

At The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS), generous donors and volunteers make life-saving advances possible.

Supporter's Corner

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I support LLS because...

Cindy was only 16 when she lost her 18-year-old brother to leukemia, and that is what motivated us to get involved with LLS many years later. That initial involvement led us to get to know and respect the LLS organization.

With the research they have supported, LLS has changed the face of leukemia. It is no longer a death sentence for children. They truly care about patients and families, they develop personal

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Intensifying the Fight Against Myeloma

Multiple myeloma is the second most common hematological malignancy in the United States and Europe. To tackle this difficult disease, last year LLS launched the Myeloma Initiative, with targeted investment of \$10 million or more per year for the next five years.

Driving a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to curing myeloma in the near term, a

significant portion of LLS funding in 2018 is dedicated to myeloma. Of the numerous awards granted to research in this area, two are prestigious Specialized Center of Research (SCOR) grants. Awarded to research of the highest caliber, these multidisciplinary, multi-institutional grants forge powerful collaborations among

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▲ **Stephen Nimer, MD, University of Miami, has received a prestigious Specialized Center of Research grant to advance exciting research into the behavior of genes in a number of blood cancers. This SCOR grant was made possible in part by a generous gift of \$1 million from a private donor.**

Supporter's Corner

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relationships with people and genuinely want to help them. That means so much to us.

We are fortunate to be at a point in our lives that we are able to look for ways to help our extended community. When getting to know LLS, we noted right away that in addition to the great research agenda, they work with very impressive operational efficiency. LLS engages talent and resources from many independent research organizations to work toward the common goal. Their ability to manage and coordinate all those diverse projects demonstrates that LLS has earned the respect of researchers all over the country.

We know that LLS is working for the benefit of helping humankind, and we feel privileged to be part of that effort and that our contribution is being put to good use.”



Cindy & Frank Gasztonyi
Long Beach, CA

Using the Word “Cure”

Every year, the nation’s experts in the science and medicine of blood cancer gather at the American Society of Hematology conference to share findings, report breakthroughs, and see where the field is heading. At this year’s meeting, the impact of LLS and our supporters was profound, with several hundred projects that benefited from LLS support. While some results were preliminary and warrant further study, some doctors even dared to utter the word “cure.”

Here are the main takeaways:

- **Without a trace:** New approaches target specific cancer-causing genetic mutations to achieve deep, lasting remissions with no remaining detectable disease.

In 2017 the FDA approved an incredible 18 therapies for blood cancer, 15 of which were funded by LLS and our donors.

- **The right combination:** Precision medicine is realizing gains and proving successful at providing the right treatment “cocktail” to the right patient at the right time.
- **CAR T continues to wow:** CAR T-cell immunotherapy, which reengineers immune cells to find and kill cancer cells, has resulted in impressive outcomes for some patients who had run out of options.

The landscape of care for blood cancer is changing, and LLS is excited to be on the front line and proud of the role we—and our donors—have played in this amazing progress.



Karen Kaul, MD, PhD, of North Shore University HealthSystem participated on a panel of experts covering a broad range of blood cancer topics as LLS’s scientific symposium opened the ASH Conference.

To support research in the area of greatest concern to you, contact us at 1-888-773-9958.

Intensifying the Fight Against Myeloma

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teams of researchers working to solve difficult challenges in blood cancers.

**Robert Orlowski, MD, PhD,
University of Texas MD Anderson
Cancer Center, Houston**

Orlowski and his team are working to unlock the molecular and immunologic mechanisms that make high-risk myeloma so aggressive. The goal is to uncover weaknesses that can be exploited by new drugs and therapies that target and kill the cancer. The team is developing an immunotherapy that can be personalized to each patient and will delay or even prevent progression to full-blown myeloma, thereby sparing patients from toxic chemotherapy

**Andreas Strasser, PhD, MSc, FAA,
Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of
Medical Research, Australia**

This grant paves the way for therapeutics that harness the body's cell-death machinery, the normal process that causes impaired cells to self-destruct. When the process goes awry, cancer cells do not die as readily. Dr. Strasser's team is testing multiple new approaches to boost apoptosis in leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma.

There have been many new therapies approved by the FDA for multiple myeloma and they are changing the treatment paradigm for patients.

