



www.windsorcancerresearch.ca



2017

IMPACT REPORT

Bridging Research and Hope

TABLE OF CONTENT



- ✓ Our Vision
- ✓ Message from the Executive Committee
- ✓ The Numbers – 2017

- ✓ Publications
- ✓ Building Collaborative Research
- ✓ In the Spotlight

- ✓ Think Tank Series
- ✓ Researcher Snapshot
- ✓ Clinical Trials

- ✓ Nucleus
- ✓ Cancer Smart Community
- ✓ CURES

- ✓ Testimonials
- ✓ The Heart of Research
- ✓ Thank You to Our Supporters

OUR VISION

01

A united community bridging cutting edge research with world class cancer care.



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

02



Lisa Porter
University of Windsor



Dora Cavallo-Medved
University of Windsor



Ken Schneider
Windsor Regional Hospital



Michael Naccarato
Royal Bank of Canada



Alice Grgicak-Mannion
University of Windsor



Caroline Hamm
Windsor Regional Hospital



Krista Naccarato
Windsor Regional Hospital



John Trant
University of Windsor



Karen Metcalfe
WCRG



Otis Vacratsis
University of Windsor

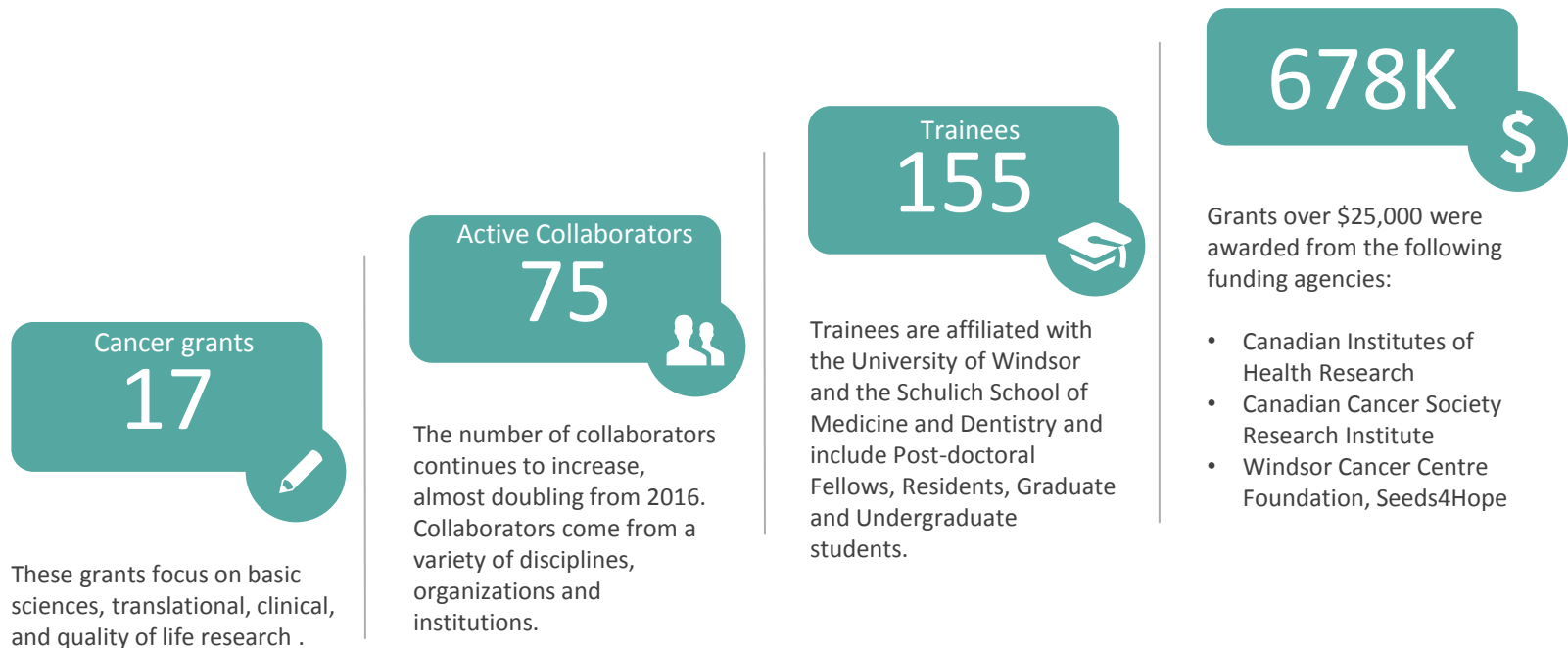
Over 40% of the population will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. Thankfully, because of research, we now better understand the actions of cancer and ways to protect ourselves from the disease. We also have enhanced diagnostics that can detect the disease earlier and more accurately. Year after year we see improvements in the treatments available, and as a result, mortality rates for all cancers combined continue to decline. Today 60% of people diagnosed with cancer will survive 5 years or longer. But for the other 40%, we need to do better.

