Reflecting on 15 Years

Crystal is the traditional gift to commemorate a 15th anniversary. As I reflect on the past 15 years, I can’t think of a more appropriate symbol to represent the multi-dimensional spirit of GCF. Through our three-tiered mission, we’ve made headway in public education, outreach and research.

As public education advocates, GCF has published 12 educational brochures on a wide variety of topics related to gynecologic cancers, held nine cancer survivors courses, and sponsored numerous seminars aimed at underserved populations and local communities. In addition, our toll-free information hotline has received over 125,000 calls to date, we’ve published 27 editions of the GCF Bulletin, and our award-winning Women’s Cancer Network Web site www.wcn.org logged over 2.2 million page views last year alone.

As gynecologic cancer awareness advocates, we acted as lead partner of the National Cervical Cancer Public Education Campaign and declared January as Cervical Cancer Awareness Month. We’ve developed four public service advertisements, and two public service announcements. We’ve co-sponsored 12 Annual Meeting media campaigns with placement in key national media outlets each year. And I can’t forget to mention our largest public outreach effort, Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month (GCAM), which has steadily grown over the last six years. Also, our evolving partnerships with other organizations, such as the Allied Support Group, have extended GCF outreach efforts even further.

As research advocates, the Foundation has awarded over $3 million in funding, benefiting over 50 investigators. Since the program began in 1995, we have steadily increased the number of grants awarded each year. This year, we offered 11 awards to outstanding researchers.

These numerous accomplishments are just the beginning. As GCF continues to grow, we are able to offer even more exceptional programs and services. In the next year, GCF has slated three additional survivor courses, a Hispanic outreach course, new telephone workshops and more educational brochures. The roll-out of GCF’s Ambassadors Program will help fine-tune members’ media and fundraising skills. Through our partnership with the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG), we will help patients participate in clinical trials. GCF will also co-sponsor the GCF/NCI scholars program, a program to facilitate investigative training for physicians with a dedicated interest in gynecologic malignancies.

GCF has a long and prosperous future ahead. That, my friends, is “crystal” clear.

Karl C. Podratz, MD, PhD
GCF Encourages Members to Apply for Newly Enhanced GCF/NCI Scholar’s Program

As part of its mission, GCF is dedicated to furthering research and training in the field of gynecologic oncology. GCF demonstrates this strong commitment through many avenues, including the GCF/National Cancer Institute (NCI) Scholar’s Program. As part of this commitment, GCF has named five GCF/NCI Fellows.

The purpose of this program is to support the development of outstanding translational scientists by providing specialized study for a clinically trained professional committed to a career in research. The award supports a one-to-three year period of supervised research under the direction of an NCI mentor. Further details about this program are enclosed with this newsletter.

To be considered for this program, applicants must be Full, Associate, Candidates or applicants for Candidate Membership, or a fellow-in-training in gynecologic oncology. If you are interested in applying for this exciting opportunity, please fill out the enclosed application or call GCF at 312.578.1439.

GCF Grants and Awards Booklet Will Soon Be Available

Hot on the heels of SGO’s 37th Annual Meeting on Women’s Cancer, GCF is excited to emphasize an important research milestone. Since 1995, GCF has awarded over 50 grants totaling more than $3 million in research, and has proudly supported 28 educational institutions. These awards have allowed for groundbreaking cancer research, and the potential for saving lives.

Attention physicians and fellows-in-training searching for funding opportunities in 2006. GCF’s 2006-2007 Research Grants and Awards Booklet will soon be available. Watch for your opportunity to apply for one of several research grants.

Last year, GCF received over 20 grant applications and funded seven. This year, we will offer an additional grant opportunity dedicated to endometrial cancer research. In addition, we are pleased to announce a newly enhanced program co-sponsored with the National Cancer Institute, the GCF/NCI Scholar’s Program. Please refer to the next article and enclosed documents for further information about this program.

Also included in this year’s Research Grants and Award booklet are the photographs of previous research award recipients and highlights of how initial funding led to increased funding.

GCF Congratulates Nine Research Grants and Award Recipients

GCF is pleased to recognize its 2005-2006 research grants and award recipients.

