

Our Quest



Gabrielle's Angel Foundation
For Cancer Research

“If you wonder where
your money’s going,
it’s inside me. I am living
proof that the work
that these doctors do on
a daily basis is saving lives
of real people like me.”

~ **Ethan Zohn** ● Angel Ambassador ● Two-time lymphoma survivor



Gabrielle Rich Aouad
(1969-1996)

Our Inspiration

The Life of Gabrielle Rich Aouad (1969 ~ 1996)

Gabrielle Rich Aouad grew up in Switzerland where she graduated from Aiglon School. She graduated with honors from Oxford University in England, earning her B.A. in philosophy and modern languages. Fluent in five languages, Gabrielle was a champion skier, an expert in horseback riding and a skilled rock mountain climber.

In the summer of 1991, she moved to New York and joined the NYU intensive film program where she met her future husband, Philip Aouad. At the tender age of 23, she was diagnosed with advanced stage Hodgkin's disease. Her strength and feistiness never failed through months of painful treatment.

By 1993, Gabrielle was at last in remission. This period of renewal brought great vibrancy and activity to her life. She and Philip got married. She became one of the finalists in the worldwide search to replace Isabella Rossellini as the face of Lancôme. She studied acting at the Lee Strasberg Institute. Her drive brought her great success. In no time, Gabrielle had eight plays and seven movies to her credit. Her film roles included a newscaster

in "The Chase" starring Charlie Sheen and a seductress in "Savage Hearts" starring Richard Harris. In addition to her acting skills, Gabrielle was a gifted writer. She wrote a screenplay, "Surprise," she dreamed would one day be produced.

In May of 1996, she was diagnosed with acute myelogenous leukemia (AML). Once more, she was treated with chemotherapy. She lost her beautiful long hair, but fought with fearless determination throughout her difficult and painful treatment. After going into remission for the second time, she was due for a bone marrow transplant, so her mother, Denise donated her own bone marrow to save Gabrielle's life. Upon receiving this gift Gabrielle said, "Mummy is giving me birth again."

Gabrielle's final wish was to create a leukemia foundation that would help spare others the suffering that she endured. One of its goals would be to invest in research for better treatments for leukemia, so people would not have to suffer from the side effects and damage of chemotherapy and radiation. Gabrielle Rich Aouad passed away in the fall of 1996 at the age of 27.

