The Pan-Mass Challenge raised an incredible $69 million in 2022 thanks to committed riders like members of Team Duncan, above, who raised more than $80,000 with inspiration from their Pedal Partner, Norma-Rose, age 9.

Back in the saddle again, 2022 PMC raises record $69 million—that’s $900 million since 1980!

The world can always use more good news, so here is something great—the Pan-Mass Challenge (PMC), the annual bike-a-thon that raises more money for charity than any other single athletic fundraising event in the country, had its best year yet, raising a record $69 million for Dana-Farber in 2022. This historic performance brought the PMC’s cumulative fundraising total to an extraordinary $900 million since 1980, an enduring testament to everyone who has come together over the years to bring cures for cancer closer by the mile.

United by this powerful purpose, 6,400 riders from 43 states and 8 countries hit the road for the 43rd PMC on August 6 and 7. Participants pedaled 16 routes from 25 to 211 miles across Massachusetts during one of the hottest rides on record, supported by 2,700 volunteers and countless cheering fans along the way. One hundred and forty Dana-Farber faculty and staff rode or volunteered, as did a record 950 cancer survivors and patients who are considered Living Proof of the PMC mission.

The PMC’s power is generated by the commitment of folks like Nancy Cantor, a 24-year PMC participant and captain of Team Ovarian Cancer. For 16 years she rode with the Stem Cell Cyclists to support the research of Corey Cutler, MD, medical director for Dana-Farber’s Adult Stem Cell Transplantation Program. But in 2022, she chose a different route, establishing Team Ovarian Cancer in honor of Janet Snider and Mara Castello, two ovarian cancer patients she met through the Brock-Wilson Family Chair at Dana-Farber.

Like many in the PMC, Cantor rode for lost loved ones, such as Snider; those who are living with cancer, such as Castello; and for the research that will ultimately save more lives, such as Matulonis’ study. She was glad to spend time with her team, grateful to all who propelled their success, and proud of the difference they made together. “It takes a community to cure cancer, and everyone’s support makes us want to work even harder,” said Cantor.

Her efforts and those of the entire PMC community have a maximum impact on patients because, thanks to the support of 200 corporate sponsors, including co-presenting sponsors Red Sox Foundation and M&T Bank, every rider-raised dollar goes directly to Dana-Farber’s world-class cancer research and care. And as the Institute’s largest single donor, accounting for more than 60% of the Jimmy Fund’s annual revenue, the PMC fuels everything the Institute does to defy cancer. Laurie H. Glümer, MD, Dana-Farber president and CEO, the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine, and 7-year PMC rider, sees the impact of PMC funding each day across the Institute’s labs and clinics and beyond. “Because of the PMC, Dana-Farber is forging scientific breakthroughs, translating these advances into better therapies, and delivering on our promise of extraordinary patient care for all,” said Glümer. “And for that, the PMC will always have our deepest gratitude.”

According to Billy Starr, founder and executive director of the PMC and an Institute Trustee, this year was special precisely because it was normal, as many COVID-19 restrictions from the past two years were lifted and the ride returned to its traditional pre-pandemic form. “It was a blessing to live this weekend as we knew it, with all its greatness and humanity,” Starr said. “The PMC is bigger than any one of us, and what we achieve together lifts us all!”

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has been the top-ranked cancer hospital in New England by U.S. News & World Report for 22 consecutive years, and is the only cancer center in the country ranked in the top 4 for both adult and pediatric cancer programs.
Dear Friends,

With the end of 2022 just around the corner, it is the perfect opportunity to reflect on another outstanding year of progress at Dana-Farber—progress truly made possible by our incredible community of support.

For 75 years, philanthropy has enabled Dana-Farber to take bold steps and tackle big initiatives, to emerge as a leader in cancer care and medicine. Today, thanks to The Dana-Farber Campaign, we continue to ramp up our immuno-oncology program and discovery science efforts, our commitment to equitable health care, our enduring focus on patient-centered care, and our important work in prevention and early detection so that we can stop cancer before it starts.

We would not be poised to pursue these kinds of projects were it not for the incredible foundation of scientific excellence that we have built over the years with your help. From generations of individual donors making leadership gifts to create endowed positions and establish new centers of excellence, to the community of grassroots fundraisers who attend our events year after year, gifts of all sizes help sustain our mission and advance our boldest ideas.

This issue of Impact is filled with stories celebrating many of our longstanding charitable commitments from families, foundations, events, and partnership organizations—all of which demonstrates that this 75th anniversary year, and the milestone it represents, is as much because of all of you as it is because of our incredible faculty and staff at the Institute.

Because of you, Dana-Farber endures as a leader in the field ready to tackle the big challenges we still face. On behalf of all of us at Dana-Farber, I wish you a safe and healthy holiday season, and a happy 2023.

Sincerely,

Melany N. Duval
Senior Vice President and Chief Philanthropy Officer

Hale Family honored at Dana-Farber in Foxborough

The names of Dana-Farber Trustee Judy Hale, her son, Rob Hale, and his wife, Karen Hale, have become synonymous with Dana-Farber’s steadfast efforts to understand, prevent, and treat pancreatic cancer. Their visionary support has made Dana-Farber a worldwide leader and pioneer in this field. In recognition of their transformative commitment to pancreatic cancer research, the name of the Hale Family Center has been added alongside Dana-Farber’s to the new Dana-Farber Brigham Cancer Center – Foxborough, which opened at Patriot Place in August.

From left: Rob and Judy Hale at the Hale Family Center at Dana-Farber Brigham Cancer Center – Foxborough, which is illuminated in purple for pancreatic cancer awareness (far right).

Thank you to our donors!

Seventy-five years ago, Dr. Sidney Farber launched what would become a relentless effort to defy cancer at every turn, fueled by a generous and growing donor community. As they have since 1948, our exceptional faculty continue to advance revolutionary science and extraordinary care on a national and even international scale, so every gift, large and small, added up in fiscal year 2022 to make a powerful difference for patients everywhere. Thank you for your continuing support!

FY22 FUNDRAISING RESULTS
For the fiscal year October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

Total Funds Raised $398.3 million
Total Donors 244,701

Portion raised for the Jimmy Fund $103.9 million — a new record!

THE DANA-FARBER CAMPAIGN: UPDATE

Dana-Farber is pursuing an ambitious, multi-year fundraising effort to change the future of cancer research and care: The Dana-Farber Campaign. This bold campaign is the largest in the Institute's history and one of the largest ever in the U.S. focused solely on cancer. Our community of support is crucial to this effort. Philanthropy through The Dana-Farber Campaign is accelerating the Institute’s strategic priorities by supporting revolutionary science, extraordinary care, exceptional expertise, and essential opportunities—helping us prevent, treat, and Defy Cancer.

In the five years since the start of the campaign, our supporters have demonstrated an incredible commitment to ensuring Dana-Farber reaches our ambitious goals. Below is a snapshot of our progress to date, enabled by a strong community of donors:

- more than 1.7 million gifts
- more than 735,000 donors
- more than 1.1 million gifts below $100
- more than 350,000 gifts from outside New England, including all 50 states

Join us!

To learn more, visit DefyCancer.org
Richard and Susan Smith Family receives Institute’s highest honor, the Sidney Farber Medical Research Award

On a beautiful evening in mid-September, members of the Dana-Farber community gathered to celebrate the presentation of the 2022 Sidney Farber Medical Research Award to the Richard and Susan Smith Family. Accepting the award on the family’s behalf were Dick and Sue’s children, Amy Smith Berylson, Debra Smith Knez, and Robert A. Smith, accompanied by grandchildren and extended family members representing many generations and branches of the Smith Family.

Dana-Farber’s highest honor

The Sidney Farber Medical Research Award was established in 1968 in appreciation of the contributions Sidney Farber, MD, made to medicine and to the development and support of cancer care and research around the world. It represents the Institute’s highest honor and is presented to individuals or groups who have made outstanding contributions to oncology, either through research or public service.

A multigenerational legacy of giving and leading

The awarding of the Sidney Farber Medical Research Award coincides with a momentous occasion for Dana-Farber, our 75th anniversary. The Smith Family has been associated with Dana-Farber since its founding in 1948, when Dick’s father, Philip, served as a founding Trustee. Dick followed in his footsteps on the Board, eventually becoming the Institute’s longest-serving Trustee. Over the decades, Dick expanded his involvement, serving as chairman of the board and even the Institute’s president, and being a steady hand through periods of substantial growth and evolution for Dana-Farber. Sue served as a Trustee of the Institute and a driving force behind the establishment of the Center for Women’s Cancers at Dana-Farber, which was later renamed the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers in her honor and in recognition of her tireless leadership, fundraising, and advocacy.

Dick and Sue were active leaders, participants, philanthropists, and partners in every aspect of Dana-Farber’s work and mission, and the next generations of their family are carrying on this tradition. Amy Smith Berylson has served on the Dana-Farber Board of Trustees since 2011. Debra Smith Knez supported her mother’s work and continues to be a proud champion for the Institute’s mission, and her daughter Jessica Knez joined the Dana-Farber Board in 2021. Robert Smith is a board member and former chair of the Pan-Mass Challenge, and a board member and incoming chair of Dana-Farber/Children’s Hospital Cancer Care, Inc.

Dick and Sue led by example through their extraordinary philanthropy and are recognized as the Institute’s most generous individual donors. Their gift of $50 million in 2006 was one of the largest single gifts in Dana-Farber’s history and launched the construction of the Yawkey Center for Cancer Care. The family’s commitment is also seen through the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation, established in 1970 to promote greater health, educational attainment, and economic mobility in Greater Boston. Their children and several of their grandchildren are active trustees of the foundation, and its grants to Dana-Farber have often supported early career investigators and, most recently, helped establish the Susan F. Smith Center Living Biobank to advance discovery science in ovarian cancer.

“The Smith Family name has been associated with Dana-Farber since our founding—few families in our history have been as integral to our lifesaving mission as the Smith Family,” said Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, Dana-Farber president and CEO, and the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine. “They have been responsible for the growth of our Institute in both physical footprint and scientific ambitions.”

“There are lots of amazing people who have been important donors to many great institutions. But I don’t think you can go anywhere and find a family that has had as much of an effect on an institution as the Smith Family has had on Dana-Farber,” said Josh Bekenstein, chairman of the Dana-Farber Board of Trustees. David G. Nathan, MD, president emeritus of Dana-Farber, who knew Dick and Sue since their childhoods together and who holds great admiration for the family said, “The Smith Family has made Boston a better place. The Smith Family has made Dana-Farber a better place. Sue and Dick put so much of themselves into this work. To them, we owe so very, very much.”

It was fitting that the celebration took place at the Longwood Center—a state-of-the-art research facility where investigators conduct the most advanced cancer research. One of Dick’s last major gifts to Dana-Farber before his passing enabled the expansion of the Longwood Center and was one of the lead gifts to The Dana-Farber Campaign.

