

# JOURNAL

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## Going the Extra Yard: Chris and Eddie Canales Recognized for Helping High School Athletes Cope with Spinal Cord Injury

On Nov. 2, 2001, Chris Canales suffered a spinal cord injury (SCI) during a high school football game in San Marcos, Texas. One year later, Chris and his father Eddie Canales turned adversity into a relentless drive to help the families of other high school football players whose lives have been interrupted by catastrophic injuries. In 2003, the father-and-son team started the Gridiron Heroes Spinal Cord Injury Foundation,



which helps kids with SCI cope with their life-changing circumstances. Last fall, both men were nominated as CNN Heroes.

Following his injury on the football field, Chris was transported to the Level I Trauma Center at Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, where he spent a month and a half in acute care. “We almost lost Chris twice due to complications of his injury,” Eddie says. “Once he was stabilized, my wife and I did some traveling around in Austin and San Antonio, visiting

rehab facilities. TIRR Memorial Hermann kept coming up in every conversation we had. After a visit to the hospital, we just knew it was the best place for him to be. But it was a hard choice to make because we also knew we’d be spending a lot of time away from home, traveling back and

forth to Houston to be with him.”

At all times during his three-and-a-half-month stay at TIRR Memorial Hermann, Chris had a

family member by his side. “It was a very trying time for all of us,” Eddie says. “We learned that Chris would be paralyzed from the shoulders down, and that was still sinking in.”

Before he was sidelined by his injury, Chris was an all-conference defensive back and all-state punter

*Extra Yard continues on page 5*

## FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

### **Jeffrey Berliner, D.O.**

Attending Physician  
Assistant Professor of PM&R, UTHealth Medical School

### **Vicki Clayton**

Recovery Assistance Project Manager at ILRU

### **Craig DiTommaso, M.D.**

UTHealth/BCM Alliance Resident  
President of Project U.N.I.O.N.

### **Gerard E. Francisco, M.D.**

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Chair of the Department of PM&R,  
UTHealth Medical School

### **Lex Frieden**

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TIRR Memorial Hermann CEO

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Vocational Coordinator  
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### **Margaret Struchen, Ph.D.**

Research Scientist  
Assistant Professor of PM&R, Baylor College of Medicine

### **Rev. Hazel R. Thomas, M.Div., B.C.C.**

Chaplain Manager

### **Patricia Tully, O.T.R., A.T.P.**

Seating and Mobility Specialist

### **Poyee Pansy Tung, M.D.**

Director of Cardiovascular Disease at  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Imagine an environment in which each patient's medical record is stored and updated electronically throughout the entire continuum of care - from admission to discharge.



*Carl E. Josehart, CEO*

Physicians would have access to hundreds of evidence-based order sets through the touch of a button to deliver care proven to produce the best possible outcomes. This vision is fast becoming a reality at TIRR Memorial Hermann.

Our electronic medical record (EMR) and computerized physician order entry (CPOE) went live in January of this year, dramatically changing the nature of how we work in a positive way. The transition to a paperless environment, which will allow clinicians to automate care by documenting medical records electronically, is a milestone for TIRR Memorial Hermann and a giant leap forward in ensuring efficiency, accuracy and patient safety.

One of our strengths at TIRR Memorial Hermann is our integration with the entire system of care provided by Memorial Hermann. EMR means that we can access patient history from transport by Memorial Hermann Life Flight<sup>®</sup> to Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center's Level I Trauma Center through inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation care. Access to imaging results through the Picture Archiving Communication System (PACS) eliminates repetition of studies. An entire patient history is now available in one medical record.

The implementation of EMR and CPOE was a true partnership between clinicians, physicians and Memorial Hermann's Information Technology team. We're proud of the accomplishment, which brings us one step closer to being a higher reliability organization.

*Carl E. Josehart  
Chief Executive Officer  
TIRR Memorial Hermann*

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*We have opportunities for outstanding rehabilitation professionals. If you are interested in joining our team at U.S. News & World Report's No. 5 rehabilitation hospital, contact Jude Lemaire, recruitment consultant, at 713.797.7281 or [Jude.Lemaire@memorialhermann.org](mailto:Jude.Lemaire@memorialhermann.org). All available opportunities can be viewed at [memorialhermann.org](http://memorialhermann.org).  
[www.tirrmemorialhermann.org](http://www.tirrmemorialhermann.org), [www.ilru.org](http://www.ilru.org)*

## Rep. Giffords' Arrival Puts TIRR Memorial Hermann in the International Spotlight

In January, Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords arrived at Memorial Hermann-Texas Medical Center and soon after was transferred to TIRR Memorial Hermann, raising public awareness of the process of recovery for individuals with a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Local and national news reports took an international audience inside the facility, giving them a personal look at the experts who work there and the experience of patients.

“We’re optimistic that greater awareness and understanding of the science and practice of rehabilitation, and brain injury recovery in particular, will lead to increased community acceptance of individuals with a range of abilities,” says **Carl Josehart**, CEO of TIRR Memorial Hermann. “We also hope it will lead to more

willingness to provide reasonable accommodations that allow all individuals to remain independent and productive members of society. We’re grateful for the opportunity to showcase the members of our multi-disciplinary team of rehabilitation professionals who work together to

advance the care of our patients.”

Stories about the facility and the team caring for Giffords appeared on national networks, including NBC, CNN, ABC, CBS, PBS and CSPAN, in addition to coverage by local network affiliates. CNN anchor Sanjay Gupta, M.D., and *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams took their viewers on tours of TIRR Memorial Hermann and watched its staff at work.

“Giffords’ admission brought

attention to the little-known specialty of physical medicine and rehabilitation, in general, and the field of brain injury rehabilitation, in particular,” says **Gerard Francisco, M.D.**, chief medical officer at TIRR Memorial Hermann and chair of the department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at

Houston (UTHealth) Medical School.

