen in West Vail on June 20, 2006. Sally Ann presented the new ThinkFirst DVD. Awards were given to Holly Adnan and Lisa Pease for their contributions.

### **My Resignation**

Cindy and I decided to leave Vail and relocate in Indio California. I submitted my letter of resignation from ThinkFirst Sponsoring Physician and Executive Board to the president of VVMC, Gregory G. Repetti on November 26, 2006 (Appendix 16). At the Executive Board meeting on December 7, 2006, Sally Ann announced my resignation to the Board. Sally Ann invited Cindy and me to Sweet Basil for lunch in Vail on December 11, 2006. Bill, Dara, Kim and Ann came and we had a little farewell party.

It has been a wonderful experience for us to initiate ThinkFirst in the Vail Valley and central Rocky Mountain communities in Colorado. We enjoyed traveling to the different towns in Eagle, Summit, Lake, Park and Pitkin counties, and meeting with the students and teachers. Since its inception in 1999, ThinkFirst has expanded its mission yearly and the ThinkFirst injury prevention message has reached thousands of students and the public as well. The mission of ThinkFirst is to prevent injury through education, research, and influencing policy makers to create a safe environment. We accomplished this mission, and hopefully our efforts will yield beneficial changes in the lives of young people. Saving even one person from the devastating brain or spinal cord injury would be worth all our efforts.

We were fortunate and thankful for the strong support by ATAC, VVMC and the central mountains communities. Our engagement with the communities gave us a sense of belonging and made our living in the Vail Valley more meaningful. It was indeed an unforgettable period in our lives.

In February 2006, I was invited to become a member of the Board of Directors of the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation. I accepted the invitation and succeeded Dr. Roberto de Leo as Chairman of the International Committee. Since then, I have continued serving for the Foundation to expand ThinkFirst globally.

The ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention was held April 25-27, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Chicago, IL. At the conference, I met with the ThinkFirst VVMC chapter directors, Kim Greene, Holly Adnan, and Kelly Lau. I was surprised to learn from them that Sally Ann had resigned from ThinkFirst VVMC in 2007 and Kim Greene was the new Chapter Director.

Kim became involved with the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation in assisting with the creation of a VIP training video. At this conference, ThinkFirst VVMC received an Outstanding Chapter Award. I was thrilled and applauded Kim for bringing ThinkFirst VVMC to national recognition. At the same time, it gave me a sense of satisfaction that ThinkFirst VVMC was thriving and continuing its mission.

September 16, 2010, Indio, CA  
Revised December 5, 2016

PS: The ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention “Celebrating 25 Years” was held in Denver, Colorado April 8-11, 2011, in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons. Cindy and I attended the Conference and celebrated ThinkFirst 25 years. Kim and Vicky Cassabaum from Denver co-chaired the conference.

On Sunday, April 10, a Community Helmet Fitting and Safety Education Event was held at INVESCO Field. Denver Broncos quarterback, Tim Tebow was invited as a speaker. He spoke with the audience about his own experience with concussion and the importance of helmet use. He had a sensational season as a backup quarterback and created 'Tebow mania' nationally. He was a very popular football player and delighted the people attending the event. It was a successful event and we all enjoyed meeting Tim Tebow.

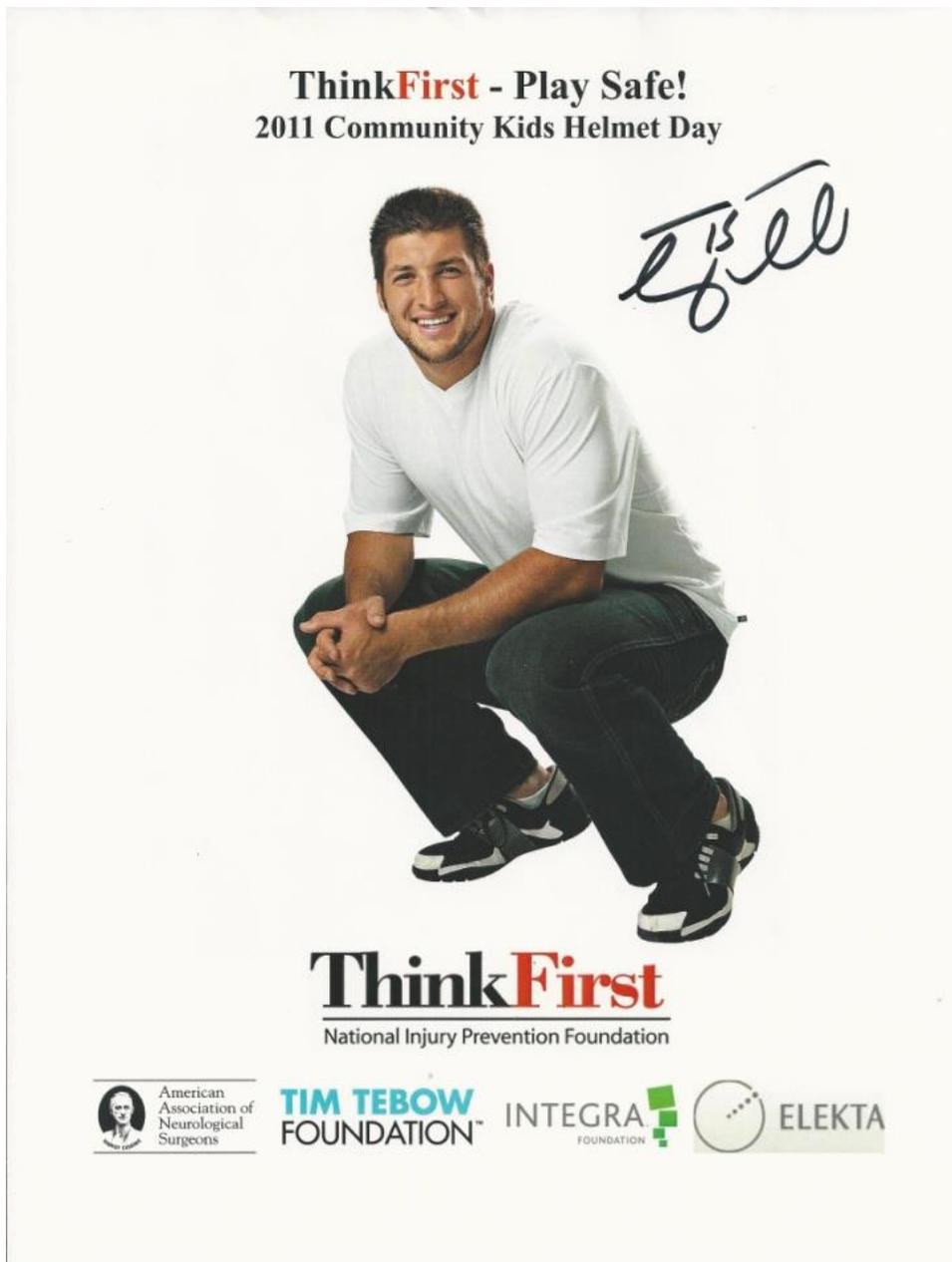


Fig. 29, Guest speaker, Tim Tebow at the Helmet Fitting Event

There were five ThinkFirst chapters in Colorado in 2011: Aspen, Colorado Springs, Denver, Dillon and Vail. I had the opportunity to meet most of the Colorado chapter directors at the conference (Fig. 30). I was happy to see the expansion of ThinkFirst chapters in Colorado. Kim Greene has been serving as the State Chapter Director and has made great contributions for ThinkFirst development locally as well as nationally. She is currently serving as a member of the ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation Board of Directors.



Fig. 30, Colorado ThinkFirst Chapter contingents at the 2011 ThinkFirst Conference on Injury Prevention



Fig. 31, Our family with VIP speakers, Carlos and Jeremy at the ThinkFirst 25 Year Celebration Reception

It held special meaning for me that the ThinkFirst Conference in Injury Prevention “25 years Celebration” took place in Denver. When we moved to Edwards, Colorado, I became affiliated with the Department of Neurosurgery at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center in Denver and I visited Denver frequently. To me, Denver was the home of my early retirement life. I started ThinkFirst Central Mountains as a satellite chapter under the Denver Chapter. It was quite appropriate to celebrate ThinkFirst 25 Years in Denver. I invited our family to the ThinkFirst 25 Years Celebration Reception. We all enjoyed the special occasion (Fig. 31).

## References

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5. Maroon, JC, Lovell, MR, et al. Cerebral Concussion in Athletes: Evaluation and Neuropsychological Testing. *Neurosurgery* Sep. 2000; 47 (3): 659-672.

## **Acknowledgement**

As one of the 135 ThinkFirst chapters in the country, ThinkFirst VVMC has been serving to promote injury prevention in the central Rocky Mountains' communities since 1999.

