



# CATALYST

Growing Funds for Parkinson's Research

## Parkinson's Disease in a Petri Dish: A New Era in Research Begins

Using a start-up grant from The Parkinson Alliance, researchers at The Parkinson's Institute (PI) have launched a new, cutting edge program in the field of stem cell biology which could dramatically accelerate research in Parkinson's disease (PD). Under the leadership and direction of Drs. Birgitt Schuele and William Langston, this exciting new program utilizes a new stem cell technology that involves inducing cells such as skin to transform into stem cells. These cells are known as "induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells," which means that these cells

have the capability to become any type of cell in the human body. Working closely with the Institute's PD Clinical Center, over 60 skin biopsies from volunteer PD patients and age-matched controls have now been collected and grown in culture. These cells can be made into neurons and other cells that form the adult brain, including dopamine neurons which degenerate in PD. Having a library of stem cells that originate from patients with PD provides an opportunity to directly study the cause and treatment of PD that has never before been possible.

The original Parkinson Alliance grant has also enabled PI researchers, in collaboration with scientists at Stanford University, to successfully obtain \$3.6 million in funding from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM). PI researchers have since successfully applied for three additional grants totaling an additional \$4.5 million in funding. Thus, The Parkinson Alliance funding has allowed the PI to build an exceptional program of 17 scientists and students over the last three years,

### INSIDE

- A Thank You from The Parkinson Alliance* ..... 2
- Carnegie Center 5K and One Mile Fun Run* ..... 2
- With Your Help – Thousands Raise Funds for Research* ..... 3
- Team Parkinson* ..... 3
- Upcoming Events* ..... 4
- Celebrity Chefs Reunite* ..... 4
- A Voice for the Patients' Perspective: Completing The Parkinson Alliance Survey* ..... 4

attract collaborators, and accelerate this important and promising area of research.

Current research at PI with this new cellular model, which can be thought of as "Parkinson's disease in a Petri-dish", involves several areas. First, there is an intensive effort to utilize these cells for the discovery of new drugs aimed at slowing or even halting the progression of PD. Second, researchers are investigating energy production in these cells, as they have the same abnormalities in mitochondria (the energy factories of the cell) that are seen in PD. Finally, these iPS cells are being used to develop new tools that could actually correct genetic defects in familial forms of PD. And this is just the beginning of what many scientists have hailed as an exciting new era in PD research. ☺



J. William Langston, Founder, CEO and Scientific Director of the Parkinson's Institute in Sunnyvale, CA

## A Thank You from The Parkinson Alliance



Margaret Tuchman

Dear Generous Friend,

I'm so proud of what we've been able to accomplish together for millions of people with Parkinson's disease who are desperately waiting for signs of hope. I hope you enjoy reading about our work with Dr. Langston and the iPS cells project at The Parkinson's Institute.

As you know, one facet of our many goals is to conduct research to better understand the experience of Parkinson's disease (PD) from the "patient's perspective," which is of great significance when trying to improve the quality of life of individuals with PD. As of this summer, we have completed 11 surveys with past surveys inclusive of topics such as fatigue and apathy, pain, coping styles, depression and anxiety, and disturbances with balance, speech, and sleep. We had a total of 62 participants in our first survey, and we had over 500 participants in our most recent survey!

Thanks to your contributions, we are supporting promising PD research programs, and conducting research that assists in better understanding the experiences of individuals with PD with and without deep brain stimulation.

Every time we receive a gift from a person like you, I'm proud to be able to match it with contributions from The Tuchman Foundation so that 100% of your gift goes to vital research.

We won't give up until we find a cure for Parkinson's disease. And, with you by our side, I know that day will come.

Gratefully yours,

*Margaret Tuchman*

The Parkinson Alliance, Founding Member & President

## Carnegie Center 5K and One Mile Fun Run

Our Annual Carnegie Center 5K and One Mile Fun Run is a day when our community comes together to raise awareness and funds to find a cure for Parkinson's disease. Some who attend are serious runners and register because it is a USATF sanctioned race. Others know or care about someone who has Parkinson's disease and this is their way of making a difference. In addition, our sponsors create teams for their employees and their families.

The 11th Annual Carnegie Center 5K and One Mile Fun Run, held on September 25, 2010 was a sunny and warm day. We had runners from the age of 5 through 75 participating in the 5K and Fun Run and raised close to \$70,000 for Parkinson's research! The King Award, which recognizes a sponsor's dedication and commitment to the Parkinson's community, was presented to NRG Energy. Some of our sponsors also included: PNC, Boston Properties, GE Healthcare, Tyco, First Choice Bank, Palumbo Associates, Residence Inn, and Taylor, Colicchio, & Silverman.

