



# Key Updates

Unlocking A Mystery, Increasing Survival and Hope



## Executive Sponsor's Message



We are busy building. Building on our early successes. Building our presence and awareness. And building with your help.

I'm very pleased to report that since our last newsletter, [UnlockingBrainTumors.org](http://UnlockingBrainTumors.org) has secured and will soon detail a \$10,000 donation from an established NY-based Foundation. This generous organization supports a wide variety of charitable organizations, and its gift to us is our largest to date. Following last month's gift of \$5000 from the TJX Foundation to the Musella Foundation, we could not be more delighted about receiving significant support from well-managed and thoughtful charitable foundations. We will honor the gifts by maximizing their value and directing them rapidly to brain tumor research.

Please read on for other [UnlockingBrainTumors.org](http://UnlockingBrainTumors.org) news. And happy spring!

-Steve Coffman,  
Survivor since 2005



## UnlockingBrainTumors.org News

- With final numbers still coming in, [UnlockingBrainTumors.org](http://UnlockingBrainTumors.org) had a strong showing at the **ABTA Path to Progress 5k Walk**. The event, held at Chicago's Montrose Harbor 4/26, had 200+ teams and 5,500 participants. Our team of almost 30 individuals collectively raised nearly \$7,000, expected to be about 1% of the total raised. The ABTA exceeded its fundraising goal of \$500,000, with all proceeds being directed to brain tumor research – at press time, it had logged more than \$650,000. Thanks to all who contributed donations to our team, and to those that braved the weather!

[UnlockingBrainTumors.org](http://UnlockingBrainTumors.org) held a wine tasting and jewelry sale with proceeds benefitting our group. The event, hosted by **Tuscan Market and Wine Shop** in Arlington Heights, IL, offered a wonderful wine selection along with a delicious Italian-American deli, and the event featured the uniquely handcrafted jewelry by **Silpada Designs Sterling Silver**, which donated proceeds to benefit our charity. You can visit the shop at [tuscanwineshop.com](http://tuscanwineshop.com) and our Silpada representative at [mysilpada.com/sites/kathy.pierce1](http://mysilpada.com/sites/kathy.pierce1)



## Medical Updates

- **Nanoparticles Targeted to Brain Tumors**. According to an article in the journal ***Molecular Cancer Therapeutics***, researchers at **Penn State University** have shown that a lipid-based nanoparticle, designed to bind to a specific receptor found on malignant brain cells but not healthy ones, improves the potency of a common anticancer drug and slows significantly the growth of glioblastoma in mice. James Connor, Ph.D., and colleagues created their new drug delivery vehicle by linking interleukin-13 (IL-13), a molecule produced by the human immune system, to lipid-based nanoparticles coated with poly(ethylene glycol), or PEG. They then used this nanoparticle to encapsulate the anticancer agent doxorubicin...Initial experiments showed these nanoparticles did indeed bind to their target on the surface of glioblastoma cells growing in culture and, as a result, were taken up by the cells. In contrast, the nanoparticles did not bind to healthy cells and there was no measurable uptake of these nanoparticles by healthy cells".

**Medical Updates** continued on page 2.

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### Around The Community

"Cancer researchers at **Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC** and the **University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute** (UPCI) will further develop novel treatments for brain tumors through a new, five-year, \$6.24 million grant to the **University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine**. The grant from the **National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)** will fund three projects aimed at developing cutting-edge treatment strategies for gliomas. The three projects, led by principal investigator Ian Pollack, and their respective investigators are: 1) Molecularly targeted therapies that interrupt the signaling pathways in the brain that drive tumor growth – Dr. Pollack, MD, chief of the Division of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Children's Hospital and director of the UPCI Brain Tumor Program; 2) Immunotherapy using segments of proteins that are overexpressed by brain tumors to "vaccinate" patients against tumor growth – Hideho Okada, MD, PhD, associate professor in the departments of Neurological Surgery and Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and 3) Viral vectors (a modified herpes virus) to kill tumor cells while leaving other cells intact – Joseph C. Glorioso III, PhD

### Beneficiaries

We are continuing our support of beneficiaries and researchers with targeted identification of those foundations whose mission may best align with our goals. We are underway on funding for two specific researchers at present, Dr. Hideho Okada and his team of the Brain Tumor Program at the **University of Pittsburgh Cancer Institute** and Dr. Jeffrey Raizer, Dr. James Chandler and the team of the **Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Center of Northwestern University**.