Reflecting on her parents’ legacy and looking to the future, Amy Smith Berylson said, “My father’s part in growing the Institute from a small clinic to the best-of-the-best in cancer research and care was viewed by him as his greatest philanthropic accomplishment. There is no doubt that the bond between Dana-Farber and our family endures as a source of pride and inspiration.”

“My parents were a team of the ages,” said Debra Smith Knez, in remembrance of her mom and dad. “I can’t express enough how much I admired their partnership, which translated to the research and patient experience at Dana-Farber. We could not be more honored to receive the Sidney Farber Medical Research Award on behalf of our parents, who we were so blessed to have as parents.”

Capturing the essence of the Smith Family’s partnership with Dana-Farber, Robert A. Smith said, “Our parents put their heart and soul into Dana-Farber. They helped define a vision for Dana-Farber, which defined a mission for Dana-Farber, which endures.”

The Sidney Farber Medical Research Award, Dana-Farber’s highest honor, was presented to the Smith Family for their historic and ongoing contributions to the Institute and to cancer science and medicine. Above, at the award ceremony on Sept. 15 were (from left): Debra Smith Knez; Institute Trustee Amy Smith Berylson; Dana-Farber President and CEO and the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine Laurie H. Glimcher, MD; Robert A. Smith; and Dana-Farber Chairman of the Board Josh Bekenstein.
Leadership gift establishes Poorvu Jaffe Chair in Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care and launches health equity initiative

Dana-Farber is committed to providing the best possible care to patients from all walks of life. In recent years, the Institute has prioritized expanding its clinical facilities into surrounding communities to better reach medically underserved patients with the Institute’s signature Total Patient Care model, which includes supportive services from the Department of Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care (POPC). To further this mission, Institute Trustee Alison Poorvu Jaffe and her husband, Daniel G. Jaffe, recently made a substantial gift to establish the Poorvu Jaffe Chair in Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care at Dana-Farber and to launch the Initiative to Integrate Supportive Oncology and Palliative Care at Dana-Farber. This initiative is aimed at advancing the Institute’s mission to eliminate racial, socioeconomic, cultural, and other disparities in patient care and outcomes.

Historically, the majority of patients seen by caregivers in POPC have been white, educated, English-speaking patients, most often self-referred and treated on the Longwood campus. This is something the Poorvu Jaffe family would like to see change. As a former patient and longtime supporter of palliative and psychosocial care at Dana-Farber, Poorvu Jaffe knows how integral managing the emotional and physical side effects of cancer treatment is to one’s cancer journey. “Since I have been connected with Dana-Farber I have been impressed by the Institute’s commitment to treating and supporting the whole person throughout their journey,” said Poorvu Jaffe, who also recently joined the Dana-Farber Society with a legacy gift through her estate plan. “But I know there is still work to be done to expand access and integrate supportive care for patients who come from underserved backgrounds. Dana-Farber recognizes those barriers to care, such as cultural sensitivities and language, and we wanted to do our part to improve the Institute’s ability to meet the needs of all populations. It was important to know that the health equity initiative does not just focus on getting people into the door once, but on providing them access to the cancer support and care needed throughout their cancer journey.”

The Poorvu Jaffe Chair in Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care is the first chair in this field established at Dana-Farber and one of only a few endowed chairs in palliative care or psychosocial oncology in the country. This permanent endowment will support research and patient care priorities and advance the field of psychosocial oncology and palliative care overall, in perpetuity. The inaugural incumbent is James Talisky, MD, who serves as chair of POPC.

“James has devoted his career to improving the patient experience,” said Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, president and CEO of Dana-Farber and the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine. “His work has helped to identify what matters most to patients and how to improve the experience of living with cancer. As the inaugural Poorvu Jaffe Chair, James will continue to innovate and advance this critical field.”

Bolstered by funds from the Poorvu Jaffes’ gift, Talisky is launching an initiative to ensure that patients from priority neighborhoods in Boston have access to and education about supportive oncology services as part of their cancer treatment, and, ultimately, to see Dana-Farber as a trusted provider of choice.

“The Institute continues to expand its geographic footprint to reach more patients from diverse backgrounds and identities, our team is working to fully integrate psychosocial and palliative services into all aspects of clinical care,” said Talisky. “The Poorvu Jaffe family’s support through many years has been transformative, and this gift is another example of that.”

Brown leads the way with support for cancer care for all

For nearly a decade, Christine Brown has been a staunch supporter and advocate for equitable cancer care at Dana-Farber. Her latest gift of $160,000 will increase access to supportive oncology care under the direction of James Talisky, MD, chair of the Department of Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care and the Poorvu Jaffe Chair in Psychosocial Oncology and Palliative Care at Dana-Farber.

Brown’s first major gift to Dana-Farber in 2013 was to the Institute’s Center for Global Cancer Medicine to support cancer care in Rwanda and Haiti. This sparked further interest in seeing what more could be done for medically underserved communities at home, including a major gift to Dana-Farber’s Cancer Care Equity Program which reaches patients in priority neighborhoods of Roxbury and Dorchester.

“For me, this is about pushing cancer care beyond the four walls of Dana-Farber,” said Brown. “Dana-Farber’s compassion and their ability to help people navigate the health system—to try to give more people access—is changing the way people can get care, for the better.”

With Brown’s gift, Talisky and his colleagues are working to increase access to supportive oncology for patients of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and individuals of all backgrounds with lower socioeconomic status. Brown is also a member of the Dana-Farber Society, a special group who make provisions for the Institute in their estate plans.

“Chris has long been passionate about ensuring that Dana-Farber’s expertise reaches all patients, including those from the most marginalized communities,” said Talisky. “We are thrilled to partner with her as we create a model that provides access for all patients to the highest quality supportive oncology care.”

Christopher Lathan, MD, MS, MPH, has been appointed the inaugural incumbent of the Hadley Family Chair at Dana-Farber, the first-ever chair at the Institute dedicated to equity in cancer care. Disparities and discrimination affect all aspects of the cancer care continuum including prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment, and survival, and eliminating these inequities is a key priority for the Institute. To support these efforts in perpetuity, Connie and Institute Trustee Chris Hadley endowed this chair with a generous gift to The Dana-Farber Campaign.

A longtime champion for health equity and social justice, Lathan is the Institute’s chief clinical access and equity officer and the founding director of Dana-Farber’s Cancer Care Equity Program. His research focuses on the effects of race and social determinants of health on access to care in cancer outcomes, including differences in access to precision medicine and equitable distribution of new treatments across historically marginalized populations. Lathan aims to bridge the gap between research and the realities of patient care by developing interventions to increase access to high-quality care. Above, at a celebration in June, are (from left): Dana-Farber President and CEO Laurie H. Glimcher, MD; Christopher Lathan, MD, MS, MPH; and Connie and Chris Hadley.

Lathan honored as the first Hadley Family Chair
Massachusetts Life Sciences Center grants $2.8 million to establish new center and accelerate drug development

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) has awarded Dana-Farber $2,811,397 to establish a Center for Emergent Drug Targets (CEDT), which will provide a collaborative environment to streamline and accelerate the earliest stages of drug discovery.

Progress during these initial phases is often stymied by a lack of synthetic small molecules that can be used to manipulate or interfere with the function of a protein relevant to cancer development—a “protein target”—or even basic insight to confirm that a protein target is amenable to traditional small molecule therapies. The new center will provide chemical tools and other technologies that academic and industry researchers can use to address these knowledge gaps.

The MLSC is a quasi-public agency that invests in the growth and development of the life sciences sector in Massachusetts. Since it was created in 2007, MLSC has strategically deployed more than $700 million in grants, loans, and other investments to foster the development of new therapies and scientific advances.

“The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center’s visionary support means that advances in basic science will be more quickly translated into new cancer therapies,” said Dana-Farber President and CEO Laurie H. Glusmacher, MD, the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine. “It will make a tremendous difference in what we can achieve to benefit patients in Boston and beyond.”

Researchers Sara Buhrlage, PhD, and Jarrod Marto, PhD, who have collaborated extensively in the study of a protein family of emergent drug targets known as desubiquitinating enzymes, will lead the CEDT, which is expected to open early next year. Buhrlage and Marto want to position the center to invent the typical pharmaceutical development paradigm by focusing on new small molecules as well as early stage protein targets that have not yet been “de-risked,” or shown conclusively to have some potential against cancer.

“As we’ve seen in our own work,” noted Buhrlage, “tools and technologies made available through the CEDT will enable our partners to streamline go/not go decisions early in their pipeline and allow them to focus resources on the most promising targets and compounds.”

Researchers using the CEDT will have access to state-of-the-art equipment and libraries of small molecules housed at Dana-Farber. “A molecule out of these libraries that binds to a protein target of interest is then a good candidate for further development as a potential therapeutic drug,” said Marto. “Similarly, we can use technologies in the center to screen our partners’ compounds to identify their protein targets in cancer cells.”

The CEDT will also help train future scientists by providing hands-on experience for trainees in academic labs as well as other outreach activities to encourage students from across the state to consider a career in the life sciences industry.

“Commercial drug discovery is an intensive, high-risk endeavor that requires junior and senior scientists with a multitude of specialized research skills,” said Kenneth Turner, president and CEO of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center. “With this investment in the CEDT, we are making it possible for established pharma and biotech companies to mitigate risk, particularly in the earliest stages of developing new therapeutics. They will be able to expand their Massachusetts workforce around the most promising programs, while startups can improve their chances of success.”

Simons Foundation grant targets cell biology

Scientists are often able to pinpoint genomic variants in people with disease, but it is very difficult to understand which of those mutations caused their illness, and even harder to know how that knowledge should inform treatment. That’s why the Simons Foundation Autism Research Initiative (SFARI) awarded $1,179,895 to a project led by Dana-Farber cancer biologist Marc Vidal, PhD.

Vidal is director of the Institute’s Center for Cancer Systems Biology, where a multidisciplinary team of scientists is investigating how molecular networks within a cell control biological processes. They want to understand how disturbances of those networks can explain human disease.

With the SFARI grant, Vidal and his team are working to functionally characterize most variants in the SFARI gene set, which is strongly associated with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Working with a computational biologist at the University of California, San Diego, their goal is to pinpoint the variants that are causing ASD and to provide insight into the underlying mechanisms by which that happens. “We try to understand complex systems,” said Vidal. “The principles we’re hoping to learn here will help advance autism research as well as research on diseases like cancer.”

The New York-based Simons Foundation was founded in 1994 by Jim and Marilyn Simons to advance the frontiers of research in basic science and mathematics. In SFARI initiative seeks to improve the understanding, diagnosis, and treatment of autism spectrum disorders by funding the most relevant and high-quality research in the field. SFARI has provided or committed more than $570 million in external research support to more than 600 investigators around the globe over the past two decades.

