



THE Caring Hand

Family Support & Research

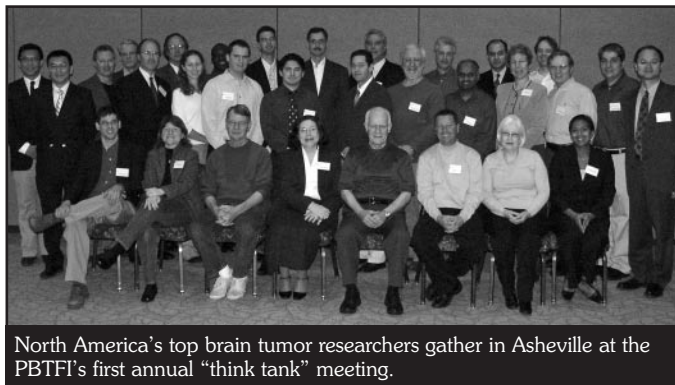
Researchers converge at first PBTFI “think tank”

Thirty of North America’s top pediatric brain tumor researchers recently took advantage of what they hope will be an annual meeting to discuss ways to accelerate the development of treatments and cures for the thousands of children suffering from brain tumors.

The March 23 meeting, organized by the PBTF, featured presentations on the evolving science of childhood brain cancer, as well as lively discussions of the biggest challenges to treating and curing the disease.

Collaborating on a cure

The invitees were all participants in the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Institute (PBTFI) program at Duke University and the pre-PBTFI programs at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), Childrens Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), and the



North America’s top brain tumor researchers gather in Asheville at the PBTFI’s first annual “think tank” meeting.

Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada. “It was basically a think tank, one where the latest data can be presented and stimulate the minds of everyone in the room,” said Dr. James Rutka of the Labatt Brain Tumour Centre at the Hospital for Sick Children.

For most participants—principal investigators, post-doctoral fellows, and their graduate students alike—such meetings are invaluable.

“All of these high-powered groups are going down research pathways that are leading to a convergence, but without this kind of gathering, we would never actually converge,” said Dr. Mitch Berger of UCSF. “This is going to allow us to develop treatments for this disease a lot sooner.”

Dr. Bob Seeger of CHLA, meanwhile, called the event “a terrific way to exchange ideas and promote collaboration.”

Dr. Darell Bigner, director of the PBTFI at Duke, was delighted with the turnout. “This is one of the largest groups of basic and translation pediatric neuro-oncology researchers ever assembled,” he said.

(continued on page 6)

PBTF’s active grants and programs in 2006

by Dianne Traynor

Thanks to your support of the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, scientists in the United States, Canada and Australia are making strides in the search for the cause and cure of childhood brain tumors. The PBTF funded a variety of promising research projects in 2006.

Last year the PBTF continued its fourth year of funding for the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Institute (PBTFI) at Duke University, and the first year of pre-Institute programs at the University of California, San Francisco, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, and the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada.

A key component of these Institute programs is research collaborations, which will accelerate discoveries of potential pediatric brain tumor targets for novel therapies. We’re delighted to report that the first PBTF Institute ‘research summit’ took place in March 2007 (see story to left).

In 2006, we also awarded six new basic and translational research grants for projects at Cornell University, Duke University Medical Center, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Stanford University, and Washington University School of Medicine.

With the help of our esteemed Scientific Advisory Board, we choose to fund research projects with the most potential to produce viable results. We’re confident that we’re funding the best and brightest scientists in the arena of pediatric brain tumor research. **□**

For a complete list of the 2006 active grants and programs, please turn to page 4.

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From the President's Desk



Historic research gathering

Over the past 24 years, the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation has made incredible strides in the understanding of the childhood brain tumors through our multimillion dollar research programs. On several occasions we've reported those milestones, and today we share one more giant step in that progression to a cure.

On March 23, we hosted our first PBTF Institute conference, which brought 30 researchers from our PBTF Institutes at Duke University, Childrens Hospital Los Angeles, Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto, Canada, and the University of California, San Francisco to the Foundation's home of Asheville, NC, to share the results of their combined and separate research work.

You'll read a more detailed account of this prestigious gathering elsewhere in this newsletter, but suffice it to say that some of the finest pediatric brain tumor research minds in the world came together to give reports on their work and to collaborate on their exceedingly promising findings.

