

M.D. NEWS

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Let's Play!

Resurgens Charitable Foundation

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Children's laughter echoes in the air. Smiles as wide as the outdoors dominate the faces of youngsters swinging high to almost touch the treetops. Doctors watch as children with disabilities experience the pure joy of a playground for the first time.

Since 2001, the Resurgens Charitable Foundation has helped build seven metro-area playgrounds with special play structures where all children, regardless of their abilities, can play together.

"There's nothing quite so fulfilling as seeing the children swing, slide and play on these amazing structures," said Dr. D. Kay Kirkpatrick, Co-President of Resurgens Orthopaedics and President of the Foundation Board of Directors.

"At Resurgens, we work with enough kids to realize that play is essential therapy to help young people grow stronger and healthier.

Dr. D. Kay Kirkpatrick, Co-President of Resurgens Orthopaedics and President of the Foundation Board of Directors, stands in front of the foundation's Hammond Park playground facility.



PHOTO BY HAIGWOOD STUDIOS

Every child needs outdoor physical play. But some children who need it most, kids with disabilities, miss out because they simply don't have suitable facilities," Dr. Kirkpatrick said.

Started after September 11 as a way to give back to the community, the mission of the foundation has evolved to focus on youth health and fitness. A major goal of the foundation is to support construction of at least one playground a year, frequently in partnership with a city or county government.

The first playground was completed in 2002 in Hammond Park in cooperation with Fulton County and a coalition of Sandy Springs civic groups. The all-abilities playgrounds include ramps, handrails and special seats on swings that allow all children to play. Resurgens Charitable Foundation contributed funds for a second playground in 2003 at Unity Place at Bay Creek Park in Grayson. That facility houses a playground and baseball fields developed for children and young adults with disabilities and gives them an opportunity to enjoy recreational activities and team sports.

The foundation has also assisted in the construction of parks in Peachtree City, north Gwinnett County, Conyers, Acworth and in Atlanta just south of Turner Field.

Injury prevention has become an additional goal of the foundation. The group supports the WellStar Safe Kids Program that promotes bicycle safety and funds helmets for youngsters in Cobb, Douglas and Cherokee counties.

A major project in 2009 has been the release of a DVD, *Striking Out Injuries in Youth Baseball*, that features future Hall of Fame pitchers Tom Glavine and John Smoltz. The two legends share their experiences in youth baseball as well as their opinions regarding practices common in youth baseball today.

Narrated by Resurgens Charitable Foundation Executive Director Dr. Joseph Chandler, the DVD also includes sections on pitching training and arm care, both of which are critical in preventing injuries in youth baseball.

Dr. Chandler has been a physician for the Atlanta Braves since 1987 and currently serves as Director of Medical Services, Emeritus for the team. The DVD, which is available free to parents and coaches, cites studies showing that baseball injuries are often the result of too much pitching at too young an age.

"When it comes to youth baseball injuries, we want to see fewer patients," Dr. Chandler said. "We hope this video will promote injury prevention and awareness among coaches and parents and, most importantly, our youth."

Dr. Chandler's campaign to reduce sports injuries followed his

experience both in his clinical practice and his years of working with professional baseball players. He saw an alarming number of kids sustaining arm injuries in youth baseball. As the Braves' team orthopaedist, he also watched a dramatic increase in the number of arm injuries in young pitchers in the minor leagues.

When Dr. Chandler evaluated the causes of these injuries, he found that overuse in youth baseball was a significant contributing factor. Dr. Chandler then surveyed more than 100 professional pitchers regarding their experience in youth baseball. The vast majority of these pitchers did not experience the overuse that is prevalent in youth baseball today.

These successful players did not pitch excessive numbers of pitches or innings. They did not throw breaking balls until they were older than what is typical in youth baseball today. They did not typically play year-round baseball, and they also played (and excelled in) other sports, Dr. Chandler said.

Today's players, however, are suffering injuries at younger and younger ages. "We are seeing some of these kids with three or four operations before they even get out of high school or college," Dr. Chandler said.

In the video, Glavine stresses that he will not let his kids throw a breaking ball "until they are in high school" and that "learning to throw a fastball for strikes consistently is much more important at a young age."

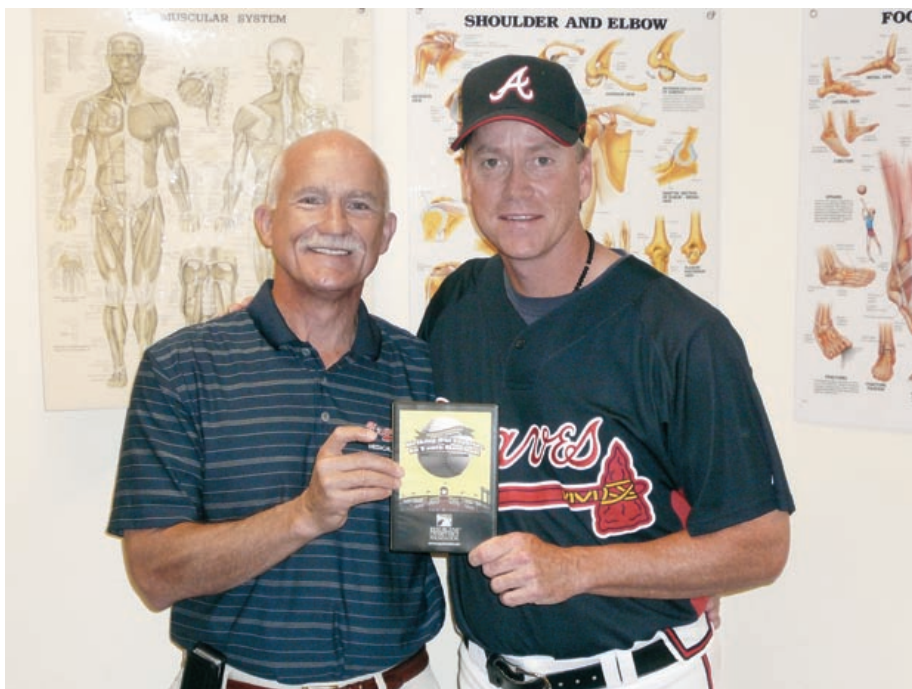
"If a young pitcher can throw a fastball for a strike 70% of the time, then they can learn to throw a change-up," he says. "When the pitcher is older, stronger and more physically mature, a breaking ball can be added."