The success in the development and continuation of the ThinkFirst programs in the communities is owed to a number of individuals and organizations. I would like to acknowledge and to thank those individuals and organizations in chronological order:

Lorraine Caposole, trauma coordinator of Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council (ATAC), Lorraine was an enthusiastic supporter of the ThinkFirst Program from the onset and she was instrumental to the development of ThinkFirst Central Mountains.

Ana Maria Vergara, president of the Brain Injury Support Group in Eagle and Summit Counties for introducing VIP speakers and her continuous support of ThinkFirst.

Dr. John Woodland, Chairman of ATAC and ATAC Council for adapting ThinkFirst Central Mountains as their injury prevention program in 1999. Without the support of ATAC, a ThinkFirst Chapter would not exist in the region today.

Dr. Bill Rodman, Chairman of Aspen EMS Council for supporting the development of ThinkFirst Aspen and Roaring Fork Valley.

Dr. Michael Handler, ThinkFirst Denver Chapter sponsoring physician and Barbara Varnhagen, ThinkFirst Denver Chapter coordinator for accepting ThinkFirst Central Mountains as their satellite chapter.

Cindy Tatsumi, RN, the first coordinator and healthcare speaker of ThinkFirst Central Mountains and guided the successful first and second year programs (1999-2000, 2000-2001), and also editing this manuscript.

Mary Salmi, RN, the first coordinator of ThinkFirst VVMC and made a successful transition (2001-2002).

Mary Shelton, RN, the coordinator of ThinkFirst Aspen and Roaring Fork Valley, established a successful program in Pitkin County.

Sally Ann Bluhm, RN, succeeded Mary Salmi in 2002 and expanded the ThinkFirst VVMC programs.

Kim Greene succeeded Sally Ann Bluhm in 2007 and led ThinkFirst VVMC to national recognition by receiving an outstanding chapter award in 2008. She is currently serving as the

Colorado State Chapter Director and a member of the Board of Directors of ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation.

The following VIP speakers for their dedication. They were the core of the ThinkFirst For Teens program and made a powerful impact upon the students. They made outstanding contributions to the program:

Eagle County

Melissa Eckdahl  
Travis Hanbarger  
Raul Martin  
Bill Mielcuszny  
Sarah Will

Pitkin County

Amanda Bostell  
Bill Moriarty  
Leah Potts

Summit County

Sherri Cole  
Jeremy Greene  
Carlos Santos  
Dena Walsh

Clifford Eldridge former CEO of Vail Valley Medical Center for adopting ThinkFirst Central Mountains and his leadership to expand the program as ThinkFirst VVMC.

Gregg Repetti, former CEO, Vail Valley Medical Center for continuing support of ThinkFirst.  
Ed O'Brien, Chairman of the Board, Vail Valley Medical Center for the support of ThinkFirst.

Aspen Valley Hospital for their support of ThinkFirst.

Aspen Valley Medical Foundation, Vail Valley Surgery Center, LLC, The Summit Foundation, Beaver Creek Merchant Association, Colorado State University, Eagle County Health and Human Services, Tom and Jan Harris of Visual Impact, Vail Resorts, Inc and the Town of Vail for their generous contributions and continuing support of ThinkFirst.

The following teachers for their support of ThinkFirst. Their continuous support made it possible for ThinkFirst to succeed:

Miss Seals, Minturn Middle School in Eagle County  
Susan Scott, Eagle Valley High School in Eagle County  
Pat Phelan, Battle Mountain High School in Eagle County

Robert Bandoni, Vail Mountain School in Eagle County  
Pat Foote, Summit High School in Summit County  
Kip Kuhn, Silverheels Middle School in Fairplay, Park County  
All other teachers who supported the program year after year.

Aspen Ambulance EMS Council, Eagle EMS Council and Summit EMS Council for their continuous support of ThinkFirst and providing EMT participation in the ThinkFirst presentations.

ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation for providing curriculum, educational materials and tools, and for continuing support.

Debby Gerhardstein, RN, MA, Executive Director, ThinkFirst National Injury Prevention Foundation, for editing this manuscript.

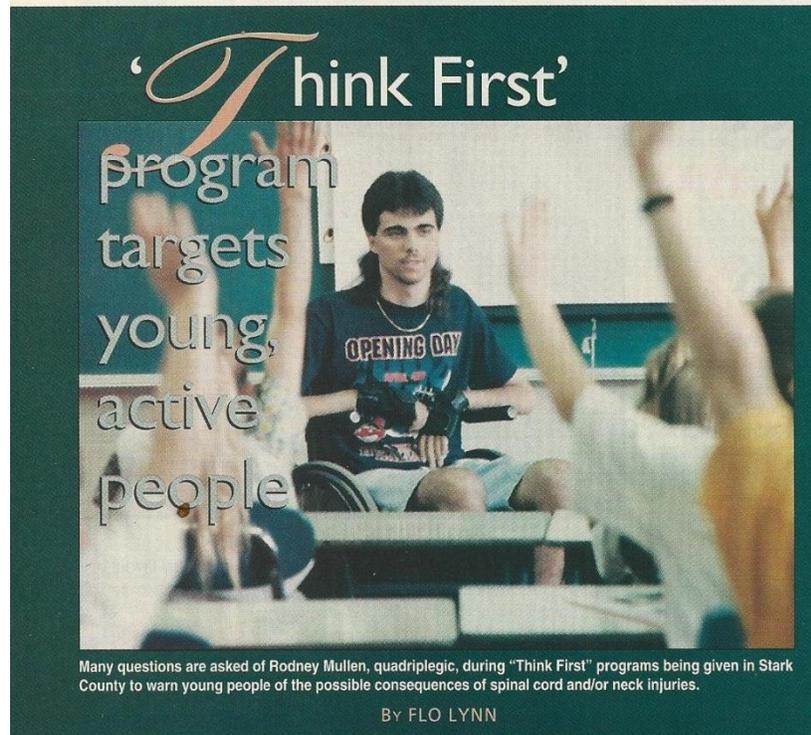
**ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center**  
**A Historical Review and Its Role in Injury Prevention in the Community**

**Appendix**

## Appendix 1

ThinkFirst Program on "Stark" magazine. July/August 1996

### OVERVIEW



Many questions are asked of Rodney Mullen, quadriplegic, during "Think First" programs being given in Stark County to warn young people of the possible consequences of spinal cord and/or neck injuries.

BY FLO LYNN

The message is that you can lead a fun, exciting life without hurting yourself if you think first and use your mind to protect your body.

Strong words?

Not if you know people who have had their normal active existence wiped out because of spinal injuries so severe that the remainder of their lives must be spent in wheelchairs, completely dependent upon caregivers.

Not when you consider that these injuries, except for a pitifully few, last not for just a few hours, days or months, but forever.

What is even more thought provoking is that many of these injuries could be entirely avoided just by thinking first.

However, no matter how many words one uses to emphasize the dangers that lurk in every corner of a good time, nothing brings the message home more quickly than living testimony.

Rodney Mullen's presence among his audiences does just that. He is the nucleus of the local "Think First" head and spinal cord injury prevention program which especially targets teens and young adults, but is available to any age group.

Mullen, 25, is a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down. His injuries are the result of a diving accident two and a half years

ago when he was 22.

The program is sponsored locally by Aultman Hospital in Canton which is carrying the message of the National Head and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program, "Think First," initiated by America's Neurosurgeons. It is presented free of charge.

Liz Edmunds, R.N., Aultman trauma coordinator, and Marty Giles, director of home medicine for Aultman, are program co-coordinators. Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi, an Aultman neurosurgeon, is the program's overseeing sponsoring surgeon.

Between January and May 15 of this year the four-point program reached 1,740 students through 25 class presentations in six area school districts.

"The program was founded by a group of neurosurgeons who got together and decided that, if they could get the information to young people on how to prevent these types of premature disabilities and mortalities, the number of injuries hopefully would be reduced," Edmunds said.

"This is an age group that suffers the most head and spinal cord injuries," she explained. "These are the people who are most active — involved in sports, extra curricular activities, learning how to drive — they're just out doing more things, have no fears, and have the most risky behavior.

"Sometimes they won't be cautious and wear helmets when riding bikes or motorcycles or they may not think before they dive into a pool," Edmunds continued. "There may be underage drinking going on and when that happens, these people are not going to be as sharp in their thinking."

Each year in the United States an estimated 500,000 persons suffer permanent brain and spinal cord injuries, the most frequent being from motor vehicle accidents, falls, sports, recreation (especially diving), and violence. Many of these injuries are preventable.

Young people understand injuries — temporary ones. They do not understand injuries that last a lifetime, and that's where Mullen's presentation cracks the whip.

As Edmunds tells it, "Rodney had everything. At 19 he had his own business and career in car restoration. He knew when he was 16 that that's what he wanted to do.

"He was known nationally for his work and had been written up in several periodicals such as *Hot Rod* magazine. He won national awards for a '33 Chevy and other cars he restored.

