



















### HIGHLIGHTS OF HOPE | SEPTEMBER 2018

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## RESEARCH



# STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY

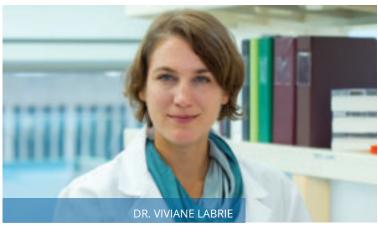
### VAI'S WOMEN SCIENTISTS ACCELERATE PROGRESS FOR THE FUTURE

#### Rigorous science, boundless creativity and diversity of thought are critical elements of a successful research enterprise.

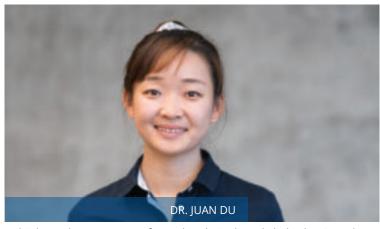
VAI is committed to fostering an environment that encourages excellence and is proud of its growing team of women faculty. Together with their collaborators in the U.S. and abroad, VAI scientists are discovering new ways to solve some of today's greatest health challenges.



Depression affects more than 300 million people worldwide, and more than 800,000 lose their lives to suicide each year. As a psychiatrist and a scientist, Dr. Lena Brundin searches for better ways to diagnose and treat these serious public health concerns by studying inflammation of the nervous system and translating her findings into new approaches to diagnosis, monitoring and treatment.



Parkinson's disease has long been considered to be a movementrelated disorder triggered by changes in the brain. Now, growing evidence shows that other parts of the body, including the gut, may play a major role in its onset and could provide new opportunities for prevention and treatment. Dr. Viviane Labrie is working to develop these new therapeutic strategies by studying the complex web of factors that give rise to Parkinson's in hopes of finding innovative ways to slow or stop its progression — something no current treatment can do.



In biology, the structure of a molecule is directly linked to its role in the body. Using the Institute's high-powered cryo-electron microscope (cryo-EM), Dr. Juan Du is working to understand the brain's intricate communication system by visualizing its smallest components, which she hopes will inform the development of new therapies for neurological diseases.



Once cancer spreads to the bone, it becomes much more difficult to treat and much more painful for the patient. Dr. Xiaohong Li studies how and why certain cancers — such as those in the breast, lung and prostate — are more likely to migrate to the skeleton in hopes of finding new ways to stop this process and to treat these aggressive cancers.

### RESEARCH

### STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY (CONTINUED)



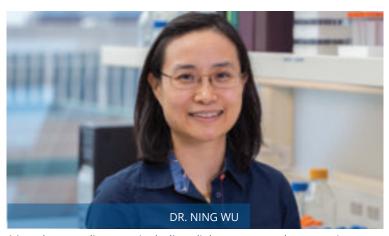
Dr. Hui Shen harnesses the power of Big Data and cutting-edge computational methods to investigate the interaction between genes and their epigenetic control systems in pursuit of new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer. She is particularly interested in women's cancers, with a focus on ovarian cancer, but is also interested in commonalities shared between different kinds of cancer



Dr. Piroska Szabó studies the flow of hereditary information from parents' DNA to their offspring, with a focus on the "epigenetic memories" that inform development. Slight alterations to these "memories," which are manifested as tags that are added to the genetic code, have consequences on health and disease risk that last throughout a person's lifetime.



Epigenetic changes impact how the instructions in our DNA are carried out, making them a key player in cancer development, progression and resistance to treatment. Dr. Hong Wen and her team are working to understand how cancer cells, particularly in pediatric cancers, exploit epigenetic processes to activate genes that cause cancer and to silence those that suppress the development of the disease. Ultimately, they hope to translate their findings into improved medications that correct these processes when they go awry, better treating cancers and enhancing the lives of patients.



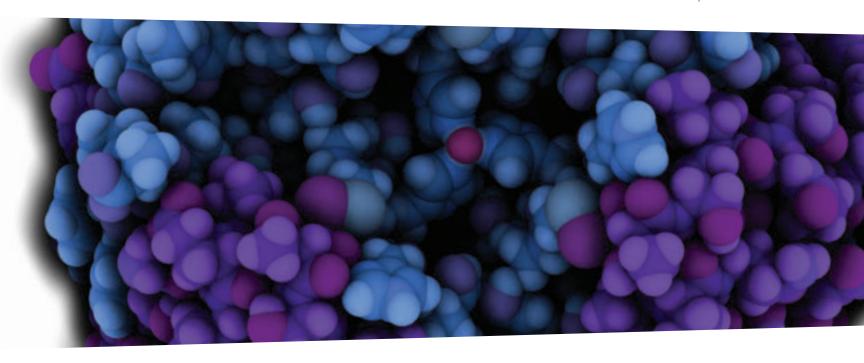
Many human diseases, including diabetes, neurodegeneration and cancer, are linked to cellular damage that accrues as we grow older. Dr. Ning Wu aims to find new ways to prevent or slow the onset of such diseases by better understanding how altering one's diet and, therefore, metabolism may delay the effects of aging.

Read more at vai.org/women-in-science,



# MAKING MOVES IN METABOLISM

VAN ANDEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE ESTABLISHES PROGRAM EXPLORING METABOLISM, NUTRITION



On the surface, diseases like cancer, Parkinson's and diabetes are vastly different. But go deeper and you'll find that they are linked by a common thread, one that scientists hope will lead to new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat these disorders along with a range of other health problems that plague people around the world.

That connector is metabolism, the complex web of chemical reactions that controls countless biological processes, such as how our bodies manage and distribute energy gleaned from food consumption.

