



2010 Annual Report

Our vision

Kessler Foundation leads the way in linking science and grantsmanship so that people with disabilities can lead more productive, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Our mission

The mission of Kessler Foundation is to improve quality of life for people with disabilities through discovery, innovation, demonstration, application, and dissemination.

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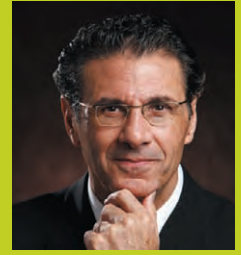
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About the cover: Santiago Sanz of Spain crosses the finish line of the Kessler Foundation 10K in Ridgewood, NJ. More on page 8.

“...nothing is more rewarding than seeing people disabled by injury or disease become independent and productive.”



Dear Friends of Kessler Foundation

2010 was a symbolic year, as the nation celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Kessler Foundation marked this milestone with the release of two widely disseminated surveys that serve as a ‘report card’ on our progress toward equality for people with disabilities. Kessler Foundation partnered with the National Organization on Disability on the surveys, which examined hiring practices and lifestyle gaps between Americans with and without disabilities. Results of the Harris Interactive polls showed that 20 years after the ADA, the single largest difference that remains is employment, with a gap of 38% for this indicator.

While disappointing, these results have only reinforced Kessler Foundation’s resolve. Our leadership in funding innovative employment programs provides a blueprint for successful strategies to promote employment for people with disabilities, the single largest minority in the nation. Foundation funding supports job training in greenhouse farming, document management services, the arts, and other social enterprises. Our efforts are creating meaningful jobs for young adults transitioning from school to jobs, people recovering from serious injuries and stroke, and wounded warriors re-entering the workforce.

Kessler Foundation made great strides in physical and cognitive rehabilitation research. More than \$4 million was received in external grant funding, the second highest annual award for our Research Center. Advances in activity-based training are enabling people to learn to walk once again, even those paralyzed many years ago. Kessler Foundation neuroscientists documented that a mentally active lifestyle slows the onset of symptoms in people with multiple sclerosis. This protective effect is a key consideration for early intervention.

Foundation neuroscientists also swept all four grants awarded by the New Jersey Commission of Brain Injury Research. Three grants are enabling us to explore ways to improve sleep and minimize fatigue and depression after traumatic brain injury (TBI). A fourth study is looking at the impact that TBI has as people age. Brain injury research continues to expand. Our TBI Laboratory’s new director is a renowned expert with more than 30 years of experience. He is applying his expertise in genetics to develop ways to tailor interventions for individuals in order to achieve the best outcomes.

Kessler Foundation’s Stroke Research Lab hosted its first Aphasia Summit, which convened speech and language professionals from around the country to discuss optimal ways for treating aphasia—a common communication disorder after stroke. Our stroke researchers shared their developments with colleagues in the US, Taiwan, Germany, Canada, Italy, and at a special symposium at the United Nations.

2010 also marked the 10th anniversary of the Kessler Foundation Wheelchair 10K, the largest such race in the northeast. The 10K attracted more participants than ever before, including its first international wheelchair athlete and numerous Paralympians.

Kessler Foundation is proud to continue its tradition of improving the lives of people with disabilities. As the CEO of Kessler Foundation, nothing is more rewarding than seeing people disabled by injury or disease become independent and productive.

Thank you for sharing in our mission. Together, we are making a difference every day!

Sincerely,
Rodger L. DeRose
President & CEO



The ADA—20 Years Later

“Every man, woman
and child with a
disability can now pass
through once closed
doors, into a bright
new era of equality,
independence and
freedom.”

— *President George H. W. Bush*
at the signing of the ADA,
July 26, 1990

In 2010, Americans celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Kessler Foundation representatives joined in commemorating this historic event in Washington, DC. Their main goal was to foster discussion about what still needs to be done so that people with disabilities, by far the largest minority in the US, can enjoy the benefits of equality.

Foundation executives attended major ADA events at the White House, Capitol Hill, and the National Press Club. Kessler Foundation was a sponsor of the National Council on Disability Summit on Disability Issues and ‘The Spirit of the ADA...Lead On!’ Gala. The most important event was the release of the Kessler Foundation/National Organization on Disability (NOD) Survey of Americans With Disabilities. Also known as the “Gap Survey,” it measured changes in key areas in people with and without disabilities—education, employment, income, access to technology, access to transportation, access to healthcare, and overall satisfaction with life.

Conducted by Harris Interactive, the results were announced on July 23 at a national press conference held at the Rayburn Building on Capitol Hill. Following introductions by Governor Tom Ridge, NOD Board Chairman, and Congressman Jim Langevin (D-RI), the only member of Congress with tetraplegia, the findings were presented by Rodger DeRose, President and CEO of Kessler Foundation, Carol Glazer, President of NOD, and Humphrey Taylor of Harris Interactive.

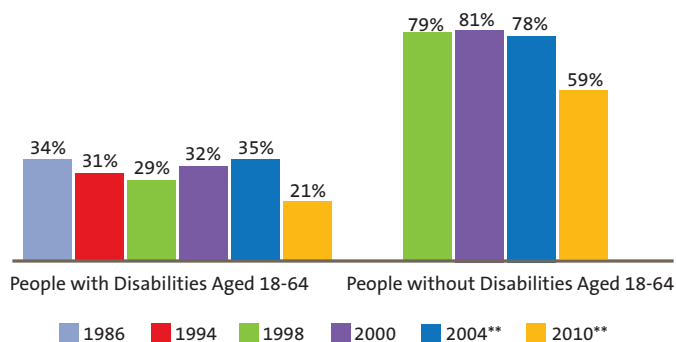
“...much still needs to be done to ensure that these gains translate into improvement in areas that contribute to life satisfaction. Clearly, passage of legislation is just the first step toward ensuring equal rights.”

—DeRose & Katz, October 2010.

THE GAP SURVEY

The 2010 Survey of Americans with Disabilities, called the Gap Survey, reinforced the shared missions of Kessler Foundation and NOD—to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities. While the education gap has narrowed considerably, the biggest challenge facing individuals with disabilities today remains employment. Only 21 percent of people with disabilities are working as opposed to 59 percent of the general population. While this gap has narrowed slightly, the employment rate for the disabled population is at its lowest point since 1986 (see figure below). As a result of their strikingly low employment rate, people with disabilities are more than twice as likely to live in poverty—with an annual household income of \$15,000 or less; only 7 percent earn \$50,000 or more per year.

Working Full-time or Part-time



In summary, limited access to employment, income, friends, technology, transportation, and other community activities lead to an overall dissatisfaction with life. Only 34 percent of individuals with disabilities report feeling satisfied with their lives as opposed to 61 percent of able-bodied Americans.

THE EMPLOYMENT SURVEY— A CALL TO ACTION

With employment confirmed as a persistent factor preventing equality for people with disabilities, it was clear that more information was needed. In recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, the 2010 Kessler Foundation/NOD Survey of Employment of Americans with Disabilities was released by representatives of both organizations at the New York Stock Exchange in October.

This followup survey, called the Employment Survey, analyzed the hiring practices and viewpoints of human resource (HR) personnel and senior management on hiring people with disabilities. It also examined how people with disabilities found employment, how HR hires people with disabilities, and how employers view employees with disabilities.

The Survey uncovered the facts about how employees with disabilities perform in the workforce. According to HR managers and senior executives, employees with disabilities have equal or greater dedication than their able-bodied employees. Turnover rates were lower among employees with disabilities and absenteeism was about the same. The majority of employers said that their employees with disabilities were as flexible as nondisabled employees in adapting to new workplace situations.



Representatives from Kessler Foundation and NOD rang the Closing Bell of the New York Stock Exchange on October 21 to highlight National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The occasion also marked their joint release of the new Survey of Employment of Americans with Disabilities conducted by Harris Interactive.

“... a concerted effort is needed to close the employment gap. Nonprofit organizations, government agencies and the business community need to promote people with disabilities as a pool of willing, productive, and loyal workers with the ability to make unique contributions to the work environment. —*DeRose & Katz*, January 2011.

Employers interested in hiring people with disabilities have their own obstacles. Two-thirds of HR managers and executives cite a lack of qualified candidates as a problem to hiring people with disabilities.

Another telling statistic was that while 86 percent of companies have a diversity policy or program, only 26 percent have a disability-specific policy or program. Hiring people with disabilities is just not on the radar for the majority of employers.

For people with disabilities to advance in the workforce, employers must be open to hiring someone with a disability and track all forms of diversity in their personnel. Service providers have to consider the needs of employers as well as the needs of their clients with disabilities.

Learn more about both surveys at www.2010DisabilitySurveys.org



Rodger DeRose (center) and Carol Glazer listen to Humphrey Taylor, of Harris Interactive, explain the survey data at the national press conference on Capitol Hill.

Kessler Foundation Program Center

Achieving Results Through Leadership

Kessler Foundation understands that fully integrating our workplaces and communities not only benefits people with disabilities but society as a whole. The Foundation's overall plan encompasses efforts on the national, state, and community levels. By working with policymakers, government agencies, business networks, and other nonprofits, the Foundation promotes progress through advocacy, legislation, and broad measures that support people with disabilities in overcoming obstacles to employment.

