



THE Helping Hand

Ride for Kids®

Start your engines: Ride for Kids® season launches in South Florida

The 2007 Ride for Kids® season got off to a great start in southern 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 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 of 375 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."

The third annual event raised a total of \$75,296. The top individual fundraisers were Rita and Rick Case of Davie, who brought \$7,200. The top club, Florida Sports Cycle of Stuart, contributed \$20,135, while the customers of Rick Case Honda made it the top dealership with \$20,529 in donations.

The grand prize, a brand-new Honda motorcycle, went to Adam Cooperman of Hollywood, Fla., attending his first Ride for Kids® in memory of the son he lost to a brain tumor. □



Four-year-old survivor Brandon jumps with joy at the third annual South Florida Ride for Kids®.

PBTF's active grants and programs in 2006

by Dianne Traynor

Thanks to the motorcycling community's generous 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.

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 on page 6).

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



Courageous riders for kids

More than once over the past 24 years I've awoken on a Ride for Kids® morning to booming thunder and pouring rain. In the early years those threatening sounds would make my heart sink as I thought of the task force leaders and their legion of volunteers. They had invested hundreds of hours into logistics preparation and had traveled hundreds of miles to make chapter, club and dealer visits to get the word out to the uninitiated and remind the faithful that we needed their help. My concern then was that no one would show up, making the volunteers' work for naught.

However, you've taught me a lesson over the years: Despite the fact that you have to crawl out of bed and pull on your rain gear, you will fire up your mighty steed and ride into the cold rain with your pockets and saddlebags filled with the donations that you've worked all year to raise. You bring hope to the brave parents who pray that our research will bring the answer to save their child's life.

In Chicago one year, it was 5 a.m. at the start site, with high winds, pouring rain, and a disco-look as furious flashes of lightning danced all around us. Concerned that someone would get hurt, I quickly secured the approval of a nearby hotel to use their meeting area to get the volunteers out of danger. I proudly raced back to announce the new arrangements. Even though it wasn't light out yet, and the noise of the storm blotted out what they were saying, I quickly got the message that the volunteers thought I was a brick short of a load. Who ever heard of cowering to the weather at a Ride for Kids® event?! Despite the fact that it took a few hefty gentlemen to hang onto the smaller tents so they didn't head for Kalamazoo, we did business as usual and ultimately had a very successful ride that day.

Our Ride for Kids® events have followed hurricanes in Florida, Louisiana and New York, mudslides and fires in California, snow in Washington, and tornadoes in Kansas, and we've absorbed enough rain to float a battleship in numerous cities over the years. The 2001 Columbia, Md., event was held just four days after the 9/11 attacks, within 40 miles of the Pentagon. At that ride, the local county executive came on stage as shaken as the rest of us, but he said something I'll never forget: "After all that has happened so close to our homes this week, I see by this huge crowd that you better not get between a motorcyclist and these children here today. You riders will not let anything get in the way of saving their lives!"

He was so right. We've had 24 consecutive years of growth in the donations raised and the research conducted, no matter what the weather or economy has been. That has only happened because motorcyclists are among the hardest-working, bravest and most caring people in the world.

I look forward to seeing you at a Ride for Kids® this year, with or without the rain gear!

Mike Traynor
Motorcyclist 

Hope Springs Eternal

Brain tumor can't clip student's wings

“But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams,
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream,
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied,
so he opens his throat to sing.”

When the celebrated poet Maya Angelou wrote these words, she did not know just how closely they would resonate with Katie. Just after her 15th birthday, the Sacramento teen was diagnosed with an orange-sized brain tumor in her right occipital-parietal lobe.


"Maya Angelou's description relates closely to my life," Katie says. "The image of a bird's wings being clipped symbolizes my brain tumor and the major impact it has had on my life."

But Katie wasn't content to give up. Mustering her courage, she embraced a positive outlook after her diagnosis. "I refused to imagine anything less than an excellent, fast recovery. I am lucky that my wings were clipped, not removed."