Research outcomes have a global benefit, but there are additional impacts felt when research is funded locally. Research brings cutting-edge infrastructure to the community, delivers the latest innovative treatments to local patients, elevates knowledge of all healthcare providers, and attracts and retains the brightest professionals. Data shows that patients treated in institutions with active research programs have improved outcomes. Research saves lives.

The Windsor Cancer Research Group (WCRG) strives to enable researchers to advance bright ideas and work together to find new and innovative solutions in the areas of cancer prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment. We also aim to support our community through their cancer journey by improving survivorship and educating and empowering patients and their families. This Impact Report highlights some of our successes and key initiatives of 2017.

THE NUMBERS- 2017

WCRG members are involved in building a dynamic cancer research environment in the Windsor-Essex region. Their contributions are important to the continued growth of WCRG and significant to the success of cancer research programs in our community. A general overview of our 2017 progress is illustrated below.

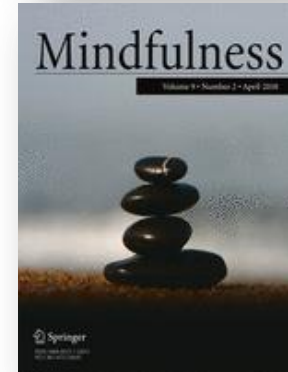
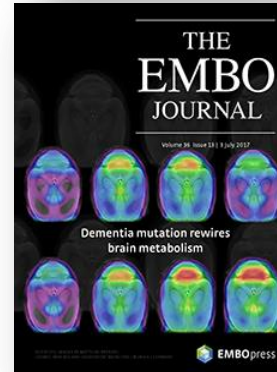
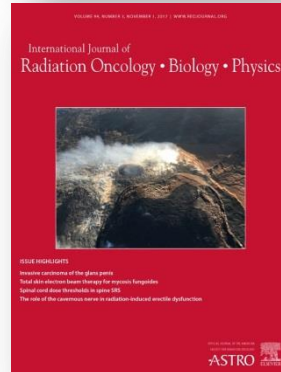
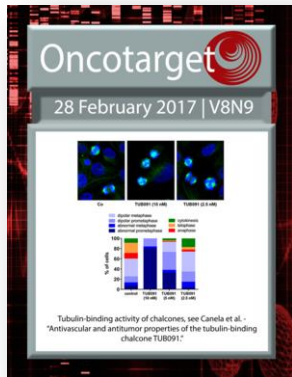


* Metrics are the outcomes of the 23 Core Members. - local researchers who are active in the cancer field (PI/Co-applicant) on cancer grants/clinical trials, publish in the cancer field, hold an academic appointment AND have contributed significantly to WCRG.

PUBLICATIONS

In 2017, core members produced **22** cancer research peer-reviewed publications, proceedings and books.

Highlighted are a small sample of the journals where publications can be found and include collaborators from computer science, biological sciences, psychology, chemistry and biochemistry, physics, diagnostic imaging, medical oncology, radiation oncology, engineering and social work.



BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH

05

WCRG is focused on activities and events that build collaborative cancer research networks. In 2017, we continued to grow our membership, facilitated UWindsor Adjunct Appointments for our clinical members, established a clinical research portal and continued to grow our Peer Review Panel. Our newsletter, WCRG Matters, is circulated throughout the year to keep our members engaged and informed.



WCRG Membership

- 360 Members
 - 23 Core Members
 - 137 Student Members
 - 35 Institutions/Organizations



Peer Review Committee

- 19 grants reviewed
- Disease sites: colorectal, melanoma, lung, breast, brain, prostate and multiple myeloma



'WCRG Matters' Member Newsletters

- 6 issues
- Shares member successes
- Enhances communication

Select Researcher Recognitions

Dr. Dora Cavallo-Medved, Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations (OCUFA) Teaching Award.

Dr. Sindu Kanjeeikal honoured by the India-Canada Association for her contribution to the community.

Dr. Lisa Porter, University of Windsor, Faculty of Science 2017 Graduate Student Mentoring Award.