Thank you to all our sponsors and participants for helping us get closer to finding a cure for Parkinson's disease. ☺



## With Your Help, Thousands Raise Funds for Research

Thousands of participants came out to the 17th Parkinson's Unity Walk on Saturday, April 16, in New York City's Central Park to help raise funds and awareness for Parkinson's disease (PD) research, exuding commitment, support and high energy, in spite of an unseasonably cold spring day. This year's Unity Walk included teams from around the globe and comprised the largest grassroots initiative in the U.S. for Parkinson's disease research.



*Team "William the Conqueror" at Abbott's Messages of Hope™ Wall*

For more information on the Parkinson's Unity Walk, visit [www.unitywalk.org](http://www.unitywalk.org).

At this year's Unity Walk, Find a Cure Boulevard was renamed as Margot Zobel Way in honor of the Unity Walk's founder, who passed away last year. Ms. Zobel, who had Parkinson's disease, single-handedly rallied 200 supporters to create the Parkinson's Unity Walk in 1994. Last year, over 10,000 participants raised \$1.5M for Parkinson's research.

The Unity Walk is made possible through the support of its many sponsors, including this year's premier sponsor, Abbott, the global health care company. For the third year, Abbott featured its Messages of Hope™ Wall, collecting hundreds of photos and inspirational messages from Unity Walk participants and donated an additional \$15,000 for research. Other Unity Walk sponsors included Boehringer Ingelheim, Teva, Ceregene, Davis Phinney Foundation, LSVT Global, Medtronic and Novartis. ↻

## Team Parkinson

Thank you so much for a fabulous year of participation, giving and caring for our cause as we continue our mission toward a cure for Parkinson's disease. We had two terrific marathons, in Los Angeles and San Francisco, and a blast at the "Knock Out Parkinson's" Comedy event in 2010. All three events have raised close to \$220,000.00 for Parkinson's research!



*John & Edna Ball, TP Co-Chairs, and The Parkinson Alliance CEO, Carol Walton, with Lisette Ackerberg, Team Captain of the Top Fundraising Team at the 2011 LA Marathon*



*"Knock Out Parkinson's Comedy Show" hosted by May May Ali*

Our Team Parkinson mission is threefold: to raise awareness about Parkinson's disease; to raise money for research; and to empower those living with PD to take control of their lives through exercise.

For more information about Team Parkinson visit [www.team-parkinson.org](http://www.team-parkinson.org). ↻

## Upcoming Events to Support Parkinson's Research

### Team Parkinson at the Los Angeles Marathon

Saturday & Sunday March 17 & 18, 2012

Los Angeles, CA

### Parkinson's Unity Walk

April 2012 (exact date TBA)

Central Park, NYC

### Team Parkinson at the San Francisco Marathon

Sunday, July 29, 2012

San Francisco, CA

### Carnegie Center 5K & Fun Run

Saturday, September 22, 2012

Princeton, NJ

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## Celebrity Chefs Reunite

"Celebrity Chefs Reunite" was hosted at Eno Terra, in Kingston, NJ on Sunday evening, March 6, 2011. Over 100 supporters gathered and enjoyed the culinary creations of Chef Christopher Albrecht and Chef Jonathan Benno of Lincoln in New York, former colleagues who plated together at Danny Meyer's Gramercy Tavern. The Parkinson Alliance appreciates the generous support of all those who made this event possible.



Martin Tuchman, Raoul Momo, Chef Jonathan Benno, Carol Walton, Carlo Momo, and Chef Christopher Albrecht



## A Voice for the Patients' Perspective: Completing The Parkinson Alliance Survey

One facet of our many goals is to contribute to the improvement of quality of life through conducting survey-based research to obtain the "patient perspective" about the experience of PD for those with and without Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS). You are invited to participate

facebook.

Be connected! Follow us on:  
[www.facebook.com/  
The Parkinson Alliance](http://www.facebook.com/TheParkinsonAlliance)

in our survey at [www.dbs-stn.org](http://www.dbs-stn.org). In addition, if you would like to participate by completing a survey using paper and pencil, please call us at 1-800-579-8440, and we will be happy to assist you. ☺

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100% of net proceeds from all events goes directly to Parkinson's research.

For the latest news on upcoming events,  
please visit our Web site at [www.parkinsonalliance.org](http://www.parkinsonalliance.org)