Bone Marrow Donors & Recipients Honored at Survivors’ Walk

It’s not too late to sign up for the 16th annual Cancer Survivors’ Celebration & Walk, the Lurie Cancer Center’s salute to cancer survivors and the strides made in cancer treatment and research. This year, Be the Match, formerly the National Marrow Donor Program, will register potential new donors on-site, free of charge ($52 fee will be waived) as the Lurie Cancer Center honors bone marrow transplant donors and recipients throughout the day. The Lurie Cancer Center is working closely with Children’s Memorial Hospital to register desperately needed donors, and make the day a meaningful and memorable occasion for all.

Join patients, their friends and families—as well as your colleagues—for the leisurely four-mile non-competitive walk, which begins in Grant Park at the corner of Columbus and Balbo Drive. The walk, along with music, entertainment, children’s activities, refreshments, t-shirts, and a chance to sign the dedication wall, make it a great day for everyone—sunshine is guaranteed! No pledges are required. Registration is $15 in advance and $25 on walk day. Register online at cancer.northwestern.edu/walk. For additional information call 312.695.1304.

William W. Wirtz Allocates $19.5 Million to Cancer Care and Research at Northwestern

Northwestern Memorial Foundation announced the inception of the William W. Wirtz Cancer Innovation Fund, a new initiative in support of continued research and clinical advancements within the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. The late William W. Wirtz designated more than $19.5 million to seed the program prior to his passing in 2007.

In recognition of Wirtz’s generosity, Northwestern Memorial formed this pivotal oncology fund in his honor. The William W. Wirtz Cancer Innovation Fund will support efforts to enhance patient access to a wide range of essential services for individuals with cancer; recruit leading physicians and physician-scientists specializing in cancer research and treatment; and allow Northwestern Memorial to remain at the vanguard of emerging technologies. “We are grateful to Mr. Wirtz for his profound generosity,” said Dean M. Harrison, president and chief executive officer of Northwestern Memorial HealthCare. “His gift, coupled with the vision of his family, will play an important and lasting role in helping to identify and develop novel new therapies and advance the care we provide to patients living with cancer.”

William W. Wirtz
Cancer Center News and Notes

Vera Jackson Celebrates 25 years at Northwestern

Clinical Research Office (CRO) Affiliate Program Assistant, Vera Jackson, celebrated 25 years at Northwestern in March. “I saw an ad in the newspaper for a secretary and thought it would be great to work at the University,” she recalls. “I’m glad I applied, because I still enjoy being here. When I was first hired there were just four of us in what was called the Protocol Office. I remember typing the consent forms on a typewriter! After three years we started growing and became the CRO. We’ve been growing and growing ever since!”

Jackson has been working with affiliates in some capacity for most of those 25 years, but three years ago, that became her official role. She’s constantly busy, assisting them with protocol, NU-IRB issues, audit scheduling, distribution, data monitoring, and more. Jackson’s colleagues surprised her with a party in her honor, clearly demonstrating how many friends she’s made at Northwestern and how much she is appreciated.

David Cella Named Head of Medical Social Sciences Department

David Cella, PhD, a top researcher on how to measure outcomes among cancer patients and the quality of life for patients in medical clinical trials, has been named chair of a newly created Department of Medical Social Sciences at Northwestern’s Feinberg School of Medicine.

Cella, professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Feinberg and in the Institute for Healthcare Studies, and Cancer Control Program Leader at the Lurie Cancer Center, also served as executive director of the Center on Outcomes, Research & Education at NorthShore University HealthSystem, formerly known as Evanston Northwestern Healthcare. The new department will focus on health measurement, quality of life measures, outcomes science and statistical tools used to support clinical research. He developed, and is continually refining, the Functional Assessment of Chronic Illness Therapy Measurement System for outcome evaluation in patients with chronic medical conditions.