"He had all the toys that any 19-year-old could want, because by that time he was taking home more than \$1,000 clear each week. He had a jet ski boat that he restored for his father. They had readied it to take out in the spring, but it never was used because of the accident. He had 'gone through' six different dirt bikes and motorcycles. He had the cars of his choice. He tells his audiences all of this and they see him sitting in his electric wheelchair and they see the pictures of him before his accident.

"Within three months after he was injured, all the toys were sold to cover medical and other expenses," Edmunds said.

"Mullen tells the young people what all he had to give up," Edmunds continued. "He explains that accidents like his do happen and he tells them that he feels he is fortunate because most quadriplegics end up in an extended-care facility, while he is home with his parents, Gary and Cheryl Mullen."

Even that took a lot of doing, Edmunds said. Mullen's parents sold the family home and built another one that would accommodate the wheelchair and their son's special needs. Rodney's talented and creative father, who's employed at Republic Engineered Steels' Canton plant, built an elevator in the home and equipped the basement as a physical therapy room.

When Mullen progressed enough in his therapy to be able to get around in a wheelchair, he felt that he had reached a milestone because it gave him a measure of independence, Edmunds said.

He tells the young people that at their age, friends mean everything to one another. "Think about it," he says. "You have 15 to 20

## OVERVIEW

friends you run around with on the weekends. When something like this happens to you, you're put into slow gear and your friends go on because they have a life.

"All of a sudden you have no friends. I can tell you I still have four or five friends. It's nothing against the others. I'd probably be the same way. They have things to do. Because of my injury I can't go into a lot of places that are loud because I can only talk so loud." He explains his breathing pattern that limits his volume.

According to Edmunds, some members of the audiences are very bold and have asked one particular question: "How do you live? If I had to live like that I'd want to kill myself." Mullen responds that for the first year he was deeply depressed and attempted suicide once, even though it was almost impossible to do because of his physical restrictions. The attempt was thwarted by his father.

Later, when a friend told him, "You've always done everything your best. Don't let this beat you" it was as if something in Mullen

started to fight again and he decided that he was fortunate to be alive, an attitude he carries with him today.

Mullen is grateful for his parents' devotion to him. "When you generally think of life support, you think of tubes and other hospital paraphernalia," he said. "My parents are my life support and I owe them everything."

Mullen, who's gradually getting involved in other projects, puts the "Think First" program first on his agenda. He's so impressed that if he's not able to go to a scheduled program, Edmunds cancels it. "I'm just an adult giving a program," she explained. "Rodney IS the program."

Edmunds believes that the program is a good one and is very happy that Dr. Tatsumi made the hospital personnel aware of it. She is

### Program co-coordinators & sponsoring surgeon:



Liz Edmunds, R.N.,  
Aultman trauma coordinator



Marty Giles  
Aultman director of home medicine



Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi  
Sponsoring Aultman neurosurgeon

grateful that Aultman deems its message important enough to promote it in the community.

Mullen feels that if his presentation helps just one youngster think first before getting involved in an accident, then he's accomplished his goal.

Persons interested in scheduling "Think First" are asked to call Edmunds at Aultman Hospital at 452-9911, extension 6186. ♦

## Appendix 2

June 11, 1999

Dear Raul and Steve,

Thank you for willing to participate in ThinkFirst.

Before we meet, I would like to give you brief information about the program. The name of the program is "ThinkFirst Central Mountains". This is a national injury prevention program offered by the National ThinkFirst Foundation. The ThinkFirst Head and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program was founded by the joint effort of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. The program offers two injury prevention programs:

1. ThinkFirst for Kids.
2. ThinkFirst for Teens.

We are starting with the ThinkFirst for Teens program for the Vail Valley area as a satellite program under the ThinkFirst Chapter in Denver. Our program is sponsored by the ATAC.

I am enclosing a pamphlet describing ThinkFirst.

Your participation is vitally important and I am sure that you will give a great influence upon the area teenagers.

I look forward see you on June 23, 11:00 at the Vail Valley Medical Center.

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD

ThinkFirst Central Mountains sponsoring physician

## Appendix 3

### Awakening Newsletter

By Ana-Maria Vergara and Cindy Duncan  
Wendy Martin Accessible program/Vail associate

August 1999

On July 11<sup>th</sup> Head Injury meeting at the Ford Amphitheater, we had the opportunity to meet Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi MD and have him join our group. He is extremely knowledgeable on subjects pertaining to our head injuries. Everyone seemed enjoyed him and anxious to have him join us again.

We are very fortunate to have Dr. Tatsumi join us on August 14<sup>th</sup> for another meeting. All of us will have the opportunity to meet and ask questions to Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi once again.

Dr. Tatsumi, MD was born in Japan and graduated from Gunma University, School of Medicine in 1955. He completed Neurosurgery Training at Episcopal Hospital in Philadelphia, PA and headed his own private practice in Canton, OH for thirty years. Now retired, he resides in Edward since 1998.

Dr. Tatsumi involved in numerous things. He is a member of American Association of Neurological Surgeons, Congress of Neurological Surgeons, American College of Surgeons and last but definitely not least, the American Medical Association.

Today we will be discussing neurosurgeons Head – Spinal Cord Injury Prevention. We all need to be more aware of possibilities that can happen to any given time. Please feel free to raise questions and concerns you may have.

Please meet at **Trail's End Bar** located at the base of the mountain in Lionshead at 2:45pm. From there we will walk to the ticket Window as a group. The ticket windows are located east of Trail's End, underneath the clock tower. It is directly behind of the season pass office. **If you have your winter Access Pass, please bring it with you. If you do not have a pass, no worries, Vail Associates will give you a lift ticket for free.** Our meeting will be held at the top of Gondola at 3:30pm.

After the meeting, approximately 5:30pm, we will go back down on the Gondola and have a bite to eat (Garfinkel's Bart & Yeti's, or subway). We are going to see the Paul Mitchell international Dance Company at the Ford Amphitheater. We have a discount for the brain injury Group, 2 for 1 \$15.00. Bring warm clothes and rain gear in case. If you have trouble seeing or walking, please let one of ushers know. There is disable seating available. The performance starts at 7:30 pm, but we suggest that arrive at least 30-40 mints early. You can drive to the east Vail Parking Lot and take the bus or take the bus from Lionshead. Ford Park is the closest, but you have to pay \$5.00, the bus is free. There are golf carts available with a driver to shuttle down to the theater from Ford Park. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Ana-Marie 970-476-4122.

#### POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS

September 14, 1999 regular Monthly Meeting in the Vail library at 7-8:30pm.

October 7-9, 1999 Annual BIAC (Brain Injury Association of Colorado) Conference. This will be held at the Marriott in Vail. If you have difficulty paying, you can get a scholarship by writing to BIAC, 6825 E. Tennessee Ave. #405, Denver, CO 80224.

## Appendix 4

August 12, 1999

ThinkFirst Presentation to the Brain Injury Support Group:

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak to you today.

When I meet you in here today, you remind me of my patients. I have had many patients just like you, and I feel like I am talking to my patients. All of you went through the most critical events of your life, the brain injury, or surgery. I admire your courage and efforts to come through the crisis and to get back to your life. I know that it is very difficult and time consuming efforts. You are here to help and support each other, and I think that is wonderful.

Some of you had brain injury with different causes, some of you had brain tumor and some of you had aneurysm rupture or stroke. All these things hit you like a thunder and you are suddenly ending up losing important part of your function such as a motor function, speech or reading ability. Young healthy individuals suddenly losing such an important function is a shocking event to the individuals and also to their families and indeed a tragedy. I have treated many such patients and faced with their crisis and shared the suffering with the individuals and their families. As you all know, some of the functions can be restored by extensive rehabilitation, but some of functions are permanently lost. Because once a nerve cell dies, it cannot be replaced. In other words, once the brain is injured or damaged, it cannot be cured. Therefore, prevention of the brain injury or damage becomes very important issue. The prevention of stroke or brain injury is big public concerns today. I would like to talk about Brain Injury Prevention today.

According to a new CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) report, an estimated 5.3 million Americans, a little more than 2 percent of the U.S. population, currently live with disabilities resulting from traumatic brain injuries. CDC estimates in each year 1 million people are treated in hospital emergency room, of which 230,000 people are hospitalized and 80,000 people become disabled resulting from the brain injury and 50,000 die from the brain injury.

To gain perspective into these numbers, let us compare with other medical conditions:

**AIDS:** According to CDC, approximately 350,000 Americans are living with AIDS today and 21, 909 American died from AIDS in 1997.

**Breast Cancer:** This year, 182,000 women and 1,000 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 46,000 will die as a result of the disease.

**Multiple Sclerosis:** According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, there are between 250,000- 300,000 people diagnosed with MS in the U.S.

**Spinal Cord Injuries:** According to a study published in Discover Magazine, 7,800 Americans sustain spinal cord injuries in each year.

