Celebrate Birthdays with a Facebook Fundraiser

Over the past year, many of us have celebrated *quarantine birthdays* by finding new and unique ways to share our special day with friends and family from afar. From car parades to sending balloon bouquets and Zoom parties, one way to celebrate a family member or friend's life is to support a cause close to their heart.

One of the easiest ways to share a cause that you care about is by setting up a Facebook fundraiser in celebration of your birthday or just because. Giving back is better when friends pitch in and that's exactly what happens when you create a Facebook Fundraiser. As we look forward to our own birthdays, as well as our friends' birthdays, celebrating with a Facebook Fundraiser for pancreatic cancer research is icing on the cake. Your support will raise awareness in the community and the generosity of friends and family will give us momentum to fight another day!

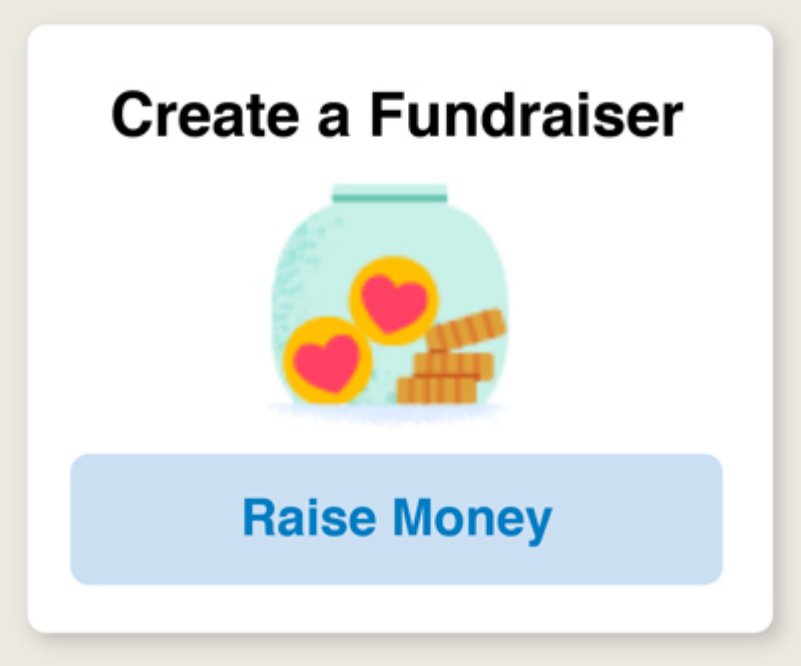
What is a Facebook Fundraiser?

Facebook Fundraisers are a feature on the social media platform that allows users to create and share a fundraising page with friends and family. The page helps supporters collect donations for a cause they care about in honor of their birthday or just because they want to give back. Users may add a photo or write a story to share why they are fundraising or keep it simple with the default text and image. Select the Hirshberg Foundation as a beneficiary and then post to your page. Fundraisers are easily shared with Facebook friends to help raise money. Give your birthday special meaning and make a difference in the fight to

cure pancreatic cancer!