GCF would like to thank the members of the 2005-2006 Awards Committee: David Mutch, MD, Chair; Cathy Casey, MD; Ilana Cass, MD; William Cliby, MD; Jean Hurteau, MD; Elise Kohn, MD; J. Rebecca Liu, MD; David Miller, MD; Stephen Rubin, MD; and Elizabeth Swisher, MD for their time and commitment to this worthy cause.

Robert Coleman, MD
The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center
AWARD
Florence and Marshall Schwid Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, $50,000

Ernst Lengyel, MD, PhD
University of Chicago
AWARD
Molly Cade Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, $50,000

Gloria Huang, MD
Montefiore Medical Center
AWARD
Kea Simon Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, $50,000

Takiko Daikoku, PhD
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
AWARD
Ann Schreiber Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, $50,000

Kerry Rodabaugh, MD
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
AWARD
Anonymous Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, $50,000

Ruea-Yea Huang, MD
Roswell Park Cancer Institute
AWARD
Lee Kaplan Cancer Foundation Ovarian Cancer Research Grant, $50,000

Vivian Von Gruenigen, MD
The MacDonald Women’s Hospital, University Hospitals of Cleveland
AWARD
St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness Grant, $25,000

Peter Argenta, MD
University of Minnesota
AWARD
Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Career Development Grant, $50,000 (Second-year funding of $100,000 grant)

Andrew Berchuck, MD
Duke University Medical Center
AWARD
Margaret Greenfield/Carmel Cohen, MD Excellence in Ovarian Cancer Research Prize, $7,500

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Outstanding Residents and Fellows Honored

Congratulations to the 2005-2006 Award for the Outstanding Paper by a Resident or Fellow recipients — Premal Thaker, MD of The University of Texas M. D. Andersen Cancer Center and Lynne Knowles, MD of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. These prizes were presented at SGO’s 37th Annual Meeting on Women’s Cancer. Since the inception of the Outstanding Paper by a Resident or Fellow, GCF has presented 14 of these prizes to date.

GCF would like to thank Eli Lilly & Co. and the Carol’s Cause Organization for funding these important prizes. The Carol’s Cause Organization was founded by the Laino family in fond memory of Carol Laino — a courageous woman whose dying wish was to encourage more OB/GYN residents to enter the field of gynecologic oncology, and in turn, save more lives.

GCF Grants Have “Planted the Seed”

GCF would like to congratulate its 2005-2006 Margaret Greenfield/Carmel Cohen, MD Excellence in Ovarian Cancer Research Prize winner, Andrew Berchuck, MD. This prize, awarded to the individual who best demonstrates that they have used their GCF funds to improve women’s health care, was presented at SGO’s 37th Annual Meeting on Women’s Cancer.

Dr. Berchuck originally received $50,000 in funding for his pilot study, “Molecular Epidemiology of Ovarian Cancer.” This study was designed to learn more about ovarian cancer through simultaneous studies of epidemiological risk factors, genetic susceptibility and molecular changes in the cancers. The project was funded by the 1997-1998 Karin Smith/GCF Research Project in Ovarian Cancer Award.

Following the initial seed grant provided by GCF, Dr. Berchuck received funding from the NCI and the Department of Defense Ovarian Cancer Program, which has been renewed for eight years. In total, the project has garnered over $5 million in additional funding.

GCF would like to thank Mr. James Greenfield for providing the endowment to fund this important research prize. This endowment honors Mr. Greenfield’s wife, Margaret Greenfield, who lost her battle to ovarian cancer. The award also honors her physician, SGO/GCF member Carmel Cohen, MD, for his excellent care of Mrs. Greenfield throughout her illness.

GCF Honors Paige and Mark Anderson

Congratulations to Paige and Mark Anderson, the 2006 recipients of GCF’s Public Service Award. This prestigious award, now in its ninth year, is given to an outstanding individual (or individuals) in recognition of activities that directly impact women’s cancer awareness. GCF is pleased to recognize their many accomplishments in the fight against women’s cancers.

Paige, a cervical cancer survivor, has devoted many hours helping to create awareness of gynecologic cancer on Capitol Hill. Paige was instrumental in the U.S. House of Representative’s passage of a Congressional resolution supporting the ideals and goals of Gynecologic Cancer Awareness Month (GCAM) in September 2005. In addition, Paige and her husband Mark have raised more than $34,000 on behalf of GCF.