By comparing these numbers, injuries far exceed those diseases combined. Yet very little attention has been paid to injury. We must make every effort to injury prevention.

Every neurosurgeon became frustrated not being able to cure the brain injury and spinal cord injury. And certainly, we sympathize the agony of the parents who must face the fact that their son or daughter will

never speak or walk again. Every day in our practice, we are reminded of how dramatically a life can change when fun and exciting activity suddenly turn to tragedy.

The most frequent causes of head and spinal cord injuries are motor vehicle accidents, falls, sports, recreational activities, diving and violence. Teens and young adults are at highest risk for these devastating injuries.

To help to prevent these devastating injuries, American neurosurgeons joined together and founded the National Head and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program in 1986, which now we call "ThinkFirst".

The THINKFIRST Program consists of two prevention programs:

1. THINKFIRST for KIDS
2. THINKFIRST for TEENS

ThinkFirst For Kids: This comprehensive prevention program targets children in grade 1-3 and implemented in the class room by teachers, or school nurses. The program includes a separate curriculum for each grade; a "Street Smart", a Think First Adventure video, one set of five class room posters, one set of five color comic strips and one set of five black and white comic strips. Each curriculum is divided into six lessons, introduction to the brain and spinal cord, vehicle, water, bicycle, sports and recreational safety as well as safety around weapons and creative problems-solving.

The ThinkFirst For Teens: This is a public education effort targeting this high-risk age group. It is presented at no charge in junior and senior high schools. The program educates young people about personal vulnerability and risk taking. The message is that you can have a fun, exciting life, and you can do it without hurting yourself if you **think first and use your mind to protect your body**.

There are four components to the ThinkFirst For Teens. The school based education, reinforcement activities, general public education, and public policy activities. The major educational portion is presented in junior high and high schools, in either large assembly or classroom. It consists of four segments.

1. The 15-minute multi-award film "Harms Way" which feature honest and direct testimony about the narrow margin separating exciting activity and fun which results in tragedy. Blending action and music, it features the insights of dynamic teenagers with brain and spinal cord injuries.
2. A discussion of the anatomy of the brain and spinal cord, how injuries to these parts of body occur, the physical results of injury, and how many of these injuries can be prevented. It is stressed that teens are the highest risk age group for these injuries.
3. A young person who has sustained a brain or spinal cord injury describes how his or her life has changed since the injury. This is the key component of the program, as it shows the students that these injuries can and do happen to people just like them while engaging in typical teenage activities. Many questions from the students to the speaker will be followed.
4. A brief discussion on proper bystander behavior at the scene of an injury, for example, diving or a motor vehicle crash. Often paramedics present this part of the program.

Think First is a registered service mark of The American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Congress of Neurological Surgeons. ThinkFirst symbolizes organized neurosurgery's belief that young people should use their minds to protect their bodies. Since its inception in 1986, nearly 5.7 million young people have received the ThinkFirst message. We are hoping to reduce the number of these devastating injuries throughout the country by this message.

I am now assisting ATAC (Area Trauma Advisory Council) to develop ThinkFirst Program in this region as a trauma prevention program, and I look forward for your cooperation and support.

## Appendix 5

August 6, 1999

Dear Principal:

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi, I am a retired neurosurgeon, living in Edwards. I am sponsoring Injury Prevention Program for the Central Mountain Area Trauma Advisory Council, ATAC.

Each year an estimated 500,000 persons sustain permanent brain injuries and another 10,000 persons sustain spinal cord injuries in the United States. The most frequent causes of these injuries are motor vehicle crashes, falls, sports and recreation, especially diving, and violence. Teens and young adults are at highest risk for these devastating injuries, many of which are preventable.

THINK FIRST Program, the National Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Prevention Program, is an award-winning public education effort targeting this high-risk age group. The THINK First Program educates young people about personal vulnerability and risk taking. The message is that you can have a fun, exciting life, and you can do it without hurting yourself if you **think first and use your mind to protect your body**.

THINK FIRST Program is developed by joint effort of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. The program received Ronald Reagan's 1988 presidential citation for the Private Sector Initiatives, and American Medical Association's 1989 Adolescent Health Congress Award for Excellence in Education and Prevention. Since its inception in 1986, nearly 6 million young people have received the THINKFIRST message.

We would like to bring this award-winning Injury Prevention Program to your school at no charge. An ATAC representative will contact you soon and explain the program in detail.

If you have any questions about the program or implementation of the program, please feel free to call me at 970 926 6304 or Lorraine Caposole, ATAC Coordinator at 970 668 4240

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD

## Appendix 6

January 11, 2000

A Lecture to the Brain Injury Support Group

### **What Cause Brain Damage? How Brain Can Be Protected?**

There are many diseases, such as tumors, hemorrhage, stroke, infection, trauma, degenerative diseases, and hereditary diseases cause brain damage.

1. Direct damage to brain by diseases - focal neurological signs
2. Indirect or secondary damage to the brain by diseases - mass effect - diffuse -can be fatal

In the majority of diseases, except degenerative and hereditary diseases, brain damage can be avoided or minimized by proper management.

Tumors:

Grow various parts of brain:

Outside of brain - benign - compresses brain - temporal focal neurological signs.

Inside of brain - malignant - destroy brain tissue - permanent focal neurological signs.

Malignancy - grade I - IV.

Hemorrhage:

Subarachnoid hemorrhage - ruptured aneurysm

- ruptured vascular malformation

Different degree of severity - different degree of secondary brain damage.

Aneurysm - arterial outpouching - weakness in the arterial wall - arterial bifurcation.

Arteriovenous malformation - congenital

Aneurysm needs to be clipped surgically before ruptures.

Intracerebral hemorrhage - hypertensive

- ruptured aneurysm

- ruptured vascular malformation

Focal neurological signs

Secondary brain damage- permanent neurological signs or death.

Stroke:

Arterial occlusion - ischemia - focal neurological signs

- secondary brain damage - permanent neurological signs or death.

Infection:

Meningitis - diffuse inflammation of meningeal membrane- secondary brain injury

Brain abscess - focal neurological signs.

- secondary brain damage.

- antibiotic treatment, surgical drainage of brain abscess may be necessary.

Encephalitis – virus

Trauma:

Concussion

Contusion

- Hemorrhage - epidural hematoma - compress brain - focal neurological sign
  - or mass effect, secondary brain damage
- subdural hematoma - compress brain - focal neurological signs
  - or mass effect, secondary brain injury
- intracerebral hematoma - destroy brain tissue - focal neurological signs
  - or mass effect, secondary damage.

**Degenerative and Hereditary Diseases:**

- Alzheimer's disease
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple Sclerosis etc.

**Secondary Brain Damages by Various Diseases and Trauma to the Brain**

Brain is contained in a skull, rigid compartment.

Inside of skull: three intracranial contents - maintain certain pressure (Intracranial pressure, ICP)

- brain
- cerebrospinal fluid (CSF)
- circulating blood (CBF), 20% of total blood circulation

ICP - normally below 10mmHg

Any one of intracranial content increases its volume, it will increase ICP.

If any lesion occupies intracranial space, it will also increase ICP.

Each intracranial content can increase its volume.

Brain: it can increase its volume by increasing water content, edema or brain swelling by traumatic injury, hemorrhage, brain tumors, infection or stroke.

CSF: blockage of CSF circulation - hydrocephalus.

CBF: normal cerebral blood flow - 50cc/100gm brain/min. (1500gm brain -750cc)

can be influenced by arterial CO<sub>2</sub> content (Pa CO<sub>2</sub>)

PaCO<sub>2</sub> increase - cerebral blood vessels dilate - increase CBF

PaCO<sub>2</sub> decrease - cerebral blood vessels constrict - decreases CBF

4%/each PaCO<sub>2</sub> mmHg change.

Effect of increased ICP on the brain

Clinical symptoms and signs: headache - alteration in conscious level - coma - death.

Pathophysiology:

1. Decrease in cerebral perfusion pressure: ischemia - cell death - edema
2. Brain herniation - temporal herniation (uncal herniation) -compress brain stem
  - unconscious - decerebrate rigidity - dilate pupil
  - cerebellar tonsillar herniation - compress medulla – stop respiration – death

Example:

Tumor - increase intracranial volume

- brain edema - increase brain volume

- increase ICP - decrease level of consciousness - decrease respiratory effort or obstruct air way - increase PaCO<sub>2</sub> - increase CBF - increase ICP

more - decrease CPP - ischemia - edema - increase ICP more-  
brain herniation - death.

**Secondary Brain Damage by Chemical Changes Caused By Diseases and Trauma.**

Brain cells lives on glucose and oxygen: oxidative glycolysis:  $\text{glucose} + 6 \text{O}_2 = 6\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O} + 690.000 \text{ Cal} + 32 \text{ ATP}$

ATP: Maintain cell membrane integrity -  $\text{Na}^+ / \text{K}^+$

Lack of oxygen, hypoxia - anaerobic glycolysis = 2 ATP + lactic acid

Lack of ATP - loss of cell membrane integrity

$\text{Na}^+$  and  $\text{Ca}^{++}$  into cells - cell death - edema

-release of glutamate -  $\text{Ca}^{++}$  into cells - cell death

### **How Brain Injury Affect You, Your Family and Friends?**

Physical and mental disability

Emotional instability, depression, irritability and anxiety.

