

Surgeons Honor Reconstructive Patients

(NAPSA)—The courage and strength of four reconstructive surgery patients is being honored in The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) Patients of Courage: Triumph Over Adversity program.

Last year, more than six million people had reconstructive surgery to improve function and restore the appearance of an area of the body that was affected by trauma, injury, disease or congenital defect. The road to recovery for these patients brings not only physical changes, but psychological ones. This year, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) has reached out to their reconstructive patients to honor their efforts to overcome hardship and positively change not only their life, but also the lives of others.

"The awards program 'Patients of Courage' was established to acknowledge plastic surgery patients who have gone through great trials to live a normal life," said ASPS President James Wells, M.D. "We have chosen four patients from nominations received from across the country to be honored for conquering adversity and using their experience to help others."

This year's Patients of Courage recipients have exemplified what it means to triumph over adversity.

Diagnosed with breast cancer at age 30, Tracie Metzger, Cincinnati, Ohio, founded the Pink Ribbon Girls, a support group for young women with breast cancer, after undergoing chemotherapy and breast reconstruction.

"Tracie is one of those unique individuals able to tackle the physical and emotional aspects of her disease and turn it into a positive force in her life," said Richard B. Williams, M.D.

Scott Donnelly of Randolph, N.J. was born with a severe craniofacial deformity and had countless plastic surgery procedures by the age of 24. Currently a senior at college, he is preparing himself for a career devoted to improving the lives of patients with facial differences.

According to Joseph G. McCarthy, M.D., "Scott's determi-



Plastic surgeons honor patients as heroes.

nation, optimism and general sense of caring inspire all that surround him."

Alicia Frede-Rankey of St. Peters, Mo. triumphed over severe trauma resulting from a car accident that tore her abdominal wall. After 23 surgeries in 2 years and years of recovery, she became a national spokesperson for seatbelt safety, graduated college and is now an elementary school teacher. According to David A. Caplin, M.D., "Alicia interacted with hundreds of caretakers in her recovery, and they all left her bedside feeling they were better people having come to know and care for Alicia."

Kevin Pollak of Phoenix, Ariz. was serving in Operation Desert Storm when his vehicle was struck leaving him burned over 30 percent of his body, especially his face and hands. Over a two-year period, he had multiple surgeries, but he remained positive, graduating magna cum laude from Springfield College in Mass. and summa cum laude from the University of Arizona Law School.

Pollak's plastic surgeon Frederick J. Menick, M.D., reports, "Kevin is the most admirable young man I have ever met."

For more information on reconstructive plastic surgery or referral to plastic surgeons in your area, call the ASPS at (888) 4-PLASTIC (888-475-2784) or visit www.plasticsurgery.org.