

# Messages of Hope for Cancer Survivors

June is National Cancer Survivor's Month and we are happy to share these heartfelt messages with all those facing cancer. All month long we celebrate survivorship and honor those in treatment as we work towards a cancer-free future.

Share your message of hope [here](#). Together, let's provide support, hope and love with all those facing pancreatic cancer!

*I am an 8 + year survivor of pancreatic cancer. I was diagnosed in 2012 and had a distal pancreatectomy in September, followed by chemo for six months. I am happy and blessed to say I am still here, cancer free, and thriving! There is hope and you can survive too!*

*Barbara*

*Be well informed but don't let anyone take away your hope. Hope gives us the power to endure what we think we can't, to heal. Remember to enjoy life, enjoy the little things. Be your own best advocate and keep fighting. It's ok to have bad days, to feel like you want to quit, but remember what or who you are fighting for and continue. Even the strongest of us get tired and need to lean on someone else for a bit, or have someone give us a hug and say it's okay.*

*Roberta*

*Thank you to all the researchers, the clinical trials, the*

doctors, pharmacists, scientists, oncologists and nurses working to cure pancreatic cancer patients each day.

George

The greatest gift I have received from my recent stage IV pancreatic cancer diagnosis is the deeper appreciation of each day of life and the deeper connections I have with each person, object and experience in my life. It is the gratitude and connections that give me strength and purpose to get through each step of this journey. Life is so much more beautiful when I focus on the wonderful things I have and not on what I don't have.

I am so thankful for the treatment options available for me, only made possible by incredible foundations such as the wonderful team at Hirshberg Foundation, generous donations from supporters and believers in the amazing scientists and doctors working hard to give us reasons for greater hope each day.

Esther

I remember hearing that the tumor on my husband's pancreas could be cancer and that the 5-year survival rate less than 5%. Boom! He was 50, and our kids were still too young. When I told my hubby's brother that the survival rate was only 5% (and I was shaking) he said this to me,

"So, why can't he be in the 5%?" HOPE. Those words let light in and we began the fight! We formed our team of family, medical experts, support people and HOPE was restored. That was 11 years ago. He was in that 5%!

In this pancreatic cancer journey, it's hard and scary and so

*sad. But I KNOW that hardwork is happening and progress is happening and numbers are changing in a better direction. I KNOW that there is HOPE to increase them further. I KNOW! And so does my husband! Eleven years, what a gift! So thankful and full of gratitude and HOPE.*

*Cyndy*

*We are all individuals. Focus on surviving and positive energy instead of looking at stats or educating yourself on survival. Educate yourself in health and what that means instead. Maybe explore Ayurveda or cannabis if you are looking for gentle plant medicine. I was diagnosed in 2010 and I am a survivor.*

*Christina*

*I am a 16 year survivor, Blessed Be! My motto was "leave no stone unturned." I did everything the doctor told me to do, and everything meditative and spiritual my heart and hospice counselor suggested. Hospice was so supportive. I exercised and walked daily and ate healthy as much as I could. It was so long ago and I'm so healthy now, I can only thank heaven. I tell everyone who is interested about my story because there IS hope and there ARE angels.*

*Julie*

*Hang in there! Every new day brings a chance for hope, more treatments and cures. Thank you to the Hirshberg Foundation for all the information and support, you are so helpful and inspiring! Appreciate it all!*

Joanne

*Each morning is a new day- live, love, experience...cherish each moment!*

Kevin

*Hang in there, be strong, have resilience. You are not alone, relatives, patients and the pancreatic cancer community is here to support you.*

Ana

*Happy National Cancer Survivors Day! I would just like to celebrate all cancer survivors perseverance, strength, passion and enthusiasm in each day, your spirit inspires all of us! It's been an honor being able to support this amazing foundation and be around such a great atmosphere of people!*

Brandon

*I am a 1 year Pancreatic Cancer survivor! My journey has had so many different emotions of fear, tears, pain, the unknown, but most importantly HOPE! Knowing that my medical teams and organizations like Hirshberg are doing everything they can to keep this mean cancer away and that research continues to progress gives me hope that I will continue to live a beautiful life, cancer free! I will win and beat this cancer! I am Dawnie Strong!!!*

*Dawnie*

*I am a 7 1/2 year pancreatic cancer survivor! A positive attitude is key to your recovery with the love and support of those around you.*

*Barbara*

*I was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in the year 2000. A state-of-the-art clinical trial saved my life. Twenty years later the treatments and therapies have advanced to such an extent that the protocol I received is seldom used. The past two decades of breathtaking research can truly bring hope to you who have been recently diagnosed.*

*Helping hands and hearts are waiting to help you. Be strong and know that you are not alone!*

*Lee*

*Never give up hope! There is ALWAYS reason to believe!*

*Margie*

*To all those fighting and surviving every day...this is a new day. We have significantly progressed in the search for a cure. Don't give up hope and keep fighting because there are people you don't even know praying for you, and prayer is enormous! God Bless you and keep you healthy. You were given this life because you are strong enough to live it!!!*

Noël

*We will never give up! You deserve to be celebrated every day!*

Lisa

*What a beautiful thing it is, to be able to stand tall and say;  
“ I survived”*

Rocio

*Wishing you years of health, happiness and a cancer-free future  
spent with loved ones!*

Sarah

*With love and encouragement to all who are working and  
educating themselves about pancreatic cancer and everything  
being done to support those who are affected by pancreatic  
cancer. We need this now and on into future when there will  
finally be a cure! Never give up!!*