Alteration in physical well-being; dizziness, fatigue, oversensitive to noise and photophobia

Seizure disorder

Pain syndromes

Family: Shock and painful

Economic burden

Nationally, 25 billion dollars.

Friends: Only a few remain.

## Appendix 7

Grant Application to Vail Valley Foundation:

May 26, 2000

Meg Laferriere- Horrocks  
Vail Valley Foundation  
Grant Program  
P.O. Box 309  
Vail, CO 81658

Dear Meg:

On behalf of **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**, I would like to submit a grant application to help prevent brain and spinal cord injuries from young people and children in Eagle County.

I am a retired neurosurgeon living in Edwards who was first involved with **ThinkFirst** in Ohio in 1995.

**ThinkFirst** is a national brain and spinal cord injury prevention program, developed by a joint effort of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. Our program, **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**, was initiated last year by *The Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council (ATAC)*, serving Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit counties, and is a satellite program of the **ThinkFirst Denver**.

Each year in the United States, an estimated 500,000 persons sustain brain injury, approximately 56,000 of them die, and 100,000 of them sustain irreversible brain damage, and another 10,000 people sustain spinal cord injury resulting in significant disability. The most frequent causes of these injuries are falls, sports, recreational activities, motor vehicle accidents and violence. Teens and young adults are at the highest risk for these devastating injuries, many of which are preventable.

The goal of **ThinkFirst** is to reduce the incidence of brain and spinal cord injury by educating young people about personal vulnerability and risk taking. The message is “you can have fun and an exciting life without hurting yourself, if you think first and use your mind to protect your body.” **ThinkFirst** is an award winning program, receiving Ronald Reagan’s 1988 Presidential Citation for the Private Sector Initiatives and the American Medical Association’s 1989 Adolescent Health Congress Award for Excellence in Education and Prevention. The program has been presented throughout the United States and Canada.

**ThinkFirst** offers two programs, **ThinkFirst for Kids** and **ThinkFirst for Teens**.

**ThinkFirst for Kids** was designed by a task force of educators, psychologists/psychiatrists and curriculum specialists to help first through third graders develop safety habits which will minimize their risk of brain and spinal cord injuries. It is literacy based, intended to be informative yet fun. It involves children, teachers, parents and members of the community. It is easily integrated into subjects as math, science, reading and language, and it meet district’s academic standards. It is a comprehensive injury

prevention program targeting children in grades 1-3 and is implemented in the classroom by teachers, school nurse, etc., within the school system. Each school or school system has to purchase a Think First For Kids curriculum kit from Think First Foundation. The cost of a kit is \$199.00.

**ThinkFirst for Teens** is a community outreach program which targets junior-high and high school students. It is presented in either a classroom or large assembly free of charge.

The program consists of four segments.

1. An award-winning film presentation, entitled “**On the Edge**”, describing the cause and effect of traumatic injuries using testimonials from injured young people.
2. A discussion of anatomy of the brain and spinal cord, how injuries to these parts of the body occur, the physical result of injury, and how many of these injuries can be prevented.
3. Young person who has sustained a brain or spinal cord injury describes to students how his or her injury occurred and affected his or her life, physically, socially and emotionally, and how it might have been prevented.
4. A brief discussion on proper bystander behavior at the scene of the accident.

People living in the Vail Valley region are very active in sports and outdoor recreational activities, and as a world class resort, this region invites many people not only from all over the United States, but also from all over the world. I believe that setting a priority in safety and injury prevention is vitally important to our communities. Although our program involves other surrounding counties, only Eagle county program will be funded by the money requested.

In the 1999-2000 School year, **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** presented 17 classroom sessions in 6 middle and high schools, of which 7 classroom sessions in 3 schools (Minturn Middle School, Eagle Valley High School and Battle Mountain High School) were in Eagle County. We have reached to a total of 225 students in Eagle county. Although this was our first year in this region, we have had a very successful **ThinkFirst** program. We received many excellent remarks and responses from students as well as from teachers. Full details of our activities are attached (refer to attachment THINK FIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 1999-2000 ACTIVITIES REPORT).

Our goal for the 2000-2001 school year is to increase the **ThinkFirst for Teens** program to additional 3 schools, Eagle Valley Middle school, Berry Creek Middle School and Vail Mountain School, and also to start the **ThinkFirst for Kids** program in the Eagle county elementary school system.

Unfortunately, ATAC has insufficient funds for supporting this program for the coming year. Therefore, we are seeking your support. I will attach last year’s budget and the projected coming year’s budget. (Refer to attachment THINK FIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 1999-2000 BUDGET, and THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 2000-2001 BUDGET PROJECTION).

We would like to request a grant in the total amount of \$ 5,500.00 for the new school year.

**ThinkFirst Denver** has been qualified tax-exempt under section 501( c )(3) of the internal revenue code as CHILDRENS NEUROSCIENCE RESARCH FOUNDATION, Employer Identification Number: 84-1271092. (Refer to an attachment, the Letter from Internal Revenue Service District Director Bobby E. Scott, dated Sept. 23, 1994).

Prior year's tax return was not filed by the CHILDRENS NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH FOUNDATION, since their income did not exceed \$25,000.00. (Refer to an attached letter from Dr. Michael H. Handler dated May 25, 2000)

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains** is a satellite program under **ThinkFist Denver**, but the funds raised by the satellite program will remain in the use of the satellite program. The grant check is to be payable to THINK FIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS and mailed to Lorraine Caposole, ATAC coordinator, ATAC, PO Box 5055, Frisco, CO 80443

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains** was created by Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council, who continues to endorse and monitor the program, including budget.

ATAC, PO Box 5055, Frisco, CO 80443,  
Chairman: Dr. John Woodland, Vail Medical Center  
Vice President: Paul Mattson, EMT  
Coordinator: Lorraine Caposole.  
Tel. 970 668 4240, Fax, 970 668 4146

### **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD. Director, sponsoring neurosurgeon  
Cindy Tatsumi, RN. Coordinator and Nurse Speaker  
Sheri Cole, Speaker  
Raul Martin, Speaker  
Bill Mielcuszny, Speaker  
Dena Walsh, Speaker

### **Contact Person's Mailing Address and Tel. Fax No.**

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.  
PO Box 2858  
Edwards, CO 81632  
Tel: 970 926 6304  
Fax: 970 926 6305

Your support will be greatly appreciated. If I can provide any further information, please let me know. I look forward to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

Attachments:

1. **THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 1999-2000 ACTIVITIES REPORT.**

2. **THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 1999-2000 BUDGET.**
3. **THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 2000-2001 BUDGET PROJECTION.**
4. Letter from Internal Revenue Service District Director Bobby E. Scott addressed to CHILDRENS NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH FOUNDATION for federal income tax exempt qualification, dated Sep. 23, 94.
5. Letter from Dr. Michael H. Handler dated May 25, 00.
6. Vail Daily newspaper article, November 10, 1999, regarding Think First presentation at Eagle Valley High School.

cc: Dr. Michael H. Handler  
President, CHILDRENS NEUROSCIENCE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

cc: Lorraine Caposole  
Central Mountains ATAC Coordinator

## Appendix 8

August 21, 2000

The Summit Foundation Grant Application

### ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY

(Submit as the cover page of your application)

SUBMITTED TO: The Summit Foundation

ORGANIZATION NAME: ThinkFirst Central Mountains

MAILING ADDRESS: P O Box 2858 Edwards, CO 81632

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: 0366 Kensington Drive, Edwards, CO 81632

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Tetsuo Tatsumi,MD.

CONTACT PERSON: Tetsuo Tatsumi,MD.

DAYTIME PHONE: 970 926 6304 FAX: 970 926 6305

EMAIL: tatsumi@ctive.com

PURPOSE OF GRANT:

TYPE OF AGENCY

Agency support as a Whole

Art & Culture

Marketing Support

Health & Human Service

Special Program/Project

Education

(special activity of the organization consistent with its mission)

Capital Expenditure

Environment

(funds spent for additions or improvements to plant or equipment)

Seed, Start-up or Development Costs

Sports

Technical Assistance

Special Event

Matching Grant

In-Kind Support

Other:

AMOUNT OF REQUEST: \$5,400.00 FISCAL YEAR: 2000-2001 School Year

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF REQUEST:

To continue and expand the national brain and spinal cord injury prevention program, ThinkFirst for Teens and ThinkFirst for Kids programs in Summit and neighboring Park and Lake Counties, ThinkFirst Central Mountains needs your support.

