



Forum in Focus

FALL 2015

President's Letter

Dear Friends of the Forum,

As we conclude our 45th year as an organization it is important to reflect on how far we've come, why we are here and how much we still want to accomplish as a group.

Tom Slick's original vision for creating a world-class research facility in San Antonio, Texas Biomedical Research Institute, has certainly been accomplished. Today, we are fortunate to house scientists and researchers who are leaders in their fields focused on advancing our knowledge of human disease and ultimately saving lives. Since 2000, Forum grants have resulted in awards of more than \$35 million in major NIH grants and other national funding for Texas Biomed researchers, and this number continues to grow.

If you haven't been to Texas Biomed lately, join us on a student tour. You won't believe the new buildings and labs on site and the gorgeous state of the art facilities. New scientists and researchers are being added to the Texas Biomed staff with incredible credentials. If you aren't able to tour the campus, consider joining us at a roundtable event or a lecture luncheon and hear more about what's happening at Texas Biomed.

San Antonio is at the forefront of biomedical research and we are so fortunate to have this gem in our city. Our Forum Trustees understand this responsibility and have been working hard throughout the summer to ensure we continue to move the needle within our organization.



Amanda Bezner

Thank goodness for those who have come before us to make our jobs a little easier!

As I move into the position of President, a big thank you goes out to Immediate Past President **Melissa Morgan**. Her support, guidance and passion for Texas Biomed is unwavering and I'm so happy she's only a phone call away. This year Melissa will oversee the Nominating Committee, ensuring another group of strong and dedicated women to our board.

The month of May is always a big one for the Forum as we celebrated the completion of another successful year, capped off by our annual gala. I hope you were able to attend this amazing event Chaired by **Jordan Arriaga**, Co-chaired by **Courtney Percy** and Gala Assistant **Sara Walker**. It was an evening to remember and raised \$215,000 in seed monies for Texas Biomed scientists and their pilot studies.

The ink is barely dry on the check presented to Texas Biomed for proceeds from the 2015 Gala, but our newest group of women, **Sara Walker**, Gala Chair, **Jody Lutz**, Gala Co-Chair and **Elizabeth Cox**, Gala Assistant, have already been hard at work on next year's Gala scheduled for May 7, 2016 at the Argyle. It will be one evening you don't want to miss!

Our 1st Vice President, **Daniela Serna**, is in charge of lecture luncheons. Over the Summer, she and **Ashley Weaver** researched new speakers to bring to our members. The luncheons are scheduled for November 11th and March 23rd, so mark your calendars. Working with lecture luncheons, as well as other committees is **Kati Smith**, who will make sure we are fully staffed with enough volunteers.

The purpose of the Texas Biomedical Forum is to support the Texas Biomedical Research Institute through community relations, volunteer service and fundraising.

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Maintaining the membership information for the Forum is no easy task and a big thank you goes out to past membership chairman **Daniela Serna** and incoming VP of Membership **Lisa Westmoreland**. These ladies have spent a large part of their summer updating records and getting ready for our next membership drive. Be on the look out for renewal information headed your way!

Speaking of membership, we all love to stay in touch with our friends and fellow forum members. Thanks to **Amy Garcia** and **Jolie Flavin** you will see a new look for our directory hitting your mailbox in the next few months.

Our Treasurer, **Carla Nelson**, along with assistant Treasurer, **Sara McCamish**, have spent many hours this summer reviewing past expenses and looking at our annual budget. Thank you both for keeping us in line.

Courtney Percy, our Recording Secretary, will be busy taking minutes at our monthly meetings ensuring they are distributed timely and approved by the Board.

Our Corresponding Secretary, **Jordan Arriaga**, will keep up with the Forum's outside correspondence. The team of **Denise Mosser** and **Lindsay Archer** will be taking on the task of digitizing our past yearbooks and scrapbooks, as well as creating ones for the current year.

This year **Julie Dorbandt** and **Jessica Berg** will continue to build on our community relations with local high schools by providing tours of the Texas Biomedical Research Institute. Student Tours is a very popular piece of our community outreach program and these tours book up quickly.

Amy Swaney, **Holly Rabinowitz** and **Molly Drought** are keeping us all up to speed on activities happening at the Forum through our social media pages. Make sure you are following us on Facebook and Instagram (texasbiomedicalforum). Speaking of happenings, look for Fall events coming your way courtesy of **Clare Duffin** and **Cynthia Kerby**.