Think of metabolism as a biological power plant — when there's an outage or a malfunction, people who depend on that plant's electricity aren't able to go about their business efficiently or, perhaps, even at all. The same is true for our cells; if the body's metabolism doesn't supply enough energy, cells can't carry out the necessary functions to keep us healthy. A robust understanding of how these processes impact health — and how to fix them when they go awry — would be transformative.

That's why the Institute is establishing a global hub for metabolism research, which will foster an innovative, collaborative environment and increase our impact on human health. The goal is simple yet wideranging: exhaustively investigate the links between metabolism, nutrition, health and disease, and translate the findings into life-changing prevention and treatment strategies.

To launch the program, we've recruited four exceptional scientists from premier research organizations in Canada and Germany. They include:

- Dr. Russell Jones, who investigates metabolism at the cellular level to understand how alterations in these processes affect cell behavior and health, with a specific eye on cancer and the immune system.
- Dr. Connie Krawczyk, who studies the link between metabolism and the immune system, with the goal of understanding how these systems work together to keep us healthy and, when things go wrong, to promote disease.

- Dr. Adelheid Lempradl, who traces the impact of metabolic changes across generations in an effort to develop ways to predict and prevent disease.
- Dr. J. Andrew Pospisilik, who seeks to link metabolic changes to alterations in how our genes are expressed, giving scientists new tools to predict a person's lifelong health outlook at birth.

Together with Van Andel Research Institute investigators Dr. Brian Haab and Dr. Ning Wu, the program will develop a comprehensive and precise understanding of the mechanisms that make our metabolism tick.

It's an urgent mission, spurred by a looming increase in the incidence of many of the world's most challenging diseases. This new program is a catalyst, one that will rally the collaborative spirit of the Institute and connect all aspects of its research to create a healthier future.

Stay tuned for more information at vai.org.

# SMALL DIFFERENCES, BIG IMPACT VAN ANDEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE SCIENTISTS PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN CREATION OF CANCER "ATLAS"

Just as a map (or these days, a GPS) can help you get to your destination, a new comprehensive atlas is helping scientists hit the mark when it comes to accurately classifying cancers.

Earlier this year, The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) Research Network, an initiative spearheaded by the National Institutes of Health, published its final batch of 27 studies detailing precise — and often subtle molecular variations in 33 major types of cancer. The findings are the result of more than a decade of work by scientists in the U.S. and abroad, including Institute investigators Dr. Peter W. Laird and Dr. Hui Shen, and are already impacting how cancers are classified and studied.

The group's findings were extensive, so we've broken them down into the top three takeaways:

#### 1. Cancers should be classified primarily based on genetic, epigenetic and molecular differences.

Historically, cancers have been categorized and named based on the organ or tissue in which they arose — for example, cancers that start in the esophagus have been called esophageal cancers and were believed to have a lot in common with other cancers found in the esophagus, and so on.

TCGA's findings urge a shift away from this view, based on new insight into the incredibly complex factors that influence and differentiate one cancer from another. In short, this means that a cancer found in the lower part of the esophagus may actually have more in common with a stomach cancer than other esophageal cancers.







### 2. Better classifying cancers is a game-changer for cancer research and

When it comes to combating cancer, the old adage "Know thine enemy" is incredibly apt. Not only do the specific characteristics identified by TCGA reveal new vulnerabilities that can be targeted by future medications, but they also may help simplify treatment decisions today.

For example, if physicians know that an individual's cancer is marked by a certain characteristic, they can choose medications designed specifically for that subtype and avoid other treatments that are better suited for another subtype.

#### 3. Working together is the way forward.

TCGA's work was a massive, decade-long undertaking that required the time and talent of hundreds of scientists from around the world, who painstakingly analyzed more than 10,000 samples from 33 different cancer types. None of this would have been possible without an extraordinary level of cooperation, teamwork and a singular dedication to creating a resource that may revolutionize cancer research and treatment.

"Team science endeavors like TCGA are the future," Laird said. "By sharing resources, expertise and data, we were able to do more together than we ever could have apart. It is our hope that this atlas will serve as a guide for scientists as they develop more personalized and more effective methods of patient care."

To learn more, please visit lairdlab.vai.org and shenlab.vai.org.

### VAN ANDEL INSTITUTE GRADUATE STUDENTS — GREAT SCIENCE, GLOBAL REACH

Kajang, a bustling city on the outskirts of the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur, is a long way away from Grand Rapids, Michigan. But for Menusha Arumugam, a doctoral student enrolled in Van Andel Institute Graduate School (VAIGS), both cities are home.

Arumugam is part of a community of international students who come to Van Andel Institute from every corner of the world to train as the scientific leaders of the future. They hail from diverse backgrounds and cultures, but they are bonded by a common desire to use their talents and skills in the service of something they all feel strongly about the idea that great science can change the world for the better.

#### Menusha Arumugam (Malaysia)

Arumugam's love of science comes from a deep desire to help people. As a young student growing up in Malaysia, Arumugam had dreams of becoming a doctor and helping cure people suffering from disease.

"When I was a student in high school I shadowed a doctor and, while I liked the idea of improving human health, I quickly learned that I was really interested in figuring out how the diseases come about and how we can improve treatments for patients," Arumumgam said.

From that moment on, Arumugam has worked toward her goal of being a scientist. That choice led her to leave her hometown of Kajang to study, first at the University of Michigan – Flint, and now at VAIGS.

"When I received a scholarship from the Malaysian government to study abroad, I decided to come to Michigan to further my education," Arumugam said. "Grand Rapids is such a great city, and the Institute's location on the Medical Mile allows for a lot of collaboration with other scientists, clinicians and organizations like Michigan

State University and Spectrum Health."

Arumugam works alongside a team of scientists in the laboratory of physicianscientist Dr. Matt Steensma, an expert in orthopedic oncology and rare diseases such as neurofibromatosis type 1 (NF1). This direct connection between research and patient care is something that Arumugam loves about her work in the Steensma lab, where she studies breast cancer in NF1 patients.