Now well into our second decade of research funding of this methodology of investigation, with larger sums of funding for longer periods of time, we see that we are on the best possible course to find the answers we all so desperately seek. Nowhere is there more honorable and dedicated work going on to bring new hope and success to this effort to save the children. We are greatly pleased with the early outcomes of this next significant step in our quest to reach our goal of finding the cause and cure of childhood brain tumors.

On the patient family side of the PBTF, I'm happy to report a bold new approach to enhanced patient and family care. For many years, there has been a close collaboration between American and Japanese brain tumor researchers who have pooled their resources as well as the knowledge that has emerged from their cooperative and individual brain tumor research projects. This mutual effort has brought about a better understanding of issues surrounding the treatment of neuro-oncology patients in our respective countries.

To take that a step further to benefit pediatric patients and their families in the U.S. and Japan, the PBTF has provided a grant to the Children's Cancer Association of Japan to send a social worker from their association to our headquarters in Asheville. Here, she will learn our procedures and programs, and share with us the methodology the CCAJ uses in delivering patient and family services to their clients in Japan.

After working with us for a time, the CCAJ social worker will accompany the PBTF social worker and Dianne Traynor, our director of research funding and advocacy, to the International Conference of the Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers, where we host Education Day each year.

We see many benefits of learning to better serve the broadening pediatric patient population here and in Japan, and look forward to continuing to expand our efforts to help families.

Mike Traynor □

PBTF college scholarship fund continues to grow



PBTF scholar Darla addressed motorcycle industry executives in February.

The motorcycle industry put its money where its heart is over the Presidents' Day weekend, contributing more than \$43,000 to the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation's college scholarship fund.

Organized by *Cycle World* magazine and the PBTF, the fifth annual Joseph C. Parkhurst Education Fund Auction attracted bidders from across the country and abroad as part of the three-day Advanstar International Powersports Dealer Expo in Indianapolis.

It was a record year for the auction, according to PBTF President Mike Traynor. "The success of this year's event proves just how much the motorcycle industry really cares about children suffering from one of the most terrible diseases," he said.

All auction proceeds support college scholarships for students battling brain tumors, many of whom would be otherwise unable to afford a post-secondary education due to the overwhelming cost of medical treatment.

Helping convince convention attendees to take part in the charity auction was Darla, a 19-year-old brain-tumor survivor and recipient of a Parkhurst scholarship. "You people are my heroes. Without you, I would not be here," she told 200 industry executives at a private dinner on Feb. 17.

The program has granted 184 scholarships since its inception in 2002. Applications for the 2008-09 scholarship program will be available Sept. 1, and the entry deadline is March 1, 2008. For more information, contact Jennifer Causey at familysupport@pbtfus.org or 800-253-6530. □

Hope Springs Eternal

Determination helps student beat odds

Ask Gary Michael how having a brain tumor has affected his life and he responds, "What a big question. The answer is so big."

His words reflect the unexpected wisdom of a young person who, as an active and athletic 13-year-old, had to learn how to do everything over again—including eating—following his first surgery.

Now affected by double vision, Gary Michael's days of lacrosse and soccer, and bike and scooter rides are gone. He has also felt the pain of abandonment that often accompanies those stricken with a serious illness.

"When I told my 'best' friend that I had a brain tumor, I pretty much never heard from him again."

In spite of these hardships, Gary Michael found within himself a steely determination that is as inspiring as it is unwavering. Although he has missed 187 days of school since the eighth grade—the equivalent of an entire school year—he has consistently kept his grades in the A-B range. He has also mastered the all-too-rare ability to view the glass of life as half-full.

"Through my 16 surgeries I have remained positive thanks to family support and my therapist, Cori. I've had my share of bumps in the road, but I always seem to take back control and veer back onto the road of life." □



Gary Michael attends Bridgewater State College with the help of a PBTF scholarship.

Radiothon raises \$110,000 to help “Cure the Kids”

The inaugural Cure the Kids Radiothon was a stunning success, raising more than \$110,000 to benefit the PBTF. The entertaining and informative broadcast on Asheville, NC’s, 99.9 Kiss Country also brought thousands of radio listeners in touch with the lives and life experiences of families dealing with childhood brain tumors.