The Foundation's plan incorporates grant funding for other non-profits and social enterprises that promote employment, as well as the arts, recreation, sports, and injury prevention. According to Elaine Katz, MS, CCC-SLP, Vice President of Grants & Special Initiatives of Kessler Foundation Program Center, "It's important that we look at disabilities as a whole and the issues that individuals face every day. Research and treatment are necessary, but we can also take action and improve the quality of daily life today." In 2010, the Foundation opened its grant applications to programs beyond New Jersey, including New York and Pennsylvania.

LEADING IN NATIONAL DISABILITY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

New data on Americans with disabilities are now available through two Foundation-funded Harris polls, in partnership with the National Organization on Disability (NOD). The 2010 Survey of Americans with Disabilities and Survey of Employment of Americans with Disabilities (*see pages 3 & 4*) are influencing the strategies of policy makers, government agencies, and disability organizations. The results confirmed that the Program Center's work is vital to improving the lives of people with disabilities.

To ensure that service providers funded by the Foundation use the most effective techniques to find their clients lasting employment, Kessler Foundation hosts an annual Grantee

Symposium. Guest speakers share their successful strategies with their colleagues and advise what steps job seekers should take to increase their chances of success (*see page 25*).

Kessler Foundation Program Center also sponsors educational conferences for professionals and consumers on job development, quality of life, and advances in rehabilitation research. For more than 20 years, the Annual Review Course in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation has attracted hundreds of attendees from the US and abroad. More focused conferences address topics in stroke rehabilitation, neuroimaging, multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, and brain injury.

Invited lectureships provide educational enrichment and promote collaboration. This year, two professors, one from Rome and one from Virginia, shared their expertise in multiple sclerosis research and vocational rehabilitation research (*see page 26*).

LEADING IN JOB DEVELOPMENT

Kessler Foundation provides funding to non-profits, social enterprises, and new business ventures in a variety of fields—the financial industry, document management services, the arts, retail, laboratory technology, and agribusiness.

While Kessler Foundation grants funds to community service providers who help connect employers looking to fill a position with a qualified job candidate with a disability, what makes the Foundation unique is its support for job development. Over the past five years, Kessler Foundation gave more than \$18 million to employment projects, which put more than 2,000 people with disabilities to work—just in the tri-state area!

"By supporting job creation and new business ventures for people with disabilities, we're not only improving their lives but also contributing to the economy," said Katz. "As these businesses succeed, other employers will see the skills and abilities that individuals with disabilities have.



Panelists explained how they successfully transitioned back into the workforce after their injuries during the 2010 Life After Spinal Cord Injury Conference, which was supported by Kessler Foundation Program Center.

With this method, Kessler Foundation is thinking ahead to educate employers so that, in the future, employers won't question why it's a good idea to hire someone with a disability."

Despite economic conditions, Kessler Foundation remained strong in its commitment to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities with nearly \$2.5 million in grant funding for employment projects. Grant making focused on programs with the potential for success on a larger scale.



Started by Wendie Blanchard with a seed grant from the Foundation, Arthur & Friends Greenhouse Project has received numerous awards for its successful employment of people with disabilities. More greenhouses have been started in NJ and neighboring states, providing fresh hydroponically grown produce as well as meaningful jobs for the largest minority in the nation, the disabled.

Here are three Kessler Foundation grantees that have successfully leveraged Foundation funding to expand their reach:

- Arthur & Friends, a social enterprise of NORWESCAP, received the NJBIZ award for Financial Growth & Stability. Arthur & Friends Greenhouse Project grows produce hydroponically in greenhouses. Staffed by 'friends' (people with disabilities) and a dedicated group of volunteers, Arthur & Friends not only grows produce and herbs, but markets them to local restaurants and caterers. This agribusiness is a perfect fit for current trends that favor local produce and green initiatives (hydroponic farming uses fewer resources than soil farming). Arthur & Friends provides a platform for individuals with disabilities to gain real work experience for market-rate wages. Started with Foundation seed money at one location in Sussex County, Arthur & Friends quickly became successful. This award-winning program is so successful that two more greenhouses have opened in New Jersey and the model is being adopted in other states.
- The BEST (Building Economic Strength Together) internship pilot program, which is fully funded by Kessler Foundation, won the Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Award from the New Jersey Credit Union League. The BEST program at New Community Federal Credit Union also placed third out of 150 programs nationwide. BEST, a program of the National Disability Institute, places qualified candidates with disabilities in internships in participating federal credit unions. After two weeks of training, the interns work for eight weeks. BEST interns at the New Community Federal Credit Union worked in marketing, accounting, business development, and human resources. The BEST program also provides training to the credit union staff on diversity and disability access. Successful in New Jersey, the BEST program plans to expand to additional states.
- The New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation, which founded the New Jersey Business Leaders Network (NJBLN), received the Affiliate of the Year award from the United States Business Leaders Network (USBLN). Kessler Foundation supports NJBLN's drive to register employers and secure their commitment to hire people with

disabilities. NJBLN also educates employers about the lack of added costs associated with hiring candidates with disabilities. These candidates are assets because of their perseverance, problem-solving skills, dedication, and high retention rates. By launching this initiative, employers are recognizing the contributions that employees with disabilities can make to their businesses. By leveraging the Foundation's support, NJBLN was able to gain additional funding and recognition.

Kessler Foundation recognizes that an important part of creating job opportunities is educating employers. By involving federal credit unions and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce, the leading businesses in the state are becoming aware that including individuals with disabilities in their workforce can enrich the workplace and improve their bottom line. As more people with disabilities achieve stable meaningful employment, they will become better integrated in community activities and overall quality of life will improve.

LEADING IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Adaptive Youth Sports

Sports are proven to build confidence, self-esteem, determination, and increase success in the future. Kessler Foundation believes that it is just as important to instill these characteristics and values into the upcoming generations with disabilities.

The North Jersey Navigators, an adaptive sports team for junior athletes up to age 21 years, offers wheelchair racing, swimming, archery, table tennis, and track & field. "Most of the kids who join lack social skills," said head coach Jimmy Cuevas. "Their parents do everything for them. And with the Navigators, they gain independence. Their self-esteem improves drastically. They challenge themselves. It's a big change. They see things in different ways," said Cuevas.

His son, Jim Cuevas, Jr., as well as Raymond Martin and Gianfranco Iannotta are the core of the Navigators, having been together for nearly a decade. They received the distinct honor of being chosen for Team USA for the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports (IWAS)

Junior World Championships in Dubai in April 2011. Isabel Cuevas, Jimmy's mother and track coach for the Navigators, always tells the new parents, "Be prepared to cry when you see them marching as athletes, because it is an emotional moment. Once you get to nationals, you see the opportunities they have."

Thanks to sponsors like Kessler Foundation, the athletes and their families can afford to travel to national and international competitions.

While most of these athletes have dreams of reaching the Paralympics, they're also focused on going to college and having a career and have dreams of helping others. Kessler Foundation is proud to be a part of the path to these remarkable young men and women achieving their dreams.



Raymond Martin, 17, of the North Jersey Navigators, began participating in wheelchair sports when he was 5 years old. He looks forward to studying kinesiology in college.

Wheelchair Racing

WheelBlazers is a wheelchair racing team that accepts athletes high school age and older. Kessler Foundation organized the team in 2000 after several men with spinal cord injury approached Angela Smith, the current Research Coordinator in the Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Laboratory, with the idea to develop a team. The Foundation, committed to improving quality of life for people with disabilities, loved the idea. Angela, using her experience as an adaptive fitness instructor, became the first coach.

Tony Noguiera used the WheelBlazers as an outlet for the athletic prowess he had as a soccer player. “In my teenage years, I was very competitive,” he said. “When I became paraplegic, it didn’t change me. I was the same person. I took being in a wheelchair as a challenge and made something positive out of it.” He excelled and competed in the Spain and Atlanta Paralympics.

For Tony, competitive sports are a way to connect with his sons and teach them the importance of a healthy and active lifestyle. The WheelBlazers show that athleticism doesn’t have to end after a disabling injury. There are new sports to learn and national and international competitions on the horizon.



WheelBlazer Tony Noguiera trains six days a week and is also an art teacher. He is instilling a passion for sports in his children, who enjoy soccer and cycling.

10th Anniversary of Wheelchair 10K

The Kessler Foundation Wheelchair 10K, the wheelchair division of the Fred D’Elia Ridgewood Run (*see cover*), celebrated its tenth anniversary. It is now the largest wheelchair race in the northeast. Race director Angela Smith commented, “The most meaningful aspect of the race is how it spotlights the abilities of our remarkable athletes. Since the race is inclusive of wheelchair racers and able-bodied athletes, it allows everyone, including the runners, to see the determination and athleticism that the racers have.”