"When you're a scientist working in a lab, sometimes you can forget why you're doing what you're doing," Arumugam said. "In our lab, the work might directly impact patients, and I think when you're constantly reminded that your work impacts real people, you'll never lose the passion for what you're doing."

#### Eric Cordeiro-Spinetti (Brazil)

Science can mean a lot of things to a lot of people, but for Cordeiro-Spinetti, it means living a well-examined life. Cordeiro-Spinetti speaks about science in a soulfully enthusiastic way, like a dancer talking about music or an architect talking about geometry.

"I want everyone to be a scientist in their own way," he said. "Being a scientist is not just a job, it's a lifestyle, and being curious and thinking critically means you're living your life to the fullest."

His passion for science began as a small boy in Rio de Janeiro watching American television shows and movies. The scientists he saw on the glowing screen were larger than life characters, but they were important, and they were making sense of the world.

"I have a vivid memory of being 5 or 6 years old and watching scientists on television shows and movies, and I loved how they were always curious and trying to figure

things out," Cordeiro-Spinetti said.

Today, Cordeiro-Spinetti is a doctoral student in the laboratory of Dr. Scott Rothbart, where he collaborates with a team of scientists to better understand the role of epigenetics in human diseases. In addition to his work as a graduate student, he uses his love of communication and his big personality to create educational videos he hopes will inspire others to pursue science and examine their world.

"I'm always challenging myself and trying to reach people," Cordeiro-Spinetti said. "I want to tell people in Brazil and around the world, 'Hey, I'm working at this really cool place in Michigan where I am training to become a great scientist, and if I can do it, you can do it too."

#### Wooyoung Choi (South Korea)

Wooyoung Choi is both a scientist and an explorer. He has traveled to almost every country in Asia and has recently started to explore Canada and the United States. In 2016, he took the most significant trip of his life when he traveled to Grand Rapids after finishing his master's degree at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China. Drawn to the Institute's reputation for great science and intrigued by the opportunity to work with the Institute's state-of-the-art cryo-electron microscope (cryo-EM), Choi decided to move halfway around the world to continue his studies at VAIGS.

"I thought this was a great opportunity to be a part of an institute with this incredibly advanced technology and answer really complex biological questions," Choi said. "I wanted to use this technology to better understand the structures of proteins, which can be used to understand mechanisms in cells and help develop new treatments."

Choi's mentor at the Institute, Dr. Wei Lü, is an expert in cryo-EM and structural biology. Working and learning alongside a



MENUSHA ARUMUGAM, MINGE DU, WOOYOUNG CHOI & ERIC CORDEIRO-SPINETTI.

scientist with such a specialized focus is the opportunity of a lifetime.

"Dr. Lü is very knowledgeable and experienced with using cryo-EM, and his enthusiasm for his work is incredible," Choi said. "Everyone here is passionate about teaching me, and everyone I work with treats me like family. Being here is lifechanging."

The close-knit bonds Choi has with his mentor and classmates helped him navigate the complexities of a new culture and new environment, and these relationships have helped him succeed in this new adventure.

"People are really kind here and care about teaching me not just science but American culture. They really want me to learn," Choi said. "I am happy to be at a graduate program that provides such great opportunities and lets me seek out and achieve my goals for the future."

#### Minge Du (China)

On her family's farm in China, Minge Du tended to the bountiful corn and wheat crops. As a child working directly with the natural world, Du developed a keen interest in animals and plants, which eventually led her to pursue a career in science.

"I loved nature and animals when I was young, but I became really interested in science in college, where I studied a lot of biology," Du said. "I have always been a very curious person, and while most of my family are farmers, I decided I wanted to be a scientist."

Du began her graduate education in the U.S. at Stony Brook University in New York. There, she worked alongside Dr. Huilin Li, whose research uses cryo-EM to determine the structures of molecules. When Dr. Li accepted a position at Van Andel Research Institute, Du and her husband, who is also a scientist in Li's lab, followed him to Grand Rapids.

"I never imagined I would be in Grand Rapids, Michigan, but I am happy to be here because it's such a good graduate school program," Du said. "The size of the Institute allows students to work collaboratively and get to know each other, and that is very good for me."

Du's work with Dr. Li focuses on uncovering the molecular structure of specific proteins using tools such as cryo-EM. Her work at the Institute is unlike any experience she's ever had, and she is excited to work with program peers who share her interest in technology and scientific discovery.

"Every day, I am discussing newly published papers, working and collaborating with other scientists, and living a life much different than I ever expected," Du said. "I am glad I am following my dreams."

Learn more about supporting Van Andel Institute Graduate School by contacting Teresa Reid at teresa.reid@vai.org.

# HONORING AND EMPOWERING TEACHERS — VAN ANDEL EDUCATION INSTITUTE'S INAUGURAL SCIENCE ON THE GRAND CONFERENCE

In July 2018, more than 130 teachers, administrators and education professionals visited Van Andel Education Institute (VAEI) for the inaugural Science on the Grand conference. Terra Tarango, Van Andel Education Institute's director, and her team at VAEI designed the conference to honor the work of teachers and provide them with the opportunity to gain practical, purposeful strategies to incorporate inquiry-based instruction into their teaching.



TEACHERS DISCUSS INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING AT THE INAUGURAL SCIENCE ON THE GRAND CONFERENCE.

VAEI was honored to kick off the event with exceptional keynote presentations from Taylor Mali, education advocate and author of *What Teachers Make*, on day one, and B. Gentry Lee, chief engineer for the Solar System Exploration Directorate and partner for Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, on day two.

"During this event we literally and figuratively rolled out the red carpet for teachers," Tarango said. "We wanted teachers to be inspired by world-class speakers as well as empowered with classroom-proven strategies and lessons to create extraordinary classrooms. But more than that, we wanted them to feel honored and appreciated for the extraordinary work they do."

