We have been at war for more than a decade. Since 9/11, more than 2.5 million have worn a uniform to protect America’s freedom. Now they are coming home and facing the dynamic challenges of reintegration to civilian life. For many warriors, shedding the uniform signifies the surrender of purpose, mission and the camaraderie of their military service. Finding a new way to channel their intelligence, resilience, and drive to succeed is imperative to ensuring the next greatest generation’s ultimate victory, being able to enjoy the life they have so courageously defended.

In a move to support our nation’s most patriotic citizens, the Hamon Charitable Foundation donated $1 million to the Center for BrainHealth’s Brain Performance Institute to establish the Hamon Endowment for Veteran Support. The permanent endowment will help fund treatment and training that helps bridge the transition from the battlefield to life as a civilian for returning veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

“We recognize the need to help the veterans who have encountered traumatic situations in fighting our foreign wars. Our goal is to endorse programs that provide a real-time and direct benefit to the veterans,” explained Kelly Roach, President of the Hamon Charitable Foundation.

“The Center’s leading scientific research and humanitarian benefits are consistent with the mission of the Foundation,” said Mr. Roach. “We knew when we had the opportunity to meet with veterans at the Center, that our foundation’s founders, Jake and Nancy Hamon, would have recognized and appreciated the work being done.”

Foundation board members met with retired U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Jake Schick and retired U.S. Navy SEAL Lt. Morgan Luttrell who shared their stories of survival from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and their gratitude for the Institute’s high performance brain training programs that positively and significantly changed the course of their lives. While Cpl. Schick’s prosthetic leg and extensively rebuilt hand serve as reminders of the extreme physical injury he endured, both warriors described their unseen scars and reported that their invisible wounds were far more painful and difficult to overcome than any visible ones.

“The strategies I learned assisted me as a leader in the SEAL teams while at home training or deployed on combat missions around the world,” said Luttrell. “Today, I continue to apply the strategies and benefit as a husband, father, student and an active member in society.”

Cpl. Schick confirmed, “Out of all of the drugs I was prescribed and therapy I was forced to attend, the training I received at the Center for BrainHealth helped tenfold.”

Debbie Francis, Center for BrainHealth Board Chair, explained the spark that led to the generous gift from the highly regarded Dallas-based foundation. “The Hamon Foundation is known and respected for making meaningful gifts in the community. When I approached the Foundation, I knew that they would only be interested in a partnership that would create a lasting and meaningful impact for warriors. We were most grateful they chose to include us as one of their beneficiaries.”
**Brain Change in Chronic Marijuana Use: Volume and Connectivity Abnormalities**

*ENRICH YOUR MIND:*

**Brain Change in Chronic Marijuana Use: Volume and Connectivity Abnormalities**

Dr. Francesca Filbey, Ph.D., is an associate professor and associate director of the Institute for Brain Health at The University of Texas at Dallas. Dr. Filbey is also the principal investigator for the Neuroimaging Research in Addictive Disorders (N-READ) laboratory, which focuses on the impact of marijuana use on the brain and behavior. The laboratory has received grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and the National Institute on Aging, and its research is focused on understanding the effects of marijuana use on the brain, particularly in the context of addiction.

The research team studied 48 adult marijuana users and 62 gender- and age-matched controls. The participants were asked to push a button when they were shown 224 randomized images of random objects or scrambled images. EEG testing was conducted to assess brain activity in response to these stimuli.

The results revealed that threatening stimuli provoked more intense brain activity in marijuana users compared to controls. Specifically, the study found that marijuana users showed increased connectivity in the frontal lobe, which is involved in decision making and emotional regulation. This increased connectivity suggests that marijuana use may alter the way the brain processes threatening information, potentially leading to increased vulnerability to addictions.

These findings are significant because they provide new insights into the potential mechanisms underlying the effects of marijuana use on the brain. Understanding these mechanisms could help inform the development of new interventions to prevent and treat marijuana addiction.

**REFERENCES**


**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**DISCLOSURE**

The authors have no conflicts of interest to report.
Leadership Spotlight

More than 150 of Dallas’ most beautiful and talented young-professional females took the field at the Cotton Bowl for the 7th Annual BvB Dallas Powder-Puff Football Game presented by Bud Light on August 16. Founded by sisters whose father was afflicted by Alzheimer’s, BvB exceeded its 2014 goal of $400,000 to raise more than $441,000 toward eradicating the grave disease. This year’s game benefited the Center for BrainHealth and UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Over the last seven years, BvB has raised more than $1.8 million. Each year Team Blonde, Team Brunette and coaches spend the months of May through August preparing for game day running training drills and raising at least $1,000 each for the cause. More than 3,500 fans brave the triple-digit temperatures to cheer on their favorite team.

“Big D Powder Puff Tackling Alzheimer’s (BvB Dallas) was thrilled to announce the Center for BrainHealth as one of our Season 7 beneficiaries,” said BvB Dallas Board President, Jennifer Bergman. “The Center for BrainHealth has impressed us with their innovative research and programs dedicated to Alzheimer’s disease. Our partnership with the Center is important not only to our mission, but also to our participants, many who are personally affected by Alzheimer’s. We have greatly enjoyed working with the Center, their staff and volunteers. Their support during our 7th Season has been instrumental in our success, and we look forward to seeing what BvB Dallas can help the Center for BrainHealth accomplish.”