Articles featuring TIRR Memorial Hermann appeared in *USA Today*, *Houston Chronicle*, *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Los Angeles Times*. ♦



*Gerard Francisco, M.D., speaks at a press conference for Rep. Gabrielle Giffords*

## Computerized Physician Order Entry Brings Evidence-Based Medicine to the Point of Care

Most physical medicine and rehabilitation specialists were trained in a paper-based world. The big news in healthcare today is the transition to a paperless environment through the implementation of electronic medical records (EMR) and computerized physician order entry (CPOE). TIRR Memorial Hermann went live with both on Jan. 16, 2011.

“We’re not 100 percent there yet but utilization of order entry for TIRR Memorial Hermann is relatively high – about 85 percent,” says **Gerard Francisco, M.D.**, chief medical officer. “When CPOE is fully implemented, our medical staff will be able to access hundreds of plans for delivering care and transmit them electronically to the appropriate department or individual to be carried out. The entire care team will be on the same page, with no time lag in the sharing of information.”

CPOE incorporates evidence-based medicine at the point of care by activating rules and alerts related to specific patient medical records. “The program helps physicians avoid deviations from standard practice,” Dr. Francisco says. “If a physician is using the software to write orders for a patient, the program will bring up clinical guidance data and a set of rules on the screen, so that all the information is available to the physician when writing specific orders. For instance, if I order a larger-than-normal dose of a particular medication, an alert will come up. We can override the alert when we need to order unusual doses of a medication, but by

*Computerized continues on page 4*

providing the warning, the program eliminates inadvertent errors, enhancing patient safety.”

In hospitals that have implemented it, CPOE has produced substantial benefits, including reductions in medication errors and adverse drug events. “CPOE helps us improve efficiency of care delivery, and it also gives the hospital some insight into the potential for errors,” says **Jacob Joseph, M.D.**, an attending physician at TIRR Memorial Hermann and



P. Jacob Joseph, M.D.

assistant professor of physical medicine and rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School.

“For instance, you can track the number of times a doctor is alerted for a patient allergy or a higher-than-normal dose of a medication. By standardizing care, CPOE introduces another level of quality assurance into the patient care process.”

Physicians can pull spreadsheets that graph trends based on lab tests or blood pressure results, and they no longer have to be on a nursing unit to order a medication for a patient. “I like the process because I can write orders from home or from my office at the university,” Dr. Francisco says.

“It’s an evolving process because we’re still discovering ways to make the EMR more efficient,” he adds. “It’s a little more time consuming than writing a simple order for Tylenol by hand, but it’s worth the effort to improve safety for our patients.” ♦

## Research Update: Examining the Contribution of Social Communication Abilities and Affective/Behavioral Functioning to Social Integration Outcomes for Adults with Traumatic Brain Injury

Researchers at TIRR Memorial Hermann have published one of the first studies to explore directly the relationship between social communication skills and broader social integration outcomes in a culturally and socioeconomically diverse traumatic brain injury population. The article appeared in the January/February 2011 issue of the *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*.<sup>1</sup>

“There are no gold-standard measures and few clinical tools to evaluate communication skills following traumatic brain injury,” says lead author **Margaret Struchen, Ph.D.** “The measures we used to evaluate the extent to which social



Margaret A. Struchen, Ph.D.

communication abilities and behavioral functioning contribute to overall social integration outcomes were evaluation of self-perception of communicative skill, as well as behavioral measures that assess receptive, processing and sending communication abilities.”

Participants in the prospective cohort study included 184 English-speaking adults (72.8 percent men) evaluated at least six months post discharge from acute care or inpatient rehabilitation hospitals between May 2004 and June 2008. Assessment measures included the La Trobe Communication Questionnaire, Assessment of Interpersonal Problem-Solving Skills, Affective Behavioral subscale from the Problem Checklist of the Head Injury

Family Interview, the Craig Handicap Assessment and Reporting Technique-Short Form Social Integration subscale and the Community Integration Questionnaire Social Integration subscale.

“Based on the results of the measures, we concluded that social communication measures and self-reported behavioral functioning contributed significantly to concurrently measured social integration outcomes,” Dr. Struchen says. “It’s evident that social communication abilities and affective/behavioral functioning make a substantial contribution to social integration outcomes.”

The work was supported by grants from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Community Integration of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Developing Strategies to Foster Community Integration and Participation for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury, and the Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Model System of TIRR Memorial Hermann.

For more information about the article, contact Dr. Struchen at [struchen@bcm.edu](mailto:struchen@bcm.edu). ♦

<sup>1</sup>Struchen MA, Pappadis MR, Sander AM, Burrows CS, Myszka KA. Examining the contribution of social communication abilities to social integration and emotional functioning outcomes for adults with traumatic brain injury. 2011 Jan/Feb, *Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation*, 26(1):30-42.

with scholarship offers from 14 colleges. “At that time, Tarleton State University was the only school in Texas with an exercise program for students with disabilities,” Eddie says. “Chris tried to go to college but it was a tough experience, and he had to withdraw on a medical leave.”

When he returned home, his friends had left for college, leaving him isolated. “I could see the isolation starting to wear and tear on him,” his father says. “He was reaching the one-year anniversary of his injury – and that first year is the toughest. Right after a spinal cord injury, people are still thinking, ‘I’m going to do whatever it takes to get out of this chair.’ Athletics was an important part of Chris’ life, and at the one-year mark, it was starting to sink in that he would never play football again.”

To get his son out of the house and take his mind off the injury, Eddie took Chris to a state championship football game. From the stands, they witnessed a high school player suffer a spinal cord injury.

“That was the inspiration behind the Gridiron Heroes Spinal Cord Injury Foundation,” he says. “Chris said, ‘Dad we have to go and help him. I know what he will go through, and you know what the family will go through.’”

