



Making Moments

“I’m looking forward to my kids getting older, teaching them how to drive, school dances ...
Is *‘thank you’* enough? I don’t think those words are enough.”

- Elicia Pera
Roswell Park patient



ANNUAL REPORT | 2023 - 2024

A Letter from
DR. JOHNSON



Thanks to incredible partners like you, the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation celebrated moments of success, expansion and mission-focused advancement this past year. I think back to moments like the opening of the Scott Bieler Amherst Center to bring high-quality, compassionate care to our neighbors who live in suburbs north of Buffalo. Moments like the preservation of a neighboring historic building on Michigan Avenue with the opening of the Community Outreach and Engagement Center where experts will be focused on advancing health equity and improving health outcomes. Moments, too, like seeing the brain cancer vaccine SurVaxM expand to late-stage clinical trials to get one step closer to being the standard of care, bringing hope to so many patients.

The moments that mean most to me are the personal ones.

The ones we give to our patients. Truly, the ones our donors make alongside our patients.

You're making moments for people who conquered months of chemotherapy to celebrate their daughter's first birthday party, one they were afraid they might not be here for at all.

Making moments for people who pushed through cancer treatment during their senior year of high school to walk across the stage at graduation with all their friends beside them and their family cheering from the crowd.

You're making moments for people who finally step back into the spotlight, reenergized by their passion to perform, with their loved ones in the audience after beating the cancer they never expected to have.

Through your generosity, the experts at Roswell Park are empowered to investigate promising ideas and make new scientific discoveries.

They can build on deeply compassionate programs our patients and their support systems rely on. With your help, they launch clinical trials that are saving lives — and will go on to shape the future of cancer care here and around the world.

These are the moments we live for. The ones that inspire us to commit to making a difference in our collective fight against cancer. From today until no one needs to fear a cancer diagnosis. **These are the moments you're making.** And I thank you from the bottom of my heart for making them with us.

Sincerely,

Candace S. Johnson
Candace S. Johnson, PhD
President & CEO

M&T Bank Presidential Chair in Leadership
Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

A Letter from our
CHAIRMAN

What a great honor it is to Chair the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation Board. Many thanks to Jim Newman for his tremendous leadership over the past four years. As a result of his leadership, the Alliance Foundation has made significant contributions in the fight against cancer. We are so very fortunate to have a great staff of dedicated workers at the Alliance Foundation and a world-class faculty at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center. Recently a national rating agency conducted an extensive onsite review of Roswell Park from top to bottom. Our center received a rating from this agency that placed it in the **top 10% of comprehensive cancer care nationwide!**

In a leap forward, Roswell Park is expanding its cell production facilities to open cell therapy trials for solid tumor cancers. This puts Roswell Park at the forefront of cellular therapy development and the production of these vital therapies. That is the primary focus of the **Igniting Cancer Breakthroughs** campaign — a goal that will only be possible through steadfast partnerships with donors like you.

You may have heard the exciting news of Empire State Development Corporation investing \$30 million in the expansion of Roswell Park's cell therapy program creating the largest academic cell and gene therapy research and manufacturing facility in the United States. While that is wonderful news, **the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation needs to raise an additional \$20 million to complete this state-of-the-art hub for life-saving treatments.**

The development of cell therapy is very personal to me. My wife Mary Alice just successfully completed her second round of treatments for lymphoma. Cellular therapy will likely be a vital future treatment option to keep her cancer under control and will also be a critical, life-saving treatment for many other cancer patients in the future.

As you read this annual report, know that your support is making a difference in expediting the timeline to bring new treatment options to more patients.

As we all know, cancer patients do not have time on their side. The continuous need for cancer breakthroughs is great, and the time for innovation is now.

Sincerely,

Ross J. Eckert
Chairman
Roswell Park Alliance Foundation



Ross Eckert



Gratwick Reception



Mary Alice

*This report is an in-house production.
Stories: Michelle Ostrander,
Jenna Schifferle and Joan McDonough
Graphic design: Amy Prior
Photography: Ben Richey,
Brittany Sikora and Thomas McBride*



Tim is back to life's adventures with his wife, Debbie, after CAR T-cell therapy.

Watch how your generosity gave Tim hope!



Shaping the future of cancer care by **IGNITING CANCER BREAKTHROUGHS**

Roswell Park is positioned to become a global destination for innovative cancer care, and Roswell Park donors have been invaluable in bringing this goal to life. By expanding our ability to study, produce and test new treatments, Roswell Park experts will be able to offer the most cutting-edge care to our patients in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.

SOPHISTICATED CELL PRODUCTION

Immunotherapy has changed the way we treat all kinds of cancer by taking full advantage of the innate genius of the immune system. Cell therapy, a type of immunotherapy, is an evolving and expanding field that offers great promise for patients and their loved ones.

Cell therapy uses cells, sometimes gene-engineered, to work with a patient's immune system to stop cancer growth and kill existing cancer cells. **The production of those cells needs to happen in a sophisticated, dedicated facility that is built exactly for that specific purpose.** With donor support, Roswell Park is broadening our capabilities to expand the pace and scope of available treatment for patients. This expansion will set up Roswell Park as a leader in cell production for immunotherapies and cell therapies and get us one step closer to being a global destination for this innovative cancer care.

BRINGING INNOVATION TO PATIENTS

Roswell Park is committed to accelerating access to the most promising immunotherapy treatments through clinical trials. **Few institutions in the nation have the facilities for pre-treatment, manufacturing and post-treatment of immunotherapies and gene therapy clinical trials. With a recent investment from New York State and with the support of donors through the Igniting Cancer Breakthroughs campaign, Roswell Park has all of this, making it uniquely positioned to lead cutting-edge trials.**

“I’m incredibly excited about the work the team will do in the next few years — the time we are going to be able to give back to patients with even advanced cancers, the cures that are within our reach today.”

– Dr. Brentjens

With your support, Roswell Park experts will be able to use the expanded facilities to bring existing and new treatments to more patients, participate in more clinical trials and research treatments that are still on the horizon.

Four cell therapy clinical trials will be made possible through the Igniting Cancer Breakthroughs campaign: a pediatric and adult sarcoma trial, an ovarian cancer trial, a small cell lung cancer and prostate cancer trial and a pancreatic cancer trial. These trials, all currently in pre-clinical phases, will focus on targeting solid tumors. The results are expected to bring groundbreaking advancements to cell therapy that will launch this treatment type into standard of care, reaching many more patients.

