



E-NEWSLETTER

February News

Advances in the Science of Assisted Walking and Bionics

Exciting breakthroughs are being reported in the fields of computer-assisted movement, bionics and treatment for spinal cord injury.

A recent article in Parade magazine discussed clinical trials regarding mechanized leg braces for assisted walking. (To read Parade article, click [here](#).) This technology, called ReWalk, was developed by Amit Goffer, an Israeli engineer and entrepreneur, who happens to be a paraplegic himself. Currently undergoing clinical trials in the United States, ReWalk may have the potential to enable a paraplegic to make his or her way more easily through the day.

An article in a recent issue of National Geographic magazine discussed clinical trials on "bionics". (To read National Geographic article, click [here](#).) In these clinical trials, missing or ruined body parts are replaced by devices embedded in the subjects' nervous systems that respond to commands from their brains. The machines they use are called neural prostheses or, as scientists have become more comfortable with a term made popular by science fiction writers, bionics.

Quality of Life Grants

The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation has an inspiring and distinctive philanthropic history of funding organizations that promote the health and welfare of individuals with disabilities, particularly for those living with spinal cord injuries and other neurological disorders.

Here's one of our recent Quality of Life grants:

In 2009 the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation made a donation towards a barrier-free playground under construction in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, a Twin Cities suburb. The project was initiated by the parents of a disabled daughter, after discovering that playground equipment is generally inaccessible to children in wheelchairs or too difficult for them to use.

The new playground has accessible pathways and surface structures that allow non-mobile children and adults to reach all areas of the play structure. This access enables children with physical challenges to have the opportunity to play alongside their peers.

We were impressed by the fact that these parents organized private fundraisers and also worked very hard to research all possible sponsorship avenues for the barrier-free playground, which will help not only their own child but everyone in their community.

SSPF is being honored for their support by having an engraved paver stone at the entrance to the park.

For those of you who live in the Twin Cities area, we hope

Meanwhile, other scientists work toward finding a way to reconnect severed nerves or to route around a damaged area of the spinal cord. Dr. Michael Sofroniew at UCLA and colleagues have used drugs and electrical stimulation in successful trials on paralyzed rats. (To read about Dr. Sofroniew's research, click [here](#).)

Dr. Stephen Davies and his research team at the University of Colorado has achieved similar results with stem cells. (To read about Dr. Davies' research, click [here](#).) To view a video interview with Dr. Davies, click [here](#).) It is hoped and expected that these experiments will proceed to human clinical trials in the near future. Dr. Davies attended SSPF's Day at the Races event in Chicago last year and we are looking forward to working more closely with him in the future. We'll keep you posted!

The implications of these and other ongoing studies are exciting and marvelous. The process of taking an idea to the clinical trial stage is long, arduous and very expensive. These scientists deserve all the support we can give them.

However, attention should also be given to those who volunteer to participate as a subject in a clinical trial. As an able bodied person, picture volunteering to walk a high wire, when the purpose of the activity is not to test your own prowess but to test the strength of the high wire.

Of course, that analogy is far from accurate; it was offered just as something for you to think about. Clinical trials are conducted under strict

you will visit the park to see how your donation is changing lives.



Miss Ashley enjoys a great day at the accessible playground!

Quality of Life grants are awarded to non-profit organizations designed to promote active and rewarding lives for those living with spinal cord injuries and other debilitating conditions. Individuals are encouraged to participate in sports, train for a job, and operate specially-adapted computers, among other things.

Special attention is given to those organizations supporting soldiers returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Grants for housing, sports programs, and programs providing services to meet their special needs have been awarded.

We will highlight other Quality of Life grants in future issues of this e-newsletter – stay tuned!

Upcoming Events

March:

- 3/26: Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon, St. Petersburg FL
- 3/27: Day at the Races, St. Petersburg FL

April:

- 4/14: Parnelli Jones Private Museum, Torrance, CA
- 4/17: Day at the Races, Long Beach CA

May:

- Annual May Gala, Indianapolis IN
- 5/21: Day at the Races, Indianapolis IN (tentative date)

guidelines and close supervision. But being a subject in a clinical trial does require dedicating significant time and hard work. Those who agree to participate as a subject in a clinical trial are not only looking to help themselves, but also to help others in their physical situation.

