



# AMERICAN-ITALIAN CANCER FOUNDATION DONOR REPORT

July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015





Dear AICF Friends,

The Board of Directors of the American-Italian Cancer Foundation (AICF) would like to thank the generous donors who made gifts and grants to AICF in fiscal year 2014-15 in support of cancer research, education and early detection.

The International Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship Program has effectively launched the scientific careers of several hundred world-class cancer researchers, many of whom are among the very best the field has to offer. In 2014-15, your generosity supported 16 post-doctoral research fellowships for outstanding young Italian scientists at Yale University, Columbia University, Memorial Sloan-Kettering, Dana Farber Cancer Institute, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center and many others.

The Mobile, No-cost Breast Cancer Screening Program recruited and screened more than 4,800 economically disadvantaged New York City women in the past year. Many of these women would not have been screened if we did not reach them where they live, work, and worship. The New York City community has embraced this Program for its relevance in low-income neighborhoods with limited screening access and high incidences of breast cancer.

We are delighted that the 2014 Prize for Scientific Excellence in Medicine, sponsored by the Alexander Bodini Foundation, was presented to two prominent scientists: James P. Allison, PhD, Chair of Immunology, Division of Basic Science Research at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, and Jedd Wolchok, MD, PhD, Chief of Melanoma and Immunotherapeutics Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering.

All of this has been possible because of your great generosity, support and dedication. You make a profound difference to AICF and all the people we serve.

Deep appreciation also goes to our Board of Directors, the Scientific Advisory Board members, our volunteers, and staff.

Thank you,

Daniele D. Bodini, Chairman

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### MOBILE, NO-COST BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

AICF's Mobile, No-cost Breast Cancer Screening Program serves economically-disadvantaged, medically-underserved New York City women, ages 40 and over, who have not had a mammogram in the last 12 months. The goal of our program is to improve the health outcomes of New York City's most vulnerable populations: lowincome, medically-underserved, ethnically, linguistically and geographically marginalized women by making breast cancer screening and treatment services accessible. AICF's Mobile Care Clinic travels the five boroughs of New York City five days a week to provide no-cost mammograms, clinical breast exams and breast health education to those most in need. We also offer Patient Navigation services to ensure that women with positive results are linked to diagnostic testing and treatment.

AICF makes breast cancer screenings accessible to the uninsured and underinsured.



#### **BY THE NUMBERS**

In fiscal year 2014–2015, AICF screened 4,829 women an increase of over 500 women from last year.

72% had a household income at or below \$25.000

15% identified as women of color

42% spoke a language other than English

38% were uninsured, and 22% were underinsured

women were diagnosed with breast cancer and are undergoing treatment

On June 27, 2015, Charmaine M. was the first in line. Dressed in her scrubs, she wanted to have her mammogram before she had to be at work as a home health aid. Despite working in the health care industry, Charmaine neither had the time nor health insurance to regularly receive health care, least of all her annual mammogram, until she learned about the AICF Mobile Care Clinic.

"I was so excited when I saw the flyer last year. I never had a mammogram done before and I knew I needed one, but I could never afford it because I never had the insurance to cover it. I made an appointment with AICF and had my mammogram. Then I forgot all about it until you gave me a call the next year. When I heard you would be at the First Presbyterian Church of Jamaica in Queens, even closer to me, I decided I had to come again. It is extremely convenient, and the staff is great. I will definitely be back next year!"

Our appointment no-show rate has dramatically decreased from a high of 23% in Fiscal Year 2012/13 to a low of 10% this year. This decrease is due in large part to our commitment to program improvement. This year we instituted new appointment reminder procedures which include phone calls, emails and text reminders. We are now screening more women per day, increasing our effectiveness and ensuring that we are cost efficient.



that she was diagnosed early.



Dawn Rzeznikiewicz, Ann Sullivan, Katty Wu and Ben Wunsch

# 2014 2015 INTERNATIONAL POST-DOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The International Post-Doctoral Research Fellowship Program provides financial support for bright Italian scientists who pursue post-doctoral research and advanced training in collaboration with mentors at major cancer centers in the United States.

Post-doctoral research fellowships are a critical component in advancing cancer research, as they support talented young scientists with innovative project ideas at a time in their careers when funding from other sources is less certain. An AICF fellowship is awarded for a two-year period pending a satisfactory administrative review after the first year. All applications and renewal applications are reviewed by AICF's Scientific Advisory Board Executive Committee.



#### **GABRIELE DI SANTE, PHD**

Gabelli Funds Fellow
Thomas lefferson University

Mentor: Richard G. Pestell, MBBS, MD, PhD, FRACP

Being selected as an American-Italian Cancer Foundation Research Fellow has been essential to my career development. I have had the opportunity to work in an amazing laboratory with an exceptional team that dedicates its mission to discovering fundamental advancements in Cancer Biology. Thanks to your support, I was able to complete the first part of my proposed research and publish the new findings in exceptional journals in the scientific field. Furthermore, I was able to complete two other parallel projects related to the field of Prostate Cancer and Neuroendocrinology. Both publications received broad attention and interest by the scientific community. I am proud to see that my scientific contributions are beginning to be appreciated. Hopefully, my contributions will move the understanding of these diseases forward.