Later in the year you will hear from **Courtney Ogle** and **Christine Mayer** who have been putting together

an evening of round table discussions with scientists from Texas Biomed. This event is one not to be missed and a great opportunity to bring a spouse or a prospective member and hear first hand about current projects and what's happening at the Institute.

Shalimar Wallis and **Karen Bryant** put this fabulous newsletter together. Trying to gather all of the information for this publication is no small feat, especially during the summer months.

Working closely with me throughout the year will be **Fabiola Kasse**, our Parliamentarian. Fabiola will make sure meetings run smoothly, according to procedures and by laws.

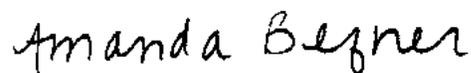
Under **Lynette Embrey's** leadership, the Science and Education Award Program received a record number of applicants last year. This year, **Whitney Miller** will join the team to continue working closely with local Bexar County schools.

Keeping everyone abreast on a larger scale of all Forum activities and Texas Biomed information in general will be **Edie Wright**, our website liaison. Edie will ensure our website is up-to-date with the latest ticket sales, gala information and much more. Keep checking our web page for updates!

And serving as Honorary Trustees and Advisors are **Peggy Gracy**, **Leslie Hamilton**, **Julie Zacher**, **Allison Zeller**, **Jane Satel**, **Walton Gregory** and **Laura Moorman**. You are invaluable to me. Thank you for agreeing to give your time and knowledge and being a part of my journey.

I encourage you all to remain engaged in the Texas Biomedical Forum, whether you are a past president, current trustee or member at large. It takes commitment from each one of us to continue growing this amazing organization and our work is never complete.

Warmly,



Amanda Bezner

President 2015-2016

Texas Biomedical Forum

It's that time of the year!

Join or Renew Your Membership to the Texas Biomedical Forum

All women over the age of 21, interested in promoting the work of the **Texas Biomedical Research Institute** are invited to join the Texas Biomedical Forum. The mission of The Forum is to support Texas Biomed through community relations, volunteer services and fundraising. The Forum's main purpose is to raise pilot study funds for Texas Biomed through its highly anticipated annual Forum Gala held at The Argyle in May . . . and there are many ways to get involved, but first make sure you initiate/renew your membership, so that you can be in the "know"!

Membership in the Forum includes invitations to the Gala, lecture luncheons and roundtable discussions each year, all held at The Argyle. Your dues also include a tour of the Texas Biomed campus, a membership directory, email blasts with pertinent Forum information and the *Forum in Focus* newsletter, which is published three times per year.

Our membership year has been modified to correlate with our fiscal year and it now starts June 1st through May 31st (of the following year). Next year, the annual membership campaign will begin on May 15th and the deadline to be included

in the membership directory is October 15th.

The Standard-level membership is \$50, but feel free to support our cause at a higher level with the Patron-level membership at \$100 or the Benefactor-level membership at \$250. Higher-level memberships allow us the ability to increase our visibility and showcase our existence to support Texas Biomed. All membership levels are 100% tax deductible.

For more information on membership and to join or renew, please visit: <http://www.txbiomed.org/forum/membership/initiate-renew-membership>

Please note: We highly encourage you to pay your dues online! However, we have enclosed a form to join or renew your membership along with a return envelope for your convenience in this newsletter.

So, join or renew your Forum membership and help us spread the word throughout San Antonio about the positive, life-changing research that is being conducted at the city's biomedical research jewel, Texas Biomed!

For membership questions, contact Lisa Westmoreland at sjwlg@aol.com.

STUDENT TOURS

Student Tours are a fantastic opportunity for area high school students and a rewarding experience for Forum volunteers! Each year, the Forum facilitates an in-depth tour of the Texas Biomedical Research Institute for several advanced placement biology and chemistry classes in San Antonio and the surrounding areas. This season's 2015-2016 school tours are already completely booked!

Students and our Forum tour volunteers will be treated to lectures from scientists in the Department of Virology and Immunology and the Department of Genetics, as well as to staff-guided tours of the AT&T Genomics Computing Center, the suit room of the Biosafety Level 4 containment laboratory, and the Southwest National Primate Research Center.

