

Writing on the Wall Recognizes Generosity

Gracing the first floor foyer of The Whittier Institute is our new Donor Wall, where we proudly recognize The Whittier's gracious supporters. Designed to be both flexible and cost-effective, the three-panel display will be updated every six months.

The left panel acknowledges donors whose collective giving has reached \$10,000 or greater. The center panel will note the soon-to-be established Corporate Council, while the right panel lists current members of Whittier Friends.

To learn more about being recognized on The Whittier Donor Wall, call Katie Andrews at 858-626-5671.



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FOR DIABETES
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Summer 2003

THE Whittier Diabetes REPORT

Thanking Local Lifesavers

An Expert Opinion

Learning the Language of Cells

Fresh Fennel Salad



Scripps Whittier Diabetes Program

Scripps/UCSD/Whittier Diabetes Research Program

*Project Dulce – a program in partnership with
Community Health Improvement Partners
and the Council of Community Clinics*

Mission Statement:

The Whittier Institute for Diabetes provides resources for innovative research, education and patient care; and is a catalyst for collaboration among leading organizations to effect a cure for diabetes.

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On the cover: Mark and Molly Baber with Captain Robert Stanberry and Engineer Michael Swanson (in cab).

For more information, or to comment:
Katie Andrews at 858-626-5671

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Saying “Thanks” to Local Lifesavers

When Poway resident and type 1 patient Mark Baber had a hypoglycemic episode a few years ago, Molly Baber asked the paramedics if she could test her husband’s blood sugar using their own glucometer, TheraSense’s Freestyle brand. The medics agreed – and found themselves quite impressed.

“It caught the eye of one of our paramedics,” recalls Poway Fire Division Chief Bob Krans. “We’d been using the standard finger-prick test, and this gave us alternate site capabilities and required a smaller sample.”

Mark and Molly had wanted to show their appreciation to the Poway paramedics, and donating glucometers presented the perfect opportunity. “The work they do on a day-to-day basis often goes unrecognized,” says Molly. “We truly appreciate what they do for us personally and for the community, and they’re the nicest guys.”

Chief Krans led the Babers through the County’s approval process. In the end, the Babers donated 200 meters not just to Poway, but to all City and County Advanced Life Support Paramedics Units, and convinced TheraSense to match the donation for a total of 400 meters and supplies.

“We also negotiated with TheraSense to offer the departments government



Mark and Molly Baber with members of the Poway Fire Department, (clockwise from center left) Captain Robert Stanberry, Michael Swanson, Geoff Kamantigue and Scott Post.

pricing,” explains Molly. And, the company trained the paramedics onsite.

According to Chief Krans, reaction to the new monitors has been very positive. “It’s easier on the patients and less painful,” he says. “It provides a great alternative.”

After learning of their donation, Whittier board member David Winkler invited the Babers to tour The Whittier. “We were very impressed, especially with the educational aspect,” says Molly, adding that the diabetes education classes she and Mark attended there offered excellent, personalized information.

Recently, Molly became The Whittier’s newest trustee and, with Mark, spearheaded The Whittier’s new Web site (see page 7).

An Expert Opinion

San Diego is home to more than 220,000 people with diabetes – and just a handful of endocrinologists (physicians who specialize in hormonal disorders such as diabetes). As you might imagine, endocrinologist and Scripps Whittier Diabetes Program Medical Director Jeffrey Sandler, M.D., has quite a busy schedule.

“The majority of people with diabetes are still managed by their primary care physicians,” says Dr. Sandler. “So while there aren’t enough endocrinologists to manage each patient individually, we can be available to the larger groups of primary care doctors in a consulting role and through The Whittier.”

Referring to the Expert

As a consultant, Dr. Sandler spends most of his days at Scripps Mercy Hospital seeing patients who have been referred by their primary care physicians. The reasons for referral are many: A newly diagnosed patient may need a plan of action to manage the disease, while someone who has had diabetes for a while may need to change or add medications or insulin. Type 1 patients often see Dr. Sandler when they are considering switching from insulin injections to pumps.

After the consultation, Dr. Sandler constructs a plan of action that can be

carried out by the primary care physician. In more complicated cases, patients may return to Dr. Sandler for follow-up.