Today, Gridiron Heroes, which is funded solely through private contributions, provides immediate and long-term resources and support to individuals who sustain a catastrophic spinal cord injury through activities associated with high school football. Through the foundation, Chris and Eddie Canales provide guidance to athletes and their families and prepare them for the lifestyle changes they will face. To date, they’ve helped 19 young Texas athletes adapt to life after SCI, and they also devote time

**G**RIDIRON HEROES, WHICH IS FUNDED SOLELY THROUGH PRIVATE CONTRIBUTIONS, PROVIDES IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM RESOURCES AND SUPPORT TO INDIVIDUALS WHO SUSTAIN A CATASTROPHIC SPINAL CORD INJURY THROUGH ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL.

and energy to raising awareness of SCI in the community.

Their work through the foundation has gained national attention, including a cover story in *Time* magazine, several Associated Press articles and most recently, recognition from CNN. Last fall, both men were nominated as CNN Heroes.

“It’s quite an honor,” says Eddie, who was named CNN Hero for January 2011. “Chris and I were both nominated for the award, and they had to choose one of us. I think they chose me because Chris has been recognized for his work in the past.” In 2006, Chris was named the American Red Cross of Central Texas Hero. That same year, he was a finalist for the Houston Texans’ Community Quarterback Award. He was inducted into the National Spinal Cord Injury Hall of Fame in 2007.

“Chris has been the inspiration and faith behind the Gridiron Heroes,” Eddie says. “Thanks to the motivation he provided, we’ve established our niche. As big as football is in Texas and across the nation, there’s never been an organization quite like ours. We’re grateful for the opportunity to help and for the attention we’re getting. Now that our names are out there, we’ve started to receive calls for help from people in other states,

including folks who aren’t athletes but need guidance and help.

“Chris is still very involved with the Gridiron Heroes, but he’s also moved on with his life,” Eddie says. “Going beyond the injury to reintegrate into the community is a major part of what TIRR Memorial Hermann teaches. I’m proud of Chris’ accomplishments.”

Chris developed an interest in film editing after he and his dad were invited to work on the pilot for the television show *Friday Night Lights*, based on the film of the same name. He went on to complete an internship in film editing at Universal Studios in Hollywood and is now working on the feature film *Battleship*, to be released in 2012.

“TIRR Memorial Hermann helped me get back what I have now, and I’m grateful for the therapy they provided me,” Chris says. “It was a tough time, but it was a good experience and it’s part of what inspired me to want to help. I’ve always been kind of a shy guy but when I saw that player injured at the state championship game, I knew how hard it would be for him and I knew we had to help.” ♦

**Philanthropic Gift Kicks Off e-Reader Program**

What started as a simple conversation about e-readers between two employees at TIRR Memorial Hermann led to a \$17,000 gift from Houstonians Suzann and Robert Jones. The gift enabled the purchase of 10 Amazon Kindles, 10 Barnes & Noble Nooks, 10 Sony eReaders and 10 Apple iPads for the use of inpatients and outpatients recovering from illness or injury.

“**Brenda Eames**, the TIRR Memorial Hermann librarian, and I asked ourselves how we could further help people recovering from neurological and other injuries stay connected to the world around them,”



*Hazel R. Thomas, M.Div., B.C.C.*

says the **Rev. Hazel R. Thomas, M.Div., B.C.C.** “We immediately thought of the potential of various e-readers as aids to regaining function as well as maintaining connection.”

Research demonstrates the importance of reintegration into the community for persons adapting to disability. Rehabilitation literature also highlights the role of connectedness with informational and social networks in improved quality of life. The impairments that accompany injury can threaten an individual’s ability to use informational and social media to help regain that connectedness.

In the fall of 2010, on a visit to TIRR Memorial Hermann Outpatient Rehabilitation, Rev. Thomas saw Suzann Jones reading from her Kindle

while she waited for her husband to finish his therapy session. “I asked her if she liked her Kindle, and when I learned that her husband was recovering from stroke, I was also curious about whether he had tried using it. In the course of our conversation, she mentioned that she had talked with a client recovering from stroke who said she loved her Kindle. It was light enough to hold, and you only have to use one side of your body to read from it. I mentioned that we were trying to get a project off the ground to purchase e-readers for the use of our patients.”

When Jones asked for more information, Rev. Thomas gave her a rough cost estimate. “She said, ‘I think I can do that. Why don’t you send me a proposal, and we’ll talk about it.’” The gift was made through the Memorial Hermann Foundation.

The Joneses’ generosity will allow people with neurological injuries to try out and evaluate the four available platforms for e-reading as they work to regain motor skills, coordination, visual deficits, memory loss and problem-solving abilities. “It will also help them stay connected through the Internet, give them access to new books and encourage them to talk about what they’re reading,” Rev. Thomas says. “There are countless possibilities for the project.”

**Bequest from TIRR Memorial Hermann Founder Creates the William A. Spencer Fund for Pediatric Outpatients**

Widely acknowledged as the father of modern rehabilitation, William A. Spencer, M.D., believed that people with even the most severe disabilities could attain a state of health and

functional ability, and return to active lives in their communities. A founder and first president of The Institute for Rehabilitation and Research, now TIRR Memorial Hermann, Dr. Spencer died on Feb. 18, 2009.

Dr. Spencer’s words are inscribed at the base of the statue of *Prometheus Unbound* that stands at TIRR Memorial Hermann’s entrance: “Man uses the tiniest of strengths for the greatest purposes.” In 1951, as a young pediatrician just out of the United States Army, Dr. Spencer was recruited by Baylor College of Medicine and the National Foundation for

**W**HEN THE POLIO VACCINE ALL BUT ERADICATED THE DISEASE, DR. SPENCER REFOCUSSED THE CORE CLINICAL KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPED FROM THE REHABILITATION OF PATIENTS WITH POLIO TO THE CARE OF THOSE WITH CATASTROPHIC INJURIES.

Infantile Paralysis to lead a staff of clinicians at the Southwestern Poliomyelitis Respiratory Center in Houston. As the polio epidemic swept the nation, patients from across the United States were sent to the center. At one time, the center managed more than 10 percent of the 38,000 new cases of polio occurring annually.