Racers compete for a total purse of \$10,000 in the following categories: Male Open, Female Open, Male Masters (ages 40 and over), Female Masters, Male Grand Masters (ages 50 and over), Female Grand Masters, Male Quad, Female Quad, Male E Athlete (ages 19-21), Female E Athlete, Male Junior (under 19 years of age), and Female Junior.

The 10K marked its 10th anniversary with its first international athlete—Santiago Sanz, from Spain. Disabled by Charcot-Marie-Tooth Disease, he turned to racing as a way of staying active. Not only did he win the Male Quad division, he crushed the record by nearly three minutes. As he crossed the finish line with his thumbs in the air, it was



Santiago Sanz, a Paralympian from Spain, won his division in the 10th Annual Kessler Foundation Wheelchair 10K.

clear that he was proud of his accomplishments. Santiago, 29, married with two children, also travels the world researching how high altitude affects sports performance.

Kessler Foundation recognizes that through adaptive sports and competition, people with disabilities are realizing that opportunities exist in all aspects of life.

LEADING IN INJURY PREVENTION

Kessler Foundation's ThinkFirst program is a community health education initiative that educates students K through 12 about avoiding disability by minimizing risk of injury. The Voices for Injury Prevention (VIPs) are a key program component. VIPs are individuals living with spinal cord injury, who discuss how they were injured and the challenges of living with a disability. At schools and camps VIPs explain how wearing a helmet, using caution when diving, and driving responsibly can save lives or prevent chronic disability. In 2010, ThinkFirst reached 8,137 students through 82 presentations across New Jersey.

Kessler Foundation also sponsors its Annual ThinkFirst Poster Contest. One winner from each school receives a certificate and \$50 award. The grand prize winner receives \$100.

Under the leadership of Kessler Institute's Sandra DeLeon, NJ State Director of ThinkFirst, the program has brought the importance of safety to more than 12,000 students in 18 years.



ThinkFirst's VIPs (Voices for Injury Prevention) travel to schools around NJ educating students about safety precautions that prevent disabilities caused by injuries to the spinal cord and brain. This poster by a young student took top prize in the Annual ThinkFirst Poster Contest.

Jessica Galli, from IL, won her ninth title in 10 years. Jessica has competed in the Sydney, Athens, and Beijing Paralympics, where she won six gold medals. She holds the world record in the 400 and 800 meter races.



Grants Awarded 2010

Kessler Foundation Program Center

SIGNATURE EMPLOYMENT GRANTS

AHEDD, (Camp Hill, PA) To collaborate with schools in the Southeast, PA region to establish work incentive counseling as a standard practice among young adults receiving SSA benefits: \$473,394.

Epilepsy Association of Greater Rochester, Inc., (Rochester, NY) To create a collaboration of five agencies that provides a state-wide employment program for teens and adults with epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, and neurological disorders ages 18-65 who need assistance with transitioning from school to work, a career change, or other barriers to employment: \$455,000.

Jewish Employment and Vocational Service, (Philadelphia, PA) To develop an innovative partnership between two vocational service agencies and a new volunteer-operated veterans' organization to provide the supports needed by veterans with a range of physical injuries and permanent disabilities to successfully return to employment: \$400,000.

National Organization on Disability, (New York, NY) To demonstrate effective employment practices of companies seeking to hire and retain more people with disabilities through its Bridges to Business program, working in partnership with Lowe's distribution centers: \$225,000.

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT GRANTS

Arts Unbound, Inc., (Orange, NJ) To provide a year-long professional instruction and internship program to emerging artists with physical disabilities, resulting in educational achievement and income opportunities in the visual arts: \$45,800.

Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc., (North Brunswick, NJ) To provide consultation to DVRS counselors about vocational planning for individuals with brain injury on how to incorporate new training techniques into existing training curriculum and revise manuals: \$50,000.

Career Opportunity Development, Inc., (Egg Harbor City, NJ) To expand auto detailing business through the purchase of a mobile automotive detailing system, allowing consumers to provide on-sight detailing to local companies' automobiles: \$35,000.

Cerebral Palsy League, Inc., (Cranford, NJ) To hire a vocational director who also serves as a transition coordinator for the Adult Vocational Center's expansion, which provides job opportunities and training to persons with severe multiple disabilities: \$50,000.

Easter Seals New Jersey, (East Brunswick, NJ) To purchase document imaging equipment and ancillary services for expansion of existing document imaging business to provide increased computer-based employment opportunities to individuals with physical disabilities: \$45,000.

“Kessler Foundation’s grantees demonstrate a commitment to advancing integration and equality for children and adults with disabilities. Whether building an accessible playground or expanding employment, their projects eliminate barriers, enabling individuals with disabilities to participate fully in our workplaces and community life.”

—*Elaine Katz*



Family Resource Network, (Trenton, NJ) To expand programming that places people with physical and mobility disabilities in employment by assisting with all support needs and providing 90 days followup to ensure retention: \$50,000.

Jespy House, Inc., (South Orange, NJ) To develop and implement a specialized supported employment program at a variety of accessible worksites for individuals with learning disabilities who are physically handicapped with the goal of competitive employment: \$38,562.

Jewish Vocational Service of Metrowest, (East Orange, NJ) To provide a 2-week career camp, with vocational evaluation, exploration, and transition summer program for students ages 14 to 21, with mobility and/or cognitive impairments primarily from neurological disorders: \$42,000.

National Multiple Sclerosis Society-GDV Chapter, (Philadelphia, PA) To provide the necessary tools to find, gain, and maintain employment for individuals with multiple sclerosis in addressing their unique employment needs through a conference event, online job-readiness training, and professional networking groups: \$42,000.

New Jersey Chamber of Commerce Foundation, (Trenton, NJ) To promote Disabilities-At-Work, a program that rewards businesses that support people with disabilities, by developing two additional communication components: Live Internet Talk Radio and a widely distributed e-Newsletter with advice for job seekers: \$40,000.

Newark Alliance, (Newark, NJ) To participate in a collaboration to fund sustainable workforce development for training of low-skilled workers for in-demand jobs in key growth sectors in Northern New Jersey and overcome barriers to employment for people with disabilities: \$25,000.

Pathways for Exceptional Children, (Montville, NJ) To provide expansion of a community youth mentoring program and training in job readiness, technology, customer service, and business skills in a variety of careers, including video production for children with disabilities ages 12-21: \$25,000.

Queens Chamber of Commerce, (Jackson Heights, NY) To facilitate job placement as a liaison between community agencies that serve people with disabilities and the business community: \$50,000.

United Cerebral Palsy of Northern, Central and Southern New Jersey, Inc., (Chester, NJ) To support a community mentor program that provides people with disabilities individualized social and life skill development in an integrated community setting, laying the foundation for independence and sustainable employment: \$30,000.

The Washington Center for Internships & Academic Seminars, (Washington, DC) To defray the cost of helping students with disabilities from New Jersey universities to participate in the Public Service Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities: \$50,000.

Grants Awarded cont'd

SPECIAL INITIATIVE GRANTS

Camden City Independent Living Center, Inc., (Newark, NJ) To provide ramps or home modifications to increase accessibility for people with mobility limitations living in the greater Camden area: \$20,000.

Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation, Inc., (Mountainside, NJ) To provide scholarships for students to Camp Chatterbox, an overnight, week-long camp for kids with augmentative and alternative communication needs: \$1,500.

City Without Walls, (Newark, NJ) To provide a community-based program for at-risk Newark youth with physical disabilities to produce a large-scale mural with a master artist-mentor that will be permanently installed in a highly visible public space: \$20,000.

County of Bergen, (Hackensack, NJ) To support The Post Stroke & Disabled Adult Support Groups, which provide an opportunity for socialization, recreation, rehabilitative instruction, and restorative exercises to stroke survivors: \$10,000.

Disability Funders Network, Inc., (Midlothian, VA) To provide a series of funder's briefings featuring experts in the topic of Inclusion and Disability to facilitate strategic discussions on grantmaking: \$15,000.

Kean University Foundation, Inc., (Union, NJ) To support The Institute for Adults Living with Communication Disabilities, which provides innovative therapy and support services for clients and their caregivers: \$12,800.

Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, (Philadelphia, PA) To fund a four-part series of educational videos that demonstrate daily community living for newly injured individuals living with spinal cord injury: \$13,000.

New Jersey Fencing Alliance, (Newark, NJ) To implement a NJ Fencing Alliance Wheelchair Program, an initiative dedicated to providing training and competitive opportunities to youth with disabilities in the art of fencing: \$20,000.

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, (New Brunswick, NJ) To fund the first disabilities awareness conference at Rutgers for educators, disability professionals, parents, students, and returning veterans to engage all participants in productive dialogue and improve a collective understanding of disabilities in the classroom and the workplace: \$1,000.

Services for Children with Hidden Intelligence, Inc., (Lakewood, NJ) To purchase a LiteGait Mobility Device to provide mobility services to multiple-disabled students to improve gait, balance, posture, and endurance: \$20,000.

The Township of Hillsborough, (Hillsborough, NJ) To fund an accessible playground for children with physical and mobility disabilities: \$15,000.

