

The MRF Endowment for Research

The case for investment in innovative research and discovery in Oregon

For more than 60 years, the Medical Research Foundation of Oregon has been an indispensable partner of Oregon's health and science community.

The MRF's research grant program has supported some of Oregon's signature medical achievements: crucial breakthroughs in bone marrow transplantation, the world's first successful artificial heart valve, innovative devices for the hearing disorder tinnitus, and a list of discoveries in cardiology, neurology and other fields.

The MRF has a proven track record of identifying and supporting innovative researchers at critical points in their careers, providing a financial life-line that, in many cases, has been all that was needed to secure permanent funding for worthwhile research projects.

Today the MRF awards more than \$1 million per year in competitive funding to scientists at research institutions across the state. MRF grants are inherently translational – that is, even the most basic scientific project funded must demonstrate a potential relevance to human health.

With this proud history, the MRF is changing to meet critical needs in biomedical research.

Never before has innovation-focused funding been so vital to the future of Oregon medical science. Traditional federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health have reduced their budgets and shifted their priorities in recent years. Consequently, most scientists today – especially those in the early-to-middle stages of their careers – find it harder than ever to fund their work. In fact, the average scientist today does not earn his or her first independent NIH funding until after age 40.

When it comes to investing in the next generation of researchers, the current system inhibits innovation, starves excellence and drives promising scientists from the field. In an era of virtually unlimited scientific opportunity, the impacts of this lost potential are beyond measure. But there is something we can do about it.

What the MRF Can Do

We can reduce our researchers' dependence on federal support. We can help them get their ideas off the ground and keep the innovation pipeline flowing. We can identify and invest in new scientific talent. Simply by expanding what we already do, the MRF can provide a local solution to the national crisis in research funding.



The MRF's first research grant was a \$200 award to an applicant studying amino acids. The average award size today is \$30,000.

OHSU and VA researcher Aaron Janowsky, Ph.D., (above) is a prime example of the MRF's scientific leverage. Janowsky received his first MRF grant in 1987 to study dopamine regulation. His work has gone on to earn \$13.4 million in additional federal funding. This represents an amazing 1,125-fold return on the MRF's original \$11,950 investment.

What MRF supporters can do

One of the MRF's principal activities is a grant and recognition program that fosters the values of mentorship and innovation in the life sciences. Philanthropic investment is needed to grow the MRF's sustaining endowment, the foundation's primary funding source for these programs. Gifts are welcomed from anyone in Oregon who shares the MRF's vision of a strong statewide community of life science researchers working individually and in collaboration with peers to advance knowledge, find solutions and improve lives.

A gift designated to the MRF endowment is an investment in the future of world-class biomedical research in Oregon. Endowed support provides the MRF with financial resources in perpetuity to keep the quest for new treatments and cures moving ever forward.

An investment in the MRF endowment will enable the organization to add new recognition programs such as the Richard T. Jones New Investigator Award, which was established in 2009 to recognize emerging investigators with exceptional promise. A critical new program, the Oregon Scientist Development Award, is proposed for 2010 to provide significant grant funding to keep Oregon's best young investigators here in the state as they transition from postdoctoral training to scientific independence.

As an affiliate committee of the Oregon Health & Science University Foundation, the MRF is aligning its philanthropic needs with OHSU's current three-year fund-raising initiative to build support for its faculty.

This initiative seeks to raise private funds to recruit and retain the best and brightest faculty at OHSU, provide them with the resources they need to do exceptional work, and create opportunities for them to participate in multidisciplinary collaborations that directly improve the health and well-being of Oregonians.

Giving opportunities

Endowed support

Private gifts of endowed support for the MRF can make a real impact on real people, now and in the future.

For the purposes of investment, the MRF endowment is pooled with other funds that make up the OHSU endowment. This fund is invested and managed for perpetual growth by financial professionals. Numerous endowed funds have been established to create chairs, professorships, research funds and other funds benefiting exceptional faculty and programs.

OHSU gratefully accepts outright gifts as well as deferred or planned gifts.

Outright gifts: Your outright gift of cash or certain other assets can be designated to support the MRF Endowment for Research. You can give your gift now or pledge to pay it later. Pledges can be fulfilled in one lump sum or in installments over a period of years.

Planned gifts: A range of financial vehicles are available to donors interested in making a deferred gift to benefit the Medical Research Foundation.

The MRF merged with the OHSU Foundation in 1994. In addition to enhancing MRF's administrative and financial management resources, the move recognized the shared interest between MRF and OHSU in the future of the Oregon National Primate Research Center.

In addition to its research grant program, the MRF annually awards the prestigious Mentor and Discovery awards to outstanding Oregon researchers. Private support of the MRF will help expand its recognition programs.

Make a Gift

Professional staff members from the OHSU Foundation are available to help coordinate the details of a gift. For more information, contact Constance French at 503 220-8336 or frenchco@ohsu.edu.

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