“When the polio epidemic hit, my father became frantic,” says Susan Spencer-Tully of Potomac Falls, VA, who worked closely with TIRR Memorial Hermann leadership to establish the William A. Spencer Fund for pediatric outpatients. “As a pediatrician, he was committed to curing kids. But he couldn’t cure this disease, and when he saw the crippling, the kids confined to iron lungs and

young people being sent to nursing homes for the rest of their lives, he wanted to do something innovative. He always said, ‘Even though the body is broken, the mind still works.’ He wanted to make sure that everyone with a disability had the opportunity to use their skills and talents to the greatest degree possible.”

When the polio vaccine all but eradicated the disease, Dr. Spencer refocused the core clinical knowledge developed from the rehabilitation of patients with polio to the care of those with catastrophic injuries. He guided TIRR Memorial Hermann to become a worldwide model for comprehensive medical rehabilitation programs. Under his leadership, the institute gained national recognition for its innovative and pioneering programs, which led to TIRR Memorial Hermann’s unique collaboration with The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School and Baylor College of Medicine.

The William A. Spencer Fund will assist children who seek therapy at TIRR Memorial Hermann Outpatient Rehabilitation, which opened a pediatric outpatient center this spring. An initial gift of more than \$100,000 from the family to the Memorial Hermann Foundation created the fund.

“We expect the fund to become a permanent endowment that will continue the spirit and passion of Dr. Spencer as a pediatrician and rehabilitation physician,” says **Carl Josehart**, TIRR Memorial Hermann CEO. “Each year, Memorial Hermann’s corporate leadership selects a program to support through our employee campaign, and this year they’ve selected TIRR Memorial Hermann.

We expect the fund to grow quickly with support from employees and community members who want to help.”

### One Step Closer Foundation Hosts Third Annual Celebrity Poker Tournament Benefiting TIRR Memorial Hermann

Celebrities and professional poker players came together last December to help find a cure for cerebral palsy at the third annual “All in for CP Celebrity Charity Poker Tournament,” held in The Venetian Poker Room in Las Vegas. The tournament supports the One Step Closer Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness and funds for

ROB GRACIE/GREASIEWHEELS



*Mekhi Phifer, Jacob Zalewski and host Cheryl Hines*

research on cerebral palsy. Founded by CEO Jacob Zalewski, a former patient at TIRR Memorial Hermann, the foundation generously donates proceeds from the tournament to the rehabilitation hospital.

One hundred fifty-two players registered for the tournament, including Mekhi Phifer of Fox’s *Lie To Me*; Sean Astin of *Lord of the Rings*; Sam Simon, creator of *The*

*Simpsons*; Jennifer Elise Cox; Jennifer Tilly; Jeremy London; Omar Gooding; Al Santos; Miko Hughes; and boxer Sergio Martinez. Professional poker players included Karina and Chip Jett, Todd and Anjela Brunson, Justin Smith, Christina Lindley, Phil Laak, Lupe Soto, Eric Mizrachi, Marsha Waggoner, Joseph Reitman, Andy Bloch and 2009 World Series of Poker champion Joe Cada, among others. Tournament host Cheryl Hines and Zalewski kicked off the tournament with an enthusiastic “Shuffle up and deal!”

In 2008, the first “All in for CP” tournament drew 44 players who raised \$44,000. From this year’s proceeds, Zalewski donated \$15,000

to TIRR Memorial Hermann through the Memorial Hermann Foundation, his largest donation to date. “We are grateful to Jacob for his continued interest in and support of TIRR Memorial Hermann and our programs,” says TIRR Memorial Hermann CEO **Carl Josehart**, who attended this year’s tournament. “TIRR Memorial Hermann was founded on the belief

that people with even the most severe disabilities could attain a state of health and functional ability and return to active lives in their communities. Jacob never gave up, and through his efforts he’s helping us help others find the path to more rewarding lives.”

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Born three months premature, Jacob Zalewski suffered complications during birth, including broken ribs, a brain infection and air supply loss when his umbilical cord wrapped around his neck. He weighed less than 1.5 pounds, and his doctors gave him a 3 percent chance of survival.

When he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at the age of 3, his adoptive family sought treatment around the world. By the time he was 18, he had been to numerous hospitals, specialists and physical therapists but had failed to gain his independence. After years of being told that nothing more could be done, he began to believe that his disability was permanent.

In 2003, his parents took him for an evaluation at TIRR Memorial Hermann. "After consulting with my doctor, Gerard Francisco, and my physical therapist, Heather Heyl, I

**W**HEN HE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH CEREBRAL PALSY AT THE AGE OF 3, JACOB'S ADOPTIVE FAMILY SOUGHT TREATMENT AROUND THE WORLD. BY THE TIME HE WAS 18, HE HAD BEEN TO NUMEROUS HOSPITALS, SPECIALISTS AND PHYSICAL THERAPISTS BUT HAD FAILED TO GAIN HIS INDEPENDENCE. HE BEGAN TO BELIEVE THAT HIS DISABILITY WAS PERMANENT.

knew there was something special about them," Zalewski says. "The fire in me that had almost died began to spark again. I couldn't wait to start."

In two weeks at TIRR Memorial Hermann, he improved an astonishing 20 percent. "I had not improved that much in 10 years at other hospitals," he says. "My parents and I were thrilled. I felt that I was a part of something important instead of watching my therapy from the sidelines as I had done at other hospitals. It was about what we could accomplish together.

"TIRR Memorial Hermann has helped me get where I am," he says. "They were the first people to believe in me as a patient and to believe in us as a foundation. My goal is to continue to work with TIRR Memorial Hermann and the Memorial Hermann Foundation on bigger and better fundraising projects."

### Project U.N.I.O.N. Extends TIRR Memorial Hermann's Reach into the Community

Begun in 2009 as the idea of Pari Azari, M.D., Project U.N.I.O.N. was founded as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization to help individuals with disabilities become more functional, safe and active in their communities by providing durable medical equipment. At the time, Dr. Azari was a resident at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School/Baylor College of Medicine Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Alliance, rotating at TIRR Memorial Hermann for much of her training.