#### Reaching out to teachers everywhere

Lisa Carlstrom, a fifth-grade teacher from Holy Spirit School in Grand Rapids, attended the conference with other K–12 teachers as a way to improve inquiry-based learning in her classroom.

"The conference had really good sessions, and every one of the speakers was amazing," Carlstrom said. "We had the opportunity to learn hands-on techniques we can take back to the classroom and apply. I am really fired up to change things up when we start school this fall."

Conference members came to the Institute from across West Michigan, and more than nine states in the U.S. as well as Canada. Lori Corley, principal of Springfield Elementary in Greenwood, South Carolina, traveled thousands of miles to attend the conference along with two science teachers from her school. Corley was introduced to the Institute while attending the National Science Teachers Association Conference, where she met VAEI education specialists and learned about the Institute's science education and professional development programs.

"After meeting representatives from the Institute, I recognized that the beliefs that go into VAEI's education philosophy are very similar to the beliefs that I hold as a principal," she said.

While at the conference, Corley and members of her team went on a tour of an Institute lab, met with scientists, participated in breakout sessions, heard inspirational speakers and networked with teachers, where they discovered new ways to view science education and new insights into their profession.

"One of the takeaways I received from the conference is the importance of teaching students to think like scientists," Corley said. "We want to let students know that if you

think like a scientist in the classroom, there is no reason why you can't be one in the future. I think this understanding is really important."

#### Learning what VAEI is all about

Tarango is optimistic that the conference will serve as a way for teachers and administrators to become familiarized with both the Institute and its mission, which focuses prominently on inquiry-based instruction.

"This conference is a good way for educators to get to know us at VAEI and metaphorically kick the tires a little," Tarango said. "To make meaningful transformations in instruction, we often work with teachers over a two- or three-year period, so this conference lets teachers learn what we're about and see if VAEI is a good fit for their continued professional development."

The two-day conference was divided into two sections — day one focusing on classroom culture and day two focusing on practical, inquiry-based lessons and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) content. Tarango views the conference structure as a reflection of VAEI's framework, which emphasizes both the classroom learning environment and content-area knowledge.

"I think the conference was a perfect forum for reminding teachers why they entered this noble profession and inspiring them to continually grow and improve their craft," she said. "I have heard from many teachers who were frustrated with teaching, tempted to leave education altogether, and then heard an inspiring speaker or learned an innovative strategy, and just like that — they are recommitted to their students and all the promise of this remarkable profession."

For information on VAEI's educational programs and events, visit vaei.org.

### THINKING AND ACTING LIKE SCIENTISTS

### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SPEND SUMMER DAYS AT VAN ANDEL EDUCATION INSTITUTE

**High School students from** across West Michigan spent their summer days thinking and acting like scientists during Van Andel Education Institute's (VAEI) week-long summer camp held in July 2018. Students used handson interactive investigations and inquiry-based learning techniques to delve into a series of complex projects including using electrophoresis to identify DNA, testing the water quality of river water, exploring what it would be like to live on Mars and building and testing robotic devices.

VAEI's summer camp is one of several student programs in which young scientists can explore their world, collaborate with other students and learn in an environment where curiosity, creativity and critical thinking thrive.



#### Esther Vanderwey, Sophomore

"I like science very much, so I really enjoyed this camp. Today, we were using DNA to figure out how to solve crimes. We used samples and gel electrophoresis to match DNA and learn about forensics. My interests are in zoology, but I love all sciences and I had a lot of fun."



#### Sophia Maisel & Lucie Kovarik, Freshmen

"The camp was good because it was very hands-on, and compared to doing online courses, this was more fun. We did a lot of trial and error in our projects, which is cool because it's all up to you and your group if you succeed or fail. I liked working with other people and collaborating, and it was fun seeing people succeed."



Eli Lake, Freshman

"The instructors we had at the camp are really nice. What I really loved is that we were doing things that scientists in a big university lab do right here in a classroom, and that is really cool. I really like science and one day I would like to be a molecular biologist."



Alex Kempston, Freshman

"Everyone at the camp is interested in science, and it was a good opportunity for me to be around other people who like science as much as I do. I'm really interested in science as a career."

The Van Andel Education Institute summer camp was made possible thanks to generous funding from the Bea Aldrink Idema Foundation.

Learn more about VAEI's summer camp and other student programs by visiting vaei.org/student-programs.

### CAROL VAN ANDEL ANGEL OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS

#### Van Andel Institute (VAI) honored donors and volunteers at the sixth annual Carol Van Andel Angel of Excellence dinner and awards presentation in April 2018.

The annual event celebrates individuals and organizations who have demonstrated excellence and made significant contributions to Van Andel Institute's mission through volunteer service and charitable commitment. During the 2018 event, Angel of Excellence Awards were presented to Duncan Lake Middle School, Jeffery Roberts, Therese Rowerdink, Susan Stafford and West Ottawa Purple Power.

The event also welcomes new members of the Institute's Leadership and Legacy Societies. Both societies honor individuals, businesses and organizations who have made significant contributions to the Institute's biomedical research and science education programs. The Leadership Society recognizes those who have given more than \$10,000, and the Legacy Society is an honor bestowed to those who have given more than \$100,000 cumulatively.