He also incorporates patient education into his practice. The Whittier Institute’s office at Scripps Mercy Hospital is just down the hall from Dr. Sandler’s, and certified diabetes educator Joanne Shartel, MA, RN, has worked part-time in his office for 20 years.

A “Fascinating” Subject

Dr. Sandler’s interest in endocrinology was sparked during his days as a medical student at the University of Illinois, where he discovered *Williams Textbook of Endocrinology* — the “bible” of endocrinology students. Fascinated by the subject, he volunteered to do research with a professor who was a major figure in endocrinology circles.

“We lived in the same suburb and rode the train together every morning,” Dr. Sandler recalls. “I became more and more impressed by him, and never turned back.” Long before he had even finished medical school, Dr. Sandler knew he would specialize in endocrinology. He completed his internship and residency at UCSD, and currently teaches there in addition to his work with The Whittier.

Scripps Whittier Diabetes
Program Medical Director
Jeffrey Sandler, M.D.



The Evolution of Diabetes Care

The endocrinologist has seen diabetes management take great strides over the years.

“It’s been revolutionary in my practice time,” Dr. Sandler says, noting such advances as immediate blood sugar readings, longer-acting “designer” insulin, type 2 prevention tactics and the discovery that diabetes is a potent risk factor for other health problems such as heart disease.

Dr. Sandler strongly believes both patient and physician education play important roles in diabetes management. The Whittier, he adds, makes a significant impact through its educational resources including materials, seminars, Web site, and outreach programs. Dr. Sandler cites Project Dulce, The Whittier’s community-based diabetes care program, as “a perfect example.”

“We’ve lowered A1c (the measure of blood glucose control) of Project Dulce patients in a matter of months,” he points out. “So we know it can be done, and not just by endocrinologists.”

Looking Ahead: The Whittier Institute Plans for the Future

With an eye toward ensuring The Whittier's continued role as a leader in diabetes research and education, the Institute is launching an unprecedented, multi-part plan to raise the funds necessary to bring its goals to fruition. At the top of the list are our most crucial objectives: research, educational programs, and facilities improvement.

During the initial phase of this most important endeavor, The Whittier staff will meet with the Institute's Board of Trustees, Medical Directors, past and present donors and individuals with an interest in diabetes research and care. Together, these groups will fine-tune our fundraising goals and chart a course to ensure an all-around successful effort.

To complement this valuable input, The Whittier also will carry out a feasibility study to determine how best to secure funding. The feasibility analysis is an integral part of a far-reaching plan to position The Whittier for continuous outstanding research and care well into the 21st century.

Over the next three years, our fundraising efforts will focus on program initiatives that currently define The Whittier Institute, including:

\$1.6 million – Research

The Whittier stands at the forefront of such cutting-edge research programs as islet cell replication and transplantation, and continues to lead the way in providing a cure for type 1 diabetes. Funding is a top priority in order for us to continue along this path.

\$1.2 million – Young Investigator Grants

By funding the innovative work of early career researchers, who are not traditionally awarded research grants from the National Institutes of Health or other established institutions, The Whittier plants the seed for larger, independently funded diabetes research programs.

\$2 million – Facilities

Renovated facilities and state-of-the-art technology are essential to the success of The Whittier Institute's research and educational programs.

\$3 million – Education and Outreach

Of course, funding is always needed for The Whittier's ongoing programs and activities, including our nationally

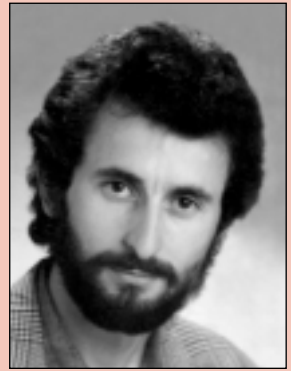
acclaimed Project Dulce and the Scripps Whittier Diabetes Program, that do not receive full reimbursement from outside funding sources. In addition, funding helps support our community outreach efforts, programs for underserved populations, and joint programs such as The Whittier Children's Center at Children's Hospital.