Although Katie knows that her short-term memory has caused some diminished capacity, she plays to her strengths to offset any obstacles she encounters. "I use passion to maintain maximum motivation, and I use college as a means of looking toward a bright and long future."

Katie's positive outlook appears to be paying off. And it is here that she sees another parallel to Angelou's poem.

"The bird compensated for the loss of flight by using song. I am fortunate not to have had further treatment in the last two years, which enabled me to learn how to 'sing,' and I began to work towards making my dreams a reality," she says.

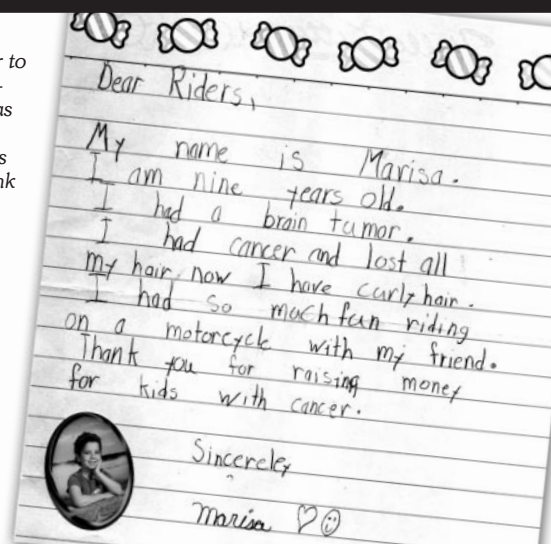
"The aftermath of my surgery will continue to test my strength, but I know that I will continue to find blessings when I am not looking for them. In every obstacle I encounter, there will always be a helping hand, or a new personal discovery waiting around the corner." 



Katie attends Sacramento City College with the help of a PBTF scholarship.

Mailbox

It only seems fair to share this 9-year-old's letter with as many Ride for Kids® participants as possible. Thank you, Marisa!



Nothing keeps this L.A. rider down

by Sam Aoki

A friend of mine named Erik Orre, who works at American Honda, asked me back in 1998 if I wanted to come out for an event called Ride for Kids®.

When I told him that I didn't have a Honda, he said that I could ride any kind of motorcycle. But I still hesitated and decided not to go. A year later, he invited me again. This time I agreed and rode my '77 Yamaha RD400.

After the ride, I realized what a great charity event it is. The following year, I asked my customers, friends and anyone else who might be interested to come out and join us in this ride for charity. We got together about 25 riders, including a few people who rode YSR50 and street racing GP 80cc bikes. The kids loved seeing the mini-bikes on the street!

In November 2003, I had a horrible motorcycle accident, seriously injuring my spinal cord and paralyzing myself from the neck down for about a month. I was lucky that my hand, leg and other areas of my body started to function again. But I was weak and couldn't get up by myself until January 2004.

As I continued down the road to recovery, I set a personal goal to participate in the Ride for Kids® again with my friends. The event



Sam Aoki of Korp Cycle in Torrance, Calif., hasn't missed a Los Angeles Ride for Kids® yet, despite a devastating motorcycle accident.

was coming up in May and I knew this was a big challenge. I told myself that I would try my best and that I wouldn't give up.

In March, I started my training and rode my Honda XR100 at Gorman and El Mirage. But my body was stiff, as if I had a heavy cast on my arm and leg.

The biggest problem I had was that I couldn't use my front brake; I could only use the rear brake to stop. You know, I had been working on dirt-tracking at Ken Maley's Ranch for a long, long time, and I'm sure my knowledge of dirt-racing techniques

helped me get back on a motorcycle a lot sooner. Thanks, Maley!

Now I had only two more months left until the ride. I had to train harder by trying to use the front brake. The reflexes in my fingers were still slow and weak. But finally, I was able to grab the front brake lever, slowly but with some firmness. I only had a month to go.

