

WINTER 2019 Volume 22 | Issue 1

Impact

Dana-Farber.org and JimmyFund.org

THANKING THOSE WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



More than 8,200 walkers raised \$8.5 million at this year's Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai to support cancer care and research at Dana-Farber.

Celebrating 30th year, Walk raises \$8.5 million



On Sunday, September 23, more than 8,200 walkers celebrated the Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai's 30th year by raising \$8.5 million for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The Jimmy Fund Walk, the nation's most successful single-day fundraising walk, has raised a total of over \$135 million since 1989 to support critical cancer research and patient care for both adults and children with all forms of cancer.

For the 16th consecutive year, Hyundai Motor America was the Jimmy Fund Walk's presenting sponsor, and was joined in 2018 by 48 other generous sponsors and more than 1,000 volunteers who provided support to walkers on routes ranging from the 5K to the full 26.2-mile marathon course.

President and CEO Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, walking for her third

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Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has been the top ranked cancer hospital in New England by U.S. News and World Report for 18 consecutive years, and is the only cancer center in the country ranked in the top 4 for both adult and pediatric cancer programs.



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Hope for rare cancer



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Running for record \$1 million



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Easing cancer care for kids



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Lifetime Benefactors

Philanthropy fast-tracks four gynecologic cancer research projects

Recognized as one of the most active programs in the United States, the Division of Gynecologic Oncology in the Susan F. Smith Center for Women's Cancers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute cares for more than 8,000 patients and conducts more than 30 clinical trials each year. In recognition of the strength of this program, a generous donor has made a \$5 million gift to support the work of Ursula Matulonis, MD, chief of the division and the Brock-Wilson Family Chair at Dana-Farber.

"This gift is truly going to have a transformative effect on our ability to research the most intractable forms of gynecologic cancer," said Matulonis. "We are all so grateful for this support, which will enable us to apply scientific advances to thinking about how best to treat these diseases, bringing new hope to patients."

Having assembled an unparalleled group of physician-scientists dedicated to finding new

solutions to gynecologic cancers, and bolstered by this visionary gift, Matulonis and her team will address dire issues across the spectrum of gynecologic malignancies including: early detection, treatment resistant ovarian, recurrent endometrial, and invasive cervical cancers.

There is an urgent need for a way to diagnose ovarian cancer early, when it is most treatable, so part of this gift is supporting Dipanjan Chowdhury, PhD, chief of the Division of Radiation and Genome Stability, in developing a new blood test. This test is based on discoveries by Chowdhury, showing that gene expression regulators called microRNAs produce an ovarian cancer-specific signature detectable in blood samples.

"Ovarian cancer is an area where we know an accurate, easy-to-access test for early detection can have a lifesaving impact," said Chowdhury.



A generous donor has made a \$5 million gift to Ursula Matulonis, MD, and the Division of Gynecologic Oncology.

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Dear Friends,

After 21 wonderful years at Dana-Farber, I am thrilled to introduce our new Senior Vice President and Chief Philanthropy Officer, Melany Duval, who will lead philanthropic efforts for Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund beginning this month. Melany is a seasoned development executive with extensive experience in managing campaign planning and strategy. She was

most recently Vice President of Development at Silicon Valley Community Foundation, the largest community foundation in the world, which raised more than \$1.4 billion in 2017. Prior to that, Melany was the Senior Associate Dean and Associate Vice President of Health Science Campus Development at the University of Southern California (USC) and provided leadership for the campaign to raise \$1.5 billion for the USC Health Sciences Campus—the largest component of USC’s \$6 billion fundraising campaign. She also worked for the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles in roles of increasing responsibility, where she helped successfully complete a \$1 billion fundraising campaign—the largest in the institution’s history. I know that you will join me in giving her a warm welcome to Dana-Farber, and to Boston.

Melany will have the pleasure and privilege of getting to know our extraordinary family of donors, one of whom recently made an anonymous \$5 million gift to support the Division of Gynecologic Oncology at Dana-Farber’s Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers. This powerful gift will advance our physician-scientists’ research into new treatment options for ovarian, endometrial, and cervical cancers, and support the Institute’s planned comprehensive capital campaign.

As always, the thousands of Dana-Farber supporters who participate in fundraising events have a major impact. This year marked the 30th Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk, where more than 8,200 walkers and 1,000 volunteers worked together to raise \$8.5 million for Dana-Farber.