All Forum members are encouraged to attend one student tour. Tours will be given Tuesdays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on the following dates:

Fall 2015: September 15th and 22nd; October 6th and 13th

Spring 2016: January 26th; February 2nd, 9th and 16th

Please contact Jessica Berg at JessicaB@lmfj.com or Julie Dorbandt at jdorbandt@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer for one of these school tours.

Getting Ready for Texas Biomedical Forum Gala 2016!

Save the date!

The 46th Annual Forum Gala will be held on **Saturday, May 7th** at The Argyle. Gala Chair, **Sara Stumberg Walker**, Gala Co-Chair, **Jody Lutz**, and Gala Assistant, **Elizabeth Cox** are hard at work planning the party of the century!

The annual Texas Biomedical Forum Gala is more than just a party. Money raised through Forum Grants, raffle tickets, auction items and table sales directly funds pilot studies for Texas Biomedical Research Institute scientists. These “pilot studies” go on to merit millions of dollars in grants from the National Institute of Health and other similar organizations. In the past 40 years, Forum Gala contributions have resulted in more than \$35 million dollars in grants.

Early commitments for table sales are now being accepted. Please contact **Fabiola Kaase**, our table sales Chair, at (210) 363.8056 or **Fabiola.Kaase@icloud.com** if you are interested in **premium table sponsorships** (tables of \$5,000 and up). We are pleased to announce table sales have been coming in since June in anticipation of this fabulous event. Early commitments are due by October 31, 2015.

Friendly Reminders . . .

- Seating at the Gala is extremely limited. You don't want to miss your opportunity to attend this event, so be sure to make your reservation early!
- If you are unable to attend the event, please consider making a Forum Grant donation. 100% of the Forum Grant monies raised go to scientists' pilot studies. If you have any questions about Forum Grants, please contact **Sara Stumberg Walker** at [sstumberg@gmail.com](mailto:ssstumberg@gmail.com) or 210.867.7272.

Want to get involved?

- Sign up to be a part of Gala 2016! We depend on our volunteers to make this party a success. If you are interested in getting involved, please email **Jody Lutz**, 210.475.1556 or **Elizabeth Cox** at cox6@me.com or 210.867.3269.
- Please submit any names of corporations or individuals whom you think would like to be included in Gala related activities. We will be happy to reach out to them!

HERE'S TO A GREAT GALA!
Cheers – Sara, Jody & Elizabeth

SAVE THE DATE FOR FALL EVENTS!

**Forum Roundtable Discussions, November 2nd at the Argyle,
invitations coming soon!**

Julian Gold Fashion Show – January 21, 2016

You will not want to miss this event . . . More details to follow!

To help with events or for more information please email chairs Clare Duffin at clareduffin@yahoo.com or Cynthia Kerby at cynthiakkerby@hotmail.com.

A Glamourous Night In Vintage Las Vegas!

We flew to the moon and played amongst the stars at the 44th annual Texas Biomedical Forum Gala, held on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at The Argyle. This year's theme, *Fabulous Las Vegas*, created lots of buzz with an amazing menu, a sensational premier silent auction, a one of a kind raffle, sparkling decor and other great features!

This year's Gala Chair, **Jordan Worth Arriaga**, Co-Chair **Courtney Percy** and Gala Assistant, **Sara Walker**, worked throughout the year to provide a wonderful evening for the guests meanwhile ensuring the gala would be a financial success. With the help of the fabulous Gala Committee Chairs and committee members, as well as the San Antonio community, the Forum presented a check for **\$215,000** to the Texas Biomedical Research Institute! These funds will help fund the most pilot studies in a year by the Texas Biomedical Forum. A special thanks to **Carla Nelson**, Gala Treasurer for her efforts in tracking all of the donations, expenses and managing the Forum bank account.

Planning for the *Fabulous Las Vegas Gala* began early in the summer of 2014 with the selection of great Gala Committee Chairs. **Sheila Mayfield**, Table Sales Chair for the second year in a row, once again hit the ground running and helped us sell out in record time. With the help of the Argyle, we were able to increase the number of tables at the event, and by early November we sold out all 58 tables! Forum Grants Chair, **Shalimar Wallis** raised over \$32,000 for Texas Biomed. In May, we partnered with The Big Give SA and that day of giving generated more than \$40,000 in additional funds to the Forum Grants. We can't thank the San Antonio community enough for stepping up and giving to this very worthy cause.

