

School of Nursing Grant Focused on Emotional Wellness

A new study, funded through the Hirshberg Foundation's [Seed Grant program](#), will focus on the emotional wellbeing of patients and their caregivers as they face pancreatic cancer.

Through a new partnership with the clinical teams at the [UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#) and the psychosocial clinicians at the [Simms/Mann-UCLA Center for Integrative Oncology](#), Dr. [Eden Brauer](#), Dr. Denice Economou, and Barbara Demman have developed a study to identify the optimal way to provide a mindfulness-based intervention to patients and caregivers facing pancreatic cancer. The team has devised an intervention plan to provide four pre-recorded, self-paced modules that will focus on four aspects of the cancer journey and ways to be mindful. These include: 1. Introduction to Mindfulness, 2. Cultivating Self-Compassion, 3. Making the Most of the Moment, and 4. Life Review and Legacy Envisioning.

These modules, recorded by a nursing faculty member who is a mindfulness certified facilitator, will be available online through a study website so participants can engage with them in a flexible way. This will allow study participants to access the four modules when it is convenient for them and as often as they need over a six-week period. The team's primary objective will be to determine the best way to provide a web-based mindfulness practice and set of tools for those facing pancreatic cancer. Another objective of the study is to collect data on other aspects of the patient and caregiver emotional well-being throughout the cancer journey. This mindfulness intervention aims to track and improve self-reported symptoms of depression, anxiety, spiritual wellbeing, sleep, and quality of life for both the patients and caregivers.

The Hirshberg Foundation is honored and excited to partner with the UCLA School of Nursing to work towards understanding the ways to support and improve both patient and caregiver emotional well-being throughout the cancer journey. This research is made possible thanks to our community.

Mindfulness Study

Patients are not required to have been treated for cancer at UCLA. However, they do need to have a caregiver who will also enroll. This can be anyone, from a family member to a friend to a loved one who has supported them in their cancer journey.

[Learn more and enroll today](#)



The World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition Highlights the Hirshberg Foundation

This spring, the World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition (WPCC) is shining a light on the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. As a member of the WPCC, we celebrate and recognize that we are not alone in this fight. With over 100 member organizations from 40 countries, the coalition raises awareness, inspires action, and ultimately creates better outcomes for patients. Every organization in the WPCC brings something unique and remarkable to the table. As the pancreatic cancer foundation that pioneered these efforts, we are honored to share our history, mission, and ongoing projects.

WORLD PANCREATIC CANCER COALITION MEMBER PROFILE

In 1997, the Hirshberg Foundation was established to fund groundbreaking scientific research, provide patient education and support, and sustain the hope that this cancer will be eradicated once and for all. To date, the organization offers many programs focused on accelerating multidisciplinary pancreatic cancer research, providing comprehensive support services to patients, educating families, and raising community awareness.

WHERE WE STARTED

Over twenty-five years ago, Agi Hirshberg set out on an extraordinary journey to lead the fight against pancreatic cancer in honor of her late husband, Ronnie. Determined to find

answers, she made a promise that still holds true: she would be relentless in the fight against this disease, and she would never give up. Today, the Foundation she started remains at the forefront of pancreatic cancer research and is a beacon of hope for patients and families facing this disease.

The Hirshberg Foundation's research efforts launched with the opening of the Ronald S. Hirshberg Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research Laboratory at UCLA and the Foundation's world-renowned Seed Grant Program. The Seed Grant Program provides early funding for researchers, opening the door for investigators to secure additional support to advance their work. To date, over 120 individual and collaborative Hirshberg Seed Grants have been funded at more than 45 research institutions in the US and abroad.

Under Agi's direction, the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Board and an ever-growing community of doctors and scientists have been instrumental in elevating patient care, leading research globally, and increasing awareness in the medical community. In 2005, the Foundation funded the UCLA Pancreas Tissue Bank, sharing specimens to aid the basic, translational, and clinical research activities of investigators. That same year, the first Symposium for Pancreatic Cancer was presented to the pancreatic cancer community, providing critical information and updates on treatment, research, and topics including nutrition, genetics, surveillance, and more to patients, caregivers, the research and the medical community.

To date, the Hirshberg Foundation's patient programs include one-on-one support, patient-focused events, educational resources and webinars, financial aid for low-income households, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Guidelines, and the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases at UCLA. Patients and families are at the heart of the Foundation's

mission, and each of these resources empowers them as they navigate a diagnosis with the support they need.

Thanks to the partnership, guidance, and brilliance of doctors and investigators from every corner of the globe, significant strides have been made in both research and patient care. Today, the Foundation remains focused on finding a cure for pancreatic cancer and empowering patients and families whose lives have been touched by this disease. Advances being made are not only offering families hope, they're giving patients a fighting chance.

