



# CSF Newsletter

## Children's Spine Foundation

Volume 8, Issue 1

Winter 2006

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the Children's Spine Foundation progresses into the new year, we look back upon our efforts to make a difference in the lives of children. As a non-profit organization, we are blessed to have a wonderful community of caring and giving citizens that support our services to children. The programs of CSF are designed to serve children with spine abnormalities and injuries, and children whose families do not have funds, insurance or access to appropriate spinal health care. The success of our last March gala is indicative of the paramount role supporters of CSF play in helping treat and prevent spinal deformities in children. We are extremely grateful for such dedicated volunteers and generous benefactors.

Spinal deformities such as scoliosis are not unique to only our area but affect youth all over the world. In addition to caring for children in our region, we extended our efforts to the Dominican Republic. Dr. David Siambanes served as a charitable ambassador from the Children's Spine Foundation when he

performed free surgeries for a week in the Dominican Republic. Our efforts abroad have strengthened our determination and solidified our



Dr. Thomas Haider

mission. As an organization concerned for the well-being of all people, we are excited about future work overseas. Spinal irregularities in children are often ignored and not thought of as diseases, deformities that can grow with time and eventually limit both movement and quality of life.

We've continued to work with school nurses from California to spread awareness

of back problems to students and their families. The nurses that we have been fortunate enough to work with have been vectors of knowledge to this entire region and are a cornerstone of the foundation.

The Children's Spine Foundation coordinates its clinics and most surgeries with the Riverside County Regional Hospital, an outstanding medical facility. This association allows us to tend completely to children diagnosed with spinal deformities. Continued cooperation between CSF and RCRH will open doors for the numerous families in need of care for their children. As we step forward, we only hope that more people will join our hands to add momentum to our work and help our vision mature into a beautiful reality.

Sincerely,

Thomas T. Haider, M.D.

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**Special points of interest:**

**Inaugural Charity Golf Classic**

**Friday, May 12, 2006**

**PGA West - Beaumont**

## PHYSICIAN'S CORNER



The Children's Spine Foundation has expanded its assistance of children in desperate need of spinal care beyond our national boundaries by helping to fund a medical missionary trip to the Dominican Republic in September, 2005.

For those whose geographical knowledge is as poor as mine, the Dominican Republic is ... Hispaniola, comprised of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 960 kilometers southeast of Florida and about half the distance between North America and South America. Roughly two-thirds of the island is occupied by the Dominican Republic. The remaining third is Haitian in origin. The team's efforts were centered in the city of Santo Domingo.

The Dominican Republic was discovered by Christopher Columbus. Its history is rife with conflicts with the Spanish, French, and neighboring Haiti as well as internal strife. However, in spite of the turbulent nature of its past, this island boasts a richly varied and lively culture. The Dominican people are Spanish-speaking and their sense of hospitality and friendliness to visitors is instinctual, made all the more remarkable because this is the quintessential third-world nation, lacking in transportation, public utilities, and, most alarming, the medical care taken

for granted by the populations of industrialized nations.

Medical care is quite expensive in this region and the best care is only available to wealthy individuals. A patient in need of medical care who does not have adequate financial resources is virtually unable to obtain appropriate surgical assistance and the expensive instrumentation or implantations



which may be necessary. Sadly, this disparity is quickly evident on tours of the country's public hospitals, where rows and rows of children and young adults have been placed in long-term traction for fractures and injuries that could easily be remedied with the immediate surgical implantation which is completely unaffordable for this group of individuals. Nowhere is this situation more alarming than when it concerns the care of children.

Cure International, a nonprofit organization, has established a hospital in Santo Domingo for the sole purpose of treating deformities in children. Scott Nelson, a recent graduate of Loma Linda and a good friend who worked with me at Riverside County Regional Medical Center, has dedicated five years of his life to missionary work as the Medical Director of this facility. He soon made it quite evident to me that the number of children with deformities is nearly epidemic, not only in the

Dominican Republic but on the island itself, and spine-trained surgeons are not available to meet their needs. These children have severe deformities which alter their ability to function, let alone ambulate, and their plight became a cause for the Children's Spine Foundation.

With the appropriate funding we were able to establish a team of physicians, including me as well as Dr. Nelson, a cell-saver technician, a resident, and instrumentation and other techs to undertake a one-week trip to Santo Domingo. We were treated with the utmost hospitality and soon saw for ourselves the great need for our services

when we met the children and hospital staff. Over the ensuing week we provided medical and surgical services to approximately fifteen children who suffered from severe deformities. The donation of time and materials, including instrumentation, as well as funding by the Children's Spine



Foundation made this trip possible.

Certain modifications of technique and instrumentation were required in order to provide optimal care with limited resources so that we could serve as many children as possible. The hours were long: we worked a minimum of twelve hours per day. However, we were also able to provide lectures and instruction to the existing medical residents of Santo Domingo to impart some of our knowledge of this type of care.