Kelley

*You are examples of strength and we honor you for that!*

Matt

*I am doing very well after my Whipple in April of 2020. New*

*survivors should hold on to hope, no matter what happens. I am working with research doctors to update protocols by educating both patients and doctors to signs, symptoms and risks of this cancer. Early detection is the goal! Please support my efforts by letting the associations associated with pancreatic cancer know you agree that this is important for future survivors. God bless you all!*

*Laura*

*I am a 23+ years survivor of pancreatic cancer. I was diagnosed and had the Whipple surgery in January, 1998, followed by chemo and radiation therapy. I am happy to say that I am still here, cancer free, being checked by my original surgeon and oncologist at least once a year with scans and blood tests. So far, so good!!!*

*Ruth*

*Wishing everyone suffering from this horrible cancer the very best and always look at what options are available to you. I am so very thankful to have some more time and hoping it stays away. Glad I had doctors that were looking out for me and offered me options for the liver metastasis. Thankful for all the researchers and doctors and caregivers who are there for us.*

*Kay*

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# Celebrate National Research Month in May

In recognition of National Research Month, we're shining a light on extraordinary scientific advances gaining momentum in pancreatic cancer. To date, the Hirshberg Foundation has funded over 120 Seed Grant projects leading to significant [NIH funding](#), clinical trials, and [improved patient outcomes](#). Groundbreaking ideas are coming to fruition, including the use of [artificial intelligence to analyze CT scans](#) for pancreatic cancer patients and an [mRNA vaccine](#) in the pipeline to prevent disease recurrence. The greater pancreatic cancer research community remains committed to discovering answers and we are watching them turn an exciting corner.

This month and throughout the year, we look forward to sharing news from our [UCLA laboratories](#), [Seed Grant projects](#), and updates directly from the headlines. Your generous support has allowed us to increase our research efforts worldwide and we look forward to announcing the results of their efforts!

## ACTIVITY SUMMARY REPORT

The UCLA Activity Summary Report includes a comprehensive overview of advancements in research and patient care. From [66 open clinical trials](#) to individual Seed Grant updates, and news from the [Agi Hirshberg Center for Pancreatic Diseases](#) – the latest report details this progress over the past year.

[Read the Report](#)



## RESEARCH LABORATORIES

The Hirshberg Foundation's UCLA laboratories have propelled research forward in the global medical community. The collaboration between the [Hirshberg Translation Laboratory](#) and the [Sahin-Toth Laboratory](#) is central to our work on campus as they make great strides forward.

[Learn More](#)

## NCCN GUIDELINES

The Hirshberg Foundation is a sponsor of the [NCCN Guidelines for Patients: Pancreatic Cancer](#). These extensive guidelines include clinical trials and studies, care options, treatment protocols, and much more.

[Learn More](#)

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

At the latest APA meeting, lectures were led by researchers from Mayo Clinic, Cedars Sinai, and MD Anderson Cancer Center each discussing innovation in the AI space as it relates to early detection and diagnostic tests. [Take a look at our APA Video on AI](#), a symposium funded by the Hirshberg Foundation.

With your support, we are empowering the medical community to pursue groundbreaking research and initiatives that make an impact across the globe.

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# What is Type 3c Diabetes?

Type 3c diabetes develops when the pancreas is damaged in ways that affect its ability to produce insulin. Conditions such as chronic pancreatitis, cystic fibrosis, and pancreas surgery, either complete or partial removal (pancreatectomy), can lead to pancreas damage that causes diabetes. Type 3c diabetes (also known as pancreatogenic diabetes) is diabetes that comes secondary to pancreas diseases, involving the exocrine and digestive functions of the [pancreas](#).

Diabetes is a health condition that occurs when blood sugar, or glucose levels in the blood, are too high. This develops when the pancreas doesn't make any or enough insulin (a hormone), or the body doesn't respond to insulin properly and glucose levels rise in the blood.

The pancreas has two main functions in the body:

**Exocrine function:** Produces enzymes including amylase, proteases, and lipase that assist with the digestion of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.

**Endocrine function:** Sends out hormones (mainly insulin and glucagon) that control the amount of sugar in the bloodstream.

Pancreas damage that leads to type 3c diabetes may also affect the pancreas's ability to produce the enzymes that help with digestion and absorption of nutrients. This condition is called [exocrine pancreatic insufficiency \(EPI\)](#).

The difference between the various types of diabetes is what causes them. **Type 1 diabetes** is an autoimmune disease in which the immune system attacks and destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas for unknown reasons. Individuals with type 1 always need insulin to manage the condition. **Type 2 diabetes**

develops when the body doesn't make enough insulin and/or the body's cells don't respond normally to the insulin (insulin resistance). Individuals with type 2 diabetes may manage the condition with lifestyle changes, oral medication and/or insulin. **Type 3c diabetes** results from damage to the pancreas that isn't autoimmune in nature. People with type 3c often also lack the ability to produce enough enzymes their pancreas makes for digestion and absorption of nutrients. In this form of diabetes, the amount of insulin being made by the pancreas can vary. Some individuals will need to take oral diabetes medications while others may also need insulin to manage the condition.

The worldwide prevalence of type 3c diabetes is unknown. It is often misdiagnosed and under recognized because there is not a universally accepted diagnostic criteria. The management of type 3c diabetes depends on the level of damage and what caused the damage to the pancreas but may include oral medications, insulin injections, and diet and lifestyle modifications.

If you or a loved one thinks you have type 3c diabetes, please speak with your healthcare team. We are [here to help](#).

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## 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](#)



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## The World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition Highlights the Hirshberg Foundation

*This spring, the World Pancreatic Cancer Coalition (WPC) is shining a light on the Hirshberg Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research. As a member of the WPC, 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](#)

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## “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](http://www.tourdepier.com).

