

A newsletter for supporters of



# Giving matters

## Clubs for Colorectal Cancer

Golf tournament drives generous support for colorectal cancer research



Support from new 5K fundraiser

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### FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE

year, supporters of the Clubs for Colorectal Cancer Golf Tournament raised more than \$35,000 for the UMass Memorial Colorectal Cancer Research Fund. Nearly 140 golfers teed off on June 7, 2019, at the 8th annual event, which has, in its lifetime, raised more than \$200,000 to benefit colorectal cancer research and patient care.

“Our research team was thrilled to see such wonderful support from so many,” said Justin Maykel, MD, the *Joseph M. Streeter and Mary Streeter DeFeudis Chair in Surgery* and associate professor of surgery at UMass Medical School, and chief of the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery at UMass Memorial Medical Center. “Donor support plays a vital role in our ability to make advances in this field, which means that donors are helping us to save lives. We’re extremely grateful.”

At the 2019 tournament, the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery presented its first “Inspiration Award” to Tim McCarthy, a colorectal cancer survivor and patient of the

UMass Memorial Health Care system, in recognition of his 14-year battle against colorectal cancer. Tim’s wife Marilyn, children and grandchildren were all in attendance to celebrate this honor. Making the day even better, Tim and his team won the golf tournament!

Golfer and UMass facilities employee Dave Westerfield, who captured this photo of Tim, commented that it was “an inspirational day to actually meet someone who benefited from and represented the face of the cause and fundraising efforts of this tournament.” ■

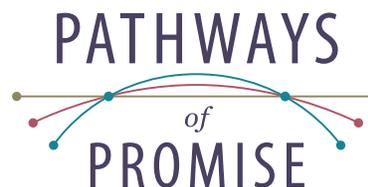


**Tim McCarthy accepts the first Inspiration Award from the Division of Colon and Rectal Surgery**

### Campaign Completed

UMass Medical School has successfully completed its ambitious Pathways of Promise fundraising campaign, surpassing the \$250 million goal ahead of schedule.

“We embarked on a campaign with the bold aspiration of driving advances with the power to transform the course of human disease and guiding promising students to become world-



class medical practitioners, researchers and educators,” said Chancellor Michael F. Collins. “We discovered a world hungry for our style of creative, rigorous medical science, education and collaboration. The belief and generosity of our community, friends and supporters will strengthen our institution today and for years to come.”

Learn more: [www.umassmed.edu/campaign](http://www.umassmed.edu/campaign)

# New 5K fundraiser supports NICU and families

Longtime supporters change things up and raise nearly \$30,000



**ON MARCH 30, 2019, HUNDREDS** of supporters participated the first-ever TDD 5K, a fundraising event organized by Elaine and Don Vescio to support the UMass Memorial NICU and its families. The 5K race was a first for the Vescios, who had previously organized the TDD Triathlon in memory of their triplet sons Tyrus, Dante and Daniel, who died in April 2005 shortly after they were born prematurely.

After nearly 10 years of organizing the triathlon, the Vescio family decided to expand the mission of the event to make it more inclusive.

“We changed it to a 5K and fun run with a focus on remembering all the babies who have left the world too soon,” said the Vescios. “That is what the TDD 5K is about: gathering together to celebrate life while doing something enjoyable like running or walking. And that is in keeping the promise we made to our boys—that they would



Supporters at the first TDD 5K in 2019

never be forgotten and that they would help other babies.”

Nearly \$30,000 was raised at the inaugural 5K to support upgrading equipment in the NICU as well as amenities, accommodations and services for NICU babies and families. A portion of the proceeds will also support families who experience the loss of a child in the NICU.

Registration for the TDD 5K 2020 opens Oct. 1, 2019. Learn more at <https://tdd5k.com>. ■



## Support the UMass ALS Cellucci Fund Run the 2020 Boston Marathon!

Apply today for your chance to receive an official race number. For more information, visit [umassals.com/boston-marathon-team/bib-app](https://umassals.com/boston-marathon-team/bib-app) or email [communityfundraising@umassmed.edu](mailto:communityfundraising@umassmed.edu)

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# Giving milestone reached by UMass Medical School's leading scholarship donor

**IN MAKING ITS ANNUAL** contribution of financial aid for School of Medicine (SOM) students in FY19, the J.T. Tai & Company Foundation reached a notable moment in its longstanding support of UMass Medical School: its lifetime contributions topped the \$1 million mark, making it the leading single donor to scholarships at the medical school.

Since 2000, the Tai Foundation has supported more than 180 students here through scholarships, including 20 in the 2018-2019 academic year. The Manhattan-based foundation was established in 1982 by the late Jun Tsei Tai, a world-renowned dealer and collector of Chinese porcelain. Spurred by personal experience, Mr. Tai concluded that one of the best ways to ensure quality medical care was to support medical students financially, making it possible for them to focus on their educational goals, and launched his foundation to assist them.