Invitations Chair, **Clare Duffin** and Texas Creative worked diligently on designing the logo, letterhead, invitations, programs and event visuals, which carried the vintage Las Vegas theme throughout. Additionally, many thanks to the entire Gala Committee who helped hand deliver invitations to all of our guests.

As guests arrived at The Argyle, they were greeted by the flashes of Vincent Quaranto with



SuperQ Photography in front of the glamorous tent embellished with a large lit Welcome to Las Vegas sign. Las Vegas showgirls greeted the guests with their large feather fans and a girl in a champagne table waltzed around the pre-party filling people's glasses to toast to the beginning of a great night. The dazzling décor was the vision of the talented Decorations Co-Chairs, **Tracy Williams** and **Sarah Moore**. They worked closely with Danny Cuellar of Trinity Flowers to create a stunning and elegant vintage Las Vegas feel with lots of sparkle, feathers and golden palms. Several large crystal-stranded chandeliers adorned the elegantly decorated tent, along with majestic lighting to enhance the shine from the crystals and silver bar. The entire grounds of The Argyle were covered with blue lights, which led guests to the Little Chapel of Love where Elvis was present to perform a "ceremony." Thank you to Forum Trustee, **Christina Mayer** for her help in coordinating this effort.

Menu Chair, **Whitney Solcher Miller** and the Menu committee did an amazing job keeping

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with the theme of the Gala. Guests enjoyed caviar on toast points, crème fraiche and sturgeon caviar on toast points, phyllo wrapped asparagus with parmesan bourbon glazed meatballs during the pre-party reception. During the dinner hour, the Argyle's signature chopped salad was served in a martini glass for the first course. The main course was delicious classic French prepared red wine braised short ribs served with root vegetables and creamy polenta. Chef Bobbie prepared his famous layer cake that shimmered with a gold flake piano top for dessert. Central Market generously donated lemon bars, brownies and a coffee bar for guests to enjoy after dinner.



Julian Gold graciously sponsored the Favors and gifted each couple with a gift card to the prestigious retail store and a deck of silver playing cards to keep as a memento of this fabulous event. Many thanks to **Courtney Percy**, Gala Co-Chair and **Jody Lutz**, Favors Chair for their support and helping us give back to those that helped make the party a success.

DJ Kiss from New York rocked the stage and had a packed dance floor at the Rat Pack After Party at all times. Many thanks to **Ashley Hixon** and **Daniela Serna**, After Party Co-Chairs, as well as Entertainment Chair, **Christina Mayer** for leading the effort in assuring that guests enjoyed the night. Gaming Chair, **Amy Swaney**, worked closing with Casino Fun in bringing in multiple gaming tables and slot machines and

coordinating prizes for the big winners. The biggest winner, Sean McNelis, won a \$500 gift certificate to Shetler Wade Jewelers. In the late hour, fried egg sandwiches and honey butter chicken biscuits were served for those who worked up an appetite after gambling and dancing the night away.



Once again we had a splendid super silent auction co-chaired by **Tracee Feik**. The premier silent auction included nine fabulous packages: 1) Vegas at Your Place, won by Ashley Hixon, (2) A Rat Pack Nite won by Ashley Hixon, (3) Glitz and Glam which was a beautiful set of earring and cufflinks donated by Lee Michaels, won by Denise Mosser, (4) New York, won by Tracee Feik, was a trip to the Big Apple for Fashion week and a \$2000 shopping spree at Julian Gold, (5) Party All Day and All Night, a fun-filled day at Neiman Marcus and a night tour of Rebecca Creek Distillery, won by Denise Mosser, (6) Dove Hunt at the Paloma Pachanga won by Jeff Vogt, (7) Drink Up, a trustee Wine barrel, won by Doug Cook and (8)





Let's Go, a trip of choice to a Montage Resort from Herff Travel, was won by Hannah Little. Thank you to all the 'winners' for their generous support of the Forum!

