

BRAIN WAVES

KREMPELSCENTER.ORG

FALL 2020

Krempels Center is Virtually Amazing



When the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak struck in March, no one could have predicted that Krempels Center—celebrating its milestone 20th anniversary in 2020—would operate for the remainder of the year on a virtual platform. Programs are typically hosted at the Community Campus in Portsmouth, providing members the opportunity to socialize while rebuilding the skills and confidence needed to participate in the greater community. How could the mission and magic of Krempels Center continue under social distancing practices during a global pandemic?

The Krempels Center staff and board quickly sprung to action the third week of March to figure out how to continue delivering programs and services to its members. And on March 23rd, the pilot community meeting took place online with 16 members in attendance, an impressive number considering the brain injury-related as well as technical challenges that members face. It wasn't simple. Krempels Center staff has since reached out to all 100 of its members directly to ensure they have the information they need and technical hardware to join the online meeting platform.

Fast forward six months, Krempels Center now offers a full slate of programs and meetings on its regular weekly schedule. The fall schedule features community meetings three days a week virtually on Zoom. Group favorites such as "Let's Make A Scene", Tai Chi, Creative Expressions, Brain Games and Book Club continue to meet weekly. This fall, the Monday afternoon Art Studio returns by popular demand through the online platform. And members have the option to log-in at lunchtime and enjoy socializing with others just as they would in the café at Community Campus.

All Krempels Center staff remain fully invested and committed to engaging members who want to interact and grow through these challenging times. The six Krempels Center program staff and 17 fall semester interns log-in to meetings from their devices at home, ready to facilitate therapeutic programming and offer professional support to members.

The virtual offering mirrors as closely as possible Krempels Center's model of social connection and skill-building support. Being online minimizes the isolation that brain injury survivors already experience and ensures members can continue receiving the impactful benefits of being a part of

the Krempels Center community. In fact, some members have been able to increase their engagement with the program because of the virtual format. With the challenges of geography and lack of transportation removed, members can join Krempels Center from anywhere as long as they have a connection to the Internet. Members who haven't attended in years are now logging on three times each week to access programming.

Once the pandemic subsides, Krempels Center will continue to offer a virtual model in conjunction with in-person programming. With the the generous support of our community, our aim is that the necessary shift to virtual evolves into a permanent option that elevates what Krempels Center has to offer to all those living with brain injury.



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Virtual Success



When we started planning for the celebration of our 20th anniversary this year, we did not think to include navigating through a global pandemic. Our goal was to kick off our October 2020 anniversary by looking back to where we started, reaching out to the people who supported us over the years, and then share our vision regarding where we might go.

But 2020 had other plans. When our program had to close its doors to in-person programming on March 16th, our program team was able to reach back to our roots and create a scaled-back program—now offered virtually—that still achieved our original mission of helping brain injury survivors socially connect and thrive. Our first week started out with a small group of core members, just as in the beginning all those years ago, but has since grown rapidly, welcoming new members who have never experienced our program at the Community Campus, yet found a supportive, hopeful community with us online.

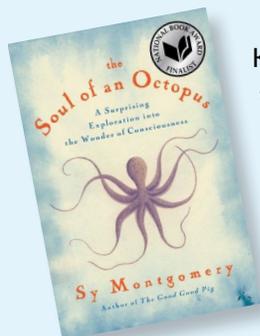
The impending impact on our fundraising program had our development team spring into action, applying for a new array of grants and reaching out to our supporters for help, while reimagining our annual 5k road race. Both our dedicated supporters and other members of the local community stepped in, and many were even able to step up, and give an additional gift. This, paired with our usual fiscally-responsible practices, has allowed us to retain our full staff and continue to strengthen and expand our program through the virtual model to serve our members.

While all of this is going on, the world around us is changing. The entire staff is working remotely from their homes with only occasional trips to the office as necessary. Because of previous investments and planning last fall, all our files were already accessible remotely and our phone system could be accessed from anywhere. This summer, we invested in new laptops for each staff member for consistency and performance, ensuring our online groups were supported and reliable. The virtual model has been so successful, we are exploring the option of continuing it as a permanent part of Krempels Center's programming.