“My lab is interested in trying to understand how proteins, RNA molecules, genes, the macromolecules of the cell—how they’re all organized,” Vidal explained. “The genome of cancer cells is totally perturbed relative to the genome of our healthy cells. And even different cells inside the same tumor don’t have the same genome. At the end, what we’re interested in is how the cell organizes all its molecules.”

Vidal compares studying just one discrete part of a cell to examining only one component of an airplane to understand how the plane stays aloft, posing the question, “How do we take mutations we see in the genome and characterize how these mutations affect the systems properties, the network properties of the cell?”

One intriguing finding from previous work by Vidal’s lab and others is that disparate diseases with little resemblance to one another often have genes in common. “Molecules are in very complex networks, and to perturb them in one way means cancer, but to disturb them in another way might produce Alzheimer’s disease or other disease,” he said.

“This is important research, and we look forward to seeing the progress Dr. Vidal and his team will make toward improving the understanding of autism biology.”

— KELSEY MARTIN, Simons Foundation
**Support from Russ and Paula Agrusa recognized with named space**

Visionary entrepreneurs Russ and Paula Agrusa established the Project P Fund at Dana-Farber in 2014, to support high-risk, high-reward research into immunotherapies for colorectal cancer. After Paula’s passing from the disease in 2016, Russ honored her legacy by continuing to support the fund. As a direct result of their generous investments, Dana-Farber researchers have made actionable advancements, such as the discovery that RNF43 is one of the most frequently mutated genes in colon cancer and that an existing type of drug can target it.

In recognition of this longstanding and impactful support, the elevator lobby on the 12th floor of the Charles A. Dana Building was named in loving tribute to Paula. Among those attending the ribbon-cutting in June were Russ Agrusa (right) and Brian Wolpin, MD, MPH, director of the Gastrointestinal Cancer Center and the Robert T. and Judith B. Hale Chair in Pancreatic Cancer at Dana-Farber.

**Family comes together to raise money for colon cancer research**

Michael Mulrenan comes from a big and loving family, with his wife, Amy, and children, Jake, Shaye, and Beec, at the top of the list. When he was diagnosed with colon cancer in March 2022, he had no shortage of supporters including eight siblings, his in-laws, nieces, nephews, cousins, and an extended network of friends. In addition to supporting Michael, his family felt the need to take on a more global fight to help other patients and their families facing this disease. Michael’s sister Julie and her husband, John, established the Crush Colon Cancer Fund and committed to raise at least $100,000—which they would match up to $50,000—to fund research led by Marios Giannakis, PhD, at Dana-Farber.

The entire family enthusiastically joined in to help fundraise, including Michael and Amy. In August, the Mulrenans, Holzman, Brandano, Miller, and McDonough families hosted the first Crush Colon Cancer fundraiser at the Boston Harbor Hotel, which attracted 250 family members and friends, as well as additional donations from more than 200 people and organizations not in attendance. All told, the family has raised more than $200,000 for the cause.

“Family ‘wanting to get involved’ is an understatement,” said John McDonough. “And Michael’s active participation in fundraising that will likely only benefit future patients, tells you everything you need to know about him and his spirit.”

“The funds Michael’s family have raised are critical to our research efforts to activate the immune system against colorectal cancer and develop innovative clinical trials,” said Giannakis. “I’m so grateful for the generous support from Crush Colon Cancer, which will drive critical therapeutic breakthroughs for colorectal cancer patients.”

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**Hope Funds enables study of new therapies for liver cancer**

Founded in 2006, the Hope Funds for Cancer Research has encouraged investigation into the most difficult-to-treat and understudied cancers. The Hope Funds recently awarded a grant of $148,000 to Dana-Farber’s Hans-Georg Sprenger, PhD, who is using gene-editing technology in the Department of Cancer Biology to uncover new therapeutic targets in hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), a type of liver cancer.

Building on previous research into metabolic changes that contribute to tumor growth, Sprenger is developing a novel test to study the role of a biological function called ketone body metabolism in HCC. When cancer cells develop in the liver, defects in the production of ketone bodies can occur, resulting in their breakdown. This in turn can further amplify tumor growth. Sprenger believes that targeting the part of the cell that controls the transport of ketone bodies holds potential for treating HCC.

“Our research suggests that ketone body transport within the cell would be a promising therapeutic target for treating HCC,” said Sprenger. “This funding will enable me to create a robust cell culture assay to test my hypothesis and find another avenue of treating the unique metabolism of HCC and other malignancies.”

“Researchers such as Dr. Sprenger are making significant contributions to understanding the most difficult-to-treat cancers,” said Leah Cann, Hope Funds Executive Committee chair.

“We are privileged to fund this important work, which reflects our commitment to promoting scientific innovation.”

**Husband creates research fund to honor late wife**

Loving, courageous, and compassionate are three words that come up frequently when Rich Toelke describes his wife, Donna. Donna was diagnosed with anal cancer in March 2019 and was cared for by James Cleary, MD, PhD, director of clinical research in the Department of Gastrointestinal Oncology at Dana-Farber. Though Donna had a short and often tough course of treatment, Rich is grateful to Cleary and his team for adding months and quality to Donna’s life.

In her memory, Rich created the Donna V. Toelke Fund for Cancer Research to honor their special relationship with Cleary and advance anal cancer research for those with diagnoses similar to Donna. With an initial gift of $150,000, Rich hopes the fund will help accelerate research and find more innovative treatments to benefit more patients.

“Dr. Cleary provided the most exceptional care to Donna and was like family to us during her treatment,” said Rich. “The innovative thinking from him and his team added months to Donna’s life, and our family is incredibly thankful for that.”

“Donna didn’t want others to go through what we went through, and didn’t want to be forgotten,” said Rich. “We created the fund with the hope that creative approaches to this rare type of cancer would save and extend lives in the future, and to honor Donna by ensuring that her legacy of love and concern for others lives on.”
Rasmussen Family funds research into underlying causes of colorectal cancer

Anna and Neil Rasmussen are no strangers to medical research in the quest to find answers to chronic illness—one of their children had been living with ulcerative colitis since she was seven years old. But when a follow-up evaluation, during the surge of COVID, revealed their child had developed colon cancer, they were stunned. At just 23, she is part of a growing population of young adults being diagnosed with a disease previously associated with older adults.

Given her preexisting condition and young age, the family turned to Matthew Yurgelun, MD, a physician-scientist who specializes in young-onset gastrointestinal cancers and hereditary conditions and serves as director of the Lynch Syndrome Center at Dana-Farber, to seek treatment and answers.

Grateful for the care received and inspired by the expertise of Yurgelun, the family has made gifts totaling more than $500,000 to support his research. With his colleague Kimmie Ng, MD, MPH, director of the Young-Onset Colorectal Cancer Center and director of Translational Research within the Division of Gastrointestinal Oncology at Dana-Farber, Yurgelun is working to develop treatments that could prevent colorectal cancer in patients who are especially susceptible to it.

“We are building biobanks of patient samples to lay the groundwork for better understanding the biology of such cancers, which will be crucial for developing preventive treatments,” said Yurgelun. “Understanding the causes underlying this young-onset colorectal cancer epidemic absolutely needs to start with data, and thanks to the Rasmussens’ support, we are able to accelerate our data collection so as to learn how to prevent colorectal cancer before it starts.”

Prevention has become an increasingly important focus of gastrointestinal cancer research in recent years and is a strategic priority of The Dana-Farber Campaign.

“Drs. Yurgelun and Ng now have the tools to dive deep into genetic profiles and the causes of gut microbiome dysbiosis that can lead to cancerous mutations,” said Anna Rasmussen. “We couldn’t be more thankful and honored to support their ambitious work, which we are confident will lead to critical breakthroughs—ultimately sparing both adults and children alike from this heartbreaking disease.”

Bob Parsons Memorial Golf Outing surpasses $1 million for early detection in pancreatic cancer, patient assistance

Bob Parsons was a multi-faceted force of nature: a funny and loving husband and father, an avid sailor and sportsman, and an accomplished businessman. He was also a fighter, especially through his battle with pancreatic cancer. To honor his spirit and memory, family, friends and colleagues established the Bob Parsons Memorial hosted by Shem Creek Capital in 2016, in partnership with Jimmy Fund Golf presented by Mohegan Sun. In 2022, the event raised a record of more than $250,000, bringing the tournament’s lifetime total to $1.2 million raised for Dana-Farber.

The Bob Parsons Memorial funds two crucial initiatives that mirror Dana-Farber’s dual focus on cancer research and patient care. The Bob Parsons Fellowship and a corresponding named fund have helped investigators make significant inroads toward early detection of pancreatic cancer, the third most deadly type of cancer in the U.S., for which there are no early warning signs. The tournament also provides vital support to the Patient and Family Assistance Crisis Fund, assisting patients facing dire financial circumstances that threaten their treatment or recovery.

“The Bob Parsons Memorial has been a way for us to continue to honor Bob’s legacy and make a positive impact for Dana-Farber patients and their families,” said Tournament Director Scott Goldberg, Bob’s partner at Shem Creek Capital and the driving force behind the event. “It has been inspirational to see the outpouring of support from friends, family, and business associates who share a steadfast belief in the mission of Dana-Farber.”

IMS grants drive innovative multiple myeloma research

The International Myeloma Society (IMS) recently awarded three Dana-Farber scientists grants totaling $525,000 to promote research on the blood cancer multiple myeloma. Jens Lohr, MD, PhD, and Eric Smith, MD, PhD, director of translational research in the Immune Effector Cell Therapy Program, received the IMS and Paula and Rodger Riney Foundation Translational Research Award, which supports translational investigations aimed at improving the prevention, early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of multiple myeloma. Jean-Baptiste Alberge, PhD, received the IMS Career Development Award, which seeks to foster the academic careers of young scientists pursuing multiple myeloma research and to promote the next generation of leaders in this field.

Lohr is developing methods to detect genetic and molecular changes in myeloma cells over time by analyzing patient blood samples. This “liquid biopsy” approach, which could inform treatment decisions and predict patient outcomes, promises to be more accurate and less invasive than standard methods, which rely on the analysis of bone marrow samples.

Smith is generating novel agents that target two different molecules found predominately on myeloma cells. He hopes that these agents, when incorporated into disease-fighting immune cells, will induce an extremely potent anti-myeloma immune response in patients.

Alberge is exploring whether genetic changes can predict disease progression in patients with smoldering myeloma—a condition that often precedes myeloma. He is also working to create a model that will assess the risk of progression in individual patients based on their clinical, molecular, and immune characteristics.

“I’m extremely grateful to the IMS for giving me the opportunity to pursue this exciting research, which is helping me to establish my career as an independent investigator,” said Alberge.

“Our mission is to cure myeloma by building a global myeloma community, promoting education, fostering clinical and translational research, and assuring excellence in clinical care worldwide,” said IMS president Nikhil Munshi, MD, who is also director of basic and correlative science at the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center and the Kraft Family Chair at Dana-Farber.