This year the Gala featured another fantastic raffle. With the help of North Park Lexus of San Antonio and MGM Resorts International and the Delano Hotel, the raffle consisted of a chance to win a Lexus RC 350 by guessing the exact number of sequins inside an acrylic box. If no exact guess was made, the person that made the closest guess would win a trip for 2, including round-trip airfare, and a stay at the Delano Hotel in Las Vegas. Two other raffle ticket holders with the closest guess-

es also won a 3-day rental to drive a Lexus for the weekend. This year didn't involve a lucky guess of the exact number, however Gerry Ortega and his wife will enjoy the trip to Las Vegas . . . an amazing trip for the price of a \$100 raffle ticket! David Zachry and Melissa Morgan were the two runner-ups and winners of the Lexus for the Weekend Drive prize. Our endless thanks to **Amanda Bezner**, Raffle Chair who worked to





ensure the success of this exciting feature of the Gala! Special thanks to **Elizabeth Cox** and the folks at North Park Lexus for their coordination and support of this year's Gala.

Many, many thanks to **Cathryn LeVrier**, Logistics Chair who ensured that all went smoothly the day of the event set-up, transportation for the DJ and coordinated taxis to be available for rides home after the Gala, amongst many other things.

The Gala was also well publicized to various media outlets in San Antonio thanks to our PR Chair, **Elizabeth Cox**. She worked on press releases and sent in photographs to news out-

lets all over the city, including Society Diaries, 78209 magazine, San Antonio Woman, Online in 09, and through social media. In addition, Elizabeth secured an ad with the San Antonio Express News to feature our corporate sponsors and publicly thank them for their very generous support. Be sure to grab a copy of Society Diaries magazine, which featured a multi-page spread on the Gala.

A special thank you to The Argyle administration and staff, who went above and beyond with their help in ensuring the success of the Gala. General Manager, Michael Vlad and his team led by Catering Events Director, Jessica Speaker were absolutely spectacular and wonderful to work with. The Gala's success was largely due to their support of the Forum and its mission to aid the Texas Biomedical Research Institute.

The 2015 Gala was tremendously successful due to the fabulous Gala Committee Chairs and the generosity of the San Antonio community. We are so appreciative to everyone who continues to support the Forum and its mission to support the Texas Biomedical Research Institute through community relations, volunteer services and fundraising. The proceeds from the Gala go directly to fund scientists' pilot studies to further the investigative efforts of the Institute. It was an incredible evening thanks to the efforts of so many volunteers. Texas Biomed is a special place in our community and the Forum is honored to be a group that helps support them!

A Glamorous Night In Vintage Las Vegas

Saturday, May 2, 2015

Table Sponsors

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Golden Nugget Level

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Azar/Dudley/Frost/Kelly/Morgan/
Welder/Wulfe
Barnes/Jones/Oden
Cochran/Cox/Heinrich/ Kieschnick/
Mayer/Rolle/Salisbury (2 tables)
Bell/Gouger/Mitchell/Troy
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Society Diaries

The Prestigious Mark

Texas Creative

Texas Biomed Updates

A rising star in malaria research, Dr. Ian Cheeseman named to faculty at Texas Biomed, first Goldstein Young Scientist

Ian Cheeseman, Ph.D., a former staff scientist in the Department of Genetics at Texas Biomed, has been appointed to the faculty position of assistant scientist and will serve as the Milton S. & Geraldine M. Goldstein Young Scientist at Texas Biomedical Research Institute. Cheeseman has worked in the lab of scientist Dr. Timothy Anderson since 2010 when he joined Texas Biomed as a post-doctoral scientist.

Cheeseman's primary area of research is malaria, which kills an estimated 600 thousand people every year and has developed resistance to all available classes of antimalarial drugs. Cheeseman aims to understand the genetics of malaria parasite infections and the selective forces shaping parasite genome diversity, including the recent acquisition of drug resistance.

"We are excited Ian has committed to joining the faculty at Texas Biomed," said Michael Olivier, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Genetics. "He has made a significant impact in the area of malaria genetics research, and developed innovative novel approaches for his studies. We look forward to watching his research program expand as he looks for genetic answers to aid in the fight against malaria."

Malaria infections frequently involve multiple parasites with distinct genetic backgrounds. These complex malaria infections challenge

standard genetic analysis. Cheeseman has developed methods to isolate individual malaria parasites, amplify genetic material using whole genome amplification and generate whole genome sequence. This "single cell genomics" approach can be used to investigate the composition of malaria infections. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) awarded Cheeseman a \$1.8 million grant in 2014 over four years to continue his research in this area. At 31, Cheeseman was one of the youngest recipients of such an award in the country.