The rewards of treating children with severe spinal deformities, some with 80-90 degree curvatures of the spine, were great and we left the country with a burden for the significant



numbers still in need of treatment. It is my hope and wish that in the future through the joint efforts of the residents I supervised and those of multiple volunteer workers in ancillary services we can repeat this endeavor again in this needy region. For a visual insight into the CSF-funded team, please refer to the segment on the Children's Spine Foundation website, which chronicles some of our experiences.

As a participant in this team effort, I would like to thank all the individuals who have donated to this foundation, making this trip, and, hopefully future trips possible.

David Siambanes, D.O.

## CSF Highlights

### Education Partnership for Scoliosis Training Benefits Local School Nurses

Scoliosis training is an important part of the education that nurses receive when they complete their coursework to work at schools in California. According to the Education Code of California, all school nurses are mandated to screen for spinal deformities for seventh-grade girls and eighth-grade boys. School nurses are also required to screen for hearing and vision problems as well at different grade levels.

To become a school nurse in California, the nurse must be a four-year R.N. or have a four-year college degree in

a related subject with additional education to become licensed R.N. In addition, all school nurses are required to take 28-plus credits of college work above and beyond their degree to receive a School Nurse Credential. In our inland area, most of the school nurses receive their School Nurse Credential coursework at California State University, San Bernardino. The college work for this credential takes approximately three years but can be done as a part-time student while they are working as a school nurse in a local school district.

The training for scoliosis screening takes place in one of the first classes of their coursework for the credential. The nurses meet on Saturdays to learn about the

mandated screenings and develop the skills they need to do quality screenings. The Children's Spine Foundation has been instrumental in providing the trainings for school nurse students at CSUSB and refresher courses for school nurses for the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools office. Dr. Haider and his staff generously spend a morning at the Spine Foundation hosting all new school nurse students to provide accurate medical information on spinal diseases, demonstrate screening techniques, allow nurses to practice these techniques and talk with patients and their parents about the required surgery and after-care necessary to correct spinal problems in school age children.

The partnering of the Children's Spine Foundation, the Health Science Department at Cal State San Bernardino and the County Superintendent of Schools office affords school nurses in the inland area the ability to become excellent screeners for scoliosis in children thus preventing years of discomfort and deformity as they reach adulthood.

We look forward to our next educational and training session on January, 28th.

Christine Ridley,  
School Nurse Credential  
Advisor, CSUSB  
HIV Project Center Coordinator,  
SBD Co. School

## Healthy Body Healthy Mind



Healthy Body-Healthy Mind (HBHM) was offered this past summer on the University of California campus in partnership with the Alpha Center.

HBHM is a program for students entering 7th and 8th grades which focused on developing a well-rounded individual by balancing the

role of healthy education, fitness, nutrition and positive mental attitude. The goal of the project is to stimulate an awareness and exploration of self through engaging and motivational activities which informed and challenged the body and mind.

Tracy Balow and Amber Fleeman, teachers at Villegas Middle School in Alvord Unified School District, were the mathematics and health instructors for the program. Lindy Fenex, director of the Student Recreation Center, led the physical education activities. SRC staff members Mike Eason, Kim Stotts-

Sanchez, and Wanda Murphy provided program support.

Program evaluation showed over a 70% improvement in mathematics and health content knowledge. A participant said, "I understood math better than anything and I realized how important it is to eat healthy." A parent of a program participant added, "[My son] benefited in many ways. I think he is coming away with more knowledge of math and it was acquired in a fun atmosphere. I think he had the opportunity to get in some physical activity, and most of all I think he had the opportunity to go

into a situation where he did not know anyone and he made friends. This whole week has been a good confidence builder." The Alpha Center appreciates the support of CSF in this program.



# CALENDAR

## January 28

School Nurses Program at Haider Spine Center

Clinic - 1st Friday of the Month, Contact Steve Clute for details

## May 12

Inaugural Ambulatory Services Corporation Charity Golf Classic Benefitting CSF Golf Tournament at PGA West, Beaumont\*

## July 10-14

Healthy Body - Healthy Mind  
9 a.m. - Noon - UCR  
Contact Linda Rankin  
(951) 827-5425

\* This will be the major fundraising event of the year for CSF. We are grateful to Ambulatory Services Corporation (ASC), Steve Mansker, Executive Vice President and Charlie Wong, Executive Director of Business Development who have generously offered their leadership and services to help make this event a success. All net proceeds go the operation and mission of CSF. There will be a golf tournament followed by an awards banquet. The Children's Spine Foundation and ASC sincerely hope that you can join us for this fun and worthy occasion. Please contact Steve Clute at (951) 656-4160 for details.



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