#### 2018 Legacy Society Inductees:

- · Bee Brave 5K
- · John & Judy Spoelhof Foundation
- · Lighthouse Group
- Meijer
- · Neiman Marcus
- · Southside Ice Arena Hockey Fights Cancer
- Tempting Tables

#### 2018 Leadership Society Inductees:

- · AT Media Studio
- Patrick & Kristine Brady
- · Cisco Michigan Partner Community
- · Bill & Marilyn Crawford
- · Jeffrey & Mary Dixon
- Eagles for Eric
- Eileen DeVries Family Foundation

- First National Bank of Michigan
- Margaret Fondren
- · GVSU DIII Hockey Fights Cancer
- · Haworth, Inc.
- Ted & Amy Heilman
- · Paul & Rosemary Heule
- · Independent Bank
- · James H. Bouwhuis Memorial Golf Outing
- · Blake & Mary Krueger
- · Mari I. Meyer Pancreatic Cancer Trail Run for Hope
- · Jack Nichols
- · Priority Health
- Pure Barre on the Blue Bridge with Lolë
- The Bank of Holland
- Traverse City Hockey Fights Cancer Game TCW vs. TCC
- · Traverse City West Football
- · Alvin & Hylda Tuuk
- · Brian & Lori Vander Baan
- · Allen & Nancy VanderLaan
- · Jim & Jane Zwiers Y









(STARTING AT THE TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT) THERESE ROWERDINK, SUSAN STAFFORD & CAROL VAN ANDEL; RYAN GRAHAM; JEFFERY ROBERTS & CAROL VAN ANDEL; CAROL VAN ANDEL & MEMBERS OF WEST OTTAWA PURPLE POWER.

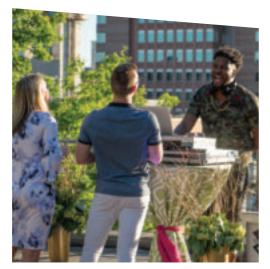
### AROUND THE WORLD

Around the World, a signature special event for the Institute's JBoard Ambassadors, was held in June 2018.

More than 250 JBoard members, Institute donors and special guests gathered together on a beautiful spring night atop the Medical Mile in Grand Rapids' Crescent Park. The night featured global cuisine, craft cocktails and a variety of wines from around the world. This year's Around the World event raised important funds for Van Andel Education Institute's inquiry-based science education programs including lessons and field experiences for students as well as an innovation in education award for educators.

Around the World is one of many JBoardsponsored special events that benefit the Institute's biomedical research and science education programs. Since 2009, the JBoard has given young professionals a way to lend their time and talent to support the Institute's mission.

Interested in joining the Institute's JBoard? Visit vai.org/jboard or contact Sarah Rollman at sarah.rollman@vai.org.\









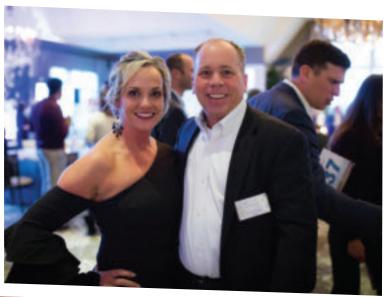


(STARTING AT THE TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT) AB; VAN ANDEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS; RACHEL MRAZ & CHAD BASSETT; KAITLYN DISSELKOEN SWAN; SARAH TUPPER, ABBIE BENTON, MOLLY CHELOVICH & KATHY TUPPER.

### **EVENTS**

### WINTERFEST











(STARTING AT THE TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT) GEORGE SHARPE JR. & MISSY SHARPE & SALLY MURDOCK; MARK & JENN BUGGE; DALE & DIANE EVERETT, RON & MARY RUTKOWSKI; DAVID BRONKEMA; DAVID VAN ANDEL.

## ART OF FASHION & RESEARCH









(STARTING AT THE TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT) KEN DEWEY, CAROL VAN ANDEL & RENEE JANOVSKY; MODEL WALKING THE ART OF FASHION & RESEARCH CATWALK; LAURA FABRIZIO & EILEEN BRADER; ANOTHER MODEL

## BOARD OF GOVERNORS DINNER







(STARTING AT THE TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT) DAVID VAN ANDEL & TIM LONG; DR. PETER A. JONES & WIFE, VERONICA; VICKY LUDEMA.

## THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS EVENT SPONSORS

To learn more about sponsoring an event, contact Sarah Rollman at sarah.rollman@vai.org.

#### Winterfest

Aon

Aquinas College B.D.'s BBQ Belwith Products

Blue Water Custom Homes Carnelian Energy Capital

Crowe LLP Cumulus Media

Dan Shapiro & Joe Mangini

Deloitte Divani

Eastbrook Homes

Grand Rapids Christian Schools

Harvey Automotive iHeartMedia, Inc. Jerry & Karen DeBlaay John & Kristine Palmer

K3 NOW Neuroscience Optimized Wellness

King Street Capital Management

Lighthouse Group Macatawa Bank Mazzo Cucina D'Italia McShane & Bowie, P.L.C.

Mercy Health

MGD Technologies, Inc.

MSU College of Human Medicine

NorthStar Commercial Nothing Bundt Cakes

Oppenheimer & Company Inc. -

Michael J. Murdock, Director of Investments

Owen-Ames-Kimball Co.

Perper Design Pioneer Construction

Red Water Restaurant Group

**Rockford Construction** Ruth's Chris Steak House Rycenga Building Center

San Chez Bistro six.one.six Slows Bar BQ Sobie Meats

Suburban Landscapes

Taconic Charitable Foundation

The Chop House

The Sandi Gentry Team RE/MAX Lakeshore

The Sharpe Collection

The Steve & Amy Van Andel Foundation

**US Signal** 

Warner Norcross & Judd LLP

Wheelhouse

Women's LifeStyle Magazine

#### Art of Fashion & Research

Lighthouse Group Neiman Marcus

#### **Around the World**

Alliance Beverage Blake Crabb

Brian DeVries & Barbara Pugh

Chad Bassett Comfort Research

Crowe LLP

Dan & Carol Springer

Edward Jones

Eileen DeVries Family Foundation John Hancock Financial Services Ken Hoffman & Lisa Rose Lee & Alexandra Perez

Leigh's

Marc & Ashley Veenstra

Media 3 Design

Metro Health – University of Michigan

Health Priority Health Renew Family Dental **Rocket Science** 

RoMan Manufacturing Inc.