1999-2000 Act. Operating Revenue \$6,000.00 1999-2000 Act. Operating Expenses \$5,400.25

2000-2001 Proj. Revenue Pending 2000-2001 Proj. Operating expenses \$9,782.00

( \$5,400.00 for Summit, Park, and Lake Counties)

\_\_\_\_Signature, Executive Director

Date

\_\_\_\_Signature, Coordinator

Date

### I. AGENCY INFORMATION:

## THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS

### A. Mission

Annually, as a result of preventable injury, more than 56,000 Americans die of a brain injury, 99,000 people develop loss of function after a brain injury, and \$25 billion is the total national bill for traumatic brain injury. Each year, 7,800 - 10,000 spinal cord injuries occur, and 250,000 - 400,000 individuals are living with a spinal cord injury.

The mission of **ThinkFirst** is to prevent brain and spinal cord injuries through the education of children, students, community leaders and creators of public policy.

### Goals of ThinkFirst Central Mountains

To reduce the tragic number of unintentional deaths and brain and spinal cord injuries in children and adolescents living throughout the central mountains region by continuation and expansion of the **Think First Programs**.

### B. History of ThinkFirst and ThinkFirst Central Mountains

**Think First** was founded jointly by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. **ThinkFirst** is an award-winning educational program, receiving Ronald Reagan's 1988 Presidential citation for the Private Sector Initiatives and the American Medical Association's 1989 Adolescent Health Congress Award for Excellence in Education and Prevention. **ThinkFirst** offers two educational programs, **ThinkFirst for Teens** and **ThinkFirst for Kids**.

**Think First Central Mountains** was established under the recommendation of neurosurgeon, Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi and sponsored by **Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council (ATAC)** serving Eagle, Lake, Park, and Summit Counties, as a satellite program under the **ThinkFirst Denver** chapter in 1999.

### B. ThinkFirst Central Mountains' Activities and Accomplishments.

In the 1999-2000 school year, **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** presented 17 classroom sessions in 6 middle and high schools in the four counties which included 10 classroom presentations in Middle and High Schools in Summit and neighboring Park and Lake Counties. A total number of 484 students received the **ThinkFirst** message, of which 259 were in Summit, Park, and Lake Counties. **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** presented the **ThinkFirst** program to two civic organizations, Eagle/Summit Brain Injury Support Group and Western Eagle Valley Rotary Club, and donated seven ski helmets to Upper Blue Elementary School in Summit County. (Refer to attachment 1, THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 1999-2000 ACTIVITIES REPORT)

## II. PURPOSE OF GRANT

### A. Description of the programs to be funded

#### **ThinkFirst for Teens** and **ThinkFirst for Kids**.

**ThinkFirst for Teens** is presented to middle and high school students in either classroom or large assembly free of charge. The program consists of four segments, lasting for approximately one hour.

1. An award-winning film presentation, entitled "**On the Edge**", describing the cause and effect of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries using testimonials from injured young people. A discussion of anatomy of the brain and spinal cord by a health care professional, how injuries of these parts of the body occur, the physical result of injury, and how many of these injuries can be prevented.
2. A young person who has sustained a brain or spinal cord injury describes to students how his or her injury occurred and affected his or her life, physically, socially, emotionally, and how it might have been prevented.

3. A brief discussion on proper bystander behavior to prevent secondary injuries at the scene of the accident by emergency medical personnel.

**ThinkFirst of Kids** was designed to expand the message of safety to the elementary school-aged population recognizing that it is easier to form behavior than to change behavior. It was designed by a task force of educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, and curriculum specialists to help first through third graders develop safety habits which will minimize their risk of brain and spinal cord injuries. It is literacy based intended to be informative yet fun. It involves children, teachers, parent and members of the community. It incorporates five safety modules into subjects such as reading, math, science, and English. These five modules are motor vehicle safety, water safety, weapon safety, and recreational safety. The program is taught in the classroom by first, second and third grade teachers. Think First Foundation provide the **ThinkFirst for Kids Curriculum Kit**. The cost of a Kit is \$199.00.

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains** received a seed grant of \$6,000.00 from ATAC, Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council, in 1999 and accomplished a very successful first year. Unfortunately, ATAC is unable to provide funds to support this program for the coming school year. Therefore, we are seeking an alternative funding to continue and expand the **ThinkFirst** program.

#### **B. Goals and objectives for the purpose of grant**

1. Continuation of the current **ThinkFirst for Teens** program presentations to Summit High, Lake High, and Park Middle Schools in the 2000-2001 school year.
2. Expansion of the **ThinkFirst for Teens** program to Summit Middle School, Lake Middle School, and Park High School during the 2000-2001 school year.
3. Implementation of the **ThinkFirst for Kids** program in the Summit elementary school system in the 2000-2001 school year.

Expansion of the **ThinkFirst for Kids** program to the Park and Lake elementary school system during the 2000-2001 school year.

In order to achieve these goals, **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** will require \$5,400.00 (Refer to attachment 3, THINK FIRST CENTRAL MONTAINS 2000-2001 BUDGET PROJECTION).

#### **C. Timetable for implementing the programs**

The **ThinkFirst for Teens** program presentations will be scheduled individually by the school, September 2000 through May 2001.

The implementation of the **ThinkFirst for Kids** program to Park, and Lake elementary school systems will be planned after January 2001.

#### **D. Benefits to the local community**

The impact of sudden brain and spinal cord injuries can be devastating to individuals, their families and to the community. The health care cost, rehabilitative cost and loss of productive life of the brain and spinal cord injured persons is an enormous emotional drain upon their families and community. Each incidence of brain or spinal cord injury can exceed \$4million and \$600,000, respectively in patient care. We are confident that the **ThinkFirst** programs will inspire safety awareness among the children and young people living in Summit and neighboring Counties and play a role in preventing or reducing the incidence of these tragic injuries. The wellbeing of the young people is essential to the vitality of the community and its economy.

#### **E. Long term sources/strategies for funding**

The **National ThinkFirst Foundation** will continue to provide support, publicity, ongoing curriculum development and a limited amount of donated curriculum materials.

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains** is confident in its ability to obtain on-going funding through local foundations and corporate sponsorship. At the end of the grant period, we will seek continuing support of **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** from the various foundations, organizations and corporations such as listed below:

Vail Valley Foundation, Vail Resorts' Community Giving, Beaver Creek Merchant Association, Wal-Mart Foundation, Slifer, Smith and Flampton Real Estate, Inc., Western Eagle Valley Rotary Club, Vail Valley Medical Center, Aspen Valley Hospital, and Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Council (RETAC).

### **III. Evaluation**

#### **ThinkFirst for Kids Program**

##### **Impact Evaluation**

A pre-test / post-test comparative design will be used to evaluate the impact of the intervention among the four chosen elementary schools. The testing will measure the overall change in score, as well as the unique change in score of each of the subject matter modules.

The hypothesis of the evaluation study is that there will be a significant reduction in self-reported high-injury-risk behaviors, and a significant improvement in critical thinking and injury prevention knowledge following the delivery of the six- week curriculum.

The pre-test will be given within 10 days prior to implementation of the Think First for Kids curriculum, and the post-test within 10 days of completion of the curriculum.

##### **Process Evaluation**

The **ThinkFirst** coordinator will provide a summary of the number students reached by the intervention and the number of teachers participating. Teachers will be asked to complete an anonymous two-page survey that elicits their overall rating of the components of the program, the quality of the videos and other supplemental materials as effective teaching tools, the time spent teaching the modular components, and the ease of integrating the curriculum into lesson plan.

#### **ThinkFirst for Teens**

##### **Impact Evaluation**

A survey instrument will be utilized to assess the teen intervention program. The survey will summarize the impact of **ThinkFirst** nurse educators and injured-speakers by assessing student participant knowledge of the brain spinal cord and the potential adverse health outcomes of high-risk activities. Self-reported risk taking behaviors will be summarized.

This survey will aid in capturing grade, gender, and race-specific data regarding the prevalence of behaviors that put teens at high risk of injury. Sample questions will include:

How often do you ride in a car with a driver who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol?

How often have you driven without a seatbelt?

List three high-risk behaviors you have been involved with in the past month.

(Refer to attachment 1, THINKFIRST CENTRAL MOUNTAINS 1999-2000 ACTIVITIES REPORT, Students Responses)

##### **Process Evaluation**

The process evaluation will be similar to that for the **ThinkFirst for Kids** program.

## Appendix 9

Letter to Clifford Eldridge

February 13, 2001

Clifford Eldridge, President  
Vail Valley Medical Center  
181 West Meadow Drive  
Vail, CO 81657

Dear Mr. Eldridge:

Please let me introduce myself. I am a retired neurosurgeon, living in Edwards, and sponsoring and directing **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**.