"Dr. Azari saw the progress patients had made at TIRR Memorial Hermann and understood that it doesn't end with inpatient and outpatient treatment," says **Patricia Tully, O.T.R., A.T.P.**, a seating



Patricia Tully, O.T.R., A.T.P.

and mobility specialist who serves on the board of directors of Project U.N.I.O.N, an acronym for Understanding Needs In Our Neighborhood.

"Rehabilitation is a lifelong process, and often when former patients have

finished their program of therapy, they find themselves without the equipment they need to continue living active lives. Our goal is to help them meet those needs by providing wheelchairs, walkers and even hospital beds by refurbishing and recycling donations from the community."

Project U.N.I.O.N. depends on the support of volunteers, many of whom work at TIRR Memorial Hermann. "Therapists, rehab equipment dealers and manufacturing company representatives have donated their time, skills and products to help refurbish the equipment and make it ready for use by others," Tully says. "We are only as strong as our volunteers."

"We hope to expand in the future to offer other services such as orthotics, education about pain management, free or discounted transportation funds and help with medication and treatment fees, as well as physical, occupational and speech therapy," says **Craig DiTommaso, M.D.**, a UTHealth/BCM Alliance resident who assumed the role of president of Project U.N.I.O.N. following Dr. Azari's departure from Houston. "TIRR Memorial Hermann is a driving force and inspiration to us. They've been very involved with us on several levels. Patients leave TIRR Memorial Hermann with great potential to move forward with their lives. We're here to provide them with support over the long haul." ♦

## ON THE MOVE

### TIRR Memorial Hermann Hosts Brain Injury and Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems Meetings

TIRR Memorial Hermann, one of only six rehabilitation hospitals in the nation designated as model systems by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) for both its spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury programs, will host the annual leadership forums for both model systems this spring and fall.

The 5th Annual TBI Model Systems Leadership Forum, which was held at TIRR Memorial Hermann April 13 to 16, 2011, provided an opportunity for invited TBI Model Systems representatives from occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology and nursing to exchange administrative, clinical and educational ideas and information related to brain injury and rehabilitation. Participants, who came from current and former TBI Model Systems around the country, discussed the challenges of conversion to an electronic medical record, fall prevention, restraint use, behavior management, staffing models, team conferences, incorporating research into the clinical setting, updates on research studies and patient and family education, along with other discipline-specific clinical topics.

The 33rd Annual Model SCI Systems Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy Leadership Forum will be held Oct. 19 to 22, 2011. A collaborative meeting of current and former SCI Model Systems centers designated by the NIDRR, the gathering will include presentations to invited participants on patient safety, clinical issues, staffing needs, how to implement culture change, how to manage

patients with catastrophic needs in the changing healthcare environment and related topics.

Both forums seek to enhance TBI and SCI rehabilitation services on a national level through participation of leadership representatives from member centers serving in program development or administrative roles.



*Diane Wege, P.T., N.C.S.*



*Julie Jennings, P.T., N.C.S.*

For more information about the TBI Model Systems forum, contact **Diane Wege, P.T., N.C.S.**, at [diane.wege@memorialhermann.org](mailto:diane.wege@memorialhermann.org). For information about the SCI Model Systems forum, contact **Julie Jennings, P.T., N.C.S.**, at [julie.jennings@memorialhermann.org](mailto:julie.jennings@memorialhermann.org).

### TIRR Memorial Hermann Outpatient Rehabilitation Adds a Pediatric Center

Steady growth in the pediatric program at TIRR Memorial Hermann Outpatient Rehabilitation has led to an expansion of services in a newly constructed space adjacent to the facility. The expansion adds 2,900 square feet designed solely for the use of pediatric patients.

TIRR Memorial Hermann Pediatric Outpatient Rehabilitation features a dedicated child-friendly space for pediatric services, a new entrance and space to further grow the pediatric

**T**HE PEDIATRIC OUTPATIENT PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN WHOSE CONDITION CALLS FOR THE INTENSITY OF CONVENTIONAL INPATIENT REHABILITATION BUT DOES NOT REQUIRE OVERNIGHT NURSING CARE.

program. New additions include pediatric neuropsychological testing, and last June, the program purchased pediatric legs for TIRR Memorial Hermann's Lokomat<sup>®</sup>, which benefits patients with neurological movement disorders. The addition of the pediatric legs was made possible by the generosity of 105 donors who contributed \$88,000 to the Memorial Hermann Foundation for their purchase.

The pediatric outpatient program is designed to meet the needs of children whose condition calls for the intensity of conventional inpatient rehabilitation but does not require overnight nursing care. Patients benefit from an intensive, integrated rehabilitation program in a clinical setting during the day, combined with the family's emotional support at home.

Physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, social workers and neuropsychologists at the pediatric outpatient center provide a full range of rehabilitation services for patients with brain injury, spinal cord injury, amputations, developmental delay, torticollis, multiple trauma, genetic disorders, cancer, neurological insult, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis, as well as for post-transplant and post-orthopedic injury patients.

For more information or to refer a patient, call 713.524.9702. ♦

*On the Move continues on page 10*

## ILRU Continues Support for Hurricane Ike Victims

Since December 2009, TIRR Memorial Hermann's Independent Living Research Utilization program has assisted people with disabilities who were affected by Hurricane Ike, using federal Social Services Block Grants managed by the Houston-Galveston Area Council. Last fall, the United States Congress approved a one-year

**T**O DATE, ILRU HAS INTERVIEWED 346 CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE NINE COUNTIES THAT COMPRISE THE GREATER HOUSTON AREA.

extension of the grants, allowing groups in Texas and other states to continue to spend allocated grant funds into 2011.

To date, ILRU has interviewed 346 clients with disabilities in the nine counties that comprise the Greater Houston area. One hundred thirty-three clients were referred to appropriate organizations for assistance with food, utilities, housing, transportation, rent, prescription medications, medical, vision and dental services and many other miscellaneous needs. Attorneys at the Southwest ADA Center, a program of ILRU, have helped numerous clients with fair housing and other disability-related legal issues.

