



# PROGRESS REPORT

## JANUARY 1 – DECEMBER 31, 2016

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## WE TAKE CANCER PERSONALLY.

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**Our mission is to see a world free of the devastating effects of BRCA-related cancers.**

The Basser Center for BRCA at Penn Medicine's Abramson Cancer Center provides families with a place they can turn to for education, genetic counseling, and treatment. We raise awareness around the world. We are at the center of a global hub of scientists, geneticists, and physicians dedicated to successfully treating BRCA-related cancers, and eventually preventing them altogether.

“I started my career focusing on how to find better options for people faced with a BRCA mutation. We have come a long way, and I know that by the end of my career, the Basser Center will play a significant role in offering a greater array of higher quality choices.”

SUSAN DOMCHEK, MD  
Basser Professor in Oncology  
Executive Director, Basser Center for BRCA

## SHARING EXPERIENCES. FACING THE FUTURE TOGETHER.

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Sharing the personal histories of those affected by BRCA mutations helps us face the future together with heart and mind. Through sharing, we empower each other not only with information, but also with bravery, compassion, and life-transforming insights. When we help each other, we in turn help our whole community better understand cancer risk, life-saving choices, and the value of genetic counseling.



## LAURA TEMPLE

Philadelphia, PA, Stage 1 Breast Cancer, Age 53

Laura lost her mom to ovarian cancer after a five year battle. Just six months later, she found a lump in her own breast. The confusion that followed was not only devastating—it was life-threatening. After inconclusive evaluations by two different hospitals, Laura found the Bassett Center and gained control.

“You really can’t tell what a person has been through by just looking at them. This experience has given me an empathy for others that I did not have before.”

At Penn, Laura learned she was a carrier of a *BRCA2* mutation. Dr. Susan Domchek helped Laura prepare to discuss the impact of these results with her family and how her mutation status might affect them as well. Testing revealed the *BRCA* mutation had been passed down through her mother’s side of the family. Three of the four sisters, including Laura, carry the *BRCA2* gene mutation and have developed breast cancer. Laura’s brother has not yet been tested.

Dealing with *BRCA* and its hereditary implications has brought Laura and her sisters closer together, but it was still hard for Laura to tell her sons that they may face an increased risk, and that their children, in turn, may as well. Focusing on the tremendous progress and promise of new scientific discovery helps Laura keep her anxiety about her sons’ futures at bay. Laura continues to dedicate herself and her health efforts to the loving memory of her mom. She only wishes she and her mother had known they carried the *BRCA2* mutation before developing cancer so they could have taken preventative steps. Now, empowered with information, Laura’s family and the generations that follow can face their futures with more hope.

## ERIKA STALLINGS

New York, NY, *BRCA2* Previvor, Age 31  
Co-Chair of the Bassett Center's Young Leadership Council

Erika was too young to understand the first time her mother, Samantha, was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 28. Samantha went into remission, but by the time Erika was a senior in college 14 years later, her mother's cancer had returned. That was 2007, and available genetic testing revealed her mom's *BRCA2* mutation. When Erika turned 29, she decided to confront the possibility of having a *BRCA* mutation herself.

“Since learning about my *BRCA* mutation status, one of my goals is to make sure all communities are aware of the importance of knowing how one's family history impacts cancer risk. And Bassett has been incredibly supportive of every idea I've had.”

After discovering she also carried a *BRCA2* mutation, Erika weighed her options. A prophylactic mastectomy seemed to be the best choice for her medically, but she knew, as a young single woman, that enduring such a drastic change would be emotionally and physically challenging. With her mother's cancer journey in mind, Erika ultimately decided to undergo the surgery. She was grateful to have an amazing and protective support group throughout the entire process—her devoted circle of friends took turns going with her to different doctor appointments, and even threw her a post-surgery celebration.

Although Erika knew *BRCA* mutations impact African Americans, particularly with strong family histories like hers, she couldn't find a single article about a personal experience with a *BRCA* mutation written by a woman of color. She decided to write her own article, which was

eventually featured on the website, *Jezebel*. Among the positive responses to the article was a message from the Bassett Center's Outreach manager, who noticed Erika's gift for explaining this difficult subject. With their encouragement, Erika organized an event with her law firm, Kelley Drye and Warren LLP, to focus on the legal implications of *BRCA*. The successful event was moderated by Honorable Barbara Jaffe, Acting Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, and featured Dr. Susan Domchek and Dr. Kathie-Ann Joseph, a breast surgeon at NYU School of Medicine. Erika's continued engagement with the Center has led to her role as co-chair of the newly formed Bassett Young Leadership Council. Erika's drive to educate others about *BRCA* mutations had found a new platform.







“You’re going to see more  
and more patients like  
me, showing dramatic  
improvement because of  
new targeted therapies.”

