

From: [NREF](#)
To: [Joanne M. Bonaminio](#)
Subject: NREF Newsletter | Summer 2025
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Dear Friends & Colleagues,

As we approach the start of the academic year, the **Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation** (NREF) is pleased to announce the results of our grant and fellowship programs.

It is my honor to report that 2025-26 will be another record-setting year for the Foundation.

With your support, the NREF will bestow **\$2.2 million** in grant and fellowship funding this year. We extend our thanks to the donors that make this possible, including:

- **Industry Partners** – Globus Medical, Medtronic, Johnson & Johnson MedTech, Cerenovus, Stryker and Terumo Neuro
- **Sections** – CV, Spine and Pediatric Neurosurgery
- **Affiliated Organizations** – Columbia University and the American Academy of Neurological Surgeons

Receiving an NREF award isn't easy. Year after year, the NREF receives applications from some of the most promising researchers in the country making the decisions extraordinarily difficult. The exceptional quality of the proposals submitted by the awardees makes us optimistic for the future of neurosurgery.


For the coming academic year, the NREF will support:

- **1 William P. Van Wagenen Fellowship**
- **30 Clinical Fellowship Grants**
- **8 Research Fellowship Grants and Young Clinician Investigator Awards**
- **16 Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships**

The impact of your generosity on early career neurosurgeons leads to success in acquiring subsequent grant support, research productivity and achievements of academic rank, leading to a broader effect on the trajectory of research and innovation within neurosurgery. I would urge you to check out some of the **Success Stories** from previous NREF grant and fellowship recipients on our website.

Applications for 2026-27 open in September through the **NREF Online Grant Portal**

and are due in November. Award announcements will be made in Spring 2026.

 Your support opens doors to **future breakthroughs** by contributing to the development of leading-edge educational opportunities and groundbreaking research projects.

To make a tax-deductible donation, please visit our secure online [Donate](#) page.

Your gift will **empower** the next generation of neurosurgeons, and together, we will leave the field of neurosurgery better than we found it and improve our patients' lives.

Thank you for your continued support of NREF!

Sincerely,



Adam S. Arthur, MD, MPH, FAANS
NREF Chair

Additional Updates from the NREF

[Cushing Circle of Giving Welcomes New and Elevated Members](#)

The **Cushing Circle of Giving** was established by the NREF as a lifetime giving society to recognize donors who support the Foundation's research and education efforts. The NREF extends its gratitude to: **Brian M. Howard, MD, FAANS, Michael M. McDowell, MD, FAANS, Laura McGuire, MD, and Scott Douglas Simon, MD, FAANS**, the newest philanthropists to have made a substantial commitment to the future of neurosurgery by joining the Cushing Circle, and to N. Ross Jenkins, MD, FAANS(L), FACS, the latest member to reach the Gold level. To become a member, visit our secure [Donate](#) page, email info@nref.org or call 847.378.0500 for more information.

[Westchester Medical Center Takes 4th Annual NREF Cushing Bowl Crown](#)

A new champion has been crowned! The NREF is pleased to announce that **Westchester Medical Center** won the fourth annual **Cushing Bowl** - a competition amongst residency programs held during the 2025 AANS Annual Scientific Meeting in Boston, MA.

This year's Cushing Bowl raised over \$12,000 to further NREF's mission of advancing neurosurgical research and education. Contact NREF at info@nref.org for more information.

[New Honor Your Mentor Funds Recognize Industry Leaders](#)

Honor Your Mentor (HYM) Funds recognize the incredible people who have advanced neurosurgery. Each mentor fund has a specific purpose, and donations fund a chosen research or educational endeavor in the mentor's name across a variety of subspecialties. The following HYM funds have recently made award disbursements: **Andrew T. Parsa, Charles H. Tator, Donald O. Quest, Howard J. Silberstein, Katie O. Orrico, R. Michael Scott, Roy A. E. Bakay, Sanford J. Larson, Takanori**

Fukushima, and **University of Minnesota Residents Research Fund**. NREF congratulates all award recipients and offers our best wishes for their continued success.

The 20th Annual Charity Softball Tournament Raises over \$100k

The **20th Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament**, hosted by Columbia University, was held in New York City's Central Park on Saturday, June 7, 2025, to raise funds for brain tumor research. The tournament featured an expanded field from across the U.S and Canada. Play was suspended due to rain before the playoff round could begin. A silent auction held in conjunction with the tournament raised over \$19,000 in addition to funds from participants and sponsors bringing the total to over \$100,000. For more information regarding the 2026 tournament, please contact Dr. Ricardo J. Komotar (rkomotar@med.miami.edu); or Dr. Jeffrey N. Bruce (jnb2@columbia.edu).

NREF Awards 2025 Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships

The NREF is pleased to announce the 2025 recipients of the **NREF Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships** (MSSRF). The MSSRF program offers fellowships to outstanding medical students in the United States, Canada or Mexico, who wish to spend a summer working in a neurosurgical laboratory, mentored by a member of the **American Association of Neurological Surgeons** (AANS).

The 2026 fellowship application opens on September 1, 2025, through the **NREF Online Grant Portal**.

NREF Awards 2025-26 Research Fellowship Grants and Young Clinician Investigator Awards

The **Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation** (NREF) provides funding for studies in basic, translational and patient-oriented clinical research for investigators in North America through this annual research grant program. NREF is pleased to announce this year's recipients of the Foundation's **Research Fellowship Grants and Young Clinician Investigator Awards**.