“This is a time of tremendous hope and promise,” explains Dr. Brentjens. “Cellular therapy is in its infancy, but it’s already dramatically reshaping what we can achieve through cancer therapy. I’m incredibly excited about the work the team will do in the next few years — the time we are going to be able to give back to patients with even advanced cancers, the cures that are within our reach today.”

Meet the Team



RENIER BRENTJENS, MD, PhD
Deputy Director and Chair of Medicine
The Katherine Anne Gioia Endowed Chair in Cancer Medicine
Dr. Brentjens joined Roswell Park in September 2021. Before joining us, he was part of the team that developed the first approved CAR T-cell therapy for blood cancers. His focus now is on “armored” CAR therapies and translating cell therapy to treat solid-tumor cancers.



MARCO DAVILA, MD, PhD
Senior Vice President & Associate Director for Translational Research
Rustum Family Endowed Chair in Translational Research
Dr. Davila joined Roswell Park in July 2022 and is focused on developing novel cell therapies.



ANURADHA KRISHNAMURTHY, MBBS
Associate Director of Early Phase Clinical Trials for Solid Tumor Cell Therapies
Dr. Krishnamurthy joined Roswell Park in September 2022. Her specialty is expanding the benefits of CAR T-cell therapies to patients with solid tumors including colon, pancreatic, ovarian and more.



PETER MASLAK, MD
Vice Chair of Clinical Affairs and Director of the Flow Cytometry/Immune Monitoring Shared Resources Core
Since March 2023, Dr. Maslak has led the lab that monitors a patient’s immune response to treatment and how the use of vaccines and cell therapy can create better treatments for patients.



CHRIS CHOI, PhD
Senior Vice President of Industry Partnerships and Technical Director of the GMP Engineering & Cell Manufacturing Facility
Dr. Choi rejoined Roswell Park in March 2023 to lead the expansion of our cell production facilities from 6 to 20 rooms.



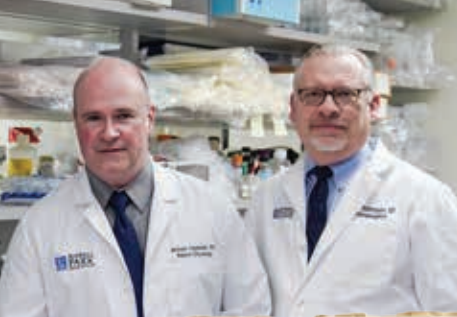
KANWAL MALLHI, MD
Clinical Director of Pediatric Transplantation and Cellular Therapy
Joining Roswell Park in August 2023, Dr. Mallhi is investigating new approaches using stem cell transplant, gene therapy and cell therapy for pediatric patients.



BRIAN BETTS, MD
Vice Chair of Strategic Initiatives in Transplant & Cellular Therapy
Since August 2023, Dr. Betts has used his expertise to develop new therapies for cancer and research ways to reduce and prevent graft versus host disease (GVHD) after a stem cell transplant.



SHERNAN HOLTAN, MD
Chief of Blood and Marrow Transplantation
Dr. Holtan is the newest recruit, joining in February 2024. Her specialty is in GVHD and reducing toxicities of transplantation.



On the fast track to LIFECHANGING TREATMENTS

A decade of donor-support for brain cancer vaccine SurVaxM



In October 2023, a major announcement from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) granted Fast Track Designation (FTD) for SurVaxM, a brain cancer vaccine developed at Roswell Park and currently in clinical trial. This designation opens doors for more extensive and accelerated access to FDA resources to continue to develop SurVaxM.

"We are enormously proud of the Roswell Park team's work going back more than a decade to conceive of SurVaxM, show that it may benefit patients with hard-to-treat, highly deadly cancers and move it successfully from the lab bench to hundreds of patients around the country," said Roswell Park President, CEO and M&T Bank Presidential Chair in Leadership Candace S. Johnson, PhD.

SurVaxM was created at Roswell Park by Robert Fenstermaker, MD, Chair of Neurosurgery and Michael Ciesielski, PhD, Assistant Professor of Neurosurgery. Their work has been passionately supported by donors like you for the past 10 years, proving the importance of community support in bringing new treatments to more patients.

The clinical trial is currently in phase 2b, with an anticipated 270 patients across 11 cancer centers across the country. A successful phase 2a demonstrated that 51% of patients receiving SurVaxM survived at least 2 years, 41% survived at least 3 years and some surviving many more years — considerably longer than the expected outcomes from standard therapy alone.



Cassandra Johnston was diagnosed with glioblastoma in April 2023. She travels from Toronto to be part of the SurVaxM clinical trial at Roswell Park.

"We need more breakthroughs in cancer," Cassandra's mom, Christine, said. "We thank donors for hanging in there and funding the doctors and this research. They couldn't do it without donors. There's a lot to be grateful for, even in the face of this diagnosis."

As of spring 2024, Cassandra's family reported that her tumor had not shown any signs of growth.

Bringing cancer care north at the SCOTT BIELER AMHERST CENTER

The Roswell Park Scott Bieler Amherst Center opened in September 2023 to bring the same top-tier cancer care to patients living in the suburbs north of Buffalo the care they would receive at the downtown Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center campus.

This new building is named for longtime supporter Scott Bieler, President and CEO of the West Herr Automotive Group in recognition of his significant gift to the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation.

"I am so moved by the Western New York community — they are the driving force behind everything we do," Scott said. "The purpose of this new facility is to bring hope and provide a solution to a cancer diagnosis, it was built to hopefully extend life to all who enter it."

One patient present for the opening was Courtney Weigand, a "current cancer thriver and survivor" whose husband, Billy, is a West Herr employee. She recently battled a form of non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

"Scott showed up with flowers in hand and open arms to congratulate me," Courtney said of her bell-ringing day. It was an emotional afternoon with everyone she loved. That is the same kind of warmth and hope our patients feel in the Bieler Amherst Center.

Here, patients can access many of their cancer care services in the new, state-of-the-art facility which allows Roswell Park experts to care for patients in a welcoming environment that's close to home.