Mark was the lead coordinator for a successful charity golf tournament that raised over $8,000 for GCF last August. Planning for the 2006 tournament is well underway. Mark has secured more than $20,000 in sponsorships to date. Together, Paige and Mark coordinated the first annual winter tea to celebrate Paige’s two-year anniversary of being cancer free. The tea raised more than $6,000, once again to benefit GCF.

“GCF is extremely grateful to Paige and Mark Anderson for their extraordinary efforts on behalf of GCF, and women’s cancer awareness and prevention,” stated GCF Chairman and award presenter, Dr. Karl Podratz. “I am honored to present them with GCF’s Public Service Award and cannot think of more deserving recipients.”

“Mark and I are so proud to have received GCF’s Public Service Award,” states Paige Anderson. “We will continue to support gynecologic cancer awareness and education as best we can.”
ANNUAL MEETING WRAP-UP

The SGO/GCF annual meeting media campaign once again generated strong coverage, including stories in U.S. News and World Report, Newsweek, and other major mainstream media outlets and trade publications.

This year, the SGO/GCF communications teams selected the following four manuscripts to highlight for media attention:

➤ “A Prospective Randomized Trial of Thalidomide with Topotecan Compared to Topotecan Alone in Women with Recurrent Epithelial Ovarian, Primary Peritoneal or Fallopian Tube Carcinoma,” led by Levi S. Downs Jr., MD.


➤ “Prospective Randomized Trial of Laparoscopy vs. Laparotomy for Comprehensive Surgical Staging of Uterine Cancer” led by Joan L. Walker, MD.

➤ “Quality of Life of Patients with Endometrial Cancer Undergoing Laparoscopic FIGO Staging Compared to Laparotomy” led by Alice B. Kornblith, PhD.

OTHER ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

ANNUAL MEETING INTERVIEW — Dr. Downs (left) took some time out to meet with a reporter from OB/GYN News to discuss his study and presentation in the SGO/GCF newsroom.

GCF BOOTH AND CENTER OF EXCELLENCE — GCF’s tradeshow booth and center of excellence stood out at this year’s annual meeting. Dozens of attendees stopped by these venues to learn more about GCF programs and services, and view GCF’s milestones and research accomplishments.

LUNCH AND LEARN — Dr. Hector Tarraza led a bilingual seminar on signs and symptoms of gynecologic cancer as well as general information about women’s health for Palm Springs area hotel and convention center employees.

GCF Recognizes Its Board Members — Past and Present

GCF would like to welcome its newest executive committee member, Dr. Thomas Herzog, GCF Awards Committee Chair. We would also like to welcome Board members-at-large, Drs. Vivian von Gruenigen of The MacDonald Women’s Hospital, University Hospitals of Cleveland and Robert Coleman of The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. In addition, we are pleased to announce the re-election of Dr. Karl Podratz as Chairman and Dr. David Gershenson as Treasurer. The on-going commitment and dedication of our volunteers and support staff makes GCF what it is today.

GCF would also like to recognize and thank former Board members, Drs. David Mutch, Ted Trimble and Max Austin, for their outstanding service and commitment to the Foundation.

GCF’s Contact Information
Gynecologic Cancer Foundation
230 W. Monroe, Suite 2528
Chicago, IL 60606
PHONE: 312.578.1439
FAX: 312.578.9769
WCN WEB SITE: www.wcn.org
GCF WEB SITE: www.thegcf.org
EMAIL: info@thegcf.org
GCF Hosts Its Ninth Ovarian Cancer Survivors Course

With Three Additional Courses Planned for 2006

Following in the footsteps of last fall’s first ovarian cancer survivors course hosted at an educational institution, GCF held another successful course at The University of California San Diego Medical Center, Moores Cancer Center, in La Jolla, CA in January. Over 130 ovarian cancer survivors from eight states gathered to learn the latest clinical information about the disease, as well as useful lifestyle tips and coping mechanism. The course was once again led by SGO/GCF experts in the gynecologic oncology field.

“Hosting the course at a university cancer center allows for more community involvement and stronger advocacy support,” stated SGO/GCF member and course coordinator Cheryl Saenz, MD. “I was truly pleased to be a part of this wonderful educational opportunity.”