Kessler Foundation Research Center Improving Rehabilitation Through Research

For more than 20 years, Kessler Foundation has demonstrated leadership in research by discovering treatments that improve quality of life for people with disabilities. The Foundation recognizes that while a cure is the ultimate goal, it is vital to restore function and prevent decline and complications.

Scientists at Kessler Foundation Research Center explore new interventions for individuals with spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and other neuromuscular conditions. Collaboration extends the Foundation's reach. "Through our partnership with Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation," said John DeLuca, PhD, Vice President for Research, "our researchers benefit from a close relationship with the clinicians who provide rehabilitative care through physical, speech, and occupational therapy, as well as vocational rehabilitation."

2010 was the Research Center's second best year for state and federal grant funding, which reinforces recognition of the Foundation's leadership in rehabilitation research. "With these grants, our scientists will make further advances in overcoming physical and cognitive disabilities," said Dr. DeLuca. "We are also leaders in education, preparing the next generation of rehabilitation researchers with our fellowship program, which serves trainees from the US and abroad."

Kessler Foundation is also one of only seven centers in the US to have model systems in both traumatic brain injury (TBI) and spinal cord injury (SCI). The federally funded model systems are a network of regional groups that perform collaborative research aimed at improving care and quality of life of individuals with SCI and TBI. Kessler Foundation contributes to this important goal through the Northern New Jersey TBI System (NNJT BIS) and Northern New Jersey SCI Model System (NNJSCIS). Through national

collaborative research, the model system collects patient data that helps identify obstacles to recovery and devise strategies for solutions.

In 2010, the Foundation's scientists made more than 70 contributions to medical and scientific literature, including the first and only *Encyclopedia of Clinical Neuropsychology*, which was published by Springer. Edited by John DeLuca, Jeffrey Kreutz, and Bruce Caplan, this important new resource addresses the needs of neuropsychologists caring for adults and children with an array of neurological disorders, emphasizing treatment and rehabilitation, not just assessment and diagnosis.

Kessler Foundation scientists also share their knowledge on the international level. In 2010, researchers traveled to seven nations in Europe and Asia to partner with colleagues on research in neuroimaging, multiple sclerosis, and brain injury.

LEADING IN COGNITIVE RESEARCH

Maintaining Brain Health

Neuroscientists at Kessler Foundation showed that a mentally active lifestyle may protect against the problems with learning and memory that affect 50 percent of people with multiple sclerosis (MS). This protective effect was quite large; individuals with mentally active lifestyles had memory declines of 1 percent, while those with less active lifestyles had declines of 15 percent. Moreover, the effect was seen even in people with advanced brain atrophy, explaining why two persons with MS can have the same degree of brain atrophy, yet only one has memory deficits.

In this important study, James F. Sumowski, PhD, with co-investigators Dr. DeLuca, Glenn Wylie, DPhil, and Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD, Director of the Foundation's Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Research Laboratory,

tested individuals with and without MS. The participants performed tasks involving thinking, learning, and remembering, while their brain activity was observed using fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging). fMRI shows which parts of the brain are active when performing specific tasks. Mentally enriching tasks include reading, puzzles, learning, and social interaction.



Drs. Wylie, Sumowski, Chiaravalloti, and DeLuca discovered new information about brain function in MS.



An active brain is better able to withstand the cognitive effects of MS.

Brain activity was higher in individuals who lived an intellectually enriching lifestyle prior to their diagnosis. “Now we can advise [people] that staying in school, being active, and using their bodies and brains will stave off cognitive decline,” said Dr. DeLuca. “These are important findings with global implications for the care of patients with MS.”

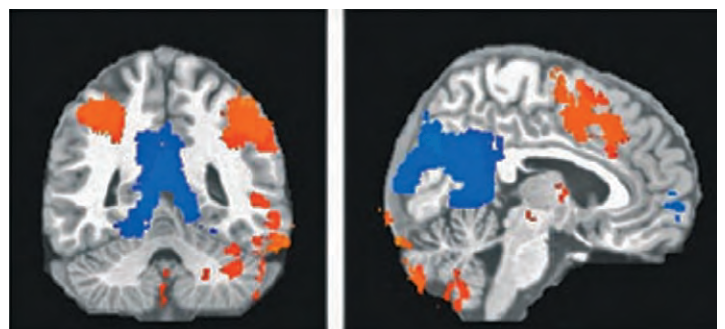
This was the first study to demonstrate the effect of cognitive reserve in the MS population. Future studies will examine whether early intervention for individuals newly diagnosed with MS prevents cognitive decline.

Because of the implications for clinical care, this study was highlighted in a media release by *Neurology*, the journal of the American Academy of Neurology.

Examining After Effects of TBI

In 2010, Foundation scientists received four grants given by the New Jersey Commission on Brain Injury Research, totaling nearly \$1 million. Anthony Lequerica, PhD, is examining the effects of a popular sleep aid on sleep patterns in individuals with TBI, and its impact on daytime fatigue and function. Using fMRI, Dr. Wylie is looking at the underlying causes of cognitive fatigue, a debilitating and persistent after effect of brain injury. Jean Lengenfelder, PhD, is studying how aging affects behavior and brain function and why people with TBI often develop depression and difficulty with executive function, such as problem solving or performing tasks in a sequence.

As part of its community outreach program, NNJT BIS hosted its first consumer conference about adapting to life after brain injury. Working, family, and intimacy issues were explored with the guidance of Foundation staff and invited experts. One speaker coached the audience in brain exercises designed to help improve memory, a common problem after TBI. Response was overwhelmingly positive, so the conference returns to the Kessler Conference Center in September 2012. TBI News ‘N Views, a biannual consumer newsletter was redesigned and expanded. This newsletter highlights the impact of research on quality of life.



Neuroscientists use fMRI to study brain activity in people with MS, TBI, and stroke.



Optical prism therapy may help some patients with spatial neglect, a hidden disability.

Uncovering Hidden Disabilities

Hidden disabilities are common after stroke, but are often overlooked. Spatial neglect, for example, is a hidden disability that can prolong recovery and increase the risk of injury and other complications.

Anna Barrett, MD, director of the Stroke Rehabilitation Research Laboratory conducts research on spatial neglect. Lack of awareness is common in patients with hidden disabilities. “Symptoms of spatial neglect are often subtle problems with functional vision,” she said. Functional vision stems from the brain, not the eye, which is why the person still recognizes objects, colors, and people. The person with spatial neglect has difficulty recognizing objects and events in a 3-dimensional space on the side opposite the brain injury. Untreated, spatial neglect increases the risk of auto accidents, falls, cooking-related injuries and accidents, and is a factor in poor personal hygiene.

Studies being conducted in Dr. Barrett’s laboratory aim at identifying who is likely to recover from spatial neglect, who needs treatment, and what types of treatment will

be most beneficial. Kessler Foundation is the first US clinical research center to make an innovative research treatment, optical prism therapy, available to hundreds of stroke survivors during inpatient rehabilitation. To help retrain the brain, patients wear prism goggles, a thick pair of goggles fitted with prism lenses. Wearing the goggles redirects attention to the neglected area. Findings indicate that prism therapy may help some stroke survivors.

Another disability affecting 20 to 30 percent of stroke survivors is aphasia, a communication disorder that impairs the ability to read and process language. While difficulty in communicating may be severe, intelligence is not affected; individuals with aphasia often feel isolated and frustrated. Dr. Barrett’s laboratory is testing a handheld device that facilitates communication by enabling individuals to “talk” to others via touch-screen technology.

Dr. Barrett is committed to raising awareness of aphasia. “Surveys that track the progress of stroke survivors don’t fairly represent people with aphasia,” explained Dr. Barrett. “Having aphasia is a barrier to participation in clinical studies based on personal interviews. People with aphasia can’t participate as a result of their inability to communicate.”

Dr. Barrett advocates for more research into these lesser known complications of stroke. She also recommends that patients be followed by an interdisciplinary team of medical professionals trained to identify hidden disabilities and intervene appropriately. Kessler Foundation, in partnership with Kessler Institute, hosted the first national Aphasia Summit, convening experts from around the country (see “More News & Events” on page 23).

LEADING IN MOBILITY RESEARCH

Kessler Foundation Research Center also investigates ways to restore mobility and strength after stroke, brain injury and spinal cord injury, and how to maintain function in diseases like MS.

Testing New Devices

Common side effects of a stroke include food drop—where the ankle doesn’t flex up when walking. If the foot drags during walking, the person is at an increased risk for falls

and subsequent injury or disability. A traditional treatment is the prescription of an ankle-foot orthosis (AFO), in which a plastic “boot” keeps the foot flexed in an upright position. Research scientist Karen Nolan, PhD, is testing an alternative device, the WalkAide, by Innovative Neurotronics.

About the size of a cell phone, WalkAide straps on just below the knee. When it senses the leg lifting, it delivers an electrical pulse, making the foot flex and then relax.

This helps train the muscle to flex on its own. Shown to be effective for foot drop after stroke, WalkAide is now being evaluated for Medicaid reimbursement in a collaborative study with Kessler Institute.



A patient tests the WalkAide, a device that applies electrical stimulation to improve gait.