“We are pleased to support these innovative projects, which promise to advance the field and improve patient outcomes.”
Munshi honored as inaugural Kraft Family Chair

In July, Nikhil Munshi, MD, was honored as the inaugural incumbent of the Kraft Family Chair at Dana-Farber, which was endowed with a gift from New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft to provide support in perpetuity for the remarkable work conducted in hematologic malignancies at the Institute.

Munshi serves as director of Basic and Correlative Science at Dana-Farber’s Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center, and as president of the International Myeloma Society. His work is focused on understanding genomic changes and molecular mechanisms in multiple myeloma, and translating such findings to improve diagnosis, prognosis, and therapeutics for the disease.

In recognition of the longtime friendship and partnership between Robert Kraft and Kenneth Anderson, MD, program director of the Lipper Center and the LeBow Institute for Myeloma Therapeutics and the Kraft Family Professor of Medicine, the chair will be renamed the Kraft Family and Kenneth C. Anderson, MD, Chair at Dana-Farber upon Anderson’s retirement at a future date.

Above, at the celebration (from left): Nikhil Munshi, MD; Kenneth Anderson, MD; Robert Kraft; and Laurie H. Glimcher, MD, Dana-Farber president and CEO and the Richard and Susan Smith Professor of Medicine.

Accelerating the pursuit of rare blood cancer treatment

The MPN Research Foundation has made an award of $200,000 to Dana-Farber for research into potential therapeutics for people with myeloproliferative neoplasms (MPNs), a set of rare blood disorders in which stem cells in the bone marrow grow uncontrollably.

The Chicago-based foundation’s mission is to stimulate original research in pursuit of new treatments—and eventually a cure—for MPNs. Since its founding in 2000, the foundation has awarded more than $16 million to investigators around the world for high-risk, high-reward research into the three blood cancers collectively known as MPNs: polycythemia vera, essential thrombocythemia, and myelofibrosis.

The foundation’s funding supports research by a multidisciplinary team of Dana-Farber chemists, biologists, and clinicians led by Sara Buhrlage, PhD, Jarrod Marto, PhD, and James Griffin, MD. Most MPNs are thought to be driven by a mutation in a gene on chromosome 9, called JAK2, which regulates the production of the different kinds of blood cells—red cells, white cells, and platelets. Because mutated JAK2 genes can lead the bone marrow to overproduce one or more of these kinds of cells, the researchers are working to develop small molecules that can burrow into a cell and shut down mutated JAK2 while sparing normal cells.

“We are optimistic that the work Dr. Buhrlage and her colleagues are doing in the lab will move us even closer to our goal of finding new ways of potentially preventing these blood cancers from progressing while improving the quality of life for patients,” said Kapila Viges, CEO of the MPN Research Foundation.

ASH furthers mission with grants to early career researchers

The American Society of Hematology (ASH) is a global network of more than 18,000 hematologists from nearly 100 countries working to conquer blood diseases. For more than six decades, their mission has focused on fostering high-quality, equitable care, transformative research, and innovative education to improve the lives of patients with blood and bone marrow disorders. Recently, ASH awarded a total of $325,000 in grants to Dana-Farber physician-scientists Eugenio Morelli, MD, Livius Penter, MD, and Franziska Wachter, MD, to further that mission.

Morelli’s research aims to characterize the non-protein-coding RNA networks in multiple myeloma and develop strategies for the therapeutic targeting of those networks, for translation to clinical trials. Penter’s research focuses on novel single cell sequencing approaches to dissect the clonal relationship between monoclonal B cell lymphocytosis and chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL) at the level of chromatin accessibility and mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) mutations. Wachter’s research concentrates on advancing a next-generation therapy for relapsed T-cell acute leukemia to improve outcomes for affected children who currently have limited treatment options.

“ASH is proud to support talented researchers at Dana-Farber,” said 2022 ASH President Jane N. Winter, MD. “Their pioneering research will provide more hope for patients with blood disorders.”

Steadfast support in memory of beloved daughter and best friend

When Ken Raymond’s daughter was misdiagnosed and then later accurately diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer, he immediately took her to Dana-Farber to ensure he had exhausted all efforts to help her. Unfortunately, the disease had progressed substantially, and Ken’s daughter soon passed. This would mark the beginning of a long and important relationship between Ken and Dana-Farber.

What started as a gift made towards ovarian cancer research in 2017, soon transformed into Ken serving as a de facto referral service in Albany. N.Y., for Dana-Farber—if you or someone you know needed cancer care or treatment, Ken took it upon himself to connect you with someone at the Institute.

When Bob himself was diagnosed with cancer, Ken made an additional gift to support leukemia research and “show the appreciation Bob, his family, and I had for the treatment he received at Dana-Farber. We have peace of mind knowing that he received the best of the best care.” Bob’s son, Todd, has joined with Ken to continue to push forward their work to help defy cancer and raise awareness and funds.

“We have peace of mind knowing that he received the best of the best care.”

— KEN RAYMOND

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In 2017, a mammogram revealed that Langley Perer had ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS), the very earliest, and highly treatable, stage of breast cancer. Because she also tested positive for BRCA2, an inherited gene mutation that increases her risk of developing certain cancers over her lifetime, Langley decided to undergo a double mastectomy to ensure the cancer wouldn’t return. It was a difficult decision, but afterward, she felt ready to move forward with her life, her career, and taking care of her two small children, Bowie, age 5, and Sawyer, age 3.

But then in 2021, Langley noticed one of her eyelids was drooping. Another series of tests later, she received devastating news: at 40 years old, she had leptomeningeal metastases. Her cancer had spread to her bones, brain, and spinal fluid.

Leptomeningeal brain metastases (LBM) are rare and difficult to treat, with progress stalled largely due to lack of funding for clinical trials that include this specific subset of patients. Langley and her husband, Scott Rosenberg, both work in the film industry and are savvy about getting projects off the ground. They have applied this approach to philanthropically supporting the work of Langley’s doctor, Nancy Lin, MD, with a substantial $2 million commitment—the largest gift ever to LBM research at Dana-Farber. Lin serves as director of the Metastatic Breast Cancer Program and of the Program for Patients with Breast Cancer Brain Metastases at Dana-Farber, and is considered one of the foremost experts on LBM in the country.

“I learned from Nancy that there hasn’t been a change in the way we treat LBM in 30 years or so,” said Langley. “It’s not just about saving my life—if 5–10% of people with a breast cancer diagnosis have LBM, that is not a small number of people. There is a better way of treating this out there, and we can provide the resources to find it.” This gift has enabled Lin to launch a ground-breaking clinical trial to test a class of drugs called antibody drug conjugates (ADCs), and for the first time ever, a sub-cohort of LBM patients will be eligible to participate. Often referred to as “smart bombs,” ADCs combine an antibody protein with chemotherapy. The protein enables the therapy to recognize and latch onto the cancer cells to deliver high doses of the drug. Unlike conventional chemotherapy, ADCs are extremely selective, thus sparing more healthy cells.

“Historically, due to its rarity, poor prognosis, and the assumption that most anticancer molecules were too large to pass through the blood brain barrier, patients with LBM have been excluded from nearly all clinical trials,” said Lin, who is also the associate chief of the Division of Breast Oncology within the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers. “ADCs have strong potential to provide therapeutic benefits for many of these patients, and this gift from Langley and Scott fills a critical gap in funding for the clinical trials.”

In addition to pledging $2 million of their own money, and thanks to the generosity of some of their friends and family, Langley and Scott are also committed to raising further funds to support additional clinical trials and expand the team of researchers developing treatments for LBM.

“I’d like to believe there is a reason we’re facing this,” said Scott. “Because we have the means to help, and know a lot of others who wish to help, maybe there’s a good chance we can save a whole lot of people.”

### The Cancer Couch Foundation’s heartfelt, renewed support advances metastatic breast cancer research

Cancer Couch Foundation, which has raised over $5 million for MBC research since 2016. The foundation recently made a heartfelt and generous $160,000 gift, which was matched by an anonymous donor, to continue their longstanding support of MBC research led by Dana-Farber’s Nikihil Wagle, MD. Wagle and his team are using genomic analysis on serial tumor biopsy and blood samples from patients with MBC to understand how tumors become resistant to treatment. Their aim is to discover new therapies and to identify predictors of metastatic disease.

“Our goal is to provide the much-needed seed funding to forward-thinking researchers, like Dr. Wagle, to empower them to secure large research grants that help identify more effective MBC treatments,” said Tom Scalera, Rebecca’s husband and executive director of The Cancer Couch Foundation.

### Grateful survivor advances breast cancer research

Margie Loucks was shocked 10 years ago when, just after her 28th birthday, she was diagnosed with invasive ductal carcinoma, a type of breast cancer. Having no family history of cancer, she was “totally floored” by the news. She was treated by Ann Partridge, MD, MPH, founder and director of the Program for Young Adults with Breast Cancer and the Eric P. Winer, MD, Chair in Breast Cancer Research at Dana-Farber, who understood how important it was to Maggie and her husband, Drew, that they preserve her fertility during treatment. Partridge’s cutting-edge treatment plan, which was tested in successful clinical trials, would treat Maggie’s cancer while being less toxic than other regimens. That plan, now a recommended standard of care, led to Maggie today being cancer-free, and the mom of two-year-old twins and a 3-month-old.

To support Partridge’s work, Maggie and Drew created the “One life, Live it” fund in honor of Meghan Martin, a fellow patient with whom Maggie became close. Meghan always said that we only have one life, and we should live it. She died three years ago and is someone I hold in my heart every single day.”

Partridge, who is also vice chair of Medical Oncology and director of the Adult Survivorship Program, says, “The support of survivors, like Maggie and research helps ensure that the care we provide is the best, most patient-centered possible, and that future patients have the best possible outcomes—both in terms of treatment and their quality of life.”

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Gift to ovarian cancer inspired by story of research

In early 2022, Dr. Jean Kasmer read a story about an ovarian cancer survivor who gave to support the research of Ursula Matulonis, MD, chief of the division of Gynecologic Oncology and the Brock-Wilson Family Chair at Dana-Farber. As a recent ovarian cancer survivor herself, Jean was struck by the article and realized the effect she could have by making a gift to Dana-Farber. Along with her husband, Charles Jacobs, Jean gave $500,000 to support Matulonis’ research.

When Jean was first diagnosed with ovarian cancer, it was a surprise. She is herself a physician; however, this particular disease is typically difficult to diagnose in its earliest stages because symptoms can be vague or similar to those of common conditions.

“For the first year of living with my diagnosis, I was focused on adapting to being a patient and getting through my surgery and chemotherapy,” Jean said. “But I felt a sense of purpose after reading about another survivor who was using her experience to defy cancer. I knew that I wanted to support the work being done at Dana-Farber and help other patients.”