## STEVEN MERLIN

**Interlaken, NJ, Pancreatic Cancer, PARP inhibitor therapy, Age 60**

To say Steven Merlin lives a healthy lifestyle would be quite the understatement. He takes extraordinarily good care of his health and body. His diet and 50-mile bike rides were legendary. So when he wasn’t feeling like his usual self in May of 2012, and had to skip the beach on a perfect Memorial Day weekend, he knew something wasn’t right.

At that time, he was working at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City. His primary care physician said, “Let’s wait a few days and see.” But when his urine turned dark and his eyes became jaundiced, he went back for more tests. His physician referred him to a specialist who scheduled an endoscopy the very next morning. The procedure revealed a very aggressive pancreatic tumor. Because he was in excellent physical shape, he was a terrific candidate for the Whipple procedure, a complex operation to remove part of the pancreas, small intestine, and gallbladder. His surgeon scheduled the procedure immediately.

Since Steven carried a BRCA mutation, he was a candidate for a PARP inhibitor clinical trial after his cancer was discovered to have metastasized after initial chemotherapy. Steven threw himself into finding the best treatment options. During his research, one name kept coming up over and over: Dr. Susan Domchek. Clinical trials were showing improved outcomes for BRCA-related pancreatic cancer patients using PARP inhibitors. That’s when the stars began to align and Steven enrolled in the clinical trial.

After more than two years on a PARP inhibitor, things look very positive. Steven has barely skipped a beat during his treatment, keeping a close eye on his diet, continuing to set goals, and looking to the future.

Steven also works hard to be a positive role model in his community. He mentors medical students so they can be better physicians. And he shares his story with other cancer patients, especially those with pancreatic cancer. Through Steven, they can see living proof that the Bassett Center is winning the war on BRCA-related cancer.





“We have been awed by the advancements made possible through the research and collaborations at the Basser Center over the last five years, and are more hopeful than ever that our support will lead to the prevention of and cures for BRCA-related cancers.”

MINDY AND JON GRAY  
Founders, Basser Center for BRCA

## CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF HOPE

Since its establishment, the Basser Center has much to celebrate. We are thrilled for Mindy and Jon Gray’s recent \$21 million gift, which brings their investment in the Center to an astounding \$55 million. Through the commitment of our generous donors and philanthropic partners, the Basser Center is changing the future for generations to come.

### In just five years, we have accomplished so much:



WE MADE  
TREMENDOUS  
PROGRESS  
IN 2016.

## RESEARCH

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SHARING KNOWLEDGE.  
ADVANCING SCIENCE.

The funding we provide focuses on cutting-edge science and a team approach, encouraging dynamic collaborations among top researchers in their pursuit of a cure for BRCA-related cancers. Whether the work takes place here in Philadelphia or at other research centers around the world, we are empowering scientists to join forces to improve patient care and provide better options for the next generation.



# INTERNAL PENN GRANTS

## ADVANCING THE SCIENCE AMONG US.

### BASSER CENTER LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

- Susan Domchek, MD**  
Executive Director
- Ronny Drapkin, MD, PhD**  
Director of Gynecologic Cancer Research
- Roger Greenberg, MD, PhD**  
Director of Basic Science
- Katherine Nathanson, MD**  
Director of Genetics
- Beth Stearman, MPH**  
Administrative Director

Internal funding encourages collaborators across University of Pennsylvania Schools and Centers to pursue promising and innovative science. Through these internal grants, the Basser Center provides the vital funding needed to help our scientists and physicians build upon our solid foundation in both research and patient care. Penn has always been a leader in the study of BRCA-related cancers. Through the Basser Center’s continued support, we’re poised to find the next lifesaving advancement.

Individuals who have a *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* gene mutation have an increased risk for developing certain cancers, including breast, ovarian, prostate, and pancreatic. These hereditary mutations can affect both men and women and can be passed down from either parent. Research funded by the Basser Center propels better prevention, screening, and treatment options for individuals with a BRCA gene mutation. Through research, we continue to bring hope to those who need it.

The following section outlines the four, multi-year, team science grants being supported by the Center.

PARP inhibitors represent a big advancement in precision medicine. Normally, when cells develop DNA breakages, the body repairs the breakage with PARP. PARP inhibitors are particularly effective in cancers associated with *BRCA1* or *BRCA2* mutations. In cancer cells lacking BRCA, DNA repair mechanisms are already not working normally. This situation, combined with a PARP inhibitor, creates a “one-two” punch which can kill the cells and reduce tumors.