"We are forever grateful to Scott and Kathy for their generosity and commitment to making sure the people of this community have access to outstanding cancer care close to home," said Candace S. Johnson, PhD, President, CEO and M&T Bank Presidential Chair in Leadership at Roswell Park.

Scott Bieler and his wife Kathy have been key supporters of Roswell Park for over 20 years. Scott has served on the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation board since 2002 and West Herr has been the presenting sponsor of Ride for Roswell for more than a decade.



"I think patients who might be overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle of the main hospital will appreciate having 907 Michigan as another option in the community. I am sure this new facility will help reach even more folks and bring new love and appreciation for Roswell Park. I am proud and humbled to be part of this new community facility."

- Veronica Meadows Ray
Roswell Park volunteer and breast cancer survivor

Neighbors unite in ROSWELL PARK COMMUNITY CENTER

A 150-year-old residence at 907 Michigan Ave. — a structure that has been around longer than Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center — was transformed into a beautiful community and outreach space dedicated to advancing health equity and improving health outcomes for communities across Western New York.

The Roswell Park Community Outreach & Engagement Center opened in October 2023 to serve members of our community by providing cancer awareness, educational programs, navigation to cancer screening, financial wellness programming and space for community gatherings. **This effort was passionately supported by donors like you, as well as the Walter Lane Living Trust, the Baird Foundation and the Maximus Foundation.**

"We proudly invite our community to this beautiful center they inspired and informed," says Candace S. Johnson, PhD, President, CEO and M&T Bank Presidential Chair in Leadership at Roswell Park. "We're deeply grateful to the many partners who helped us create a space that has the people of this community built into every corner, nook and detail."

REACHING OUR NEIGHBORS

Roswell Park has one of the oldest and most active Community Outreach and Engagement programs in the nation. The new facility is home to many of Roswell Park's broad outreach teams. **Over the last five years, the Roswell Park outreach team has served more than 65,000 community members through culturally appropriate outreach.**

"If everyone really knew all that goes on at Roswell Park, they would not believe it!" says Bernarda Arias, Director of Community Outreach and Engagement, Corporate Social Responsibility. "We have assisted so many not-for-profit organizations with resources and education to continue the great work they are doing in their individual communities."



Making Moments

Meghan, a Hodgkins lymphoma patient, has made more beautiful moments with her baby girl, Lily.

Watch Meghan's moment





Donors support
HEALTH FOR THE WHOLE PATIENT

Comprehensive cancer care doesn't begin or end at medical treatment. It encompasses the full spectrum of mental, emotional and spiritual wellness for our patients and their loved ones. **When you support Roswell Park, you're providing programs that bring hope, access and deep compassion to our patients.**

YOUNG ADULTS WITH CANCER

Efforts to improve patients' quality of life spans dozens of programs of all types and sizes, addressing myriad needs cancer patients and their loved ones face. One group that benefits from these programs is the young adult community at Roswell Park.

"We're an extra hand to hold while people are going through the chaos of a cancer diagnosis and then helping them navigate life into survivorship," says Ashley King, Wellness Program Coordinator for the Young Adult Program.

"Your 20s and 30s are a really challenging time of your life, even without cancer."

Donor funds provided for these programs — and many more!

- **Psychosocial Support** – bringing mental health care to patients, caregivers and families
- **Fertility Preservation** – providing education and financial support to eligible patients whose treatment may impact their fertility post-cancer treatment
- **Patient Outreach** – welcoming new young adult patients into the fold, connecting them with resources and opportunities available at Roswell Park and in the community
- **Child Life Program** – caring for the children of cancer patients, helping them understand their parent's situation in a family-led and age-appropriate way

Young Adult Programs at Roswell Park have steadfast support from quality-of-life donations and longtime donor, Joe Curatolo. Joe and his wife Kathy, who passed away in 2022, had a lifetime of love thanks to excellent care at Roswell Park.

"Roswell Park saved Kathy's life at age 16 and so many other people," Joe said, explaining their connection to young people facing cancer. "I want to hear what their needs are and give access to as many patients as possible." Joe continues to support many programs geared toward young adult and pediatric patients, especially through the dedicated fundraising of their Ride for Roswell team, Kids Just Want to Have Fun.



QUALITY-OF-LIFE PROGRAMS

Donor support fully funds more than 50 Quality-of-Life Programs annually, including the following.

Elevate Salon

Elevate Salon is a specialty salon for cancer patients experiencing hair loss due to treatment. The spa-like space welcomes patients with warmth as they're supported by our knowledgeable and compassionate staff and volunteers.

Creative Arts Team

Roswell Park's Creative Arts Team provides opportunities for patients and loved ones to reduce anxiety, depression, pain and fatigue through a range of creative self-expression projects.

Scalp Cooling Program

Many patients' cancer treatment includes the reality of hair loss. Eligible patients have an opportunity to take advantage of scalp cooling technology which has helped many patients retain some hair or help with hair regrowth.

Chapter 2 Cancer Survivor Workshop

Cancer survivors, patients, caregivers and loved ones are invited for an inspiring and informational workshop series to bring folks with similar experiences together and to learn from experts and one another's hard earned wisdom.

"Whatever your cancer is, they're going to treat it, but they treat the whole person and they carry the family as well. I think that is really important for people to understand when they come to a comprehensive cancer center like Roswell Park."

- Julie Alford
Roswell Park patient and
Alliance Community Board member



Elevate Salon



Creative Arts



Scalp cooling program



Chapter 2



“I really believe the technology we have will become a nationally accepted procedure.”

- Dr. Morrison



AN INNOVATIVE BLOOD TEST

that could change the way we treat cancer

A routine blood test — combined with a novel, ultrasensitive technology developed at Roswell Park — could be the next innovation we’ve been waiting for to change the outcome of virtually all cancer patients.

Tumors secrete very small amounts of themselves into the blood stream.

The Roswell Park Liquid Biopsy, developed by Roswell Park’s Department of Pathology, has the power to detect these trace amounts of cancer in the blood to help inform care teams.

There are a few different ways this technology could be applied to improve patient care everywhere. It can be employed immediately after or routinely after surgery to detect any lingering cancer in the body. It can also be used throughout chemotherapy and/or immunotherapy treatment to assess tumor growth or reduction. Finally, cancer survivors can participate in routine monitoring as a tool to check for cancer recurrence.

