Dear AICF Friends:

The Board of Directors of the American-Italian Cancer Foundation (AICF) would like to thank you for your generous support to our organization in Fiscal Year 2017-18. All contributions received this year funded our cancer research, early detection and patient support initiatives and made a great impact on our community.

AICF continues to work as a bridge between Italy and the United States by sponsoring gifted Italian scientists who perform groundbreaking research in the fields of cancer biology and treatment in competitive labs across the United States. To date, AICF enhanced the careers of several hundred young scientists. This year, your generosity supported post-doctoral fellows conducting research at Columbia University, Massachusetts General Hospital, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer, Yale University Comprehensive Cancer Center, Weill Cornell Medical Center, and others.

AICF’s Mobile, No-Cost Breast Cancer Screening Program, one of the largest mobile mammography providers in New York, continues to offer life-saving breast cancer screening services to medically-underserved women in low income neighborhoods with limited screening access. Several thousand women screened on our Mobile this year in the five boroughs of New York City, of which more than 800 needed additional testing and were provided one-on-one with information and referrals to affordable diagnostic and treatment facilities.

This year we were also honored to present the 2017 Prize for Scientific Excellence in Medicine, sponsored by the Alexander Bodini Foundation, to Brunangelo Falini, MD and Peter Vogt, PhD for their exceptional contributions to the world of science and medicine. AICF is strongly committed to recognize excellence in cancer biology, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.

Our deepest gratitude goes to our dedicated Board of Directors for wisely and steadily leading the organization year after year, and to the Executive Committee of our Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) for providing scientific guidance to our programs and for helping the many cancer patients who reach out to our organization. A special thank you to Dr. Silvia Formenti for leading the SAB for the past four years and a warm welcome to our new SAB Chairman Dr. Virgilio Sacchini. His knowledge, expertise and commitment will be key to the success of our programs in the years to come.

Lastly, thank you to each and every one of you for your continued trust, care and generosity. AICF exists because of you.

We look forward to another great year together.

Thank you,
Daniele D. Bodini
Chairman

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MOBILE, NO-COST BREAST CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM

In 1987, AICF launched the Mobile, No-cost Breast Cancer Screening Program in response to increasing community needs and the Foundation’s commitment to improving access to breast cancer screening services to medically underserved women. Over 100,000 women have been served since the program’s inception.

AICF’s Mobile Care Clinic travels the five boroughs of New York City, five days a week, year around to provide no-cost mammograms, clinical breast exams and breast health education to those most in need. AICF’s goal is to eliminate the economic, linguistic and cultural barriers to screening by:

• Having no out of pocket cost for the women served.
• Bringing screening services directly to where women live, work or worship.
• Partnering with a network of community groups throughout NYC that have the cultural and linguistic capacity to reach the women and help bring them into screenings.
• Offering comprehensive breast health education to ensure that women feel empowered to be proactive about their well-being.
• Offering Patient Navigation services to provide women with the support and tools they need to access screening, diagnostic and treatment services in a timely manner.

AICF’S Breast Cancer Screening Program welcomes the uninsured

In July 2017, Marlene – a 54-year-old Queens resident with no health insurance – called AICF to schedule her annual mammogram. She has been screening on our Mobile Care Clinic for the past 5 years. Marlene is an ovarian cancer survivor and is diligent about her annual cancer screenings, including her mammogram. Marlene explains: “I am grateful to AICF for their screening program which makes it possible for me to receive my mammogram year after year!”

AICF helps women from screening to treatment and beyond

AICF’s Patient Navigators work one-on-one with women to provide them with information and referrals to medically appropriate breast cancer screening, diagnostic or treatment facilities following an enhanced protocol designed by AICF. Our Program provides navigation services from recruitment to treatment and every point in between ensuring that women feel supported and empowered to make informed medical decisions.

Sylvia is 51, uninsured, and an immigrant from the Caribbean. Working a few jobs, it is challenging to schedule her annual mammogram. In August, Sylvia screened on our Mobile Clare Clinic at her church and commented: “It was so easy, I would get my screening right before or after attending services at the church”. A few days later, our Patient Navigator called Sylvia to tell her she needed additional tests to rule out cancer.

BY THE NUMBERS

In Fiscal Year 2017-2018, we held 281 breast cancer screening events, and served over 4,700 New York City women

- 72% reported a household income at or below $25,000
- 59% were uninsured or underinsured
- 81% identified as women of color
- 45% spoke a language other than English
- 8 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and are undergoing treatment
THANK YOU

We would like to extend a special thank you to all of our volunteers & interns:


Since last year’s results were normal, she was hesitant to return for testing. Over the phone, our Patient Navigator listened and addressed Sylvia’s concerns, prompting her to see her doctor in September. Sylvia shared: “I’m glad I can call you if I need help. It really makes a difference.” She scheduled her sonogram in October and was diagnosed with breast cancer in November. Since Sylvia was diagnosed early and sought treatment quickly, she had an excellent prognosis. She finished treatment in February and is in high spirits.

