

FOUNDATION UPDATE



CNS
Foundation

Dear Colleagues,

We want to thank you again for your ongoing support of the CNS Foundation and its mission in 2021. We continue to be grateful and inspired by your individual contributions to our new programs, some of which are outlined in the following update, as well as in our core initiatives. Of special interest to this issue of *Congress Quarterly* is our International Philanthropy fund, which aims to close the gap in worldwide neurosurgical knowledge and service through educational opportunities and collaborative support. The interview with Dr. Alexis Morell on page 25 offers a great illustration of the impact of our International Philanthropy fund.

As always, it is an honor for us to serve you and your patients in philanthropy.

With Sincerest regards,



Elad Levy

Elad I. Levy, MD, MBA
Chair, CNS Foundation



Alex Khalessi

Alex Khalessi, MD, MBA
Vice Chair, CNS Foundation

CNS Foundation Funds New K12 Webinar Series Begins March 8th

The CNS is proud to announce a webinar series highlighting neurosurgeon-scientists who have been supported through the Neurosurgeon Research Career Development Program (NRCDP) that is funded through the NIH and the CNS. The NRCDP is a K12 funding mechanism for early career neurosurgeons designed to support impactful translational and clinical research programs.

“These neurosurgeon scientists are performing research and making discoveries that will impact our field for generations. It is an honor to give them a forum to present their latest insights to our members,” said Maryam Rahman, CNS Education Committee Vice Co-chair.

“This is a terrific addition to the CNS’s robust educational platform. There has been a significant amount of interest in the last few years around neurosurgeon research, particularly what is coming out of the K12 program. Bringing senior surgeon scientists together with the K12 awardees to discuss latest science is certain to be interesting,” said Past CNS President Russell Lonser.

Beginning on March 8, NRCDP awardee, Timothy Lucas, will present his research on Bidirectional Brain Computer Interface for the Restoration

of Grip to provide an overview of cyberphysical strategies for sensory reanimation. Discussion led by Itzhak Fried and moderated by Julie Pilitsis.

This webinar series is funded in part by an Innovative Seed Grant from the CNS Foundation, in support of the Clinical Scientist Career Development Initiative. Please visit CNS.org/Education for the calendar of the entire K12 Webinar series.

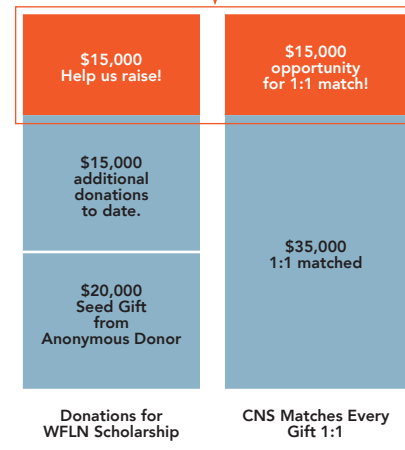
Goal to Raise \$50,000 for Future Women Leaders in Neurosurgery Scholarship Nearly Achieved! Will you help us reach our goal?

Foundation.cns.org/donate

EVERY DOLLAR MATCHED

Help us establish a \$100,000 FWLN Scholarship Fund!

\$50,000 Goal! ↑ ↓ \$50,000 Goal!



Pandemic Can't Stop First Recipient of CNS Foundation International Tumor Observership

In three short years Alexis Morell, MD, of Rosario, Argentina, has demonstrated the tenacity that makes for a future leader.

With only ten days before his starting date of a new position in the United States, the Morell family entered the country with a full schedule. In those ten days, he and his wife Maia, along with their two-and-a-half-year-old son, Tomas, and two cats, moved to a new country and quickly organized basic needs such as cell phones, renting an unfurnished apartment, and purchasing a used car from friends. Dr. Morell then drove four hours for the only available opening to sit for his second medical licensing examination, a rigorous 9-hour test well known to US physicians. The following morning, he began onboarding as the new Clinical Research Coordinator of the University of Miami Brain Tumor Initiative.

He reflected on the year leading up to this opportunity. The COVID-19 pandemic only intensified Argentina's existing shortage of resources, including hospital beds. As Dr. Morell continued attending to his most urgent neurosurgical patients, he added critical care training sessions to support the COVID emergency as he continued to prepare for his second medical exam. Meanwhile, his wife, who is an internal medicine doctor, treated COVID patients

daily and regularly had to self-quarantine as many of her colleagues fell sick, some dying from the disease.

Amid all this, the two parents juggled full-time care for Tomas. "Early in the pandemic, if you were caught in public without a special permit as an essential worker, the police would arrest you. Childcare and nannies were non-essential workers. We set up a playground in our tiny apartment for him and did the best we could."

Now in Miami, Dr. Morell has begun working with familiar faces Dr. Ricardo Komotar and Dr. Michael Ivan, his mentors during his three-month CNS Foundation Tumor International Observership in 2018. His appreciation for global connections has only grown. "COVID has shown us that international collaboration is a must."

He is grateful for the big and small things about his family's new life in Florida. His wife will have time to perfect her English before she applies for her own residency. They can now enjoy the neighborhood park with their son.

"He gets to look at bugs and birds and squirrels. He can be a kid again," Dr. Morell said.

"And I am getting to work with great leaders in neuro-oncology." He hopes to continue working on ground-breaking research as well as expand his knowledge of minimally invasive procedures.



Having achieved so much, when asked about new goals he replied, "If your dream is satisfying more patients with better outcomes, then the journey itself is the dream."

The CNS and CNS Foundation congratulates Alexis Morell and looks forward to watching his incredible journey continue. 