Master of Biotechnology Program Update

The five-quarter Master of Biotechnology Program (MBP.northwestern.edu), formally affiliated with the Lurie Cancer Center since 2008, prepares biologists, chemists and engineers for careers in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. The pool of MBP research preceptors has grown to 41, including 20 members of the Lurie Cancer Center, and six MBP students are currently conducting research in Lurie Cancer Center member laboratories.

After enrolling in September, 2009, the next class of MBP students will begin their research projects in January, 2010. The MBP’s newly renovated space on the ground floor of the Technological Institute includes a teaching laboratory, a reception area, a conference room, and faculty offices. They recently introduced a new industrial internship track; giving students an opportunity to work as interns in industry for six months during their second fall and winter quarters. Please contact MBP lecturer, Arthur Felse (afelse@northwestern.edu), or MBP Director, Bill Miller (wmmiller@northwestern.edu), if you are interested in becoming a research preceptor and accepting MBP students in your laboratory.
A national study led by William Gradishar, MD, director of breast medical oncology at the Lurie Cancer Center, found that the drug Abraxane prolonged progression-free survival by almost seven months compared with Taxotere, which is part of a class of solvent-based drugs called taxanes. “It nearly doubled progression-free survival,” said Gradishar.

The study showed Abraxane also was much less toxic to patients. Gradishar said solvents are responsible for many of the side effects of chemotherapy including a drop in the white blood cell count and numbness or tingling in the fingertips. In the study, the Abraxane was administered on a weekly schedule compared to injections every three weeks of Taxotere. The Phase II, open-label, randomized clinical study involved 300 patients with previously untreated metastatic, stage 4 breast cancer. The results were assessed by an independent radiology company and study investigators. The study was designed to evaluate the safety and efficacy of three doses of Abraxane versus the highest standard dose of Taxotere.

Research continues to advance the ability of doctors to preserve the reproductive health of women, men and children diagnosed with cancer, but many oncologists don’t have enough information to help their patients navigate these new technologies. Teresa Woodruff, PhD, and Jacqueline Jeruss, MD, PhD, have written a guide to assist doctors in their efforts to make patients aware of the fertility threats posed by cancer treatments, as well as helping them to understand their options. The guide offers strategies based on type of cancer, age and gender of the patient.

“Clinicians need to break through old practice patterns,” Jeruss says. “In the past, if I saw a young woman with breast cancer, I would be focused on getting her into surgery and through chemotherapy and radiation. Now we have a better sense that with the improvements we’ve made in cancer management, many of our young patients with cancer are going on to survive and live healthy long lives. We need to do everything possible so patients can look forward to a life that looks as much like the life they had planned on before the day they were diagnosed.”

Woodruff and Northwestern colleagues also recently launched http://myoncofertility.org, an interactive web site to educate patients about the potential effect of cancer and treatments on their fertility and options to preserve it.

Research from the RADAR project (Research on Adverse Drug Events and Reports), led by Charles Bennett, MD, links the popular cancer drug rituximab (brand name Rituxan) to progressive multifocal leukoencephalitis, or PML. Widely used for lymphoma, it is also approved for treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and is widely used off-label to treat multiple sclerosis, lupus erythematosus and autoimmune anemias. Bennett reports on 57 cases from 1997 to 2008 in which patients developed the fatal brain disease after taking rituximab. They died an average of two months after being diagnosed.

“Rituximab is one of the most prominent drugs in a new class called monoclonal antibodies. It’s now the third monoclonal antibody that is associated with PML,” said Bennett, the A.C. Buehler Professor in Economics and Aging at Cancer Center Economics and Aging at Feinberg, a hematologist and oncologist at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center, and a member of the Lurie Cancer Center. The RADAR project is an international consortium of physicians that collaborate to identify adverse reactions to medications and devices.
The Lurie Cancer Center’s Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE) in prostate cancer, one of just 11 in the country, will receive $11.5 million over the next five years from the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The SPORE brings together a multidisciplinary team of basic scientists, epidemiologists, urologists, oncologists, pathologists and statisticians, who are working together to develop innovative approaches to prostate cancer research.