Both parents and children were featured on radio interviews during the 30-hour event, which was held Jan. 26 and 27 at the Asheville Mall. Joining them were brain tumor researchers, clinicians, Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy, business leaders, and hundreds of volunteers.

Contributions poured in from 10 states and a listener in Iraq, tuned in via the Internet.

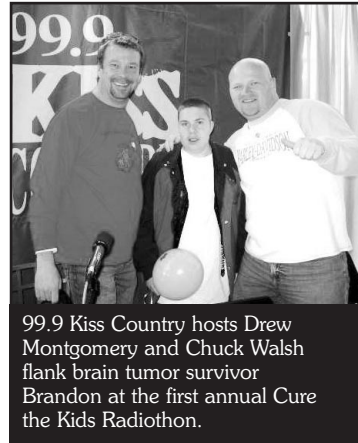
“The way the community and businesses came together to raise money to fight this most devastating of childhood diseases is a testament to the generosity and compassion of western North Carolinians,” said PBTF Development Director Aggie Alexander. “And reaching people on the other side of the world just made it that much more special.”

A rewarding experience

Drew Montgomery and Chuck Marsh, 99.9 Kiss Country morning show partners, spent two exciting days in front of the microphone asking listeners to donate. Montgomery called it “an unbelievable and amazing” event.

“The response from the Asheville community and beyond was incredible,” he said. “I’ve always loved working in radio, but hearing those phones ring and watching the tote-board numbers grow made this event one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had in my career.”

The total amount topped \$110,277, establishing a new source of funding for the PBTF. The success of the radiothon, coupled with expectations for a record-setting year in 2007 in the national Ride for Kids® events,



99.9 Kiss Country hosts Drew Montgomery and Chuck Walsh flank brain tumor survivor Brandon at the first annual Cure the Kids Radiothon.

ensures the PBTF will be able to continue to serve the patient community and advance its expansive research program.

Thank you to our sponsors

In addition to 99.9 Kiss Country, the radiothon was supported by premier sponsor Beverly-Hanks & Associates. Wachovia, Charter Communications, the Asheville Mall, Chick-Fil-A, Dixon-Hughes,

Biltmore Press, Lenny’s Sub Shop, Earth Fare, Progress Energy, Parsec Financial Management, the Tarrants Agency-Allstate, Bank of America and the Asheville Renaissance Hotel all provided financial support and employee volunteers. Janet Cloyde, director of operations for Charter Communications, led the volunteer radiothon committee. □



Nikki White’s legacy is the Nikki’s Hope Foundation, which has given the PBTF funding for two promising new research grants.

PBTF announces Nikki White Memorial Research Grant Awards

The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation has awarded two research grants in memory of Nikki White, who lost her battle with a brain tumor at age 9. The two grants, worth \$50,000 each, will support the work of pediatric brain tumor researchers at Cornell University and Washington State University (see related story, page 4).

Funds for the research grants were provided by the White family’s charity, the Nikki’s Hope Foundation. After Nikki’s death in 2000, her family vowed to continue the fight against childhood brain tumors by raising funds in her memory.

Now in its 10th year, the Nikki’s Hope Foundation sponsors a golf tournament and silent auction each fall, along with other events throughout the year. Their success is making the White family’s dream of fostering new cutting-edge pediatric brain tumor research a reality. The proceeds of the 2006 golf tournament and auction provided the funds for these promising new research studies.

“We are immensely grateful to Scott and Mary Jo White, the entire White family and all of their loyal volunteers for their courageous efforts to help eradicate the illness their daughter so bravely faced,” said Dianne Traynor, the PBTF’s director of research funding and advocacy. □

Nikki White Memorial Grants



Dr. Mark Souweidane, Cornell University

Cornell University

"Convection-enhanced delivery of recombinant immunotoxin 8H9-PE38 for the treatment of pediatric infiltrative brainstem tumors," Mark Souweidane, M.D.

A particular type of childhood brain tumor that occurs in the brain stem, the pontine glioma, is invariably fatal. Treatment is limited only to radiation therapy as a means of slowing tumor growth.

Reasons for this trouble include the ability to safely remove them, difficulty with therapeutic drugs gaining access to the involved tissue, side effects of treatment, and lack of specificity of anti-cancer drugs. Our study addresses these issues by combining two recent developments in cancer therapy: local infusion and recombinant immunotoxins.