“Alzheimer’s disease is a formidable foe, listed as number 3 of America’s top killers behind heart disease and cancer. And while the brain disease is a frightening diagnosis, scientific discoveries are bringing new hope for those living with the disease and those at risk for developing it,” said Sandra Bond Chapman, Ph.D., Founder and Chief Director of the Center for BrainHealth. “Our research at the Center for BrainHealth is contributing to solutions that will one day reduce risk, and help to earlier diagnose and treat Alzheimer’s disease effectively. With the support of BvB, we can continue to make great strides in building brain resilience and maximizing cognitive performance across the lifespan in health, injury and disease.”

Social cognition is what allows us to relate to others; it informs our ability to read facial expressions and take turns during a conversation. People on the autism spectrum and individuals with schizophrenia score lower than healthy controls on social cognition tests, leading scientists to believe for years that the two populations may have comparable social skills. However, a new Center for BrainHealth study found that despite similar social cognitive abilities, individuals with autism are more adept at reasoning when it comes to understanding analogies.

The findings are actually quite surprising,” explained Dan Krawczyk, Ph.D., Debbie and Jim Francis Chair in BrainHealth. “Social cognition and reasoning go hand in hand; individuals with mild autism spectrum disorder seem to be immune to their social cognitive deficits when it comes to reasoning in similar situations.” The study, published in Frontiers in Neuroscience, is the first to examine analogical reasoning in schizophrenia. Forty-three participants were tested on 24 analogies of varying content. Individuals with schizophrenia demonstrated lower reasoning ability than individuals on the autism spectrum and healthy controls. Interestingly, the autism spectrum group showed more success with scenes depicting living objects (people/animal) than non-living. “These findings are really counterintuitive. We expected the autism group to do better than the schizophrenia group on scenes that contained non-living objects,” said Dr. Krawczyk. “Apparently, when it comes to reasoning ability, problem content and social dynamics really matter.”

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On November 11, Veterans Day, the Center for BrainHealth celebrated Lyda Hill and her commitment to America’s servicemen and women, presenting her with its highest honor, the Legacy Award, which recognizes the pioneering spirit of individuals whose vision and dedication to brain research enable the Center to explore the vast potential of the human mind.

Ms. Hill credited her nephew, Michael Wisenbaker, an Air Force F-16 pilot and Iraq war veteran, with inspiring her to make a gift to the Center’s Brain Performance Institute to address the often overwhelming and unseen injuries of war that make the transition from military to civilian life difficult. Her $2 million contribution activated the Warrior Training Team, mobile units of clinicians and veterans who deliver effective, evidence-based programs that build brain resilience, achieve brain regeneration and reverse losses in cognitive function.

Lyda, having a warrior’s spirit herself, knew she had to do something...And that she has done”, said Sandra Chapman, Ph.D., BrainHealth Founder and Chief Director. “Lyda’s gift ignited the extension of our proven trainings to go well beyond our current Department of Defense funded research. Her gift, has been transformative — launching stress-inoculating and brain health building programs to hundreds of military service members and their families — farther and faster than we ever imagined possible.”

The Warrior Training Team has reached more than 500 warriors, including active duty special forces, veterans, and military spouses and caregivers, in eight states and Washington, DC in the last year. Projections for next year are in the thousands.

Past Legacy Award recipients include Dianne Cash, Debbie Francis, T. Boone Pickens, James Huffines, Dee Wyly, Daryl Johnston & Lee Roy Jordan, and Jane & Bud Smith.

The Legacy Award Dinner was sponsored by:

Gold: $25,000
- Mr. & Mrs. Ray W. Hunt, Lila Cockrell Charitable Trust
- J. C. Ewing Foundation of Texas
- PlainsCapital Bank
- Mr. & Mrs. Chuck Scates
- The Alinda Hill Wikert Family Foundation
- Highland Capital Management
- B. J. Kyle

Silver: $15,000
- Mr. & Mrs. Ray W. Hunt, Lila Cockrell Charitable Trust
- J. C. Ewing Foundation of Texas
- PlainsCapital Bank
- The Alinda Hill Wikert Family Foundation
- Highland Capital Management
- B. J. Kyle

Bronze: $10,000
- J. C. Ewing Foundation of Texas
- PlainsCapital Bank
- The Alinda Hill Wikert Family Foundation
- Highland Capital Management
- B. J. Kyle

Lynn McBee
Dinner Chair Lynn McBee commenced the program describing Ms. Hill as “an individual who takes on the impossible, and through her example, inspiring others to do the same. Her work has made the world a better place.”

Ms. Hill approached the Legacy Award Dinner with gusto! And tonight we hope to show you the same gusto as we celebrate you and the lives you touch.”

The Event
Held at The Joule Hotel, Legacy was attended by approximately 250 guests, including many of our nation’s treasured veterans.

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List reflects donations received December 2, 2013 through December 1, 2014.