Restoring Function

Kessler Foundation is one of seven centers in the NeuroRecovery Network (NRN), developed by the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation. The Human Performance and Movement Analysis Laboratory (HPMAL), headed by Gail Forrest, PhD, collaborates with NRN centers to assess the impact of injuries and disease on mobility and how to restore function more effectively.

The foundation of the NRN program is locomotor training, which awakens nerve cells in the damaged spinal cord through intensive repetitive training. The participant is harnessed over a treadmill as therapists move the legs to simulate walking. This is followed by training over ground to work on strength and balance. Therapists at Kessler Institute administer the therapy, while researchers from the Foundation collect data and monitor progress. Results are then used to modify therapy for optimal outcomes.

One teen who has gained mobility and independence is Ardie C. At age 13, Ardie had a rupture of an arteriovenous malformation—a tangling of blood vessels around the spinal cord. When he began locomotor training, Ardie could not stand or support himself even with assistance. With intensive therapy, he was soon standing and taking steps with leg braces and crutches. After additional therapy, he no longer needed the braces and could walk longer distances with crutches. Two years later, Ardie was walking at home without assistance and using crutches for outings, with his wheelchair reserved for long distances. He continues in the NRN program, improving his strength and balance.

Ardie plans to study medicine so he can help others “get back on their feet.” Ardie and his mom, Gjyste, have no doubt that he will accomplish all of his goals.

Applying New Technology

The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Laboratory (REAL), led by Peter Barrance, PhD, applies biomechanics, biomaterials, bioinstrumentation, and rehabilitation technology to solve problems in rehabilitative care. Posture and balance are two active areas of study that are fundamental to mobility research. REAL shares its expertise in engineering science and technology with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, the New Jersey



Ardie is able to walk with crutches after intensive training at Kessler, a center in the NeuroRecovery Network.

Institute of Technology, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, and the University of Delaware, as well as the other research laboratories at Kessler Foundation.

In 2011, Kessler Foundation will look at applying new robotic technology for improving mobility and function in individuals with SCI and minimizing secondary complications such as pressure ulcers, depression, cardiovascular risk, and loss of bone and muscle strength.

Preventing Complications

Restoring mobility is just one aspect of SCI research. Achieving quality of life also depends on preventing further loss of function and minimizing medical complications in individuals with SCI. Headed by interim director Trevor Dyson-Hudson, MD, the SCI Research & Outcomes Assessment Laboratory has received major funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research since 1990, for support of the Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System (NNJSCIS).

One of 14 SCI model systems, NNJSCIS collects patient data from the time of injury through long-term followup, which

is contributed to the National SCI Statistical Center. Data are analyzed to identify areas where investigation is needed to improve care and satisfaction with life. Prevention of respiratory complications, the leading cause of mortality in SCI, is a major focus of clinical investigation. Other areas of investigation include pain management, factors influencing employment, and aging with SCI, an important area as people with SCI are living longer.

Outcomes researchers look over the long term at factors that influence health, employment, and quality of life for people with disabilities. Under the leadership of research scientist Amanda Botticello, PhD, the Outcomes Lab correlates patient data from the NNJSCIS with data from the US Census and other national surveys, to gain perspective on outcomes in the disabled versus non-disabled populations.

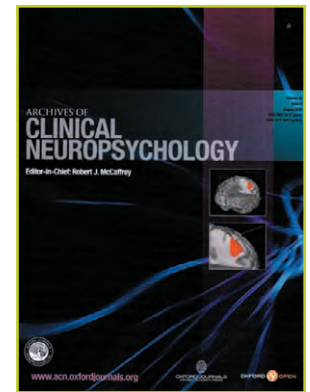
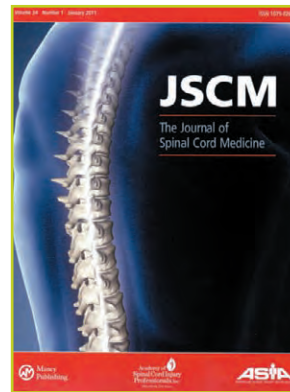
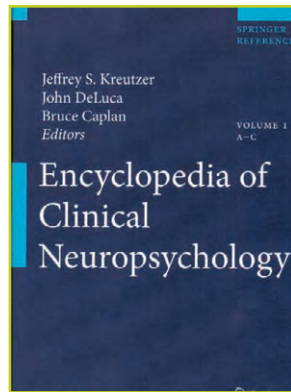
To support individuals and their families, NNJSCIS hosts consumer conferences on topics that promote community integration. The 2010 conference focused on finding employment (see “More News & Events” on page 23).

Grants & Clinical Trials Awarded Jan-Dec 2010

Kessler Foundation Research Center

Grant/Clinical Trial Name	Source of Funding	Period	Total Amount	Investigator
The E-Z Guide to Managing Medical Complications Associated with SCI	Craig H. Neilson Foundation	2010-2011	\$97,500	T. Dyson-Hudson, MD
Clinical Trial to Investigate the Effectiveness of the MTG EZ-Gripper® Catheter at Allowing Catheterization in Neurologically Impaired Individuals with a Neurogenic Bladder and Decreased Hand Function	Medical Technologies of Georgia	2010-End of Study	\$7,980	T. Linsenmeyer, MD
Predicting Fall Risk in Acute Rehabilitation and Long-Term Care via Innovative, Targeted Cognitive Assessment	Select Medical Corporation	2010-2013	\$120,774	C. McKenna, MD, PhD
June 2010 Clinical Research Summit: Innovative Physiologic Treatments for Severe Aphasia	Bob Woodruff Foundation	2010-2011	\$10,000	A. Barrett, MD
The Effect of Rozerem on Sleep Disturbance after Traumatic Brain Injury	NJ Commission on Brain Injury Research	2010-2012	\$97,205	A. Lequerica, PhD
Examination of Cognitive Fatigue in Traumatic Brain Injury using fMRI	NJ Commission on Brain Injury Research	2010-2013	\$374,287	G. Wylie, DPhil
Aging in Traumatic Brain Injury: A Pilot Study of Cognitive and Cerebral Profiles	NJ Commission on Brain Injury Research	2010-2012	\$148,275	J. Lengenfelder, PhD
Examining Apathy, Depression, and Executive Function in Individuals with TBI	NJ Commission on Brain Injury Research	2010-2013	\$348,992	J. Lengenfelder, PhD
Mentoring Translational Cognitive Science for Stroke Recovery	National Institutes of Health	2010-2015	\$716,572	A. Barrett, MD
Community Effects on Long-Term Rehabilitation Outcomes in SCI	National Institutes of Health	2010-2012	\$229,034	A. Botticello, PhD
Impact of Cognitive Reserve on Memory Functioning in Multiple Sclerosis	National Institutes of Health	2010-2013	\$669,514	J. Sumowski, PhD
Focus Group Sessions for SCI Family Caregivers	Subcontract via Craig Hospital at Englewood, Colorado	2010-2011	\$10,000	A. Botticello, PhD
Randomized Trial of the Innovative Neurotronics WalkAide Compared to Conventional Ankle-Foot Orthosis (AFO) in Stroke Patients	Innovative Neurotronics	2010-2012	\$234,000	K. Nolan, PhD
A Multicenter, Double-Blind, Crossover Design Pilot Study to Evaluate the Effect of NVC-422 Catheter Irrigation on Urinary Catheter Patency	NovaBay Pharma	2010-2012	\$123,720	T. Linsenmeyer, MD
Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine	Paralyzed Veterans of America	2009-2010	\$147,000	C. Murphy, PA

Total \$3,334,853



Kessler Foundation Research Center

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DeFina, P.A., Fellus, J., Thompson, J.W.G., Eller, M., Scolaro Moser, R., Frisina, P.G., Schatz, P., DeLuca, J., Zigarelli-McNish, M., Prestigiacomo, C.J. 2010. Improving outcomes of severe disorders of consciousness. *Restorative Neurology and Neuroscience* 28(6):769-80.

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More News & Events



Three students—Andre, Levar, and Sha-Dair—from Horizon High School, in Livingston, NJ, visited Kessler Foundation to explore various jobs for National Disability Mentoring Day (DMD), on October 20. Students received employee ID badges before they rotated to various stations in the research laboratories and administrative departments for one-on-one instruction and mentorship. They participated in memory training tests that researchers give to individuals with traumatic brain injury and multiple sclerosis and also practiced simulated driving for people recovering from spinal cord injury. Next, biomedical engineers showed how technical expertise can enhance mobility for individuals with physical impairments. After practicing purchasing and administrative tasks, they practiced their interview skills during a mock radio show. Whenever asked if they wanted to try a task, they responded, “Yes, we’re here to learn.” Over lunch, Lauren Scrivo, a Foundation employee with a severe physical disability, explained the struggles she encountered in finding employment, how she manages her job tasks, and how to prepare for employment. Since 1999, DMD takes place on the third Wednesday of October—as part of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Goals of DMD include raising awareness of the need to hire people with disabilities, easing the fears of employers, giving individuals with disabilities job exposure, and increasing confidence.