Local infusion delivers the agent through small catheters placed directly into the tissue. This approach avoids toxicity to other organs and achieves high local drug concentrations.

Molecules that possess a high degree of specificity against tumor cells have been designed. Monoclonal antibodies (MAbs) are such molecules. They can be attached (conjugated) to a toxin that kills cells and is delivered locally to the brain.

Our study aims to define the smallest infusion dose of the conjugated molecule for the brain stem and determine the anti-tumor effect of the drug. Human brain tumor tissue will be implanted in a model system and treated locally with the agent.

The resulting data will help design and implement clinical studies for children with malignant brain stem tumors.



Dr. Joshua Rubin, Washington University

Washington University School of Medicine

"Modulation of intracranial brain tumor growth and therapeutic responses by cAMP," Joshua Rubin, M.D., Ph.D.

For those who care for children with brain tumors, the desperate need for better treatment is obvious. Currently, hope is placed on the power of genomics and biologically based therapies to advance pediatric brain tumor care. The promise of this approach, however, has not been realized and it is important to question whether there are missing elements in the approach.

We study the role that the developing brain plays in the genesis of pediatric brain tumors. We found the brain-derived growth factor CXCL12 regulates the growth state of tumor cells by controlling the level of a growth inhibitory molecule known as cyclic AMP (cAMP). In the growing brain, CXCL12 lowers cAMP levels, which permits the dysregulated growth of tumor cells. Consistent with this, genomic analyses alone may not predict the growth potential of a tumor and that cAMP elevating therapies may provide an improvement in brain tumor outcome.

Here, we propose to better define the role of cAMP and the activity of cAMP-elevating drugs in brain tumors. This will advance our understanding of brain tumor biology and bring cAMP-elevating drugs to clinical trial for brain tumors.

Basic Research Awards

(continued from page 1)



Dr. Sally Kornbluth, Duke University

Duke University Medical Center

"Elimination of pediatric brain tumors through activation of the apoptosome," Sally Kornbluth, Ph.D.

Pediatric brain tumors are the leading cause of cancer-related death in children. The clinical management of these cancers is complicated by radiotherapy-induced neurological impairment and the development of chemotherapeutic resistance. To circumvent these limitations, the ideal treatment would target the destruction of brain cancer cells while sparing the surrounding normal tissue.

In studying an innate program of cellular suicide, termed apoptosis, we recently discovered a potential mechanism for selectively inducing cell death in pediatric brain tumors. Normally, apoptosis is initiated when a cell, sensing irreversible damage, triggers a signaling pathway that ultimately leads to its death.

However, many cancers, including pediatric brain cancers, have developed mechanisms that block the initial steps of this pathway. Although pediatric brain cancer cells are resistant to initiation of the death program, we recently found that they are remarkably susceptible to apoptosis induced by a protein active further along the cell death pathway. Importantly, normal neural tissue is highly resistant to this same protein.

The differential sensitivity provides a potential method for inducing death in cancerous cells while leaving normal tissue unharmed. The current proposal is centered on exploiting this phenomenon in order to develop novel therapies for the treatment of pediatric brain cancers.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center



Dr. Eric Holland, Memorial Sloan-Kettering

"Multi-drug resistance to phenotype of the side population in medulloblastoma models," Eric Holland, M.D., Ph.D.

Medulloblastoma is the most common childhood brain tumor. Current therapies resulted in a 70 percent survival rate, but with severe side effects. Ongoing research into the origin and mechanisms of brain tumor development promised to provide additional treatment options with a lower degree of toxicity.

In normal brains a specific class of cells, called stem cells, have the capacity to renew and generate all the component of the brain. Interestingly, recent studies have demonstrated the presence of stem cells inside the tumors. Furthermore, while most tumor cells are killed during therapy, the stem cells persist and can repopulate the tumors once treatment has ended.

We now have evidence that this phenomenon results from the ability of stem cells to exclude drugs from their internal environment. Our laboratory has developed models of pediatric brain cancer in humans and we aim to elucidate the mechanism(s) leading to drug resistance in these tumors. We suspect that the presence of cancer stem cells within these tumors leads directly to their drug resistance.

