Advancing knowledge and realizing the human potential is at the core of the RGK Foundation’s mission to improve society. "RGK Foundation recognizes brain science’s immense capacity to transform individual health and productivity when translated into life-improving programs," said Gregory A. Kozmetsky, Chairman of RGK Foundation.

Based in Austin, Texas, the RGK Foundation is an independent foundation that was established by Ronya and George Kozmetsky in 1966. Aaron, the founders’ grandson, and his wife Tracey live in Dallas and have been contributing their personal gifts of time, talent and funds to the Center for the last several years. A proponent of the Center’s high performance brain training program called Strategic Memory Advanced Reasoning Training (SMART), Tracey explained her enthusiasm, “If you apply the Center’s high performance brain training strategies, you will really see a difference in how your brain functions on a daily basis. Adopting the skills has helped me think more strategically, more creatively and more meaningfully.”

In its most recent grant to the Center for BrainHealth, the RGK Foundation donated $500,000 to expand two existing high performance brain training initiatives in Austin, San Antonio, and the greater Central Texas area. The programs will be delivered through the Center for BrainHealth’s translational arm, the Brain Performance Institute. One initiative, known as Warrior SMART, is tailored to empower current and former military service members on and off the battlefield. The other initiative, called Adolescent SMART, focuses on helping middle school students reach their full academic and personal potential.

"The Center for BrainHealth has developed solutions that are truly transformative, and we are excited to be collaborating with the Center on several fronts," he continued.

“RGK Foundation and the Kozmetsky family adequately understand the challenges facing our military service members transitioning from the battlefield to civilian life,” said Matthew Neyland, head of the Warrior Training Team and former U.S. Marine Corps Officer.

“We are deeply grateful to The RGK Foundation and the Kozmetsky family,” said Sandra Bond Chapman, Ph.D., the Center’s founder and chief director. “They are truly agents of change pushing forward better brain health for all.”

1st QUARTER 2014 | CENTER FOR BRAINHEALTH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

Inspiring Human Brain Potential: RGK Foundation
Brain Performance Institute Raises $19M

The Institute is helping people today—people with healthy brains, those who have suffered brain injury and those diagnosed with brain disease. At the same time, it is allowing us to deepen our research and fine tune the potency of our brain maximizing solutions,” said Sandra Chapman, Ph.D. (D), Chair of the Brain Health Foundation and all of Direct Effect. “There is no other institution like this in the country.”

The Brain Performance Institute could not be possible without our visionary benefactors who join us in the belief that with the right technologies and methodologies almost anybody has the power to change their mind,” explained Eric Brain Performance Institute.

Bipolar Study Seeks to Add Side-Effect Free Solution to Brain Disorder

Bipolar disorder is one of the most prevalent manic-depressive illnesses affecting approximately 5.7 million adults in America every year. It causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, and activity levels, which can lead to the ability to carry out daily tasks. Although it cannot be cured, it can be treated effectively. A new Center for BrainHealth study will investigate the effects of the Center’s high performance brain training called SMART on the mental health and cognitive performance of individuals who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

The study is being funded by friends of the Center, Debbie and Jim Francis and The Meadows Foundation. “We realize that individuals with bipolar disorder are often very bright and creative,” explained Debbie Durbin. “We are truly excited to see how they might benefit from accessing the SMART programs.” Although not previously studied in bipolar disorder, SMART has been scientifically proven to improve several populations including healthy aging adults, children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and those recovering from brain injury and addiction.

Worldwide Presentations Highlight BrainHealth Research

Each year Center for BrainHealth researchers travel the nation and the world to share their innovative research and learn about discoveries occurring at other institutions. According to Chief Science Officer and associate professor and BrainHealth collaborator, will present two abstracts in Milan, Italy at the International Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM); shorter than usual shifts in mood, energy, and activity levels, which can lead to the ability to carry out daily tasks. Although it cannot be cured, it can be treated effectively. A new Center for BrainHealth study will investigate the effects of the Center’s high performance brain training called SMART on the mental health and cognitive performance of individuals who have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The study is being funded by friends of the Center, Debbie and Jim Francis and The Meadows Foundation. “We realize that individuals with bipolar disorder are often very bright and creative,” explained Debbie Durbin. “We are truly excited to see how they might benefit from accessing the SMART programs.” Although not previously studied in bipolar disorder, SMART has been scientifically proven to improve several populations including healthy aging adults, children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and those recovering from brain injury and addiction.

This novel pilot study will measure changes in cognitive, real-life functionality, and brain imaging data. Erin Vena, R. S. CCC-SLP, the clinician spearheading the study explained, “Working memory and attention are common complaints in individuals with bipolar disorder. We believe that this training will greatly enhance cognitive and neural functioning in this group of adults and also increase white matter generation.”

2.5 million from The Simmons Family Foundation will integrate high performance brain training, known as SMART, into the curriculum of several Texas middle school campuses next fall.

2 million from philanthropist Lyda Hill ignited the creation of mobile Warrior Training Teams to deliver proven programs to veteran and active duty service members across the country, including training at Fort Hood this spring.

3 million from Joel Williams, Jr. and Linda Evans in honor of directed wife and mother, Betty Lu, will support the Brain Performance Institute building capital campaign.

Generous gifts from The Rowling Foundation and Emy Lou and Jann Radecke will cover the additional $6 million in capital funds needed to break ground.

We are very grateful to all of our donors and supporters,” reflected Kingdom Hartman, the Meadows Foundation Director. “Their generosity and shared passion for helping others through brain health is enriching lives, our nation’s economy and the cognitive outcome for all future generations.”