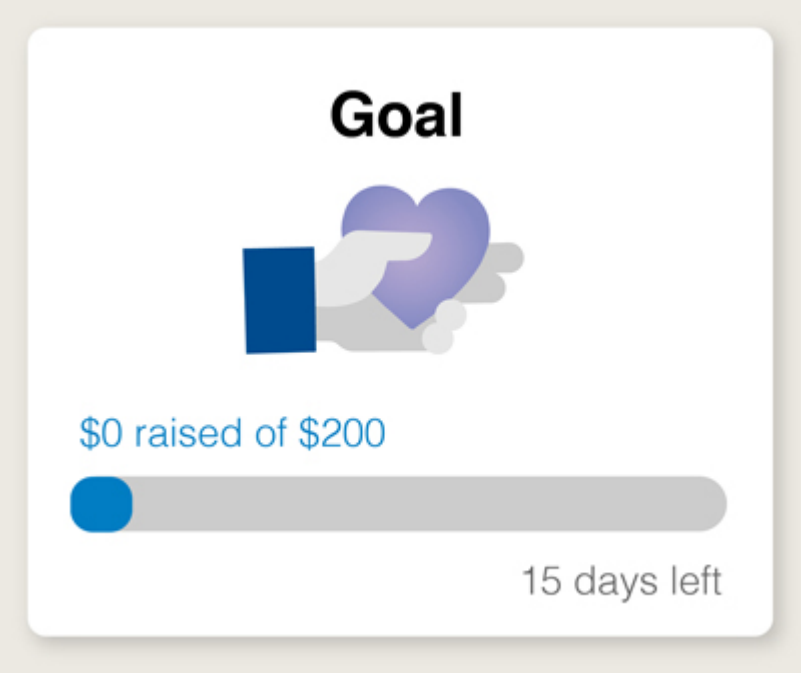
Get Started in 3 Easy Steps!

Create a Facebook Fundraiser with a few simple steps to create and launch your page. If you're curious what a Facebook Fundraiser looks like, preview these wonderful Facebook Fundraising pages for a Birthday and another to Honor a Loved One.



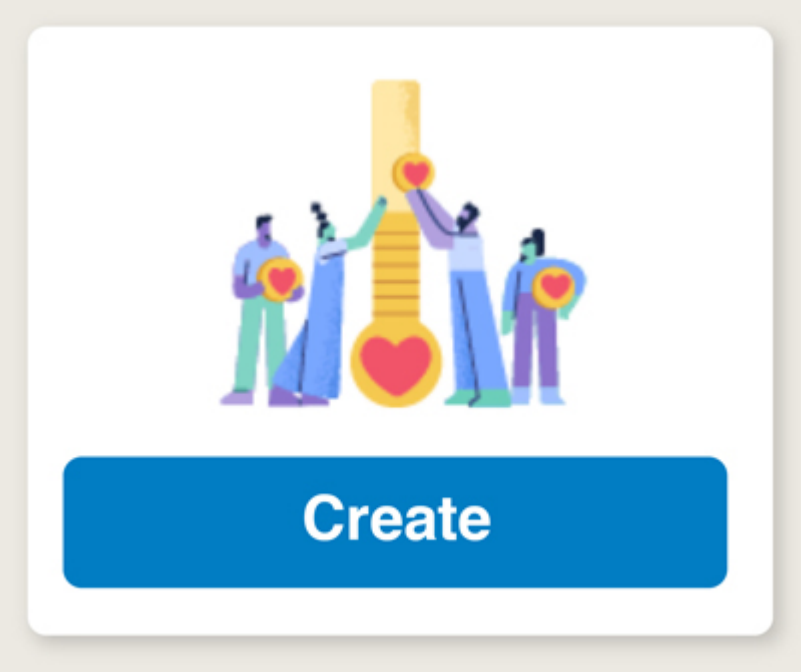
Step 1:

Click the link to open a new Facebook Fundraising page



Step 2:

Add a Fundraising Goal. Text and a Photo are Optional.



Step 3:

Click the blue ‘Create’ button and your fundraiser will launch!

Hirshberg funded UCLA study finds combination therapy suppresses pancreatic tumor growth

UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center researchers, including our Scientific Advisory Board member and close collaborator, Dr. Timothy Donahue have uncovered a therapy that subdues tumor growth. The study, published in the prestigious *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, was funded by the Hirshberg Foundation the National Cancer Institute. As Dr. Donahue told us, “This project helps us to better understand the biology of pancreatic cancer and how to use that information to develop improved treatment strategies.”

A hallmark of what makes pancreatic cancer so difficult to treat is the tumor’s extensively reprogrammed metabolic network. All cells, including cancer cells, function by transforming nutrients into building blocks for cellular processes. Many of these processes require the critical cofactors NAD and its reduced form, NADH to carry out those processes.