\$10 million – Endowment

Endowments provide the financial underpinning through which we will ensure long-term stability as a leading diabetes research and education institute. The Whittier's current endowment of \$10 million reflects the steadfast commitment of individuals who hold The Whittier in high esteem, and our goal is to continue building the endowment with the support of current and future benefactors.

For more information about these and other fundraising goals, please contact John DeMichele, Director of Development, at 858-626-5664.

Vincenzo Cirulli, M.D., Ph.D.,
is a Principal Investigator
with The Whittier Institute



Learning the Language of Cells

How do young cells decide what to be when they grow up? That's one of the questions Vincenzo Cirulli, M.D., Ph.D., and his team are trying to answer.

After receiving his medical degree from the University of Rome, the native of Abruzzo, Italy became interested in diabetes while earning his board certification in endocrinology and Ph.D. in endocrine cell biology at the University of Geneva Medical School (Switzerland).

"Diabetes is such an emotionally touching disease," Dr. Cirulli says. "You feel like you want to do something." He decided to come to the United States, where he felt there were better opportunities for research funding. In 1994, he joined The Whittier Institute.

Understanding Cell Communication

"We are trying to understand how cells communicate," explains Dr. Cirulli. "When organs first develop, they form from mostly immature cells. In order for these immature cells to decide what to become – for example, if they will become cells of the brain, or heart, or another organ – they need to communicate with each other."

According to Dr. Cirulli, these interactions depend on a special class of molecules, known as "cell adhesion molecules." These molecules work not only as a glue to keep cells together, but also as a vehicle for cells to talk to one another.

"We are trying to manipulate these molecules which mediate cell-to-cell interaction, to see if we can instruct undifferentiated cells to become insulin-producing cells," he explains.

A Three-Pronged Approach

Dr. Cirulli and his researchers use human pancreatic cells, embryonic stem cells, and mouse models of pancreatic development in their research. "On the one hand, we are trying to see if we can coax the undifferentiated human cells into producing insulin," he says. "On the other hand, we are using mice models to test the in vivo function of certain adhesion molecules, and determine whether they can be used to either induce immature pancreatic cells and stem cells to become beta-cells, and/or cause adult beta-cell proliferation and regeneration."

So far, the investigators have identified several types of cell adhesion molecules that appear to influence cell communication and development.

"We have found that whenever the level of a specific molecule known as Ep-CAM (Epithelial Cell Adhesion Molecule) increases in a cell, the cell starts to grow. On the contrary, when the level decreases, the cell starts to differentiate. This discovery indicates that undifferentiated cells modulate the levels of production of this molecule to either grow or mature into a specific cell type." Dr. Cirulli adds that his team has since genetically manipulated this molecule in mice and found that increasing the amount of Ep-CAM produced by pancreatic islet cells dramatically expands the number of insulin-producing cells.

Working Toward A Cure

Ultimately, Dr. Cirulli's goal is to define molecular pathways that can be manipulated to generate new insulin-producing cells. The progress is slow but steady.

"Breakthroughs happen when scientists piece together information and understand its meaning as a whole," Dr. Cirulli explains. "Every small discovery about how cells talk to each other, and decide to do what they do, harbors precious information."



Calculated Cooking

by Jeanne Jones

Fresh Fennel Salad

This simple, delightfully refreshing salad is perfect for fish and poultry. If possible, make it the day before to give the flavors time to marry. It's ideal for entertaining, potluck dinners, picnics and tailgate parties since making it ahead of time only makes it better. It's easy to transport and needs no refrigeration. You can even add chopped leftover fish or poultry, and serve it as an entrée.

- 8 oz. fennel bulb, very thinly sliced (2 cups)
- 1 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 plum tomato, peeled and dice

Combine fennel, olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Marinate for at least 30 minutes. Just before serving, stir in diced tomato.

Makes 4 servings

Each serving contains approximately:

- Calories: 58
- Fat: 4 grams
- Cholesterol: 0
- Sodium: 166 mg.
- Protein: 1 gram
- Fiber: 1 gram

Jeanne Jones has been involved with The Whittier Institute for Diabetes since 1981, when she was named the first president of "Whittier Friends."