GCF would like to thank all volunteer presenters for their time and commitment, including: Julian Schink, MD; Barbara Goff, MD; Andrew Berchuck, MD; Anil Sood, MD; Vivian von Gruenigen, MD; Robert Coleman, MD; Paula Anastasia, RN, MN, OCN; and Rhonda L. Johnson, PhD. GCF would like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Saenz for coordinating this event and the UCSD’s Moores Cancer Center for co-sponsoring the event.

In addition, we are pleased to be hosting our first-ever endometrial cancer survivors course:

➤ Saturday, September 30, 2006 in partnership with The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston a new course for endometrial cancer survivors.

Other 2006 ovarian cancer survivor courses include:

➤ September 16, 2006 The Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, MO, sponsored by St. Louis Ovarian Cancer Awareness (SLOCA) and the Washington University School of Medicine.

➤ October 14, 2006 Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel during the International Gynecologic Cancer Society meeting in Santa Monica, CA, sponsored by the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund.

More information about these courses is available on the GCF Web site, www.thegcf.org.

WHAT ATTENDEES HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE NINTH OVARIAN CANCER SURVIVORS COURSE

Mostly I want to say thank you! We (OvCA patients) need more of this type of event/course. In summary — very good — Thank you! And give us more.

The course was masterfully organized and well presented. It was impressive to have such a core of outstanding authorities speak to us. I am a psychotherapist and 10 year survivor, and it is highly important for me to keep up on all research and new data, not only for myself but also for others I know and treat.

Thank you for all your time and effort. I hope the program continues to receive funding — it would be great to see the effect on smaller communities.

Thank you for having these knowledgeable presenters! Well paced and organized. Thanks for the slides! Tops in the field and cutting edge information.

WHAT LISTENERS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE CA 125 TELEPHONE WORKSHOP...

It was wonderful to sit in a comfortable chair and listen at my leisure, instead of trying to ask a million questions in the doctor’s office.

The telephone workshop was helpful and informative. It was professional and well organized.
GCF Reaches Out to Underserved Populations

All women are at risk of developing gynecologic cancers; however, recent studies have revealed striking disparities in diagnosis and treatment based on race and socio-economic status. In many underserved Hispanic communities, women are less likely to receive pre-cancer screenings. This can lead to later stage cancer diagnosis, and fewer life-saving options.

GCF is committed to narrowing this gap through education. This commitment is demonstrated through our various efforts to reach out to Spanish-speaking populations, such as translating and adapting our educational materials into Spanish, hosting a bi-lingual lunch and learn seminar at the 37th SGO Annual Meeting on Women’s Cancer and partnering with Hispanic/Latina outreach organizations. This fall, in partnership with the National Alliance of Hispanic Health (NAHH) and LatinaSHARE, GCF will hold its 2006 Hispanic Outreach Course. This educational course will be offered entirely in Spanish and is geared specifically toward the Hispanic/Latina community. All speakers are experts in gynecologic oncology and fluent in Spanish.

This free educational course is scheduled for October 13, 2006, in Los Angeles California, and coincides with the 11th Biennial Meeting of the International Gynecologic Cancer Society.

The seminar will provide an overview of the benefits of preventive screening and will identify risk factors. It will also cover the latest early detection, diagnostic and treatment techniques, and will provide attendees with local information and resources. GCF encourages all Hispanic women, friends and family members to attend.

This course is made possible through unrestricted educational funding from Merck and the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund. GCF would also like to thank the NAHH and LatinaSHARE for their partnership in this important event.

In addition, GCF is pleased to announce the successful roll-out of the Hispanic National Cervical Cancer Public Education Campaign and Web site. This campaign, launched on May 11, was developed to bring lifesaving cervical cancer prevention and treatment information to Hispanic communities. For more information, please visit: www.cervicalcancercampaign.org.

GCF Welcomes Janet Wykoff

GCF is pleased to welcome Janet Wykoff as GCF’s director of development.

Janet joined GCF in January of this year and brings with her many years of development experience in the health care field. Prior to joining GCF, Janet held the post of vice president of development of the Sinai Health System in Chicago. In this role, Janet was responsible for providing oversight and direction for all development functions and activities of the Sinai Health System. Other health care field development experience includes Evanston Memorial Hospital and Northwestern Memorial Hospital, and 12 years with the American Cancer Society, Illinois Division. Janet earned her BA from Ball State University at R.A.F. Chicksands, Bedford, Bedfordshire, England.