Trevor Dyson-Hudson, MD, Interim Director of Spinal Cord Injury and Outcomes & Assessments Research at Kessler Foundation, received the Standing Tall Award from the Alan T. Brown Foundation to Cure Paralysis, for his career dedicated to improving the lives of people with spinal cord injury (SCI). Dr. Dyson-Hudson incurred a SCI from a rugby accident. He decided to return to medical school and focus his career on rehabilitation. During his rotation at Mount Sinai Medical Center, he met Alan who had also sustained a SCI. “Alan was a real inspiration to me,” said Dr. Dyson-Hudson. “He showed me I didn’t have to always compromise when it came to my life. Alan inspired me to pursue my dreams and help others with paralysis achieve theirs.” Dr. Dyson-Hudson researches ways to minimize secondary complications of SCI, including pain, lung function, and heart disease. He is also the Director of Consumer Dissemination and Outreach for the Northern NJ SCI Model System, a collaborative network of organizations dedicated to developing a standard of care and improving the lives of people with SCI.



Kessler Foundation, in association with Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation, hosted “Empowering People with SCI to Compete in Today’s Workforce” as part of its continuing Life After Spinal Cord Injury Conference series for consumers with spinal cord injury, families, and caregivers. The conference featured individuals who successfully found employment and had thriving careers after their injuries. Speakers from community service organizations also shared the resources available to jobseekers with SCI. “This consumer conference gave us the opportunity to show how the work we do benefits people with disabilities,” said John DeLuca, PhD, Vice President for Research at Kessler Foundation. “Kessler Foundation does more than just research. We look at ways to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities through employment. Not only is getting back to work important, but it’s possible.” The Life after Spinal Cord Injury Conference is just one of the ways that the Northern New Jersey SCI Model System reaches out to individuals and their families living with SCI. The conference also received funding from the Reeve Foundation and the Alan T. Brown Foundation to Cure Paralysis.



Aphasia affects 20 to 30 percent of all stroke survivors. A communication disorder that impairs the brain’s ability to understand and process language, it hinders a person’s ability to speak and read but intelligence is not affected. To raise awareness and develop research strategies for this isolating condition, Kessler Foundation and Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation hosted “Innovative Physiologic Treatment for Aphasia,” the first national Aphasia Summit focused on physiological treatment, featuring worldwide experts.

“Aphasia has not received coordinated attention in large-scale ‘big science’ studies of stroke or neurological disease,” said Anna Barrett, MD, Director of stroke research at Kessler Foundation. “Unless we start research conferences and initiatives focused on the needs of people with aphasia and how to advance their care, they will be left out of the next wave of advances in neurological medicine and rehabilitation.” The summit was also sponsored by the Bob Woodruff Foundation, Dynavox Mayer Johnson, Lingraphica, National Aphasia Association, and American Society of Neurorehabilitation.



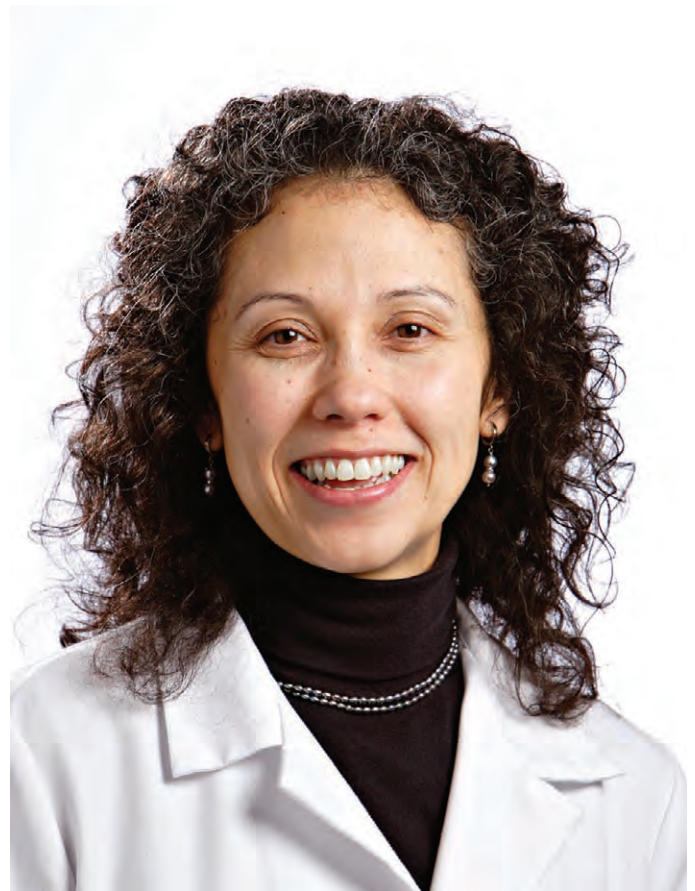
Celebrities Wyclef Jean and Daryl "Chill" Mitchell toured the halls of Kessler Foundation in 2010. In April, musician and Haitian philanthropist Wyclef came to learn the latest rehabilitation strategies in an effort to bring that knowledge back to his home country of Haiti to help the victims of the devastating earthquake. "It's important that we partner with Kessler and study as much as we can because there are a lot of kids with [disabilities] who can be part of the work force in the future," he said. "I feel that it's our job to help them."



"Chill," an actor, producer, director, and disability advocate, paralyzed in a motorcycle accident in 2001, is interested in the latest developments in SCI research. After seeing the demonstrations by our scientists, he toured Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation to observe how that research is applied to patient care. "We need this," said Chill. "The government needs to come here, see the work of Kessler Foundation and the Institute, and apply it on a grander scale. I see a lot of positive energy and employees who genuinely care here. Tools are only tools, but when you get the people behind it, that makes a world of difference."



Anna Barrett, MD, Director of Stroke Rehabilitation Research at Kessler Foundation, was invited to speak at a special program of the United Nations (UN) to explain the importance of properly coding hidden disabilities that hinder recovery after stroke. To track the frequency, treatment, and cost of medical conditions, the World Health Organization assigns a universal code to each condition. Unless hidden disabilities are coded, they will not be recognized and receive the medical attention needed. She also discussed the personal, social, and medical cost of hidden disabilities. "There is a cost benefit to addressing health care disparities in racial and cultural groups, which could be as much as \$230 billion savings in the US," said Dr. Barrett. "This suggests that social justice really is cost effective in terms of the treatment and identification of hidden disabilities." Denise Fyffe, PhD, research scientist at Kessler Foundation's SCI and outcomes research labs, also addressed the health disparities and hidden disabilities. Her lecture, "Achieving Accuracy in Healthcare Research among the Aged: The Negative Impact of Clinical Coding Practices on Research Outcomes and Proposed Solutions," was part of the nine day 48th annual session of the UN Commission for Social Development.





To Scott Vycital
With best wishes,
Michelle Obama

Retired Army Specialist Scott Vycital, who successfully found employment through the Army Wounded Warriors Career Program, received a unique honor for President Obama's January 2010 State of the Union Address: he sat in the President's box with First Lady Michelle Obama. Kessler Foundation committed \$1.5 million over the past five years in support of this 2-year pilot demonstration program developed by the National Organization on Disability that helps severely injured veterans return to work. After surviving a penetrating brain injury in Iraq, Spc. Vycital had slurred speech and difficulty concentrating on tasks. His recovery was further complicated by post-traumatic stress disorder. Despite his injuries, his main concern was supporting his wife and two young children. Armed with a new accounting degree, Vycital received support from the Army Wounded Warriors Career Program. Career specialists spoke with potential employers about his disability and the accommodations he needed to successfully do the job. They were also available to address any new issues that arose. Hired by the Federal Highway Commission in Denver, Colorado, he was offered a promotion within his first year. Now a budget specialist, Spc. Vycital is financially self-sufficient and can provide for his family.

John DeLuca, PhD, Vice President for Research, was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Academy of Neuropsychology (NAN), which represents more than 3,300 scientist-practitioners, clinicians, and researchers in 24 countries. The mission of NAN is to advance neuropsychology as a science and health profession, to promote human welfare, and to generate and disseminate knowledge of brain-behavior relationships.



Victoria Leavitt, PhD, Nancy Chiaravalloti, PhD, and Glenn Wylie, DPhil, received second prize (out of 996 posters) at the International Conference of the European Committee for Treatment and Research in Multiple Sclerosis, for their unique work on measuring brain activity in persons with MS before and after cognitive rehabilitation.

Every year, Kessler Foundation hosts a Grantee Symposium for its grantees to learn how to further expand employment opportunities for people with disabilities. More than 125 professionals took part in this full-day program free of charge. Panel presentations and guest speakers discussed useful strategies for helping people find jobs by identifying needs of employers. Practical strategies included using Medicaid and Social Security's incentives to encourage individuals with disabilities get back to work, using social media as a networking tool, and ways that service providers can support job seekers and employers to create a lasting partnerships.



Karen Nolan, PhD, was an ESM 2010 Novel Award Finalist for her poster on gait speed in individuals with hemiplegia and ankle-foot orthoses. Her poster was presented at the 2010 EMED Scientific Meeting in Providence, RI.