She was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in her 30s. After the initial shock wore off, Jeanne learned to control her diabetes through an exchange diet and has parlayed her success into a promising career.

Jeanne has written numerous books about light cuisine, appeared on national television programs, and is an internationally renowned nutrition consultant. Her syndicated weekly column, "Cook It Light," reaches millions of readers.

Jeanne, along with her mother, Kathryn Fishback, and her sister, Cheryl Harris, established the Kathryn C. Fishback Family Foundation. Their foundation has contributed handsomely to ongoing research and other projects at The Whittier Institute.

Joanne Wilson



"The Hope of the Future"

After living with type 1 diabetes for nearly 50 years, dental hygienist Joanne Wilson made a discovery that would change her life: Project Dulce, Whittier's community-based diabetes care program.

Diagnosed at age 18 after she went into a diabetic coma, Wilson spent decades using little more than guesswork to manage her nutrition and insulin. "The only education I personally had was a nurse's manual I was given when I was 18 years old," she recalls.

"Though I had been managing my diabetes fairly well, insulin drove my life," recalls Wilson. "In those days, you took insulin, and then you ate according [to when you took it], which is a terrible way to live."

In the spring of 2002, her physician suggested that she look into Project Dulce. She attended a diabetes class and found that she had plenty to learn.

Since then, Wilson's knowledge of diabetes management has been greatly enhanced. She has switched to a new type of insulin, which enables her to eat at her convenience. She also credits her improved lifestyle to Project Dulce's "marvelous" group support.

"Project Dulce is the hope of the future for diabetes," says Wilson.

News & Events

Partner with a Researcher

Experience the challenge and excitement of diabetes research – and perhaps even be part of the next groundbreaking discovery. **PARTNER FOR A CURE**, The Whittier's newest program to support research efforts, presents a unique opportunity for individuals to "sponsor" a researcher and spend time with him or her in the laboratory.

With an impressive list of alma maters, our scientists are a first-rate, dedicated group who look forward to sharing their theories and discoveries with you. Annual partner sponsorships begin at \$2,500; additional benefits include recognition on our donor wall and an invitation to our Annual Dinner with the Institute's leadership and researchers.

For more information on **PARTNER FOR A CURE**, contact Katie Andrews at 858-626-5671.



Pictured are three of the scientists involved in the inaugural phase of Partner for a Cure. (l to r) Alberto Hayek, M.D., Harvard & Yale, Giuseppe Diaferia, Ph.D., University of Milan, and Liora Newfield, M.D., Israel Institute of Technology.

Teeing Off for The Whittier

A team of dedicated volunteers, led by co-chairmen Dick Mau and Trustee Charles Scribner, is again spearheading the 2003 annual golf tournament to benefit The Whittier's programs and activities. We would like to recognize US Bank for once again serving as our Presenting Sponsor, and ResMed for their Principal Sponsorship.

In its sixth year, the event is an important source of support for The Institute. Slated for Monday, October 13, at the beautiful La Jolla Country Club, ours is one of a handful of charitable tournaments permitted at the exclusive club. In this tournament, **all players play their own ball and receive a \$100 gift certificate toward a selection of Titleist and Cobra products.** Capping off the day will be exquisite seafood hors d'oeuvres, dinner, and silent and live auctions.

For more details or to receive a sponsorship packet call Katie Andrews at 858-626-5671.

The Whittier's New Web Site – www.whittier.org

In early June, The Whittier launched its new Web site. Much more user-friendly and stylized than before, the revamped site was made possible by new Whittier Trustee Molly Baber and her husband, Mark, and designed by San Diego firm Artemis Agency.

The site provides visitors with information on diabetes and the activities of The Whittier Institute, including patient programs, research, clinical trials, and outreach. A section titled "In the Lab" reports on the latest research updates. Of particular interest to patients and loved ones is the ability to interact via e-mail with many of our Principal Investigators regarding their areas of diabetes research.

A primary goal for Phase II of the project is to create more interactive features, including online registration for clinical trials, a "virtual" tour of The Institute, and a monthly "Ask a Doctor" Q & A forum with our Medical Directors.

The Whittier's newly redesigned web site
www.whittier.org