The results of our studies should aid considerably in the development of new strategies to render cancer stem cells more responsive to treatment.

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

"Translation regulation by TXC2 in normal cerebellum and medulloblastoma," Anna Marie Kenney, Ph.D.

Medulloblastomas arise in young children in a part of the brain called the cerebellum. Immature neural cells in the cerebellum divide rapidly

soon after birth. These cells are proposed cells of origin for certain classes of medulloblastoma. Current treatments for medulloblastoma do not distinguish between tumor cells and normal cells in the still-developing brain, leaving patients with devastating, life-long side effects.

Understanding events controlling immature neural cells proliferation will yield insight into how they may become transformed into medulloblastoma. We can then develop treatments that specifically attack the tumor cells, by targeting molecules that are inappropriately active.

My research focuses on using neural cell cultures and model systems that develop medulloblastomas to identify ways that making new proteins inside cells promotes precursor proliferation in the cerebellum and in medulloblastomas. New proteins need to be made in order for cells to increase in size and divide. The molecules that generate new protein are essential for immature cerebellar neural cell division and survival, and their activity is increased in medulloblastoma.

In the future, we will screen protein synthesis-blocking drugs for their effectiveness against medulloblastomas.

Stanford University

"Identification of medulloblastoma tumor stem cells using self-renewal pathways," Irving Weissman, M.D., Ph.D., and Michael Edwards, M.D.

Medulloblastoma is the most common malignant pediatric brain tumor. Children with this form of cancer receive a combination of treatments, involving surgery, chemotherapy and radiation.

These treatments are associated with long-term risks of cognitive dysfunction and developmental abnormalities. The development of more efficient and specific therapies will depend on our understanding of the mechanisms involved with cancerous growth of brain cells.

Our hypothesis is that within medulloblastomas, only a small group of cancer stem cells retain the ability to initiate and replicate the tumor. These tumor cells are the most dangerous because only they are responsible for growth, metastasis and the recurrence of the cancer.

Our goal is to isolate cancer stem cells for medulloblastoma based on an approach of selecting tumor cells that demonstrate special biochemical activities indicative of growth. We have developed the means to measure the activity level of two biochemical pathways that are associated with cell self-renewal and that are known to be altered in medulloblastoma.

If our study links these biochemical activities to the growth of cancer stem cells in medulloblastoma, then new therapies can be developed to eliminate this cell population, thereby improving the outcome and survival of children affected by this disease.



Dr. Anna Marie Kenney, Memorial Sloan-Kettering



Dr. Irving Weissman (top) and Dr. Michael Edwards (below), Stanford University



Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Institute (PBTFI) Award

PBTFI at Duke University

Director: Darell Bigner, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 1: Establishment of Cell Lines, Xenografts and Monoclonal Antibodies, Darell Bigner, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 2: Serial Analysis of Gene Expression of Childhood Brain Tumors, Hai Yan, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 3: Altered Signal Transduction, Pathways and Small Molecule Inhibitors, Jeremy Rich, M.D.

Project 4: Gene and Radiotherapy, Michael Zalutsky, Ph.D.

Project 5: Definition of Non-AGT/DNA Mismatch Repair Deficiency Mechanisms of Resistance to Temozolomide, Henry Friedman, M.D.

Project 6: Fibro Growth Factor as a Therapy for Medulloblastoma, Rob Wechsler-Reya, Ph.D.

Project 7: Investigational New Drug and Reagent Preparation Core, Michael Granger, Ph.D.

Project 8: Tissue Bank Core, Roger McLendon, M.D.

Project 9: Pilot Project Core, Darell Bigner, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 10: Fibroblast Growth Factor as a Therapy for Medulloblastoma, Robert Wechsler-Reya, Ph.D.

Project 11: Investigation of Signal Transduction Pathways in Medulloblastoma, Marc G. Caron, Ph.D.



Dr. Darell Bigner, Duke University



Dr. Mitchel Berger, UCSF

Pre-PBTFI Awards

University of California at San Francisco Program on Pediatric Brain Tumor Biology and Therapeutics, Mitchel Berger, M.D., Principal Investigator

Project 1: Central Nervous System Development and Brain Stem Glioma Tumorigenesis, David Rowitch M.D., Ph.D., and Arturo Alvarez-Buylla, Ph.D.