In December 2017, Pastor Pablo Gonzalez promoted the visit of AICF’s Mobile Care Clinic at St. Rita’s Church in the Bronx by teaming up with local businesses and organizations to offer information in English and Spanish. Pastor Gonzalez commented: “The Mobile Unit is a godsend for the many people in the St. Rita community who do not have access to health care or are unable to seek care for a variety of reasons. Many of our members appreciate that the services are free to them and so accessible – even the religious Sisters residing at the St. Rita Convent took advantage of the Mobile Clinic!” Pastor Pablo looks forward to the Clinic’s next visit. He said: “It is great to have the Mobile Clinic here for the second consecutive year allowing participants to build a history of screenings for comparison use.”
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.

To date, AICF has effectively launched the careers of 318 young scientists who have been awarded 465 fellowships since the Program’s inception in 1983.

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 one-year period. All applications are reviewed by AICF’s Scientific Advisory Board Executive Committee.

GIORGIA FOGGETTI, PHD
The Alexander Bodini Foundation Fellow
Yale University Comprehensive Cancer Center

After graduating with an M.S. in Cellular and Molecular Biology from the University of Genoa, I obtained my PhD in Oncological Genetics. I joined the laboratory of Dr. Politi at Yale University in the summer of 2016. My research focuses on drug resistance and metastasis in lung adenocarcinoma. I investigate how different resistance mechanisms influence the metastatic ability of lung cancer cells using orthotopic EGFR mutant lung metastatic models and clinical data. I recently established models of metastatic mutant EGFR lung adenocarcinoma that allow me to determine how sensitivity to TKIs is affected at different metastatic sites. My study aims at identifying links between metastatic progression and drug resistance, and at optimizing therapeutic strategies to combat drug resistance.

DEMIS MENOLFI, PHD
The Amy & Joseph R. Perella Fellow
Institute for Cancer Genetics, Columbia University Medical Center

After getting my B.A. in biotechnologies, my M.A. in molecular cell biology, and my PhD in Molecular Medicine, I started my post-doctoral work at the Institute for Cancer Genetics at Columbia University. My project focuses on the molecular characterization of a mouse model expressing a kinase defective allele of the ATR checkpoint protein. ATR protein is essential for viability, but ATR kinase inhibitors are well tolerated in preclinical trials, suggesting that ATR might have essential functions beyond its kinase activity. We aim at characterizing the structural functions of ATR during normal replication and replication-stresses using the newly generated kinase-dead allele. Since ATR is also a haploid-insufficient tumor suppressor, we are also investigating the oncogenic potential of ATR kinase-dead allele in vivo.
GIACOMO OLIVEIRA, PHD

The Gabelli Funds Fellow
Dana Farber Cancer Institute

After graduating with an M.S. in Medical Biotechnologies from the Vita-Salute San Raffaele University in Milan, I obtained my PhD in Bio Molecular Medicine, Basic and Applied Immunology. As an AICF Fellow, I joined the lab of Dr. Wu at Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. My research is focused on investigating the multiple facets of T-cell immunology applied to cancer therapy with the ultimate goal of providing novel and potentially clinically actionable insights in the cancer immunotherapy. I work on identifying and tracing T-cell antitumor T-cell specificities across therapeutic interventions, with the final purpose of providing fresh insights into the mechanisms underlying protective tumor immunity.

FRANCESCA PUCA, PHD

The Chiara & Massimo Ferragamo Fellow
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center

Glioblastoma Multiforme (GBM) is characterized by a very poor prognosis and limited therapies, underscoring the need for novel therapeutic approaches. Using an in vivo loss-of-function screening targeting metabolic gene products in patient-derived glioblastoma stem cells (GSCs), we identified ACADM (Acyl CoA dehydrogenase medium chain) as one of the most relevant genes for GBM progression in vivo and in vitro. My current studies aim to decipher the molecular mechanisms by which ACADM and lipid degradation pathways support tumor maintenance in vitro and in vivo by using an ACADM knock-out transgenic mouse model, giving rise to new opportunities for therapeutic intervention for this lethal disease.

PAOLA VINCI, PHD

The Debra & Claudio Del Vecchio Fellow
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

After graduation, I obtained my PhD in Molecular and Translational Medicine (DIMET) at the University of Milano-Bicocca, with a primary interest in the field of hemato- oncology. During this period, I have been working on childhood leukemia, studying the immunological mechanisms underlying Graft-versus-Host Disease (GvHD), which frequently occurs in hematopoietic stem cell transplanted patients. In the next few years as a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Hanash’s Lab, I will focus on a particular cell subset, expressing the G protein-coupled receptor ChemR23, which seems to play a prominent role in GvHD pathophysiology and in the Graft-versus-Leukemia response.
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2017 BENEFIT DINNER AND AUCTIONS

On Wednesday, November 8, 2017, the American-Italian Cancer Foundation held its 37th Annual Benefit Dinner & Auctions at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York City.

Ms. Chiara Boni served as the Gala Chair. The Alessandro Di Montezemolo Lifetime Achievement Award was received by H. E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the 8th Secretary General of the United Nations, and Madame Yoo Soontaek.

AICF’s Prize for Scientific Excellence in Medicine was presented to Brunangelo Falini, MD and Peter K. Vogt, PhD.

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