The 17th annual WEEI/NESN Jimmy Fund Radio-Telethon presented by the Arbella Insurance Foundation also had a banner year, broadcasting live for 36 hours from Fenway Park and raising over \$4.4 million, as patients and doctors told their stories and shared their hopes for a world without cancer.

And Jimmy Fund Golf presented by Mohegan Sun shattered all previous records, as dedicated supporters raised \$8.1 million through more than 160 tournaments, golf marathons, and mini golf events throughout the country.

Although stepping down from my formal role at Dana-Farber, I will remain an ardent supporter of the Institute, and of our mission to conduct the most advanced cancer research while providing top-quality patient care. It will be a pleasure to watch as Dana-Farber’s unparalleled researchers, caregivers, and supporters continue to advance the field on every front. Please join me in welcoming Melany to the team.

Sincerely,

Susan S. Paresky
Senior Vice President, Chief Philanthropy Officer

Dana-Farber teams win \$23 million in Moonshot grants to probe childhood cancers

In an ambitious effort to crack the code of aggressive childhood cancers lacking definitive treatments, the Beau Biden Cancer Moonshot program has awarded two of only four grants to research teams led by scientists at Dana-Farber.

One team, receiving \$12.5 million over five years, is led jointly by Scott Armstrong, MD, PhD, chairman of Pediatric Oncology and the David G. Nathan, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, and Kimberly Stegmaier, MD, co-director of the Pediatric Hematologic Malignancy Program, vice chair of Pediatric Oncology, and the Ted Williams Chair at Dana-Farber. Heading the other team, which is receiving \$10.5 million over five years, is Cigall Kadoch, PhD.

The research teams were chosen among a competitive nationwide pool for their expertise and resources relevant to the challenge of studying rare pediatric cancers, which include Ewing sarcoma, the second-most common bone cancer in teens and young adults; synovial sarcoma; alveolar rhabdomyosarcoma; ependymoma; and a form of acute myeloid leukemia.

The cancers being tackled by the research teams are all driven by “fusion oncoproteins”—abnormally joined proteins in cells that act as powerful stimulators of malignant growth. These fusion proteins are formed by accident when two genes on separate chromosomes break and merge, forming a renegade partnership that disrupts normal gene regulation.

Over many years, Armstrong has produced a series of pioneering discoveries about the role of fusion proteins involving the MLL (mixed lineage leukemia) gene and protein in causing acute leukemias with a poor



Scott Armstrong, MD, PhD; Kimberly Stegmaier, MD; and Cigall Kadoch, PhD (from top), are leading teams that received a total of \$23 million in Cancer Moonshot grants to explore childhood cancers.

prognosis. How such oncoproteins disrupt the normal molecular circuitry of cells in additional childhood cancers is one of the questions the scientists hope to answer, with the aim of finding new targets for drugs. ■

Gynecologic cancer research continued from page 1

“Philanthropy has fueled this work from day one. We are so thrilled and humbled by this most recent support, which will help us in our effort to make this test a reality for patients.”

Treatment resistance affects 70–95 percent of women diagnosed with late-staged ovarian cancer. With this support, Matulonis, Joyce Liu, MD, PhD, and Elizabeth Stover, MD, PhD, are designing new combination treatment regimens, and collecting tumor and blood samples to develop laboratory models to help search for novel targets and test drug combinations.

When endometrial cancer recurs or spreads, women have few treatment options. Liu and Panagiotis Konstantinopoulos, MD, PhD, are exploring how to best combine two of the newest and most promising therapeutic strategies for endometrial cancer: immunotherapy and antibody

drug conjugates (ADCs). Part of this gift will fuel the researchers’ effort to evaluate how harnessing the power of the immune system works with ADCs, which chemically link a potent chemotherapy to an antibody to directly target cancer cells.

Cervical cancer remains a leading cause of mortality in women worldwide. In developed countries, the Pap test has increased early diagnosis leading to many cures, but also limited resources for developing therapies. With donor support, Matulonis and her team are leading a comprehensive pre-clinical program for invasive cervical cancer that includes collecting tissue samples and creating laboratory models to propel research.

This gift also provides early momentum to the Institute’s planned comprehensive capital campaign, which aims to help Dana-Farber transform the science of cancer. ■



A \$5 million gift to the Division of Gynecologic Oncology will support projects including a blood test for early detection of ovarian cancer spearheaded by Dipanjan Chowdhury, PhD.