Greetings MATR Participants!

In this edition of our spring newsletter, we wanted to bring you some stories, photos, and feedback that you have shared with us over the past year. In addition, we are continuing with several studies and gearing up for new ones, so please take a minute to see if any of those are of interest to you.

As always, thank you for being a part of the MATR – each and every one of you makes twin research possible!

Judy Silberg, PhD
MATR Scientific Director

We Value You

The Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry (MATR) values our participants. If you have feedback regarding your experiences with MATR staff or research staff for any study, please do not hesitate to send us an email to matr@vcu.edu, call 1-800-URA-TWIN (1-800-872-8946), or call our Participant Coordinator, Carol Williams, directly at 804-828-8116.

New Info?

Remember to let us know if your name, address, email, or telephone number changes by going to: go.vcu.edu/twinupdate, sending an email to us at: matr@vcu.edu or calling our toll free number 1-800-URA-TWIN (800-872-8946).

TWIN BONDS

Sometimes miracles come in pairs. It’s double the giggles, double the grins and double the trouble when you’re blessed with twins. In 1986 our parents were blessed with my twin brother, Anthony, and me nearly three months premature. As our parents tell us today, it was the greatest but scariest blessing of their lives. Since that day, we have conquered so much together in our short life and hope to continue to share our story for twins and their families.

Due to being so premature we have been faced with health issues, extended hospital stays and numerous checkups, however nothing has broken the bond we share as twins. To this day, we finish each other’s sentences and have yet to miss a beat of each other’s lives. We celebrate together our accomplishments, birthdays, holidays and everything in between. We talk every day and feel so fortunate to have a built-in best friend.

We’re very similar but very different in ways. Anthony is left-handed and I am right-handed. I am outgoing and Anthony is shy. He likes mustard, I like mayo. Despite our small differences, we both have an interest in sports, traveling, and enjoy helping others. Being a twin has been an incredible experience. Thank you for listening to our story.

Sincerely,
Amy and Anthony

NOSTALGIA OF A TWIN CHILDHOOD

My twin sister and I thought it would be fun to restore our vintage, circa 1970’s Sears & Roebuck childhood bikes. Our Dad built his career at Sears and we thought it would be a fun tribute to our family. With the help of a neighbor, a true artist who designs and restores automobiles, he was able to salvage all the original parts with the exception of the tires to original condition, color, and design! The bikes are now a special reminder of “Being a Twin” and the beautiful carefree days that these special bikes gave us as kids!

Submitted by Meta and Myra – MATR Members for over 20 years!
We wanted to let our twins know that researchers have been in contact with the MATR to discuss investigating the causes of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis in identical twins as well as a study hoping to learn more about breast cancer risk. Even though these are still just potential research topics, we thought we would go ahead and give MATR twins that might be interested a heads up that these may be upon the horizon.

If you would be interested in learning more about such studies begin, please let us know and make sure we have your current contact information by completing the form found here: go.vc.edu/tellmemore.

We Appreciate You!

Recently, we’ve had the opportunity to say thank you to some of our twins and their families for being registered members, updating their contact information, or sharing a story or photo with us! These tokens of appreciation could be a ticket to an event or a VISA gift card in a modest amount. Recipients are chosen by random periodic drawings, so please keep those updates, stories, and photos coming our way – you might be the next recipient of one of these tokens! Read what some of our lucky members had to say about being in the MATR:

Bonnie B. (mother of twin girls) registered her family in 2016 and said “The opportunity to help learn more about the experience of being and parenting twins is thrilling and satisfying!”

Kathleen L. and her family have been members for almost a decade and said “My 11-year-old twins love being able to participate in science that could help others!”

Ansley C. and her family have been members since 2012 and said “I have triplet 7-year-old boys and it has been fascinating for my husband and me to watch their individual personalities develop and the group dynamic change as they get older. They are unbelievably close and we cherish this bond. We often read them stories from the MATR and they loved the recent one regarding the identical twin astronaut experiment! They couldn’t wait to research it more! …Thank you for including us in the MATR! We have really enjoyed your publications over the years!”

If you have not already, please take a minute to like our page to stay up to date on studies, twins in the news and events for twins! Check us out at www.facebook.com/twinsmart or by searching “The Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry of VCU.”

No Multiples Day this year…

We are very sorry to report that Kings Dominion will not be able to accommodate our Multiples Family Day this year. We are hopeful that we may be able to bring back this fun event next year. We always enjoy seeing twins, other multiples, and their families, so please keep an eye on our website (go.vc.edu/matrevents) for announcements regarding events we will attend in the future!

Adolescent Behavior Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study Update

Many folks have now heard of this exciting study because it was featured on NBC’s The Today Show - visit: go.vcu.edu/matrstudies to see the clip. Recruitment for this study continues full steam ahead - and there’s likely less than a year left for the staff to complete the baseline study assessments. Our MATR twin families have been amazing with their interest, time, and commitment in this study - the Turner twins were excited about the MRI (before and after)! Ms. Turner said her twins had a blast and participation in the study made them more interested in science. The whole family took pleasure in knowing they were a “great assistance with helping improve scientific discoveries.”

The bulk of the remainder of this baseline recruitment will focus on providing opportunities for underrepresented groups, such as Hispanics/Latinos, Asians, and African Americans to participate. If interested in learning more, please visit: go.vc.edu/tellmemore.

Text-4-Thought (T4T) Study Update

The T4T study is another in which the generous spirit of our MATR twins continues to shine! Recruitment for the T4T study is ongoing as well, though for now, the study’s Principal Investigator - Dr. O’Connor has asked us to focus our efforts on the young adult (18 through 21 years old) portion of the recruitment sample. If interested in learning more, please visit: go.vc.edu/tellmemore.

AYATS Update

The AYATS study staff is in the homestretch for its study enrollment! Over 400 families completed Wave 1 of the study and of those, approximately 152 twin pairs participated in Wave 2 thus far. By the end of March, the AYATS staff completed their VCU-site Wave 2 visits. For AYATS participants that have not completed a follow-up with the study, stay tuned: running through July, approximately 194 more participants, selected from pairs that completed Wave 1, will be invited to complete an online follow-up task.

The AYATS study is in progress as well, though for now, the study’s Principal Investigator - Dr. O’Connor has asked us to focus our efforts on the young adult (18 through 21 years old) portion of the recruitment sample. If interested in learning more, please visit: go.vc.edu/tellmemore.

*Some names were altered to protect privacy of individuals from which it would be difficult to obtain consent.