Dr. Junaid Yousuf, Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, Department of Oncology's Excellence in Academic and Teaching Award.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

06

First Investigator-Driven Clinical Trial

Principal Investigators: Dr. Caroline Hamm and Dr. Lisa Porter

When a community invests in research the impact can be big. A local Seeds4Hope grant from the Windsor Cancer Centre Foundation supported a clinical trial that decreased relapse rates for patients with one of the most aggressive forms of breast cancer. This collaboration between the Windsor Regional Hospital and the University of Windsor also found new proteins that can drive relapse for this disease. The research was further supported with national funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to determine whether targeting these proteins can be a novel method of treatment that will further improve survival for these patients. Translation of research from the lab to the clinic increases survival rates and brings hope to patients with some of the most devastating forms of cancer.



CIHR IRSC
Canadian Institutes of Health Research / Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada



Seeds4Hope

A program of the
Windsor Essex County Cancer Centre Foundation

\$70,000

TITLE: *Correlation of Spy-1 Levels in Patients During a Phase II Trial of Patients with Triple Negative Breast Cancer Receiving Dose Dense Adriamycin/ Cyclophosphamide/ Taxol in Combination with Carboplatin.*

2010 - 2012

OUTCOMES

- 90 local patients were treated with the new protocol
- Decreased relapse rates for patients with stage I and stage II disease.
- Results identified potential drivers of relapse.

2013

\$765,203

TITLE: *Novel Cell Cycle Regulation in the Initiation and Therapeutic Intervention of Triple Negative Breast Cancer*

- Brought together a team of local surgeons, pathologists, oncologists, and University professors to tackle new treatment directions
- First study to initiate collection of fresh patient tissues in Windsor
- One protein has emerged as a potential new treatment direction

2015 - 2019

THINK TANK SERIES

Moving Ideas Forward

07

In 2017, WCRG continued its quarterly Cancer Research Think Tank series. The objective of the Think Tanks is to present and discuss cancer research topics of interest and identify collaborative teams that can work together to bring these projects forward for funding. This series has been a driving force behind the increase in cancer grant submissions and the growing collaborative research network.



4

Cancer Research Think Tanks

130

Participants

21

Disciplinary backgrounds represented

14

Institutions/organizations participating, including hospitals, universities, colleges and industry

RESEARCHER SNAPDSHOT

08



In 2017, snapd Windsor continued their commitment to the Cancer Researcher Snapdshot. Thanks to their generous sponsorship, 4 more cancer researchers were introduced to our community. They share information about their research, what motivates them to do cancer research and how they spend their free time. The goal of this initiative is to raise awareness about the cancer research being done in Windsor-Essex and stimulate new research collaborations. Thank you snapd Windsor for supporting this community initiative!

MARCH

Dr. Ken Schneider



WCRG RESEARCHER SNAPDSHOT
Dr. Ken Schneider
 B.Sc., MD., FRCPC
 Chief, Department of Oncology,
 Windsor Regional Hospital

What is your research focus?
 As a practicing radiation oncologist treating a broad spectrum of cancers for 25 years, the importance of integrating research into clinical practice cannot be understated. My main focus has been as a clinical investigator in clinical trials for breast, gynecologic, head and neck cancer as well as tumors of the brain. Optimizing radiation treatment dosing schedules in breast cancer, treating with lesser alternative treatment for lower aggressiveness head and neck cancers, and radiation boost trials for highly aggressive brain cancers are examples. Most of these trials are randomized Phase III studies that compare current standard treatment to new treatment approaches and evaluate for improved outcomes. Results in clinical cancer research can take several years, but the benefits can change practice and lead to significant improvements for patients. I am a member of the NCI and NCI Clinical Trials Institutes who oversee large scale clinical trials within cancer treatment programs across Canada.

What do you do in your spare time?
 The scope of professional life as a physician leaves the word 'spare time' out of your vocabulary. However, one must make time for the things that are just as important... family, friends, personal well-being and maybe even a hobby. Music and being a life long musician has enriched my life in ways not meant to be captured in words. It's more a feeling that remains part of one's essence.

What do you hope the impact of your work will be?
 Cancer prevention will remain crucial, understanding the biology of cancer will lead us forward and refining treatment through translational and clinical research will shape our futures. To be a small part of that would rock!

MAY

Dr. John Trant



WCRG RESEARCHER SNAPDSHOT
John F. Trant
 Ph.D.