Especially notable in the stories about mechanically assisted walking and bionics is what the participants look forward to doing again someday. Those with spinal cord injury find themselves in a world filled with obstacles that most people don't notice, such as stairs, curbs and narrow doorways. Their hopes for the future of scientific advances are simple. They look forward to household chores being more easily completed and errands becoming less than major expeditions.

So we'd like to salute not only the scientists but also the participants. Everyone who contributes in their own way to the cause of finding new treatments and ultimately a cure for spinal cord injury has our sincere gratitude.

Just as you are doing your part, we are working hard to do our part. As staff and volunteers, we promise to do our best to further the work of the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation by extending research grants to scientists working on these issues, quality of life grants to organizations dedicated to improving daily life for those with disabilities, and by taking every opportunity to publicize the need to discover new treatments and ultimately a cure for spinal cord injury.

In future issues of this e-newsletter, we will highlight various Research Grants given - stay

June:

- 6/18: Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon, Newton IA (tentative)
- 6/19: Day at the Races, Newton IA

July:

- 7/15: Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon, Honda Indy, Toronto Canada
- 7/17: Day at the Races, Toronto Canada (tentative)

August:

- 8/19: Run, Walk, 'N Wheelathon, Infineon Raceway, Sonoma CA
- 8/21: Day at the Races, Infineon Raceway, Sonoma CA
- 8/28: Day at the Races, Chicago, IL

September:

- 9/3: Run, Walk 'N Wheelathon, Sparta KY (tentative)

October:

- 10/30: Run, Walk & Wheelathon, Las Vegas, NV

November:

- 11/1: 5th Annual Racing to Recovery Golf Tournament, Las Vegas, NV

Visit our website for information on how to register for any of these events, or call the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation at 317-236-9999.

tuned!

It's Never Too Early... or Too Late!

Have you heard the saying, "charity begins at home"? This is especially true during times of economic uncertainty. It's never too early or too late to include charitable giving into your financial planning.

You do not have to wait to be of a certain age or in a certain salary bracket to include the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation in your charitable giving. Anyone can name the foundation as a beneficiary in charitable giving through programs such as employer matching, CFC, 401(k), 403(b), insurance policy, or personal will.

Does your employer offer a matching gift program? Many companies offer matching gift programs to encourage employee charitable giving. Most of these programs match employee contributions dollar for dollar. Some even double or triple the amount of your gift!

Are you a government employee, civilian or military? The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation is proud to participate in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) as an eligible nonprofit organization, through our federation membership in Medical Research Charities (MRC). Any federal employee, whether civilian, postal or military, can designate SSPF for their donation pledge. Look for us under our Federation name in the CFC directory. Our CFC number for your pledge form is 11724.

Do you have a 401(k), 403(b) or a life insurance policy? Consider naming your loved ones as the beneficiary of 99% of your estate and the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation for 1%.

Do you have a will or intend to have one written? Consider naming your next of kin as the beneficiary of 99% of your estate and the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation for 1%.

There are almost 6 million people in the US who report that

they have some form of paralysis. The Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation receives communications every day from people living with spinal cord injury and other disabilities; people who are battling for things that, for them, are now basic necessities, such as medically safe wheelchair seating systems, ramps, and well-designed wheelchairs to enable them to lead a life outside their living rooms. Your donation to SSPF will make a dramatic impact in improving quality of life for the many people living with paralysis.

Your generous support will also help the Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation move life altering medical research out of the laboratories and into human clinical trials that bring us closer to discovering treatments and cures for paralysis and other neurological disorders. ***SSPF is poised to lead the charge to cure paralysis. With your support, hope for the future will become a reality today.***

Our mailing address is:

PO Box 3661, Princeton, NJ 08543-3661

Copyright (C) 2009 Sam Schmidt Paralysis Foundation. All rights reserved.

www.samschmidt.org

Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and You Tube!