**ThinkFirst** is a national brain and spinal cord injury prevention program founded jointly by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. There are more than two hundred **ThinkFirst** chapters throughout the United States and Canada. The mission of **ThinkFirst** is to reduce the incidence of brain and spinal cord injuries through the education of young people, community leaders and creators of public policy. I am enclosing the brochures outlining the **ThinkFirst** programs.

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains** was established in 1999 as a satellite program under the **ThinkFirst Denver** chapter with the support of ATAC, *Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council*. In the 1999-2000 school year, **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** presented 17 classroom sessions in six middle and high schools in Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit Counties.

In the 2000-2001 school year, we have been supported by RETAC, *Central Mountains Regional Emergency Medical and Trauma Advisory Council* and funded by Beaver Creek Merchants Association, Colorado State University, Eagle County Health and Human Services, Eagle County EMS Council, The Summit Foundation, Summit County EMS Council, and Vail Resorts Inc. This year we have doubled the number of school presentations and also introduced the **ThinkFirst for Kids** program to Eagle and Summit County elementary school systems. In order to continue our program as a nonprofit organization **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** must become its own chapter. **ThinkFirst Denver** has been inactive since last year and we will not be able to depend on them as their satellite program next year. We are now facing two choices, first, to form our own nonprofit organization or second, to join forces with another nonprofit organization. My choice would be to join with another nonprofit organization to save time and resources. Therefore, I would like to ask you if it is possible for Vail Valley Medical Center to include **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** as a part of Vail Valley Medical Center's injury prevention program? I believe **ThinkFirst** will enhance the Vail Valley Medical Center's commitment to provide excellent health care services to the Vail Valley and surrounding communities.

I would like to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss in further detail regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

cc: Dr. John Woodland.

Lorraine Caposole, RETAC coordinator.

## Appendix 10

Abstract submitted and accepted to the World Medical Tennis Association meeting on October 3-11, 2001 to be held in Fukuoka, Japan.

### **ThinkFirst, National Injury Prevention Program**

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD. and Cindy L. Tatsumi, RN.  
Think First Central Mountains  
Edwards, Colorado, USA

#### **Abstract**

**Background:** In children and adolescents, injury accounts for more deaths than all other causes combined. Injury is the leading cause of death under 45 years of age. Yet injury is the most under recognized health problem facing the nation today. Very little resources have been allocated for the research and control of injury compared to other diseases such as heart disease or cancer etc.

**ThinkFirst** is a national injury prevention program founded by the joint effort of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. The mission of **ThinkFirst** is to prevent brain, spinal cord, and other injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders and creators of public policy. **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** was established in 1999 and served the central Colorado mountain region.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this presentation is two folds: 1. Introduction of **ThinkFirst** and its efficacy as an injury prevention program through the responses from the students. 2. To promote **ThinkFirst** implementation to many communities.

**Methods:** The **ThinkFirst** program was presented to 1128 students in 28 classrooms and 8 assemblies, at junior high and high schools in Eagle, Summit, Lake, and Park Counties during the 2000-2001 school year. Before the presentation, 10 safety questions were asked to each student, concerning the use of helmets in 7 different sports activities, car seat-belt use, water safety, and by-stander behavior at the scene of injury. After the presentation, each student was asked to fill out an evaluation sheet containing the following question: I. Please rates the parts of the program, II. Which part of the program had the greatest impact? III. Please list at least three messages you heard from this program, IV. Please check the answer that best expresses your opinion: 1. I could understand and relate to the speakers. 2. I gained new knowledge. 3. I will change my behavior due to the information I learned. 4. Please comment on the program overall.

**Results:** 1113 students responded to the questionnaire. The average use of helmets in bicycle, ski, snowboard, skateboard, roller-skate, and rollerblade was 50%, and 76% in motorcycle. The helmet use was much higher in the private school student population than the public schools, 78% and 30% respectively. The helmet use was much higher in Summit County student population than Lake & Park County's, 62% and 29% respectively. It was reflecting the economic status of the students and counties. Car seat-belt use as drivers was 92% and as passengers was 87%. 61% of students responded to check the depth of water before they dive in pool, river or lake. 897 students responded to the program evaluation. 87% of students rated the Injured Guest Speaker excellent. 86% of students noted the Injured Guest

Speaker had the greatest impact on them. The three messages students heard from this program: They listed, wear helmet: 523; wear seat-belt: 492; think first before you act:295; be safe or cautious:165; check the depth of water before diving: 96, etc. 98% of students strongly agree or agree to understand and relate speakers. 97% of students strongly agree or agree to gained new knowledge. 96% of students said they will change their behavior due to the information they learned. 318 students commented the program great, excellent or very good.

**Conclusion:** The helmet use for the various sports activities in the central mountains region in Colorado ranges from 24% to 85% depending upon the individual's economic status. The helmet use in motorcycles is consistently higher, 85%-76%. The core strength of the **ThinkFirst for Teens** program was the Injured Guest Speaker which was well demonstrated by the student responses. Overall, this program was well received by the majority of the students, and made students aware of helmet use, vehicle and water safety. However, the efficacy of this program as injury prevention, ultimately reducing the incidence of injuries remains to be seen. Further longitudinal, sequential study is necessary.

## Appendix 11

Submitted to the Editor on October 27, 2001 and published on The Vail Daily November 10, 2001.

### Community Support

Dear Editor:

On behalf of **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**, I would like to thank Aspen Valley Medical Foundation for their gift of \$ 2,400.00 for the 2001-2002 school year program. Their support of **ThinkFirst** will make a difference in the lives of young people in Pitkin County and the Roaring Fork Valley. In children and adolescents, injury accounts for more deaths than all other causes combined. According to the CDC data (1995), injury is the leading cause of death and disability under age 45, yet injury is the most under recognized health problem.

**ThinkFirst** is a National Injury Prevention Foundation founded by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986. The mission of **ThinkFirst** is to prevent brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders, and creators of public policies. **Think First** provides two comprehensive educational programs. **ThinkFirst for Kids** is curriculum based injury prevention lessons taught by teachers in the classrooms, grades one through three. It is designed to influence behavior early in a child's life. **ThinkFirst for Teens** is a reinforcement program, presented by health care professionals and injured speakers in the classrooms or assemblies at the middle schools and high schools. The goal of **ThinkFirst** is to prevent traumatic injuries among young people by teaching them to think first and use your mind to protect your body.

**ThinkFirst Central Mountains** was founded in 1999 and supported by ATAC, Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council. Since its inception, the **ThinkFirst for Teens** program was presented to 45 classrooms and 8 assemblies at 7 high schools and 7 middle schools in Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit Counties. A total number of 1612 students received the **ThinkFirst** message. A total of 243 bicycle helmets and 64 ski helmets were provided to the students. The program was also presented to three civic organizations. Six **Think First for Kids** curriculums were provided to Eagle County elementary school system last year.

Since the 2001-2002 school year, **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** became under the auspices of Vail Valley Medical Center Foundation, and it will continue its mission to prevent brain, spinal cord, and other traumatic injuries from young people living in the central mountains region. Under the leadership of Dr. Bill Rodman, Trauma Director, and Mary Shelton, RN, Trauma Coordinator at Aspen Valley Hospital, a new team of **ThinkFirst** subdivision was established to start the program in Pitkin County and the Roaring Fork Valley region.

In order to carry out our mission, **ThinkFirst** needs a wide range of community support.

A timely gift from the Aspen Valley Medical Foundation provided the opportunity to start this program in Pitkin County and the Roaring Fork Valley. I am grateful to the Aspen Valley Medical Foundation for their support of **ThinkFirst**, and would like to acknowledge its leadership for the community support.

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

Sponsoring Neurosurgeon

ThinkFirst Advisory Board  
Edwards  
Tel. 970 926 6304, e-mail: [tatsumi@ctive.com](mailto:tatsumi@ctive.com)

## Appendix 12

October 15, 2001

Jan Harris, President  
Visual Impact  
10105 Technology Boulevard West  
Dallas, TX 75220 - 4332

Dear Jan:

Thank you very much for making such beautiful color slides for the **ThinkFirst** presentation, and contributing the total cost to **ThinkFirst**.

These slides are an excellent tool to promote **ThinkFirst**. We are now all set to make the **Think First** presentations to various organizations. I am certain that your contribution will play a significant role to expand **ThinkFirst** in the central mountains region.

I will present the slides to the Advisory Board Members at the upcoming Advisory Board Meeting on October 31, and obtain an approval for your contribution to be tax deductible gift. I will also ask an approval from the Vail Valley Medical Foundation to make your contribution as tax deductible gift to **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center**. I will contact you again when I obtain the approval.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

cc: Mari Salmi, RN. Director  
Scott Beaver, Development Coordinator  
Al Mielcuszny, Treasurer

## Appendix 13

August 18, 2002

Mr. Ed O'Brien  
Chairman, Board of Vail Valley Medical Center  
P.O. Box 840  
Edwards, CO 81632

Dear Chairman Ed O'Brien:

On behalf of **ThinkFirst**, National Injury Prevention Foundation, and as a sponsoring neurosurgeon for the **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center**, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Board, President Cliff Eldridge, and the members of Vail Valle Medical Center staff for their support of **ThinkFirst**.