Carl Morrison, MD, DVM, Senior Vice President of Scientific Development and Integrative Medicine and Chair of the Department of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine, is committed to bringing the most advanced and effective care to Roswell Park patients. He and his team believe the **Roswell Park Liquid Biopsy is the dynamic, convenient and cost-effective solution we’ve been waiting for.**

TWO STUDIES UNDERWAY AT ROSWELL PARK

Two phase 1 studies are already underway at Roswell Park. The first, involving early-stage tumors removed through surgery, is designed to detect recurrence of cancer long before it could be detected by standard methods such as a CT scan.

The second study is for current patients with advanced disease. The goal of this study is to monitor response to treatment in real-time during each round of treatment whether it be chemotherapy, immunotherapy or a combination.

This is a fast-paced and aggressive path toward higher quality cancer care, knowing we cannot waste time as cancer certainly does not.

“The Roswell Park Liquid Biopsy has the opportunity to change the treatment of cancer as much as anything I’ve ever witnessed in my life,” Dr. Morrison says.

THERAPY MEETS DIAGNOSTICS

in new, expanding field at Roswell Park



Metastatic cancer can be a thief of hope for patients and their loved ones who have exhausted their treatment options. Thankfully, there’s an emerging field of precision medicine called theranostics — a combination of therapeutics and diagnostics — that’s bringing hope back to these families.

DONORS OFFER A SOLUTION

Thanks to incredible donor support, Roswell Park added four shielded rooms dedicated to outpatient theranostic procedures. This facility not only expands options for patients but will lay the foundation for participation in clinical trials and research surrounding the potential for theranostic approaches to reach other cancers.

There are only approximately **50 centers in the country that offer this type of care**, and only a few of those have dedicated theranostic centers. **Roswell Park will continue to be one of those few, leading the industry in this cutting-edge cancer care, now with its own dedicated center.**

Richard Phelps, a prostate cancer patient, was moved to know that supporters of the Roswell Park Alliance Foundation wanted to pave the way for more patients like him to find hope.

“Oh, it means the world to me,” he said. And with this expansion comes so much hope for the future, for patients experiencing other cancer types, too. “I hope they can get more medicine to help more people.”

Richard’s Story

In 2004, cancer screening showed Richard’s prostate specific antigen (PSA) results beginning to grow higher, **he knew he wanted to be seen by the best. And for him, that meant Roswell Park.**

In 2023, Richard’s PSA count spiked. After a more traditional medication wasn’t proving effective for his specific cancer, Gurkamal Chatta, MD, Clinical Chief of Genitourinary Medicine, introduced Richard to theranostics. He started treatment in April and finished in January 2024 with incredible success.

Richard’s philosophy throughout his cancer journey is simple: **“Come to the place where they do the best work and hope for the best,”** he said.

Your generosity generates hope for patients who are with us today and patients who will seek care in the future.

CANCER RESEARCH TAKES OFF,

thanks to donor support

Roswell Park researchers are always working toward the next lifesaving discovery. Often, those groundbreaking findings begin with a simple question or a small data set. Major national funding for cancer research doesn't come until a scientist can prove they have a solid foundation and are already well on their way to something big.

Thanks to your generosity, we have the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). Roswell Park researchers submit unique project proposals about their dedicated cancer focus. Through a competitive and rigorous process, the projects with the highest potential and most established groundwork are funded.

These SAC grants are made possible by the funds contributed by you, without whom, these projects could not make their marks. For every \$1 donated and invested into research initiatives, researchers earn an additional \$23 in external grant funding, further fueling their lifesaving work.

Here are some projects you've made possible this year:



JENS HILLEGASS, MD, PhD

Phase 1 trial introducing a new inhibitor of immunosuppressive cells for patients with relapsed or resistant multiple myeloma
Led by Jens Hillengass, MD, PhD

Survival rates for patients with multiple myeloma have been improving thanks to new treatment options, but barriers persist. Many of those treatments heavily rely on a healthy patient immune system to be the most effective, while many patients develop tumor-induced immune suppression. There's no method currently available to counteract certain parts of this immune suppression. **Dr. Hillengass aims to explore the effectiveness of an existing inhibitor drug as a new way to stop immunosuppression** either on its own or combined with other standard treatment.



PRASENJIT DEY, PhD

Obesity can contribute to pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma progression
Led by Prasenjit Dey, PhD

There is great need for new, effective treatments for pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, a disease with a five-year survival rate of only 12%. Studies have shown that obesity can contribute to these negative outcomes. **Dr. Dey aims to uncover how this information can help prevent or intervene early** by better understanding how obesity plays a role in the cancer's progress.



IRWIN GELMAN, PhD

Identifying the specific driving force behind aggressive, metastatic prostate cancer
Led by Irwin Gelman, PhD

Aggressive metastatic prostate cancer is assumed to be connected to increases in a particular signaling pathway. Inhibitors targeting those signals in clinical trials, however, have not performed as well as expected. **Dr. Gelman's aim is to better understand how metastatic prostate cancer progresses in order to better target this disease through therapies** and, ultimately, improve survival rates for patients battling this aggressive form of cancer.

SPECIALLY FUNDED RESEARCH

Immuno-metabolic regulation in triple negative breast cancer
Led by Subhamoy Dasgupta, PhD, and Scott Abrams, PhD
Funded by the 2022 Empire State Ride top Excelsior Riders

Understanding what drives growth of gene-amplified neuroblastoma in children
Led by Anna Bianchi-Smiraglia, PhD
Funded by The 11 Day Power Play organization

Establishing the mechanism and consequences of regulatory T cell-B cell crosstalk in ovarian cancer
Led by Joseph Barbi, PhD
Funded by the 2023 Empire State Ride top Excelsior Riders

DEVELOPMENTAL THERAPEUTICS PROGRAM

Novel treatment strategy for advanced colorectal cancer
Led by Andrei Bakin, PhD

Development of new therapies for pancreatic cancer
Led by Michael Feigin, PhD
Signaling suppresses neuroendocrine differentiation and alters tumor immune microenvironment in advanced prostate cancer
Led by David Goodrich, PhD

CANCER STRESS BIOLOGY PROGRAM

Targeting Metabolism for Treating Metastatic Breast Cancer
Led by Costakis Frangou, PhD