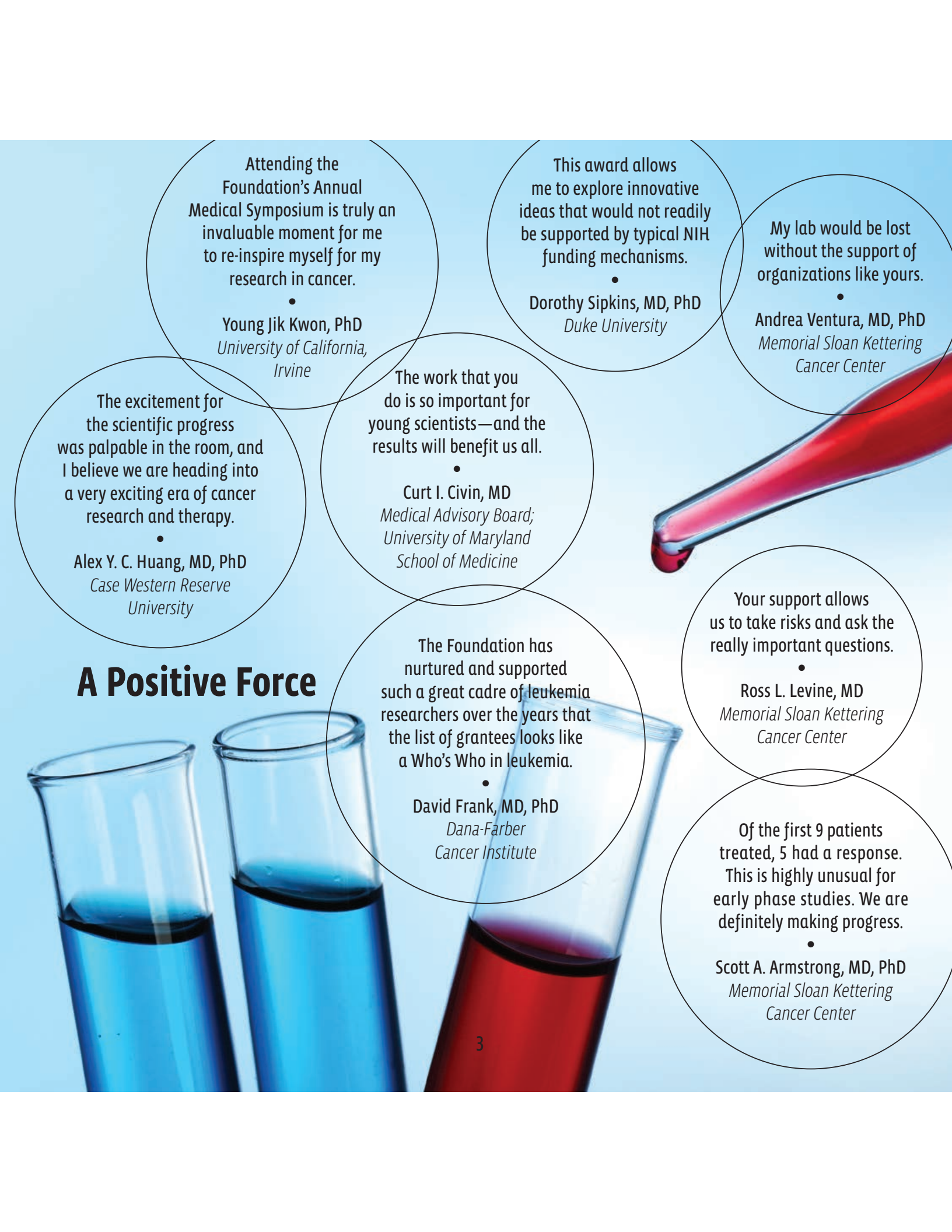
The work of Gabrielle's Angel Foundation for Cancer Research continues in her honor and memory. Gabrielle's strength and wisdom live on in her own words, "**Love defies all pain, even death.**"

Our Story

It was Gabrielle's last wish to create a Foundation that would fund the most promising scientific investigators in the nation with the hope that less toxic treatments, and ultimately a cure, might be discovered. Her mother Denise and sisters, Daniella and Ilona, believed the best way to honor Gabrielle's memory was to turn their extraordinary grief into a positive force for others. Her spirit lives on in the work of the organization created in her memory. Gabrielle's Angel Foundation funds only the best and brightest physician-scientists just starting their labs and has become one of the largest non-governmental sources of grant support to blood cancer research in the nation.

Since 1998, Gabrielle's Angel Foundation has proudly funded more than \$33 million in research grants in the United States and abroad.

The Foundation honors Gabrielle's legacy by continuing to fund bold scientific ideas with a focus on grants that will make a significant impact on blood cancer treatment in the short-term.



Attending the Foundation's Annual Medical Symposium is truly an invaluable moment for me to re-inspire myself for my research in cancer.

•
Young Jik Kwon, PhD
*University of California,
Irvine*

This award allows me to explore innovative ideas that would not readily be supported by typical NIH funding mechanisms.

•
Dorothy Sipkins, MD, PhD
Duke University

My lab would be lost without the support of organizations like yours.

•
Andrea Ventura, MD, PhD
*Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center*

The excitement for the scientific progress was palpable in the room, and I believe we are heading into a very exciting era of cancer research and therapy.

•
Alex Y. C. Huang, MD, PhD
*Case Western Reserve
University*

The work that you do is so important for young scientists—and the results will benefit us all.

•
Curt I. Civin, MD
*Medical Advisory Board;
University of Maryland
School of Medicine*

The Foundation has nurtured and supported such a great cadre of leukemia researchers over the years that the list of grantees looks like a Who's Who in leukemia.

•
David Frank, MD, PhD
*Dana-Farber
Cancer Institute*

Your support allows us to take risks and ask the really important questions.

•
Ross L. Levine, MD
*Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center*

Of the first 9 patients treated, 5 had a response. This is highly unusual for early phase studies. We are definitely making progress.