Jean Lengfelder, PhD, received the Emerging Researcher Award from the New Jersey Psychological Association, which represents more than 2,000 psychologists statewide.





BAIRD INVITED PROFESSORSHIP

Aging, Cognition and Domestic Accidents in Multiple Sclerosis –
Ugo Nocentini, MD, PhD

Ugo Nocentini, MD, PhD, from the University of Rome ‘Tor Vergata’, a noted expert in multiple sclerosis (MS), gave the annual Baird Lecture during his weeklong visit with neuroscientists at Kessler Foundation Research Center. During his sabbatical, Kessler Foundation’s Vice President for Research John DeLuca, PhD, worked with Dr. Nocentini at the Santa Lucia Foundation in Rome, Italy, which serves a large population of people with MS. The two researchers share an interest in the effect of MS on cognitive function, and the impact of its decline on quality of life.

Concerned about the impact of cognitive decline on safety, Dr. Nocentini took a novel approach, looking at the incidence and characteristics of accidents in the home. While there were some data on driving accidents and falls, this was an unexplored area. Patients with MS who were living in the community and independent in their daily living were studied. Comparing their experiences with a group of people without MS, the MS group had more frequent accidents.

The impact of aging on cognitive decline in people with MS is another of Dr. Nocentini’s interests. “We have much to learn about helping people with MS maintain function and independence as they age,” he said. “Our clinical expertise combined with Kessler Foundation’s scientific capabilities will help achieve that.” Clinical signs and findings on brain imaging studies do not always correlate, he noted, an interesting observation that has also captured the interest of researchers at the Foundation’s Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Laboratory.

Kessler Foundation is recognized as a center for cognitive research in MS. Collaborating with scientists here and abroad helps advance global understanding of this complex neurological disease.

KENNETH ESTABROOK LECTURESHIP

Employment and Return to Work for People with Significant Disabilities: How Far Have We Come?—Paul Wehman, PhD

Paul Wehman, PhD, Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and Executive Director of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University, an expert in employment for people with disabilities, presented the Kenneth L. Estabrook Lecture. He discussed the importance of “real work for real pay” for individuals with disabilities and what is affecting their quest for employment.

Dr. Wehman believes that fear of losing Social Security and Medicaid health benefits is the number one obstacle when it comes to people with disabilities seeking employment. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) allots just enough income to keep people at poverty level. Those who want to live above poverty level need to find a job.

Dr. Wehman presented data for individuals with all kinds of disabilities who found employment. He advocates for supported employment, which involves brainstorming with clients about what jobs would best suit them and whether they need any further education, then working with the employer to determine whether special accommodations, such as flexible scheduling, are needed. Once hired, the agency communicates with the employee and the employer to ensure that the needs of both are being met. “People have a greater likelihood of getting work, staying at work, and advancing at work if they have periodic assistance. Employers are going to do what they need to do to keep the best people involved.”

Putting individuals with disabilities to work also has to fill the employers’ needs and contribute to their bottom line. “We do need to have integration in the workplace,” he emphasized, “but we also have to show competence.” By working for pay, according to Dr. Wehman, people with disabilities learn they can work, build a strong work ethic, and improve their quality of life.





Arts Unbound, based in Orange, NJ, received a Special Initiatives grant for \$45,800 to provide training and vocational training for careers in the visual arts. Participants honed their skills and sold their work through Arts Unbound's online store and gallery. Artists with a wide range of disabilities learn how to create, market, and sell artwork including paintings, drawings, photographs, jewelry, clay and wooden decorations, quilts, note cards, and other accessories.



From May 20th to the 22nd, Kessler Foundation exhibited at the New York-Metro Abilities Expo, an event for people with disabilities to find new products and information on healthful living. At the booth, individuals with SCI, TBI, stroke, and multiple sclerosis learned about opportunities to enroll in research studies and experimental treatment.

Visitors also learned about the Foundation's mission, upcoming events, and Foundation-sponsored programs available to people with disabilities. This largely successful event increased public's awareness of Kessler Foundation as a leader in the disability community.

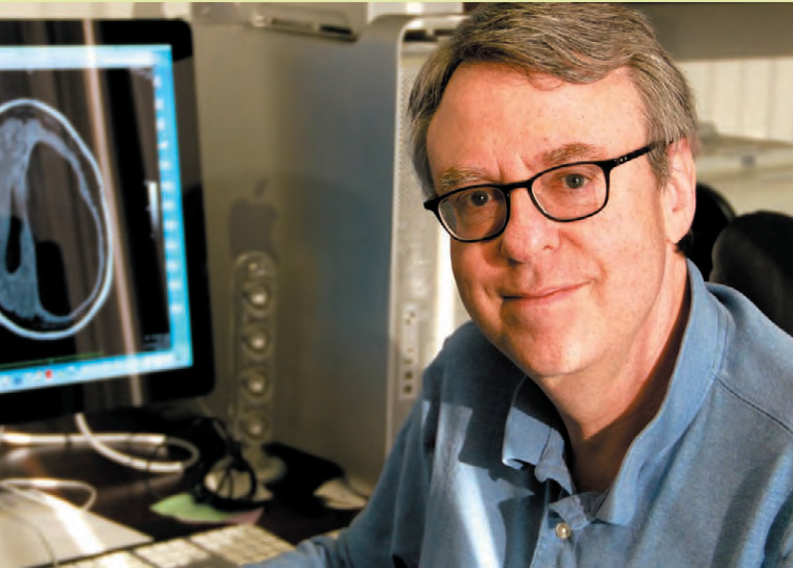


Joel DeLisa, MD, MS, addresses more than 300 attendees of The Annual Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Board Review Course, the largest such course in the nation. In its 22nd year, the popular course offers mock oral exams and a special one day course in prosthetics and orthotics.

Kessler Foundation sponsors this educational opportunity in cooperation with UMDNJ Department of PM&R and Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation.



Kessler Foundation Update



Kessler Foundation continued to grow and further its mission by acquiring two key members and updating its research facility and corporate offices.

NEW DIRECTOR ESTABLISHES AGENDA FOR INNOVATIVE TBI RESEARCH

Kessler Foundation announced Jordan Grafman, PhD, as the new Director of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Research. Dr. Grafman focuses on ways to tailor interventions for individual patients with TBI in an effort to achieve the best results. While studying neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to grow new cells after damage, he found that the brain has more ability to heal than previously thought. But healing is dependent on more than just the point of injury.

"Our genetic makeup influences how our brain heals after injury and how it responds to various strategies used in rehabilitation, including medication and cognitive and behavioral therapy," he explained. "By taking advantage of genetic information, we will learn which treatments are likely to be most effective for individual patients." This genetic approach, which will expand upon Kessler's current cognitive and neuroimaging research, will increase knowledge of the impact of TBI, as well as other diseases that impair brain function, such as stroke, multiple sclerosis, and degenerative diseases.

Dr. Grafman has more than 30 years experience in the study of brain function in TBI, dementia, depression, and other degenerative neurological diseases. His previous position was chief of the Cognitive Neuroscience Section

at the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, a division of the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Grafman, who led the Vietnam Head Injury Project at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, is the leading expert on the long-term effects of penetrating brain injury in military personnel. He has authored more than 300 research publications and sits on the editorial and review boards of more than 30 medical publications. Dr. Grafman is the recipient of many prestigious awards including the 2010 National Institutes of Health Directors Award.

"Dr. Grafman's leadership greatly enhances Kessler Foundation's ability to translate research into patient treatment," said John DeLuca, PhD, Vice President for Research at Kessler Foundation. "His novel approaches will lead to substantial improvements in the standard of care for TBI, which will mean a better quality of life for people recovering from brain injuries. With his participation, we look forward to broadening our collaborations nationally as well as within our Research Center."

Kessler Foundation is known for clinical research in brain injury research. The Northern New Jersey TBI Model System is one of 16 federally funded systems that encourage individual and collaborative research

to improve quality of life for people with TBI. Kessler Foundation is one of only seven institutions to have Model Systems for both TBI and spinal cord injury.

NEW CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER SETS FOUNDATION GOALS

Pamela J. DeLuca, CFRE, accepted the position of Chief Development Officer (CDO) of Kessler Foundation in March of 2010. A professional with more than nine years of experience in fundraising for religious institutions, DeLuca is applying her skills to help the Foundation touch the lives of greater numbers of people with disabilities.

President and Chief Executive Officer of Kessler Foundation, Rodger DeRose, said, “We are very excited to have Pam on our team. She will head our efforts to achieve our goal of increasing our fund raising revenues over the next five years so we can expand our work in research, education, employment, and community programs.” DeLuca incorporated social media and the latest technology to promote the Foundation’s achievements. New programs join the Foundation’s annual Stroll ‘N Roll. She has also planned Kessler Foundation’s 25th Anniversary Celebration, a stellar gala in an exciting downtown venue. In her first 9 months as CDO, she increased fundraising revenue by 30 percent.

DeLuca looks forward to a long and productive tenure at Kessler Foundation, the largest public charity serving the disability community.