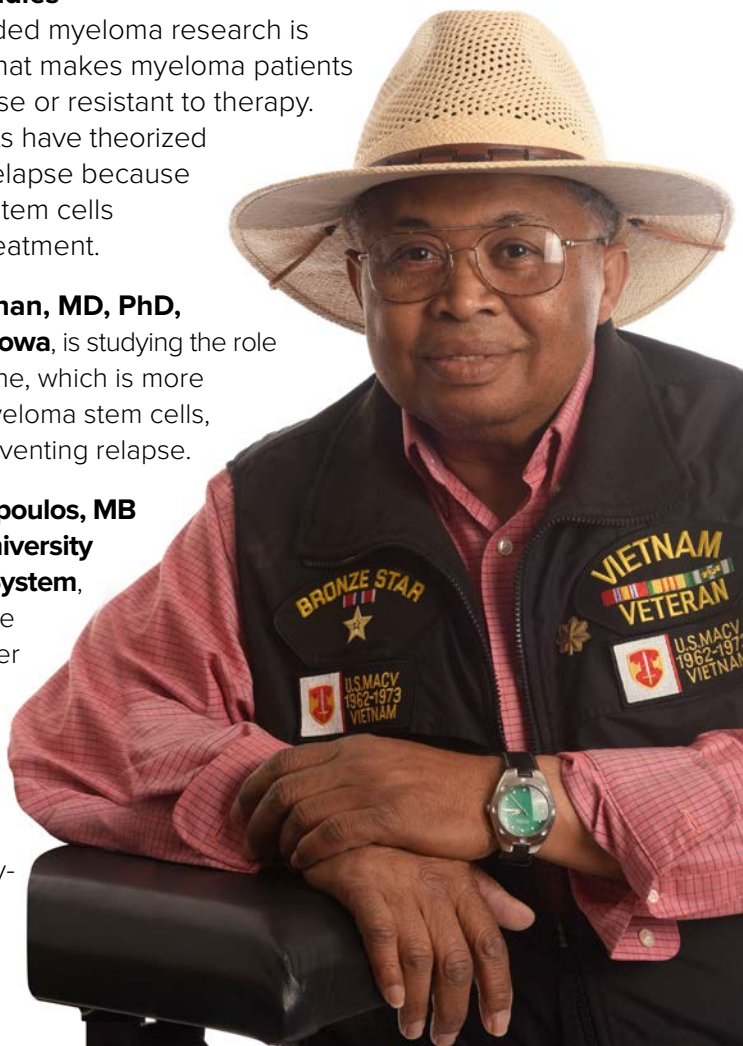
—Louis J. DeGennaro, PhD, LLS President and CEO

Additional Studies

Other LLS-funded myeloma research is focusing on what makes myeloma patients prone to relapse or resistant to therapy. Some scientists have theorized that patients relapse because the myeloma stem cells persist after treatment.

**Fenghuang Zhan, MD, PhD,
University of Iowa,** is studying the role of the CD24 gene, which is more abundant in myeloma stem cells, in hopes of preventing relapse.

**Fotis Asimakopoulos, MB
BChir, PhD, University
of Wisconsin System,** is examining the defenses cancer cells employ to resist treatment, with the goal of enhancing the ability of immunotherapy-mobilized killer cells to do their job.



Trial lawyer and Vietnam veteran Eliehue Brunson (pictured above) became involved with LLS after being diagnosed with myeloma in 2013. Eliehue encourages everyone experiencing bone pain to seek medical care—especially veterans, African Americans, and people over 60 years of age.

Myeloma Outreach and Community Engagement

Taking aim at myeloma means providing support and education to the people with the greatest need.

Myeloma Education

In 2017, LLS's outreach included:

- National webinars designed to increase patients' knowledge about cutting-edge therapies and emerging treatments.
- Presentations in Philadelphia and South Florida to share the latest treatments with clinicians.
- Regional blood-cancer conferences, where nearly 1,000 myeloma patients and caregivers received information and support.

- Videos and booklets, helping patients and caregivers understand the disease, navigate treatment, and adhere to oral therapies.

Myeloma Link

African Americans have twice the incidence of myeloma as white Americans. In collaboration with the National Black Church Initiative (NBCI), LLS launched *Myeloma Link* in March, 2017, to heighten awareness and understanding of myeloma, provide critical information and resources, and encourage patients and caregivers to use a new support infrastructure.

This past October, LLS partnered with Radio One-DC, part of, the nation's largest radio network dedicated to African Americans, to educate them about myeloma risk and connect them to myeloma information and resources.

LLS staff and volunteers conducted presentations, on-air interviews, and PSAs. Radio One also posted information about Myeloma Link on their website; churches throughout D.C. received emails about this unique program. In total, there were more than 250,000 exposures to the LLS message.