"My path to medicine was an organic journey that grew from a multitude of life experiences," said Haley Schachter, SOM Class of 2022. "... not knowing from a young age that I would be attending medical school, I did not have sav-



**From left: Bridget Yang, Class of 2020; Mrs. Y.C. Chen; Chancellor Collins; and Stephen Em, MD'19**

ings. This scholarship is a wonderful gift that allows me to pursue my passion and excitement for medicine while not having to worry as much about my financial obligations."

"I've had an interest in medicine ever since I was a young child," said Matthew Suzor, SOM Class of 2021. "This scholarship really helps me feel much more secure financially, which is something I have never felt before coming to UMMS."

Today, the Tai Foundation is overseen by Mrs. Y.C. Chen, Mr. Tai's longtime colleague in his art and real estate businesses. Working

with the Foundation's trustees, she continues to keep the organization focused on the mission established by Mr. Tai more than 35 years ago.

To mark this defining philanthropic moment, current and former Tai Scholars Xinmiao (Bridget) Yang, SOM Class of 2020, and Stephen Em, MD'19, joined Chancellor Michael F. Collins at an intimate luncheon in New York City where they presented Mrs. Chen with a special certificate of recognition for the Tai Foundation's outstanding generosity. ■

2019

Oct.

**Community Fundraising**  
Event Calendar

## **Big Bear Annual Tailgate Cookoff** 5th annual

Oct. 19, 2019, Clinton  
In memory of Mark Litterio, supporting the UMass Transplant Clinic  
<http://bit.ly/BigBearCookoff>

## **Wiff Out NF Charity Wiffle Ball Tournament**

Oct. 19, 2019, Crompton Park, Worcester  
Supporting genetic research to find a cure for NF (neurofibromatosis)  
<http://bit.ly/WiffOutNF>

## **PINK—Lighting the Way for Women's Cancers**

Oct. 23, 2019, Hanover Theater, Worcester  
For 15 years, supporting women's cancer research and patient care at the UMass Comprehensive Breast Center  
[www.umassmed.edu/supportpink](http://www.umassmed.edu/supportpink)

**Start your own fundraiser!** We can help.  
[communityfundraising@umassmed.edu](mailto:communityfundraising@umassmed.edu)  
508-856-8554

# UMMS scientists mark progress on Huntington's disease research

Huntington's research foundation CHDI visits medical school

**INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED** Huntington's disease researcher Neil Aronin, MD, led an afternoon of presentations in July 2019 that detailed advances made by UMMS scientists in the quest to find a treatment for the deadly neurological disorder. Dr. Aronin, the *Higgins Family Professor of Neuroscience* and professor of medicine, welcomed visitors from the CHDI Foundation, which supports Huntington's disease research.

There is no treatment or cure for Huntington's disease, a fatal genetic disorder that strikes in the prime of one's life, with symptoms that feel like having ALS, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's all at once. Patients suffer a loss of cognition, uncontrollable movements and depression, often living out their lives in nursing homes, eventually becoming unable to walk or speak, but often able to comprehend language and recognize family.

Aronin and colleagues at UMMS are exploring promising new therapeutic approaches to the disease based on gene silencing and RNA interference. The goal of gene silencing is to shut off the mutant huntingtin gene, which causes the disease, while preserving a normal huntingtin gene. Researchers at UMMS are leveraging new developments in gene therapy, genetic editing and RNA biology that they believe will one day lead to a treatment for Huntington's disease.

Robi Blumenstein, the president of CHDI, accepted a plaque on behalf of the medical school from Chancellor Michael F. Collins in honor of the exceptional history of collaboration in Huntington's disease research fostered by CHDI. The foundation is a privately funded, not-for-profit biomedical research organization devoted to



**Front from left: Edith Pfister, PhD; Robi Blumenstein; and Neil Aronin, MD.**

**Middle from left: Anastasia Khvorova, PhD; Heather Gray-Edwards, DVM, PhD; and Marian Difiglia, PhD.**

**Back from left: Mike Brodsky, PhD; Richard Moser, MD; and Miguel Sena-Estevés, PhD.**

finding a treatment for Huntington's disease. It backs research projects that encourage scientific collaboration to more directly connect academic research, drug discovery and clinical development. Since 2006, the CHDI Foundation has supported UMMS and Aronin's research with grants totaling \$13 million. ■



**CREATE YOUR  
LEGACY**  
*while making a difference!*

Your planned gift to UMass Medical School or UMass Memorial can take many forms: from an outright gift of cash or real estate to a bequest.

**Learn more about planned gift options:**  
[www.umassmed.edu/planned-giving](http://www.umassmed.edu/planned-giving)