"Since beginning the project, ILRU has worked closely with volunteer groups from the area who provide labor for construction projects. Together, we've completed 37 ramps and three wheelchair-accessible showers, and widened doors for wheelchair accessibility for three clients," says **Vicki Clayton**, recovery assistance project

manager at ILRU. "Our clients have all been grateful for the help."

## Rehabilitation Solutions Expands to 200-Plus Participants

More than 200 people attended Rehabilitation Solutions 2011, TIRR Memorial Hermann's annual advanced case management conference featuring nationally and internationally recognized experts in the field of rehabilitation. This year's conference was held February 17.

Topics and speakers included "Current Concepts in Sports Medicine" by William Mosi Jones, M.D., assistant professor in the departments of Orthopaedic Surgery and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at The



*Shaun A. Smith, M.S., C.R.C.*

University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School, and attending physician at Memorial Hermann Sports

Medicine Institute; "An Overview of Vocational Rehabilitation" by **Shaun A. Smith, M.S., C.R.C.**; "Implications of Aging in Persons with Disabilities" by Kathleen Murphy, Ph.D., M.S., G.N.P., C.N.S., Suzie Conway Endowed Professor in Nursing at UTHealth; "Pain Management in the Rehabilitation Setting" by **Eric Kerstman, M.D., M.P.H.**; "Sexual Function and Sexual Health in the Neurogenic Patient" by Sophie Fletcher, M.D., assistant professor, department of Urology, and director of research, Center for



*Eric Kerstman, M.D.*



*Meilani Mapa, M.D.*



*Jeffrey Berliner, D.O.*

Life Brace and Limb was a gold sponsor.

Restorative Medicine at The Methodist Hospital; "The Obstacles in Healthcare Access for Persons with Disabilities" by **Meilani Mapa, M.D.**; and "Advances in Spinal Cord Injury Medicine" by **Jeffrey Berliner, D.O.**

Platinum sponsors of the event were Life Care Centers of America, Muilenburg Prosthetics Inc., Pride Mobility Products and Touchstone Neurorecovery Center. New

## Outpatient Clinics Open at TIRR Memorial Hermann

TIRR Memorial Hermann added three additional outpatient clinics for people with disabilities who identify the rehabilitation hospital as their primary provider of healthcare.

"We want to provide a holistic service for our patients, many of whom don't have a primary care physician,"

says **Gerard E. Francisco, M.D.** “Many of our patients are young and have never seen a doctor during their adult life, and are now faced with health problems as a complication of their condition or as a direct result of their illness or injury. Our intent is to provide services by specialists who are well versed in the health and lifestyle issues facing rehabilitation patients.”

Cardiologist **Poyee Pansy Tung, M.D.**, director of cardiovascular disease at



*Poyee Pansy Tung, M.D.*

TIRR Memorial Hermann, now conducts a half-day outpatient cardiology clinic once a month on Friday mornings at the rehabilitation hospital. Dr.

Tung and her colleagues provide a full range of cardiology services for patients who identify TIRR Memorial Hermann as their primary provider of care. They include perioperative cardiac management; general cardiology care for arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease and peripheral vascular disease; insertion and removal of IVC filters and thrombectomy for the treatment of venous disease; and advanced wound care, including hyperbaric medicine.

Cardiovascular services available for inpatients and outpatients at TIRR Memorial Hermann include venous duplex ultrasound for assessment of venous thrombosis and venous insufficiency; carotid duplex ultrasound; assessment of peripheral arterial disease including ankle-brachial index and peripheral arterial duplex; echocardiography; and 24-hour Holter monitoring.

Dr. Tung, an assistant professor in the division of Cardiology at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Medical School, is a member of the American College of Cardiology, the Society of Vascular Ultrasound and the Society of Cardiovascular MRI.

**Susan Pelini, M.D.**, an assistant professor in the division of General Medicine at the UTHealth Medical School, provides primary care services to TIRR Memorial Hermann outpatients every Thursday afternoon at her internal medicine clinic. Dr. Pelini, who also holds medical staff appointments at Memorial Hermann-



*Susan Pelini, M.D.*

Texas Medical Center and Lyndon B. Johnson General Hospital, is a certified diplomate of the American Board of Internal Medicine and the National Board of Medical Examiners. She is a member of the American College of Physicians.

**Christopher J. Jayne, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.** is a clinical assistant professor in the Scott Department of Urology and clinical instructor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Baylor College of Medicine. He is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology, fellowship trained in female urology and voiding dysfunction and certified in sexual health. He is in practice with Vanguard Urologic Institute at Memorial Hermann Hospital-Texas Medical Center.

Dr. Jayne focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of voiding dysfunction, urinary incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse and chronic pelvic pain.



*Christopher J. Jayne, M.D.*

His research interests focus on urinary incontinence and novel methods of treating these disorders as well as female sexual dysfunction.

Dr. Jayne has an outpatient clinic at TIRR Memorial Hermann once a month focusing on routine gynecological care and management of gynecological disorders, evaluation and treatment of voiding dysfunction and urinary incontinence, and evaluation and treatment of pelvic organ prolapse.

### **ILRU Announces the Creation of New Community Opportunities Training and Technical Assistance Center**

The New Community Opportunities Training and Technical Assistance Center operated by Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), a program of TIRR Memorial Hermann, will promote community-based alternatives to institutionalization and the successful transition of youth with disabilities from school to postsecondary education, employment and independent living. Funded by a

*On the Move continues on page 14*

**Lex Frieden Appointed Chancellor's Health Fellow on Disability**

Kenneth I. Shine, M.D., executive vice chancellor for health affairs for The University of Texas System, has appointed disability rights champion **Lex Frieden** to take on the challenge of enhancing the lives of the 2.8 million Texans with disabilities. Frieden's appointment as the Chancellor's Health Fellow on Disability was effective Dec. 1, 2010.