This gift from Jean and Charles will allow Matulonis the flexibility to hire staff into positions that are often not covered by government or other funding sources but are vital to research, including regulatory and research staff.

“I am very grateful to the Kasmer-Jacobs family for their gift,” said Matulonis. “Philanthropy is key to sustaining our research efforts and can have a major impact on the care of patients at Dana-Farber and around the world.”

As parents and grandparents, Jean and Charles hope that by supporting Dana-Farber they can help patients today, but also inspire the next generation. “We see this gift as an investment in the future,” the couple said, “and we hope that we might inspire someone else to also support the work at Dana-Farber.”

Johnston paves the way for a novel ovarian cancer clinical trial

Debbie Johnston is dedicated to supporting causes that are close to her heart, and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s ovarian cancer research is one such cause. After the passing of a cherished friend in 2010, Debbie joined Team Diane for the Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai in support of ovarian cancer research. While her gifts started off small, they have created a ripple effect over the years and grown into substantial funding for cancer research and care.

At Dana-Farber, Debbie’s philanthropic passion lies with clinical and pre-clinical trials and she feels that private funding is a key component to unlocking the viability of cancer research. Her latest gift of $500,000 to the previously established Johnston Family Ovarian Cancer Research Fund highlights this. Her gift provides critical funding for Ursula Matulonis, MD, chief of the division of Gynecologic Oncology and the Brock-Wilson Family Chair at Dana-Farber, who plans to conduct a clinical trial testing a novel, natural killer “NK” cell therapy—a form of immunotherapy—in ovarian cancer to pave the way for better patient care and outcomes.

“Debbie’s continued generosity in the pursuit of groundbreaking ovarian cancer research is vital to advancing our work,” Matulonis said. “Her interest and passion for discovery of the next cutting-edge ovarian cancer therapy is driving critical research forward. I am truly very grateful for her loyal generosity.”

For years, Debbie has served on the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers Visiting Committee—now known as the Presidential Symposium—as an ambassador for Dana-Farber and continues to receive research updates from Matulonis and her team. Debbie hopes for a day when cancer no longer wreaks havoc on the lives of friends and family.

“Ursula and her team don’t shy away from a tough fight,” Debbie said. “Ovarian cancer is difficult to treat, but I’m an optimist. We’ve made so much progress in treating people with cancer, and I hope we will one day live in a world where it no longer exists altogether. Small acts of generosity today can make a big difference tomorrow.”

PBTF accelerates research to better treat pediatric brain tumors

Since 1991, Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation (PBTF) has helped patients and families cope with a brain cancer diagnosis, offering financial, logistical, and emotional support. In addition, PBTF funds research that accelerates drug discovery. To that end, the foundation awarded more than $600,000 to Dana-Farber’s Mimi Bandopadhayay, MBBS, PhD, director of the PLGA Program, and Keith Ligon, MD, PhD, director of the Center for Patient Derived Models, both of whom are shedding new light on the mechanisms that drive pediatric brain tumors.

Bandopadhayay received two grants covering two promising studies. In the first, she is working with Ramen Beroukhim, MD, PhD, and Ligon to study cellular interactions within and around pediatric low-grade gliomas (pLGGs). This work, which leverages innovative technology to analyze cells in their native configuration, could help Bandopadhayay and her team identify new treatment vulnerabilities.

In the second, Bandopadhayay is partnering with Beroukhim and Ligon to explore how targeted inhibitors alter the tumor’s makeup over time, an undertaking that could help optimize targeted therapies to overcome resistance and reduce toxicity.

“Thank you, PBTF, for all you’ve done to help our research,” said Bandopadhayay. “This support is redoubling our efforts to find better, safer treatment options for our young patients.”

Ligon received the David Andrysiak Clinical Research Assistant Award to support and grow the Institute’s repository of tissue samples and research models. Cancer studies rely on such models to better understand tumor biology and to develop therapies. Such resources are critical to the patient-oriented, collaborative research he and Bandopadhayay perform.

“The Clinical Research Assistant Award is a tremendous boon for our program. Thanks to PBTF, we can support the people who make our research possible,” said Ligon.

“We are proud to support the pioneering work of Drs. Bandopadhayay, Beroukhim, and Ligon,” said PBTF’s National Director of Research Investments Amy Weinstein. “Studies like theirs give us reason to hope for a world without childhood brain tumors.”
Grant funds innovative research into nanoparticles

Michael and Melissa Wiggins were devastated when their 20-month-old son, Cannon, was diagnosed with stage IV neuroblastoma in 2014. After watching him endure 14 months of harsh treatments and difficult surgeries, the Wiggins were emboldened to do whatever they could to help find better, more tolerable treatments for children facing cancer. In 2015, they founded Cannonball Kids’ cancer foundation (CKc). In 2021, CKc partnered with Sarah’s Sporting Days, an event honoring the memory of Sarah Szafranski, and awarded $100,000 to fund the research of Dana-Farber’s Joselle Payne Straehla, MD, who is exploring the use of nanoparticles to improve targeted drugs for pediatric high-grade gliomas, a form of brain cancer.

“Most drugs cannot cross the blood-brain barrier, a specialized network of blood vessels that prevent toxins from reaching the brain,” said Straehla. “ Nanoparticles have great potential for pediatric cancers as a method of helping get drugs across the blood-brain barrier and into tumor cells. With this funding from Cannonball Kids’ cancer, I can leverage my background in materials engineering to accelerate the translation of these new drugs from lab to clinic.”

To date, Cannonball Kids’ cancer has awarded more than $3.09 million in funding to innovate pediatric cancer research and clinical studies across the country.

“In the fight against pediatric cancer, it’s imperative that we invest in talented physician-scientists like Dr. Straehla through our Young Investigator grants,” said Dana Nichols, CKc’s executive director. “We are proud to support her innovative approach to treating this devastating disease while increasing her patients’ quality of life.”

New tests aim to revolutionize Ewing sarcoma treatment

Treatment for Ewing sarcoma, an aggressive form of bone cancer in children, has remained largely unchanged for the last two decades, and patients with advanced or relapsed disease have a poor prognosis for survival. This is due partly to a lack of biologic markers to indicate if a patient is responding well or showing signs of relapse during treatment.

With a new $150,000 grant from the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation (PCRF), Brian Crompton, MD, is developing a new biologic assay that could revolutionize treatment.

“Because repetitive surgical biopsies are not an option for bone cancer, this assay utilizes a ‘liquid biopsy’—a test of the patient’s blood—to detect circulating tumor DNA (ctDNA), which is shed from the bone tumor into the bloodstream and serves as a measurable indicator of poor prognosis,” says Crompton, research co-director of the Solid Tumor Center at Dana-Farber. “The grant will provide funding to test patient blood samples throughout treatment and during off-therapy surveillance to determine how changes in ctDNA levels correlate with treatment response and relapse.”

Crompton is hopeful these studies will validate this assay to assess risk and guide treatment approaches to usher in a new era of precision medicine for this disease.

“PCRF exists to advance the science of visionary researchers in pediatric oncology. We are honored to support Dr. Crompton and other imaginative pathbreakers who are transforming pediatric cancer care and improving the lives of kids facing cancer,” said Jeri Wilson, executive director of PCRF.

Morin gift proves lifesaving for young patient with rare disease

When Dick and Pat Morin toured Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic several years ago, they unknowingly helped fuel Junne Kamihara, MD, PhD, on a path to a remarkable scientific breakthrough.

“We wanted to help these kids live a full life,” says Dick. They established the Morin Family Fund for Pediatric Cancer, a fund that would prove timely and life-changing for one patient in particular.

With support from the fund, Kamihara defined a novel therapeutic target for a young patient with Pacak-Zhuang syndrome, an exceedingly rare disease, and found that it could benefit from belzutifan, a drug that was awaiting approval for adults with kidney cancer.

“In just over two weeks, the patient’s tumor masses began to show signs of shrinking. Now more than two years into treatment, they’ve either vanished or shrunk to a fraction of their original size. Results of the study were published in the New England Journal of Medicine, underscoring the potential of molecular testing and targeted drugs to benefit children with a genetic risk of developing certain tumors and cancers. With a new gift of $250,000, the Morins offer hope to even more children and families facing cancer.

“The Morins’ support is a powerful example of how philanthropy allows us to be nimble and pursue scientific questions in a timely fashion,” says Kamihara. “We hope to emulate this success for more patients with rare diseases and cancer risk.”

“Philanthropy is crucial to funding research that may be out of the ordinary,” says Dick. “But for patients, research is far beyond ordinary—it can be lifesaving.”

10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission

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The Dana-Farber Campaign

Defy Cancer

11% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission
Mayer Foundation grants spur innovative cancer research

Since its founding in 1947, the Louis B. Mayer Foundation has supported cutting-edge medical research for the treatment of cancer, most recently through grants totaling $180,000 to four Dana-Farber researchers.

Pasi Jänne, MD, PhD, director of the Carole M. and Philip L. Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology, is using his grant to study tumor dormancy in non-small cell lung cancer, which can persist for years before giving rise to a drug-resistant population of cells that develop into a new tumor.

“These funds will help us identify new therapeutic targets that are specifically enriched in the dormant state. We are grateful for the Mayer Foundation’s generosity,” said Jänne, who also directs the Robert and Renée Belfer Center for Applied Cancer Science and the Chen-Huang Center for EGFR Mutant Lung Cancers.

With his grant, Richard Romee, MD, director of the Haploidentical Donor Transplantation Program, is developing a new therapy for aggressive HER2+ breast cancer that combines chimeric antigen receptors, synthetic molecules made in the lab, with natural killer cells, the shock troops of the immune system, to attack cancer cells. Kee Kiat Yeo, MD, and collaborators are developing an artificial intelligence algorithm to accurately distinguish between low- and high-grade pediatric gliomas, which may help speed up treatment of these brain tumors, and Megan Insco, MD, PhD, is determining how defective RNA quality control causes more aggressive melanoma.

“We are pleased to fund Dana-Farber’s groundbreaking research, and especially so as Louis B. Mayer was treated there,” said Judi Farkas, a member of the Louis B. Mayer Foundation board.

Blitzer renews support for melanoma research

When Michael Blitzer came to Dana-Farber, it quickly became his “port in the storm.” He met with Elizabeth Buchbinder, MD, who created a treatment plan tailored for him, giving him more time than his initial prognosis had indicated.

For several years, Blitzer has supported Buchbinder’s work through the Blitzer Family Fund for Melanoma Research, impressed both with her expertise and with the power that philanthropy has to accelerate development of new treatments.

“Giving to Dana-Farber yields results,” said Blitzer. “I’ve seen it firsthand. People who had no hope before now have hope because of doctors like Beth. She saved my life.”

With Blitzer’s new gift, Buchbinder is exploring the efficacy of vaccines for melanoma patients who have already received treatment with immune checkpoint inhibitors.