WHO WE ARE AT OUR CORE

When the Foundation was established, it was organized around Agi's vision and five mission pillars. To date, the Foundation has accomplished 4 of those 5 goals, with a cure being the final piece of the puzzle. The hard-fought battles of our patients, families, researchers, and medical community have brought us closer than ever to a cancer-free life, and the Foundation remains committed to our mission and our mantra to Never Give Up!

[Read our mission pillars](#)

Ongoing Projects

Seed Grant Program

Each year, the Foundation Seed Grant program provides research funding to innovative projects led by basic and clinical investigators. To date, over 120 research projects have been

funded at 45 medical and research institutions in the United States and overseas, many of which have gone on to receive NIH support. The program funds research in treatment/therapy, patient care, early diagnosis, detection, cancer biology, basic science, prevention/metabolism, and research core facilities. It is allocated annually- submissions pouring in from locations around the world, with a notable emphasis on collaborative initiatives involving multiple research institutions.

[Learn more about the Seed Grant Program](#)

Symposium for Patients & Families

The 18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer returns to the Luskin Center on April 13th with a host of new topics and guest speakers. This invaluable event is provided free of charge and brings together patients, caregivers, medical professionals, and scientific researchers. This year's Symposium will cover topics from genetics to enzymes, the Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Consortium, and the Canopy Cancer Collective. The highlight of this event includes a patient and caregiver panel sharing personal experiences, unique perspectives, and inspiration with survivors and caregivers. Guests may attend in person or online, with videos made available later for viewing.

[Learn more about the Symposium](#)

Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases

The Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Disease continues to set the standard for state-of-the-art care as it grows and thrives. The Center has made tremendous progress, assembling an ever-growing arsenal of tools to understand and mitigate the effects

of the illness and advance its quest for greater patient comfort. Now, under the direction of Dr. Timothy Donahue, the Center recently opened in a new larger space at UCLA where patients can receive top-notch care from their entire medical team. Patients are able to meet with surgeons, medical oncologists, gastroenterologists, palliative care specialists, dietitians, genetic counselors, clinical trials coordinators, and therapists from the Simms-Mann psychosocial care team – all in one location and often in one visit.

[Learn more about the Center](#)

UCLA Partnership

The longstanding partnership between the Hirshberg Foundation and UCLA plays a crucial role in advancing research and improving patient outcomes. The Foundation funds laboratories, core research facilities, and the Pancreas Tissue Bank. The relationship extends to psychosocial care from the Simms/ Mann Center for Integrative Oncology as well. As a member of the Canopy Collective, our UCLA team is making great strides in nutrition, palliative care, genetic testing, clinical trial participation, and patient education. The clinical trial portfolio of the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases is also among the strongest in the country. Trials have robust patient enrollment, with collaboration across multidisciplinary teams.

[Learn more about our UCLA partnership](#)

“Love Rides” at the 12th Annual Tour de Pier

South Bay artist displays life-size custom artwork at the award-winning outdoor stationary cycling fundraiser to honor loved ones and friends in the fight against cancer

In the battle against cancer, it takes love and the dedication of community to make a difference. South Bay artist [Wendy Stillman](#) is showing her support by creating the custom-design mixed media painting, “Love Rides” which will be on display at the [12th Annual Tour de Pier](#) outdoor stationary cycling fundraiser on Sunday, May 19 at the Manhattan Beach Pier & Strand.

Masterfully using acrylic on canvas, Stillman’s artwork is a large, vibrant 7.5 feet by 7.5 feet painting featuring healing heart hands surrounded by symbols of support. “As a local artist and longtime resident here in the South Bay, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to create a large custom piece of art for the Tour de Pier,” said Stillman. “These hand hearts represent all the love people are expressing by participating in this event and riding at the Tour de Pier to honor loved ones, friends, and the fight against cancer.” She added, “I wanted to create a large, strong piece both physically and visually to symbolize the power we have collectively to stand together as a community to fight the fight, and what better way to symbolize that than two hands coming together to symbolize love.”

Since the launch of the Tour de Pier more than a decade ago, the hand heart gesture has been incorporated into rides as a symbol of love and hope for those fighting cancer. This year, the Tour de Pier is honored that Stillman will be sharing her incredible art with the community. “Our goal this year is to weave the

healing power of art into the Tour de Pier. Over the years, the hand heart has been a unifying gesture of love and support between our instructors and the participants,” said Heath Gregory, Co-Founder of the Tour de Pier. “We wanted to embrace hand heart fully and extend the sentiment into the greater community with Wendy’s help and talent. Her piece, ‘Love Rides’ is a symbol of the love we have for our greater South Bay community and a message of love and hope to those fighting cancer.”

