# Honoring a Year of Impact with Gratitude

Highlighting 3 programs that are making a difference

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## ⭐ Brain Matters Special Edition | December 2025 ⭐

As the holiday season leads us into a new year, we take a moment to reflect on 2025 with gratitude in this special issue of the *PNI Brain Matters Newsletter.*

Early this year, our Los Angeles community was deeply affected by the devastating wildfires that swept through the area. Many homes were destroyed, and countless families faced uncertainty and loss. Yet, even in the face of hardship, we witnessed the incredible strength and compassion that define our community.

An inspiring example came from one of PNI's founders, **Dr. Chester Griffiths**, who, alongside his son and neighbor, bravely fought to protect their Malibu neighborhood during the fires. Equipped with fire hoses, they worked tirelessly for four days and five nights to defend six homes—standing together against overwhelming odds.

**READ MORE**

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## The Importance of Making a Difference

Stories like Dr. Griffiths' highlight the dedication, courage, and compassion at the heart of the Pacific Neuroscience Institute. In that same spirit and **because today is Giving Tuesday**, we invite you to explore **3 programs**—and the **physicians** who lead them—that **transform our patients' lives**.

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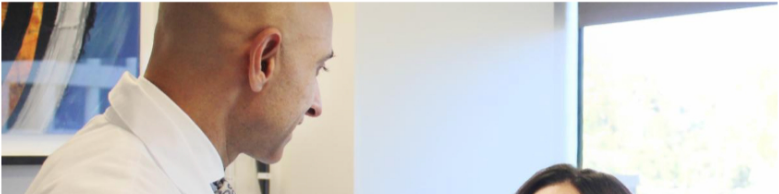
## ⭐ Facial Nerve Disorders Program: Rebuilding Confidence



The Facial Nerve Disorders Program offers advanced care for those facing facial paralysis and related conditions. The team understands that **facial movement is deeply tied to how we express ourselves and connect with others.** With an emphasis on shared decision making, each patient's treatment plan is personalized, combining expertise from multiple specialties—including neurosurgery, otolaryngology, ophthalmology, neurology, facial plastic surgery, physical therapy, and speech pathology—to restore both function and confidence.

**Learn more in our article about** rebuilding confidence after facial paralysis.

## 🎉 Spotlight on Dr. Amit Kochhar

As Director of the Facial Nerve Disorders Program, **Dr. Amit Kochhar** combines exceptional surgical skill with genuine compassion for his patients. Double board-certified in Otolaryngology and Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, he's known for **his ability to restore both facial function and confidence**. Dr. Kochhar's care begins with listening—understanding each patient's story and goals before creating a personalized plan. His warmth, empathy, and dedication make him a trusted partner in recovery.

**Learn more about** Dr. Kochhar.

## ⭐ Cochlear Implant Program: Restoring Hearing

C.J. Voelker, MD, PhD
Otology & Neurotology
Lateral Skull Base Surgery

Specialists at the Cochlear Implant Program **restore hearing and improve the quality of life** for both adults and children who no longer benefit from hearing aids. Hearing loss affects more than communication—it influences memory, mood, and overall health. Our multidisciplinary team combines **expertise in otology, audiology, neurology, and rehabilitation** to guide each patient from diagnosis to long-term hearing success. From evaluation and surgery to activation and auditory training, every step is designed to provide comfort, clarity, and ongoing support.

**Learn more about** **cochlear implants for hearing restoration.**

## 🎉 Spotlight on Dr. Courtney Voelker

As Director of the Adult & Pediatric Cochlear Implant Program, **Dr. Courtney Voelker, MD, PhD (DPhil Oxon)**, brings both scientific rigor and deep compassion to her care. A Rhodes Scholar and board-certified neurotologist, she's known for restoring hearing to patients through advanced cochlear implant surgery and innovative treatment protocols. Her patients describe her as an excellent surgeon who is **empathetic, approachable, and fully committed to helping them** reconnect with the sounds and moments that matter most.

**Learn more about Dr. Voelker.**

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## ⭐ Brain Tumor Center: Tackling the Most Difficult Cases

*Left to right: Dr. Howard Krauss, Dr. Garni Barkhoudarian, Dr. Daniel Kelly, Dr. Chester Griffiths*

Our experts at the Pacific Brain Tumor Center deliver advanced, compassionate care for patients with the challenging diagnoses of brain and skull base tumors. Ranked among the nation's **top neurosurgery programs**, our experienced team specializes in minimally invasive keyhole and endoscopic techniques to achieve the **best outcomes** with the least disruption. Partnered with Providence Saint John's Health Center and Little Company of Mary, our specialists provide **personalized treatment plans focused on improving both health and quality of life.**

