

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation Celebrates 25 Years of Fighting Childhood Cancer with Breakthrough Research Initiatives

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, the largest independent childhood cancer charity in the US, announces funding for two groundbreaking predisposition projects.

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Liz Scott, ALSF Co-Executive Director

Foundation (ALSF), the largest independent childhood cancer charity in the U.S., announces the funding of two groundbreaking research projects focusing on early detection and innovative treatments for children predisposed to cancer. The announcement comes as the Foundation also marks 25 years since its founder, Alex Scott's, first lemonade stand.

At least 15-percent of all childhood cancers are caused by a cancer predisposition.

The first grant will study the implementation and promise of a genetic test using newborn blood samples, obtained with a heel-stick at birth, to screen for several cancer

predisposition syndromes. The project is led by Dr. Sharon Plon at Baylor College of Medicine and Dr. Lisa Diller at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, in collaboration with the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and Texas Children's Hospital in Houston. Co-investigators on the team include Dr. Will Parsons, Dr. Stacey Pereira, Dr. Sarah Scollon from Baylor College of Medicine, Dr. Philip Lupo from Emory University, and Dr. Arindam Bhattacharjee and Dr. Richard Parad from Brigham and Women's Hospital. The researchers will explore the promise of using the heel-stick test for cancer risk assessment; this intervention could reduce deaths from cancer or toxicity of cancer therapy by promoting cancer screening in infants found to be at risk.

The second project will study the potential for a cancer vaccine that could provide an early-stage intervention in kids with certain cancer predisposition syndromes. This project is led by Dr. Uri Tabori and Dr. David Malkin at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto. Joining their team as co-investigators are Dr. Gad Getz, Broad Institute, Dr. Derin Keskin, Dana-Farber Cancer

Institute, Dr. Steven Lipkin, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, Dr. Trevor Pugh, University Health Network, Dr. Cynthia Hawkins, SickKids, and Dr. Drew Weissman, from the University of Pennsylvania, the Nobel laureate known for his pioneering work with mRNA vaccines.

The two grants are funded by ALSF's [Crazy 8 Initiative](#), an ambitious grant category that funds collaborative teams that are tackling the most challenging problems in childhood cancer. Launched in 2020, the Crazy 8 has invested \$35 million in 8 collaborative projects. These two new projects will each receive \$5 million over 4 years to complete their studies.



“For 25 years, Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation has been dedicated to bringing hope and better outcomes to children with cancer,” said Liz Scott, Alex’s mother and Co-Executive Director of ALSF. “These groundbreaking studies represent the future of pediatric oncology—moving beyond treatment to prevention and early detection. Alex believed in the power of research to change lives, and these initiatives are a testament to her vision.”

While scientists know about cancer predisposition syndromes, testing for them is not yet part of routine care for the general population, but could make a major difference in catching cancer in its earlier stages when it is potentially more treatable.

This is a reality that families facing predisposition know all too well. Cole Fitzgerald was just 3 years old when he was diagnosed with high-risk stage IV neuroblastoma. Treatment was successful but left Cole with several long-term side effects including hearing loss. Fifteen years later, he was diagnosed with a different type of cancer. It was through this second fight that Cole found out he had Li-Fraumeni Syndrome, a cancer predisposition disorder. Cole died at age 19.

“Families like Cole’s are just waiting to get cancer, but surveillance and a vaccine would allow them to breathe a little easier knowing that it maybe could be prevented,” said Scott. “These projects are everything to these families.”

The two new Crazy 8 Initiative projects were made possible by the generous support of Northwestern Mutual Foundation, Rebecca and Dmitry Balyasny, the Kaliner Family Charitable Fund, Kristin and Michael Kelly, Ira and Andrea Tauber, Jeff and Kristy Snyder, the Danhakl Family

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About Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation

Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) emerged from the front yard lemonade stand of 4-year-old Alexandra "Alex" Scott, who was fighting cancer and wanted to raise money to find cures for all children with cancer. By the time Alex passed away at the age of 8, she had raised \$1 million. Since then, the Foundation bearing her name has evolved into a worldwide fundraising movement and the largest independent childhood cancer charity in the U.S. ALSF is a leader in funding pediatric cancer research projects across the globe and providing programs to families affected by childhood cancer. For more information, visit AlexsLemonade.org.[□]

As ALSF celebrates 25 years of milestones, the foundation calls on supporters to join its mission by donating, volunteering, or raising awareness. Together, we can continue Alex's legacy and bring an end to childhood cancer. To learn more, visit AlexsLemonade.org

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