Smoltz discusses the importance of limiting the number of pitches for young players, claiming that it is more important to work on the mechanics of the game than to risk "career-ending injuries."

Parents and coaches who wish to receive a free copy of the video can visit www.resurgensfoundation.com for details.

The foundation also supports groups that help people with disabilities. Working with the North Metro Miracle League, the foundation purchased cantilevered shade awnings to cover the sitting terraces at Miracle Field to help prevent seizures for children with atypical brain or spinal structure. The group also partners with BlazeSports to help provide sports training, competitions, summer camps and other sports and recreational opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities.

Future goals for the Resurgens Charitable Foundation include funding programs that will address the childhood obesity epidemic in the United States, Dr. Chandler said.



Resurgens Charitable Foundation Executive Director Dr. Joseph Chandler with Atlanta Braves pitcher Tom Glavine holding the DVD *Striking Out Injuries in Youth Baseball*

PHOTO COURTESY OF RESURGENS

Funds for the foundation come primarily through donations and an annual golf tournament held each fall.

Support for the Resurgens Charitable Foundation is an outgrowth of the overall mission of Resurgens Orthopaedics. "Our goal is to serve the Atlanta community by providing exceptional patient-focused and comprehensive musculoskeletal care," Dr. Kirkpatrick said. "Helping children and youth play, heal, learn and live is an excellent way that we can expand our service to the community."

As the largest orthopaedic practice in Georgia, Resurgens Orthopaedics provides patients with a full range of orthopaedic, diagnostic and rehabilitation services. "Our physicians have specialized expertise and broad experience in the treatment and prevention of every orthopaedic condition," Dr. Kirkpatrick said.

With 20 locations and 90 physicians, Resurgens Orthopaedics is accessible to patients throughout greater Atlanta. The practice's board-certified specialists focus on orthopaedic subspecialties that include back and spine care, foot and ankle surgery, hand surgery, joint replacement, sports medicine and trauma care.

"Our patients can receive one-stop service, from initial appointment through rehabilitation. We invest in state-of-the-art technology yet believe in a hands-on, personal approach to caring for our patients," she said.

Resurgens Orthopaedics began in 1986 when Dr. John Garrett started his practice based out of Piedmont Hospital. As Dr. Garrett's practice grew, he moved the group to St. Joseph's Hospital and merged with seven smaller practices to form one large practice under the Resurgens name. Dr. Garrett was team physician for the Atlanta Falcons from 1981 through 1993.

Resurgens Orthopaedics continues to grow along with metro Atlanta. The practice spans the city's geography, with offices in



A major goal of the foundation is to support construction of at least one playground a year, frequently in partnership with a city or county government. Pictured here is the playground in Acworth.

12 metro counties. Resurgens Orthopaedics also has three specialty centers — the Spine Center, the Hand Center and the Joint Replacement Center — comprised of multidisciplinary teams of board-certified nonsurgical and surgical physicians, physician assistants, nurses and therapists.

Six of the Resurgens Orthopaedics offices are designated as supercenters that offer a “one-stop shopping” approach for patient convenience. Patients go to one location to be seen in the clinic or

have an MRI, physical therapy or surgery as needed. The centralization of services allows patients and physicians to avoid spending time driving to multiple locations.

Dr. Kirkpatrick said that large practices offer many benefits in today’s medical environment. Resurgens Orthopaedics provides its physicians with in-house support services in areas such as risk management, information technology and human resources, allowing them to focus on patient care.

A large practice also gives stability in a challenging economic environment. “There is truly strength in numbers in the case of a larger practice, and we have a great infrastructure,” said Dr. Kirkpatrick. “You can either be on a sailboat or an aircraft carrier in a stormy sea. Because we are the larger ship, we can better navigate difficult times. Our practice’s continued success allows us to give back to the community through the Resurgens Charitable Foundation.” ■

Resurgens Orthopaedics

90 physicians
20 office locations

Six surgery centers:
Atlanta, Lawrenceville, Morrow, Austell, Marietta, Roswell

Three specialty centers:
Resurgens Hand Center
Resurgens Joint Replacement Center
Resurgens Spine Center

Services offered:
Diagnostics
MRI imaging
Rehabilitation
Custom orthotics
Workers’ compensation
OrthoNow urgent care



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