Research from Dana-Farber has shown that the timing of PD-1 inhibitors affects the production of memory T cells—a subset of immune cells that have been trained to recognize specific antigens and will trigger a stronger immune response after encountering the same antigen.

Buchbinder is leading a study of the COVID-19 vaccine to determine if patients with melanoma on anti-PD-1 therapy develop sufficient long-term vaccine memory and response.

“This study has major implications for cancer vaccine therapy, and could lead to further combination treatments for patients who have exhausted other options,” said Buchbinder.

“Gifts like Michael’s truly accelerate discovery and our ability to lay the groundwork for future studies across other types of cancer. I am grateful for his ongoing support.”

Grateful family establishes fund for lung cancer research

From the moment that Elva McLaughlin walked through the doors of Dana-Farber as a non-small cell lung cancer patient, she was impressed and comforted by the atmosphere—valets who greeted her in the parking garage, staff who helped her find her way, and the clinical care team with whom she soon met, led by Mark Awad, MD, PhD, clinical research director of the Carole M. and Philip L. Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology.

When Elva passed away in May 2019, her family took comfort in knowing that she had the best possible care. Seeking a way to give back, her daughter, Patricia Raffini, alongside her husband, George, and their two children, Charles and James, established the Elva J. and Clayton L. McLaughlin Fund for Lung Cancer Research, named in honor of Patricia’s parents.

“This gift is a way of thanking the whole of Dana-Farber for their very special way of working with patients, and for Dr. Awad in recognition of everything he did for my mother— he is a wonderful doctor, and one of the most compassionate, empathetic, and gracious people I have ever met,” said Patricia.

California couple gives in gratitude for daughter’s care

A California couple whose daughter was treated for sarcoma at Dana-Farber is so grateful for the care she received that they have made an anonymous $100,000 gift for sarcoma cancer research.

Their daughter, a mother of two who lives in Maine, came to the Institute for testing and consultation. Results showed a tumor on the vena cava, a large vein that returns oxygen-depleted blood to the heart.

The consultation team leaders were surgeon Chandrajit Raut, MD, MSc, and oncologist Priscilla Merriam, MD. After meeting with them both, their daughter called her parents and said, “This is where I’m going. Their vast experience with sarcoma, their support and confidence, and the fluidity of the collaboration between doctors was apparent from the minute I arrived at the Yawkey Center lobby.”

The surgery, performed in March 2020, was successful, and Merriam, the clinical director of the Institute’s Sarcoma Center, took over their daughter’s care. The donors have directed their gift to support their daughter’s pioneering sarcoma researcher because, they said, “What do we have without research? We, and our daughter, are so grateful to Dana-Farber. She never felt like a number. She always felt so well cared for both pre- and post-surgery.”

“I cannot thank these donors enough,” said Merriam. “It is a privilege to care for their daughter, and their gift will accelerate our team’s work to find new and more effective treatments for all sarcoma patients.”

A generous gift from an anonymous California couple will support sarcoma research by Priscilla Merriam, MD (above.)
I n his 12 years as a prostate cancer patient, Chuck Feeny has learned quite a lot about the disease and how to navigate it. He takes each day in stride, every setback, every bit of good news and bad. And he has experienced quite a bit of each.

In 2020, Feeny went to his local hospital on Cape Cod for a routine appointment, but this time, his oncologist advised him that he needed to be seen by an expert in advanced, treatment-resistant prostate cancer, someone who you go to when all else fails. He referred him to Atish Choudhury, MD, PhD, chief of the Arthur and Linda Gelb Center for Translational Research at Dana-Farber.

Devastating as this news was, Feeny was put somewhat at ease during his very first telehealth appointment with Choudhury. “He immediately impressed me,” Feeny said. “I’ve never even met him face-to-face—the compassion and chemistry was still there.”

What further impressed Feeny was Choudhury’s cutting-edge research. Inspired and eager to give back, Feeny and his wife, Jan, have pledged a generous gift of $500,000 to Choudhury’s efforts to develop novel therapeutic strategies for prostate cancer.

Using a biobank of more than 8,000 patient-derived specimens, Choudhury and his team are working to sequence DNA that circulates in the blood of patients with advanced prostate cancer, which will enable them to identify treatment responses much more quickly than previous methods. This is especially critical for patients whose cancer has become treatment-resistant, and allows for a more personalized treatment plan for each individual patient.

“Dr. Choudhury has provided me with such inspiration about the future,” said Feeny. “And the more we learned about him and his work, the more we knew we wanted to support the research.”

“Chuck and Jan’s support is enabling faster progress in prostate cancer research,” said Choudhury. “With this funding, we aim to learn more about which patients are most likely to respond to new treatment approaches, especially those who have exhausted all other options. We’re grateful to have received this investment in our work.”

On Aug. 21, more than 330 members of Dana-Farber’s team ran seven miles along the scenic Cape Cod coastline for the 50th running of the ASICS Falmouth Road Race. This dedicated group raised $885,500 while supporting Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s race toward the ultimate finish line: a world without cancer.

Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund have had a longstanding partnership with the Falmouth Road Race charity program over the years, raising over $9.5 million since 2003 to help Dana-Farber prevent, treat, and defy cancer. This partnership was brought to a new level in 2022 when Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund served as the inaugural, official Legacy Partner of the race’s charity program, the ASICS Falmouth Road Race’s Numbers for Nonprofits (NFNP) program.

This year was especially meaningful for Cara Donovan, a nine-year participant on Dana-Farber’s Falmouth team, who ran to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of her breast cancer diagnosis. Cara runs on Team Power with her brothers, Greg and Sean, who joined the team in summer 2012 to run and fundraise in her honor while she was in treatment. Cara was so grateful to be able to join them in 2013 and has been a proud member of team Dana-Farber ever since.

“My husband and I were both treated at Dana-Farber and feel so lucky that we are healthy today, thanks to the talent and skill of our care teams,” said Cara. “I hope that Dana-Farber will use the funds raised by runners like me to continue to advance cancer research and prioritize the extra benefits that make patients feel comfortable and supported during and after treatment. Dana-Farber is truly an amazing place—they continue to prioritize the whole patient by offering help with nutrition, stress management, exercise, and all other aspects of your life that are impacted by your diagnosis. I am so proud to have the privilege to run with Dana-Farber’s team to repay them for all they did for me.”

The Ripple Effect Display, a new giving opportunity located at both our Chestnut Hill and Foxborough locations, represents how your support of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund impacts the lives of current and future patients here and all over the world.
The Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge (DFMC) attracts runners from across the globe as they take on 26.2 miles in support of innovative basic research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute each year. The 2022 team included more than 500 dedicated individuals who ran the renowned route from Hopkinton to Boylston St. for the 126th Boston Marathon. The roster of runners included cancer patients and survivors, Dana-Farber employees, and friends and family participating in tribute to loved ones affected by cancer. While each teammate brought a unique perspective, all were united in their unwavering commitment to accelerate Dana-Farber’s pace to the ultimate finish line: a world without cancer.

This season’s DFMC team raised nearly $7 million for the Claudia Adams Barr Program in Innovative Basic Cancer Research. The program selects the brightest, most creative scientists and funds their most innovative ideas to propel basic research discoveries that transform cancer treatment—bolstering a key strategic priority of The Dana-Farber Campaign. Since the Marathon Challenge’s inception in 1990, one hundred percent of all DFMC fundraising efforts have supported the Claudia Adams Barr Program, with more than $115 million raised by the team to date.

“We see our fundraising dollars drive meaningful progress through the results of the program investigators,” said Scott Raven, a six-time DFMC runner who runs to honor his mother, who passed away from breast cancer. “If you get what you give in this world, then being an advocate for Dana-Farber is one of the easiest ‘gives’ of my life.”

This season was especially important to Scott as he proudly achieved $100,000 in lifetime fundraising for DFMC in this year’s race.

2022 TOP MILESTONES

YEARS OF PARTICIPATION
Dennis Moran – 30 Years

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL
Sarah Nixon – $250,000

SEASON FUNDRAISER
Kelly Machovec – $66,542
∞ Deceased

Many runners return year after year not only to support Dana-Farber’s mission, but also for the team camaraderie. Heather Daley and Heather Kispert Hagerty each celebrated their 25-year milestones with DFMC this season. Heather Daley’s commitment to Dana-Farber goes beyond running, as she has worked in the Novel Cell Therapy Lab at the Institute for more than 40 years. “I have seen firsthand that research leads to lifesaving treatments, and I plan to continue to run the marathon with Dana-Farber as long as my body is willing,” she said.

Heather Kispert Hagerty’s relationships extend beyond her teammates thanks to her Patient Partner Program participation. “I have been partnered with two patients,” Heather said. “I became very close to the first patient’s family, continuing to run in her memory since her passing. The second patient is the daughter of family friends who was diagnosed with cancer at age four. She recently graduated from college, with plans to be a pediatric oncology nurse. I continue to write their names on my legs each year—they are the wings that carry me.”

Alfonso Carrillo and Stephany Garza embarked on their first marathon together with DFMC in April. “Surreal does not even begin to describe our first marathon experience,” Alfonso said. “One of our family members was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia after we completed the marathon and Dana-Farber was there to help us navigate this difficult situation.” Stephany notes that their efforts have taken on new meaning now that they are feeling the blanket of support from Dana-Farber. “It’s hard to express the gratitude that we feel seeing the research and care directly benefitting our family. We have many more miles to run to continue to support Dana-Farber, and we encourage others to do the same.”

Alfonso Carrillo and Stephany Garza, running their first marathon for DFMC, are grateful to contribute to the research and care benefitting their family and others.
An Evening With Champions celebrates 50 years on the ice with $3 million raised

A framed photo sits on Paul Wylie’s desk showing a young girl, her mother, and the Olympic figure skating silver medalist at An Evening With Champions in 1991. Wylie displays the photo because that girl was a Dana-Farber cancer patient who did not survive. “I’ll never forget her,” he explained. “This is what being a part of An Evening With Champions really is, making it possible for kids with cancer to have a shot that she didn’t have.”

Founded in 1970 by national champion John Misha Petkevich when he was a Harvard University student, and still run by Harvard student volunteers, An Evening With Champions this year passed the $3 million mark in funds raised for the Jimmy Fund. The 50th skate was held in the spring after a two-year pandemic hiatus. “Three million dollars is really a huge honor and it’s also a lot of fun. It’s been a huge part of my life,” he said.

Since its start, the event has drawn a roster of luminaries, including 67 Olympic medalists such as Dorothy Hamill, Torvill and Dean, and Nathan Chen. Zhu, herself a skater, first participated in 2019. “It’s such a big deal because it’s so well known among skaters,” she said.

Wylie, who acted as this year’s emcee, concurs. “To be involved with it through its 50th year has been a huge honor and it’s also a lot of fun. It’s been a huge part of my life,” he said.