Under the new director, Mari Salmi, RN, **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center** has done excellent work during the 2001-2002 school year.

I would like to explain to you about **ThinkFirst**. **ThinkFirst** was founded as a national brain and spinal cord injury prevention program by the joint effort of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons in 1986.

The mission of **ThinkFirst** is to prevent brain, spinal cord, and other traumatic injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders and the creators of public policy.

**ThinkFirst** provides two comprehensive educational programs: **ThinkFirst for Teens** and **ThinkFirst for Kids**.

**ThinkFirst for Teens:** A community outreach program, presented to middle school, high school, and civic organizations. The program consists of four segments:

1. An award-winning film, "On the edge" presentation; describing the cause and effect of traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries using testimonials from injured young people.
2. A health professional speaker presentation; describing the anatomy of the brain and spinal cord, physical results of injury to these organs, and prevention of these injuries.
3. An injured guest speaker presentation; a young person who has sustained a brain or spinal cord, explains to the students directly about his or her injury and physical, social and emotional consequences of such injuries.
4. A brief discussion on proper by-stander behavior at the scene of the injury.

**ThinkFirst for Kids:** is designed to help young children, Grade 1-3, develop life-long safety habits. It is taught by teacher using grade specific curriculum provided by the Think First Foundation.

When I moved to Vail Valley in 1998, I had an opportunity to attend ATAC (Central Mountains Area Trauma Advisory Council) meeting. At the meeting, I recommended to initiate **ThinkFirst** as their injury prevention program. In May 1999, ATAC approved my recommendation and provided us a seed grant to start **ThinkFirst**. My wife and I started **ThinkFirst Central Mountains**, ATAC's injury prevention program, as a satellite program under the **ThinkFirst Denver** chapter.

The first year (1999-2000 school year), we presented the **ThinkFirst for Teens** program in 17 classrooms at 6 middle and high schools in Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit Counties, reaching to 484 students. We donated 6 ski helmets to Upper Blue Elementary School and 55 bicycle helmets to Eagle Valley High School.

The second year (2000-2001 school year), the program was funded by Aspen Ambulance, Beaver Creek Merchant Association, Colorado State University, Eagle County EMS Council, Eagle County Health Human Services, Summit County EMS Council, The Summit Foundation, and Vail Resorts, Inc. We presented the **ThinkFirst for Teens** program in 28 classrooms, 8 assemblies at 13 schools in Eagle, Lake, Park and Summit Counties, reaching to 1128 students. We donated 189 bicycle helmets, 58 ski helmets to the elementary, middle, and high school students.

Last year, since our parent Denver chapter became inactive, we decided to establish our own chapter in the central mountains region and to expand the program. In order to accomplish this, I sought help from our local hospital. I met with President Cliff Eldridge and asked him to consider incorporating **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** as Vail Valley Medical Center's injury prevention program. After consulting with the Board, Cliff agree to take the program. **ThinkFirst Central Mountains** then changed its name to **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center** and started a new era in 2001.

The 2001-2002 school year, under the new Director Mari Salmi, RN, and with the funding from Aspen Valley Medical Foundation, we were able to expand the program to Pitkin County. We presented **ThinkFirst for Teens** in 10 schools, 38 classrooms, one assembly, reaching to 1145 students, and 105 adults (Aspen ski professionals). **ThinkFirst for Kids** program was implemented at the St. Clare of Assisi school. Bicycle safety chapter was presented at 4 elementary schools and one kindergarten. We also provided helmet fitting at the Kid's Back to School Health Safety Fair, Cinco de Mayo Festival in Edwards, at the Avon Bike Rodeo, Aspen Elementary School Bike Rodeo, and Aspen Valley Health Fair. We donated 81 bicycle helmets, 56 ski helmets and 4 multisport helmets to the students. We donated **ThinkFirst for Kids** curriculum to 3 elementary schools.

We are now preparing to start the 2002-2003 school year, and hoping to expand our program further, reaching to many more children, students and adults as well.

As you said, if we can spare one student from the brain or spinal cord injury, it is worth spending \$50,000. The injury is not the accident, it is predictable and preventable. We have to make every effort for the injury prevention. We believe **ThinkFirst** can make a difference in the lives of young people. We appreciate your continuing support of **ThinkFirst**.

There will be **ThinkFirst Appreciation Reception** at the Shaw Cancer Center Cafeteria in Edwards on August 28, 5-7pm. You and your family are welcome to attend the reception as our guests.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD

## Appendix 14

December 19, 2002

ThinkFirst Presentation to Vail Resorts, Inc. Opening Remarks:

Good evening. Thank you all for coming.

My name is Dr. Tetsuo Tatsumi. Some of you know me as CGS Tat. I am the sponsoring physician for Think First Vail Valley Medical Center.

Before starting the program, I would like to thank Mr. Bill Jensen for making it possible for us to present the Think First program to you this evening. And also, I would like to congratulate everyone for working hard and making Vail the number one ski resort and also the safest ski mountains.

Think First is a National Injury Prevention Foundation established by the American Association of Neurological Surgeons and the Congress of Neurological surgeons in 1986. **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center** is a local chapter serving for the central mountains region of the State of Colorado.

The mission of Think First is to help reduce the incidence of brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injuries through the education of individuals, community leaders, and the creators of public policy.

Injuries are the leading cause of death and disability among children and young adult. Especially the brain and spinal cord injuries share the major part of this cause. As you will learn from this program, the brain and spinal cord were very vulnerable organs and once these organs are damaged, they cannot be repaired and the damage is permanent. The results of these injuries are often devastating to the individuals, their family and to society. Therefore, the prevention of these injuries becomes very important.

Injuries are not accidents, they are most of times predictable and preventable.

Ladies and gentleman whatever you do, skiing, snowboarding, bicycling or driving, please think first, use your mind and protect your body.

Now we will begin the program, first presentation by the Director of the **ThinkFirst Vail Valley Medical Center**, Sally Ann Bluhm, and VIP speaker, Bill Miencusny.

## Appendix 15

A letter to the Editor

March 11, 2006

“It Won’t Happen to Me.”

A simple fact of reality is “it could happen to anyone,” and when it happens to you, it is often too late. You must **ThinkFirst** clearly before taking your action to avoid eventual consequences. This applies to every daily act of your life, skiing is no exception.

As an advocate of injury prevention and the sponsoring physician for **ThinkFirst** Vail Valley Medical Center, I would like to congratulate Vail Resorts, Inc. for the creation of a Ski Safety Video, “it won’t happen to me”. This is an excellent ski safety presentation focusing on skier safety codes. The video recreates each vivid image of tragic accidents that actually happened on the ski slopes resulting from ignoring each skier safety code. The presentation is well orchestrated, powerful and very effective. There is no doubt that this video presentation will make a positive impact on ski safety awareness among all skiers.

It was a courageous effort on the part of Vail Resorts, Inc. to promote ski safety by exposing the tragic ski accidents on its own ski slopes. This proves that Vail Resorts, Inc. is seriously committed to ski safety and truly the Number One Ski Resort on Ski Safety.

For all of us who are living in the Vail Valley, skiing is a part of our daily lives. Let us join forces with Vail Resorts, Inc. to make Vail Mountain a safe place to ski.

**ThinkFirst** and use your mind to protect your body before you get up on the slopes every time, and enjoy great skiing!!

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD. CGS, Tat.  
Edwards

## Appendix 16

November 26, 2006

Mr. Greg Repetti  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Vail Valley Medical Center  
181 West Meadow Drive  
Vail, CO 81657

Dear Greg:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that I am resigning as sponsoring physician and Executive Board of Directors of Think First Vail Valley Medical Center effective December 7, 2006, due to our family relocation in California. It is difficult for us to leave this wonderful community and rich experiences in the Vail Valley, but we look forward to a new chapter in our lives.

I would like to thank you and the Vail Valley Medical Center Board of Directors for their strong support of Think First since its inception. Under the former Director, Mari Salmi, RN and current Director, Sally Ann Bluhm RN, Think First Vail Valley Medical Center has made tremendous progress toward achieving its goal, "brain, spinal cord and other traumatic injury prevention". I am very hopeful that Think First will continue to grow under the leadership of Vail Valley Medical Center and continue to make a significant impact upon young lives in the central mountain communities.

It has been my privilege to serve as the sponsoring physician and Executive Board Member of Think First Vail Valley Medical Center. I have enjoyed my association with you and your staff members at Vail Valley Medical Center.

I wish you continuing success to lead Vail Valley Medical Center as the premier health care provider in the central mountains region.

With kindest regards,

Tetsuo Tatsumi, MD.

Cc: Ed O'Brien, Linda Brophy, Sally Ann Bluhm, and Eileen Widmer