#### **ALESSIA CAVAZZA, PHD**

The Del Vecchio Family Foundation Fellow Dana Farber Cancer Institute Mentor: Ramesh Arjun Shivdasani, MD, PhD

I decided to join the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, an outstanding cancer research center which, together with Harvard Medical School, is providing me with perfect opportunities to develop into the best possible scientist. This highly creative and interactive environment has been an exceptional source of possibilities for diverse scientific, personal, and professional growth. Here, I have chosen to investigate the functions and mechanisms of a transcriptional regulator, CNOT3, which has an important role in colorectal cancer cell self-renewal. My investigation is advancing the understanding of CNOT3 function in colorectal cancer pathogenesis, with a long-term goal of improving prognostic and therapeutic approaches toward colorectal cancer. I have obtained promising results so far, and we are currently submitting part of our discoveries for publication in highprofile, peer-reviewed, scientific journals.



#### **GIUSEPPE CARLUCCI, PHD**

Anna Bulgari Fellow Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center Mentor: Thomas Reiner, PhD

During the first six months of my fellowship, with the help of my lab, I was able to reach all of the milestones I had presented in the first half of my project proposal. Our goal is to develop clinically relevant imaging drugs that will ultimately help in the detection and management of pediatric brain cancers. So far, we have successfully synthesized a new molecule with ideal properties to detect and interrogate tumor growth and build on treatment success. We are currently planning to translate our molecules to human studies in the next year. Our early results have been very encouraging, and have given us the hope that we have discovered a molecule which will make a significant difference in the future.

#### **MONICA TESTONI, PHD**

The Alexander Bodini Foundation Fellow Columbia University Mentor: Riccardo Dalla-Favera, MD

Thenks to AICE I have been able

Thanks to AICF, I have been able to work in the laboratory of Dr. Riccardo Dalla-Favera at Columbia University in New York City for the past year. Now that the one-year fellowship is coming to an end, I realize how privileged I am to have had the chance to come to New York City and work at a lab that is known for conducting frontier research on lymphoma. I cannot express how grateful I am for this unique opportunity that was made possible by AICF. I intend to capitalize and expand on the knowledge and research techniques that I have learned. I love being a researcher and have a desire to continue working in this area for years to come.

#### **CLAUDIA CAPPARELLI, PHD**

The Amy & Joseph R. Perella Fellow Thomas Jefferson University Mentor: Andrew E. Aplin, PhD

The past year has been very intense and very productive, I worked very hard not to lose the great opportunity that AICF gave me. I was able to submit my paper, which is currently under review, and I presented my work at international conferences that helped me establish collaborations and get valuable feedback on the relevance and scientific rigor of our studies. My research is focused on the role of neuregulin I as a cancer promoter in wild-type BRAF /NRAS melanoma and as a tumor microenvironmental factor that promotes drug resistance induced in vemurafenib-treated BRAF mutant. melanoma. These studies are important since no targeted therapy options exist for wildtype BRAF/NRAS melanoma and, despite the recent FDA approval of RAF and MEK inhibitors as the first line treatment for BRAF melanoma, the durable effects of these therapies are limited by drug resistance.

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# 2014 BENEFIT DINNER AND AUCTIONS

On Tuesday, November 11, 2014, the American-Italian Cancer Foundation (AICF) held its 34th Annual Benefit Dinner & Auctions at the Plaza Hotel in New York City.

Ms. Alessia Antinori, of the esteemed wine family Marchesi Antinori, served as the Gala Chair.

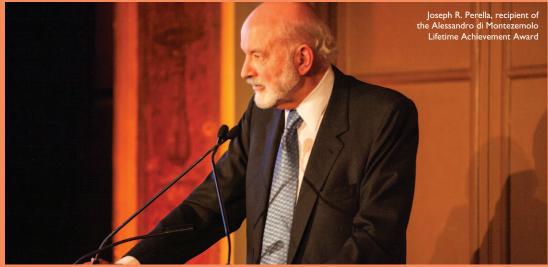
The Alessandro Di Montezemolo Lifetime Achievement Award was received by Joseph R. Perella. This award recognizes outstanding individuals who exemplify the highest standards of commitment to advancing the fight against cancer through volunteerism and philanthropy.

AICF's Prize for Scientific Excellence in Medicine was presented to James P. Allison, PhD and Jedd Wolchok, MD, PhD. The Prize has been established to recognize important discoveries in cancer biology, prevention, diagnosis and/or treatment.

The Live Auction was led by James G. Niven, Chairman, The Americas at Sotheby's.

Thank you to all of our generous donors and sponsors for making the event a tremendous success!











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