What is your research focus?
 My research focuses on making new, very stable, versions of natural molecules like sugars and amino acids for developing new therapies for cancer and autoimmune diseases. Our work combines molecular architecture with cancer biology and advanced computing methods, and could help us develop whole new ways of treating prostate cancer and multiple sclerosis.

Tell us something about you that might surprise us?
 I have my Sommelier certification, and am very happy to be here in the heart of the Erie North Shore wine region. Chemistry and wine make a wonderful combination.

When do you get your best research ideas?
 Normally at a conference. I have a short attention span, but during the less engaging talks my mind starts to wander in odd directions and makes new connections I had never previously considered. I can't seem to reproduce the effects anywhere else, maybe it is just something about the environment with all the 'science' talk flowing around.

What motivates you to do what you do?
 A combination of curiosity and rage. Both cancer and autoimmune diseases happen mostly because our own cells misbehave rather than because we are being invaded by a virus or bacterium. How this happens, and how we can design and make the molecules we need, is very complicated. It's fascinating and inspires creativity. But it also really angers me at these diseases, and anger is an excellent fuel to get you up in the morning and to motivate you to push through the research challenges.

AUGUST

Ms. Krista Naccarato



WCRG RESEARCHER SNAPDSHOT
Krista Naccarato
 B.Sc., B.Ed., CCRP
 Coordinator, Cancer Program Clinical Trials
 Windsor Regional Hospital

What is your role in research in our community?
 All of my work takes place at the Windsor Regional Hospital Cancer Program. I am currently the Business Program Coordinator for the Clinical Trials Department. The main part of my job is focused on ensuring that our department is successful in offering patients access to clinical trials as treatment options. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes regulatory work that is involved as well as ensuring all of our staff are compliant with regulations set out by Health Canada and Good Clinical Practice. I started in this field as a student in the Clinical Research office, then I became a study coordinator which I really enjoyed, I did that for 13 years before moving into my current role in July of 2015.

What advice would you give to students who are interested in cancer research?
 For students specifically interested in Clinical Research, I would suggest that they investigate what part of the spectrum of this field they are interested in most - it covers a wide range of possibilities. They may have an idea of what Clinical Research means but will discover that it encompasses everything from bench science, to drug development, to creating study protocols and managing them, to applying the clinical trial protocol at the patient level while ensuring safety and good data collection (that is what we do here).

What do you do in your spare time?
 I love to travel and spend time with family and my two dogs. I like to challenge myself. I've been sky diving, scuba diving, and ran two Marathons.

NOVEMBER

Dr. Josée Jarry



WCRG RESEARCHER SNAPDSHOT
Josée L. Jarry
 Ph.D., C. Psych.
 Associate Professor, Department of
 Psychology, University of Windsor

What is your research focus?
 I study the psychological benefits of Ahtanga yoga which is an integrated spiritual and physical practice. Its spirituality is cultivated through its physical practice on the mat. It also is an ethical system that guides our conduct in the world. It has profoundly transformed my life, how I relate to myself and to others. I study how Ahtanga yoga can help others.

When do you get your best research ideas?
 On the mat, when my practice is especially beneficial, I reflect on what might have made it so, and then I want to find the answers!

What do you hope the impact of your work will be?
 I find myself surprisingly ambitious with this new line of research, something I never truly experienced before. I am passionate about it. I hope to bring this simple, non-chemical and completely accessible practice to as many people as possible to improve their wellbeing, both psychological and physical. I want to study the benefits of Ahtanga yoga in as many populations as possible: people with different forms of cancer, with depression and anxiety, with chronic pain, with addiction, etc. We know very little about the power of "brain management" practices. We have forgotten them in favour of synthetic chemistry. But our behaviour has the power to modify our chemistry.

What motivates you to do what you do?
 My wish is "do good". We all are part of a community, living together. We either can be an asset to each other or a hindrance. We can do so much more when we help each other. I hope that my work can be experienced by others as an asset, that it can contribute to their happiness and can help give life meaning.

CLINICAL TRIALS

Clinical trials are an important part of any successful cancer research network. WCRG is fortunate to work in partnership with the Clinical Trials Department at Windsor Regional Hospital to facilitate and improve connections, communications and collaborations for our members. The Clinical Trials Business Coordinator, Krista Naccarato, provides financial tracking and budgeting considerations for each trial. In 2017, she also oversaw the development of the Quality Assurance Process that has led to an improvement in data quality as noted at site audits. Krista also serves on the WCRG Executive Committee.



