



Prepared by: Swim Across America
swimacrossamerica.org

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jenifer Howard | JHPR
jhoward@jhowardpr.com
203-273-4246

Nancy Moon | Moon PR
nancy@moonpr.com
917-533-8933

2016 SWIM ACROSS AMERICA GREENWICH-STAMFORD EVENT RAISES \$400,000 FOR CANCER RESEARCH

10th Anniversary Greenwich-Stamford Swim Benefits the Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT) and Its Cancer Research Grants

STAMFORD, Connecticut, June 27, 2016 — More than 300 swimmers and volunteers participated in the tenth annual Swim Across America Greenwich-Stamford Swim on Saturday, June 25, 2016, in an effort to raise funds to #defeatcancer. The Swim was held on the Greenwich-Stamford border on the shores of the headquarters for the Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), the beneficiary of the swim and the nation's only non-profit foundation dedicated exclusively to funding cancer cell and gene therapy research. This year's Swim Across America Greenwich-Stamford Swim raised close to \$400,000 for cancer gene therapy research with funds still being received. In its ten years supporting ACGT, the Greenwich-Stamford Swim has raised more than \$3 million that goes directly to funding some of the nation's most innovative and promising cancer treatments.

Special highlights of the day included incredible fundraising by both swimmers and volunteers, including:

Rookie of the Year: Cristy Fraser

Cristy Fraser of Old Greenwich, Connecticut, a first-time volunteer with the Greenwich-Stamford Swim Across America event, is Julian Fraser's mother. Julian is a Greenwich High School graduate, an All-American water polo player and a member of the Santa Clara University water polo team. Julian was recently diagnosed with sarcoma, a form of bone cancer, and his former Greenwich High School teammates and friends joined together to form one of the largest teams ever, **Team Julian** with 85+ members, to participate in the Greenwich-Stamford Swim Across America event.

Top Fundraising Teams

While many individuals participate in the annual Swim, friends, co-workers and family members often join together and create teams to participate in the swim and help with fundraising. This year, some of the outstanding teams led by their team captains, raised a substantial amount of money in the effort to raise funds to support cancer research. The top fundraising teams were:

Team Julian (team captain **Lorrie Hokayem**, Stamford, Connecticut): \$79,000

Peter's Defeaters (team captain **Peter Carlson**, Riverside, Connecticut): \$51,000

ChemHoes & Bros (team captain **Brooke Lorenz**, Riverside, Connecticut): \$19,000

Brunswick & Greenwich Academy (team captain **Diana Tramontano**, Greenwich, Connecticut): \$11,000

Middlesex Club (team captain **Kendall Luecke**, Darien, Connecticut): \$11,000

Team College (team captain **Chip Linehan**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania): \$10,000

CP-AC Swimming (team captain **Julian Giangrande**, Riverside, Connecticut): \$9,300
Team Mulholland (team captain **Claire Holleran**, Rye Brook, New York): \$7,200
Kicking Cancer for Karen, Chris and Friends (team captain **Jim O'Brien**, Wilton, Connecticut): \$5,800
Team Irish (team captain **Kevin Lydon**, Old Greenwich, Connecticut): \$4,300
Blue Wave (team captain **Owen Brannigan**, Darien, Connecticut): \$4,200
Swim for Kim (team captain **Craig Lawrence**, Rye Brook, New York): \$3,200
Innis Arden Aquatics (team captain **Charlie Leigh**, Old Greenwich, CT): \$2,500
PAC (team captain **Lily Parmanan**, Chestnut Ridge, New York): \$2,100

Top individual fundraisers that raised more than \$10,000 each were:

Peter Carlson of Riverside, Connecticut, **Andy Alisberg** of Greenwich, Connecticut and **Brooke Lorenz** of Riverside, Connecticut.

As this was Swim Across America's tenth year "making waves in the fight against cancer" in Greenwich and Stamford, there were several swimmers that made this year their tenth year swimming for the event. They included: **Craig Lawrence** of Rye Brook, New York; **Rob Collegan** of Old Greenwich, Connecticut; **Tori Dinkel** of Ridgefield, Connecticut; **Susie Ellis** of New York, New York; and **Chris Thompson** of Riverside, Connecticut.

