

From: [NREF](#)
To: [Joanne M. Bonaminio](#)
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Dear Friends & Colleagues,

The **Neurosurgery Research & Education Foundation** (NREF) continues to deliver on its mission to fund **cutting-edge courses** and **merit-based grants**. With support from our esteemed donors and the time and talents of our board and committee members, the NREF has made a profound difference in creating educational opportunities for young neurosurgeons and funding research that identified links between best practices and improved outcomes in patient care.

Here's a brief look at the NREF Year in Review for 2025:


- **Development** – The **Cushing Circle of Giving** is the Foundation's donor recognition society. A call campaign led by Development Committee chair **Praveen Mummaneni**, MD, FAANS, increased Cushing Circle membership to 209 individuals and 47 institutions representing over \$12 million in cumulative donations. A silent auction held in conjunction with the annual Charity Softball Tournament raised over \$19,000 in addition to funds from participants and sponsors.
- **Education** – The NREF hosted four (4) live **Resident and Fellows Courses** in 2025. The goal of the Education Committee, chaired by **Mark Bain**, MD, FAANS, is to provide course attendees with small-group instruction by leading experts in neurosurgery emphasizing real-time decision-making and complication management, along with didactic sessions that explore evolving device technologies, clinical case studies and emerging trends in neurosurgery. The combination of practical and theoretical learning provide participants with an in-depth understanding of both current standards and innovations shaping neurosurgical care.
- **Fellowship** – Under the leadership of Fellowship Committee chair, **Luis Tumialán**, MD, FAANS, NREF expanded the Clinical Fellowship Grant program to support thirty (30) fellowships in spine, cerebrovascular and tumor. NREF gratefully acknowledges our industry partners Cerenovus, Globus Medical, Johnson & Johnson MedTech, MicroVention Terumo, Medtronic and Stryker, for providing over \$1.7M in support for 2025-26 **NREF Clinical Fellowship Grants**.

- **Research** – The NREF continues to fund basic science grants for medical students, residents, fellows and post-graduates, with support given by Sections and other organizations, such as the American Academy of Neurological Surgery. In 2025, an article published in the Journal of Neurosurgery by Research Committee chair, **Gregory Zipfel**, MD, FAANS, and others found that **NREF Medical Student Summer Research Fellowships** are associated with high-quality research and strong academic productivity among aspiring medical students, with a high proportion of awardees pursuing neurosurgery and matching into top-ranked residency programs. Likewise, this early-career fellowship has a substantial return on investment in terms of subsequent NIH grant funding.

NREF Vice Chair, **Michael Wang**, MD, FAANS, and I are proud of these accomplishments, but there's more work to be done. In these challenging times, the importance of medical research and enhanced training has never been more evident. In 2026, we are prepared to meet these challenges head on with a bold and critical investment in the future of academic neurosurgery. Stay tuned for details coming soon! The future of neurosurgery depends on people like you — those who believe in the power of science, education and compassion. With your support, we will not only continue to meet the challenges of today, but we will also build a stronger, smarter and more equitable future for all.

Partner with us. Fund progress. Save lives.

Your gift will **open doors** for the next generation of neurosurgeons and **foster improved outcomes** for our patients with neurosurgical diseases.

 During this season of giving, please visit our secure online **Donate** page to make a tax-deductible donation. Your generosity will **empower** the neurosurgeons that will move our specialty forward.

Thank you for your continued support of NREF!

Best wishes to you and yours for a safe and happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year,



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: **Allan D. Levi**, MD, PhD, FACS, FAANS, the newest philanthropist to have made a substantial commitment to the future of neurosurgery by joining the Cushing Circle. To become a member, visit our secure

Donate page, email info@nref.org or call 847.378.0500 for more information.

NREF Honor Your Mentor Fund Recognizes Dr. Paul Camarata

It only takes one person to change the lives and futures of many. **Honor Your Mentor (HYM) Funds** celebrate the distinguished luminaries of neurosurgery: those who inspire, teach and mentor by giving generously of their time and talent. The NREF is proud to announce a newly established fund: the **Paul J. Camarata Honor Your Mentor Fund** will support the University of Kansas neurosurgery research program with funds for resident research, conferences and visiting professors. To make a tax-deductible donation, visit the **Paul J. Camarata Honor Your Mentor Fund** web page, and click "Donate" or forward your check to NREF, 7661 Eagle Way, Chicago, IL 60678-1076, and designate the Paul J. Camarata Fund.

Van Wagenen Fellows Host 3rd Annual Hockey Tournament

The 3rd Annual **Van Wagenen Hockey Tournament**, hosted by Dr. Andrew Grande and former Van Wagenen Fellows, will be held Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 3M Mariucci Arena in Minneapolis. The puck drops at 9 am. Last year's event raised over \$18,000 for the Van Wagenen Fellowship Fund. **Register for this year's contest.** The **William P. Van Wagenen Fellowship** provides neurosurgical residents interested in studying abroad a unique opportunity with a program designed to give freedom in scientific development without the restrictive limitations imposed by many research grants and fellowships.

Save the Date for 21st Annual Charity Softball Tournament

The **21st Annual Neurosurgery Charity Softball Tournament**, hosted by Columbia University, will be held in New York City's Central Park on Saturday, June 6, 2026, to raise funds for brain tumor research. The tournament will feature teams from across the U.S and Canada. 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).

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.

To Give – A Poem by Timer Banerjee, MD, FAANS(L)

To whom much is given much is expected,
This is written in Luke 12:48.
It is important to learn to launder happiness
By creating a job home balance.

Finding contentment in personal achievements
Sets the stage to bring cheer to others
By sharing the joy and fruit of success
Through renunciation and loving sentiment



Corporate Supporters Advance NREF Educational Mission

NREF offers free, **in-person courses** to provide 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. Thanks to our valued individual donors and corporate supporters, the NREF has funded over ninety (90) courses attended by more than 2,000 residents and fellows, with thousands more viewing presentations online.

The NREF gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our **2025 Corporate Supporters:**
2025 NREF Neuroendovascular Surgery Techniques Course for Fellows

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2025 NREF Endovascular and Vascular Techniques Course for Senior Residents

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2025 Spinal Deformity Course for Residents

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