Project 2: Pediatric Brain Tumor Xenograft Panel, David James, Ph.D.

Project 3: MYCN and Medulloblastoma Tumorigenesis, William Weiss, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 4: Genome-based Marker and Therapy Development in Pediatric Brain Tumors, Graeme Hodgson, Ph.D.

Project 5: Convection-enhanced and Intra-nasal Delivery of Therapeutic Agents, Natlin Gupta, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 6: Administrative and Statistical Core, Mitchel Berger, M.D.

Project 7: Tissue Bank and Neuropathology Core, Scott VandenBerg, M.D., Ph.D.

Childrens Hospital Los Angeles

Biology and Therapy of Pediatric Brain Tumors: Saving Lives, Saving Neurons, Robert Seeger, M.D., Principal Investigator

Project 1: Genomics, Robert Seeger, M.D.

Project 2: Microenvironment and Angiogenesis, Anat Erdreich-Epstein, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 3: Immunotherapy, Leonid Metelitsa, MD, Ph.D.

Project 4: Experimental Therapeutics, Patrick Reynolds, M.D. Ph.D.

Project 5: Molecular Imaging, Stefan Blumi, Ph.D.

Core 1: Pathology, tissue banking and cell lines, Floyd Giles, M.D.

Core 2: Pediatric Brain Tumor Core, Anat Erdreich-Epstein, M.D., Ph.D.

Core 3: Imaging, Mike Rosol, Ph.D.

Core 4: Biostatistics, Richard Sposto, Ph.D.



Dr. Robert Seeger, CHLA

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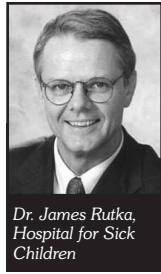
Pre-PBTFI Awards

(continued from previous page)

Hospital for Sick Children James Rutka, M.D., Ph.D., Principal Investigator

Project 1: Identification of Interstitial Germline Deletions in Children with Complex Clinical Syndromes that Include Medulloblastoma, Michael Taylor, M.D., Ph.D, Eric Bouffet, M.D.

Project 2: High Resolution Genotyping of a Large Cohort of Pediatric Medulloblastomas, Michael Taylor, M.D., Stephen Scherer, Ph.D., James Rutka, M.D., Ph.D.



Dr. James Rutka,
Hospital for Sick
Children

Project 3: Ultrahigh Resolution Genotyping of Highly Purified Medulloblastoma, Peter Dirks, M.D., Ph.D.

Project 4: Identification of Truncating Mutations in Pediatric Medulloblastoma, Peter Dirks, M.D., Ph.D., James Rutka, M.D., Ph.D., Michael Taylor, M.D., Ph.D.

2006 Peter Steck Memorial Research Award and Lecture

M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Young Investigators Award: Gurpreet S. Kapoor, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

Guest Lecture Award: Gordon Mills, M.D., Ph.D., M.D. Anderson Cancer Center

Research Grants Active in 2006

Basic Research

"The role of gangliosides on immunosuppression and tumourigenicity in brain tumours," David M. Ashley, Ph.D., and Denise A. Caruso, Ph.D., Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Melbourne, Australia

"A microfluidic system to investigate ERK proteins during medulloblastoma dispersal," Maribel Vazquez, Sc.D., the City College of the City University of New York

In memoriam

Survivors' stories fill us with hope, but the fact remains that brain tumors are the number one cause of cancer death in children. The PBTFI is working hard to change that reality, but sadly, kids are still dying. The following young people lost their battle over the past year.

Tyler Bookman

July 10, 1995 – March 13, 2007

Tara Clarke

d. August 18, 2006

Allana Creager

Oct. 20, 1997 – Dec. 2, 2006

Noah Davis

June 25, 1999 – March 19, 2006

Andan Dea

Sept. 25, 2002 – July 1, 2006

Dan Haugaard

d. March 3, 2006

Kyle Kerpan

Oct. 10, 1995 – Nov. 17, 2006

Carmela Taibi

Nov. 24, 1993 – Oct. 15, 2006

Luke Taylor Wood

July 7, 2003 – June 20, 2006

Parents, if you would like us to memorialize your child in the Caring Hand, please contact Jennifer Causey at familysupport@pbtfus.org or 800-253-6530. ■