First funded in 2001, the Northwestern-based SPORE represents a consortium of investigators from Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine, The University of Chicago, and NorthShore University Health System (formerly Evanston Northwestern Health Care). The principal investigator is Chung Lee, PhD, the John Grayhack Professor of Urology, Feinberg. Co-principal investigators are William Catalona, MD, Professor of Urology, Feinberg, and Walter Stadler, MD, Professor of Medicine, University of Chicago. The scientific administrator is Robin Leikin, PhD, Research Assistant Professor, Feinberg, and Scientific Program Director, Lurie Cancer Center.

“Five years of new funding from the NCI is a major investment in our efforts to understand prostate cancer,” says Dr. Lee. “It allows us to continue to tackle projects aimed at all aspects of the disease, including prevention, early detection, and finding innovative ways to treat patients with disease and improve their quality of life.” Dr. Lee says the funding helps SPORE projects currently under way, and he underscores the fact that all four of these are translational research projects. “One of the most significant features of a SPORE such as ours is that it unites basic and clinical researchers. It is a link from the bench to the bedside.”

In addition to the research projects, the prostate cancer SPORE includes Core facilities that support the research; the Developmental Research Program that funds promising pilot projects, and the Career Development Program that recruits junior investigators.

According to Dr. Lee, the Developmental Research Program is a vital part of the prostate cancer SPORE. “The program gives us a mechanism to bring the latest technologies and opportunities into translational research,” he says. “It has already enabled our SPORE to support innovative studies by both junior and established investigators who have, in several instances, developed their projects into full SPORE projects or have obtained national funding for their studies. This program helps us assure continued interest and commitment to prostate cancer research.” Similarly, Dr. Lee notes, the Career Development Program is a mechanism to attract talented investigators to a career in translational prostate cancer research.

For additional information, visit cancer.northwestern.edu/research/prostate_SPORE.
Actress Bonnie Hunt, mistress of ceremonies for the seventh annual Children’s Brain Tumor Foundation (CBTF) Benefit held in New York on May 13th, presented Stewart Goldman, MD, with the Foundation’s Pioneer Award for outstanding contributions in pediatric neuro-oncology and brain tumor research. Goldman is medical director of neuro-oncology at Children’s Memorial Hospital, director of the Center for Clinical Trials Research for the Children’s Memorial Research Center, associate professor of pediatrics at Northwestern University’s Feinberg School of Medicine, and a member of the Lurie Cancer Center.

Goldman serves as a director of Children’s Memorial Hospital’s Falk Brain Tumor Center, one of the world’s leading centers for pediatric brain tumor diagnosis and treatment. He describes his guiding philosophy as the treatment of children, not just their tumors. “We aren’t treating a tumor, we’re treating a child who happens to have a tumor,” reminds Goldman. Established in 1986, the center was one of the first of its kind in the nation to create a comprehensive multidisciplinary program, offering specialists in more than 30 pediatric and surgical subspecialties. Last year, the brain tumor team cared for more than 140 new patients and performed more than 100 surgeries.

Goldman is also a member of the Children’s Oncology Group CNS disease committee and is the Children’s Memorial principal investigator for the National Cancer Institute-sponsored Pediatric Brain Tumor Consortium where he is a member of the consortium’s steering, scientific, new agents and angiogenesis committees. He is also the site Principal Investigator for the Children’s Oncology Group Phase I Consortium.

Bonnie Hunt was an oncology nurse at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago prior to launching her career as an accomplished writer, director, actress and host/executive producer of The Bonnie Hunt Show.

One-of-a-kind items from Hunt’s celebrity guests are auctioned on her show’s “Bonnie’s Basement” and funds are donated to the Lurie Cancer Center. So far, over $101,000 has been raised to support cancer research.
Rebecca Caires, Administrative Director, the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University at Northwestern Medical Faculty Foundation, has been named to the Best Practices Committee of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN). The purpose of the Committee is to share successes and challenges in areas related to cancer center operations management and the delivery of oncology services. To this end, the Committee develops research studies and shares experiences in areas such as quality and patient safety, oncology workforce productivity, inpatient and ambulatory clinical operations, and clinical research/clinical trials operations.