**Learn more about the multispecialty team at the Brain Tumor Center.**

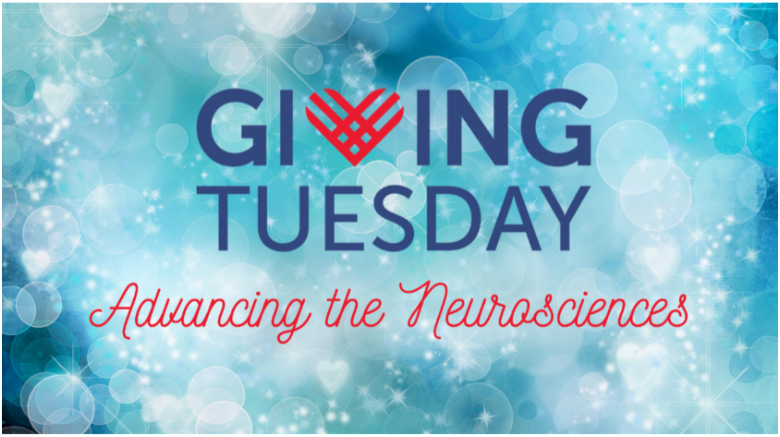
## 🎉 Team Member Spotlight: Dr. Garni Barkhoudarian

The Pacific Brain Tumor Center's success stems from its exceptional team of neurosurgeons, specialists, and caregivers dedicated to advancing innovation and compassionate care. This year, we're proud to highlight **Dr. Garni Barkhoudarian**, who joined PNI's executive leadership team. He co-directs the center along with PNI director and neurosurgeon **Dr. Daniel Kelly.**

A board-certified neurosurgeon and Chief Medical Officer at PNI Medical Group, Dr. Barkhoudarian is recognized for his **expertise in minimally invasive skull base and endoscopic surgery**. Through his leadership across PNI programs, adoption of leading-edge technologies, commitment to clinical trials, and passion for training future professionals, he demonstrates a deep commitment to his patients and the future of neuroscience care.

**Learn more about** Dr. Barkhoudarian.

## ❤️ Make a Difference Today



**Help advance neuroscience care and research**. Your donation supports our physicians, researchers, and programs dedicated to **improving brain health and enhancing quality of life for patients and their families.**

SUPPORT PNI

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## ⭐ Spotlight Stories

### Protecting Your Brain from Dementia, Depression and Anxiety

During the holidays, it is easy to get swept away with a myriad of emotions.

Learn how simple daily habits can protect your brain and boost your mood, and discover long-term strategies to lower the risk of dementia, depression, and anxiety.

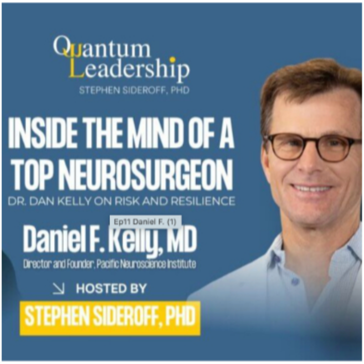
Find Out More

OUT OF THE
BLINDSPOT
The Indomitable
Howard Krauss

### Guest Podcast: The Indomitable Dr. Howard Krauss

*Out of the Blindspot* podcast guest **Dr. Howard Krauss** discusses his path into surgical neuro-ophthalmology, co-founding PNI, and his guidance for the next generation of physicians.
**Apple Podcasts | Spotify | Simplecast | YouTube**

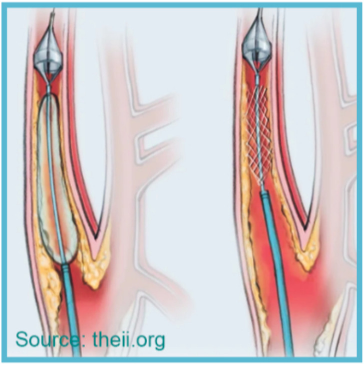
Listen Here


Quantum Leadership
STEPHEN SIDEROFF, PHD
INSIDE THE MIND OF A TOP NEUROSURGEON
DR. DAN KELLY ON RISK AND RESILIENCE
Ep11 Daniel F. (1)
Daniel F. Kelly, MD
Director and Founder, Pacific Neuroscience Institute
HOSTED BY
STEPHEN SIDEROFF, PHD

## Video: Inside the Mind of Neurosurgeon, Dr. Dan Kelly

In this guest interview, PNI co-founder and director **Dr. Daniel Kelly** talks about the inner work, vision, and steady courage behind his remarkable leadership journey.

Find Out More


Source: theii.org

## Stroke Risk Study Results Published

“Historical” CREST-2 data show reduced stroke risk with carotid stenting vs. medical therapy alone. **Dr. Jason Tarpley** was an interventionist on the study.

Learn More

*Wishing You a Healthy Holiday Season.*

From your friends at
PACIFIC NEUROSCIENCE INSTITUTE

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