Understanding why stress harms the immune system
Led by Irwin Gelman, PhD, and Elizabeth Repasky, PhD

Intersection between stress induced cell cycle exit and anti-tumor immunity
Led by Erik Knudsen, PhD, and Agnieszka Witkiewicz, PhD

Studying how to leverage metabolic stress to improve anti-cancer effects of bone marrow transplant
Led by Hemn Mohammadpour, PhD, and Dominic Smiraglia, PhD

How do cancer cells tolerate aberrant chromosome numbers?
Led by Veena Prahlad, PhD, and Katerina Gurova, MD, PhD

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH GROUP

Interrogating metastatic competency of tumor clones within renal cell carcinoma
Led by Jason Muhitch, PhD

Profiling the Immunologic Tumor Microenvironment in myelodysplastic syndromes
Led by Michael Nemeth, PhD



Together, donors are
**GIVING EVERY CHILD A
 FIGHTING CHANCE**

Giving Every Child A Fighting Chance



ROSWELL PARK
 COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

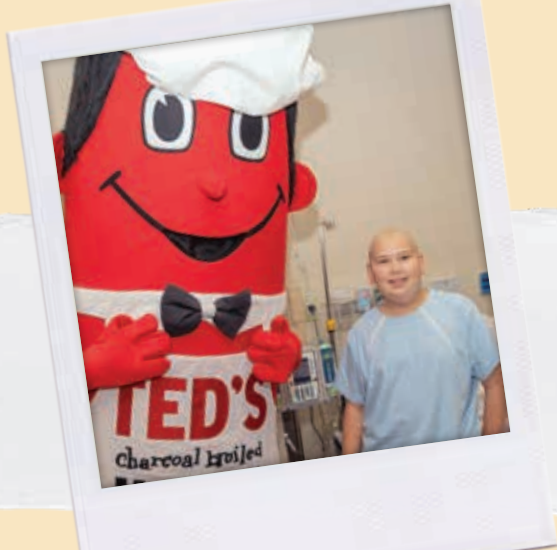
We care deeply for all our patients at Roswell Park, the youngest of those being children facing cancer and blood disorders. Raising a child already comes with challenges and complications, but when cancer appears, those challenges multiply exponentially. With the help of generous supporters, the Courage of Carly Fund can bring these pediatric patients and loved ones a little extra joy to carry with them through their journey.

With your support, Courage of Carly provides kids and families with **unforgettable moments, precious memories and hope** as they battle their illnesses and navigate life. Programs like holiday celebrations, teen prom, monthly outings for the whole family to places like the zoo, the farm, the ballpark and the indoor trampoline park, special gatherings for just parents, celebrations honoring the siblings of these incredible kids and so many more bring smiles to these families in a safe environment surrounded by new friends who understand something about what you're going through.

By supporting Courage of Carly Fund, you're making a personal impact on these children, their parents, their siblings, their school friends and everyone who loves them. **YOU are making a difference in their day-to-day lives through your generosity.**

Special thanks to our partners:

- 26 Shirts
- Ted's Hot Dogs
- Buffalo Bandits
- The Montgomery Family Foundation
- Peter Maeve
- Tucker Out Lymphoma
- Stillwater Farm
- Walgreens



300+
 active families involved with CCF

~1,900
 total participants at CCF events

40+
 events for pediatric patients and families

15
 Bisons games

9
 Sabres games

4
 Bandits games

10+
 special event opportunities

5,652
 clinic visits

581
 new patients

“When I look in the mirror,
 I see the strongest person I know.”

- Sophia LaBorde
 pediatric cancer patient

RIDE COMMUNITY
spreads hope in 2023



The Ride Community celebrated another record-breaking year in 2023, bringing together thousands of passionate and dedicated riders, volunteers and donors.

More than 8,000 riders – including 736 cancer patients and survivors – and 1,000 volunteers joined together to celebrate the strides we have made in the fight against cancer and honor those who have fought and are fighting cancer.

Their efforts raised an incredible \$5.8 million to support groundbreaking cancer research, life-changing clinical trials and expanding compassionate patient care programs.

All this would not have been possible without the generosity of presenting sponsor, the West Herr Automotive Group. West Herr is not only an incredible sponsor, but also hosts a phenomenal rest stop, brings back a dedicated Ride team year after year and boasts some outstanding fundraisers like 2023 top fundraiser Bill Loecher, captain of Team West Herr and longtime partner of Roswell Park.

There was a tangible buzz, a glimmer of hope in the air at the University at Buffalo fueled by the spirit of the Ride living in each participant. From the Celebration of Hope Friday night, to the Peloton led by Ride founder and longtime Roswell Park supporter Mitch Flynn, to the very last finish line moment on Saturday, the Ride was full of joy and determination.



2023 Torch Lighter: Maryann Salvatore

Maryann is a true community builder. Her heartfelt leadership brings dozens of fundraisers together each year and Team Salvatore Pedal Power continues to grow.

“When you have cancer, so many things are taken away from you. This is something those riders can share with their friends and family,” Maryann explained. “Some people are in the middle of treatment on that bike, doing everything they can because it’s so meaningful to prove this is another thing cancer is not going to take away from them.”

She was a clear choice for the torch lighter, driven by her love of Roswell Park and passion for the work that happens here every day. Maryann’s influence and her inspiring story have allowed her to make an incredible difference in our collective fight against cancer.

Relive Ride with us!





**FUNDRAISERS
RAISE THE BAR**
at Empire State Ride

The 9th Empire State Ride made gigantic strides against cancer. In July 2023, **279 weeklong road warriors pedaled across New York to raise awareness and critically needed funds to support cancer research.** From New York City to Niagara Falls, led by the tireless dedication of founder Terry Bourgeois, these road warriors received donations from all 50 states and 20 countries, raising a record-breaking \$2.1 million to fuel groundbreaking studies to end cancer as we know it.

Revisit the experience.



“While I can’t predict what the next big advance will be, it is likely to be due to advances in our understanding of the genetic and molecular drivers of tumor initiation and evolution. Novel immunotherapy approaches like CAR T-cell therapy are expected to play a big role. This is how the Empire State Ride will have an impact on our patients for years and decades to come.”

