



Branching Out DIGITAL



Faith, More Important Than Ever.

by Founder and CEO - Karen Ball

Faith. What does one do without it? I've relied on my personal relationship with God throughout life, having had good role models with my parents and grandparents, and even more since Kaelin's diagnosis. It has been an honor to walk beside y'all as you navigate a SWS diagnosis and the attending medical issues associated with it. While I have been in many diverse situations due to my SWF role and as a mom, I can honestly say Ms. Myla's brain surgery to stop the seizures is another monumental true test of my faith!

I'd been in New Jersey just a few months when we learned Ms. Lauren would be having brain surgery. Dr. Arno Fried gave in and gave permission (per Lauren's parents' request) that I be with her at the hemispherectomy, and after 6 hours of mesmerizing surgery, she has flourished more than we ever thought she could. The difference between Myla and Lauren is that Lauren came into our SWS community a little later, and while I'd known them for a bit, Ms. Myla has been with us since birth. Sharing her journey with her tenacious young parents and community has been a privilege. I am eternally grateful that each of you contributes what you can when you can. That unity and dedication create an extended community in good times and bad, and allow us to do more good for more people.

There are an exceedingly rare few that have the tenacity and will to give it their all every day in every way, in spite of raising a family and navigating SWS medical complications. They roll up their sleeves and never say die. I'm in awe of that ethic and admire them so very much. I often wonder if it is because I so desperately want to ease the burdens of our loved ones, and I wonder if I'm worthy of their dedication. The Speer and Davis families follow in the footsteps of other cherished Warriors. I hope each of you will now return the favor of commitment and support them in this surgery and recovery journey.

Stay tuned for an upcoming reflection of their journey! We are also excited for the upcoming Reunion of Champions this March in Denver. We look forward to seeing y'all this summer in San Antonio for a little respite, conference, and family reunion. Together we are stronger and can weather the storms life literally and figuratively throws our way with tenacity and hope. Find the joy in life; are we the victim or victor? We choose every day in every way!

With faith, hope, and love,

Karen Ball

Social Media
by the
numbers

Don't miss a thing! Follow and like us for the latest SWS updates.

f 6,318 i 2,779 ▶ 593 T 584

GEMS *of* HOPE & STRENGTH

CELEBRATING RARE BRILLIANCE
& THE POWER OF RESILIENCE



Meet

Reunion of Champions honoree
Paul M. Friedman, MD

Paul M. Friedman, MD, board-certified by the American Board of Dermatology, is the director of Dermatology & Laser Surgery Center of Houston, Texas. He was educated in dermatology at the New York University School of Medicine where he served as chief resident and was twice awarded

the prestigious Husik Prize for his research in dermatologic surgery. He completed a one-year fellowship in dermatologic laser surgery and Mohs micrographic surgery & cutaneous oncology at the Laser & Skin Surgery Center of New York and was the recipient of the Young Investigator's Writing Competition Award of the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery (ASDS). Dr. Friedman is a clinical assistant professor at the University of Texas Medical School, department of dermatology, and a clinical assistant professor of dermatology at the Weill Cornell Medical College, Houston Methodist Hospital. He is also on staff at Texas Children's Hospital and Memorial-Hermann Hospital-Texas Medical Center. Dr. Friedman is a fellowship director for the ASDS-accredited cosmetic dermatologic surgery fellowship training program and also serves as faculty for the Procedural Dermatology Fellowship at MD Anderson Cancer Center.

Dr. Friedman has been a featured speaker of ASDS, the American Academy of Dermatology, the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery (ASLMS), and other national and international audiences. He recently served as President of ASLMS and was awarded the prestigious Leon Goldman Memorial Award at the 2019 ASLMS Annual Conference. He has also been named by Newsweek as one of America's Best Cosmetic Dermatologists of 2022 and 2023, with specific recognition as one of the Best Dermatologists for Laser Treatments. Dr. Friedman was recognized as one of Medscape's Physicians of the Year: The Best of 2022 for his philanthropic campaign as the President of the American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery and awarded Physician of the Year 2022 by The Vascular Birthmarks Foundation for outstanding achievement in the diagnosis and treatment of children and adults affected by vascular birthmark, anomaly, or associated syndrome. Dr. Friedman has also received the Castle Connolly Top Doctors, Texas Super Doctors award for 10 consecutive years and is a Hall of Fame honoree.

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Why Gems of Hope and Strength?

Beneath the waves of life lies a rare and radiant treasure, which is the individuals your foundation supports. Ruby also leans towards the color of a port-wine birthmark. This event celebrates rarity, resilience, and beauty with a sophisticated underwater and gemstone brilliance.

