



Fighting Childhood Cancer
BrianMordenFoundation.org

Newsletter

March 2015

Foundation Donates Funds to New Research

The **Brian Morden Foundation** (BMF) is pleased to announce an important partnership with the **Liddy Shriver Sarcoma Initiative** (LSSI). The **Wendy Walk** and the **Alan B. Slifka Foundation** will also partner with LSSI; together the contributors will fund a \$100,000 research study to be conducted at **Johns Hopkins University**. BMF has chosen to contribute \$25,000 to this new study, which is designed to discover how the gene Nrf2 helps make Ewing's sarcoma cells resistant to chemotherapy. The ultimate goal is to find a way to interfere with the function of Nrf2, allowing for improved treatment response in patients. This particular grant awarded by the BMF to the Johns Hopkins researchers was made possible through our very successful **Dani Girl** benefit held in July 2014 at the Mishler Theater.

Shyam Biswal, PhD, the study's lead investigator, has been studying Nrf2 in lung cancers for about a decade, and it has emerged as an important driver of drug resistance in lung cancers. He believes that the same may be true of sarcomas: "We have some early hint that Nrf2 could be important for therapy resistance in sarcomas. Our studies with this grant will validate the target in sarcoma and test inhibitors of Nrf2. If these studies are positive, we can establish a solid foundation for developing a novel strategy to overcome therapeutic resistance in Ewing's sarcoma."

For more specific information about the study see <http://bit.ly/1ARwCh3>.

Previous Collaborations

The BMF has partnered with the LSSI on three previous occasions:

- In 2005 to fund research on a vaccine to treat recurrent/relapsed Ewing's Sarcoma. The

vaccine was being developed by a team of oncology specialists at the University of Michigan Medical Center led by Dr. James D. Geiger.

- The BMF also helped fund two research projects directed by Stephen Lessnick, M.D., Ph.D at the Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah in 2006. The two grants, totaling \$50,000, were made in memory of Brian Morden, Liddy Shriver, Krystle Smith, Shane Duffy, Conor O'Sullivan, Paul Onvlee, and Allen Strehlow and to honor those currently fighting this disease.
- In January 2014, the BMF once again partnered with the LSSI in the funding of a \$50,000 grant for Ewing's sarcoma research, this time in a study at the Children's Hospital Los Angeles.

A Bittersweet Finale



a global initiative
for everyone affected by sarcomas

The Liddy Shriver Sarcoma Initiative (<http://sarcomahelp.org/>) has been a leader in the fight against all types of sarcomas. The Brian Morden Foundation regrets the decision by Bruce and Beverly Shriver, co-founders of the Liddy Shriver Sarcoma Initiative, to end the publication of ESUN and phase out their Research Grants Program; however, the Shrivens have dedicated more time and energy to help in the fight against sarcomas in the last 11 years than can really be imagined.

We can only say a heartfelt thanks for all they have done and wish them well. It is fitting that their first sarcoma grant was with the BMF and one of their last will be with us as well.

BMF Card Project

When Rite Aid bought Kopp Drug, Dawn managed to be in the right place at the right time, and the Foundation acquired boxes and boxes of greeting cards – free of charge! We’ve been sorting and sharing these cards. So far, the cards have been distributed in the following ways:

- To local kids fighting cancer
- To children’s hospitals in the region, for use by patients, families, and staff
- To local churches, who will send cards to shut-ins
- To AAHS English classes, who sent almost 1000 cards to the military at Christmas, as part of the Troup Fanmail Project
- To other local charities for their card projects

We are grateful to First Evangelical Lutheran church for the use of their space, and to Thrivent Financial for a grant which helped us purchase organizing supplies.



Brian Baskets for Easter

Helping hands are needed for decorating and filling Easter Brian Baskets/Bags for pediatric cancer patients, families, and staff at Pittsburgh’s Children’s Hospital, Janet Weis Children’s Hospital at Geisinger, Hershey Children’s Hospital, Philadelphia’s children’s Hospital, and local youth with cancer. We will be meeting on Saturday, March 21st, at 9 AM at Duncansville Evangelical Lutheran Church – come join us.

If you would like to donate items for the bags/baskets, we could use:

- Books, especially puzzle/activity books, for children up to age 18
- Non-perishable snacks (single serving packages)
- Personal Size Toiletries (lotion, lip balm, etc.)
- Toys, stuffed animals, and games for children ages 2-18 (must be new)
- Phone or gift cards

Ride, Run, and Fun

Plans are underway for this year’s Ride, Run and Fun for Life event, to be held May 23 at Legion Park. Look for details in the next newsletter.

Current Calendar of Events: Spring

EVENT	DATE	PLACE	TIME
Board of Directors Meeting	March 4	First Lutheran	6:30 PM
Brian Basket Event for Easter	March 21	Duncansville Lutheran	9:00 – 11:00 AM
Board of Directors Meeting	April 1	First Lutheran	6:30 PM
Bikes, Trikes, and Things That Go	May 2	TLC/First Lutheran	10-noon
Board of Directors Meeting	May 6	First Lutheran	6:30 PM
Ride, Run & Fun for Life	May 23	Legion Park	8:30 AM – 1 PM