Broadening community engagement, the Tour de Pier shared the “Love Rides” collaboration with the youth arts program of [Indivisible Arts at Resin](#) in Hermosa Beach, a nonprofit organization dedicated to cultivating creativity, consciousness, and connection through the arts. Stillman created a project for kids to create smaller 8-inch by 8-inch versions of the hand heart painting so they could participate in the community’s effort to show support for all those fighting against cancer. Artwork of students from Indivisible Arts will be showcased, along with Stillman’s painting, at the Tour de Pier.

The hand heart design will continue to have prominent presence at the Tour de Pier as it will appear on the front of this year’s exclusively designed t-shirts worn by participants and volunteers. Hosted by [Splatterz Studio](#), kids and adults can craft their own hand heart design (for a suggested donation) at the Health & Fitness Expo which is free and open to the public.

To catch a sneak peek of Stillman’s painting in the weeks leading up to the Tour de Pier, visit Culture Brewing Co. in Manhattan Beach and the Bay Club in El Segundo.

The Tour de Pier will be held at the iconic Manhattan Beach Pier & Strand, 2 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Manhattan Beach, CA 90266 from 8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. The fundraiser benefits a trio of

nonprofit cancer organizations that work tirelessly to advance research and provide multi-layer support services: Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research, Cancer Support Community South Bay, and the Uncle Kory Foundation for Brain Cancer Research. To learn more about “Love Rides” and the Tour de Pier, visit www.tourdepier.com.



Agi's National Doctors Day Message

When I started the Hirshberg Foundation more than 26 years ago with the goal of eradicating this disease, I relied on the doctors at UCLA who had cared for my late husband Ronnie for guidance. Over the years, [these doctors became instrumental](#) in the battle against pancreatic cancer by [elevating patient care](#), leading the [research front](#), and increasing awareness in the medical community. **Today, on National Doctors Day, I hope you will join me in celebrating the extraordinary impact they have all made on our loved ones and in the field of pancreatic cancer.**

Dr. Howard A. Reber, Ronnie's surgeon, was the first to steward the Hirshberg Foundation. [Dr Vay Liang W. Go](#) was by my side for more than two decades and was the visionary behind our Seed Grant Program. Long before [Dr. O. Joe Hines](#) became the Chair of the Department of Surgery at UCLA, he helmed the [Hirshberg Translational Lab](#) and was the first Director of the [UCLA Agi Hirshberg Pancreatic Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#). **The partnership and brilliance of these doctors led to significant strides forward in both research and patient care.**



Today, we have the best and brightest doctors guiding our efforts. Our Scientific Advisory Board Chair, Miklos Sahin-Toth, MD, and the Director of the UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases, Timonthy Donahue, MD, are the top leaders in pancreatic cancer. We have outstanding medical professionals serving on our [Scientific Advisory Board](#), as physicians and caretakers to patients, and making [groundbreaking discoveries](#) in the lab. Their steadfast work is changing the trajectory of this disease and bringing us closer to a cure.

I am grateful for the expertise, commitment, and friendship of each doctor who helped the Hirshberg Foundation pioneer our path forward. If you would like to shine a light on a doctor who has supported our fight against pancreatic cancer, someone who has been your champion, or helped a loved one, I invite you to [share your story](#).

With gratitude,

Agi Hirshberg
Founder

New Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases Unveiled

The [UCLA Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#) has moved to a beautiful new space and the momentous opening was commemorated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 13, 2024. At the Center, patients and their loved ones can receive holistic, groundbreaking care in one central office. This new location enhances a key pillar of our mission for providing and redefining state-of-the-art care.

In establishing the Foundation, Agi's vision was to offer patients and families a place to receive the best care from top-notch medical professionals all in one location. That vision became one of the [pillars of our mission](#), and it became a reality when the Integrative Practice Unit opened its doors in 2015. Over the past few years, the Center's needs have evolved, and a new location was needed.

Now, under the direction of [Dr. Timonthy Donahue](#), the bright and welcoming space offers more room to serve patients and provides a new, cohesive patient experience. Patients and caretakers are able to see surgeons, medical oncologists, gastroenterologists, palliative care specialists, dietitians, genetic counselors, clinical trials coordinators, and therapists from the Simms-Mann psychosocial care team all in one location and often in one visit. The Center sets the standard for state-of-the-art care and will accommodate the needs of patients by redefining the best in patient care for years to come.

The new top-floor location, with stunning views and natural

light, features larger, upgraded exam rooms to accommodate patients and caregivers with enhanced privacy, while the addition of two team collaboration areas provides better access for improved patient-provider communication. For nearly a decade, the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases has grown to become one of the nation's premier comprehensive programs for pancreatic diseases through the Integrated Practice Unit (IPU). With a focus on personalized treatment from a collaborative research-physician team, the Center can deliver some of the best results in the nation.