PBTFI "think tank"

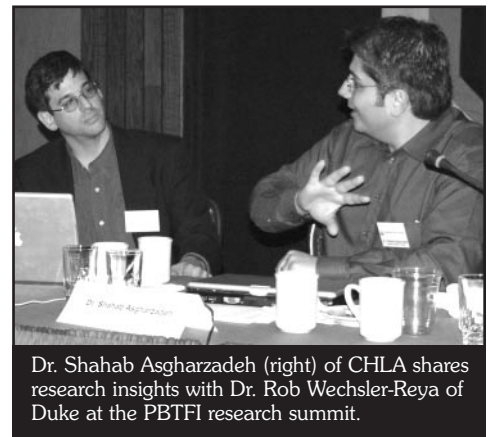
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Sharing breakthroughs

Among the discoveries presented at the one-day conference was the use of an emerging science platform that makes it possible to convince some tumor cells to "commit suicide" simply by killing neighboring cells; new strategies for delivering drugs directly to tumor cells; and new molecular discoveries about a common childhood brain tumor that may provide targets for treatments in the future.

Presented also were the latest discoveries relating to brain tumor stem cells found to be resistant to chemotherapy and radiation, and the ability to lower the resistance of these tumor stem cells to treatments used in children and adults. New models for pediatric brain tumors were also discussed.

The PBTFI researchers are dedicated to learning about the molecular make up of these tumors and to finding new targets for novel therapies. At the same time, they weighed the importance of developing new therapies and drugs against the challenges of securing funding for clinical trials and drug development.



Dr. Shahab Asgharzadeh (right) of CHLA shares research insights with Dr. Rob Wechsler-Reya of Duke at the PBTFI research summit.

Dear Mike and Dianne:

A heartfelt and extremely appreciative thanks for your organizing and hosting the productive meeting in Ashville last week. It really was amazing to consider the breadth of talented people in that conference room, and to consider that talent in the context of the progress that has been made over the past 20+ years in achieving improved outcomes for children with brain tumors.

Your sustained and dedicated efforts have been of fundamental importance to the progress that has been experienced in the field of pediatric neuro-oncology, and I am very grateful for having had the opportunity of sharing an association and relationship with you during this time of progress.

Sincerely,

C. David James, Ph.D.

University of California, San Francisco
Co-Editor-in-Chief, Journal of
Neuro-Oncology

Catalyst for change

Dianne Traynor, PBTFI director of research funding and advocacy, urged the researchers to "not let this issue of funding drive the science. We must think outside the traditional box and seek new creative funding sources, which the Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation is actively engaged in doing."

The PBTFI is extremely pleased with the level of intellectual exchange made possible by bringing the group together, and plans for a regular series of conferences are already underway, Traynor said.

"It's clear that there's a need to bring researchers together to share the latest research findings and advances that relate to pediatric brain tumors," she said. "This type of interchange between researchers will enable the fast forwarding of research discoveries that may change the devastation of the disease of pediatric brain tumors.

"The PBTFI can be a catalyst by funding pediatric brain tumor researchers and collaborative research efforts." ■

"Adoptive immunotherapy for medulloblastoma with ErbB2-specific T cells," Stephen Gottschalk, M.D., Baylor University

"Identification of genes involved in medulloblastoma," Martine F. Roussel, Ph.D., St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Epidemiology

Central Brain Tumor Registry of the United States

2006 Awards & Programs

Society of Neuro-Oncology: Platinum Sponsor, SNO Foundation

SNO Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation Basic Research Award of Excellence: Dr. Rob Wechsler-Reya

Brain Tumor Epidemiology Consortium Meetings

International Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Symposium, Nara, Japan

International Symposium on Brain Tumor Research and Therapy, Napa, Calif.

Association of Pediatric Oncology Social Workers: Sponsor, Annual Meeting Education Day

PBTF Scholarship Awards

78 active college scholarships, supported by the Cycle World Joseph C. Parkhurst Education Fund

Family Support Program

Sponsor, Lutheran General Hospital "Pedes in the Weeds" Picnic

Informed Parent and Survivor Internet Conference: Risk Factors and Pediatric Brain Tumors, presented by Dr. Patricia A. Buffler

South Florida kicks off 2007 Ride for Kids® season

The 2007 Ride for Kids® season got off to a great start in south Florida on Feb. 18, when hundreds of motorcyclists raised \$75,296 for the PBTF's medical research and family support programs.