"Only a quarter of Texans with disabilities are working, compared with two-thirds of people without disabilities



*Lex Frieden*

- and a significant percentage live below poverty," says Frieden, who was an architect of the Americans with Disabilities

Act of 1990 (ADA) and is currently a professor of biomedical informatics and rehabilitation at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth). Frieden uses a wheelchair following a 1967 traffic accident in which his spinal cord was severed.

"Lex Frieden's vast knowledge in the areas of biomedical informatics, physical medicine and rehabilitation - not to mention his extraordinary leadership in guiding national and international organizations that support people with disabilities - make him an outstanding choice as a Chancellor's Health Fellow," Shine said in announcing the appointment. "Frieden's impressive résumé of activities in this field will be most

helpful in maximizing improvements in education, research and patient care among our campuses."

As the new Chancellor's Health Fellow on Disability, Frieden's goals include exploring the use of technology to facilitate independent living among people with disabilities and expanding employment opportunities. To accomplish this, he is working to identify, organize and coordinate disability research resources within the UT System and seek partnerships with other organizations.

**F**ROM 1984 THROUGH 1988, FRIEDEN SERVED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HANDICAPPED, NOW CALLED THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY, WHERE HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN CONCEIVING THE ADA.

Frieden believes university researchers can do a better job of harnessing advanced technology for the benefit of people with disabilities. "Golfers are choosing clubs based on GPS coordinates and measurements of wind velocity. Hobbyists are guiding model airplanes with head movements. Automobile manufacturers are developing sophisticated accident avoidance systems. Smart-phone users are driving virtual race cars by tilting their devices from side to side. At the same time, power wheelchair users are controlling their devices with essentially the same technology that was used to control the devices three decades ago," he says.

Frieden says research into human-assist robotics is particularly promising and could help people with disabilities and seniors to live more independently in their homes and be more productive in the workplace. "Robotics applications are already being used in

rehabilitation centers, and in some countries, robotic exoskeletons are being used in farming and in industry," he says.

In addition to his duties at UTHealth, Frieden directs the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) program at TIRR Memorial Hermann, which has served since 1977 as a national center for information, training, research and technical assistance in the area of independent living.

From 1984 through 1988, Frieden served as executive director of the National Council on the Handicapped, now called the National Council on Disability, where he was instrumental in conceiving the ADA. In 2002, he was appointed by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the United States Senate as chairperson of the National Council on Disability, the independent federal agency he directed in the 1980s. He is the author or co-author of more than 60 articles on independent living, disability rights and rehabilitation.

**Elementary School Students Design Award-Winning Project to Help Former TIRR Memorial Hermann Patient**

A group of 10 fourth and fifth graders from the Lego League Robotics Team at Clear Lake City Elementary School won second place in the annual regional Lone Star Competition by creating an assistive device for former TIRR Memorial Hermann patient Mark Blanchard.

Their assignment: research, design and build a robotics project to improve or repair any function of the human body.



During a brainstorming session Blanchard's son Reed, a member of the robotics team, suggested that team members interview his father, who suffered a traumatic brain injury in 2004 that left him tetraplegic and unable to speak. During the interview, team members learned that communication was Blanchard's

**T**O QUALIFY FOR THE REGIONAL COMPETITION, THE ROBOTICS TEAM PERFORMED WELL IN ALL AREAS AT THE CLEAR CREEK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT TOURNAMENT AND RECEIVED THE JUDGES' AWARD FOR THEIR RESEARCH WORK WITH THE ARM BOARD.

most challenging issue: the clicker he uses to operate his augmentative communication device occasionally slipped from his finger, leaving him unable to communicate. To resolve the problem, the team custom-designed an arm board to hold the clicker in place.

The students took a tour of TIRR Memorial Hermann and met with staff members **Diane Wege, P.T., M.S., N.C.S.**, **Tashina Morrow, S.L.P.**, and **Dawn Phillips, C.O.T.A.**, for ideas on how to

improve their prototype. "The therapists gave the team better materials, which they used to create a more permanent arm board that

molds to Mark's arm," says his wife, Jennifer Harlan. "It was very moving to have these kids do this for Mark. It's been fantastic for us and a great experience for the kids to be exposed to some of the issues people with disabilities face."

To qualify for the regional competition,

the robotics team performed well in all areas at the Clear Creek Independent School District tournament and received the Judges' Award for their research work with the arm board. The team's coach, **Kari Euker**, a music teacher at Clear Lake City Elementary, was recognized as Outstanding Coach at the Lone Star Competition.

### **ILRU Recognized with eLearning Leadership Award**

Independent Living Research Utilization, a program of TIRR Memorial Hermann, is one of three national recipients of a CourseAvenue Accessible eLearning Leadership Award. The awards recognize organizations that produce courses serving learners who use assistive technologies and those who do not - without the need to create multiple versions of each course.

In recognizing the award winners, CourseAvenue noted, "These industry leaders have demonstrated how the use of instructional design and technology can produce eLearning titles in the true spirit of complying with both the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. These award winners clearly show that the days of creating separate or limited eLearning courses to achieve ADA and Section 508 compliance are over."

**Gerard Francisco, M.D.**, has been named to the editorial board of the *Journal of Rehabilitation Medicine*, Foundation for Rehabilitation Information. He served on the editorial board of the second edition of the *Textbook of Traumatic Brain Injury*, edited by J.M. Silver, T.W. McAllister and S.C. Yudofsky and published by American Psychiatric Publishing Inc. Association in Arlington, VA. In February, Dr. Francisco and two collaborators - **Raymond Grill, Ph.D.**, of UTHealth, and **Olivera Nesic, Ph.D.**, of The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston - received a Mission Connect Research Award from TIRR Foundation for their proposal "Preclinical and Clinical Testing of FDA-approved Compounds for the Treatment of Neuropathic Pain Following Spinal Cord Injury."