Since these campaigns, we have also undertaken efforts to help secure funding directly to **The Musella Foundation For Brain Tumor Research & Information**, our lead beneficiary, by identifying foundations in the New York region.

If you have recommendations on foundations that we might approach and who you feel might be interested in our efforts, contact [steve@unlockingbraintumors.org](mailto:steve@unlockingbraintumors.org)



### Partners

UnlockingBrainTumors.org continues to believe that by partnering with other like minded organizations, we can work together to achieve a greater, faster and more lasting impact.

Steve Coffman has been in discussion with a large philanthropic organization about how it and UnlockingBrainTumors.org can collaborate to increase funding for brain tumor and brain cancer research. We hope to announce some joint efforts with this important organization soon.

We also continue to reach out to other foundations around the country about opportunities to work together, or to lend UnlockingBrainTumors.org's assistance to help them reach their goals. Our model is primarily about helping to raise funds for any important research efforts within the community, and we intend to be flexible to provide the maximum support we can.

Stay tuned for more partner news!

### Medical Updates *continued from page 1.*

"An experimental vaccine made from a cancer patient's own brain tumor - and then injected back into that patient - is showing promise in extending life, a New Jersey physician said, reports By Bob Groves of The Record in Hackensack, NJ.

Early data show the vaccine increased life expectancy by nearly three years for some people with the deadliest form of brain cancer and added more than five years for a few others, said Dr. Michael Gruber, a neuro-oncologist and Englewood, N.J., resident. Until now, the life expectancy for these patients has been about 15 months to less than a year. "This is an awful disease," he said. Gruber, former chief of neurology at Englewood Hospital and Medical Center, is conducting clinical trials of the vaccine at Overlook Hospital in Summit, N.J., and New York University Medical Center, two of five study sites nationwide.

The vaccine is personalized for each patient after their tumor is surgically removed. Protein antigens extracted from the tumor are combined with disease-fighting white cells from the patient. The vaccine is then injected into the patient, where it "teaches" the immune system to recognize and kill any cancer cells left behind by the surgery. The shots are given in the arm, just under the skin - first bi-weekly, then monthly, then less frequently, for three years. The proteins stimulate the immune system to create T-cells, and sends all those immune soldiers into battle," Gruber said. The nationwide study will eventually enroll 250 patients with the tumor, called glioblastoma multiforme. The vaccine, called DCVax-Brain, is made by Northwest Biotherapeutics Inc. in Bothell, Wash."

[www.unlockingbraintumors.org](http://www.unlockingbraintumors.org)

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### Feedback/Contact Us

For more in-depth discussions or to get involved in this very important cause, please call, write or visit us. You'll find that it's easy to help, and that your help will quickly be operationalized.

We'll soon be expanding our volunteer opportunities, to reflect a growing area of needs as we ourselves grow, launch more fundraising events and need to continue expanding our reach.

Whether you have a preferred beneficiary or project, level of involvement, or simply want to help our team in whatever area possible, we'll make it easy for you to do just that. *We're looking to expand our use of volunteers and partners, so if you have ideas or suggestions, please let us know!*

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### How to Support Us

Your financial support, either one-time or ongoing, or helping to arrange for UnlockingBrainTumors.org to become a corporate beneficiary, is invaluable to our core mission to raise funds and redistribute them to our beneficiaries, and therefore, directly to research. We also have a need for volunteers who can support UnlockingBrainTumors.org in any number of ways, including fulfillment of fundraising campaigns, event support, marketing, speaking events and other channels. Even linking to [www.unlockingbraintumors.org](http://www.unlockingbraintumors.org) from your site will help to raise awareness for our organization and support our community.

For more information, please contact Steve at (616) 335-9050 (office) or (312) 375-8346 (cell).



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