The published research focuses on a subset of pancreatic tumors that express high intratumoral interferon signaling (IFN). The

team found that tumors with high type I IFN signaling, trigger a decrease in the level of NAD and NADH in pancreatic cancer cells. The study furthers our understanding of the biology of pancreatic cancer, including the mechanism by which NAD depletion occurs, a vulnerability that can be used in treatment. They showed that NAD and NADH can be further depleted by inhibition of a compensatory enzyme, NAMPT. These chemical cofactors are crucial for cell functions so reducing their availability can decrease tumor growth and disease progression.

The study demonstrated that cells with high type I IFN signaling were more sensitive to NAMPT inhibitors, which inhibit a major pathway in NAD synthesis. The use of NAMPT inhibitors paired with new systemic drugs, called STING agonists, which increase type I IFN signaling, showed not only decreased pancreatic tumor growth, but also resulted in fewer liver metastases.

The findings provide evidence that if tumors with high IFN signaling can be identified, or if IFN signaling can be amplified in tumor cells, those tumors may have greater sensitivity to treatment with NAMPT inhibitors. If so, the combination could provide greater treatment options for pancreatic cancer and improved outcomes. “This project is an example of how continuing to understand the biology of this disease will help us to improve the overall survival.” Dr. Donahue told us.

Funded through the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, this research builds on the Seed Grant relationship forged in 2009 when the Hirshberg Foundation first funded Dr. Donahue. Senior author of the study, Dr. Timothy Donahue, is the Chief of Surgical Oncology, Program Director of the General Surgery Residency Program and member of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases. This research was a collaboration with senior author Dr. Caius Radu, Professor of

Molecular and Medical Pharmacology, first authors Dr. Alexandra Moore, resident physician in the department of surgery at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, and Dr. Lei Zhou, a visiting assistant project scientist in the department of surgery.

We applaud the researchers for deepening our understanding of pancreatic cancer biology and moving us another step closer to improved treatment options and ultimately a cure. These interdisciplinary collaborations are crucial for translating research from the bench to the bedside. As Dr. Donahue said, “I am optimistic that therapy for pancreatic cancer will markedly improve in the near future.” Thanks to your support, our momentum is moving us closer to a cure.

Read the UCLA news article →

Read the original research publication →

Anything is Possible When the Goal is Saving Lives!

Dear Hirshberg Foundation Family,

When 2021 began, I felt a renewed sense of hope for great things to come as we forged ahead with our efforts to be part of the cure. **Our scientists, who you helped fund, are reminding the world that anything is possible when the goal is to save lives.** This year we look forward to our investigators delivering exciting results, offering new & innovative resources to patients, and bringing our community together again. I feel

optimistic and hope you do too!

In January I was given the greatest gift imaginable for my birthday. We hosted our first Patient & Family Webinar celebrating a 10-year, 20-year and 30-year survivor as they shared their personal journeys. Guests from 3 continents learned from these remarkable survivors, or 'thrivers' as one of our speakers identified. **What was once thought to be impossible has already become a reality – a full and healthier life after a diagnosis**. And the common message from everyone was "Don't listen to statistics!" These insightful monthly webinars will continue and I promise an informative year for patients and caregivers nationwide.

I also recently received notice that our Chief Scientific Advisor, Dr. Vay Liang Go, received the 2021 American Gastroenterology Mentor Award. He is the Co-Director of the UCLA Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases and has been instrumental in the creation of this center and mentoring young investigators over the years. **Dr. Go has helped lead our vast research efforts making his role in our foundation's growth pivotal**. The pancreatic cancer medical community has made incredible strides with his guidance and we are profoundly grateful.

The progress we're making is a joint effort and results become a reality because of your donations. Your first donation or monthly gift of 2021 will allow us to keep providing invaluable patient resources and pursue more collaborative research projects. As we raise awareness throughout February's National Cancer Prevention Month, we ask for your support. Help us continue to take proactive steps to prevent a pancreatic cancer diagnosis for all loved ones in the future!