**Martin Grabois, M.D.**, was elected president of the American Academy of Pain Medicine for 2011-2012.

*Accolades continues on page 14*



## ON THE PODIUM

### **Boake C.** Validity of Neuropsychological



*Corwin Boake, Ph.D.*

Testing in Brain Injury Rehabilitation. Seminar presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Academy of Neuropsychology, Vancouver, British Columbia, Oct. 13, 2010.

### **Ivanhoe CB.** Traumatic Brain Injury.

Invited presentation at the Houston Trial Lawyers Association, Houston, Jan. 13, 2011.



*Cindy Ivanhoe, M.D.*

**Frieden L.** Life with a Disability. Presented at the Longitudinal Ambulatory Care

Experience Spring Seminar for Third-Year Medical Students, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Jan. 13, 2011; Disability Research, Rehabilitation, Adaptive Technology, Partnerships and Collaboration and Linking Consumer with Provider. Presented at a Round Table Discussion at The University of Texas at San Antonio, February 2011; Adaptive Technology Needs and Wishes. Presented at the Community Living: It's a Choice! Let's Make a Difference! 33rd Annual Coalition of Texans with Disabilities Convention, Austin, Texas, Apr. 3, 2011; Twenty Years with the ADA. Presented at the Bush School of Government and Public Service Conference at Texas A&M University, College Station, Apr. 13, 2011. ♦

### *On the Move* continued from page 11

five-year grant of more than \$1.3 million from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Center will train and equip Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to start and grow community-based services programs.

“We’re pleased to bring a new and much-needed initiative to the independent living field,” says **Lex Frieden**, ILRU director. “When we began developing the Center, our overarching objective was to create a program of training and technical assistance to help CILs advance community services and strengthen their own organizations. We saw the availability of funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as a unique opportunity to create true capacity building.”

“Community alternatives to institutionalization and youth transition programs are vitally important, not only for the disability community but



*Richard Petty*

opportunities for expansion and for generation of third-party payments that will move them to self-sustaining operations.” Other organizations targeted by the new Center are agencies eligible to become CILs and Statewide Independent Living Councils. ♦

also for the CILs themselves,” says ILRU’s **Richard Petty**, who is director of the new Center. “They offer CILs some of their best

### *Accolades* continued from page 13

He was also recently elected vice-chair of membership development for the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (AAPM&R), and to the 2010-2011



*Martin Grabois, M.D.*

AAPM&R Pain Council Executive Committee. In addition, he serves as senior editor of the new journal *Pain Manage-*

*ment*. Dr. Grabois attended the AAPM&R annual session in Seattle, where he organized and spoke at two scientific sessions: *Lower Back Pain: Evidence-Based Practice Guidelines* and *Practice Management of Pain Practice*. He also co-hosted the UTHealth/Baylor College of Medicine PM&R Alliance alumni party in conjunction with the session. In addition, he attended the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine annual meeting in Montreal, Quebec, in October 2010. ♦

## IN THE NEWS

**Frieden L.** The Rehabilitation Experience. Presented details of a rehabilitation hospital stay on *CBS Evening News*, Jan. 24, 2011; Brain Injury Rehabilitation. Interviewed by KGUN Channel 9 in Tucson, Ariz., Jan. 24, 2011. TIRR Equipped to Handle the Most Complex Cases: A Long Road to Recovery for Injured Congresswoman. Editorial posted in the *Houston Chronicle*, Jan. 26, 2011; Robotics and People with Disabilities. Presented on the monthly television program *Focus on Abilities*, Feb. 7, 2011. ♦

## IN PRINT

*Bold print indicates that the person is affiliated with TIRR.*

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### About TIRR Memorial Hermann

TIRR Memorial Hermann is a 119-bed nonprofit rehabilitation hospital located in the Texas Medical Center in Houston. Founded in 1959, TIRR Memorial Hermann has been named one of "America's Best Hospitals" by *U.S. News & World Report* for 21 consecutive years. TIRR Memorial Hermann provides rehabilitation services for individuals with spinal cord injuries, brain injuries, strokes, amputations and neuromuscular disorders.

TIRR Memorial Hermann is one of 11 hospitals in the not-for-profit Memorial Hermann system. An integrated healthcare system, Memorial Hermann is known for world-class clinical expertise, patient-centered care, leading-edge technology and innovation. The system, with its exceptional medical staff and 20,000 employees, serves Southeast Texas and the Greater Houston community.



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## M MESSAGE FROM THE CMO

Philanthropic support helps ensure TIRR Memorial Hermann's ongoing ability to meet the needs of individuals whose lives have been interrupted by disability. We're grateful for the generosity of the many organizations and individuals who have supported us in the past and continue to support us through their donations of time, money and effort.



*Gerard E. Francisco, M.D., CMO*

Several are mentioned in this issue. Susan Spencer-Tully, the daughter of TIRR Memorial Hermann founder William A. Spencer, M.D., worked closely with us to establish the William A. Spencer Fund for pediatric outpatients as a bequest in Dr. Spencer's

will. Former patient Jacob Zalewski has made gifts to the Memorial Hermann Foundation through his One Step Closer Foundation for the last three years.

In addition to providing direct support for patient care, philanthropy can expedite the acquisition of equipment to help patients improve coordination, regain mobility and return to active lives. We're grateful for the generosity of Suzann and Robert Jones, whose donation made possible the purchase of 40 e-readers for the use of our inpatients and outpatients.

We're particularly proud of Project U.N.I.O.N., which was founded in 2009 by former UTHealth/Baylor College of Medicine Alliance residents who recognized a need in the community for access to durable medical equipment. Today, the program is run by

resident Craig DiTommaso, M.D., and supported by former patients, physicians and staff members who share their experience and expertise as volunteers.

Every gift of time or money counts. If you would like to learn more about ways to support our care, research and outreach programs, contact Thom Sloan, senior director of development at the Memorial Hermann Foundation, at 713.242.4400 or by e-mail at [thomas.sloan@memorialhermann.org](mailto:thomas.sloan@memorialhermann.org).

*Gerard E. Francisco, M.D.  
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