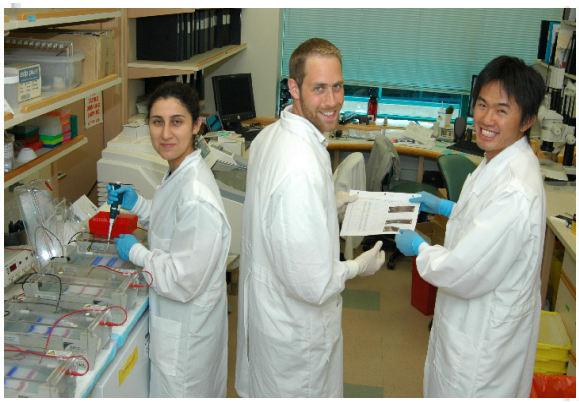
Canadian Gene Cure Foundation
Foundation Canadienne Géne Cure

Press Kit


BACKGROUNDER

Our Vision

'To make a positive difference in the lives of people living with genetic disease.'

Our History

* The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation (CGCF) is a registered Canadian charitable organization. It was formed in 1999 by a group of dedicated visionaries and members of the Canadian Genetic Diseases Network (CGDN) who strongly believe more funding is needed for medical genetics research in Canada.

* The CGCF supports excellence in human genetics research. Our goal is to raise funds to enable scientists to discover cures and treatments for genetic disorders.

* The Foundation awards grants annually to cutting-edge Canadian scientists forging significant scientific discoveries. We also recognize the importance of mentoring Canada's future scientists, supporting educational opportunities for high school students and awarding scholarships to encourage physician scientists. And we proudly support networking opportunities in which scientists can exchange ideas and work cooperatively, linking advances in different disease areas.

Our Scientists

* We are proud of our scientists and their contributions to human genetics research. These scientists are world-leaders in gene discovery and genetic research and have discovered genes relating to hundreds of disorders, including Cystic Fibrosis, Juvenile Diabetes, Muscular Dystrophy, Dyslexia, Huntington disease, Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, colon cancer, cardiovascular disease and Epilepsy, to name only a few.

To learn more about the Foundation or for images, contact Sabrina Fenster at sfenster@cgcf.ca

PROGRAMS

Research Grants

The Foundation awards grants annually to cutting-edge Canadian scientists forging significant scientific discoveries. These grants allow scientists to continue their ground-breaking research into causes, treatments and cures. In particular, the CGCF focuses on funding projects investigating potential therapies for genetic diseases. In the past, grants have been awarded for research into Juvenile Diabetes, Gaucher's Disease, Down's Syndrome and adverse drug reactions in children.

Scriver MD/PhD Scholarships

We recognize the importance of mentoring Canada's future scientists and annually grant training scholarships to encourage physician scientists. These scholarships provide support to students enrolled in a MD/PhD training program whose research focus is in human genetics. The scholarship is named after the Scriver family for the substantial contributions they have made to genetics research.

Canadian Human Genetics Conference

The Foundation proudly supports networking opportunities such as the Canadian Human Genetics Conference. This meeting provides top researchers, both new and seasoned, an essential forum to develop successful partnerships. Fostering collaboration speeds medical discoveries that positively impact health in Canada and around the world. Held annually, the conference showcases some of the best genetics in the country and abroad. Emphasis is placed on providing a learning experience for students and post-doctoral trainees.

Gene Researcher for a Week

The Gene Researcher for a Week program inspires high school students in grades 11 and 12 who have an innate curiosity for science. Once accepted into the program, students are placed with a host lab for one week. Students can expect to participate directly in real, hands-on genetic research. Participants become valued members of the research team and are mentored by an experienced scientist.

Q & A

1. What is a genetic disorder?

A genetic disorder is a disease that is caused by changes in our DNA. Genetic disorders can be caused by mutations in single genes, imbalance of genetic material or a combination of mutations and environmental stressors. A genetic disorder may be a condition that is passed down in a family (inherited) or it may have happened for the first time in the affected person (sporadic).

2. What is a gene?

Genes are both units of inheritance and encoded messages for the creation of a functional unit in a cell (usually a protein, but sometimes functional RNA). These functional units determine, among other things, an organism's appearance, its metabolism and sometimes even its behaviour. Genes are found in every cell of our body and contain the instructions for things like the shape of our nose and the size of our feet. It is estimated that we have approximately 25, 000 different genes in our body. Click here to read more about genes.

3. How do genes work?

Genes contain instructions for making proteins. Each protein has a specific job to do in our body and is important in making sure our organs and tissues develop properly and that all our body processes are carried out correctly. Click here to read more about genes.

4. Why is genetic research important?

* Three out of five Canadians suffer from a genetic disease in their lifetime

* Though individual genetic disorders are rare, collectively there are more than 15,500 recognized genetic disorders

* Up to 50% of admissions to pediatric hospitals are for genetic diseases and 20-30% of all infant deaths are due to genetic disorders

* 15% of all cancers have an inherited susceptibility

Q & A

1. What is the vision of the Foundation?

'To make a positive difference in the lives of people living with genetic disease.'

The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation supports excellence in core human genetics research. Our goal is to raise funds to enable scientists to discover cures and treatments for genetic disorders. To promote the growth of genetics research and raise awareness about genetic diseases the Foundation created four core programs: Research Grants, Scriver MD/PhD Scholarships, Canadian Human Genetics Conference, and Gene Researcher for a Week.

2. When a donor makes a contribution to the Foundation, how do you allocate the funds?

As a non-profit organization, the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation is dependant on charitable donations and sponsorships to run all its core programs. As a donor, you choose where your funds go: Research Grants, Scriver MD/PhD Scholarships, Canadian Human Genetics Conference, Gene Researcher for a Week, or General Funds.

3. What have past research grant recipients conducted their research on?

* Nephrogenic Diabetes Insipidus (NDI)

* Type 1 Juvenile Diabetes

* Adverse drug reactions in children

* Gene therapy strategies in Purine Nucleoside Phosphorylase Deficiency (PNP)

* Down Syndrome

4. Who are the sponsors for the Canadian Human Genetics Conference and the Gene Researcher for a Week Program?

Gene Researcher for a Week: Merck Frosst and CIHR

2007 Canadian Human Genetics Conference: Pfizer, Emerillon, CIHR, and Genzyme.

Previous Canadian Human Genetics Conference: AstraZeneca, Bristol-Myers Squibb Canada, IBM, Merck Frosst, and Pfizer.