SWS Volunteers Needed

Do you live in Colorado or Wyoming? Want to join us for the spectacular event? **Volunteers are needed to help set-up and check in attendees the day of the event.** Enjoy dinner with us and a private tour of the aquarium! Contact Julia for more information: jterrell@sturge-weber.org

Continued...

Dr. Friedman has published over 150 medical articles and book chapters and co-authored the book Beautiful Skin Revealed: The Ultimate Guide to Better Skin. He is co-Editor of the textbook Lasers and Light Source Treatment For The Skin and serves on the Editorial Board of the journal Dermatologic Surgery. He has been featured in numerous national media outlets and is a frequent guest on Doctor Radio's Dermatology Show. Dr. Friedman has been recognized as a leading physician and researcher in the field and has also been involved in the development of several new laser systems and therapeutic techniques now commonly used throughout the world.



Meet

Legacy Leader honoree

Brian Biesman, MD, FACS

Dr. Brian Biesman specializes in cosmetic and reconstructive eyelid and facial surgery and minimally invasive rejuvenation techniques including injectables (Botox and fillers) and technology-based solutions (laser skin resurfacing, and related techniques), and medical grade skin care.

In addition, Dr. Biesman is a nationally and internationally recognized authority on noninvasive body contouring techniques such as CoolSculpting® for the elimination of unwanted fat. Dr. Biesman serves as an Associate Clinical Professor at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, Nashville, TN, where he holds appointments in the divisions of Ophthalmology, Dermatology and Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery.

Dr. Biesman received his undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Michigan, where he graduated with high honors. He completed his Ophthalmology residency at the Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary before fellowship training in Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital in New York, NY. Upon completion of his fellowship, Dr. Biesman returned to Chicago where he served as Chief Resident.

Dr. Biesman then moved to Boston where he assumed the Directorship of the Eye Plastics and Orbit Service and the Center for Aesthetic Eyelid and Facial Surgery at the New England Medical Center, and was an Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Tufts University School of Medicine. Over the next four years he earned faculty appointments in the Division of Otolaryngology at the New England Medical Center and the Divisions of Dermatology and Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at the Beth Israel-Deaconess Medical Center in Boston. Dr. Biesman relocated to Nashville in 1998 and opened his own practice in 2002. In addition to maintaining a busy medical practice, Dr. Biesman is active in clinical research, performing numerous studies to evaluate and test new drugs and technology-based products designed to enhance the minimally invasive rejuvenation options available to consumers.

Dr. Biesman is a member of the American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery (ASLMS) which he has served as Vice-President, President, and Laser Safety Officer and sits on numerous corporate advisory boards.

GEMS of HOPE
& STRENGTH

CELEBRATING RARE BRILLIANCE
& THE POWER OF RESILIENCE



**WITH MASTER OF CEREMONIES:
ROY GERONEMUS, MD**

Downtown Aquarium
Denver

Time: **5:30-8:30 pm**

Friday, **March 27, 2026**



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GENEROUS PARTNERS:**

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Where SWS Families Connect, Rest, and Celebrate: The SWF Reunion 2026

Get ready because we are Kickin' it with My Family at the SWF Family Reunion & Conference in San Antonio this June 2026! We invite you to join us for a memorable gathering designed to bring families together through rest, connection, and shared experiences.

Enjoy thoughtfully planned respite time, exciting sightseeing events, meaningful fireside chats, and so much more. And of course, your favorite doctors will be on hand for informative seminars and personalized appointments—making this reunion both enriching and restorative.

Y'all don't want to miss this celebration of SWS family with us in the heart of San Antonio!

FAMILY COMES FIRST: DON'T MISS THE SWF REUNION IN SAN ANTONIO!



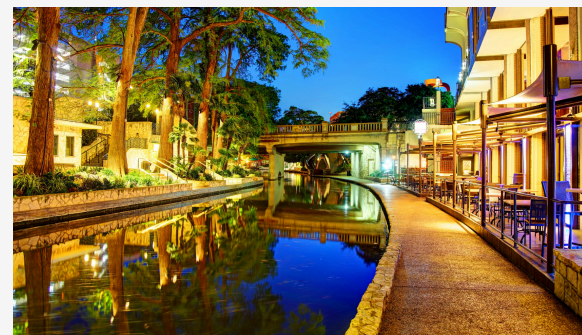
2024 CONFERENCE: PHILADELPHIA

Chill in True San Antonio Style



Our home away from home boutique-inspired Hilton hotel wraps you in Spanish-Mission charm with lush courtyard vibes, palm trees, and a refreshing outdoor pool where you can relax, splash, or just sip your morning coffee between events. It's the perfect laid-back home base that feels like a mini getaway with your SWS family right in the middle of your reunion fun!

Plus, you're just minutes from airport shuttles and San Antonio's top attractions like the Alamo and the River Walk—so whether you're sightseeing, unwinding, or reconnecting with family, you're in the heart of the action with comfort and style.



