

### **What is ThinkFirst:**

ThinkFirst is an injury prevention program focused on brain and spinal cord injury. It was founded in the 1980s as a joint venture between the two largest national neurosurgery organizations in the United States. Since then it has been implemented on a worldwide scale.

### **The Team:**

The West Michigan chapter of ThinkFirst includes specialists from the Injury Prevention, Neurosurgery, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Departments at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital and students from the MSU College of Human Medicine.

### **The Program:**

The team partners with area schools to present lessons demonstrating the value of safe behavior, focusing on concussion, bike safety, and motor vehicle safety. Activities include building a brain out of clay, building a helmet to protect an egg as it slides down a chute, and an interactive demonstration of the difficulty of driving while distracted. Our unique and powerful tool is our VIP (Voices for Injury Prevention) speakers. VIPs are individuals who have sustained a traumatic injury. VIPs provide their personal testimony and peer-to-peer interaction with students so that others can learn from the mistakes and prevent a traumatic injury or death.

### **Program interest:**

ThinkFirst is an exceptional program available to schools at no cost. The team is eager to partner with additional schools as we continue to grow the program in Kent County. If your school is interested in finding out more about the program please contact Kim Hernden by email [kim.hernden@helendevoschildrens.org](mailto:kim.hernden@helendevoschildrens.org) or call 616-391-7233.

**ThinkFirst**  
National Injury Prevention Foundation

