

2021 Spring Newsletter | XXXVII Edition

William Guy Forbeck Research Foundation

Cancer's Leading Thinkers. Together in one room.



COVID-19 Recovery Grant

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the globe, the Forbeck Foundation struggled to figure out how we can remain relevant in a time where conferences, meetings and even small gatherings were forbidden. At the first ever virtual Retreat in October 2020, we could hear how much the junior scientists were struggling across the globe from the shutdown.

"The COVID-19 outbreak caused many academic labs to either close or curtail their activities significantly, with animal colonies lost and reagents expiring due to the inability of the investigators to use them in a timely fashion. COVID is going to impact the direction of science for some time to come. Most of the funds earmarked for cancer research have been redirected to focus on COVID-19. Cancer research will still continue but it will be a second-class citizen at least until times get back to 'normal'."

- John Kemshead, PhD, FRCPath
Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Board

Inspired by discussions with the Forbeck Scholars, the Strategic Planning Committee proposed the Forbeck COVID-19 Recovery Grant. The Foundation was able to redirect funds from the rescheduled 2020 meetings to help these junior researchers get back to fighting cancer. Wasting no time, the Forbeck Foundation opened applications for junior researchers to request up to \$30k in funding to be directed towards things lost during the shutdown. In January, the Scientific Advisory

Board awarded over \$283k in grants to 13 Forbeck Scholars. Most requests had to do with reagents lost, mice colonies that had to be exterminated, or the increased costs of supplies or loss of funding during the global struggle. The awardees were incredibly grateful for this opportunity.

Grant Awardees

- * Esra Akbay, PhD - UT Southwestern Medical Center
- * Laura Banaszynski, PhD - UT Southwestern Medical Center
- * Floris Barthel, MD - The Jackson Laboratory
- * Uri Ben-David, PhD - Tel Aviv University
- * Shruti Bhatt, PhD - National University of Singapore
- * Jessie Brown, PhD - Columbia University
- * Camille Jacqueline, PhD - University of Pittsburgh
- * Loretta Li, MD - Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
- * Peter Ly, PhD - UT Southwestern Medical Center
- * Elena Piskounova, PhD - Weill Cornell Medicine
- * C. Daniela Robles-Espinoza, PhD - National Autonomous University of Mexico
- * Jason Sheltzer, PhD - Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
- * Peter van Galen, PhD - Broad Institute

"I firmly believe that this assistance from WGFRF will enable us to rapidly re-establish lost momentum and get our research program back to full speed in 2021."

- Peter Ly, PhD, Sponsored by David & Dorcas Collins



COVID-19 Recovery Grant Award Winners



"The support from the Forbeck Foundation has been incredibly valuable for my growth as a scientist, and I am very thankful that you have opened this Recovery grant funding."

- C. Daniela Robles-Espinoza, PhD, Sponsored by Bill and Helen Johnson

"This COVID Recovery Grant would allow me to avoid laying off an excellent researcher who aspires to attend grad school, and I believe that it would help us generate enough preliminary data to successfully compete for NIH funding. In particular, we would work to replicate our discoveries in ovarian cancer in other cancer types, in order to determine whether "aneuploidy additions" represent a common feature of tumor genomes."

- Jason Sheltzer, PhD, Sponsored by Big Foot Lions Club & John O'Neill



"Just yesterday we started processing patient samples with the reagents Forbeck allowed us to recover! This analysis will show how pre-malignant expansions of mutated cells affect the blood system in leukemia."

- Peter Van Galen, PhD, Sponsored by The Alben F and Clara G Bates Foundation

"We request a total of \$27,000 to recover, reestablish and rerun the in vivo metastasis experiments that we had to 100% shutdown due to the COVID19 pandemic. Forbeck Pandemic Recovery Grant would be a tremendous relief from the loss of our in vivo work, and would serve as a spring board for two publications as well as two major grants (R01 and American Cancer Society Scholar Grant)."