Next, I had to start practicing on a street bike. To be honest with you, I was still a little scared. It was something of a miracle but I somehow managed to make it to the Los Angeles ride in May. It seemed almost impossible, so it was like a dream come true. Thank God and everyone who helped me find a way to get back on a motorcycle! Without their support, I would not be riding again. □

Scholarship fund growth gives new hope to survivors

The motorcycle industry put its money where its heart is over the Presidents' Day weekend, contributing more than \$43,000 to the PBTF'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 massive 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 brain tumors, one of the most terrible childhood diseases," he said.

All auction proceeds support college scholarships for students battling brain tumors, many of whom would otherwise be unable to afford a post-secondary education due to the overwhelming cost of medical treatment. The program has granted 184 scholarships since its inception in 2002.

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. □

Correction

The Winter 2006 edition of the *Helping Hand* included an incorrect entry in the list of Top Clubs and Chapters for the 2006 Ride for Kids®. The top Harley-Davidson Owners Group (HOG) chapter, the Erie Canal Chapter, is actually based in Utica, N.Y. The editors apologize for the error.

PBTF to honor Fortney with college scholarship

The motorcycling community lost a giant this past January with the passing of Marcel Fortney, a longtime supporter of the Ride for Kids® program. As the United States representative of AGV Helmets, Fortney had provided dozens of helmets as drawing prizes for every Ride for Kids® event since 2005.

The PBTF plans to honor Fortney's memory by giving a college scholarship in his name. Details of the award will be announced when the scholarship recipients are named later this year.

"Marcel was more than a friend to those around him – he was one of those rare individuals who went out of his way to help others without being asked," said Mike Traynor, PBTF president. "I met with him in California shortly before he died and he was excited about a new motorcycle event he was planning. One of his goals was to use it to raise funds to help the PBTF in its work with pediatric brain tumor patients. He will be long remembered for his passion to help the kids." □

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.

2006 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.



Dr. Eric Holland, Memorial Sloan-Kettering

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

"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.

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.



Dr. Anna Marie Kenney, Memorial Sloan-Kettering



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



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.

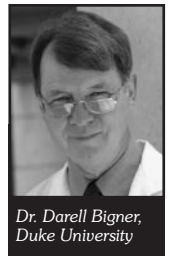
Project 7: Investigational New Drug and Reagent Preparation Core, Michael Granger, Ph.D.

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

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.

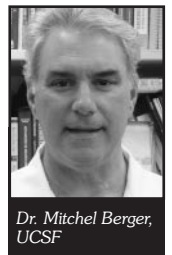
Project 3: MYCN and Medulloblastoma Tumorigenesis, William Weiss, M.D., Ph.D.

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.



Dr. Mitchel Berger, UCSF



Dr. Robert Seeger, CHLA

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.

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.

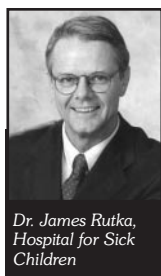
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Pre-PBTFI Awards

(continued from page 5)

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.



Dr. James Rutka,
Hospital for Sick
Children

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 tumorigenicity 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

"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 □

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 PBTfI, 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. Ride for Kids® funding and Honda Rider's Club of America sponsorship helped make this milestone event possible.

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 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.

Sharing breakthroughs

Among the discoveries presented at the one-day conference were the use of an emerging science platform that makes it possible to convince some tumor cells to



The PBTfI recently convened the world's top brain tumor researchers with the help of funds raised by the Ride for Kids® program.

"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.

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." □

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. ■



Strength in numbers: Your employer's matching gift helps the PBTF to fund more research and family support programs.