Rowerdink Inc.

Scott & Jan Spoelhof Foundation

The Meijer Foundation

The Tupper Group - Merrill Lynch Townsquare Media (Channel 95.7, 100.5 The River, 98.7 WFGR)

#### **Purple Community 5K**

B93

Buffalo Wild Wings

Classic Race Management Consumers Credit Union

DI Grant Miller Eastern Floral

Eurest

Family Fare & D&W Fresh Market

Gazelle Sports

Give 'Em A Break Safety

**Groove City Events** 

Lighthouse Property Management, LLC

Mary Free Bed YMCA

Metro Health Sports Medicine

Michigan Paving Nothing Bundt Cakes Old Orchard Brands Polar Brrr Cryo Ron's Beans

XS Energy Drink

### PURPLE COMMUNITY 5K - STRONG COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS MEAN MORE THAN A CHECK

On a cool, spring Saturday morning, hundreds of people rallied together on the beautiful grounds of the Mary Free Bed YMCA in Grand Rapids for the annual Consumers Credit Union Purple Community 5K (PC5K). Enthusiastic runners, walkers and volunteers participated in a day of activism and fundraising in support of Van Andel Institute's (VAI) research into cancer, Parkinson's and other diseases. The event has grown from a small gathering in 2015 into one of West Michigan's premier 5K races, thanks to an outpouring of community support and sponsors like Consumers Credit Union and the Mary Free Bed YMCA. Both organizations have built bridges between the Institute's mission and the people they serve and helped spread Purple Community's message of hope to spirited new audiences.

#### Feet on the Ground

Lynne Jarman-Johnson, chief marketing officer for Consumers Credit Union, views the organization's title sponsorship of the PC5K as an extension of the company's corporate values and community-focused business model. Jarman-Johnson's contagious enthusiasm for giving back, and the efforts of Consumers Credit Union, have helped expand the PC5K's reach and develop it into a day of exceptional engagement and fundraising.

"Since the beginning, helping our community has been part of our organization's mission," Jarman-Johnson said. "For us, it's very personal — we are proud to be the title sponsor for this event and see it as a way to serve our Consumers family and our region as a whole. Giving back is part of our culture."

Jarman-Johnson receives more than 10 requests for event sponsorships and

donations per day, but it's important to her that the Consumers team can give more than just funds.

"If we are going to back a cause, we aren't just going to write a check, we need to have feet on the ground," Jarman-Johnson said. "One of the many reasons we sponsor the Purple Community 5K is because there's a connection between people and, for us, it's important to have that face-to-face connection with our charitable giving partners and the people we serve."

larman-Johnson works with Stephanie Stacey, an office manager at one of Consumers' West Michigan locations, to help organize their 5K team and get their staff involved. Working directly with Purple Community and her coworkers to support cancer research is incredibly meaningful for Stacey, whose mother recently became cancer free.

"One of the many reasons we sponsor the Purple Community 5K is because there's a connection between people and, for us, it's important to have that face-to-face connection with our charitable giving partners and the people we serve."

- Lynne Jarman-Johnson



LYNNE JARMAN-JOHNSON



PAUL PETR

"Right when I became involved with this event, the fight against cancer became extremely personal because it came for my momma," Stacey said. "Because of cancer research, my mom was able to use a new treatment that worked for her, and now, knock on wood, she is doing just fine. By supporting this event, I hope we can give these researchers everything that they need."

#### Healthy mind, body and spirit for all

For Paul Petr, district executive director for the Mary Free Bed YMCA, working for the YMCA is not just a job, it's a calling. The Y's focus on the critical needs of the community and its roots in faith and human wellness are things Petr feels deeply passionate about. These values, integral to the Y's mission, are some of the many reasons Petr believes the partnership with Purple Community is such a good fit.

"Whether we are leading an initiative, convening an event or partnering with another organization, making our community healthier is one of our main goals," Petr said. "I think our partnership with Purple Community is strong, and I

think we can do more when we are working together."

By hosting the PC5K, the Mary Free Bed YMCA has given Purple Community members access to a beautiful course and top-tier facilities for the event and provided the Y's members who have been impacted by cancer with a powerful way to connect and support one another.

"Speaking through the lens of a husband who recently lost his wife to cancer, a framework of support is so critical, not only to those who are going through cancer treatment, but for those family members

and friends who are there caring for them. This event is a way for us to come together as a community and say, 'you're not alone'," Petr said. "I've always believed that people want to be involved with something that's bigger than themselves, and I think the PC5K is an event that gives people that opportunity. It's an event we are really proud to support."

If you are interested in getting involved with Purple Community, please contact Ashley Owen at ashley.owen@vai.org.\





(TOP) RUNNERS AT THE ANNUAL CONSUMERS CREDIT UNION PURPLE COMMUNITY 5K; CONSUMERS CREDIT UNION TEAM.

### DUNCAN LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL — SUPPORTING CANCER RESEARCH ACROSS GENERATIONS

**Duncan Lake Middle School in** Caledonia, Michigan, sits tucked away between sprawling farmland and rolling country roads. From the outside, its brown brick building looks like an average middle school anywhere in the United States, but its students have achieved something extraordinary. For more than a decade, the school's student council has planned and hosted an event that has inspired their quiet, rural community and raised more than \$100,000 to benefit cancer research at Van Andel Research Institute (VARI). By working together and passing the torch to successive generations, the students at Duncan Lake have redefined what young people can do when their hearts and minds are united by a common cause.

Hannah Jablonski, a 23-year-old recent college graduate, remembers being a creative, expressive eighth-grader at Duncan Lake. As a member of the school's student council, she worked with her classmates to plan and organize the very first Cancer Walk in 2008.