- Elena Piskounova, PhD



"As a consequence of the pause to in-person benchwork, supplies that I use for single-cell transcriptomics expired and mice which were to be used for patient-derived xenografts (PDX) were culled. These specialty reagents... are very costly and as a result we lost nearly \$24,000 in single-cell RNAseq supplies alone..... I greatly appreciate the opportunity from the William Guy Forbeck Research Foundation to recover some of these lost research supply costs and the recognition of the significant disruption the pandemic has had on our work."

- Jessie Brown, PhD

"As a result of COVID-19 an unexpected pause occurred in my telomere research, which prevented me from gathering data critical to the development of my research program. The requested funds from this grant award will provide a bridge to support costs to finalize pending experiments while supporting the continuation of my telomere research program, which is currently unfunded as a result of COVID-19. Specifically, the funds requested in the attached budget will be used to pilot a 'chromatin conformation capture' based assay that can detect telomeric chromatin interactions using DNA sequencing."

- Floris Barthel, MD, Sponsored by The Alben F and Clara G Bates Foundation



2021 Meetings

September 9-12, 2021

Targeted Therapies in Pediatric Cancers

Steven G. Dubois, MD of Dana Farber Cancer Institute

Martine F. Roussel, PhD of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

October 14-17, 2021

Uncovering new mechanisms of LKB1-mediated tumor suppression

Russell Jones of VanAndel Institute

Reuben Shaw of Salk Institute

2021 Fall Scholar Retreat - Sponsored by Wayne and Nan Kocourek Foundation

Stephen J. Chanock, MD of National Cancer Institute

October 28-31, 2021

Immunotherapies and Mechanisms of Immune Escape

Esra Akbay, PhD of UT Southwestern Medical Center

Monica Guzman, PhD of Weill Cornell Medicine

Emerging Strategies to Overcome Heterogeneous Resistance Mechanisms

Joan Brugge, PhD of Harvard University

Charles Sawyers, MD of Memorial Sloan Kettering

Kris C. Wood, PhD of Duke University

November 11-14, 2021

New Insights into the Role of Microbes in Cancer

Jannell Ayres, PhD of Salk Institute

Ken Cadwell, PhD of NYU Langone

Graft vs Host Disease - Sponsored by the 2021 Fishing for a Cure Ice Jamboree

Bruce Blazar, MD of The University of Minnesota

Leslie Kean, MD, PhD of Harvard University

December 2-5, 2021

Cellular Reprogramming and Metastatic Disease - Sponsored by the John T. Lewis Foundation

Sarah- Maria Fendt of VIB-KU Leuven Center for Cancer Biology

Raul Mostoslavsky, MD, PhD of Harvard University

2021 Ice Jamboree Recap

The Ice Fishing Jamboree was a great success with 96 registrations (up from 36 in 2020). The weather was great, sunny in the morning with very little wind all day. Nearly every group of anglers caught fish with multiple people stating it was the most fish they have caught in a day of ice fishing.

We are grateful to Matt Gerdes for organizing and running this very successful fundraiser. Overall we were able to raise \$6,000, which will be directly applied to the upcoming Graft vs. Host Disease forum happening November 11-14, 2021 at Geneva National Resort in Lake Geneva.

Thank You Donors & Sponsors

COVID interrupted the Foundation's growth trajectory. As we resume normal operations, we will have many more scholars and Forums. To this end, we would like to draw attention to the Sponsor a Scholar and Sponsor a Forum programs. These programs were introduced to connect donors directly with the science they were funding. These options allow a donor to fund a specific scientist or an entire forum. We can often connect donors to the area of cancer research that they are passionate about.

For example, the Ice Fishing Jamboree will be sponsoring the Graft vs. Host forum because that was a topic that affected that group of organizers. Additionally, the Kira Spedale Walk the Lake Event sponsored the DIPG Forum because Kira's family and friends want to continue to honor her legacy and her battle with DIPG.

We would love to work with you to create a way to memorialize or honor your loved ones affected by cancer.

Please contact admin@wgfrf.org to discuss a possible event today!

* * *

The Forbeck Foundation is not able to do the work we do without the generous support of people like you. For the most up-to-date list of all our supporters including individual donors, in-kind donations, grants, and the Sponsor A Scholar Program please visit: wgfrf.org/our-supporters

Thank you for your contributions and support of the Foundation.

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