Navdeep Chandel, PhD received the inaugural $200,000 Lung Cancer Promise of Tomorrow Award, made to researchers conducting groundbreaking work in lung cancer. The award will support Dr. Chandel’s investigation of a unique cellular signaling system, which may indicate the development of adenocarcinoma. Understanding how the system works may lead to development of new therapies and treatments for the disease.

David M. Engman MD, PhD, has been elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Microbiology. He is among 72 microbiologists selected as fellows this year.

Dean Ho, PhD, has received a Faculty Early Career Development (CAREER) award from the National Science Foundation. The CAREER program recognizes and supports early career development of those teacher-scholars who are most likely to become the academic leaders of the 21st century.

Seema Khan, MD, was elected to the Board of Directors of The American Society of Breast Disease.

Ann Lurie, has received the 2009 Jimmy and Rosalyn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Humankind by the National Foundation of Infectious Diseases.

Chad Mirkin, PhD, has been named to the President’s Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST). President Barack Obama announced the names of the 20 members in a speech at the National Academy of Sciences in April. “This council represents leaders from many scientific disciplines who will bring a diversity of experience and views,” said President Obama. “I will charge PCAST with advising me about national strategies to nurture and sustain a culture of scientific innovation.”

June Robinson, MD, received the Frederic Mohs Award for Career Achievement which honors individuals who promote Mohs surgery through teaching, clinical practice, scientific contributions, innovation, mentorship, or service.

Lisa Schick, MT, medical technologist with the Lurie Cancer Center Shared Laboratory, attended the regional Workshop for Laboratory Professionals sponsored by ASCP (American Society for Clinical Pathology). Her area of interest was “Quality Control and Method Validation.

Jamie Von Roenn, MD was honored with the 2009 American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) Statesman Award. The ASCO Statesman Award recognizes ASCO members for their extraordinary volunteer service, dedication and commitment to the Society.
Awards and Honors

Travel Grant Recipients Announced

The Katten Muchin Rosenman Travel Scholarship Program (KMR), the Center for Genetic Medicine Travel Fellowship (CGM) and Cancer Prevention and Control Travel Scholarship Program (CP) Review Committee would like to congratulate the following Travel Fellowship Awards recipients:

**Graduate Students:**
- Darja Bamming (CGM)
- Sheila Chari (KMR)
- Robert Harmon (CGM)
- Ryan Hobbs (CGM)
- Pei-Chih Lee (KMR)
- Samantha Lin (CP)
- Aparna Ramachandran (KMR)

**Post-Docs:**
- Kevin Hamill, PhD (KMR)
- Kristina Kligys, PhD (CGM)
- Shih-Hsing Leir, PhD (KMR)
- Shuo Yang, PhD (KMR)

The committee would also like to thank everyone who applied for Travel Fellowship Awards. The next deadline to apply for a Travel Fellowship Award is **Friday, July 10, 2009**.

The KMR Travel Scholarship Program (formerly the Gramm Travel Fellowship) and the CGM Travel Fellowship allow postdoctoral students and fellows to present the results of their cancer relevant basic science research at national or international scientific meetings by providing a $500 scholarship to offset the cost of travel and attendance. Recipients are requested to present their work at the Lurie Cancer Center’s Annual Scientific Poster Session at the end of the academic year (June 17, 2009, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m., in the Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center Atrium). The CP Travel Scholarship Program allows doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows to present the results of their laboratory, clinical, population or behavioral research with implications for cancer prevention.

