



WHITTEMORE PETERSON
INSTITUTE FOR NEURO-IMMUNE DISEASE

Wings of Hope

Fall 2011

Center for Translational Medicine



WPI was blessed with many generous gifts this year and we would like to formally thank some companies that gave generously in 2011. The NV Energy Foundation announced its approval of a grant request from WPI. WPI was granted a \$100,000 commitment to help support the comprehensive medical research program.

WPI's new Center for Translational Medicine is now open, accepting new patients and translating research into clinical care. Occupying more than 10,000 square feet, the state-of-the-art Center includes twelve patient exam rooms, doctor's offices, a procedure room, nurse's stations, and infusion room. To contact a representative at the Center for Translational Medicine, or to make an appointment, please call (775)682-8500.



Through Vivint and Chase Community Giving's online efforts to give back to communities around the world we were the recipients of \$165,000 in donations. This was possible due to the hard work of so many WPI supporters.



The Fraternal Order of Eagles, Comstock Aerie #523, kindly presented two \$5,000 grants to WPI. One grant was used to buy



an AED for the Center for Translational Medicine and the second grant will be used to provide educational materials to benefit those with neuro-immune disease.

Meet Dr. Fredericks



The new Center is led by Dr. Robert Fredericks, a board-certified endocrinologist who has had a special interest in patients with neuro-immune diseases (NID) since the mid-1980s. He received a degree in cellular and organismal biology from UC Santa Barbara, and then proceeded to the University of Southern California, Keck School of Medicine. After receiving his M.D. and serving in an internal medicine residency at Huntington Memorial Hospital in Pasadena, Dr. Fredericks returned to the USC clinical research center for a fellowship in endocrinology and metabolism. Dr. Fredericks believes that personalizing the translation of basic science to clinical care requires the integration of multiple disciplines and the recognition of the causal relationships that influence health. He treats each patient on a case-by-case basis, using an investigative strategy that remains attentive to individual complaints. His lifelong work underscores the important role that inflammation and vital hormones play in chronic disease states. His experience with ME patients includes more than a decade of clinical research. His expertise in endocrinology adds new insights into mechanisms that maintain disease and integrates well with WPI's basic investigations into the pathogenesis of ME and other NIDs. His unending curiosity and openness to new ideas makes him an excellent medical partner for WPI's translational research program.



WPI's clinical laboratory, UNEVX, provides specialty diagnostic testing using clinically validated assays and innovative technology. With a comprehensive test menu, UNEVX provides physicians with the most up-to-date tools and information for the diagnosis and management of complex diseases.



On Thursday, September 15, 2011, WPI celebrated its 7th annual *I Hope You Dance* fundraising gala at the Atlantis Hotel Casino and Spa. Four hundred guests danced to live country music and a special musical performance by Suzi Oravec, who donated her time and talent for WPI. Patient advocates raised the money for Suzi to come and perform at this year's event. R&R Partners Foundation was honored as the 2011 Lifetime Achievement winner and Chris Cairns was honored as the 2011 Outstanding Advocate. John Farahi, owner of the Atlantis, graciously donated all of the Atlantis' proceeds from the event to WPI. It was an amazing night, and we could not have done it without the support of our donors, friends, advocates, and the Atlantis. WPI's annual fundraiser brings awareness of a spectrum of complex chronic diseases to our community while providing important funding for the work of WPI.



The Patient's Corner

Rachel H. is 23 years old and living with NID. Fourteen years ago she contracted mono and since that time she has lived with this disease. She grew up in northern California and does not remember being well. She finds comfort in reading "The Game and The Glory" by Michelle Akers. It reminds her she is not alone in her struggle with NID.

Rachel was the first patient to be seen by Dr. Fredericks at the Center for Translational Medicine at WPI. For her, it was worth the three and one-half hour drive to get here. "He looks at you as an individual. He is willing and excited to get to the real cause and he is up for the challenge. He is open to what your body tells him," Rachel explained to Andrea Whittemore-Goad, WPI's volunteer for social media and donor relations. Rachel was humbled to be the first patient.

In a piece Rachel wrote about her experiences with her illness, she describes what it feels like for her to live with NID: "It is as though I am in the middle of an ocean, land

not in sight. I am riding the bumps and crashes of the waves, which encompass me. The course of the waters is unknown to me. The waves are forceful and assured—I have no control. Sometimes, the sea and I fall into a rhythm. I float on my back, breathe and flow with the waves. I begin to trust the sea. But the next day, or maybe the one after that, illness will hit me. My body will demand its pay. I will crawl to shore, weary. My limbs exhausted and heavy. The day will feel abrasive—too bright, too loud, too stimulating. Stairs will leave me winded. I will start sentences and forget how to finish them."

Rachel is working toward a master's degree in sociology of medicine and plans to work in disability rights. She works with the disability office at her college to receive the accommodations she needs.

To share your story with WPI, please email info@anida.co.



Advocates for Neuro-Immune Disease Awareness • ANIDA

WPI celebrated the month of May as NID awareness month in an effort to increase support and raise awareness for the vital work of WPI. "When we started this journey six years ago, we wanted to help the millions of people whose lives are impacted every day by these often debilitating illnesses," said Annette Whittemore, president and founder of WPI. NID awareness month provided many opportunities for people to get involved in the fight against NID, including a new community walk. On Saturday, May 28, 2011, WPI held the first annual Walk N Roll on the University of Nevada, Reno campus. Patients and advocates came from as far as Sacramento to participate. Some patients came in wheelchairs and with caregivers who were willing to walk in support of those suffering with NID. We look forward to celebrating May Awareness next year and have plans for more fun and informative activities. We hope you will join us. Please visit anida.co for more information.



Vincent C. Lombardi, Ph.D.

Vincent C. Lombardi, Ph.D. began his work in CFS, as an undergraduate in the field of Biostatistics, characterizing T-cell populations in CFS patients. He later continued to work in CFS-related research in the laboratory of Dr. Robert Suhadolnik at Temple University, studying the interferon regulated RNase L antiviral pathway and its involvement in CFS. Dr. Lombardi completed his graduate degree at the University of Nevada receiving his Ph.D. in Biochemistry in 2005. The primary focus of his Ph.D. thesis was the isolation and characterization of novel diuretic neuro-peptides. Prior to the completion of his graduate degree, he co-founded the specialty clinical laboratory, Redlabs, U.S.A., Inc. This clinical laboratory, which later became VIPDx, was formed to serve doctors and their patients who suffer from CFS. Dr. Lombardi served as the Director of Operations as well as the leader of laboratory research and development for new diagnostics in the clinical laboratory.

Upon joining WPI on July 1, 2007, Dr. Lombardi's research effort focused on the inflammatory component of CFS and its relationship to the development of lymphoma in CFS patients. It was at this time that Dr. Lombardi established his collaboration with Robert Silverman, Ph.D., of the Cleveland Clinic, the world's leading authority regarding the RNase L antiviral pathway. Dr. Silverman had recently made the discovery of XMRV in RNase L deficient cancer patients. Dr. Lombardi's research on the association of the RNase L pathway in CFS patients, and discussions with Dr. Silverman prompted him to begin the search for XMRV in CFS.

An integral member of WPI's research team, Dr. Lombardi continues to focus his research efforts in neuro-immune diseases and the innate immune system, including potential pathogens and their involvement with the interferon system and RNase L antiviral pathway.