**Following the approval of the first PARP inhibitor, olaparib, in 2014, the FDA approved rucaparib for BRCA-related ovarian cancer patients in 2016, making it the second FDA-approved drug for BRCA-related cancers in just two years. The Basser Center has taken a lead role in these FDA approvals.**

**Principal Investigator:**  
Roger Greenberg, MD, PhD

**Co-Investigators:**  
Angela DeMichele, MD, MSCE  
Robert Mach, PhD  
Mehran Makvandi, PhD  
David Mankoff, MD, PhD  
Andy Minn, MD, PhD  
Warren Pear, MD, PhD  
Wei Tong, PhD  
Lin Zhang, MD

### PUZZLING IT OUT: UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF THE CANCER CELL

*Molecular Determinants of Chemo-responsiveness of BRCA Mutant Cancers*

Mutations in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes cause deficient DNA repair that can eventually lead to cancer. However, not enough is known about how other cell functions or mechanisms behind that faulty repair let cancerous cells survive. Understanding and exploiting the way that DNA repair works is the aim of Dr. Roger Greenberg’s team.

The team is taking a unique look at a tumor’s internal environment, DNA repair sites, and a type of RNA that normally acts as the “messenger” for DNA’s instructions. Each area of study could lead to innovative clinical trials at the Basser Center. The hope is to dole out even more “pink slips” to members of cancer’s repair team (see the research update on previous page) while minimizing toxic effects to healthy, non-cancerous cells. Dr. Greenberg’s team has been able to see DNA repair and PARP inhibitors working in real time. They’ve also developed innovative PET imaging techniques that may determine which patients are most likely to respond to PARP inhibitors, as well as novel mechanisms that dictate survival of BRCA mutant cancers. The goal is to translate these basic advances into new strategies that restore cancer cells’ vulnerability to PARP inhibitors, chemotherapy, and other targeted treatments.

The team has published numerous papers that have been featured in high-impact journals such as *Cell* and *Nature*, and have received multiple National Cancer Institute grants based on their work. Their work on novel PET imaging modalities has already entered clinical trials. It has also impacted cancer research at-large: PARP inhibitors are being tested on other cancers, and additional cancer-causing genes have been identified based on their findings.

“We have a remarkably diverse team of scientists,” says Dr. Greenberg. “By taking the great successes developed in different areas of cancer biology, we’re leveraging our scientific strengths like no one else, and frankly, changing the field. Private philanthropy lends an invaluable ability to leap into action when a promising idea emerges, which is not possible under the reporting constraints of more traditional grant funding sources.”



**WE'RE NOT THROWING AWAY OUR SHOT:  
ELECTRIC VACCINES AND OTHER IMMUNO-TOOLS**

*Team Science Award in Immunoprevention*

**Principal Investigator:**

Robert H. Vonderheide, MD, DPhil

**Principal Investigators:**

Andrea Facciabene, PhD  
Katherine Nathanson, MD  
Daniel Powell, PhD  
Ben Stanger, MD, PhD  
David Weiner, PhD  
E. John Wherry, PhD

Dr. Robert Vonderheide, Director of the Abramson Cancer Center, and his team aim to develop a vaccine that can be given to BRCA mutation carriers before they develop cancer: a “polio vaccine” for BRCA. The first phase of this clinical trial is to determine the optimal vaccine dose for patients affected by a range of cancers who have completed their therapy, are in remission, and are at a high-risk for recurrence. Patients are given varying doses of a DNA vaccine delivered using electroporation to more effectively introduce the vaccine into the cell. The team is heartened by the success of the trial thus far. Trial enrollment is nearing completion and detailed studies of the immunological response are underway.

At the same time, Dr. Vonderheide’s team continues to refine laboratory models to help narrow down complementary immunotherapy targets. These targets could either disrupt the internal environment of the cancer cell or manipulate an immune response “checkpoint.” His team is also working to identify factors in tumor cell immunity, how cancer cells can evade the immune system, and whether mutations in the “power house” of the cell—known as mitochondria—can lead to a new cancer treatment target.

“Penn is an epicenter for immunology,” says Dr. Vonderheide. “Our doctors and nurses have a deep understanding of immunotherapy and gene therapy. And our world-class team of scientists is full of experts in BRCA biology. Genetic susceptibility to cancer presents us with a huge challenge and, with the resources of the Bassett Center, we’re in the fortunate primary position to solve it.”

**Principal Investigators:**

Eric Brown, PhD  
Fiona Simpkins, MD

**Co-Investigators:**

Mark Morgan, MD  
Katherine Nathanson, MD  
Ben Stanger, MD, PhD  
Rugang Zhang, PhD

**GIVING THE PINK SLIP TO CANCER'S REPAIR TEAM**

*Overcoming PARP inhibitor (PARPi) resistance by targeting the ATR-CHK1 pathway in BRCA1 deficient ovarian and pancreatic cancers.*

Among the most promising classes of drugs in fighting BRCA-related cancers are PARP inhibitors, which can stop cancerous cells from repairing themselves and continuing to survive, grow, and reproduce. Cancer cells that have been damaged—but unfortunately not destroyed—by chemotherapy or other means can potentially be targeted by this “second round punch” of PARP inhibitors, thereby killing the cancer cells. But most BRCA-related cancers eventually develop resistance to these targeted therapies.