Friends of Dana-Farber gather to celebrate 46 years of fundraising

B ack in person for the first time since 2019, the Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute gathered on May 20 for An Evening with Friends, raising an incredible $376,000 in support of the Institute’s mission. The event took place outdoors at the Endicott Estate in Dedham, Mass., and was hosted by the Friends and renowned chef Jeremy Sewall of Row 34, and emceed by Susan Wornick, former news anchor for WCVB-TV in Boston. Sewall has helped raise more than $1.8 million for the Friends over his many years of involvement and dedication to Dana-Farber.

Dressed in garden party chic, guests were treated to an evening of food, music, and a live auction of items generously donated by supporters and sponsors. Speakers included Friends Co-Presidents Gabrielle Baron and Lucy Santos, patient Betsy Herald, and Dana-Farber Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer William Hahn, MD, PhD.

Founded in 1976, the Friends of Dana-Farber is a volunteer community of more than 1,200 members who have raised more than $47 million to fund cancer research and patient care programs, including an annual fellowship. The Friends also provide services that enhance Dana-Farber’s healing environment, including gift bags for patients undergoing treatment, a museum-quality contemporary art collection, non-denominational spiritual health programs, and programs to brighten the holidays for patients and families.

Arbella helps behind-the-scenes “heroes” at Dana-Farber shine

A rbella Insurance Group, longtime partner of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund, continued spreading hope throughout 2022 with a $200,000 gift to help Dana-Farber defy cancer for patients and families. As the company’s tagline, “Here. For Good,” says, Arbella is here for the Jimmy Fund—sponsoring fundraising events and highlighting how Dana-Farber staff of all levels make a difference through its Unsung Heroes of Dana-Farber social media campaign.

Thanks to Arbella, the Jimmy Fund community learned about stand-out Dana-Farber employees like Michael Rockwood, who has been an integral part of day-to-day operations at the Institute for the past 30 years. He delivers lab equipment, moves furniture, serves as a backup driver for Dana-Farber’s Mammosgraphy Van and Blum Family Resource Center Van, helping to expand access to preventative health care services in underserved communities, and more.

In addition to raising awareness through stories like these, Arbella is the Official Auto Insurance Partner of Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund. The company is a sponsor of the “Boston Marathon” Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai, Jimmy Fund Golf presented by Mohegan Sun, John Hancock Fenway Fantasy Day, and Jimmy Fund Scooper Bowl® presented by Valvoline Instant Oil Change. Its philanthropic arm, Arbella Insurance Foundation, is the presenting sponsor of the WEEI/NESN Jimmy Fund Radio-Telethon and runs the Strike Out Cancer program all baseball season, donating $50 for each strikeout a Red Sox pitcher throws.

In all of these ways, Arbella demonstrates that everyone can support The Dana-Farber Campaign and help us prevent, treat, and defy cancer.
For 34 years, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute supporters have come together for a day of inspiration and hope at the Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai, raising lifesaving funds to defy cancer for patients everywhere. The Jimmy Fund Walk is Dana-Farber’s signature event, raising more than $160 million since its inception. Historically, thousands of walkers have gathered on the world-famous Boston Marathon® course each fall.

For the past two years, the event shifted to a virtual format due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with supporters walking in their own communities. On October 2, the Jimmy Fund Walk celebrated a triumphant return to the Boston Marathon course, with more than 7,500 dedicated walkers participating in person or virtually, raising more than $8 million from generous donors. Walkers came from 44 states and 13 countries all over the world, to be part of this impactful day.

Walkers chose from four distances along the Boston Marathon course ranging from a 5K to the full 26.2-mile marathon. They were cheered on by more than 750 volunteers, who provided both logistical and moral support. For participants who preferred to remain walking in their own communities, virtual options were available. Hyundai proudly served as the presenting sponsor of the event, marking more than 20 years of unwavering philanthropic commitment, and Team Hyundai, made up of Hyundai Motor America employees and Eastern Region Hyundai Dealerships, raised an incredible $200,000.

Along the course, walkers stopped to refresh at 12 refueling stations with complimentary food and water provided by other generous sponsors. All routes ended at the Copley Square Finish Line Powered by Schneider Electric, for a celebration complete with food, music, and an inspirational speaking program.

Walkers partake in an annual tradition at the 5K start at Dana-Farber’s main campus, exchanging a wave with pediatric patients on the PMC Bridge.

Many walkers and teams, including Team Owen’s Army, were excited to return to the Boston Marathon route this year. Owen’s Army has taken part in the Walk since 2011, walking in honor of Owen Lynch, who passed away at age 3 from rhabdomyosarcoma.

“This annual Walk has become a treasured date on our calendar,” said Michael and Julie. “We value the opportunity to gather with family and friends to celebrate Owen, his joyful soul, and support the exemplary institution that provided Owen with unparalleled care.”

This year marked an incredible milestone for Owen’s Army, as the team surpassed $1 million in cumulative fundraising.

“This year marked an incredible milestone for Owen’s Army, as the team surpassed $1 million in cumulative fundraising. Owen’s Army has taken part in the Walk since 2011, walking in honor of Owen Lynch, who passed away at age 3 from rhabdomyosarcoma. The team is led by Owen’s parents, Michael and Julie Lynch, and includes Owen’s three siblings, Casey, Olivia, and Jack, and many extended family members and friends.

“The annual Walk has become a treasured date on our calendar,” said Michael and Julie. “We value the opportunity to gather with family and friends to celebrate Owen, his joyful soul, and support the exemplary institution that provided Owen with unparalleled care.”

This year marked an incredible milestone for Owen’s Army, as the team surpassed $1 million in cumulative fundraising.

“Instead of moving away from Owen—doing things to avoid thinking about our loss—I am moving for him, doing for him.” Casey, along with siblings Olivia and Jack, walk every year in Owen’s memory.

Like Owen’s Army, the entire Jimmy Fund Walk community plays a pivotal role in accelerating Dana-Farber’s mission to prevent, treat, and defy cancer.
Jimmy Fund Little League takes a swing at cancer

Every year, Jimmy Fund Little League presented by Franklin Sports offers more than 5,000 Little League baseball and softball players throughout New England the opportunity to extend their season while fundraising for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s cutting-edge cancer research and patient care. The program was founded in 1986 by former Little League State Director George Berardi and former Boston Red Sox players Rico Petrocelli and Mike Andrews, who was then Chairman of the Jimmy Fund. Now in its 37th season, Jimmy Fund Little League raised $270,000 in 2022, bringing the cumulative program total to more than $6 million.

Stepping up to the plate as this year’s top fundraising city is Everett, Mass., whose program raised $20,221 to support The Dana-Farber Campaign. Jimmy Fund Little League’s grassroots approach to fundraising teaches players that no contribution is too small, and everyone can make a positive impact if they work together.

George’s son John Berardi, Massachusetts Little League district administrator and program coordinator for Jimmy Fund Little League, thanked the 122 teams involved this season, saying, “These kids make a huge difference in the lives of so many patients and families, and it means a lot that they can have fun while doing it. We’re grateful for everyone involved and their commitment to Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund’s mission of creating a cancer-free future.”

Rally Against Cancer raises vital unrestricted funds

Since 2006, Rally Against Cancer has raised over $7 million for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund. As part of the important and longstanding relationship between the Boston Red Sox and the Jimmy Fund—the longest and most successful partnership between a team and a charity in all of professional sports—each year leading up to the start of baseball season, companies, schools, and community groups fundraise for the Jimmy Fund and are entered to win prizes including Red Sox player visits, tickets, and more.

This year, Rally Against Cancer raised more than $250,000 in unrestricted funds, which support a wide array of cancer research and patient care initiatives across the Institute. This is made possible by passionate community members such as Matthew Parsons, who led the charge for the Colchester, Conn., School District, which was the top school fundraiser with a total of $11,111.11 raised. Parsons has been raising funds for cancer research since 2015 when his wife was diagnosed with cancer. “No one fights and battles cancer alone. I rally for all the families and patients going through the process,” Parsons explains.

Another top fundraiser and first-year participant, AVEO Oncology, led by team captain Katie McCarthy, raised a total of $13,387—the most raised by any company. Representatives from both teams and other top fundraisers were invited to participate in a Fenway Park check presentation with the Red Sox.

John Hancock Fenway Fantasy Day is a home run

On a sunny day in June, with the Green Monster setting the scene, scores of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute patients and donors took the field at Fenway Park for this year’s John Hancock Fenway Fantasy Day, an opportunity for participants to live out their baseball dreams while helping the Jimmy Fund strike out cancer.

The June 25 event raised $200,000 and created lifelong memories for all in attendance.

The day was extra special for Team Russo, the top fundraising team, which has raised more than $2.1 million over nearly 20 years. It was their first year playing without Rob Russo Jr., who participated alongside his family for more than 15 years before passing away in 2020 from a gastrointestinal stromal tumor (GIST).

They were joined on field by Rob’s doctor, George Demetri, MD, director of the Sarcoma Center and the Quick Family Chair in Medical Oncology at Dana-Farber. “Thanks to Dr. Demetri and his team, Rob was able to raise a family of his own,” said Bob Russo, Rob’s father and captain of Team Russo. “We are forever grateful, and Fantasy Day, while also fun, is how we repay Dana-Farber.”

Current patients of all ages also took a break from treatment to bat and field throughout the day, thanks to the support of Jimmy Fund donors and to Arbella Insurance Group, who matched these efforts to help send nearly 50 patients to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime day.

Defying cancer in the sweetest way possible

Ice cream lovers were welcomed back in person to the 9th annual Jimmy Fund Scooper Bowl® presented by Valvoline Instant Oil Change® on June 18—on a brand-new location. The Kraft Family hosted the Jimmy Fund community in Foxborough, Mass., at their open-air shopping center, Patriot Place. More than $230,000 was raised to support Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund, which brings the total raised since 1983 to over $7.4 million.

Emcee Kevin Lemanowicz of Boston 25 News kicked off the event with Patriot Place Director of Marketing Diana Griffin, Jimmy Fund Vice President Suzanne Fountain, and 3-year-old Avery Paananen, a patient in Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic and a big ice cream fan. Together, they dished out the first scoops to officially begin the day of sweet treats, live entertainment, and fun. Attendees were invited to add their names, or the name of a loved one that they wanted to honor, to an ice cream mural which spelled out “Scoop to defy cancer”—representing that “We’re all Jimmy” and together we can defy cancer.

More than 8,000 people visited, while enjoying all-you-can-eat cool confections from partners Ben & Jerry’s®, Blue Bunny®, Breyers®, Buon per Te®, Edy’s®, The Farmer’s Cow, Gifford’s®, Haagen-Dazs®, HP Hood, Lactaid®, Ore’s® Frozen Desserts, and Shake Shack.” Every scoop benefitted The Dana-Farber Campaign’s effort to prevent, treat, and defy cancer.
Local communities raise grassroots support for the Jimmy Fund

Very few years, hundreds of grassroots supporters come up with creative ways to fundraise for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund. From music recitals to ball games, collection drives to celebrations of life, every dollar raised makes a world of difference for patients and families everywhere. Here are a few ways that local communities came together to raise vital funds to help Dana-Farber defy cancer.