While Swim Across America holds more than 20 swims throughout the United States each year, the Greenwich-Stamford Swim is unique in that the funds raised go directly to support the Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), the nation's only non-profit dedicated to cancer cell and gene therapy and which is headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut, where the swim was held and founded by Greenwich residents **Barbara** and **Edward Netter**. The mission of ACGT is to support the extraordinary potential offered by cell and gene-based therapies to accelerate effective and safe treatment of all types of cancer. Out of ACGT's 50 cancer research grants it has funded in the past 15 years, five ACGT scientists have been supported specifically by funds raised in the 10 years of Swim Across America events and are supporting research to find better treatments for blood, brain, lymphoma, leukemia and pediatric brain cancers.

In this one-year alone, 1,685,210 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in the US. This staggering statistic offers compelling proof of the need to continue devising new approaches to research and treatment. Whether it is through swimming, volunteering, giving or cheering on loved ones, Swim Across America welcomes anyone and everyone who wants to be a part of the fight to #defeatcancer.

Special guests at this year's 10th annual Swim Across America event included **Meline Dickson** of Greenwich who is fighting stage four metastatic melanoma that was diagnosed in March 2015. When Meline discovered she had cancer, she had lesions in her brain, lungs and liver. Five years ago, the average survival for patients with stage four melanoma was six-to-ten months — and that has been the case for the past 30 years. But today, thanks to research being funded by organizations such as Swim Across America and the Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), there is a better way. Dickson was treated with two immunotherapy drugs: nivolumab and Yervoy, which she received over several months at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital.

"Imagine how excited I was to learn that the Yervoy treatment was actually developed and tested in a Swim Across America lab and has its roots pioneered by ACGT-funded research — thanks to dollars raised at events like the Greenwich-Stamford Swim Across America Swim," said Dickson.

Since her diagnosis, Meline Dickson has had two craniotomies and gamma knife surgeries to remove the lesions on her brain, but she is very grateful that the immunotherapy treatments she

received seem to be working. "I've come a long way in the last 14 months," noted Dickson. "I want to show everyone that there is hope. Today I'm playing tennis, looking well, walking my dog and parenting my four children. I still have tumors, but they are stable, shrinking and some are gone. For that, I am grateful."

Dr. Samuel Katz, assistant professor at the **Yale University Cancer Center** and an ACGT Young Investigator grant recipient, also spoke at the event. Dr. Katz is using an ACGT grant to fund research into the use of immunotherapy and RNA to kill blood cancers.

Dr. Katz noted that, "Great progress has been made in harnessing a patient's own immune cells to attack blood cancers. Our research is just one of the many immunotherapy treatments being explored today and employs RNA, which directs the cells to attack only the cancer and has the added advantage of minimal side effects. It is through the thanks of organizations like the Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy and Swim Across America that we can get the important funding needed to develop and test these new therapies and hopefully someday soon, treat cancer as a manageable disease."

Special thanks to this year's co-chairs, **Michele Graham** of Old Greenwich, and **Lorrie Lorenz** of Riverside, Connecticut, both mothers of teenage cancer survivors. Also special appreciation to the honorary co-chairs including Olympic Gold medalist **Donna de Varona** and her husband **John Pinto**, **John** and **Cindy Sites**, **Mary Henry** and **Howard Rubin**, **Arlene** and **Reuben Mark**, and **Richards** of Greenwich.

Sponsors who have helped make the Swim Across America Greenwich-Stamford event possible include: Aux Delices, Barbara and Edward Netter Foundation, CAPTRUST Financial Advisors, Carolee, Conair Corporation, Donut Delight, Essex Financial Services, Fairfield County Look, Geneve, Hobbs Inc., Letarte Swimwear Greenwich, Lexus, Paul Kempner & Julie Thiele, Pepsi Beverages - Aquafina, PURDUE, Quinnipiac University, Serendipity, The Buzz Truck, The Lapin Foundation, Turq Swimbrief, Upper Crust Bagel Company, Westy Self Storage and Whole Foods Greenwich. National sponsors are: BTIG, Columbus Circle Investors, Kellogg's, KISS MY FACE, National Coalition of Associations of 7-Eleven Franchises, SwimOutlet.com, and SWIM SWAM.

Funds are still coming in from the open water Swim Across America Greenwich-Stamford Swim and from a pool swim at Innis Arden Country Club and water polo match at the Belle Haven Club. Anyone wishing to donate to Swim Across America can do so at swimacrossamerica.org/greenwich. For information on the swim's beneficiary, the Alliance for Cancer Gene Therapy (ACGT), visit acgtfoundation.org.

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