Open to residents only, the **NREF Research Fellowship Grant** provides training for neurosurgeons who are preparing for academic careers as clinician investigators. Applicants must be physicians who have been accepted into, or who are currently in approved residency training programs in neurological surgery in North America. The **NREF Young Clinician Investigator Award** supports junior faculty who are pursuing careers as clinical investigators. Applicants must be neurosurgeons, no more than two years from the end of their clinical training, who are full-time faculty in North American teaching institutions.

The application for the 2026-27 academic year will open September 1, 2025, on the **NREF Online Grant Portal**.

NREF Announces 2025-26 Recipients of Clinical Fellowship Grants

As a leading funder of neurosurgical studies and education, the NREF focuses on providing fellowship funding in basic neuroscience and neurosurgical programs in North America.

With support from **Cerenovus, Globus Medical, J&J MedTech, Medtronic, Stryker** and **Terumo Neuro** the NREF will provide funding for thirty (30) fellowships at institutions through the Foundation's **NREF Clinical Fellowship Grants** program. The application for the 2026-27 academic year will be available through the **NREF Online Grant Portal** beginning September 1, 2025. Contact NREF at (847) 378-0500 or info@nref.org for more information about grant and fellowship programs.

Enhance Your Neurosurgical Training with NREF

The NREF is committed to providing early career neurosurgeons access to relevant, leading-edge educational opportunities. Our free, **in-person courses** offer advanced resident and fellow educational training in topic areas not always covered within neurosurgical residency. While spaces at the in-person courses are invitation-only, there are **courses and webinars** available online, free of charge, to neurosurgical residents around the world. All online courses and past episodes of NREF webinars are archived on the **NREF YouTube** channel.

Inheritance and Raising Children

*A poem by **Timir Banerjee, MD, FAANS(L)***

To be a great dad requires not just loving but total concern and caring
For the well being of the offspring

That often requires a life full of discipline and at times unpleasant disciplining.

The great sons and daughters are the offsprings of great parents

That can provide, educate and advise as is necessary for life to proceed.

Charlemagne loved his children as I understand from history

He forgave Pepin, the hunchback, when he had plotted to kill the king

It seemed more humane to have him confined in a monastery as punishment

Rather than have him executed.

The father would have been forever sad

To see the face of a lifeless son, being mortally wounded by a decree

That couldn't have been taken back.

Turgenev in Fathers and sons described the conflict that is inherent

Between the generations of intellectuals and traditionalists

At times the behavior of the younger generation is rather abhorrent

And not conducive to building relationship and can be a source of torment.

Bazarov, the young doctor with ideas of nihilism and often rather disagreeable

Certainly stands out in many occasions and that attitude is difficult to reconcile.

Despite the fact that as parents we are not supposed to have favorites

But unfortunately, it is possibly unavoidable, and is often the case
That may create a situation of jealousy among siblings,
Craving for the parental affection.
Mark Twain's deep depression
At the loss of Suzy with spinal meningitis,
Is a testament to that fact and is an example of this favoritism assumption.
Earning the title of being a 'great' dad requires considerable luck
To keep the honor on a permanent basis is an impossibility to say the least
It is easy to lose the title when the dad fails to provide monetary restitution
On occasions that are of questionable importance.
Although the dad being older and wiser may make an erroneous judgment call
That may not be favorable to the demanding person or the occasion.
My dad told me that a pigeon may hatch a crow's egg out of lack of discernment
But as it learns to fly it joins the camp of crows away from the pigeon cantonment.
The treasure of gratitude may be lacking in its potential for emotional attainment.
I believe that unless we can accept that inheritance is a gift
And definitely not a right
There is a fear of malfeasance
As is seen in Esau's case
We are taught that mothers never can love one child more than the other
But the behavior of Rebekah in that case has a distinct odor.
1:Timothy 6:10 teaches us that the love of money is the root of all evil
Certainly in modern days all of it can be lost in the legal debacle
So I believe it is best to spend it all
While living.
Enjoy it's worth by cherishing the hard work it entailed in accumulating
And give it away to those that have the potential to improve their lives
From being in a rut or are in a rough patch or need a lift from being stuck.

In Memoriam: Michael W. Groff, MD, FAANS

The NREF mourns the passing of past NREF Chair, **Michael W. Groff, MD, FAANS**, a distinguished spine neurosurgeon, beloved colleague and dedicated leader. Dr. Groff passed away tragically in a plane crash on April 12, 2025, leaving behind a profound legacy of clinical excellence, academic contribution, and selfless service to the field of neurosurgery. Even more tragically, Dr. Groff's family members — including his wife Dr. **Joy Saini**, son **Jared** and oldest daughter **Karenna**, and Jared's and Karenna's girlfriend and boyfriend, respectively — were also victims of the tragic accident. Karenna Groff was a medical student member of the AANS, a 2024 recipient of an NREF Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship, and a budding superstar for our specialty. In their memory, the **Groff Family Memorial Fund** has been

established to provide support interested in attending the AANS Annual Scientific Meeting and other programs in honor of the family's long-standing commitment to education, research, innovation and collaboration. Our deepest condolences go to his family, colleagues and the neurosurgery community. Dr. Groff's wisdom, compassion, and contributions will leave an unforgettable impact.

How You Can Support NREF

Make a difference in one minute. **Text "Neurosurgery" to 41444** from your mobile device or visit our online [Donate](#) page. Illuminate the world of neurosurgery with a contribution to the NREF. Every donation helps fund cutting-edge research and educational programs to develop the next generation of neurosurgeons and provide the highest quality of patient care.

Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation

5550 Meadowbrook Industrial Ct.

Rolling Meadows, IL 60008-3852

P 847.378.0500 or 888.566.2267

F 847.378.0600

nref.org

info@nref.org



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