Administaff	Dominion	Illinois Tool Works	Nintendo of America	St. Paul Companies
Allegro MicroSystems	Duke Energy	Johnson & Johnson	Nissan North America	Starbucks
American Honda Motor Co.	Energen	JP Morgan Chase	NSTAR Electric & Gas	Sun Microsystems
Assurant Health	Equifax	Kimberly-Clark	Omron	Symantec
Bank of America	First Data Western Union	Kraft Foods	PepsiCo	Tomkins
BD Matching Gift Program	First Horizon National	Kvaerner Oilfield Products	Pfizer	TYCO
BellSouth	GE	Logitech	Pitney Bowes	UBS
Black & Decker	Geico	Lyondell	Prudential	United Way of the Piedmont
BP	Givaudan	Mattel	Quest Diagnostics	UST
ChoicePoint	Goodrich	May Department Stores	Radio Shack	Verizon IDS
Chubb & Son	Grainger	Microsoft	Reuters America	Wachovia
Citigroup	Home Depot	Moretrench	Sabre Holdings	Washington Mutual
Coach	Honda of America Manufacturing	Motorola	SAP	Zurich
Computer Associates	HSBC	Newfield Exploration	Scitor	

Radiothon raises \$110,000

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."

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



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

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We have made every effort to provide a complete and accurate list of all gifts made between Jan. 1, 2006, and Dec. 31, 2006. If you have a correction, please contact Martha Brazell at 800-253-6530 or mbrazell@pbtfus.org.

Once again, thank you for your generosity in support of our mission. With your help, we will cure the kids!

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Ride for Kids® 2007 Schedule

The 2007 Ride for Kids® season begins and ends in Florida. The first of 37 rides, South Florida's, left from Sunrise on Feb. 18 (see page 1), while Sarasota, formerly known as the Gulf Coast Florida Ride, caps the year on Nov. 4.

Other changes to the schedule include some new starting locations. The Phoenix event now begins at Desert Ridge Junior High School in Mesa, and North Carolina's Triangle Area ride starts at the Beaver Recreation Area in the Jordan Lake State Recreation Area between Pittsboro and Raleigh.

Once again, all but two events are road rides, the exceptions being the dual sport ride in San Bernardino, Calif., and the road ride/dual sport ride in Ann Arbor, Mich. And as always, all rides benefit the PBTF's medical research and family support programs. Free event kits and more details are available at rideforkids.org. All riders on all brands of bike are welcome to join. A cure for childhood brain cancer is closer than ever, and with your help, we'll find it soon. ■



Brain tumor survivor Jonathan, 5, and his mom had a great time at the South Florida Ride for Kids® in February.

February

South Florida (Sunrise)Feb. 18

April

Albuquerque, NMApril 22

Houston, TXApril 29

May

Los Angeles, CAMay 6

Triangle Area, NCMay 6

June

Atlanta, GAJune 3

Richmond, VAJune 3

Cleveland, OHJune 10

Colorado (Golden)June 10

Southern California

(San Bernardino)*June 10

Knoxville, TNJune 23

San FranciscoJune 24

July

Indiana (South Bend)July 8

Chicagoland

(South Barrington), ILJuly 15

Utica, NYJuly 15

Kansas City (Overland Park), KS .. July 22

Minnesota (White Bear Lake) ... July 22

Marysville, OHJuly 28

August

Hudson Valley

(Central Valley), NYAug. 5

Wisconsin (Middleton)Aug. 5

Pittsburgh, PAAug. 12

Salt Lake City, UTAug. 18

New England

(North Oxford, MA)Aug. 19

Asheville, NCAug. 26

Ann Arbor, MI*Aug. 26

September

Puget Sound (Carnation, WA) .. Sept. 9

Birmingham, ALSept. 16

Philadelphia, PASept. 16

St. Louis, MOSept. 16

Baltimore/Washington, DC Sept. 23

Las Vegas, NVSept. 30

October

Dallas/Fort Worth, TXOct. 7

Sacramento, CAOct. 7

Phoenix, AZOct. 14

Louisiana (Lafayette)Oct. 21

San Diego, CAOct. 21

November

Sarasota, FLNov. 4

*DUAL SPORT RIDE

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 Helping Hand

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