•
Scott A. Armstrong, MD, PhD
*Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center*

A Positive Force

Our Grants

Gabrielle's Angel Foundation funds the nation's best science in the fields of leukemia, lymphoma, and related cancers of the blood. The Foundation not only funds conventional scientific research, but also projects that combine integrative (complementary) therapies or botanical agents. We focus on projects for cancer prevention, detection and treatment that are most likely to be translated into clinical trials within a 3-5 year period. These Medical Research Awards, distributed on an annual basis, each total \$225,000 and are given over a three-year period. The top research institutions in the nation are solicited by invitation-only and, in this highly competitive process, applications undergo rigorous peer review by the Foundation's distinguished Medical Advisory Board. This panel of experts, led by Stephen D. Nimer, MD, Director of Miami's Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, selects only the most distinguished projects for funding. The Foundation also supports pediatric oncology initiatives, music and art therapy programs and select symposia that align with our mission.

“There is nothing more gratifying than to witness the success of our 20 years of effort. The work of this foundation will last for generations and while we have made great progress, we still have so much more work to do. The future of cancer research has never looked brighter!”

~ **Stephen D. Nimer, MD** ● Chairman, Medical Advisory Board ● Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center

Our Recent Grantees

For more than twenty years **Gabrielle's Angel Foundation** has funded cutting-edge cancer research.

In 2018, the Foundation announced a new round of **Medical Research Awards** and grants totaling \$2.95 million.

Here we highlight a few of the brilliant early career scientists receiving funding this year.



Wendy Jia Men Huang, PhD | University of California, San Diego

Project: **Long non-coding RNAs in T-cell lymphoma**

“Our lab primarily focuses on lymphoid cancers, the fourth most common neoplasm in the United States with close to 150,000 new cases every year.”



Daniel Bachovchin, PhD | Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center

Project: **Small molecule pyroptosis inducers as therapeutic agents for AML**

This grant is supported by The Philip & Janice Levin Foundation

“This grant will enable me to pursue a new direction of research that otherwise would not have been possible.”



Marzenna Blonksa, PhD | University of Miami

Project: **Biological consequences and therapeutic implications of beta-arrestin2 loss in aggressive lymphomas**

“I was inspired to choose the field of cancer research because cancer is the most complex and challenging disease that affects a large number of people at any age, and we still are not able to cure all our patients.”



Aaron Ring, MD, PhD | Yale School of Medicine

Project: **Hacking cytokine pathways for precision cancer immunotherapy**

“I want to do research that can move beyond a petri dish in the lab to make a difference for cancer patients.”



Panagiotis Ntziachristos, PhD | Northwestern University

Project: Post-translational regulation of splicing as a pro-oncogenic mechanism in high-risk T-cell leukemia

“This grant will enable me to understand a novel, unappreciated non-genetic aspect of drug resistance in pediatric blood cancers.”



Cigall Kadoch, PhD | Boston Children’s Hospital

Project: Targeting mammalian SWI/SNF (BAF) chromatin remodeling complexes in leukemia and lymphoma

“This grant will enable us to probe the structure and function of ATP-dependent chromatin remodeling complexes in leukemias and lymphomas, laying the foundation for the development of targeted therapeutics.”



H. Courtney Hodges, PhD | Baylor College of Medicine

Project: Revealing novel SMARCA4-related dependencies in mixed-lineage leukemia

“My lab aims to improve precision therapies for cancer by uncovering the complex inner workings of cells and their interaction with the environment.”



David Dominguez-Sola, MD, PhD | Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

Project: **MYC-dependent replication stress as a pathogenic driver and therapeutic target in aggressive B-cell lymphomas**

“With the Foundation’s support we can take risks, aim high, and push this new idea forward—see how it translates into something tangible for lymphoma patients.”



Sara Buhrlage, PhD | Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

Project: **Targeting ‘undruggable’ initiating events in AML**

“As a chemical biologist, I believe I can make significant contributions to the field through development of small molecule tools that can be used by the research community to rapidly validate emerging targets ultimately resulting in new treatment getting to patients faster.”