The cold, wet and windy morning didn't dampen the spirits of the 375 riders, many of whom were accompanied by young brain tumor patients as they left Sawgrass Mills in Sunrise with a police escort. After touring the horse ranches of rural Broward County, they disembarked at Vista View Park in Davie for a light lunch and the inspirational Celebration of Life program.

Four Ride for Kids® "stars" were on hand to tell the crowd about their lives and to offer thanks for the fundraisers' hard work. They were joined on stage by Barbara, whose granddaughter Sara died of a brain tumor. "Thank you for what you are doing," she said. "You all have a little angel in heaven now watching you."



Four-year-old survivor Brandon jumps for joy at the South Florida Ride for Kids® in February.

Ride for Kids 2007 Schedule



Brain tumor survivor Anastacia, 4, smiles broadly from her sidecar before the Albuquerque Ride for Kids® in April.

Ride for Kids® is more than a motorcycle ride—it's also a family support program. It gives children and their families a chance to forget about brain tumors for a few hours and just have fun. If you like, you'll be able to participate in the ride as a passenger, or tell the world about your family's experiences during the uplifting Celebration of Life program. For more information for patient families, please call 800-253-6530 or e-mail familysupport@pbtfus.org. Event details are available at rideforkids.org.

February

South FloridaFeb. 18

April

AlbuquerqueApril 22
HoustonApril 29

May

Los AngelesMay 6
Triangle AreaMay 6

June

AtlantaJune 3
RichmondJune 3
ClevelandJune 10
ColoradoJune 10
So. CaliforniaJune 10
KnoxvilleJune 23
San FranciscoJune 24

July

South BendJuly 8
ChicagolandJuly 15
UticaJuly 15
Kansas CityJuly 22
MinnesotaJuly 22
Marysville, OHJuly 28

August

Hudson ValleyAug. 5
WisconsinAug. 5
PittsburghAug. 12
Salt Lake CityAug. 18
New EnglandAug. 19
MichiganAug. 26
AshevilleAug. 26

September

Puget SoundSept. 9
BirminghamSept. 16
PhiladelphiaSept. 16
St. LouisSept. 16
Baltimore/
WashingtonSept. 23
Las VegasSept. 30

October

Dallas/Fort WorthOct. 7
SacramentoOct. 7
PhoenixOct. 14
LouisianaOct. 21
San DiegoOct. 21

November

SarasotaNov. 4

TRIBUTES IN HONOR

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Matching gifts boost your giving power

Each year, millions of dollars in charitable donations go unclaimed because employees don't ask if their companies match gifts. Not sure if your employer has a matching gift program? Just ask your human resources department—that's what workers at the following companies did last year. Their corporate generosity resulted in an additional \$114,568 in donations to the PBTF in 2006. □

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Volunteers needed for research study

You and your child may be eligible to participate in an exciting new study to help survivors of childhood brain tumors. The purpose of the study is to learn more about the effect radiation therapy has on the way children and teenagers think and learn; learn how a child's quality of life may be affected by a brain tumor; and evaluate how quality of life, school performance and family life may be affected by the experimental drug Donepezil.

Wake Forest University School of Medicine is calling for volunteers who meet the following qualifications:

- Ages 8-17
- Received radiation therapy to the brain for a primary brain tumor
- Completed all therapy at least one year ago

Participants in the study will take a series of pencil and paper tests, have measurements of blood flow in the brain (safe, easy and painless), and possibly take Donepezil for 30 weeks to see if it is useful to them.

The evaluations associated with this study will be conducted by psychologists, nurse practitioners and pediatric oncologists at Wake Forest University School of Medicine. For more information, please call 336-716-4085.

About the PBTF

The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that seeks to find the cause and cure of childhood brain tumors. We fund medical research, increase public awareness of the disease, promote early detection and treatment, and offer family support programs.

Federal employees may make donations to the PBTF using CFC #10190. Charity Navigator, the leading guide to charitable giving, has awarded the PBTF its highest possible rating of four stars.



THE Caring Hand

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