The Center houses the UCLA clinical program with multidisciplinary research and education programs at the UCLA main campus as well as at sister institutions. Established by Agi Hirshberg, founder of the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research, the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases will continue to support cutting-edge investigations and remain a beacon of hope for patients and their families. This is all possible thanks to the continued generosity of our community.

Our Spring Momentum Newsletter

Spring has arrived, and with this new season, we're excited to share the progress we've made in 2024! This year began with positive news from the American Cancer Society. The [5-year survival rate of pancreatic cancer increased to 13%](#), continuing an upward trend over the last few years. This is a positive indicator for patients battling pancreatic cancer today, and we're eager to see that number skyrocket. This news, along with the announcement of our upcoming Symposium for survivors &

families and the most recent research updates, all demonstrate how your support leads to real results. We look forward to taking big strides forward this year, and we are grateful for your continued dedication.

Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for the Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases

This month the Hirshberg Foundation celebrated opening a beautiful new location for the [Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#). Agi's vision for this center was to offer patients a place to receive care from top-notch medical professionals collaborating in one location. This has become a beacon of hope and truly groundbreaking for patient care. The new, warm, and welcoming space allows more patients to be seen by their entire medical team in one location with the most advanced treatment options. Under the exceptional leadership of [Dr. Timonthy Donahue](#), the center is providing the very best care for our survivors as they navigate a diagnosis. This is all possible thanks to the continued generosity of our community.

Research Updates from our UCLA Labs

Over the years, we have deepened our understanding of pancreatic cancer thanks to the work of dedicated researchers from our Seed Grant Program, labs at UCLA, and Tissue Bank. Year-round, these investigators advance research in the global scientific community, and more recently, they have shared updates in early detection, genetics, and pathology.

Dr. Guido Eibl and Hirshberg Scientific Advisory Chair, Dr.

Miklos Sahin-Toth lead two of our laboratories at UCLA. The collaboration between the [Hirshberg Translation Laboratory](#) and the [Sahin-Toth Laboratory](#) is central to our work on campus. We invite you to review their publications – this is how your donation impacts science.

Additionally, Dr. Nelson Yee, a 2017 Seed Grant recipient, continues to make progress with his study on [biomarkers for early detection](#). We hope you will take a moment to learn more about his [project](#), and we look forward to sharing more updates in the future! Finally, we're thrilled to share a new [video about our UCLA Pancreas Tissue Bank](#). Established in 2005, the Tissue Bank is led by David Dawson, M.D., Ph.D., Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. The [Tissue Bank is a vital resource](#) for the research community and a shining example of collaboration.

The 18th Annual Symposium is Coming Up

The Hirshberg Foundation invites patients, caregivers, and families to join us, either in-person or virtually, for a day of learning and connecting at the [18th Annual Symposium on Pancreatic Cancer](#). In addition to our Survivor and Caregiver Panel, this year's topics will include [Pancreatic Enzyme Education](#), [Genetic Testing](#) for Pancreatic Cancer, [PRECEDE](#): Pancreatic Cancer Early Detection Consortium, and Improving Pancreatic Cancer Patient Care: [Canopy Cancer Collective](#). This invaluable event brings together patients and families, medical professionals, and scientific researchers in an intimate space where they may learn from one another. [Support the symposium with a donation](#) and help us continue to offer this event free of

charge to patients, caregivers, and families.

Registration for Tour De Pier is Open

The 12th Annual Tour de Pier event returns to Manhattan Beach on Sunday, May 19th. If you haven't participated in this event, you're missing out! We're bringing stationary cycling back to the beautiful scenic views of the Manhattan Beach Pier, where you'll also enjoy an expo, entertainment, event swag, and, most importantly, a community committed to fighting cancer. Be a hero and make an impact on families facing pancreatic cancer today. Join us as we ride for hope, ride for love, and ride for a cure on May 19th. Watch our ["We Can Be Heroes"](#) Video and register today!

HTT Recap

This past St Patrick's Day the 35 members of the Hirshberg Training Team culminated their months long training schedule to complete the LA Marathon or Charity Half Marathon. In addition to training, each participant committed to raising \$1000 for our Foundation and far surpassed their team goal by raising more than \$155,000. As an Official Charity Partner of the LA Marathon, we hosted our beloved course support station, the Purple People Party, at a new location in Beverly Hills. Over 100 volunteers cheered, danced, and passed out treats to the thousands of runners while raising awareness for our cause.

2024 Upcoming Events

[Symposium](#) – Saturday, April 13, 2024

[Tour de Pier](#) – Sunday, May 19, 2024

[LA Cancer Challenge](#) – Sunday, October 27, 2024