

Kuni Foundation Doubles Imagination Grants Budget in Response to COVID-19; Awards \$1.3 Million to Nonprofits

Funding Supports Emerging and Established Cancer Research Leaders and Innovative Programs for Individuals who Experience Intellectual Challenges

VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON, US, August 11, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Through its Imagination Grants Program, the Kuni Foundation recently awarded \$1.3 million in funding for 23 initiatives that advance ground-breaking cancer research and programs that enhance the well-being and inclusion of individuals who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The Foundation's Board of Directors more than doubled the original program budget in recognition of the critical need for funding in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As funding contracts or disappears, we doubled down on our commitment to cancer research and our support of individuals who experience I/DD," said Greg Goodwin, Kuni Foundation Board Chair. "We can't risk losing a generation of cancer researchers as a result of funding constraints. And, as the pandemic continues to reveal and perpetuate the marginalization of our most underserved communities, individuals who experience I/DD face persistent, increasing challenges."

The organizations that received funding serve a wide range of stakeholders in both urban and rural areas of Oregon and Washington.

Six of the cancer research grants were awarded to the University of Washington School of Medicine. The projects range from the exploration of a lung cancer vaccine to the development of new therapeutic targets for sarcoma, a rare cancer that grows in connective tissue like bones, nerves, muscles, tendons, cartilage and blood vessels of the arms and legs.

"University of Washington School of Medicine faculty were honored to receive six Imagination Grants from the Kuni Foundation, many awarded to assistant professors who are just beginning their careers in academic medicine," said John Slattery, PhD, Vice President for Research and Graduate Education at the UW School of Medicine. "Especially during this time of unprecedented economic uncertainty, these grants are an important catalyst that allow our researchers to take the next step from lab to clinic and from clinic to cure. We are so grateful to the Kuni Foundation for partnering with our remarkable faculty to end cancer."

Fourteen organizations dedicated to serving individuals who experience I/DD received funding to support a range of efforts, many impacted by COVID-19. Those initiatives include housing, self-advocacy, educational programs and emergency housing for I/DD individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

“The Kuni Foundation grant became an emergency request as the COVID-19 virus threatened to close our organization,” said Jean Edwards, founder of The Edwards Center in Beaverton. “The two months of funds to pay our fixed costs allowed us to stay open and restructure how we could serve our disabled population moving forward. We have deep gratitude to the Foundation for helping us during this difficult time.”

The following organizations received Imagination Grants:

Albertina Kerr, Portland, OR: Supporting Portland Art & Learning Studios

ARC of King County, Seattle, WA: Housing Transition Planning for I/DD Housing

Autism Empowerment, Vancouver, WA: General Operating Support

CDM, Vancouver, WA: I/DD Specialized Equipment for Adult Day Center

Edwards Center, Beaverton, OR: COVID-19 Response Funding

Harper’s Playground, Vancouver, WA: Designing an Inclusive Playground

L-Arche, Portland, OR: Exploration of New Inclusive Housing Model

Leukemia Lymphoma Society, Portland, OR: Advance Novel Immunotherapy for Infants

NW Disability Support, Portland, OR: COVID-19 Response Funding

Parkview Services, Shoreline, WA: I/DD Crisis and Stabilization Housing

People First of Washington, Lakewood, WA: COVID-19 Response Funding

PHAME, Portland, OR: Online Learning in the Wake of COVID

Providence Cancer Institute, Portland, OR: Building a Precision Oncology Program

Providence Center for Medically Fragile Children, Portland, OR: COVID-19 Response Funding

Stephen’s Place, Vancouver, WA: General Operating Support

UW Haring Center for Inclusive Education, Seattle, WA: COVID-19 Response Funding

UW Medicine, Seattle, WA: New Therapeutic Targets for Sarcoma

UW Medicine, Seattle, WA: Vaccine to Prevent Recurrence in Lung Adenocarcinoma

UW Medicine, Seattle, WA: Making Cancer Visible to the Immune System

UW Medicine, Seattle, WA: Revolutionizing Cancer Treatment with Flash Radiation

UW Medicine, Seattle, WA: Transforming Management of Leptomeningeal in Breast Cancer Patients

UW Medicine, Seattle, WA: Specific Tumor Slice Model for Glioblastoma

Wonderland, Shoreline, WA: Early Intervention Screening and Family Support

About the Kuni Foundation:

Based in Vancouver, Washington, the Kuni Foundation funds cancer research and supports programs and initiatives that enhance the lives of adults who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities. Learn more at www.kunifoundation.org or via Twitter at @KuniFoundation.

angela hult

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5032501026

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