



KiDZ Neuroscience Event Commemorates 10th Anniversary of Concussion Care Program and Youth Concussion Legislation

On November 28, the KiDZ Neuroscience Center at The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Countywide Concussion Care program and the passage of the Youth Concussion Legislation in 2012, known at the time as Florida House Bill 291.



Gillian Hotz, Ph.D.; Joshua Williams; David Goldstein; Caleb Williams; and Isabella Gomez

A throng of supporters, children who have been helped by the program, doctors and researchers who have advanced the



science, and pioneering families, legislators, and administrators gathered for the upbeat celebration in the Hurricane 100 Room at the Watsco Center on the University's Coral Gables campus.

"I am humbled by all the support since the start of the program. I have spent my career trying to make this world a safer place for children to play, learn, and grow," said Gillian Hotz, Ph.D., research professor in the Department of Neurological Surgery and director of the KiDZ Neuroscience Center and the UConcussion, WalkSafe®, BikeSafe®, and SkateSafe® programs. "Our programs have buy-in from so many people that our impact continues to grow every year to make our community safer, and that is very gratifying."

The UConcussion Program, which Dr. Hotz directs with medical director Abraham Chileuitt, M.D., includes a comprehensive program and implementation of a countywide high school concussion program which includes baseline testing through ImPACT, sideline screening, concussion clinic follow-up with gradual return to play and learn, and a concussion injury surveillance system.

Training and Advocacy

As part of the program, Dr. Hotz and her team train high school and college athletic trainers, directors, and coaches on a yearly basis. These efforts are supported by the Miami Dolphins Foundation. This year was dedicated to Jason Jenkins, longtime director and senior vice president of communications and community affairs, who passed away recently.

Rashauna Williams, representing the foundation at the event, said of Jenkins and the foundation's support, "This program



will always be near and dear to our hearts. The day that Jason passed was the day that we honored the concussion program at the Dolphins game.”

David Goldstein is a local advocate who, as a student-athlete at Ransom Everglades in 2011, sustained concussions and led the way with his family in passing the Youth Concussion Legislation. “When I suffered my third concussion in four years, I had absolutely no idea where to turn,” Goldstein said. “I went into the UConcussion clinic somewhat skeptical based on my prior experience, and Dr. Nedd and Dr. Hotz, who treated me, listened to me describe my symptoms and took my issue seriously. They helped me recover and they gave me my life back.”

Former Florida State Senator Anitere Flores, who co-sponsored the legislation, said, “I had the opportunity to meet Cheryl, Adam, and David [Goldstein], and they had an incredible impact not just in my life, but in my professional career as well. Thank you for letting me be an instrument to the amazing idea that David had.” Of the program, the senator continued, “Rest assured that you have saved people’s lives. Rest assured that you have made an impact in the lives of so many people every single day.”

Countywide Concussion Care helps about 250 high school students annually and works with the athletic trainers to ensure that protocols are followed. The program has been implemented within all 35 public high schools and many of the private high schools in Miami-Dade County.

Latoya Williams, director of athletics for the Miami-Dade County School Board, expressed gratitude for “this wonderful partnership.”



“In everything you do in life, there is someone who paves the way, the trailblazer that burns the way so that your job is that much easier,” Williams said of her mentor and predecessor, Cheryl Golden, who started the program in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Tribute Establishes New Neuroscience Education Fund

During the festive evening, the family of Dr. Hotz surprised her by providing the seed funding to establish the Dr. Gillian A. Hotz KiDZ Neuroscience Education Fund. The fund will support the training, education, and outreach priorities for pre-medical students and fellows doing research at the KiDZ Neuroscience Center.

Don Bailey Jr., Miami Hurricanes football analyst, served as event emcee and helped acknowledge supporters and special guests who were instrumental to the success of the program, including Kester Nedd, D.O., and Lee Kaplan, M.D.; Adam and Chanin Carlin; the Goldstein family; ImPACT Applications; Codina Partners; Ackerman Law Firm; the Green, Ertel, and Arriola families; Judy Winberg; Andy Pollack and family; the Arviv Family; the Quint family; Diana Brett and the family of Daniel, who passed away after suffering years with post-concussion syndrome; and those who provided auction items.

Two special guests, mascots Sebastian of the University of Miami and Bernie of the Miami Heat, helped close out the evening by entertaining attendees with dancing and interactive fun with DJ Morgan Anisman from Magen Boys Entertainment and the band.

The KiDZ Neuroscience Center is dedicated to reducing the number of children and adolescents that sustain brain and



spinal cord injuries. As part of The Miami Project, the center has brought injury prevention to South Florida youth through its evidence-based programs and street, crosswalk, bicycle, and helmet education. Through partnerships with Miami-Dade Public Schools, City of Miami Parks, the Miami Dolphins Foundation, and many other community organizations, the center helps children enjoy outdoor activities as safely as possible.

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