Marking the second cover story in a major scientific journal for scientists at Texas Biomed in 2015, some of Cheeseman's work has most recently been highlighted on the cover of the Nature Methods in July. Cheeseman was part of a team of researchers led by the Centers for Infectious Disease Research (formerly Seattle BioMed) and in partnership with the University of Notre Dame, to develop a new



tool in the fight against malaria.

He and Senior Research Associate Shalini Nair in Dr. Anderson's lab worked on the project to develop a more efficient method for creating genetic crosses in the lab between the protozoan parasites that cause malaria. This method could rapidly increase understanding of malaria drug resistance,

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A rising star in malaria research

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He and Senior Research Associate Shalini Nair in Dr. Anderson's lab worked on the project to develop a more efficient method for creating genetic crosses in the lab between the protozoan parasites that cause malaria. This method could rapidly increase understanding of malaria drug resistance, which could lead to more effective treatment and potentially better drugs.

"The work I have pursued at Texas Biomed breaks new ground, and I believe it will help

in the fight against malaria," Cheeseman said. "I am excited to become part of a very talented group of faculty at Texas Biomed and continue to grow my research and my career here. I am honored to be named as the first Milton S. & Geraldine M. Goldstein Young Scientist, which was created by a very generous bequest from the Goldsteins."

Cheeseman received his Ph.D. in parasite genetics and his Master of Science degree in molecular biology of infectious diseases from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in London, England. He has

his Bachelor of Science degree in genetics from the University of Leicester in Leicester, England.

In 2014, Cheeseman was invited to present at the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene Annual Meeting. He also presented on the Evolution of Drug Resistance at the Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics and at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine last year. Additionally, he served as a session host for the 2014 American Committee of Molecular, Cellular, and Immunoparasitology on the Biology of Malaria and Other Protozoa in New Orleans, La.

DR. MARCEL DAADI JOINS STEMBIOSYS SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD; LEADING RESEARCHER IN STEM CELL BIOLOGY AND BRAIN REGENERATION

Dr. Marcel Daadi, Associate Scientist and Director of Stem Cells & Regenerative Medicine for the Southwest National Primate Research Center at Texas Biomedical Research Institute, has joined the Scientific Advisory Board of StemBioSys, Inc., (SBS) a privately-held, San Antonio-based bio-medical company focused on stem cell-based products and therapies.



StemBioSys CEO Bob Hutchens made the announcement, noting "Dr. Daadi brings extraordinary research credentials to our Scientific Advisory Board. Among the many accomplishments of his career, he has produced hallmark research studies on human neural stem cells (NSCs) which have led to therapeutic applications for Parkinson's disease, worked to develop therapeutic NSC lines for clinical use in stroke and targeting brain tumors and discovered a novel technique of engineering NSC from pluripotent human embryonic stem cells. All of us at StemBioSys are extremely pleased that Dr. Daadi has agreed to join our Scientific Advisory Board".

Dr. John Harper, Chairman of StemBioSys' Scientific Advisory Board added "Dr. Daadi is on the leading edge of research for stem cells and regenerative medicine and will be an outstanding addition to our Scientific Advisory Board."

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StemBioSys, Inc., (SBS)

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Daadi said, “I greatly admire the research behind StemBioSys and see enormous promise in their products and therapies in development. Having such a company expanding essentially next door says a great deal about the growth and sophistication of biomedical research in San Antonio, particularly in the area of regenerative medicine. Along with the founders of the company, I believe that stem cells are the future of medicine and that has been my own research focus. I am honored to join StemBioSys’ Scientific Advisory Board and look forward to contributing to the company’s success.”

After earning his Ph.D. in neurosciences in 1992 at the National Centre for Scientific Research of the Universite de la Mediterranee in France, Dr. Daadi completed post-doctoral training at the University of Calgary, in Alberta, Canada, where he trained in stem cell biology and brain regeneration. In 1994, he discovered the growth and differentiation conditions to direct human neural stem cells towards the dopaminergic lineage. This work produced two major studies, both of scientific importance and therapeutic application for Parkinson’s disease. He then held a Senior Scientist and group leader position to start the NSC program at Layton Biosciences, the world’s first biotech company to develop and manufacture a neural product to treat stroke patients.