In her role as director of development, Janet looks forward to developing and implementing a comprehensive development program designed to further GCF’s mission and goals.

Janet is based at GCF headquarters in Chicago, IL and can be reached at 312.580.1165 or jwykoff@thegcf.org.
GCF and GOG Partner to Promote Research and Clinical Trial Participation

In an effort to provide women suffering from gynecologic cancer with the most up-to-date and easy-to-understand information on available clinical trials, GCF and the Gynecologic Oncology Group (GOG) have joined together to make information about GOG Phase III clinical trials available on the Web.

The new GOG Clinical Trials page, on GCF’s award-winning Women’s Cancer Network, www.wcn.org, provides women and their families with information on how to enroll in each trial. Each section also provides a detailed description of the trial, including the purpose of the study, how it works, eligibility requirements, and potential risks and benefits.

Women who feel they are eligible for a particular trial can call GOG headquarters where specially trained staff will help determine the nearest participating clinical site and provide the name and telephone number for the individual responsible for enrollment.

“It is our hope that GCF’s partnership with the GOG will allow for easier dissemination of clinical trial information, and will encourage gynecologic cancer patients to enroll in upcoming trials,” stated GCF Chair, Karl Podratz, MD, PhD. “I would like to thank the GOG for their generous contribution for this worthy endeavor.”

For more information about the Women’s Cancer Network or GOG Clinical Trials, visit www.wcn.org.
A cancer diagnosis can be one of the most frightening conversations in a woman’s life. While sorting out the emotions that go along with such an overwhelming diagnosis, she must also make important decisions about her recovery.

GCF prides itself on developing useful and informative educational materials to help guide women during the initial stage of diagnosis for gynecologic cancers. Now, GCF has developed an educational tool to guide women through endometrial cancer. This new brochure, “Understanding Endometrial Cancer: A Woman’s Guide” follows in the footsteps of last year’s cervical cancer brochure and covers three vital areas of cancer care: Treatment and working with your treatment team; Living and coping with cancer care; and Inspirational messages of hope and survival.

To complement this brochure, GCF has will soon roll-out a useful slide presentation to help educate the public about endometrial cancer.

“We want women who read this brochure to feel better informed and thus better able to actively participate in decisions affecting their treatment,” stated Jackie Ritz, Elizabeth Gillespie’s sister, “This is exactly what Elizabeth would have wanted!”

This brochure was made possible through the generous support from the Elizabeth Gillespie Fund for Life, and developed by the Gynecologic Cancer Foundation.

“The new brochure is very nice, well written and much needed,” states SGO/GCF member Doug Levine, MD.

GCF would like to thank Dr. Karen Lu for her leadership in developing this brochure. GCF would also like to thank Drs. David Mutch, Katherine Look, and James Orr for serving on the advisory board for this publication. Dr. Bobbie Gostout provided editorial assistance in her role as GCF’s Communications Chair.

To order copies of “Understanding Endometrial Cancer: A Woman’s Guide,” please e-mail GCF at info@thegcf.org or call 312.578.1439.

GCF Unveils its Ambassadors Program

This July, 16 SGO/GCF physicians will join together to become the very first graduates of GCF’s exciting new training event, GCF’s Ambassadors Program. The goal of this program is to help selected physicians become true media and fundraising experts on behalf of GCF.

Training, provided by the American Medical Association, will include a wide variety of media techniques, such as how the media works, successful interview tips, SGO/GCF’s key messages and how to use them effectively, handling difficult questions, voice control and on-camera appearance.

In addition to media training, GCF’s new director of development, Janet Wykoff, will give Ambassadors participants a general overview of fundraising and specifics on how active participation by Board members and volunteers can positively affect fundraising.

GCF would like to thank past SGO president and past GCF chairman, Dr. Rodrigue Mortel, for funding this exciting new program.

And this is just the beginning, it is our hope that this program will be offered five additional times over the next several years, to reach our ultimate goal of 50 GCF Ambassadors. GCF would like to thank all of our participants for their time and effort in advance. Your dedication and commitment will allow us to reach new heights in our mission and goals.