



# ELGAN-ECHO Study Newsletter

Our spring newsletter brings to you our warmest wishes and to also express our concern for your well-being during this pandemic. There have been so many challenges this past year for us all. The ELGAN-ECHO study has had its challenges too. Despite this, you have pushed us closer to our research goals by enrolling remotely, completing online questionnaires, and even coming in for in-person visits when deemed safe to do so. With this kind of dedication, ELGAN-ECHO will certainly succeed. Thank you so much!

## Tips for Managing Stress

Focusing on the positive, taking care of yourself, and helping others may keep your stress in-check. Here are some ideas you might include into your days to keep you hopeful.

- ♥ Cook for your family
- ♥ Create art
- ♥ Read a good book
- ♥ Write in a journal
- ♥ Practice deep breathing
- ♥ Walk the neighbor's dog
- ♥ Watch a fun movie
- ♥ Write letters
- ♥ Stretch & bend
- ♥ Sing anything
- ♥ Coordinate a food drive
- ♥ Complete ELGAN ECHO online questionnaires

## Are We All OK?

The pandemic has affected the lives of us all. We have heard from you about what has been the hardest from the past year: missing in-person school, hanging out with friends, worrying about your loved ones, and wondering what post-pandemic life will be like. We would like to share (with teen's permission) these heartfelt comments:

"I was deeply saddened when I found out COVID-19 was swarming over the US. I was even more saddened when my high school was shut down. Not only was I sad about not seeing friends and teachers I had connected with, I was sad for the senior class because of all the things they would not get to experience. Sitting at home, in front of a computer was not my ideal vision of how school would be going the rest of my junior year. I think what really impacted me the most during this pandemic was missing the track season. I was so excited, running is like an escape for me. It helps me drown out all the other problems I may be facing. Also, sitting at home so much allowed all kinds of fears and negative feelings to get inside my head.... However, COVID-19 has taught me to be patient, wait for the unknown. It allowed me to find parts of myself that I didn't know existed."

**Staying in touch:** People move and phone numbers change.

Please remember to update your Study Coordinator of any upcoming changes to your contact information.



## A WHOLE BOOK ABOUT ELGAN!



In addition to the papers we write for scientific journals we now have a book, just published by MacKeith Press (2021) "Extremely Preterm Birth and its consequences: The ELGAN study", edited by Olaf Dammann, Alan Leviton, T. Michael O'Shea, and Nigel Paneth. It summarizes research results from birth through age 10 - a wellspring of knowledge and discoveries we have gained, and are continuing to gain, from our partnership together in a **whole** book about ELGAN.

Your Study Coordinator

Phone

Email

## An Update from Dr. Mike O'Shea



### How is ELGAN studying information from the 15 year visits?

In summer 2017, ELGAN began study visits with participants around the time of their fifteenth birthday. At the end of 2019 when age 15 visits were complete, 700 teens - and their parents - had participated! Despite slowdowns due to the COVID pandemic, ELGAN researchers have been meeting through video calls about how to use the information (which we call data) collected at 15 year visits. Our researchers work together as part of interest groups focused on the following topics: lung and cardiovascular health; 2) cognitive abilities; 3) mental health; 4) MRI (brain magnetic resonance imaging); 5) epigenetics (lab studies of the expression of genes); and 6) positive health. These six interest groups have been meeting once or twice per month to review the results of data analyses, discuss ideas for scientific journal articles, and write papers describing findings from the 15- year ELGAN study visits.

### What are some examples of topics?

Each of the six interest groups expects to publish a variety of scientific papers. For example, one interest group is examining how fast infants gained weight after their discharge from neonatal intensive care, and any effects on childhood health. These results could help point to recommendations about nutrition and growth. Another group is exploring whether inflammation early in life affects blood pressure during adolescence. The primary goals of these papers will be to increase understanding of why extreme prematurity (birth before 28 weeks of gestation) leads to certain health conditions, and to point to potential solutions that improve the health of babies born extremely preterm.