Devo’s Derby Dash

The first annual Devo’s Derby Dash, hosted by The Devin Group, was held in May in Hanover, Mass. In a nod to the Kentucky Derby, guests were invited to dress in their race day best to enjoy a day of food, silent auction, and horseracing.

Inspired by his team of doctors, nurses, and caregivers, Chris Devin wanted to create a unique event that raised money to help support research and his Dana-Farber family while creating a fun atmosphere and an event people would want to come back to. The Derby Dash was established and his network of friends, family, and colleagues came together to raise $35,000 at the event and pushed the Devo Conquers Cancer Fund to over $135,000 since he was first diagnosed in 2020. All proceeds are supporting multiple myeloma research under the direction of Paul Richardson, MD, clinical program leader and director of clinical research within the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center at Dana-Farber.

“The power of philanthropy enables us to bring new treatments to our patients facing multiple myeloma, and especially means so much when it’s personal, as it is from Chris and his family,” said Dr. Richardson, who is also the R.J. Corman Professor of Medicine. “We have made significant strides in the battle against this disease over the last 20 years, but much more remains to be done and we are truly grateful to The Devin Group for helping drive that progress.”

Jimmy Fund Night at the Woo Sox and Polar Park

In support of this year’s WEEI/NESN Jimmy Fund Radio-Telethon presented by Arbella Insurance, the Worcester Red Sox—affectionately known as the “Woo Sox”—hosted Jimmy Fund Night at Polar Park in Worcester, Mass., on July 22.

Spectators enjoyed pre-game ceremonies featuring students and teachers from the All Saints Academy Jimmy Fund Club, who have participated in the Rally Against Cancer program for seven years and have raised $20,000 to date.

Max, a 12-year-old Ewing sarcoma patient, announced play ball, and Katie, an adult colorectal patient, threw out the first pitch. Chairman of the Jimmy Fund Larry Lucchino, who is also a Dana-Farber Trustee, chairman, and CEO of the Boston Red Sox, was interviewed live on NESN+ during the game. More than 130 Jimmy Fund supporters attended Jimmy Fund Night at Polar Park in support of Dana-Farber’s mission.

Recently, Showcase Cinemas introduced a virtual component, allowing moviegoers to donate their change when they purchased movie tickets or pre-ordered food and beverage items on the website for all theater locations. Guests were also invited to “Round up for Good” when they made in-theater purchases.

Kathy’s Light

Friends and loved ones of Kathy Ruhmel remember her as a “true light in our world,” with a warmth that inspired those around her. When she passed away in late 2021 from ovarian cancer, her husband, Joe Ruhmel, wanted to celebrate, honor, and remember Kathy and her legacy of love and kindness in a way that could help future ovarian cancer patients. And so, Joe created Kathy’s Light in her honor.

“As a gifted kindergarten teacher, Kathy was a helper by nature and very much wanted to help create a better future for those women that are stricken by this disease,” said Joe. In June, friends and family gathered at ‘The Parting Glass Irish pub in the Ruhlman’s hometown of Saratoga Springs, N.Y., to raise a pint to Kathy and raise money for ovarian cancer research at Dana-Farber under the direction of Kathy’s doctor, Susan Campos, MD, MPH. The event included drinks, food, live music, opportunity drawings, and most of all, an opportunity to reminisce about Kathy. Joe shared that the “gathering was a testament to Kathy and the love she shared with so many... a true light in our world.” The event raised more than $14,000 for ovarian cancer research.

Masa’s Concert for the Jimmy Fund

When his cousin Austin passed away from a rare cancer, 11-year-old pianist Masa Pires decided he wanted to use his musical gift to save others.

Masa is known as a rising star at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School, and with the help of family and teachers, performed a solo recital of classical pieces to support cancer research and care at Dana-Farber. He credits his cousin with inspiring him not only to raise money, but to raise money for the purpose of taking care of others.

“Austin always cared about others and cheered for others,” said Masa. “If Austin had survived his cancer, he would definitely pursue fundraising for cancer research to save more lives.”

Masa’s solo recital raised $2,500 for the Jimmy Fund in a touching evening that provided hope and healing for those who knew and loved Austin.
Faculty Research Fund supports Institute priorities

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eveny-five years ago, Dr. Sidney Farber had a radical vision: to make scientific discoveries and transform them into lifesaving treatments for people with cancer. And for three quarters of a century, thousands of ordinary people, foundations, corporations, and others have generously given to make that dream come true in ways our founder could only have imagined.

Part of the way we live out Farber’s legacy is through our Faculty Research Fund (FRF). Ten percent of all restricted gifts—those directed to a specific project or program—is allocated to the FRF, which makes strategic, Institute-wide investments in research relevant to many different types of cancer.

Since 2013, the FRF has directed more than $55.2 million to research priorities and projects that cut across disciplines and enable breakthroughs in basic science, immunotherapy, epigenetics, and more. In fiscal year 2022, Dana-Farber allocated more than $9.7 million in FRF funds to faculty recruitment and retention; strategic research centers including the Center for Immuno-Oncology; and signature programs such as the precision cancer medicine initiative, Profile.

The progress we make against cancer is possible because of our exceptional faculty members, whose passion and dedication fuel discoveries that improve the lives of cancer patients and their families every day. The Faculty Research Fund fills gaps in grant funding and helps bring about the advances that will lead to a world free of the fear and burden of cancer.

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or visit JimmyFund.org/opt-out

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute provides expert, compassionate, and equitable care to its patients and families and is known to groundbreaking cancer discoveries. Since its founding in 1948, the Jimmy Fund has raised millions of dollars through thousands of community efforts to advance Dana-Farber’s lifesaving mission.

As Dana-Farber we are committed to an inclusive community where human differences are valued and understood, and where all are welcome. We work every day to create an innovative, caring, and inclusive environment where each patient, family, and staff member feels valued and respected. Only through this focus on inclusion of thought and human experience can we foster discovery and care that are meaningful to the experience we serve.

Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund share patient stories which may include descriptions of racial or medical results. Dana-Farber provides personalized care for each patient based on their unique needs; their experiences and results will vary.

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The Faculty Research Fund supports the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s mission to make scientific discoveries and transform them into lifesaving treatments for people with cancer. Since its founding in 1948, the Jimmy Fund has raised millions of dollars through thousands of community efforts to advance Dana-Farber’s lifesaving mission.

The progress we make against cancer is possible because of our exceptional faculty members, whose passion and dedication fuel discoveries that improve the lives of cancer patients and their families every day. The Faculty Research Fund fills gaps in grant funding and helps bring about the advances that will lead to a world free of the fear and burden of cancer.

Impact is a newsletter of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund published by the Division of Philanthropy.

To learn more about The Imagine Display and one-of-a-kind naming options, visit ImagineDisplay.org

The Imagine Display
Imagine a Future without Cancer

Add your name, or that of a loved one, to The Imagine Display, made possible by the Luccomino Family. A contribution that supports Dana-Farber’s lifesaving mission and choose an element in the periodic table, a star in the sky, a Boston landmark, or much more.

The Jimmy Fund has raised millions of dollars through thousands of community efforts to advance Dana-Farber’s lifesaving mission since 1948.

The progress we make against cancer is possible because of our exceptional faculty members, whose passion and dedication fuel discoveries that improve the lives of cancer patients and their families every day. The Faculty Research Fund fills gaps in grant funding and helps bring about the advances that will lead to a world free of the fear and burden of cancer.

10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission.
On Sunday, September 18, Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic hosted its 29th annual Family Festival, a private event for patients and families at Boston’s Franklin Park Zoo. More than 3,000 guests, like clinic patient Kaho (above), enjoyed a day of hope and joy—meeting the animals and taking part in a variety of fun activities—thanks to funds generously raised by One Mission and Team ROAR of the Pan-Mass Challenge, and support from The Caroline Mae and Grace Headley Mollenhauer Fund, The Zachary Tiernan & Cameron Hawkins Fund, The Everything Great Fund, the Carmen Family, and the GBL Foundation.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

For more information on all Jimmy Fund and Dana-Farber events and programs, go to JimmyFund.org or Dana-Farber.org

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**NOVEMBER 29**

**GivingTuesday**

With your help, we have the power to defeat cancer. On this global day of generosity, your gift will be doubled thanks to a $50,000 matching challenge from Arbella Insurance Group. Visit JimmyFund.org/GivingTuesday or contact Ashley Armstrong at Annual_Giving@dfci.harvard.edu.

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**NOW–DECEMBER**

**Holiday Patient Assistance**

Help brighten the holidays for patients in financial need. Your contribution helps to put a holiday meal on the table or purchase gifts for loved ones. Visit JimmyFund.org/HolidayGiving or contact Hannah McCoy at Holiday_Assistance@dfci.harvard.edu.

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**NOW–DECEMBER**

**HomeGoods Holiday Promotion**

Make your holiday giving more festive with wrapping paper designed by Declan, a patient in Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic. HomeGoods will donate 50% of the proceeds from sales of this exclusive paper at participating stores nationwide. Visit HomeGoods.com to find a store near you, or contact Suzanne Crane at Suzanne_Crane@dfci.harvard.edu.

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**JANUARY 11**

**Palm Beach Breakfast with the Doctors**

Discuss the latest breakthroughs in revolutionary science and extraordinary care with Dana-Farber’s exceptional faculty at this compelling annual event, hosted by The Schleifer/Weinstein Family. Contact Debra Van De Warker at 531-833-2080 or Debra_Van_De_Warker@dfci.harvard.edu.

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**MARCH 6**

**Palm Beach Campaign: Leadership Celebration Dinner**

This elegant gathering at The Breakers, Palm Beach celebrates the support of our generous Palm Beach community for The Dana-Farber Campaign. By invitation only. Contact Karen Martin at 961-833-2080 or Karen_Martins@dfci.harvard.edu.

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**YEAR ROUND**

**Jimmy Fund Golf**

Presented by Mohegan Sun

Get on the right course to fight cancer®. Plan your own golf tournament or mini golf event, or play in an existing event, with Jimmy Fund Golf presented by Mohegan Sun. Visit JimmyFundGolf.org or contact Josh Belwitz at JimmyFund_Sun@dfci.harvard.edu.

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**YEAR ROUND**

**Run Any Race**

You can run any race to raise funds for Dana-Farber! Simply choose a race of any distance, anywhere, and register to run. Then register with Dana-Farber and set your own fundraising goal. Learn more at RunDanaFarber.org or contact Sarah LaClair at DFRunners@dfci.harvard.edu.