"It all started because we wanted to do something to give back and support good causes, and because we knew a lot of people were affected by cancer, we decided to do the first Cancer Walk," Jablonski said. "It was such a good experience. When you're a student and you have the freedom to plan an event like this, and you know that you can make a difference in the world, it's really impactful."

#### Students leading the way

Elizabeth Alexander, enrichment coordinator at Duncan Lake, has worked for the past 10 years with students like Jablonski to help them plan their Cancer Walk. Since the very first event, Alexander has been impressed with the students' ability to take charge of their event and take pride in their work.

"When you're a student and you have the freedom to plan an event like this, and you know that you can make a difference in the world, it's really impactful."

- Hannah Jablonski

"It's very important that the Cancer Walk is student-run and that they have a chance to lead," Alexander said. "Every year you can see the sixth-graders falling in love with the event and getting excited about how they can support cancer research, and the cool thing is, when those enthusiastic kids get to eighth-grade, they are the leaders taking charge."

In addition to planning and executing a successful event, students at Duncan Lake also make it a point to come up with some out-of-the-box fundraising ideas and have one rule — the crazier the better.

"Our students come up with some pretty interesting fundraising ideas," Alexander said. "We've had a teacher dunk tank, teachers getting slimed, unicycle jousting, cupcake wars, sponge toss wars and we've even had a teacher with a fear of snakes agree to wear a student's pet snake around his neck if the fundraising goal was met. The kids get creative."

#### Unified behind a powerful cause

Since the very first Cancer Walk was organized by Jablonski and her classmates, the event has become a source of fun, comradery and community that has unified students, teachers and their families and friends behind an important mission.

"This event really shows kids that they can give back to their community and that creating change is doable," Alexander said. "Personally, I lost two family members to cancer in the last few years, and this event is a source of hope — hope that the Institute's researchers might one day find a treatment or cure that could help people





DUNCAN LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL WAS AWARDED A CAROL VAN ANDEL ANGEL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD IN 2018 FOR THEIR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & IMPRESSIVE FUNDRAISING EFFORTS THAT BENEFIT CANCER RESEARCH AT VAN ANDEL RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

Jablonski is proud that the Cancer Walk gives so many people hope for the future, and she continues to spread the message all these years later. While in college, Alexander surprised Jablonski by inviting her to speak at a pep rally and say a few words about the event she helped create. Jablonski was shocked that Alexander had remembered her after all these years

and that the small event she and her classmates had organized had raised more than six figures.

"It's really an inspiration to know that a few kids in middle school can organize an event, raise an impressive amount of money and make a difference in the lives of people living with cancer," Jablonski said.

"I have always believed that you get as much as you give into the world, and these kids are giving a lot."

If you are interested in getting involved with Purple Community, please contact Ashley Owen at ashley.owen@vai.org.





(LEFT) RYAN GRAHAM, PRINCIPAL AT DUNCAN LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL &

ELIZABETH ALEXANDER; (RIGHT) DUNCAN LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS CELEBRATE AT THEIR ANNUAL CANCER WALK.

### LACROSSE DADS SUPPORT RESEARCH AND CHECK CANCER

When Paul Anglim's son James began playing lacrosse in sixth-grade, his wife, Kelly, was battling through a difficult fight with breast cancer. Throughout it all, she made it a point to attend as many of James' games as she could. She loved sports, treasured being there for her kids and was driven by a powerful force Anglim calls her "warrior spirit." In 2013, Kelly lost her fight with breast cancer, but her warrior spirit lives on in Paul and their three children. Beating cancer is a cause close to Anglim's heart. He knows what it means to lose a loved one to this devastating disease, and this understanding is what motivated him to take action and give back.

In 2018, along with co-chair Brian Dickerson, Anglim and two committees of dedicated parents helped plan and organize a Purple Community lacrosse game between two West Michigan high schools that raised more than \$27,000 to benefit cancer research at Van Andel Research Institute (VARI). Anglim and Dickerson have sons in the lacrosse program at Grandville High School, and they both wanted to do something with the team that would support those living with and affected by cancer. Working with another committee at Rockford High School, the parents brought athletes, their families and their community together for a day that wasn't just about winning and losing — it was about making a difference in people's lives.

"James is the youngest of my three children, and he saw his two older sisters get the opportunity to cheer or play for their mom multiple times in high school," Anglim said. "When his coach asked if we would be involved, James and I said we would work on the game together. This was the first time James had the opportunity to play in honor of his mom. I was glad this game benefitted VARI, because Kelly and I both believed that the Institute might one day develop a cure for cancer."

#### Faith and generosity

Dickerson, whose son was a varsity player on Grandville's lacrosse team, decided to be





(LEFT) BRIAN & DEVIN DICKERSON; (RIGHT) EMILY, JAMES & PAUL ANGLIM.

a co-chair on the committee in order to give back and raise funds to benefit the Institute's mission. Like Anglim, he is proud to have been a part of an event that is so meaningful to people who have been affected by cancer.

"The Purple Community game is an opportunity for me, as a member of the Grandville lacrosse program, to do something good for the community," Dickerson said. "We have a really good, solid group of kids who understand that it's important to be involved with something like this. They know they're here to make a difference and have a positive impact on society."

Dickerson and Anglim helped make sure the event was a success, and the two busy fathers worked long hours doing everything from getting event sponsors and planning the game schedule to arranging concessions, procuring t-shirts and getting specialty jerseys made for the teams. It was a true labor of love, and Dickerson believes their work ethic and dedication came from a higher place.

"I think West Michigan's generous spirit and desire to help people comes from a deep sense of faith and spirituality," Dickerson said

The game gave both men the chance to bond with their sons over a shared mission, remember loved ones lost to cancer, and place a bright light on the idea that great things can happen when good people work together.