In both an industrial and academic setting, Dr. Daadi has developed therapeutic NSC lines for clinical use in stroke, Parkinson’s disease and for targeting brain tumors. At Stanford University, Dr. Daadi started a human embryonic

stem cell program focused on developing therapeutic cell lines for treating Parkinson’s disease and stroke. He discovered a novel technique of engineering NSC from pluripotent human embryonic stem cells. A California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) disease team award supported the development of this therapeutic cell line for clinical use.

Dr. Daadi came to Texas Biomed in 2014 and today is the team leader for its regenerative medicine and aging research unit. Results from the unit’s research studies are the foundation of translational research aimed at repairing diseased or injured brain through transplantation of highly purified NSCs or stimulation of endogenous repair mechanisms.

StemBioSys’ Scientific Advisory Board is chaired by Dr. John Harper who is a Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer for Acelyt, a global wound care and regenerative medicine company based in San Antonio. Other members of the Scientific Advisory Board include StemBioSys’ cofounders Dr. Xiaodong Chen and Dr. Steven Davis. StemBioSys CEO Bob Hutchens and Chief Operating Officer Dr. Sy Griffey are also members of the Board.

The Scientific Advisory Board is charged with advising StemBioSys’ Board of directors and management on a variety of scientific areas including identifying areas for further research, designing company supported research studies and reviewing the progress of the company’s scientific collaborations.

Texas Biomed establishes the TOPS® Nutrition and Obesity Research Center

Texas Biomedical Research Institute and Wisconsin-based non-profit Take Off Pounds Sensibly® are establishing the new TOPS® Nutrition and Obesity Research Center with the goal of conducting research into the causes, health risks and treatment of human obesity. Studies at the Center will focus on the role of genetic predisposition to metabolic changes, nutritional preferences, appetite regulation, food intake and choice and incidence of obesity-related illnesses.

Genetics research has been immensely successful at identifying genes related to obesity; however, we want to now take that knowledge and look at the outcomes of these genetic variants in patients,” said Dr. Michael Olivier, Chair of the Department of Genetics at Texas Biomed, and Co-Director of the new Center. “We want to understand how genes affect how and what people eat and the effects of food choices on health outcomes.”

TOPS Club, Inc.® is a nonprofit, noncommercial organization supporting a network of thousands of weight-loss support groups. TOPS® offers tools and programs for healthy living and weight management with more than 125,000 members throughout the United States and Canada.

Through this partnership and the new Center, researchers at Texas Biomed will have an opportunity to reach out to TOPS members and their relatives who are willing to participate in studies related to obesity and utilize the extensive history of positive weight management outcomes TOPS has documented over the past several decades.

“This provides an opportunity for scientists to work directly with study participants who choose to participate and also have access to information collected on these volunteers over extended periods in the past,” said Dr. Anthony Comuzzie, Co-Director of the TOPS® Nutrition and Obesity Research Center and Scientist at Texas Biomed. “That direct access is critical to compiling accurate and novel data, and evaluating it in the con-

text of an individual’s struggle to maintain their desired weight over the years, something we can all relate to. This information, and the generous cooperation of TOPS® members, will allow us to ask new questions about the ability of individuals to control their food intake in the current environment of constantly available energy-rich food.”

The TOPS® Nutrition and Obesity Research Center will maintain a registry of TOPS® members who have successfully maintained weight loss in an effort to help determine why some people who are obese are able to lose weight and keep it off. These 20,000 members nationwide are currently part of the Keep Off Pounds Sensibly (KOPS®) group and will help aid in the understanding of weight loss and maintenance.

In addition to this new Research Center at Texas Biomed, TOPS® also supports the TOPS® Center for Obesity and Metabolic Research at the Medical College of Wisconsin, and both Texas Biomed and the Medical College will continue to collaborate and share data obtained in various research projects to facilitate further discovery.

“We are excited to partner with Texas Biomed and provide our members the opportunity to help scientists discover genetic linkages to obesity and related diseases that could one day help end the obesity epidemic in America,” said Barbara Cady, TOPS® President. “This collaboration marks our fiftieth year of pursuing viable treatments with such outstanding scientific partners and trail blazers in the study of obesity.”