For questions about the Katten Muchin Rosenman Travel Scholarship Program, please contact:

**Dr. Susan Winandy**
312.503.3075
s-winandy@northwestern.edu

**Denise Marshall**
312.695.1392
d-marshall4@northwestern.edu

For questions about the Katten Muchin Rosenman Travel Scholarship Program, please contact:

**Dr. Peter Kopp**
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**Anna Shepherd**
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a-lampien@northwestern.edu

For questions about the Cancer Prevention and Control Travel Scholarship Program, please contact:

**Dr. Raymond Bergan**
312.908.5284
r-bergan@northwestern.edu
Professional Programs & Patient Events

Throughout the year, the Lurie Cancer Center offers professional education and patient programs on various cancer related topics. Below is a set of programs scheduled through September 1, 2009. For more information, visit cancer.northwestern.edu or call 312.695.1304.

**Professional Programs**

**Children’s Memorial Hospital Lecture—Negotiating the Labyrinth: Women as Leaders**
Thursday, June 11, 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Alice Eagly, PhD
James Padilla Chair of Arts and Sciences
Northwestern University, Feinberg School of Medicine
Children’s Memorial Research Center, 2430 N. Halsted Street, Wolfson Auditorium

**20th Annual Scientific Poster Session**
Wednesday, June 17, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Lurie Medical Research Center, Lurie Atrium
303 E. Superior St.

**2009 Oncology Review: Coverage of the 2009 ASCO Annual Meeting**
Friday, June 26, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Wyndham Hotel, 633 N. St. Clair, Chicago
Chair: William Gradishar, MD

**Patient Programs**

**Cancer CONNECTION Days**
*Galter Pavillion, 21st floor—11 a.m. to 2 p.m.*

- June 10: Gynecological Cancers & Genetic Testing
- July 16: Prostate and Testicular Cancers & Clinical Trials
- August 6: Brain and Neurological Cancers & Young Adult Needs

**Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Cancer Survivorship Program**
Saturday, June 6,
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
The Discovery Center at Brookfield Zoo
3300 Golf Road, Brookfield
Panelist: Jane N. Winter, MD
For more information or to register:
www.lls.org/il / 800.742.6595

**Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma: The Changing Landscape**
Tuesday, June 9, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Wellness Place
1619 W. Colonial Parkway, Palatine
Speaker: Jane N. Winter, MD
For more information or to register:
www.wellnessplace.org / 847.221.2400

**The Role of Family in Breast Cancer**
Tuesday, June 16, 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Flourish Studios
3020 N Lincoln Ave, Chicago
Speaker: Virginia Kaklamani, MD, DSc

**Hot Topics in Breast Cancer**
Saturday, June 20, 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Wellness House
131 County Line Road, Hinsdale
Speaker: Virginia Kaklamani, MD, DSc
For more information or to register:
www.wellnesshouse.org / 630.323.5150
Cancer Center Appoints New Member

Steven T. Rosen, MD, FACP, Director of the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University, announces the following full member appointment:

Igal Szleifer, PhD, is Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the McCormick School of Engineering. His research concentrates on molecular modeling of biological systems and of the interactions between biological environments and synthetic materials. He is working on a design of drug carrier systems that target specific cancer cells as well as development of a high throughput-screening device for cancer drugs.

His office is at 2145 N. Sheridan Road, M344, Evanston.

Contact Dr. Szleifer at 847.467.0674 or igalsz@northwestern.edu

Grand Rounds/Tumor Cell Biology

There are no Tumor Cell Biology Seminars and Grand Rounds scheduled this summer. They will resume in September, 2009. Details in our next newsletter and on the Web site -- cancer.northwestern.edu/education

Grand Rounds

Ground Rounds are on Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the Gray Seminar Room of the Lurie Research Medical Center, 303 E. Superior, Chicago IL (unless otherwise noted). Contact Denise Marshall at 312.6951392 or d-marshall4@northwestern.edu.

Tumor Cell Biology Seminars

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center, Baldwin Auditorium, 303 E. Superior, Chicago, IL Thursdays--1:15 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.
Welcome New Staff

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Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center News

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Lurie Cancer Center Weekly Updates -  
Information to be considered for inclusion in the Cancer Center’s weekly e-mail updates must be received at least one week in advance. Submit suggestions to Densie Marshall at 
d-marshall4@northwestern.edu.