5

Staff

The Clinical Trials Department at Windsor Regional Hospital is comprised of 4 Study Coordinators who recruit patients and conduct local clinical trials, and 1 Business Coordinator who directs daily outputs and manages the administrative logistics, including study contracts, budgets, training requirements and study startup.



13

Open & Recruiting Clinical Trials

Clinical trials at Windsor Regional Hospital Cancer Centre open and close throughout the year. Of the 13 trials in 2017, two were initiated by local clinical investigators.



68

Recruited Participants

Our local cancer patient recruitment rate matches the national average of approximately 3%. WCRG is committed to support efforts that increase the number of clinical trials operating in Windsor-Essex and their accessibility to our local cancer patient population.

NUCLEUS

Network of Core Labs Enabling Solutions

Thanks to the support of Caesars Windsor and UWindsor Faculty of Science, **Nucleus** provides a virtual inventory of cancer research facilities and equipment in Windsor-Essex. As Nucleus grows, it will facilitate collaboration within our research community and maximize efficiencies and use of valuable resources. Caesars supported the *Nucleus Drug Development and Screening Platform* with the purchase of a critical piece of equipment.



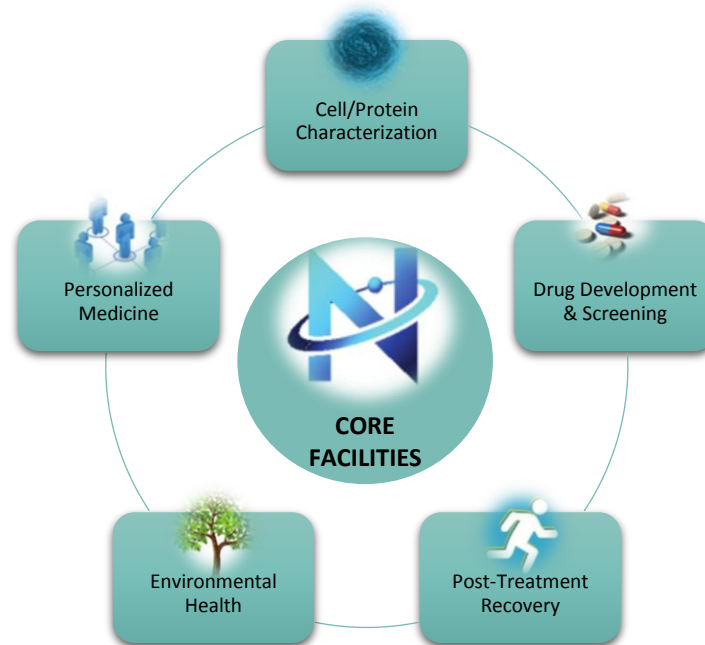
BENEFITS

Elevates Research Impact

- Supports growth of multi-disciplinary teams
- Accelerates access to infrastructure
- Drives innovation

Consolidates Resources

- Builds efficiencies
- Prevents redundancy
- Increases use of equipment



Informs Our Community

- Promotes research capabilities that we have in our community
- Provides direction regarding infrastructure needs

Supports Education

- Facilitates technical skills training
- Provides access to a variety of equipment
- Builds collaboration

CANCER SMART COMMUNITY

11

An important goal for WCRG is to make cancer research more accessible to the public. In 2016, WCRG partnered with the Windsor Cancer Centre Foundation (WCCF) to establish an education program “Cancer Smart” that translates and connects cancer research within our community. We host a community newsletter, Facebook page, twitter, outreach events, educational workshops and public seminars. This 3 year commitment from WCCF is helping WCRG extend it’s reach and become an important resource for cancer research in our community.



2

Community Newsletters circulated with a readership of over 650 people

18

Community events WCRG participated in

34

Times WCRG was featured in the media. A few of the top headlines:

- *Research experience seeking to empower children survivors of cancer*
- *False internet claims about cancer cure trouble local oncologist*
- *Cancer symposium invites students to join the fight*
- *WCRG Think Tanks initiate unique research relationships*

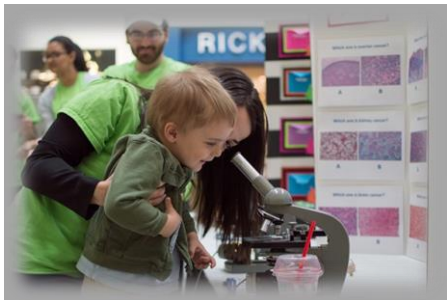
15

Education tools developed

CURES TEAM

Cancer Undergraduate Research and Education Students

WCRG has **50** undergraduate student volunteers who are vital to our success. In 2017, volunteers played key roles in the following initiatives: Science Rendezvous, Research Showcase, Cancer Researcher for a Day, Think Tank Series, WRH Cancer Education Days, Faculty of Science PASS program, Brain Tumour Foundation of Canada Windsor Walk, Halloween Open House, and Let's Talk Cancer.