Texas Biomed scientist collaborates on study providing insight into genetics of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

Paper published in Nature Communications

Dr. Michael Olivier, Scientist and Chair of the Department of Genetics at Texas Biomedical Research Institute, is a contributing author on a study led and coordinated by scientists at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine that was published this month in *Nature Communications* describing a detailed analysis of the genetic factors contributing to Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS).

PCOS causes hormonal imbalance in women that can affect ovulation and fertility and lead to an increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes as well as other disorders. The disease affects about one in every 10 to 15 women of reproductive age, according to statistics from the National Institutes of Health.

“As part of our research on the genetic basis of obesity and related disorders, we were able to provide samples from our Metabolic Risk Complications of Obesity Genes (MRC-OB) for this exciting project, as part of the ongoing research work at the TOPS Center for Obesity and Metabolic Research,” Olivier said.

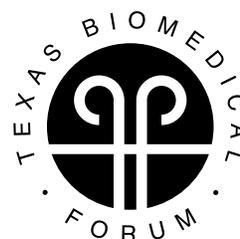
Study investigators identified two new regions of genetic susceptibility in women of European ancestry, as well as another region that



had been previously found in women with PCOS of Chinese descent. There is currently no cure for PCOS, but scientists are hopeful that studies, such as this, that help identify basic biological mechanisms for the disease can help lead to new therapies and potential cures.

For the full paper published in *Nature Communications*, please visit their website here. For more information on the study from lead authors at Northwestern, please see the Northwestern news release here.

While working at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, Olivier partnered with an international non-profit weight-loss organization called Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS). This study used DNA from thousands of women, including samples and data from TOPS members and their families. With Olivier’s relocation to Texas Biomed, this type of research is now continuing at the recently established new TOPS® Nutrition and Obesity Research Center to help facilitate studies looking at the role of genetic predisposition to metabolic changes, nutritional preferences, appetite regulation, food intake and choice and incidence of obesity-related illnesses.



New weapon in the fight against malaria drug-resistance

As part of a team of researchers led by the Centers for Infectious Disease Research (Seattle) and in partnership with the University of Notre Dame, scientists at Texas Biomed helped to develop a new tool in the fight against malaria, which kills an estimated 600 thousand people every year and has developed resistance to all available classes of antimalarial drugs.

The scientists have developed a more efficient method for creating genetic crosses between the protozoan parasites that cause malaria which could rapidly increase understanding of malaria drug resistance. Understanding drug resistance could eventually lead to more effective treatment and potentially better drugs.

“Genetic crosses – in which we mate two parasites together and look at the characteristics of their offspring – have been an incredibly powerful tool to use with malaria parasites, but they are extremely difficult to do because they require

use of a human or chimpanzee,” explained Tim Anderson Scientist in the Department of Genetics at Texas Biomed. “The three crosses done in past 25 years resulted in identification of parasite genes underlying resistance to multiple malaria drugs and informed multiple areas of parasite biology. This new method is cheaper, utilizing mice rather than chimpanzees, thereby allowing us to set up bigger crosses and making our work more powerful.”



This work was published online as the cover story in the July 1st edition of Nature Methods. Work on this project at Texas Biomed was conducted by Staff Scientist Dr. Ian Cheeseman and Senior Research Associate Shalini Nair.

◆ Past President's Letter ◆

Welcome back from summer! I hope everyone had a lot of rest, a little too much sun and some great family time. It's hard to believe that the 2015-16 Forum year is already upon us!

I could not write this letter though without first extending a special thanks to **Jordan Arriaga**, Gala Chair, **Courtney Percy**, Gala Co-Chair and **Sara Walker**, Gala Assistant. All of their hard work, and the hard work of many others, ensured the gala was a great success.

Throughout my year as President, I felt very fortunate to have worked with such an amazing group of talented women. I'm proud of all the work we accomplished as a team. I find it's easy to dedicate your time and efforts to worthwhile causes, such as the Forum.

As the new Forum year begins, I look forward to all the great successes under the leadership of **Amanda Bezner**, this year's Forum President. I am

confident she will guide the Forum through an exciting year full of great accomplishments. It was a great honor and privilege to act as your Forum President and I look forward to my continued involvement with this great organization.

Sincerely,

Melissa Morgan
Past President
Texas Biomedical Forum



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