Pam DeLuca, Chief Development Officer of Kessler Foundation, planned the Foundation’s 9th Annual Stroll ‘N Roll. She is joined by actor Daryl “Chill” Mitchell, Extra correspondent A.J. Calloway, and Richard Kessler, board member and grandson of Henry H. Kessler.

NEW CONFERENCE CENTER / RENOVATIONS EXPAND RESEARCH CAPABILITIES

Kessler Foundation, a leader in educating professionals and consumers on disability-related issues, now hosts large conferences and seminars in its new conference center. Located at 300 Executive Drive in West Orange, the conference center complements redesigned executive office space and a new Neuropsychology & Neuroscience Research Laboratory. The conference center is both attractive and functional and comfortably accommodates 100 guests. Equipped with audio-visual technology, the conference center stages events for medical and rehabilitation professionals from around the world as well as research participants, donors, and staff.



Rodger DeRose visited with attendees, including Mel Wallerstein of the Wallerstein Foundation for Geriatric Life Improvement, at the first event held in the new conference center.

Renovations are also scheduled for Kessler Foundation Research Center’s facility on Pleasant Valley Way. Expansion and updating includes the Spinal Cord Injury, Traumatic Brain Injury, Outcomes, Stroke, Human Performance & Movement Analysis, and Rehabilitation Engineering Laboratories. When completed, Foundation researchers will have the space and technology to expand their studies of innovative approaches to physical and cognitive disability.



Stroll ‘N Roll 2010

“Every year, Stroll ‘N Roll brings people of all ages and abilities together to celebrate what we can achieve when we work together. At Stroll ‘N Roll, everyone participates.”
—*Rodger DeRose*

Kessler Foundation raised more than \$50,000 for research and programs that support employment, sports, and other initiatives for people with disabilities during its 9th Annual Stroll ‘N Roll on September 26th. More than 200 individuals of all ages and abilities came out to support the Foundation by completing a 5K around Verona Park. The North Jersey Navigators, a junior adaptive sports team sponsored by Kessler Foundation, kicked off the 5K.

“This year, celebrities and local politicians joined our Stroll ‘N Roll to support the work of Kessler Foundation. We thank all of the participants for enabling Kessler Foundation to expand rehabilitation research, employment, and other community programs for people with disabilities.”

—Pam DeLuca



STROLLIN’ AND ROLLIN’

Participants were also joined by celebrities and local politicians, including: actor, director, producer, and disability advocate Daryl “Chill” Mitchell; Extra correspondent A.J. Calloway; Miss Teen NJ-World Emily Shah; Congressman Bill Pascrell; Governor Richard Codey; Assemblyman Scott Rumana; Assemblywoman Mila Jasey; West Orange Mayor Robert Parisi; Verona Mayor Teena Schwartz, and kid-favorite Ronald McDonald.

Information Alley provided a place where guests could gather and collect information from Kessler Foundation and its grantees. Kids enjoyed face painting, tattoos, and balloon art. The music and refreshments were added treats. It was a beautiful day to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends.

As people crossed the finish line of the 5K, they rushed to buy a few extra 50/50 raffle tickets. Anticipation grew as they approached the podium to see Kessler Foundation’s 50/50 cash raffle drawing. “Call my name,” people cheerfully entreated. Out of the 430 tickets sold, one lucky winner received the good news. A woman from West Orange won \$10,750! It was a great way to end the perfect day.

For Stroll ‘N Roll’s 10th anniversary, plans are already in the works to make it bigger and better than ever. There will be new activities in this celebratory year that highlight the abilities of people with disabilities!



Kids enjoyed the outdoors, face painting, balloon animals, and meeting new friends at Stroll ‘N Roll. It is the perfect family activity!

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January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010

Kessler Society

Stories. We all have them. Here at Kessler Foundation, stories may begin with loss, but soon the pages are filled with **recovery** and **triumph**. Every triumph, no matter how small, is celebrated as another chapter of progress toward the goal of independence. Each story involves the **perseverance** of a patient, the family members, and the **integrity, innovation, and creativity** of our staff. Our donors play an important role in every chapter in every story. Your commitment infuses our stories with hope and inspiration. Thank you for helping us improve the lives of people living with disabilities.

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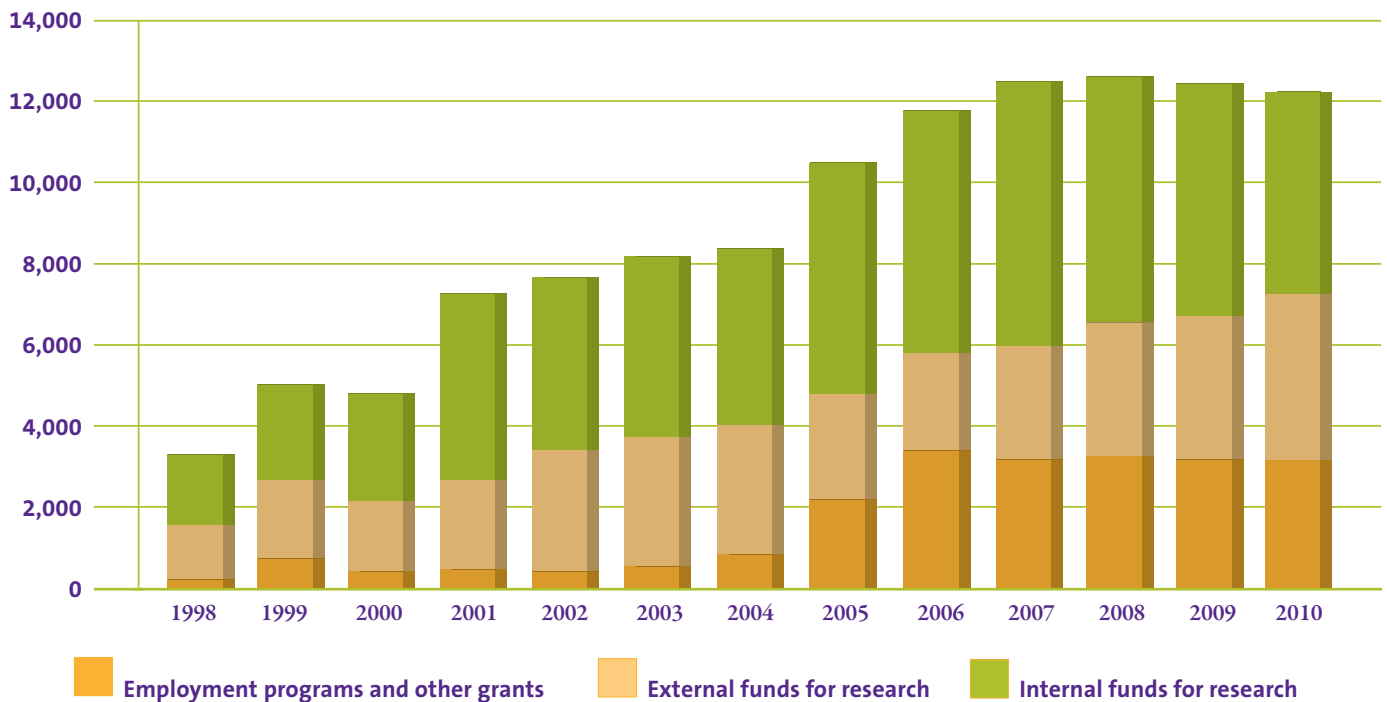
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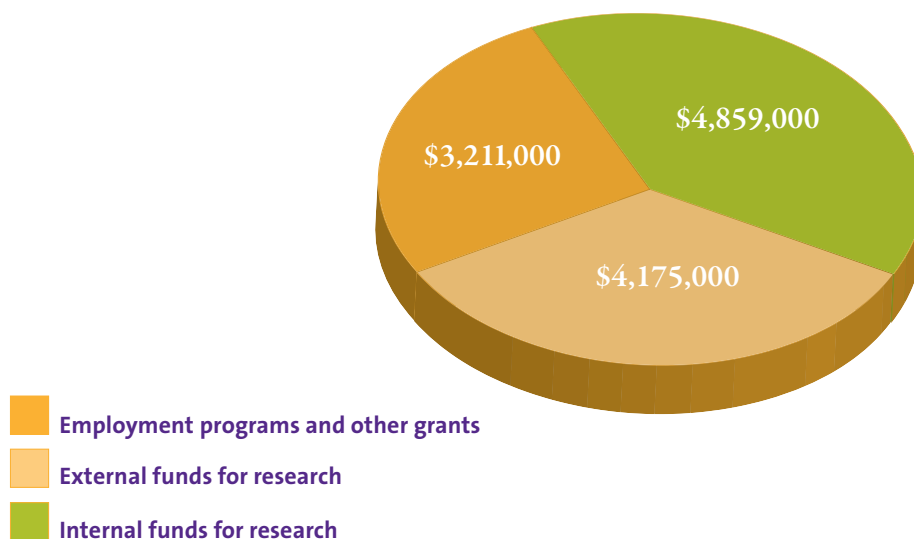
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