Drs. Eric Brown and Fiona Simpkins are looking for new targets that, combined with PARP inhibitors, could overcome this resistance. Using mouse models that mimic patients with BRCA-related ovarian cancer, the team has identified two promising targets that helped the PARP inhibitor cause tumor regression. In fact, these new targets may be effective in non-BRCA-related cancers as well. The team’s next step includes further exploration of how cancer genes and proteins are affected by these drugs so that patients may be effectively identified as candidates for new combination therapies.

The work has attracted funding from the Department of Defense and National Institutes of Health. As a result, the team will be launching a Phase I clinical trial in 2017. In combination with PARP inhibitors, the trial will test therapeutic cocktails in 60 patients with recurrent BRCA-related ovarian cancer.

“As a gynecologic oncologist, I see so many *young* women and mothers with ovarian cancer. We urgently need new treatment options to extend and improve their lives, and the Bassett Center has accelerated this process,” says Dr. Simpkins. “At Penn, I’m surrounded by the brightest minds who share a common goal: how can we beat ovarian cancer? I know I’m at the right place to realize this goal.”

**Principal Investigator:**  
Angela R. Bradbury, MD

## TALK, TEXT, OR TWEET: OUTREACH BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

*Optimizing Precision Risk Assessment and Access to Genetic Services for BRCA1/2 Mutation Carriers: "The Telegenetics Study"*

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Genetic counseling is the first step in developing a plan for effectively identifying those with a BRCA mutation. Dr. Angela Bradbury seeks to understand if remote genetic counseling—where patients at medical centers without genetic counselors receive genetic counseling by phone or videoconference—will result in more at-risk patients and families getting the genetic services and information they need to make critical health decisions.

Since the project was originally launched, Dr. Bradbury has added three new community partners, and has enrolled more than 80 patients. Her team has found that while many patients in underserved communities historically have been hesitant to seek care at, or are not able to travel to, large institutions, they have actually been receptive to telegenetic outreach.

This study has had a powerful impact across the nation. The Penn telegenetics program and the study have been publicized through LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Penn Medicine's blog. This study is the model that is also being utilized for other patients without access to genetic services. Dr. Bradbury and the program lead two similar NIH-funded studies utilizing remote genetic counseling in a national Alzheimer's disease prevention trial and for patients with potential inherited cancer risk in the national NCI match precision medicine study. The Penn telegenetics program now offers genetic services collectively to patients at more than 60 medical sites across the country.

"By taking a risk and making this innovative research a priority, the Basser Center has helped us identify many BRCA carriers, whom otherwise might not have known their risk. These individuals represent just one person within entire families that have now been BRCA-identified," says Dr. Bradbury.

## EXTERNAL GRANTS PROGRAM

### SHARING RESOURCES. PUSHING THE LIMITS.

The Basser Center has pushed the boundaries and changed the rules of traditional academic research by funding research outside of Penn. Our external grants are the best way to help the brightest scientific minds around the world work together to develop more advanced care and find a cure for BRCA-related cancers. This cross-team collaboration keeps the entire research community focused on creating a better future for people affected by a BRCA mutation. That's team science.

### 2016 FUNDED GRANTS

Four one-year Basser Innovation Awards were given in 2016. These projects represent high-risk, high-reward ideas that have the potential to change the course of BRCA-related research. Research for ideas of this type often go unfunded by traditional mechanisms. As a result of Basser Center funding, several past Innovation Award winners have gone on to receive additional grants for their Basser Center projects through organizations like the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

#### **Tony Huang, PhD**

New York University School of Medicine

*Determine the Role of Dormant Origin Firing in Modulating BRCA1 Haploinsufficiency*

#### **Jeffrey Parvin, MD, PhD**

Ohio State University School of Medicine

*Analysis of BRCA1 Missense Variants in DNA Repair*

#### **Richard T. Pomerantz, PhD**

Temple University Lewis Katz School of Medicine

*Targeting DNA Polymerase  $\Theta$  for Precision Medicine in BRCA Deficient Cancers*

#### **Patrick Sung, DPhil**

Yale School of Medicine

*Roles of BRCA1 in RAD51-mediated Homologous Recombination and Tumor Suppression*

## THE BASSER GLOBAL PRIZE

The Basser Global Prize honors a visionary scientist who has advanced the research of *BRCA1/2*-related cancer that has led to improvements in clinical care. But it is more than an honor – it is a unique research grant. Traditional funding mechanisms encourage small iterative steps. In contrast, the Basser Global Prize is completely unrestricted and is intended to encourage innovative and bold *BRCA1/2*-related research efforts.