Public Health Advocates

WCRG volunteers develop public education tools, answer questions at events and workshop, and promote awareness of local cancer research projects and resources.



Effective Communicators

WCRG volunteers convey information about WCRG, cancer research and treatment initiatives in Windsor-Essex to the public in a clear and enthusiastic manner. They are approachable and target information to the needs of the audience.



Professional

WCRG volunteers have the opportunity to interact with researchers, peers and the public, which assists them in their own professional development.

TESTIMONIALS

13



“Since I began at the University of Windsor in 2016, the WCRG has been a formidable ally and a great source of support. Being from outside the Windsor-Essex area, my network was very limited. Through various networking events and think tanks organized by the WCRG, and by the tremendous support from the members, I was able to meet and connect with partners, at the clinical and academic levels. Those new connections allowed solid partnerships to develop, resulting in innovative collaborative research, and with the ultimate objective achieve important impacts for patients.”

Simon Rondeau-Gagne, PhD

Assistant Professor, University of Windsor



When I received my cancer diagnosis, I was flooded with emotions - disbelief, confusion, anger and mainly fear. Fear of the unknown and the fear of ‘what if treatment doesn’t work’? Being offered a place in a clinical trial solidified a feeling of ‘hope’! It can make all the difference in the struggle to help yourself get through treatment and hopefully will help someone else down the road. I’m so very thankful for the opportunity and the incredible work being done in our community.

Diane Marley

WCRG Advisory Member, Cancer Survivor



“WCRG has allowed me the opportunity to raise awareness about cancer prevention and treatments and work alongside a great team. This experience is rewarding and life-changing. To be able to work with faculty, students and the healthcare community to promote the importance of research is remarkable. Thank you WCRG for your outstanding work and support!”

Anthony Pisciueneri

*Undergraduate Student, Biological Sciences
CURES Lead Volunteer*



“Think about a better future by promoting new ideas.....or about your present lives where advances in cancer have been attained. Think about those around us who have achieved a cure or improved quality of life through better medical therapies. Now..... think of a world without cancer research. Our lives would not be the same. The WCRG has made remarkable strides right here in our home community where researchers share ideas and collaborate to bring the highest quality research to its ultimate goal...understanding the nature of cancer and improving outcomes in the treatment of this disease.”

Ken Schneider, MD

Radiation Oncologist, Windsor Regional Hospital

THE HEART OF RESEARCH

14

Cancer Researcher for a Day launched in November 2017 and invites child cancer survivors and their siblings to participate in a hands-on research experience in laboratories across the University of Windsor campus, followed by a clinical trials “rotation” at Windsor Regional Hospital Cancer Centre. This initiative uses research as a tool to empower children/youth and their families through their cancer journey and encourage them to be informed research ambassadors. Research is often the main component behind a cancer patient’s hope, and it is because of research that treatments and outcomes have improved. The impact of the program is not one-sided. Paediatric survivors inspire our researchers, and their innovative ideas and honest feedback informs the future – patients ARE the heart of research.



“ I have a better understanding of the need for continuous funding that is required for research, as many variations of the same test are needed to find a favourable outcome.”

Dereck Lau

“As a sibling and daughter of cancer survivors, it was cool to see all the effort and dedication that is put into saving people’s lives.

Morgyn Lau

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Today, cancer patients live longer because of advancements stemming from research. WCRG is excited to build and strengthen our current local cancer research program to better serve the patients of the Lake Erie-St. Clair region. The devotion, energy and enthusiasm of our members, our volunteers and all those in the community that have supported us is key to our continued growth and our ability to make a difference in the fight against cancer.

Thank you, we couldn't do it without you!



University
of Windsor



Personal Donors

Heather Metcalfe

Marilyn Ursulak

Donors who wish to remain anonymous



*“Without research,
hope is just a word.”*

Dr. Michael Dufresne

WCRG Ambassador of Hope, former
cancer researcher & Seeds4Hope
Program Administrator



windsorcancerresearchgroup



@WindsorCRG



www.windsorcancerresearch.com