Center for BrainHealth would like to thank the state of Texas, The University of Texas System and numerous private donors who have contributed to the Brain Performance Institute’s program expansion and building campaign including, J. Baxter Brinkmann, Rebecca and Ron Gafford, Susan and Ralph Hawkins, JWS Architects, RDK Foundation, Sapphire Foundation, and The Tolleson Family Foundation.

ENRICH YOUR MIND:

Brain Performance Institute Raises $19M

Offering solutions that elevate the human brain span to meet the needs of the ever-extending human lifespan is at the core of the Center for BrainHealth’s new translational arm, the Brain Performance Institute. With more than $19 million raised in support of programs and capital funds, the Institute is providing services for people around the country even before the 67,500-square-foot building groundbreaking has taken place.
Leadership Legacy

“Dr. Branch’s keen intellect, generosity and leadership are unparalleled and will be greatly missed,” said Dr. John Hart, Jr., medical science director of the Center for BrainHealth. “His scientific study and medical practice have significantly impacted our knowledge of the human brain. Dr. Branch’s innovative work laid the foundation for many future discoveries and alleviated the burden of epilepsy for countless individuals over the years."

Charles L. Branch, Sr., M.D., a renowned research scholar, surgeron, pioneer and innovator, lost his battle with endocarditis at the age of 87. He left an indelible mark on the field of neurosurgery where he pioneered spine fusion therapy techniques that fueled innovations that are being used around the world today.

A Tennessee native with an M.D. from Vanderbilt University, Dr. Branch spent the majority of his career in San Antonio where he taught at The University of Texas Health Science Center and led a private practice for 30 years. During his prolific career, he placed a high priority on family and contributed tremendously to the community. In his retirement, Dr. Branch garnered an American Association of Neurological Surgeons humanitarian award for his service as a medical missionary in Africa.

In 2010, the Center for BrainHealth established the Dr. Charles L. Branch BrainHealth Award to honor his achievements. The award is bestowed on an innovative brain scientist each year at the Reprogramming the Brain to Health Symposium to honor Dr. Branch’s legacy by highlighting an individual who has, too, contributed greatly to the frontier of brain exploration.

Before his passing, Dr. Branch generously donated to the Center a collection of memorabilia and scholarly material that commemorates his neurosurgical residency at the Montreal Neurological Institute where he worked under the guidance of two famed neurosurgeons, Wilder Penfield, M.D. and Theodore Rasmussen, M.D., whose study of epilepsy led, in part, to medical science’s current understanding of the cerebral cortex.

“Dr. Branch’s legacy will live on, not only through his scientific breakthroughs, but also through the individuals whose lives he touched,” said Dr. Sandra Bond Chapman, founder and chief director of the Center for BrainHealth. “He often selflessly donated his time and medical expertise to those in need. He will forever be remembered.”

Reprogramming the Brain to Health Symposium Partnership with UC Berkeley

On April 10, the Center for BrainHealth and its partners at the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at The University of California, Berkeley will present Reprogramming the Brain to Health, an annual symposium that brings together the most distinguished neuroscientists and medical investigators in the country to share breakthroughs in brain research. This year’s symposium will focus on the topic “Brain Connectivity in Health and Disease.” Keynote speaker Floyd Bloom, M.D., Chairman Emeritus at the Department of Neuropharmacology at The Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California, will be awarded the Dr. Charles L. Branch BrainHealth Award for his significant and pioneering contribution to the understanding of the dopamine system and its role in brain health and brain decline.

Since 2010, the Dr. Charles L. Branch BrainHealth Award has honored neuroscientists who have made noteworthy breakthroughs in brain discoveries. Dr. Bloom will be the first to receive the award since its namesake, leading research scholar, neurosurgeon, humanitairian, and brain-mapping pioneer, Dr. Charles Branch, Sr., passed away late last year.

“Dr. Bloom has been a force urgently pushing forward the need for biomedicals discoveries to be more rapidly transformed into meaningful advances in health care for society today,” said Sandra Bond Chapman, Ph.D., the Center for BrainHealth’s founder and chief director. “For that reason, the Center for BrainHealth is closely aligned with his life mission: ‘A leading medical expert in neuroscience, neurology, and psychiatry, he is one of the most renowned physician-combined neuroscientists in the world and is editor of a book acclaimed as the consumer’s ‘bible’ for the brain. The Dana Guide to Brain Health.’

The Dana Guide to Brain Health. Michael Zigler, Ed. Ph.D., the first Dr. Charles L. Branch BrainHealth Award recipient, will be presenting Dr. Bloom with the award.

This year’s organizer, Francesca Fibby, Ph.D., Center for BrainHealth’s director of Cognitive Neuroscience Research of Addictive Behaviors, curated the 2014 speaker line-up for the event with Bharat Biswal, Ph.D., New Jersey Institute of Technology; Vince Calhoun, Ph.D., The Mond Research Network at the University of New Mexico; Mark D’Esposito, M.D., University of California, Berkeley; Jay Gazend, M.D., National Institute of Mental Health; Michael Gless, M.D., Stanford School of Medicine; Hanghu Lu, Ph.D., University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center; Steven Petersen, Ph.D., Washington University; and Bart Rypma, Ph.D., Center for BrainHealth at The University of Texas at Dallas.

On April 11, the Center for BrainHealth will host a closing reception that will be held to honor the 2014 Dr. Charles L. Branch BrainHealth Award recipient, General Peter W. Chiarelli, U.S. Army (Ret.).

The symposium will add to the national dialogue on public health awareness and policies that are needed to promote brain health fitness. Panel discussions and keynote presentations will feature Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Congressman Chaka Fattah (D-PA), and key leaders from National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Education, Deputy Director of Defense Science Office (DARPA), National Endowment for the Arts, the U.S. Army Medical Command, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Midnight Brain Research who will discuss solutions to our nation’s most pressing brain related issues.

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