The Basser Global Prize was established and endowed by Shari Basser Potter and Len Potter and is awarded annually at the Basser Scientific Symposium, an event that attracts researchers and clinicians from around the world. Nominees for the prize include some of the world's most accomplished basic, translational, and clinical researchers working in the field. The goal of the prize is to further support their work in an effort to eliminate the devastating impact of these genetic mutations on patients and their families.

### 2016 BASSER GLOBAL PRIZE RECIPIENT

#### Steven Narod, MD, FRCPC, FRSC

Two decades ago, Dr. Steven Narod helped identify the *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* genes. Since then, he has become the world's most-cited breast cancer scientist, having published more than 800 peer-reviewed papers. As director of the Familial Breast Cancer Research Unit and a senior scientist at the Women's College Hospital in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Dr. Narod continues to make significant contributions to the assessment of cancer risk and how to reduce its mortality in *BRCA1* and *BRCA2* mutation carriers. Throughout his research career, he has accumulated a database of more than 15,000 women with mutations from 30 countries, which facilitates understanding, research, and treatment of breast and ovarian cancers worldwide.



#### PAST RECIPIENTS:

**2015 – David Livingston, MD**  
Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center  
Boston, Massachusetts

**2014 – Mary-Claire King, PhD**  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

**2013 – Alan Ashworth, PhD, FRS**  
Institute for Cancer Research  
London, England

“We are all partners in this collective mission to fight these destructive *BRCA* gene mutations and provide today's generation, and all those that follow, with better choices for detection, risk mitigation, and treatment.”

SHARI AND LEN POTTER  
Founders, Basser Global Prize





INFORMING COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE

Helping individuals and families around the world understand what is known about BRCA mutations is one of our primary tasks. Since people can share information more easily than ever before, we can be creative in how we reach the communities affected by BRCA mutations. Whether it's through a webinar, a live seminar, a sharable message or a virtual event, our efforts are putting information about BRCA mutations out there for people worldwide.

IN 2016:

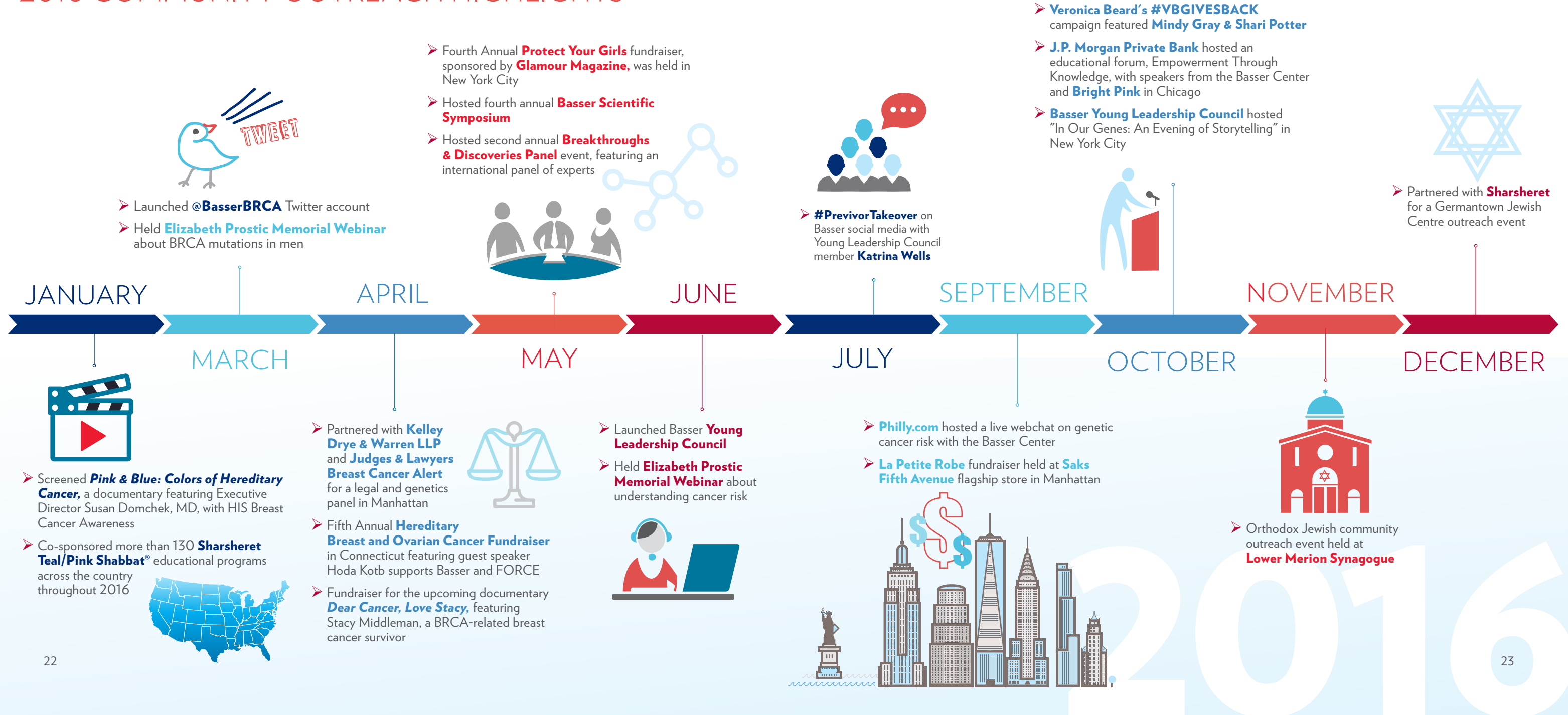


OUTREACH

INFORMING OUR COMMUNITIES

Our efforts to reach out to the individuals and affected communities with information about testing, resources, and available options can help every person with a BRCA mutation make more informed choices.

# 2016 COMMUNITY OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS



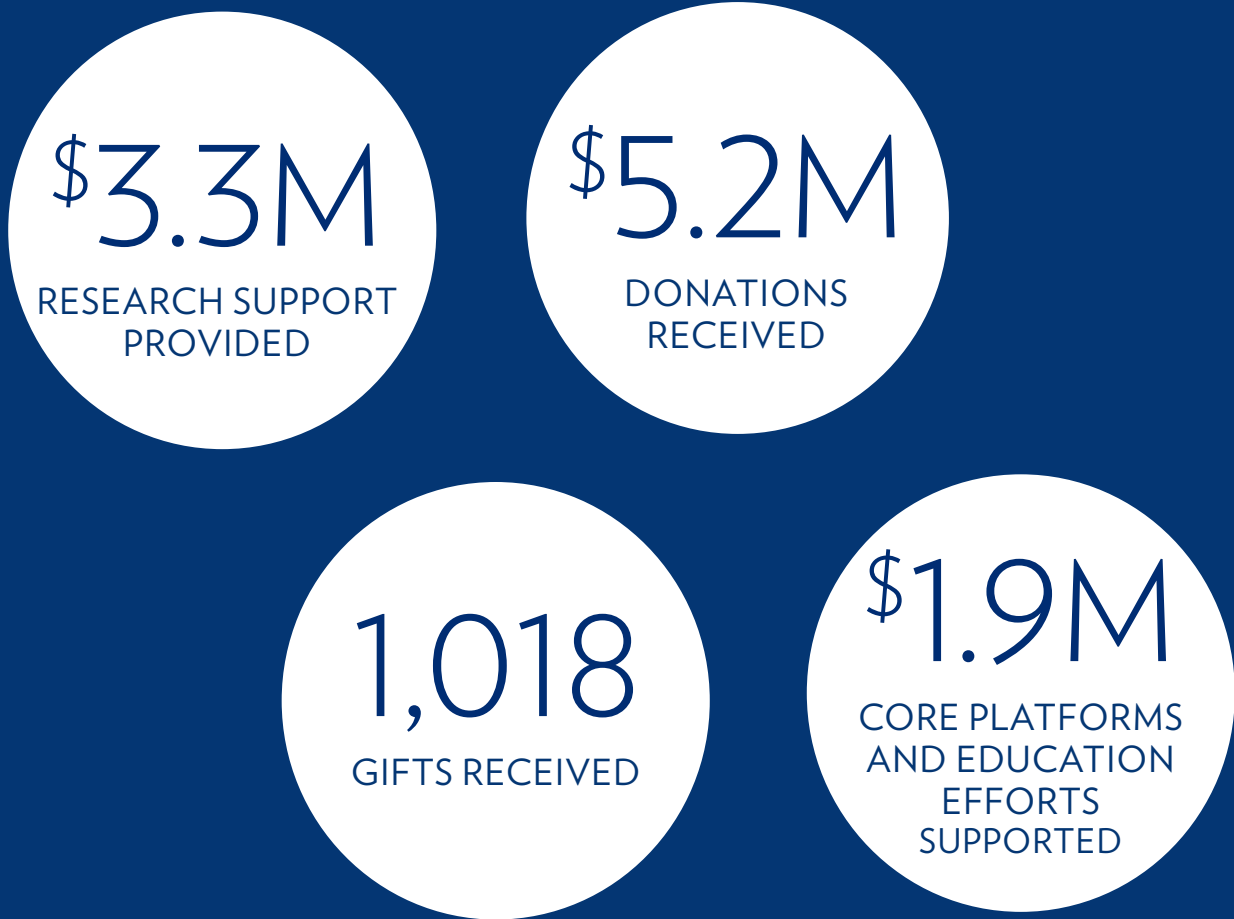


Donated in 2015 by the artist, Erik Skoldberg.