With gratitude,

Agi
Founder

February is National Cancer Prevention Month: Genetics

If you have a history of pancreatic cancer in your family, a basic understanding of genetic risk factors and resources may help you prevent a diagnosis or detect it early. We may not "have a say" when it comes to DNA but we are empowered to learn about pancreatic cancer, talk to family members about our health history and take steps to lessen risk. This knowledge, in combination with the resources the Hirshberg Foundation provides, can help address your concerns about Familial Pancreatic Cancer (FPC).

When two first-degree relatives (parent, child or sibling) have been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, seeking genetic counseling is part of your path to education and prevention. Having a family history does not necessarily mean you will develop pancreatic cancer, but it can increase your risk. Familial or hereditary pancreatic cancer accounts for about 10% of pancreatic cancer diagnosis.

Gene mutations can be passed down through generations, known as inherited mutations and can increase your risk for developing pancreatic and other cancers. For example, the BRCA1 & BRCA2 gene mutations, in part, account for an increased risk of cancer among Ashkenazi Jews. Several genetic mutations are currently being researched for their connection to an increased

risk of developing pancreatic and other cancers. These genes include: PRSS1 BRCA1, BRCA2, ATM, PALB2, MLH1, MSH2, EPCAM, MSH6, APC, STK11, and CDKN2A. Each of these genes have a different risk profile and different cancer risks depending on the individual gene. Genetic testing and counseling can lead to medical management to reduce the chance of developing cancer or increased surveillance for cancer, with the goal of detecting cancer earlier when treatment options and outcomes are better.

Learning your family history and knowing the risk factors can help you take proactive steps. You can find a genetic counselor in the US or Canada by contacting the National Society of Genetic Counselors. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) recommends genetic counselling for all individuals diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, however, genetic testing is not limited to patients. As you investigate your family history, it is also important to understand the basics about this disease. Take the time to discover what your pancreas is and which modifiable risk factors you can prevent. Understanding your genetic make-up will help you determine whether your DNA puts you at higher risk and how to tackle those challenges.

Learn more about genetic risk factors.

Genetic Counseling

Wendy Conlon, MS, CGC, a genetic counselor with the UCLA Center for Pancreatic Diseases is a highly esteemed and trusted speaker for Hirshberg Foundation educational events. She oversees surveillance of patients and their family members, provides risk assessment, genetic counseling, and genetic testing for individuals with pancreatic cancer and their at-risk relatives. She helps individuals and families navigate their treatment options, as well as other cancer prevention strategies. In 2020

she was featured in our ongoing Patient & Family Webinar Series providing important updates on genetic counseling and access to testing during COVID 19. In 2019, she also provided her expertise when she presented on *Why Should I See a Genetic Counselor*at the Hirshberg Foundation's annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer. We invite you to take advantage of these videos and other resources shared so you can learn about the benefits of genetic counseling.

Watch *Why Should I See a Genetic Counselor*

Watch Genetic Counseling: Review and Updates During COVID-19

Cannabis Components and Cancer: What We Know and Where We're Headed

Dr. Ziva Cooper, Director of the UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative, will join our Patient and Family Webinar Series to talk about the history of cannabis and what has been established with respect to cannabis and cancer. Dr. Cooper will discuss the origins of cannabis, its various cannabinoid components, current research and an exciting new study that may help cancer patients.

Dr. Cooper will spotlight a new study on the pain relief and appetite stimulating effects of cannabigerol (CBG), a minor cannabinoid that seems to lack the psychoactive side effects of THC. This research could provide a new tool to help manage the side effects of cancer treatment, such as loss of appetite and

pain. The study will investigate whether CBG, alone or in synergistic combination with low doses of THC, can provide analgesic (pain relief) and appetite-stimulating properties in humans. It is particularly exciting as this will be the first study of CBG in humans.