In retrospect, we are celebrating our 20th as we intended. We've stuck to our roots, we've connected with those who have supported us along the way, and have fast-forwarded into a virtual model which paves a new pathway for serving people with brain injury. Thank you for being with us on this journey. May you and your loved ones remain safe, healthy, and connected during these times.



VIRTUAL PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT



Krempels Center book club members met virtually with national bestselling author Sy Montgomery, and asked questions about her book *The Soul of an Octopus* (a National Book Award finalist). In her book, she befriended octopuses at the New England aquarium and scuba dived and snorkeled with wild octopuses in Mexico and French Polynesia.

King Challenge Celebrates 10 Years



The King Family: Laura, Teddy, Robbie, Margie and Ted.

This year is the 10th Annual King Challenge, and we asked Margie and Dr. Ted King—the inspiration for the event—about the last 10 years, the impact this event has had on their family and the legacy the event has had on the brain injury community.

What were the initial conversations about the King Challenge like?

Ten years ago Teddy was a professional cyclist racing in Europe. He was a prolific blogger giving insight into daily life on the European Pro Tour. Exeter Cycles bike shop asked him to talk about his career one evening while he was at home. Arlon Chaffee, a local cyclist and event organizer, was in the audience. When he learned about Teddy's father's stroke and subsequent membership at Kremfels Center, Arlon brought up the idea of a fundraising bike ride for Kremfels involving Teddy and his cycling brother Robbie – and the King Challenge was born.

How has the King Challenge impacted Dr. King?

Ted loves participating in the King Challenge on a tricycle he learned about through UNH's Northeast Passage program for disabled athletes. He enjoyed trying the trike so much

that he now has his own Greenspeed tricycle. Our whole family has been thrilled to see the smiling faces of Kremfels members participating on various adaptive bikes in the Doc King Tour – many of whom enjoy newfound freedom to move easily for the first time since their injuries.

The King Challenge has raised almost \$1million for Kremfels Center since the beginning.

We're so gratified by the enthusiastic support of friends and family of Kremfels members, as well as cycling groups from local bike shops. Teddy and his cycling friends across the country—several of whom make the effort to come from far flung places including California, Wisconsin, and Virginia. When riders come for the first time they have such fun they make plans to return the next year.

How has Ted's time at Kremfels Center impacted him—and your family?

Kremfels Center has meant the world to Ted. Sidelined in an instant by a stroke from a very busy and social professional career to isolation at home with disabilities was a difficult transition. Kremfels offers companionship and new friends who understand and share the wide-ranging difficulties resulting from various acquired brain injuries. Kremfels gives structure to his days, classes to look forward to, and new activities to try.

What's your favorite memory from the last 10 years with the King C?

So many highlights of the annual event stand out to us over the past ten years. The weather has generally been spectacular. Fall foliage is at its peak. For the past nine years our family has been the last to leave the venue at the end of the day. It's been our great pleasure to be able to thank all riders and donors for being part of the event!

Krempels Center

New Life After Brain Injury

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Virtual Fireside Chats

JOIN US!
Various Dates & Times • Fall 2020

Fireside Chats have always been a moving and memorable way to get to know the heart-centered and powerful program that is Krempels Center. Now that Krempels Center is operating virtually, you can join us for a Fireside Chat from the comfort of your own home. See firsthand what a virtual community meeting looks like and learn how we've moved our diverse programs online for members. View available dates at krempelscenter.org/fsc or contact Becky Kates to set up a time that is most convenient for you at bkates@krempelscenter.org.

October 9–18

Ride Your Way in 2020 as our bike ride for brain injury goes virtual. Registration is only 10 dollars and no fundraising minimums to meet. Tons of fun incentives to raise money for Krempels Center.

#rideforbraininjury



Register at www.kingchallenge.org

Connect with Krempels Center



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