Graduate Success Stories

Mamta B. Singh, MBBS, MD, DM
Class of 2008; Advisor, 2010; Faculty, 2012, 2014; Advocate of the Year, 2009

The aim was to narrow the wide epilepsy treatment gap in India, and Singh began by hosting a series of epilepsy camps in the suburbs and villages surrounding New Delhi, where she examined and counseled patients, prescribed medications, and offered supplies when possible. In July 2009, she pioneered two-to-three day Epilepsy Clinics at each monthly destination of the Lifeline Express, a train hospital that provides portable medical treatment for the rural poor as it travels throughout India’s remote countryside. Singh has now completed more than ten years in this innovative and highly successful epilepsy program. So far, more than 10,000 epilepsy patients from different parts of India have benefitted from this effort. Singh’s team has now grown to include at least two or three neurologists for each epilepsy clinic on the Lifeline Express, along with a team of highly motivated and active epilepsy educators and counselors.

Javier Cárdenas, MD
Class of 2008; Advisor, 2009, 2015; Advocate of the Year, 2014; Moderator, 2018

Researching concussion in high school athletes, Cárdenas and Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center collaborated with the Arizona Cardinals and the Arizona Interscholastic Association (the governing body for high school sports) to create Barrow Brainbook, an online educational module about concussion designed for the high school athlete. The module features computer-generated animation, video footage of actual concussions, and interviews with physicians, peers, and local professional athletes. All Arizona high school athletes are required to pass a quiz at the end of the module before participating in any sport, and more than 300,000 Arizona high school athletes have completed the first-of-its kind training. Barrow also is providing baseline and post-injury computerized cognitive tests (ImPACT) to every high school athlete in Arizona at no cost. The Institute also created a telemedicine program that provides athletic trainers concussion consultations statewide called the Barrow Concussion Network. More recently, Dr. Cárdenas collaborated with the National Federation of High School Associations to develop a nationwide concussion education program for high school athletes. Finally, Barrow is replicating the Barrow Concussion Network, providing education, baseline testing, and telemedicine services in Northern California.
Sarah Song, MD
Class of 2009; Advisor, 2011; Faculty, 2018; Moderator, 2019

In 2017, Dr. Song created and incorporated the Illinois State Neurological Society. The society had 110 neurologists attend its inaugural meeting; an incredible achievement for a new society. Dr. Song has established a board of directors to ensure continued success for the society. When serving as Chair of the AAN’s State Work Group, Dr. Song saw firsthand the benefit that state neurosocieties could provide to their neurologists on a very local level, on policies that affect everyday clinical practice. State neurological societies can also provide convenient and locally obtainable CME. She used the skills learned at the Palatucci Advocacy Leadership Forum and worked with co-founder, Dr. Austin Hake, to form the society. The society is working to support neurologists in Illinois in a variety of ways. They hope to support young doctors in training and encourage them to choose neurology. The society also supports neurologists at all stages from burning out to leaving the field. Dr. Song has seen the benefit of a society in Illinois and encourages all states to form a neurosociety.

David B. Watson, MD, FAAN
Class of 2011; Advisor, 2012; Advisor, 2013; Advocate of the Year, 2017; Moderator, 2015

Dr. Watson was looking for a way to contribute to the migraine community and headache and migraine research. He seized on the opportunity to launch a fundraising race for medical research—Runnin’ for Research—in Morgantown, WV. Since the first race in 2014, he has enlisted two more “PALFers,” Brian M. Plato, DO, (class of 2013) in Louisville, KY, and Jennifer Bickel, MD, (class of 2012) in Kansas City, MO. All three AAN advocates have organized a Runnin’ for Research events in their respective cities. Since its inception, R4R has donated over $250,000 to various organizations, including the American Migraine Foundation, Migraine Research Foundation, American Brain Foundation, as well as others.

Daniel C. Potts, MD, FAAN
Class of 2008; Advisor, 2009; Faculty, 2010; Moderator, 2011; Advocate of the Year, 2008

Inspired by his father's transformation from a rural Alabama lumberman to watercolor artist in a dementia daycare center's art therapy program, Daniel Potts has focused his advocacy efforts on persons with dementia at home and in residential care settings and their caregivers. He promotes person-centered caregiving models that incorporate the expressive arts to bolster the sense of self, promote life story expression, foster dignity, and maintain
relationships throughout the course of the disease. The Caring Days Dementia Daycare Center in Tuscaloosa, AL, where his father lived, is an example of the comprehensive dementia care model Potts is advocating for on the local, state, and national levels. Successes include completion of a new $2 million home for Caring Days, a state-of-the-art model for person-centered dementia daycare (caringdays.org). Potts has created a foundation to promote enhanced quality of life through the expressive arts and storytelling (cognitivedynamics.org), which has developed a service-learning program pairing students with persons who have dementia, utilizing art therapy to build intergenerational relationships and elicit life stories. In 2016, in collaboration with fellow PALF graduate, Neelum Aggarwal, MD, Potts expanded the program to Chicago. Potts has published A Pocket Guide for the Alzheimer’s Caregiver, Finding Joy in Alzheimer’s: New Hope for Caregivers, and Treasure for Alzheimer’s: Reflecting on Experiences with the Art of Lester E. Potts, Jr., and was Editor-in-Chief for the first-ever multi-faith collection of meditations for dementia caregivers, Seasons of Caring. He blogs monthly on MariaShriver.com, and has been designated by Shriver to be an "Architect of Change." Potts often contributes articles on advocacy in national publications (including Neurology® and Neurology Now®).

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