FUNDING HOPE

Each donation we receive, large and small, strengthens our collective impact on improving the odds and options for so many people affected by *BRCA1/2* mutations.

IN 2016:







At the Revlon LOVE IS ON Million Dollar Challenge check presentation ceremony in New York City, featured left to right: Shari Potter, Len Potter, Revlon spokesperson Halle Berry, Revlon CEO Fabian Garcia, Mindy Gray, and Dr. Susan Domchek.

# REVLO LOVE IS ON MILLION DOLLAR CHALLENGE

## More than \$1.2 Million Raised Through the Revlon Challenge

We’re no strangers to intense competition. In a spectacular six-week campaign throughout September and October of 2016, the Bassett Center for BRCA competed with more than 160 women’s health organizations for the \$1,000,000 grand prize in the Revlon LOVE IS ON Million Dollar Challenge.

### A powerful display of collective effort

Bassett wins second place! Thanks to our many generous supporters, with an incredible matching gift by Mindy and Jon Gray, and Revlon’s additional \$100,000 prize awarded to the 2nd place winner, we raised more than \$1.2 million for the Bassett Center.

We truly felt the LOVE. Thank you, Revlon!



# THE BASSER CENTER YOUNG LEADERSHIP COUNCIL (YLC)

## The next generation of leadership

The Young Leadership Council (YLC) of the Basser Center for BRCA is a group of men and women who serve as the next generation of leadership volunteers and supporters of the Basser Center for BRCA. The YLC is a forum for young adults to become more engaged with the mission of the Center, stay informed about the latest advances in BRCA-related cancer research, help with philanthropic support and awareness, as well as provide counsel within their areas of expertise.

All funds raised support the work of junior investigators at the Basser Center, and YLC members play an active role in awarding these critical resources.

If you have questions about the YLC or would like to join us, please contact Kelly Baldwin Heid at [kbheid@upenn.edu](mailto:kbheid@upenn.edu) or 215.746.8799.

### Co-Chairs

Rachel L. Presser  
Erika Stallings

### Event Committee Chair

Suzanne Zuppello

### Council Members

Jodi Berger  
Maureen Boesen  
Kathryn Buckley  
Jamie Burak  
Cherie H. Calingasan  
Katherine DiLullo  
Lisa Donnelly  
Elizabeth Drake  
Peri Edelstein  
Dorie Eisenstein  
Galia Farber

Denise H. Frederickson  
Lindsay Goldblatt  
Shannon Pulaski Hennessey  
Raven A. Holzer  
Lindsay Jacobson  
Michele Kaplan  
Carlette Knox  
Eliberty Lopez  
Jamie Ludwig, PhD  
Sara Lustgarten  
Stephanie Marton  
Carolyn McAnlis

Dani Nodelman  
Calle Norman  
Laura J. Reinke  
Hillary Rieger  
Ilana Katz Sand, MD  
Michael E. Sand  
Kelly Scheib  
Bridget Stillwell  
Katrina A. Wells  
Vanessa Woodman

### In Our Genes: An Evening of Storytelling

Our 2016 inaugural event, *In Our Genes: An Evening of Storytelling*, was a huge success, drawing more than 130 attendees and raising \$33,000. The October 5th event at Hudson Terrace in New York City featured stories from three individuals affected by BRCA: public speaker and comedian **Caitlin Brodnick**; acclaimed author, television writer, and women's health advocate **Jessica Queller**; and Cheddar founder and CEO **Jon Steinberg**.





# PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

## Achieving more together

2016 brought together an impressive group of partners and collaborators who have helped us continue to spread knowledge and work toward our shared mission of educating at-risk individuals.



# IN THE NEWS

## Promoting the conversation

Press coverage about our work and partnerships with like-minded organizations continues to share our message with high-risk individuals, improving understanding, and highlighting access to genetic counseling and testing. Researchers and clinicians supported by the Bassler Center for BRCA were included in more than **100** news articles, a few of which are highlighted below:

### Cancer Immunotherapy and Beyond

Robert H. Vonderheide, MD, DPhil, shares insights on progress in the field of cancer immunotherapy and how embracing an even broader view of cancer biology and therapy will continue to strengthen efforts. “In the future, we want to understand the whole problem: genetics, metabolism, immunology, vascular biology – everything at once. Technology is making this multidisciplinary strategy possible,” Dr. Vonderheide said.