Things to do in San Antonio:

- San Antonio Zoo
- Famous San Antonio River Walk
- The Historic Alamo & other Sightseeing
- LegoLand
- Botanical Gardens
- Japanese Tea Garden
- Six Flags Fiesta Texas
- Market Square (El Mercado)



REGISTER TODAY

SAVE \$30 ON EACH REGISTRATION UNTIL APRIL 15TH.

CONNECT, REST, AND CELEBRATE

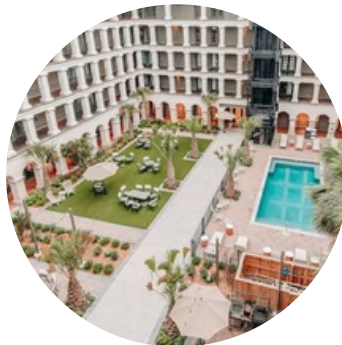
KICKIN' IT WITH MY★FAMILY



**THE STURGE-WEBER
FOUNDATION**

Family Reunion

SAN ANTONIO • JUNE 25-27, 2026



HOTEL AMENITIES:

Estancia del Norte features:

- Connecting Rooms
- Free Wifi
- Free Parking, EV charging nearby
- Fitness Center
- Outdoor Pool
- Airport shuttle from San Antonio International Airport
- 20 mins from San Antonio attractions with free shuttle
- Pet Friendly

SPECIAL OFFERS FOR YOU

**Estancia del Norte San Antonio,
Tapestry Collection by Hilton**
37 NE Loop 410 at McCullough
San Antonio, Texas, 78216, USA

HOTEL WEBSITE

The Group Code is automatically applied for your convenience; rates start at \$170/night USD.

***USE DISCOUNT CODE: 915**



Monthly Online Events

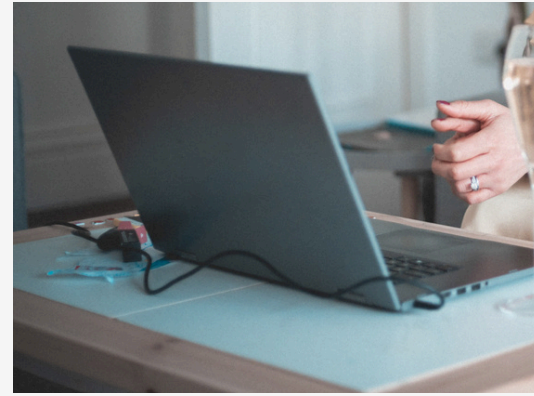


Gaming Lounge **NEW** @7:30 PM EST

Participants are invited to bring their favorite game, whether it's a video game, mobile game, tabletop game, or online activity, and spend time playing, chatting, and hanging out with peers who truly understand their journey. It's a chance to make friends who "get it" and to take a break from school, medical appointments, and everyday stress. It's just a space to be themselves.

There will also be optional time for conversation and connection, including sharing what life with SWS is like, talking about challenges at school or home, and offering support to one another in a comfortable, judgment-free environment.

This is not a competitive event. It's about building confidence, fostering connection, and creating community. Whether participants want to play, watch, chat, or simply listen, everyone is welcome. If your child has ever felt alone because of their diagnosis, this is a place where they can feel understood and included. Let's game, connect, and grow—together. **REGISTER HERE**



Mental Health Chat for Caregivers and Parents @7:30 PM EST

These virtual chats are an opportunity to meet other caregivers and parents of SWS, KTS, and PWB children and adults. Moderated by Luis Sandoval, PhD, SWF Task Force Leader for Mental Health. This is an opportunity to learn, laugh, and support each other on this caregiving journey.

REGISTER HERE

Mental Health Chat for Patients 21+ @7:30 PM EST

Our Mental Health virtual chats allow one to meet other adults (21+) with SWS, KTS, and PWB. Register below, and we will send you the Zoom link on the day of the event. Moderated by Luis Sandoval, PhD, SWF Task Force Leader for Mental Health. This is a great opportunity to bond, laugh, and chat about any mental health or general life issues you may be experiencing in a supportive space. We hope to see you there! **REGISTER HERE**

Be the Torch, Be the Light @7:30 PM EST

Join us for a virtual chat, Be the Torch. Be the Light, with Ansley and Donald—a night of hope and inspiring conversations about faith. **REGISTER HERE**



RARE Is Not Rare

One out of every 10 Americans is living with a rare disease. Worldwide, there are more than 300 million people with rare diseases. Too often, these individuals and families are left isolated and without answers to their medical questions. It doesn't have to be that way.

LEARN HOW TO SHOW YOUR STRIPES HERE.

SUPPORT OUR MISSION TODAY!



THE STURGE-WEBER FOUNDATION

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973-895-4445 • contact@Sturge-Weber.org
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