- Joyce Ohm, PhD

Chair of Cancer Genetics and Genomics at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and five-time ESR rider



“If there is a light, it’s the light of what’s currently being worked on at Roswell Park with cellular therapy. There are known targets that the team has identified for sarcoma, and in my mind, that adds a huge sense of urgency to what we’re doing. We’ve got work to do. And the beautiful thing is, we have a path to go down.”

- Terry Bourgeois
ESR founder



Making Moments

Mike is a dad who overcame colorectal cancer. He's focused on keeping moments with his family at center stage.



Watch Mike's moment



THIRD ESR LONG ISLAND returns to Oyster Bay



For the third year, hundreds of cyclists pedaled through the Town of Oyster Bay to raise funds for clinical research and trials happening on Long Island thanks to Roswell Park's partnership with Catholic Health Long Island through the Roswell Park Care Network. The 2023 event, led by Roswell Park advocate and Long Island resident Steve Mars, brought together over 400 riders and raised \$100,000 to give more hope to patients facing a cancer diagnosis in their community.



BUFFALO'S COOLEST FUNDRAISING EVENT

keeps growing

icecycle TO END CANCER

In 2024, more than 1,300 people showed up to Buffalo RiverWorks on March 8 and 9 to make a difference in the mission to end cancer. With 12 classes led by 11 studios and celebrity instructor Kristina Girod, it was a can't-miss experience. This energetic group raised more than \$685,000 to fuel innovative cancer research and enhance programs that improve our patients' quality of life.

For the fourth year, **Rise Fitness Studio** was the event's top fundraising team raising nearly \$78,000. This year's top individual fundraiser was Ashley Billittier who took her personal connection to cancer, losing her mom and grandpa, and turned it into \$10,000 for cancer research. Thanks in great part to **presenting sponsor the West Herr Automotive Group** and the dedicated event founder **Bill Loecher**, IceCycle 2024 was another incredible success for the good of cancer patients in Western New York and beyond.

Relive the experience





Going Bald:
A SMALL ACT
WITH A HUGE IMPACT



Bald for Bucks participants cut, shave and style their hair show that they stand in solidarity with cancer patients everywhere. **This small act makes a huge impact, advancing lifesaving cancer research, supporting patient care programs at Roswell Park and bringing hope to future generations.**

TEAMING UP WITH THE BUFFALO SABRES

For more than a decade, the Buffalo Sabres have teamed up with Bald for Bucks to face off against cancer and raise funds for Roswell Park. This March, Dan DunLeavy and Marty Biron once again shaved their heads on live television with help from Sophia Baudo, a recent graduate of Nardin Academy and a patient at Roswell Park.

The Buffalo Sabres and Bald for Bucks raised an impressive \$105,018 in the month of March with donations from 39 states.

This academic year, participants included:

17
SCHOOLS

5
BEARDS FOR BUCKS TEAMS

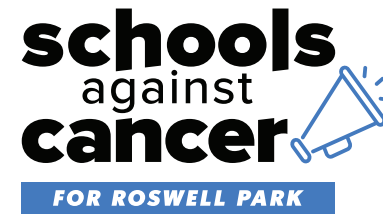
20
INDIVIDUALS

2
COMMUNITY TEAMS

\$267,500
RAISED



Students are
TAKING A STAND
AGAINST CANCER



Cancer is a cause that hits home for nearly everyone, regardless of age. **A new school-based fundraising program called Schools Against Cancer allows students, from elementary school to college, to get involved in the mission to end cancer.** Raising funds and awareness for cancer can mold leadership skills, build confidence and instill empathy and compassion in students — all while helping patients right here in Western New York.

The most unique part? Schools get to choose how to make a difference. Whether it's a pep rally, homecoming game, bottle drive or anything in between, there are no limits to how schools give back.

This year, Schools Against Cancer initiatives collectively raised more than \$47,800 to help fight cancer!

SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL THE SCHOOLS THAT GOT INVOLVED THIS FISCAL YEAR!

- Abate Elementary School — *Go Pink Day*
- Eden High School — *Stick it to Cancer*
- Eden Volleyball — *Raise for Roswell*
- Lancaster High School — *Pink the Pool*
- Lockport High School — *Pink Shirts*
- Niagara Falls — *JV Football*
- Niagara County Community College — *Breast Cancer Awareness Hockey Game*
- Starpoint High School — *Locked In to Lock Out Cancer*
- SUNY Fredonia — *Rockin' the Commons*
- West Valley High School — *Paws for a Cause*
- Wilson High School — *Spirit Week Fundraiser*

TOP FUNDRAISER: STARPOINT'S LOCKED IN TO LOCK OUT CANCER

A chance to stay up all night AND support a great cause? Students at Starpoint High School powered through an all-nighter during an event that included games, tournaments, food, a reptile show and more to support the Courage of Carly Fund and help brave kids fighting cancer and blood disorders.



CHAMPIONS COME TOGETHER

to find cancer cures

Team ROSWELL CHAMPIONS FOR CANCER CURES

The Team Roswell community is comprised of everyday people who use their unique skills and interests to become champions for cancer cures. This year, Team Roswell event coordinators hosted an impressive 49 events, bringing hope to cancer patients everywhere.

Here are just a few of last year's events.

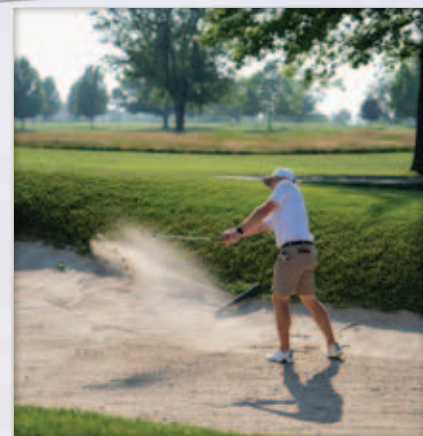


Sail for Roswell

SAIL FOR ROSWELL

\$211,908 for Igniting Cancer Breakthroughs

A weekend-long celebration, Sail for Roswell brought together sailors from across Western New York to advance the future of cellular therapy at Roswell Park. The event included an exhibition sail in front of the Buffalo Yacht Club with area high school sailing teams, a charity regatta, gala dinner and silent and live auctions. The event was sponsored by Buffalo Yacht Club and made possible by event chair and cancer survivor Tom Lewin.



