



Canadian Gene Cure Foundation Awards
Dr. Nada Jabado a \$90,000
Champions of Genetics: Building the Next Generation Grant

August 3, 2011, Victoria BC - The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation (CGCF) is pleased to announce the awarding of a \$90,000 Champions of Genetics: Building the Next Generation Grant to Dr. Nada Jabado, pediatric hematologist and oncologist at The Montreal Children's Hospital of the McGill University Health Centre and Associate Professor Department of Pediatrics, McGill University for her research on inherited genetic immune deficiencies. The Champions of Genetics is a new award initiative of the CGCF that celebrates generations of excellence in Canadian genetics.

Canadian scientists are world leaders in human genetic research and in the discovery and advancement of cures for inherited genetic diseases. The Champions of Genetics initiative was created to both honour past genetic successes of Canada's accomplished senior scientists and ensure excellence continues in future generations of Canadian geneticists by providing financial support and encouraging mentorship early in their careers.

Genetic scientists just starting their research careers face many obstacles including heavy teaching assignments, low research budgets and difficulties recruiting highly qualified personnel. The Next Generation Grant provides much needed funding to promising young scientists, such as Dr. Jabado, to hire graduate students or post doctoral researchers in their laboratories. The grant allows them to advance their own exciting genetic research while mentoring yet the next generation of scientists; thus perpetuating Canada's level of excellence in genetic research.

Dr. Jabado was chosen to receive the grant for her research on inherited genetic immune deficiencies and on pediatric astrocytomas, the most common group of pediatric brain tumours. Her research hopes to identify causative genes, explore their function and provide patients and families with improved diagnostic tools and management of these often lethal defects. The grant funding will be used for more specific research focusing on identifying genetic defects in pediatric astrocytomas to achieve a better understanding of the molecular events and pathways responsible for their formation and progression.

"The grant I received from the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation will allow me to recruit a talented post-doctoral fellow to pursue our quest of the genes responsible for life-threatening disorders of the immune-system, therefore improving our chances of achieving a cure in patients affected by these diseases," said Dr. Jabado.

To be eligible for the grant, an applicant must have been nominated by a Champion of Genetics senior scientist as chosen by the CGCF Board of Directors. Accomplished geneticist Dr. Philippe Gros was the 2011 Champion who nominated Dr. Jabado, a trainee whom he personally mentored, to apply for the grant.

"I am indebted to the CGCF for accepting my nomination and for awarding the training grant to a former post-doctoral trainee, Dr. Nada Jabado. She is a great clinician, excellent scientist and outstanding human being. She is the perfect recipient for this generous award", said Champion, Dr. Philippe Gros.

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Background:

About the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation:

The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation (CGCF) is a registered Canadian charitable organization, formed in 1999 to raise much-needed funds for medical genetics research in Canada.

The Foundation's primary goal is to raise funds to enable Canadian scientists to discover cures and treatments for inherited diseases. In addition to the annual research grants awarded, the Foundation recognizes the importance of mentoring Canada's future scientists and hosts the annual Gene Researcher for a Week program aimed at providing unique educational opportunities for high school students across the country. The Foundation also supports networking opportunities in which scientists can exchange ideas and work cooperatively, linking advances in different disease areas. Specifically, the CGCF supports the annual Canadian Human Genetics Conference in partnership with the CIHR Institute of Genetics.

Canadian 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. Through active fundraising, the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation can continue to support Canadian Scientists and their contributions to human genetics research.

www.genecure.ca

Champions of Genetics Programme

The Champions of Genetics programme was designed with multiple benefits, in that it celebrates high-caliber scientific excellence of both highly respected senior scientists, and the rising stars that they have mentored.

The first phase of recognition in the program identifies and honours Canada's long established scientists, our Champions of Genetics. The Canadian Gene Cure Foundation's Board of Directors is responsible for developing the criteria on how these esteemed few are chosen, criteria that will vary in focus from year to year. In 2011, the Board elected to acknowledge individuals responsible for establishing the dynamic Canadian Genetic Diseases Network, one of Canada's successful and highly productive Networks of Centres of Excellence, of which the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation is a legacy.

Part of the honour afforded the Champions of Genetics is the opportunity to nominate one of their former trainees to apply for a Champions of Genetics: Building the Next Generation Grant from the Canadian Gene Cure Foundation. Nominees must have excellent leadership potential, have experience running their own independent laboratory at a Canadian research institute for seven years or less and be on the path to becoming the next generation of Canada's most respected senior scientists. The projects the nominees put forth in their application must demonstrate excellent science and have therapeutic potential in the near future.

This year, three of the nominees have been awarded a two-year grant. The grant recipients will be expected to use the grant funding to hire and mentor a post-doctoral fellow. This stipulation allows them the opportunity to not only further advance their own exciting research projects but to continue the important tradition of mentorship bringing strength and a continuity of excellence to the Canadian research community.

Dr. Nada Jabado Bio Sketch

Dr Nada Jabado is an Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics and an Associate member of the Department of Human Genetics, The Goodman Cancer Centre and the Division of Experimental Medicine at McGill University. Her research focuses on uncovering genetic defects in inherited disorders affecting the immune system and on pediatric astrocytomas, the most common group of pediatric brain tumours. Inborn errors affecting the immune system have high morbidity and mortality in children. The objective is to identify causative genes, explore their function and provide patients and families with improved diagnostic tools and management of these often lethal defects. Brain tumours are currently the leading cause of cancer-related mortality and morbidity in the pediatric years. The main objective of this part of her research is to identify genetic defects in these brain tumours and achieve a better understanding of the molecular events and pathways responsible for their formation and progression. Her goal is the identification of novel therapeutic targets and their efficient transfer from bench to bedside ultimately tailoring treatment to the tumor biology.