Please join us for an hour of interesting conversation with Dr. Ziva Cooper on Friday, February 26th, 2021 at 1pm (PST). The presentation will be followed by a Q & A and our new **Survivor Chat**. During this time of isolation we continue to do what we can to bring our pancreatic cancer community together. Our **Survivor Chat**, is a space for patients and loved ones to have an opportunity to spend time talking amongst each other once the webinar is over. Share stories, information and ask questions of your fellow participants from the comfort of your living room!

As the Director of the UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative, Dr. Cooper strives to incorporate a translational approach to understating both the potential therapeutic and adverse effects associated with cannabis and cannabinoids. Dr. Cooper is also Associate Professor-in-Residence in the Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences at David Geffen School of Medicine. Her current research involves understanding variables that influence both the therapeutic potential and adverse effects of cannabis and cannabinoids.

More about UCLA's Cannabis Research Initiative:

The UCLA Cannabis Research Initiative (CRI) is a strategic initiative out of the UCLA Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior. As one of the first university programs focused on the multidisciplinary study of cannabis, they aim to bring together experts from diverse fields to

advance the understanding the plant's impact on body, brain, and society. Despite unprecedented access, nearly a century of research restrictions and funding barriers have contributed to a lack of scientific knowledge about cannabis and hemp, particularly in regards to the therapeutic potential and the industrial applications. Their mission is to address the most pressing questions related to the impact of cannabis legalization through rigorous scientific study and discourse across disciplines.

Watch Webinar

February is National Cancer Prevention Month: Lifestyle

Throughout National Cancer Prevention Month we'll share risk factors, scientific research, webinars on topics touching on prevention and facts about how you can make an impact.

The choices we make *and* avoid when it comes to our personal health can have a ripple effect throughout the body. Research has shown that certain lifestyle choices, such as smoking, can damage cells and create a domino effect throughout our DNA. When cells become damaged, there is a risk of gene mutations that can cause cells to divide at unprecedented rates and grow exponentially. When cells grow rapidly, out of control or do not die off at the appropriate time, they cause tumors. In most pancreatic cancer cases, risk factors such as smoking, obesity,

stage-2 diabetes and chronic pancreatitis can cause these DNA mutations. The first steps on the path to prevention are to adopt a healthy lifestyle and lower your modifiable risk factors.

Our Path to Prevention worksheet outlines risk factors to avoid and steps you can take to get on track towards wellness. While the scientific community is investigating possible methods for prevention and early screening, it is up to us to stay vigilant about our health. If you smoke make a plan to quit, reduce your alcohol intake and remember that your food choices matter. Build a lifestyle around nutritious food, find ways to boost the immune system, take care to reduce stress and kick bad habits as these changes may even save your life. Speak with your doctor on the best course of action to reduce inflammation, prevent insulin-resistance and lower stress. The path to prevention starts with a healthy lifestyle that can help lower your risk for cancer.

Share our Path to Prevention worksheet with your community »

Prevention Research

In 2020, a team of UCLA researchers were awarded an NIH grant for $5.75 million to study the roles diet, obesity and inflammation play in the development of pancreatic cancer. “We know that the biological mechanisms of obesity, such as inflammation, can lead to the development of pancreatic cancer,” said Dr. Guido Eibl, Laboratory Director of the Hirshberg Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory. This study will look at the mechanisms that drive the formation of pancreas tumors with the goal of prevention strategies for those at higher risk. Dr. Eibl included, "Several known and modifiable risk factors can increase the risk for pancreatic cancer, including obesity, smoking, and alcohol. In addition, chronic

pancreatitis and genetic factors can enhance the risk for pancreatic cancer. It is paramount to avoid or lower known risk factors, manage chronic pancreatitis, and get genetic counseling (if pancreatic cancer runs in the family) to reduce the risk of and prevent pancreatic cancer."

Read more about Dr. Eibl’s research »