### Promising Cancer Drug Exploits BRCA Genetic Mutations

A targeted therapy shown to benefit ovarian cancer patients with a BRCA mutation also elicited responses in previously treated pancreatic cancer patients with the mutation. Susan M. Domchek, MD, said the results “demonstrate the clinical significance of the BRCA cancer genes outside of breast and ovarian cancer, and not just in women.”



### Knowing Their Breast Cancer Risk May Empower Teens

Basser Center-led research shows that knowing they have a family history of breast cancer or a high-risk gene mutation doesn’t lead to increased anxiety or depression in teen girls. “These teens may actually have greater self-esteem and a better understanding of cancer risk than their peers,” study author Angela Bradbury, MD, said.



### Cancer Risk Genetic Testing Reports Can Vary from Lab to Lab

Testing for gene mutations linked to cancer risk may guide how a patient is treated, but the determination of whether a mutation is dangerous or benign can vary from lab to lab. “As we do testing on more and more genes that we didn’t use to test for there is more uncertainty,” study author Susan M. Domchek, MD, said.





# BASSER CENTER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Our Leadership Council is an active group dedicated to enhancing and supporting the Basser Center’s broader mission. The Council is passionate about securing the resources needed to accelerate BRCA-related research, care, and education, as well as generating ideas that can provide hope to every patient and family member affected by a BRCA mutation.

### Chair

Mindy Gray

### Council Members

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Cindy Gavin    | Jessica Queller   |
| Susan Getz     | Heidi Rieger      |
| Michael Haas   | Stacey Sager      |
| Lisa Jacobs    | Jill Steinberg    |
| Michele Konner | Dana Zucker       |
| Shari Potter   | Anonymous members |

“In just five short years the Basser Center has amassed a network of advocates, created a haven for families who need help, and established a sanctuary where researchers can collaborate with the greatest minds and acquire resources to advance their innovative ideas—all of which has been made possible through our community and philanthropic partners.”

J. LARRY JAMESON, MD, PHD  
Executive Vice President, University of Pennsylvania for the Health System  
Dean, Perelman School of Medicine

# DONORS

Gifts listed below are from January 1 through December 31, 2016, and reflect cumulative giving during that time period.

## \$250,000 and above

Phil and the late Pearl Basser  
Mindy and Jon Gray  
Shari and Len Potter  
Carol Stone and Norman Stone, Esquire

## \$100,000 - \$249,999

Sara and Eric Resnick  
Revlon

## \$10,000 - \$99,999

Madlyn and Leonard Abramson  
Anonymous  
Bank of America Corporation  
Lee Berg  
Kate Berges  
The Derfner Foundation and Jay Lieberman  
Wendy and Douglas Eisenberg  
Polina and Yan Erlikh  
Alexander Gellman  
Susan and David Getz  
Andrew N. Goldman, Esquire  
Raquel and Michael Haas  
Irene Hess  
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Lisa and Sam Jacobs  
Susu and George Johnson, Jr., Esquire  
Christine and Jordan Kaplan  
Debra and Mark Klein  
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Lynn and Paul Lattanzio  
Audrey McNiff

Evie and John McNiff  
Marla and Jon Mehlman  
Stacy Middleman  
Corry Oakes  
Carole and Stuart Potter  
Marjorie Prostic and Dr. Edward J. Prostic  
Randy Reiff Family Foundation, LLC  
Norman A. and Margaret I. Shane Charitable Trust  
Meredith A. Elson and Matthew Sirovich  
Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation  
Sabina and Harlan Stone  
Nancy and Richard Wolfson  
Dana Zucker and Brahm Cramer

## \$5,000- \$9,999

Veronica Beard  
Wendy and Paul Delaney  
Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Friedman  
Cindy and Brian Gavin  
Debbie and Keith Gelb  
Vicki Gross  
Passion Growers  
Sara and Matt Grunwell  
Leonard Kane  
Drs. Leon and Delphine Ouazana  
Stacy and Jonathan Pollack  
La Petite Robe  
Barbara Schlott  
Erin and David Schonbraun  
Jill and Jon Steinberg  
Mark Wang

## \$2,500 - \$4,999

JCC Manhattan  
Just Give  
Leila Joffe and Dr. Ian Joffe  
Hulda Khalidi

Susan Ablon Lubin and Dr. Craig Lubin  
Nadeem Meghji  
Heidi and Richard Rieger  
Dr. Ilana Katz-Sand and Michael E. Sand  
Schaffer, Schonholz & Drossman, LLP  
Phyllis L. Smith  
Dr. Marjorie Seltzer Stanek

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