"My son and I are both very happy that our community provided so much support for this game," Anglim said. "Cancer has directly impacted our family in the loss of Kelly, and it has greatly impacted the Grandville family in the loss of our principal, Chris Vanderslice. This game provided a memorable way for us to have a lasting impact in the fight against cancer."

If you are interested in hosting a Purple Community game at your school, please contact Ashley Owen at ashley.owen@vai.org. \*\*



# Duke Suwyn – A Sense of Hope

One love, one moment in time that happens by chance, can give a person the ability to see the world in a new way. When Duke Suwyn first met his wife Sue at a Church function, his world opened up and he was never the same. Suwyn, a self-described country boy, grew up on a family farm in the lush Michigan countryside. Sue was from Chicago — the city of big shoulders — and was filled with ambition, drive and determination

"The first time I saw her, I knew she was unlike anyone I'd ever met," Suwyn said." She was extremely talented, gregarious and full of life. And from that moment on, she was my mentor, coach and my teammate."

Sue and Duke got married, started a family, built successful careers and discovered their love for giving back to their community. Together, they were active in their children's school, Ada Christian, and guided by a deep faith, they served on the school's various foundations and boards. Through their philanthropic work, they met David and Carol Van Andel, who also volunteered and gave of their time and talent to benefit the school.

"They are two real-life angels," Suwyn said. "They were some of the most hardworking, focused, visionary people I'd ever met. They didn't just come with ideas — they really rolled up their sleeves and helped us improve the school for the better."

Impressed by the Van Andels' generosity, the Suwyns decided to get involved with Van Andel Institute and soon became some of the Institute's most ardent advocates and donors.

"We were both very passionate about the cancer and disease research and the Institute's mission, and even though we had limited resources, we found ways to give of our time and build awareness about what an incredible gift this Institute is to our community," Suwyn said.

With a good deal of encouragement from Sue, Duke pursued a career in commercial real estate and became an executive with Colliers International. In his leadership position, he encouraged the company to focus a portion of their charitable giving on the Institute in support of disease research. The gift, totaling more than \$100,000, provided Institute scientists with the funds to facilitate research into rare childhood diseases

"As far as philanthropy, we fight way out of our weight class here in Grand Rapids," Suwyn said. "In this city, we really benefit from the leadership of some visionary families in our community, and there's a feeling that we need to continue what people like the Van Andels have started and keep that ball rolling."

In 2016, Suwyn's connection to the Institute became extraordinarily personal when Sue was diagnosed with an aggressive form of glioblastoma multiform brain cancer. Suddenly, and without warning, the woman who gave his life meaning was facing an incredible battle.

"When Sue was diagnosed, we knew we needed help, and we felt fortunate to live in a community where we have these great hospitals and research centers right here in our city," Suwyn said. "The facilities on the Medical Mile are just amazing, and when you go into these places, you don't go in there thinking negatively, you go in with such a sense of hope."

During this difficult time, both Sue and Duke were comforted with the idea that the Institute's scientists were working on new treatments that might one day help others affected by cancer. Sue passed away in August 2017, and one of her last wishes was that memorial gifts be given to the two organizations that were held closest to her heart.



**DUKE SUWYN** 

"As far as philanthropy, we fight way out of our weight class here in Grand Rapids."

- Duke Suwvn

"There were two places Sue wanted people to think about when they thought of her — Ada Christian and Van Andel Institute," Suwyn said. "When you see the passion that the Institute's scientists have for their work, and you know that these scientists are going to work every day for the benefit of other people, you really can't help but fall in love with this place."

Interested in learning more about the Society of Hope and planned giving at VAI? Visit vai. org/society-hope or vai.org/plannedgiving or contact Teresa Reid at teresa.reid@vai.org.\

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We appreciate your trust in us to fight disease in memory or in honor of your family and friends — with hope for a healthier tomorrow. To make a gift in memory or honor of a loved one, please call 616.234.5552.

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#### Brett R. Holleman

Albert & Susan Clark

#### Joel Hosner

Joel & Maybeth Maatman

#### Jerry Isreals

Patrick & Sue Van Duinen

#### Vivian Jones

Randel & Therese Jones

#### Bernard P. Kamerschen

Karen Kamerschen

#### David H. Kammeraad

Randall & Amy Freeburg

#### Barbara Kramer

Lawrence & C. DeClarke Kramer

#### **Philip Longstreet**

Donna Tolan

#### **Wayne Maley**

Mary Maley

#### Bill McQueen

Anonymous

#### Mary Meyer

**Christine Cummings** 

#### **Christel Mikelic**

Elizabeth Hager

#### Kenneth Peirce

Don & Debbie Amos

#### **Gail Ravell**

David & Renae Simpson

#### Matthew Reitsma

Duke Suwyn

#### Steve Saltsman

Mathew & Jennifer Fahrenkrug

#### **Gordon Scripps**

Justin Barr

#### George A. Sharpe

James Brady Robert & Barbara Herr

#### Shari Simon

#### Robert Eklund

#### David & Weezie Smith

Lee Formwalt

#### Seidman MKT 357 (WTR

Seidman College of Business, Grand Valley State University

#### Clarence Suelter

2018) Students

Carl & Jenifer Nelson

#### Hailey Harold & Aaron Van Andel

David Bouma & Stephen Girod

#### David & Carol Van Andel

David & Jill Bielema Jim & Gail Fahner

#### Arlene Van Essen

Douglas & Sandra Van Essen

#### Henry Van Ry

Jason & Judy Shoemaker

#### Kimberly Van Stee

Alvin & Joyce Docter

#### **Shirley Veltema**

Dr. Melodee Vanden Bosch

#### Mary Weglicki

Kathleen & James Weglicki

These lists represent gifts made between June 1, 2017 and July 1, 2018. The accuracy of these lists is very important to us. Please contact 616.234.5552 if an error has been made.