100 Holes of Golf

100 HOLES OF GOLF AT WANAKAH COUNTRY CLUB

\$188,106 for Courage of Carly Fund

The eighth annual 100 Holes of Golf at Wanakah Country Club has become a summertime favorite event, with this year's tournament seeing 26 golfers and three relay teams playing 100 holes of golf each, all while walking the course. This event continues to be a success thanks to this year's chairs, founder Simon Bennett and Thomas Youngman.

SUMMER SPLASH

\$70,000 for Courage of Carly Fund

Shannon Tedesco and a committee of dedicated volunteers closed out summer with an annual waterfront cocktail party that included 360° cameras, refreshing beverages and countless memories made — all to give children with cancer and blood disorders the fighting chance they deserve.



Summer Splash

Special thanks to all who participated, including these Team Roswell fundraisers that raised more than \$10,000 each for the cause!

In honor of Christine Shaffer, \$51,094 (and counting)
for pancreatic cancer research

Pink Ladies Tournament, \$18,730 for breast cancer research

Thomas Furlani Sarcoma Survivorship Fund, \$10,835 for sarcoma patient programs

Ski for a Cure, \$10,500 for Roswell Park's most pressing needs

Cruising Against Cancer, \$10,028 for Roswell Park's most pressing needs



A Taste for Life

A TASTE FOR LIFE

\$55,580 for lung cancer research

The 12th annual A Taste For Life, hosted by Susan and Steven Roney and Sharon and Tom McCann, brings guests a sensational evening that includes wines, craft beers and sweet and savory treats to support groundbreaking research and advance lung cancer treatments and therapies at Roswell Park.



Hockey Mom Foundation

TERRI KATZ KASIMOV ART GALLERY

\$34,385 for lymphoma research

Coordinated by Roswell Park's own Francisco Hernandez-Illizaliturri, MD, Director of Lymphoma Research, this fundraiser took the form of an art exhibit, entitled "With Gratitude." The display showcased 120 drawings, mixed media collages and paintings from local artist Terri Katz Kasimov that captured her story as a patient undergoing cancer treatment.



Vullo Boys Walk for a Cure

HOCKEY MOM FOUNDATION GOLF TOURNAMENT

\$25,000 for pancreatic immunotherapy trials

Back for its eighth year, the Hockey Mom Golf Tournament took place this past September at Glen Oaks Golf Club, thanks to the efforts of an organization committed to raising funds for cancer research. The Hockey Mom Foundation has supported various research studies and clinical trials at Roswell Park, including SurVaxM, curaxin for pediatric patients and immunotherapy for pancreatic cancer.

VULLO BOYS WALK FOR A CURE

\$22,189 for Courage of Carly Fund

Five years ago, the Vullo family, including the two youngest members, Preston and Charlie, started a small community fundraiser to support childhood cancer and rare blood disorders. In 2023, the event grew to include a bake sale, basket raffle, bounce house, food trucks and more, bringing them close to their lifetime fundraising goal of \$100,000.



Saddle Up for Roswell

SADDLE UP FOR ROSWELL

\$20,899 for breast cancer research

Saddle Up for Roswell, has been going strong for 18 years, rallying equestrian enthusiasts from across Western New York for a show at Chestnut Ridge Equestrian Center. Funds from the 2023 event benefited breast cancer research at Roswell Park.

One year closer to
PUTTING CANCER ON ICE



From June 22 – July 1, 2023, more than 2,300 skaters — men, women and children of all skill levels — took to the ice in two teams every three hours for 11 straight days. **This uniquely-Buffalo fundraising event reached a historic milestone of \$10 million raised since the event's inception, raising more than \$1.6 million in 2023 alone.**

"It can be grueling," Amy Lesakowski, cofounder of The 11 Day Power Play said. "It's three hours of hockey, but they know it's nothing compared to what cancer patients go through and they want to do it again."

The 11 Day Power Play community is fighting cancer one shift at a time and they won't stop until there's nobody left to play for.



Event Chairs with Dr. Johnson



The Dr. Thomas B. Tomasi Hope Award Winner



The Katherine Anne Gioia Inspiration Award Winner



Patient speaker, Laura, with her guest

All Star Night 2023:
THE GRAND CRYSTAL GALA

Celebrating 125 Years of Roswell Park

PRESENTED BY
M&T Bank



Roswell Park has a rich history filled with stories of discovery, innovation, compassion and unprecedented breakthroughs. **Together with 1,000 attendees, the 2023 All Star Night gala celebrated that incredible history imagined by Chairs Russell Hurlburt and John Percy.** Collectively, attendees raised \$720,000 to support the patients and families who seek world-renowned cancer care.

The evening honored and celebrated individuals who have made significant contributions to Roswell Park throughout the years.

Award winners:

The Dr. Thomas B. Tomasi Hope Award

Renuka Iyer, MD, Co-Leader Liver and Pancreas Tumor Program and Section Chief for Gastrointestinal Oncology, Department of Medicine

This award recognizes a Roswell Park faculty member who has spearheaded groundbreaking research and brought significant hope to cancer patients. Research that is changing the way cancer is detected, treated and cured. Dr. Iyer carries on the spirit of this award as a nationally recognized oncologist specializing in rare cancers who is committed to making a difference and giving neuroendocrine patients hope.

The Katherine Anne Gioia Inspiration Award

Tony George, Bald for Bucks founder and volunteer

This award pays tribute to a volunteer who has shown exemplary dedication in the battle against cancer, and whose work has inspired other volunteers and donors in the community to work for this cause. This award honors the memory of Katherine Gioia who, without hesitation, courageously battled cancer at the young age of 4 and inspired many to rally around the cancer cause. While Tony's sister, Cathy, was battling cancer in 2002, he decided to shave his head in solidarity, to help her feel like she wasn't so alone after she lost her hair. That decision would shape the next 20+ years as Bald for Bucks took off.



“What good is it if I don’t give back to the place that kept me here?”



Legacy Giving

The Dr. Roswell Park Society

Learn more about The Dr. Roswell Park Society and legacy giving at Roswell Park.



Donors create LASTING LEGACIES WITH ROSWELL PARK

Many supporters choose to remember Roswell Park in their wills and estates, joining the Dr. Roswell Park Society, a community of donors who know the importance of a legacy that will make a lasting impact.