Luke Gilbert, PhD | University of California, San Francisco

Project: **Applying synthetic lethality to eradicate high risk NF1-deficient B-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia**

“My research focuses on new ways to target high risk pediatric leukemias. I use new genetic tools I created to study leukemia cells with specific mutations in a gene called NF1.”

Angel Ball

Gabrielle believed that life should be a celebration. She lived her life full of joy and hope. She is the inspiration behind the annual Angel Ball gala, which has become one of New York City's most anticipated charity events!



Thanks to spectacular live entertainment and outstanding honorees who have made significant contributions in support of blood cancer research, this annual gala brings the Foundation closer to its quest for a cure.

For more event details, visit gabriellesangels.org

Medical Symposium



This annual event provides an opportunity for our grantees, past and present, to introduce their work, discuss the latest medical advances and form scientific collaborations with their peers. The event is led by our Chairman, Dr. Stephen D. Nimer, and also features a keynote speech from one of our esteemed Medical Advisory Board members and a compelling patient perspective.

Music Therapy



Music played an important role during Gabrielle's treatments and hospital stays. Because of this special connection, the Foundation has provided support to music therapy programs at several institutions across the country. Music therapy programs provide one-on-one patient and family care with bedside visits as well as in the pre-surgical and post-operative suites. Often patients are referred for relief of symptoms such as pain, anxiety, social isolation and end-stage disease.

Why Give to Gabrielle's Angel Foundation? * We provide funding to only the **highest caliber** early career scientists, allowing them to pursue their most creative ideas. * We fund projects for **cancer prevention, detection and treatment** that are most likely to be translated into clinical trials within a 3 to 5 year period. * We fund **traditional** scientific research, as well as research that **combines** integrative or complementary therapies or **botanical agents**. * More than 80% of our grantees go on to obtain **further funding** which is proof that the seed money we provide is truly **shaping the future leaders** of cancer research. ❖

Our Impact

Medical Research Awards amount to

\$225,000

over a 3-year period.

More than

275

grants totaling nearly

\$33

million

in global giving.

On average,

83%

of every dollar raised directly funds cancer research.

Our Leadership

Medical Advisory Board

Gabrielle's Angel Foundation grants are selected after a rigorous peer review by our Medical Advisory Board, comprised of 10 experts in the field of blood cancers and led by Dr. Stephen D. Nimer, Director of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Stephen D. Nimer, MD

*Chairman
Director, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine*

Eduardo Bruera, MD

*Chair, Department of Palliative Care & Rehabilitation Medicine
The University of Texas, MD Anderson Cancer Center*

Michael A. Caligiuri, MD

*President, Deana and Steve Campbell Physician-in-Chief Distinguished Chair
City of Hope National Medical Center*

Curt I. Civin, MD

*Associate Dean for Research
Director, Center for Stem Cell Biology & Regenerative Medicine
University of Maryland, School of Medicine*

John F. DiPersio, MD, PhD

*Chief, Division of Oncology
Deputy Director, Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center
Washington University School of Medicine*

Jerome E. Groopman, MD

*Dina & Raphael Racanati Chair of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
Chief, Experimental Medicine, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Harvard Institute of Medicine*

Carl H. June, MD

*Director, Translational Research Program
Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute
University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine*

Rainer Storb, MD

*Head, Transplantation Biology Program
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center Clinical Research Division*

Jeffrey D. White, MD

Bethesda, Maryland

Cheryl L. Willman, MD

*Director & Chief Executive Officer
University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center*

Emeritus

Barrie R. Cassileth, PhD

*Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service*

In Memoriam

Janet D. Rowley, MD, DSc

*Board Member 2002–2013
The University of Chicago*

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Loreen Arbus Productions, Inc.

Bernd Beetz

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de Pury de Pury

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Director, Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center

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Executive Director

Keisha Escoffery

Director of Communications

Michele Keene

Associate Director of Development

“The exciting thing is we’ve never been in a moment like this. This is the first year I can say that three leukemia drugs are likely to get approved by the FDA~we’ve had two drugs approved in twenty years. And why is that? Because Gabrielle’s Angels bet on the scientists who developed those drugs long before anybody else did.”

~ Ross L. Levine, MD • Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

Gabrielle's Angel Foundation for Cancer Research


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