Christine Clement has no doubt that Roswell Park saved her life. Her body was fighting two types of cancer simultaneously — one that was only discovered thanks to the thoroughness of her care team. **That’s what inspired her to become a Dr. Roswell Park Society member.**

“If my contribution can help one doctor find one thing that saves one patient, it’s worth it,” she said. “And hopefully, it’ll save hundreds or thousands of patients.”

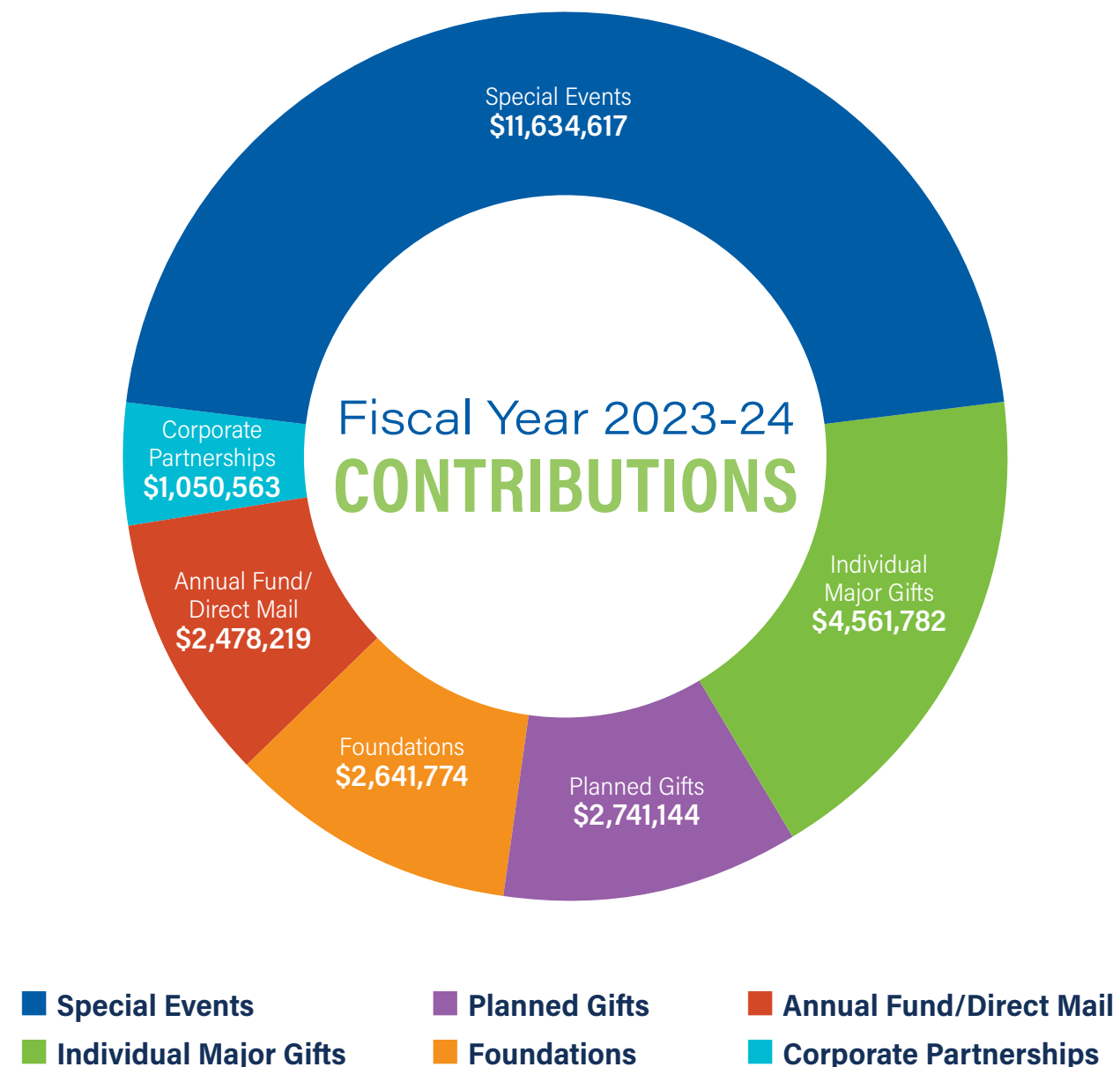
In late 2010, Christine found out she had stage 1 uterine cancer and her gynecologist wanted to start planning for a hysterectomy. Christine’s sister, a local healthcare professional and fierce advocate for her sister, guided Christine to seek a second opinion with the experts at Roswell Park who recommended she also have her ovaries removed.

Christine chose to become a patient at Roswell Park and underwent surgery under the care of now-retired Chair of Gynecologic Oncology Shashikant Lele, MD. Pathologists at Roswell Park discovered afterward that in addition to the uterine cancer, Christine had stage 1 ovarian cancer as well. Now, crediting this team with her life, she has made steps to ensure this incredible work can continue.

“If Dr. Lele hadn’t literally saved my life, I wouldn’t have been here to earn and save money,” she said. “What good is it if I don’t give back to the place that kept me here?”

Christine created a legacy that will contribute to the vast growth she has witnessed at Roswell Park throughout the years.

Fiscal Year 2023-24 FINANCIAL INFORMATION



The Roswell Park Alliance Foundation is proud to receive an unmodified audit opinion on our 2023-24 fiscal year audited financial statements. A full financial statement is available by scanning the QR code or contacting Senior Director of Finance & Operations Tammy Lightcap at 716-845-8033 or tammy.lightcap@roswellpark.org.



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“Early detection is best! If I didn’t go annually, who knows, my cancer might have been worse. My advice is, follow your doctor’s advice, do your mammogram every year and follow your treatment plan, whatever it is. Trust your doctor — and go to Roswell Park.”

– Edith Lazatin
Roswell Park patient



Making Moments

Leah isn't letting her acute myeloid leukemia keep her from enjoying her life and creating a new one.

Watch Leah's moment



Elm & Carlton Streets | Buffalo, New York 14263 | 716-845-4444 | RoswellPark.org/Giving

The Roswell Park Alliance Foundation has received the ranking of 4 out of 4 stars from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. This is the eighth consecutive year that the Alliance Foundation has earned Charity Navigator's highest possible rating.

